

Presentation 2010: 'Flemish Screenwriters Guild, Belgium'



General info

The Flemish Screenwriters Guild (*'Vlaamse Scenaristengilde vzw'*) was founded in 2004, 6 years ago. At this moment, we have 126 members, which covers about 90 % of all Flemish speaking professional fiction Screenwriters in Belgium. (Members with a track record in screenwriting pay 100 € / year but Junior members pay 50 € / year.)

Our board of directors assembles once a month, and every individual member on the board has more or less his or her portfolio. The entire board consists of professional screenwriters with different backgrounds in film and/or t.v. and are all volunteers. We have representatives to create and maintain a friendly dialogue in different organisations including our 2 Collecting Societies (SABAM and SACD); the Flemish Film Fund, the coordinating Flemish Authors Society and of course the F.S.E.

We are very active in the field of author rights. To keep a good relationship with both Collecting Societies is in our own interest. Not only to indicate the differences between them to our members and compare their rates, but also to cooperate on legal topics (such as private copy, new media, pay-per-view,...). At this moment, we also have a 'think tank' working on the reformation of the inning of the author rights (divisions in genre, etc).

We try to set up minimum rates and advise our members to take notice.

We arrange meetings with colleagues, and bring together screenwriters with producers and directors. We also invite international guest speakers and organize Master Classes in cooperations with the Flemish Film Fund. We organize public interviews with screenwriters of new Flemish feature films, podcast these and put them on our website.

We keep up our website www.scenaristengilde.be (we launch our new website soon) and distribute a newsletter very regularly.

Some highlights of 2009

'Moscow, Belgium' wins Flemish Screenwriters' Guild Award '09

Members of the Flemish Screenwriters' Guild voted 'Moscow, Belgium' best Flemish screenplay of the year.

Jean-Claude van Rijckeghem and Pat van Beirs who co-wrote the screenplay for the film were very pleased with their win. Van Rijckeghem (who also produced the film): "Receiving an award is always fun, but to receive one that is voted for by your colleagues is quite an extraordinary feeling."

In 'Moscow, Belgium' van Rijckeghem en van Beirs tell the story of a down-on-her-luck middle-aged woman who gets into a fender bender with an equally combative truck driver. Out of the initial skirmishes grows a very touching and funny love story... The screenplay was directed by Christophe van Rompaey. The resulting film was an audience favourite and made quite a splash on the international festival circuit, culminating in a selection for the Cannes festival.

The Flemish Screenwriting Award is a new initiative by the Flemish Screenwriters' Guild to promote the art and craft of writing for the screen. It will be a yearly recurrent event and sets itself apart from other awards because guild members do not vote on the 'finished product' (i.e. the film), but on the screenplay itself. Guild members have access to the nominated screenplays through the website of the Guild

(www.scenaristengilde.be) and can read the work of their peers before voting. They did so in vast numbers: voter turnout was close to 60%, which demonstrates both the interest in published screenplays within the writers' community and the instant popularity of this new award.

The winners received their award on March 6, during a short ceremony which was part of the celebrations marking the 5th anniversary of the foundation of the Flemish Screenwriters' Guild.

Flemish Scenaristengilde stops music publishers in General Assembly Sabam

The annual General Assembly of Sabam, the Belgian Organization of Authors, Composers and Publishers, on June 8th had been announced as a historical one. For the first time in years organizations of composers and music publishers had formulated a great number of proposals to change Sabam's General Agreement. A lot of discussion arose about art.35. This article had been changed in 2006. The changes were then considered as a necessary correction of the proportion of rights paid out to musicians on the one hand and screenwriters on the other hand. Composers and music publishers wanted to undo this change, thus disadvantaging screenwriters.

More than 300 partners, an extraordinary high number, took up their right to vote in the General Assembly. Minutes before art. 35 was to be voted the Scenaristengilde launched a resolution, asking Sabam to set up a separate division for screenwriters in order to be able to increase the rights paid to screenwriters with respect to the rights paid for music, especially concerning DVD, Video on Demand and Internet Exploitation.

After that the organizations of composers and music publishers decided to withdraw their proposal to change art. 35. For now things remain as they are, but a whole lot of changes are expected in the course of the next year. Sabam promised to get started

on setting up a separate division for screenwriters. Composers and music publishers announced they were open to proposals, but determined to stand up for their rights. The General Assembly elected a member of the Scenaristengilde to have a seat in one of Sabam's supervisory boards. This will enable him to defend the rights of the screenwriter and keep an eye on the evolution the following year.

Film Story Competition at the European Film Festival, BXL.

For the first time the Brussels Film Festival and the Flemish Writers Guild have organized a FILM STORY COMPETITION..

The purpose of this competition is not only to promote excellent story ideas on European level but to also encourage authors and assist them in the professional development of their scripts.

From the participants we expected an extensive synopsis of a feature film idea. 3 pages maximum, written in English, French or Dutch.

Thanks to the help of the F.S.E. and the support of the European Guilds that distributed the call for entry, the competition received in total 211 synopses from 17 different countries, a quadruple of the amount of last year entries.

Selected by a jury of professional screenplay writers, the 2 winners received a free place on a Script Factory course of their choice in London together with a refund of their expenses. The winners also have been invited for a weekend to Brussels to attend the Festival's Awards Ceremony held on July 5, 2009.

This years winners are: Dragan Stankovic en Marin Malesevic (SRB) with "Apopenia" and Faisal A. Qureshi (U.K.) with "The Footsoldier".

A new call for entry will be distributed spring 2010.