

About...

Audiovisual Production



J'ai toujours voulu être une sainte

Far from being able to pride itself on a long and rich tradition of national cinema, the Grand Duchy has only recently managed to find its place in the global audiovisual industry. The long list of awards attributed to Luxembourg filmmakers in major international festivals and a great deal of other evidence testifies to this considerable development. Day after day, year after year, the country witnesses the growth of a new jewel in the crown of its economy: the audiovisual production.

Since the 1990s, co-productions with foreign companies have regularly attracted leading film stars to Luxembourg. John Malkovich, Nathalie Baye, Nicolas Cage, Gérard Depardieu, Catherine Deneuve, Philippe Noiret, Patrick Swayze, Joseph Fiennes, Jeremy Irons and Al Pacino are but some who have demonstrated their talents on Luxembourg soil. Alongside the cream of the crop, Luxembourg actors, directors, producers and technicians have known how to get a piece of the action and managed to make a name for themselves on the international roll of honour of cinema professionals.

This marks the birth of a national industry that has no reason to be jealous of its famous foreign peers, as a few figures will suffice to show: Luxembourg

now boasts around 40 production companies, half a dozen of which regularly produce feature films, four animation studios as well as around 30 specialist services enterprises.

Many Luxembourg companies have also created partner companies in other European countries, such as Samsa Film, which is involved in companies in Belgium and Portugal, and in two enterprises in France. Tarantula Luxembourg is also part of a network with partner companies in France, Belgium and Great Britain.

In short, this young branch of activity occupies over 500 film-makers, both from Luxembourg and abroad, who make a living plying their trade in Luxembourg; there are about 40 directors among them, the majority of who currently dedicate themselves to short films and documentaries.

Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Regime: Constitutional Monarchy

Neighbouring countries: Germany, Belgium, France

Area: 2,586 km²

Population: 448,300 of which 170,700 are foreigners

Population density: 170 inhabitants/km² (2000)

Unemployment rate: 4,1% (December 2003)



In 2002 the feature film *Le club des chômeurs* in Lëtzebuergesch by Andy Bausch broke all national box office records

First things first...

For most of the 20th century, national film production in Lëtzebuergesch (the Luxembourg language) was essentially restricted to tourist and industrial films. Some efforts, such as *E Congé fir e Mord* (Holiday for Murder), shot in 16mm in 1983 by AFO, an association of a few amateur film teachers, were released but they were always one-offs. *E Congé fir e Mord*, a thriller in the Luxembourg language, was a triumph with the public and was (with the exception of *L'amour! Oui, mais...* by Philippe Schneider) the first Luxembourg language feature film shown in a commercial cinema. It was widely distributed on a non-commercial circuit at the same time and was seen by a total audience of some 30,000 out of a population of 200,000 who speak or understand the national language. This record was finally broken by Andy Bausch's *Le club des chômeurs* in 2002.

Andy Bausch emerged in the film industry towards the end of the 1970s. At that time, this self-taught devotee of the movies, who is often referred to as one of the 'fathers of Luxembourg cinema', used his 8mm camera to shoot several shorts and one feature film (*When the Music's Over*, 1980) which did not go unnoticed by Luxembourg film critics.

In 1985, he experimented again with a feature film entitled *Gwyncilla, Legend of the Dark Ages*. Success at the box office was mixed, but when it was presented at the AFI European Community Film Festival in the United States in 1987 it attracted the attention of a

critic from the L.A. Reader, who ranked it among the 10 best films of the year.

In 1987, Andy Bausch shot what was to become the cult film of Luxembourg cinema, *Troublemaker*, a co-production with the German radio station *Saarländischer Rundfunk*. The film launched the young Luxembourg actor Thierry Van Werveke and attracted an audience of 15,000 to the cinema. Andy Bausch was awarded the Special Jury Prize for this film at the 1988 Moscow Golden Fleece TV-Festival. And his career was only just beginning.

1989 was to become another pivotal year for Luxembourg cinema. The Government decided to invest 15 million Luxembourg francs (around EUR 372,000) in producing a film that was to be shot on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the country's independence. The very young Samsa Film team then knuckled down to adapting the novel *Schacko Klak* (directed by Frank Hoffmann and Paul Kieffer) by the Luxembourg author Roger Manderscheid.

The film tells the story of the author's childhood during the Second World War in a village not far from the capital of Luxembourg. This first 35mm feature film shot in Lëtzebuergesch was well received by critics and the public alike.

After this experience Luxembourg producers drew the conclusion that it was time to heave their production structures to a professional level.

Ingredients of a success story

As a result the Luxembourg Government decided to promote this new aspect of the Grand Duchy, too often experienced as a mere financial marketplace. With no real tradition of motion pictures to lean on, Luxembourg acquires the means to create one, and if the current situation is anything to go by, all the effort has clearly been worthwhile.



In 1999 Nathalie Baye won the award for 'Best Actress' for her performance in *Une liaison pornographique* at the Venice International Film Festival, a feature film which was shot for the major part in Luxembourg

The presence in Luxembourg of two giants of audiovisual communication – the RTL Group, a European television and radio broadcaster with over 40 channels, and the *Société européenne des satellites* (SES), operator of ASTRA satellites – have helped attract many innovative companies in the sector to the country. In addition, the wealth and diversity of the landscape, with its many châteaux and historic sites, provide a host of interesting alternatives for filming on location, and the linguistic baggage of the Luxembourg people as well as the country's modest size have also contributed to this rapid development.

