

Network Scenarioschrijvers / The Netherlands

FSE 2016

The professional organisation for screenwriters, the Network Scenarioschrijvers (Screenwriter Network), aims to promote the position of the screenwriter.

The Network does this by improving screenwriter visibility, and by actively lobbying for a better legal and financial position. The Network raises the screenwriter's voice and interest with funds, broadcasting companies, producers, the Ministry of Education, Cultural Affairs and Science, the Ministry of Security & Justice, and the Council for Culture. In short, with those creating the climate in which screenwriters develop their talents and make their money.

With PAM, a partnership between the guilds and collective bargaining agency's of screenwriters, directors and actors, the Network aims to ensure that screenwriters share in the proceeds of the (digital) exploitation of their work. Thanks to PAM's efforts, the film paragraph in the Copyright Contract Law was changed in favour of filmmakers. The law came into force on 1 July 2015 and secures the cable-remunerations. The negotiations on digital rights are still in progress but are nearing an agreement.

Other achievements are investments made by the Filmfonds (Film Fund) and Mediafonds (Media Fund) in screenwriting talent, by setting up various incentive arrangements aimed at screenwriters. Through these arrangements, screenwriters can receive support for writing a scenario, in some cases without the intervention of a producer

The Network also wants to be a meeting place for writers. That's why the Network organizes professional workshops and activities, such as the Day of the Scenario, as well as get-togethers for members several times a year. In addition, it arranges member discounts for seminars that are of interest to screenwriters and is actively involved in such initiatives as Schrijfpaleis (Writing Palace), which attracts many writers.

In order to increase screenwriters' visibility, the Network supports several awards (ANV Scenario award, the Dutch Oscar contender) and annually presents the professional award for best scenario, the Silver Curly Tails. It also presents a Golden Pen to a writer whose film has drawn 100,000 movie goers. The Network believes that writers' visibility is a first step towards the recognition of their work, and as such, a first step towards a better negotiating position for writers.

The Network collaborates with a large number of other organisations, such as Lira, Dutch Directors Guild, the Film Academy, EYE and the Dutch Association of Film and TV Professionals (NBF). Together with the Association for Literators (VvL), the Freelancers' Association (FLA) and the Association of Educational Writers (VvEA), the Network is part of the umbrella organisation Association of Writers and Translators (VSenV).

Network Scenarioschrijvers was founded in 1995 and has 366 members. The board consists of 8 members: Jean van de Velde (chairman), Jenny Mijnhijmer (vice president), Marc Veerkamp (treasurer), Karin van der Meer, Chris Westendorp, Sytske Kok, Franky Ribbens and Lotte Tabbers.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Authors Guild

In 2016 the VsenV will be restructured. From 2017 the VSenV will continue under the name Auteursbond (Authors Guild). The Auteursbond has nine sections, one on the largest will consist of the screenwriters. The association will be modernized with a relatively small but decisive general board that is complemented by an advisory council that represents all professional groups that are affiliated. Each section has its own board that consists of members of the professional association. Seven people work at the office, a general director, two copyright lawyers, an activity producer, a publicity and marketing associate and two office employees. The communication, including the website, will also be completely overhauled.

Means test

In 2016 a means test was performed among screenwriters. The median income that screenwriters made through their writing is a little more than € 15.000. Over 40% makes less than € 10.000 through writing screenplays, 18% makes € 40.000 or more. 60% of all screenwriters have other jobs in addition to their work as a scriptwriter.

Cultural diversity

In 2016 the Network was part of the workgroup Cultural Diversity in the Media that was commissioned by the Dutch Film Fund to come up with recommendations on how to improve cultural diversity in film.