Against this background, the Government, seeking economic diversification in the 1980s, set up two financial support mechanisms for audiovisual production. Since then, film companies have not only benefited from

financial advantages by setting up their cameras on Luxembourg soil but have also profited from modern technical installations as well as the competence and increasing experience of the local production industry.

Since 1988, over 250 audiovisual works (of various genres) have been made in Luxembourg by national producers thanks to the audiovisual investment certificate mechanism, while 125 works have been subsidized by means of selective financial aid.

Aid to audiovisual production

The Film Fund of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (*Fonds national de soutien à la production audiovisuelle*) is the official authority in charge of the promotion and development of the audiovisual sector. It is jointly overseen by the ministers responsible for the audiovisual sector and culture. Founded in 1990 and reorganized in 1999, the fund implements the sum of the audiovisual production support policies. It is responsible, in particular, for administering the selective financial aid to the national audiovisual industry, for promoting the sector, for transnational

co-production agreements, for issuing certificates of nationality to productions and for the collection of statistics on the sector.

In 2004 Pol Cruchten is working on a new feature film *Perle oder Pica*, an adaptation of a novel by the Luxembourg author Jemp Hoscheit

The fund decides on the allocation of selective financial aid destined to stimulate the expansion of the national audiovisual production sector. This aid can be granted to producers in the shape of advances on takings and can offer support in the writing and developing of

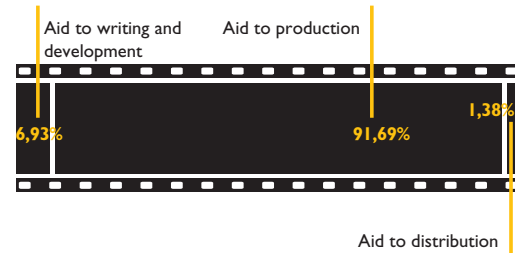


George and the Dragon, a film by Tom Reeve (on the still: Patrick Swayze, Piper Perabo and Jean-Pierre Castaldi)

screenplays, help concerning production or co-production as well as assistance in the distribution of cinematic and audiovisual works.

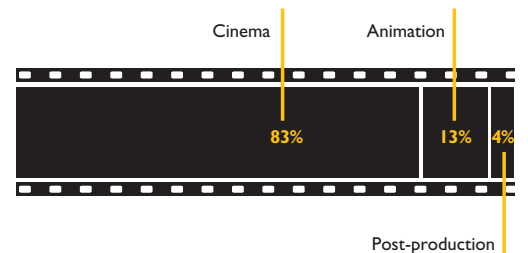
The fund also manages the audiovisual investment certificates (*certificats d'investissement audiovisuel, CIAV*), which were introduced in 1988 to enable producers to recover some of the production costs incurred in Luxembourg during filming. These certificates cover works of fiction, documentaries and multimedia productions considered to have original creative aspects and to be of lasting value. In 2002, 15 Luxembourg audiovisual works were awarded a CIAV and 21 projects benefited from the selective financial aid mechanism (23 in 2003), granted in the form of advances on takings. Government support in the shape of CIAVs amounted to 30% of this total.

Selective financial aid to production in 2003



(on a total sum of 3.22381, 44€)

Distribution of CIAVs issued in 2002





The introduction of the audiovisual production support schemes gradually attracted a large number of young Luxembourg producers and directors from Belgian and French film schools to the country.

Thanks to the CIAV and the selective financial aid, national producers were able to swiftly progress to a

professional level. The cinema sector in Luxembourg developed extremely rapidly during the 1990s. In 1992, the film *Hochzäitsnuecht* by Pol Cruchten (*Video-press – Luxembourg*) was the first 100% Luxembourg feature film presented at the Cannes Festival (in the 'Un Certain Regard' section), and it subsequently won the 'Max Ophüls prize' at the Festival of the same name in Saarbrücken/Germany.

While some 110 films of all genres (documentaries, feature-length films, shorts and news reports) were produced between 1899 and 1989, 120 were produced between 1990 and 1999. Most were shorts, a few end-of-degree films and some co-productions with foreign countries.

In the absence of a domestic market enabling to make a feature film profitable, most national companies focused on co-productions with foreign companies. From this time, the Grand Duchy offered Luxembourg technicians, producers and even actors the opportunity to make a living of their profession. Since then, foreign producers have increasingly called upon their Luxembourg colleagues to set up their projects.

Kate Odgen and Tipi Hedren in Désirée Nosbusch's short *Ice Cream Sundae*

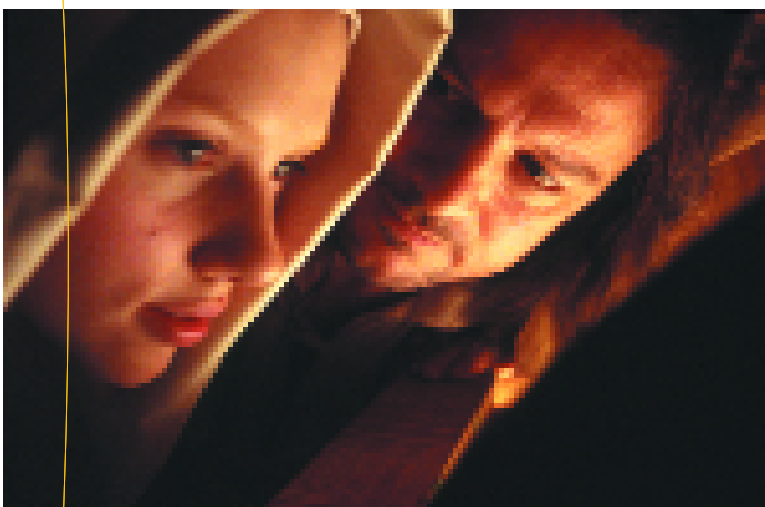


Luxembourg co-productions

The various Luxembourg State support mechanisms have entailed a professionalisation of the industry, which has in turn broadened the potential for Luxembourg productions and co-productions with foreign companies.

The Luxembourg Government is continuing its efforts to support the audiovisual sector, particularly through production agreements with foreign countries. The first steps in this direction were taken with the signature of a memorandum of understanding on audiovisual relations with Quebec in 1994, and an agreement with Canada in 1996. In 2001, the experience was repeated when the minister responsible for communications, François Biltgen, signed a motion picture agreement with France at Cannes and with Germany in the following year. Similar agreements, intending to promote and encourage the development of bilateral co-productions, to strengthen cultural and economic exchanges and to favour the transnational cooperation between professionals involved in film making, are currently being developed with other countries.

By means of these agreements, the two signatory countries undertake to reciprocally attribute their nationality to films co-produced by companies established on their respective territories. In this way, a co-production can simultaneously enjoy the advantages granted to national



The Girl with a Pearl Earring: Two nominations for the Golden Globes, ten for the Orange British Academy Film Awards and three for the Academy Awards 2004

works and seek public or private funding in both countries. These agreements are the fruit of the Government's firm desire to encourage the production of motion pictures.

A few examples

It is, above all, the films produced over the past five years that bear witness to the success achieved by the various Luxembourg State initiatives.

In 2000, Francis Ford Coppola's son, Roman, joined the ranks of the Luxembourg company Delux Productions to shoot his first feature film *C.Q.*, which was then presented out of competition at the Cannes Festival.

The cast included Gérard Depardieu, Elodie Bouchez, who appeared in *Le Péril jeune* by Cédric Klapisch, Giancarlo Giannini, who received the 'Palme d'or' at Cannes for his performance in *Mimi Métallo* and Jeremy Davies, who starred in *Nell* and *Saving Private Ryan*. Filming on location brought together over 300 extras in front of the Palais de justice in Luxembourg to recreate the student demonstrations that shook the French capital and later the whole country in 1968.

Delux Productions were also chosen by Elias Merhige for his *Shadow of the Vampire*, a work of fiction on the shooting of the film *Nosferatu*, completed by the German director F.W. Murnau in 1922. Delux Productions was associated with Saturn Films, the production company run by the American actor Nicolas Cage, and with two British companies. The châteaux of Vianden and Brandenburg, the Mullerthal region and the capital's old town provided the backdrop for John Malkovich (who played Murnau, the film-maker behind *Nosferatu*), Udo Kier and Willem Dafoe (in the role of the actor Max Schreck, who played *Nosferatu* in Murnau's work).

Willem Dafoe had already made a name for himself in classics such as *The English Patient* and *Mississippi Burning*. The role of Max Schreck won him a nomination for the Golden Globes and the Oscars 2001 in the category 'Best supporting actor'. *Shadow of the Vampire* was also nominated for an Oscar for 'Best make-up'.

Feature-length swashbuckler

In 2001, Peter Hyams, who had already directed Jean-Claude Van Damme and Arnold Schwarzenegger in *Timecop* and *End of Days* respectively, chose Luxembourg to shoot most of his feature film *The Musketeer*. This new version of the adventures of the young Gascon



In 2001 *Shadow of the Vampire* was nominated twice for the Academy Awards

starred Justin Chambers in the role of D'Artagnan, Catherine Deneuve as Queen Anne of Austria, and the very young Mena Suvari, the enchanting lolita in *American Beauty*. This mega-production was entrusted to the Luxembourg production firm The Carousel Picture Company. The rue du Nord, the Corniche in Luxembourg City and the Place d'Armes, among others, formed the backdrop for many location shots.

The Musketeer was previewed at the Deauville Festival of American Cinema and topped the American box office from the first weekend of its release in September 2001.

One of the masterpieces produced by the Luxembourg company Samsa Film in 2000 was without a doubt *Jaime*, judging by the many plaudits this film directed by Antonio Pedro Vasconcelos has received. *Jaime* was rewarded at the San Sebastián Festival with the Special Jury Prize and selected for the European Film Awards 2000 in the category 'Best European cinematographer'. This Luxembourg-Portuguese-Brazilian co-production also won the 'Grand Prix Cannes Junior 2000' and the 'Association française du Cinéma d'art et d'essai' award at the Cannes Festival. Although the film was shot in Portugal, post-production was carried out entirely in Luxembourg.

Du Poil sous les roses, also produced by Samsa Film in 2000, was chosen to represent Luxembourg at the Forum of European Cinema in the 'Being Young and European in the year 2000' category. Directed by Agnès Obadia and Jean-Julien Chervier, *Du Poil sous les roses*, the principal theme of which is adolescent

sexuality, was awarded the 'Vague d'or' for the best film at the Arcachon Festival of Women's Cinema in 2000. And who could forget *Une liaison pornographique* by Frédéric Fonteyne, starring the French actress Nathalie Baye and Sergi López (seen in *Harry, un ami qui vous veut du bien*).

This co-production between Samsa Film and Belgian, French and Swiss production companies was mainly shot in Luxembourg. Nathalie Baye won the best actress award at the Venice International Film Festival for her role. *Une liaison pornographique* also won the Media Prize at the Cannes Festival in 2001. The Media Prize is awarded each year to a first or second full-length feature film produced with Media support and which has been distributed in the largest number of countries outside its country of production and which has reached a substantial audience.



Encounter between Joseph Fiennes François Biltgen, minister of Communications (to the right) and Guy Daleiden director of the Film Fund Luxembourg

For his new film, *La Femme de Gilles* starring Emmanuelle Devos and Laura Smet, Frédéric Fonteyne chose to collaborate with Samsa Film again. This film, which should be issued in 2004, was for the greater part shot in Luxembourg.

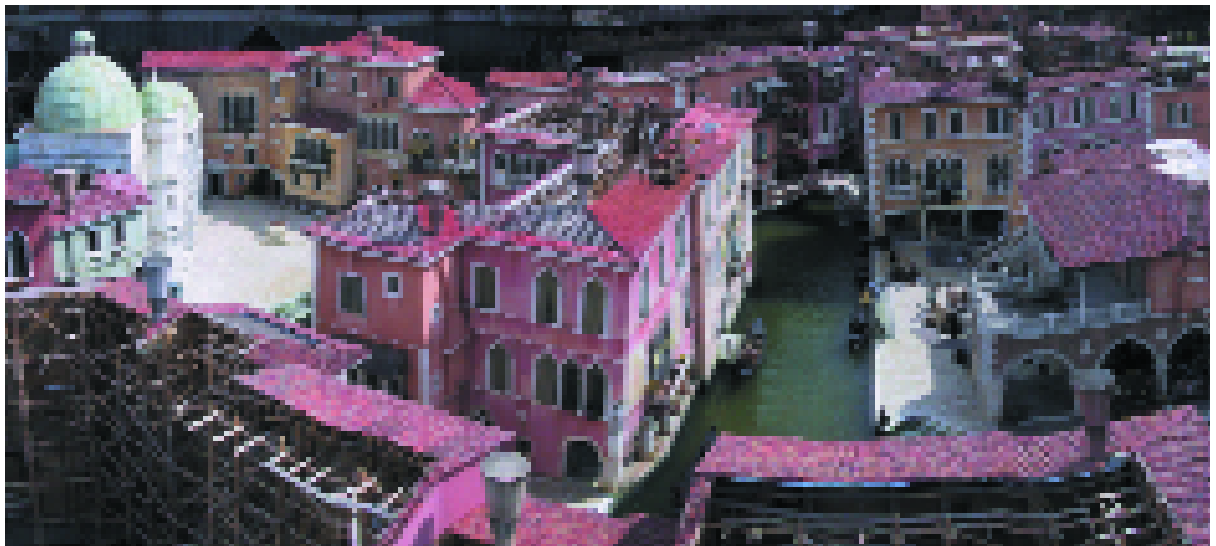
From Venice to Esch-sur-Alzette

Secret Passage from Delux Productions attracted all the attention when it was shot in Luxembourg in 2001. This film by Adémir Kenovic, a co-production with the British company Zephyr Films, starred John Turturro (*The Big Lebowski*, 1998), who shared centre-stage with Katherine Borowitz and Tara FitzGerald.

Jeunet. *Secret Passage* was officially selected at the November 2003 Boston Jewish Film Festival.

Michael Radford has, among others, also used this same setting for his film *The Merchant of Venice*. This adaptation of Shakespeare's play, co-produced by Delux Productions, can pride itself of a prestigious cast starring Joseph Fiennes, Jeremy Irons and Al Pacino.

A year of preparation preceded the construction of the sets on the disused industrial site in Esch-sur-Alzette to recreate the Venice of the 16th century



After shooting several scenes in Venice and some in the Delux studios in Contern, the film crew set up on the disused industrial site 'Terres Rouges' in Esch-sur-Alzette. Within a mere six months, some 300 craftsmen and labourers transformed six hectares of this abandoned site to make it look like Venice at the end of the 16th century. The whole team of craftsmen worked together to perfect the final details of the set, including stuccos, wall frescoes, wooden balconies, lace curtains, gondolas and even geraniums – nothing was left to chance. Tons of building materials were required, and the construction of the scenery alone amounted to a total cost of several million dollars.

A year of preparation preceded the construction of these sets designed by Miljen Kreka Kljakovic, who had already produced fabulous sets for the films of Emir Kusturica (*Le Temps des Gitans*, *Underground*, *Arizona Dream*), and the extraordinary *Delicatessen* by Caro and

The Venice Mostra and the Cannes Film Festival

In 2002, two of Samsa Film's productions were selected in the programme for the 59th Venice International Film Festival: *Nha Fala* ('My Voice') and *Un honnête commerçant* ('An Honest Shopkeeper').

Nha Fala, a musical by Flora Gomes with Fatou N'Diayé, Jean-Christophe Dollé, Angelo Torres, Danièle Evenou and François Hadji-Lazaro, was produced by Samsa Film in co-production with Fado Filmes (Portugal) and Les films de mai (France). After two official selections at Cannes in 1996 and 1992, Flora Gomes' film offers a poetic and musical view of her native Guinea-Bissau. *Nha Fala* was in the official competition at the Venice International Film Festival.



Ere Mela Mela,
a film by Dan
Wiroth, produ-
ced by Tarantula
Luxembourg

Furthermore, *Un honnête commerçant*, by Philippe Blasband was presented at the International Critics Week in Venice. Produced by Samsa Film in co-production with Artémis Productions (Belgium), the film stars Benoît Verhaert, Philippe Noiret, Serge Larivière, Yolande Moreau, Frédéric Bodson and the Luxembourgish Patrick Hastert.

In 2002, the first feature-length fiction film made by the production company Tarantula Luxembourg, *Une Part du ciel*, was listed in the 'Un Certain Regard' Official Selection at the Cannes Festival. This film by Bénédicte Liénard featuring Séverine Caneele, Sofia Leboutte, Josiane Stoléru and Yolande Moreau deals with integration and social exclusion and was partly shot in Luxembourg with the participation of many local technicians.

In a completely different style, Tom Reeve and the Carousel Picture Company released the feature film *George and the Dragon* in 2002 starring Patrick Swayze (*City of Joy*, *Dirty Dancing*, *Ghost*). The film was shot in Brandenbourg château and in Esch-sur-Alzette. The story unfolds after the first crusade to the Holy Land (at the beginning of the 11th century) in the days of knights, damsels and legends.

In 2003, a feature film co-produced by the Luxembourg company Delux Productions was also listed in the selection for the 'Palme d'Or' at the Cannes Festival. This was *The Tulse Luper Suitcase: The Moab Story* by the Englishman Peter Greenaway, whose last appearance at Cannes dates back to 1999 with another Luxembourg production, *8 1/2 Women*.

Late in the year 2003 a number of other Luxembourg co-productions won awards at international film festivals. *Moonlight*, produced by Delux Productions and directed by Paula van der Oest, featured at the Montreal World Film Festival (in the 'Cinema of Europe' category). This work had already won the 'Youth Jury Award' both at the Netherlands Film Festival in Utrecht and at the European Film Festival in Lecce/Italy. At the end of October 2003, *Moonlight* won the award for 'Best European Feature Film' at the Hollywood Film Festival.

The Girl with a Pearl Earring, produced by Delux Productions and directed by the Brit Peter Webber, was also very successful. This film, which was almost entirely shot at the site in Esch-sur-Alzette, converted into the Delft of the 17th century, involved many Luxembourg technicians. It received the 'Golden Hitchcock' (Jury Prize) as well as the 'Silver Hitchcock' (Public Prize) at the 14th edition of the Dinard British Film Festival (in October 2003) and was in official competition at both the San Sebastián and the Toronto Film Festivals (both held in September 2003).

Moreover, *The Girl with a Pearl Earring* was nominated for the Golden Globes 2004 in the categories 'Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture – Drama' for Scarlett Johansson and 'Best Original Score – Motion Picture' for Alexandre Desplat.

Finally, *Twin Sisters* directed by the Dutchman Ben Somborgaart, produced by Samsa Film, won the 'Golden Calf 2003' for the 'Best Feature Film' at the Netherlands Film Festival (at the beginning of October 2003).

At the Academy Awards 2004, *The Girl with a Pearl Earring* was nominated in three categories: 'Art Direction', 'Best Cinematography', 'Best Costumes'. *Twin Sisters* was nominated for best film in the category 'Best Foreign Language Film'.



Un honnête commerçant stars Philippe Noiret and Benoît Verhaert

Cinénygma and *Lëtzebuenger Filmpräis*

Organized in co-operation with the Film Fund and the multiplex Utopolis, the Cinénygma Luxembourg International Film Festival presents around 30 European and international films on an annual basis, a competition for feature-length and short films, and the now traditional Fantasy Film Night (four films in succession), which closes the Festival.

A total of four awards are issued at this festival: the 'Grand prix Cynénigma' awarded to the festival's best feature film, the 'Méliés d'argent' which goes to the best European fantasy film, the 'People's Award' and the 'Jury Prize' for the best short film.

In 2003, the first *Lëtzebuenger Filmpräis* was also awarded as part of a week devoted entirely to national productions. The objective of this award, introduced by the minister responsible for culture and the minister responsible for the audiovisual sector, is to reward the best contributions to Luxembourg cinema so as to highlight high-quality works, encourage the creation of motion pictures, nurture the development of the film industry in Luxembourg and draw the public's attention to Luxembourg productions.



The award winners at the ceremony of the first *Lëtzebuenger Filmpräis*

The awards 2003:

Best feature film

Two feature films shared first place:

J'ai toujours voulu être une sainte by Geneviève Mersch (Production: Samsa Film) and *L'homme au cigare* by Andy Bausch (Production: Rattlesnake Pictures)

Best Luxembourg co-production

Une part du ciel by the Belgian director Bénédict Liénard (Production: Tarantula Luxembourg)

Best short film

If not why not by Daniel Wiroth (Production: Samsa Film)

Best technical contribution

Thierry Faber for his work on the editing of the documentary *D'Lëtzebuurger am Tour de France* (Luxembourgers on the Tour de France) (Production: CNA)

Best artistic contribution

Thierry Van Weveke who acted in Andy Bausch's comedy *Le club des chômeurs* (Iris Productions)

Honorary Prize

Posthumously attributed to the Luxembourg short film director Gordian Troell, who passed away in March 2003

Best young talent

Daniel Wiroth animated film director

Best European film 2003

Hable con ella by Pedro Almodóvar

Special award issued by the city of Luxembourg

L'homme au cigare by Andy Bausch (Rattlesnake Pictures)

Honorary award issued by the city of Luxembourg

Posthumously attributed to Fred Junck

A generation of Luxembourg directors recognized by their peers

In recent years only two feature-length fiction films have been shot in the Luxembourg language (*Back in Trouble*, 1997, and *Le Club des chômeurs*, 2002), both by Andy Bausch. Moreover, only eight directors from or living in Luxembourg (Andy Bausch, Pol Cruchten, Paul Scheuer, Geneviève Mersch, Laurent Brandenbourger, Paul Kieffer, Frank Hoffmann and Luis Galvão Teles) have made feature-length films. Many others are focusing, at least for the moment, on short films or documentaries.

Le Club des chômeurs, by Andy Bausch, co-produced by Iris Productions and the Swiss company Fama Film, was a huge success when it was released in 2002, with an audience of over 40,000. Luxembourg actors such as Thierry Van Werveke, Myriam Muller, André Jung, Marco Lorenzini, Fernand Fox and Luc Feit had starring roles.

In 2002, Geneviève Mersch, a Luxembourg director who had already made a name for herself with high-profile short films and documentaries (*Le pont rouge*, 1991), shot her first feature film, *J'ai toujours voulu être une sainte* ('I always wanted to be a saint'). Co-financed by Samsa Film and the Belgian company Artémis Productions, this French language film tells the story of a teenage girl who goes off in search of her mother who abandoned her at birth.

In 2003, this film was awarded the 'Zénith d'or' for the best first feature film at the Montreal World Film Festival. The jury was won over by 'the precision of her style and the subtlety of emotions'. The film was also in the Official Selection at the Mannheim-Heidelberg Festival and at the Aubagne International Film Festival. At the first awards ceremony of the *Lëtzebuurger Filmpräis 2003* the film won the award for 'Best Luxembourg Feature Film'.

The most recent feature film by Pol Cruchten is called *Boys on the Run*. It was shot in English in the United States in 2001 and the cast includes Raquel Beaudene, who appeared notably in *Great Expectations*, and Ron Perlman, the odious Salvatore in *the Name of the Rose*.

Pol Cruchten had shot his previous film, *Black Dju* (1996), in French. Philippe Léotard, the film's leading actor, stars alongside the Cape Verdian singer Cesaria Evora in this feature film that tells the story of the friendship between a young man from Cape Verde and a solitary, disillusioned policeman. It was a co-production between Samsa Film, Saga Film (Belgium), Vermedia (Portugal) and RTBF (Belgium). *Black Dju* has been shown at many festivals throughout the world, including Brussels, Montreal, Los Angeles, Gothenburg, Prague, Berlin, Valencia and New York.

Luis Galvão Teles, who has made a remarkable impression with his feature film *Elles* (Miou-Miou, Marthe Keller) in 1997 or *Retrato de família* in 1991, directed *Fado Blues* in collaboration with Samsa Film in 2002.

best dance film at the 52nd Montecatini International Short Film Festival in Italy. This production forms part of a series of seven short films broadcast on Arte under the general title *One Dance, One Song*. Dan Wiroth reappeared in 2003 with a new dance film called *If not Why not*, which was also broadcast by Arte within the framework of a series of dance films co-produced by Samsa Film. This film received the award for 'Best Short Film' at the first edition of the *Lëtzeburger Filmpräis*.

The latest medium-length experimental film by the Luxembourg director Bady Minck, *Im Anfang war der Blick* ('In the Beginning was the Eye'), came out in 2002 and appeared in the Official Selection in the Directors' Fortnight at the Cannes Festival in May 2003. This film,



In 2003 *Im Anfang war der Blick* by the Luxembourg director Bady Minck won an award at the Pesaro Festival

In 2002 the Luxembourg Laurent Brandenbourger co-directed his first feature film together with the Belgian Philippe Boon *Petites Misères*, which starred Marie Trintignant. *Le Figaro* spoke of the film as being 'a hilarious fable on consumer society and guilt ...'.

Meanwhile, Dan Wiroth, another Luxembourg director, walked off with awards from all the festivals (Brussels, Saarbrücken, Acadie, Moncton – Canada, etc.) at the end of the 1990s with his short film *Fragile*, in which he animated glasses.

In 2001, Wiroth had similar success with his short film *Ere Mela Mela*. Among other awards, this co-production by Tarantula, Arte (France) and Heure d'été productions (France) won the 'Teddy Award' at the Berlin International Film Festival and the 'Hans Züllig Prize' for

which had been shown for the first time at the Viennale in 2002, was co-produced by the Luxembourg production company Minotaurus Film and three Viennese companies (Oikodrom, Garabet Film and Amour Fou Filmproduktion). Since this film was released it has been invited to an impressive number of festivals worldwide and even won an award at the international Pesaro Film Festival.

Other directors won fame with new short films, including Désirée Nosbusch with *Ice Cream Sundae*, produced in the United States and starring Tippi Hedren, (seen in Hitchcock's *The Birds*), Beryl Koltz with *Your chicken died of hunger*, Isabelle Costantini with *Les feux follets*, Christophe Wagner with *Un combat*, Luc Feidt with *W* or Catherine Richard with *Laterna magica*.

And this is just a short review of the Luxembourg

directors who have started, or who are starting, to build solid reputations in the profession.

Luxembourg reality through documentaries?

In this landscape rich in successful stories, some people regret that feature films shot in Luxembourg, particularly in the case of co-productions with foreign companies, are generally so far from Luxembourg reality.

This reality is said to be reflected in documentaries focusing on different aspects of Luxembourg society and history. Many examples bear witness to this: the iron and steel industry takes centre stage in *Stol*, by Claude Lahr (1998) as well as in *Sentimental Journey* (1995) and *lwwer an eriwwer* (1996). In these latter productions realised by the National Audiovisual Centre (*Centre national de l'audiovisuel* – CNA), Geneviève Mersch explores the memory of the Second World War, as experienced in Luxembourg. This period is furthermore revisited by Claude Lahr in his film *Heim ins Reich* (working title).

Short films produced or co-produced by the young production company Tarantula Luxembourg provide other examples: in *André an d'dissident Stëmmen* ('André and the dissident voices', 2001) the author Donato Rotunno presents a portrait of André Hoffmann, elected deputy of the *Déi Lénk* party. Donato Rotunno is also the creator of *Terra mia*, which deals with Italian immigration and was released in 1999 and *Les Mesures du rectangle* from 2002, challenging Portuguese Immigration. *Edward J. Steichen*, issued in 1995, is a documentary by Claude Waringo which is also worth mentioning.

In 1998, the three documentaries *Ech war am Congo* by Paul Kieffer and Marc Thiel, a documentary on the experience of Luxembourg nationals in the Belgian colony, *Histoire(s) de jeunesse* by Anne Schroeder and *Les Perdants n'écrivent pas l'Histoire – Mémoires luxembourgeoises de la guerre d'Espagne* by Frédéric Fichet and Edie Laconi, produced by Samsa Film, were the first to be shown in what was to become the Luxembourg Documentary Week.

The first official Documentary Week was held at the Utopia Cinema in 1998, when Samsa Film released the three-abovementioned documentaries at around the same time. 'Rather than stringing two or three premiers together according to availability, it would be better to draw up a broader programme and make a festival of it', explained the director and co-organiser of the festival Claude Waringo at the time. This initiative gives the public the chance to discover films that are generally overlooked by traditional distribution networks.

Films made in Luxembourg

Founded in 1989, the CNA files the national productions and, more generally, all films produced or co-produced in the Grand Duchy. Furthermore, it stores the entirety of all film, video and audio materials of *RTL Télé Lëtzebuerg* and it disposes of a considerable collection of family films. The CNA produces and co-produces documentaries on the basis of archived films (*Little Big One*, *Histoires de jeunesse*, *D'Lëtzebuenger am Tour de France*, *Ons Arméi*), offers an information desk for students planning to go to film school and carries out systematic research on the history of the Luxembourg cinema resulting in the publication of books (such as the publications on the actress Germaine Damar, the director René Leclère and the actor René Deltgen) as well as films (a film on René Deltgen is currently being made).

In 1997, in co-operation with the Film Fund Luxembourg and ULPA (Union of Luxembourg Audiovisual Producers), the CNA launched a programme named *Films made in Luxembourg*, created to distribute documentaries on the Grand Duchy on videocassettes, as well as fictional films supported by the Luxembourg State; additionally, the programme proposes to broadcast these films regularly on national television.

The producers themselves choose the films they wish to sell among those that have received State support, and finance the copying of tapes. The CNA adds the films it has produced itself (in 2002, it was *Les Luxembourgeois dans le Tour de France*, *Ons Arméi* in 2003), or which it has archived.

In December 2003 the CNA issued a very striking documentary by Andy Bausch called *L'homme au cigare*, which was rated best film of the year at the first edition of the *Lëtzebuurger Filmpräis* together with Geneviève Mersch's *J'ai toujours voulu être une sainte*. Rather than presenting a straightforward portrait of Fred Junck, the founder of the *Cinémathèque de la ville de Luxembourg*, Andy Bausch's documentary offers an illustration of the revived cinema enthusiasm in the Luxembourg of the 1960s and 1970s. In 2004 Andy Bausch works on a new documentary *DJ Don Camillo*, a portrait of the Luxembourg actor Camillo Felgen.

Over 15,000 cassettes have been sold since the series was released. A total of some 50 works are available.

Media Desk Luxembourg

Since its foundation in 1992, Media Desk Luxembourg has been acting in the Grand Duchy as the information office for the European Union Media Programme.

With a budget of EUR 435,6 million, the Media Plus programme (2001-2006) seeks to boost the competitiveness of the European audiovisual industry by means of a series of incentives focusing on vocational training, the development of production projects, the distribution and promotion of films and audiovisual programmes and support for film festivals and markets.

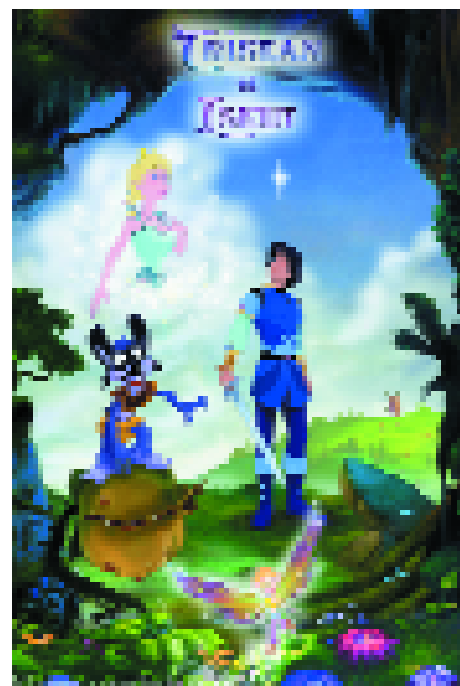
As part of this European programme, the European institute *Strategics* is the leader of FIT (Film Industry Training), a collection of training activities supported by the European Commission. Such networking ensures that these activities are fully coordinated and creates synergies among the different partners.

Strategics, one of the few European ongoing training institutions for audiovisual personnel, is located in Luxembourg and has been offering ongoing training programmes to the European film industry since 1993. It thus helps enhance the potential of European films.

From Kirikou to Renart, the Fox

In the world of cinema, the animation sector is more discreet than that of live films (in 2002 the animation sector represented 13% of CIAV). Animated films are produced unnoticed in the seclusion of the studios, without filming on location to turn the life of a city district upside-down, and without stars to fill column inches in the press. However far from the glitz, the Luxembourg animation sector is not any less dynamic.

Certain Luxembourg studios started to specialize in animated films at the beginning of the 1990s. Since then, the sector has achieved several unchallenged successes in the art and a real, globally recognized industrial platform has been established in the Grand Duchy. In 1998, for instance, Monipoly Productions proudly launched its co-production *Kirikou and the Sorceress*. This feature-length animated film was extremely successful with the public, as evidenced by the





sale of over one million tickets in France alone (not counting the 650,000 DVDs that followed). Another Monipoly production, *Freccia Azzurra (The Blue Arrow)*, a Christmas story, has been sold in 85 countries and was the first European cartoon to penetrate the American market.

At the beginning of the third millennium, a handful of companies specializing in animation share the stage in Luxembourg. Studio 352, for example, co-operated in the animated series *Super, Duper Sumo* by the Disney studios, and in the cartoon *Sabrina the Teen Witch*, by Disney and DIC Entertainment. In 2001, Melusine Productions, a Studio 352 company, co-produced cartoons such as *La famille Passiflore*, *Dans les secrets de Providence* and *Liberty's Kids*.

The Annecy International Animated Film Festival approached the Luxembourg company Oniria Pictures in 2000 to create and produce the trailer for the Festival, shown between each film in competition, for its 40th anniversary. The result was a black and white character which gradually became coloured, began to move more and more harmoniously, and finally changed into a 3D image. This was a way to show the development of animation since its birth. In 2002, Oniria Pictures was in competition in Annecy with its cartoon *Tristan et Iseut*, which combines 2D and 3D animation. In 2003, the same production company worked on *Renart, the Fox*, produced and directed by Thierry Schiel and Sophia Kolokouri, a 90-minute adaptation of the well-known fable *Le Roman de Renard*.

Other Luxembourg professionals have preferred to go abroad to work. Tanja Majerus, for example, a native of Sandweiler and a graduate of the prestigious Gobelins film school in Paris, is a member of the *Dreamworks* team, one of whose three founders is none other than Steven Spielberg. She has recently been in charge of the characters of the Colonel and his horse Spirit in the cartoon *Spirit, Stallion of the Cimarron*.

Against this background, it should also be noted that since 1990 the *Lycée technique des arts et métiers* (Applied Arts and Crafts Technical College) in Luxembourg has been offering a BTS course (*brevet de technicien supérieur* - vocational training certificate) devoted to animated films. Some former students of this school have followed in the footsteps of Tanja Majerus and are currently working at *Dreamworks* or in other big animation production companies.

Some will say that without the development aid introduced by the Government the sector might not be where it is today. They may be right, but this does not detract from the most effective argument for encouraging production companies to shoot and invest in Luxembourg – the national companies and their productions. The technical and human resources, the know-how and professionalism of these men and women are without the slightest doubt the best marketing argument for the Luxembourg audiovisual sector.

Useful addresses

Association des acteurs et techniciens du cinéma (ATAC)

57, rue de l'Hippodrome
L-1730 Luxembourg
Tel: +352 48 38 23
Fax: +352 49 06 05

Association des réalisateurs et scénaristes

102, rue Ermesinde
L-1149 Luxembourg
Tel: +352 22 76 81

Centre national de l'audiovisuel (CNA)

5, route de Zoufftgen
L-3598 Dudelange
Tel: +352 52 24 24 |
Fax: +352 52 06 55
www.cna.lu

Lycée technique des arts et métiers

19, rue Guillaume-Schneider
L-2522 Luxembourg
Tel: +352 46 76 16 |
Fax: +352 47 29 91
www.ltam.lu

Fonds national de soutien à la production audiovisuelle (Film Fund)

Maison de Cassal
5, rue Large
L-1917 Luxembourg
Grand-Duché de Luxembourg
Tel: +352 47 82 06 5
Fax: +352 22 09 63
info@filmfund.etat.lu
www.filmfund.lu

Media Desk Luxembourg

Maison de Cassal
5, rue Large
L-1917 Luxembourg
Tel: +352 47 82 17 0
Fax: +352 46 74 95
mail@mediadesk.etat.lu
www.mediadesk.lu

Union luxembourgeoise de la production audiovisuelle (Ulpa)

45, boulevard Pierre Frieden
L-1543 Luxembourg
Tel: +352 25 03 93 |
Fax: +352 25 03 94

The list and details of all approved production companies in Luxembourg can be obtained from the Film Fund Luxembourg.

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