

## Flemish Screenwriters Guild - Activities Report 2017 – 2018

### 1) General info

The Flemish Screenwriters Guild (*Vlaamse Scenaristengilde vzw*) was founded in 2003. We have 190 paying members, roughly 90% of all Flemish speaking professional fiction screenwriters in Belgium.

Our board of directors (16 persons) meets once a month. The board consists of voluntary professional screenwriters with different backgrounds in film and/or TV. Since 2013 this board is supported by a part-time staff-member responsible for daily management and representation, and who is the central contact of our guild.

We have representatives to maintain a friendly dialogue with different organizations including two collecting societies (SABAM and DeAuteurs/SACD), the Flemish Film Fund, the coordinating Flemish Authors Society, our Belgian film festivals (Ghent, Ostend, the Short Film Festival in Leuven, Anima, Docville), politicians, educational partners and of course the F.S.E.

We have an active members policy, and members can contact us directly for advice. Besides several interesting advantages and reductions, our members receive invitations for public events we organize on a regular basis. We invite international guest speakers and organize Master Classes. Our Writers Guild also organizes public interviews with screenwriters of new Flemish feature films or television series. We always podcast these interviews and put them on our website.

Our website [www.scenaristengilde.be](http://www.scenaristengilde.be) is kept up to date on a regular basis and we regularly distribute a newsletter to our members and to an ever growing database of industry professionals.

### 2) Some highlights of 2017-2018

#### *Lobbying*

First and foremost, thanks to a survey that was taken in 2017 and that showed in what dire need a lot of Flemish screenwriters are working, we were able to convince the Flemish Film Fund to **reform the screenwriting fund**. The subsidies for screenwriters in animation, fiction (feature film as well as tv series) and documentary have all been raised substantially. A new fund has been created for high-concept tv-series. Furthermore, the new president of the Flemish Film Fund has made it clear in his opening statement that he wants to continue to focus on screenwriting and the development and education of screenwriters.

Aside from the Film Fund, we continue to work towards better rights for screenwriters. We aim to create a framework within which screenwriters and producers can negotiate in a correct, respectful and professional manner about the conditions for their cooperation. Good cooperation starts with a good contract and within this context we continue our work on a **solid option-contract**. Unfortunately, this has proven to be more difficult than expected. We

are therefore now developing a closer working relation with the legal departments of our CMO's in order to book results in this delicate field.

We are also active in different taskforces, such as the multi-disciplinary taskforce started by the Minister of Culture with the aim of **developing an ethical code against sexual harassment in the cultural sector**. Furthermore, we were part of the taskforce that advised and gave input to several ministers concerning **anti-piracy measures, which resulted in a first law proposal**.

#### *Members: support & information*

Besides supporting screenwriters in Flanders, one of the main aims of the Screenwriters Guild is to inform our members. In order to help our members in a better and more effective way, we have developed a whole **new back-office and a new website** ([www.scenaristengilde.be](http://www.scenaristengilde.be)). The website now features a thorough **update of our knowledge center**, and in particular we have developed an extensive '**starter pack**' that bundles information about various business aspects and useful agencies, creative tips and even more useful information to help screenwriters get started.

In parallel we have worked on a **new communication strategy** which has improved our external communication. Besides our own activities, we often communicate workshops, masterclasses and other interesting events with our members and newsletter readers as well.

#### *Events*

We are pleased to see an increasing interest from our members (and non-members) in our activities. Classics such as the 'Round Table' around showrunners and headwriters remain a hit. Formulas that have proven their usefulness, such as the speeddate between young screenwriter/makers and producers at the IKL in Leuven, were extended to other domains. As we are **focusing more on documentary and animation**, we organized speeddates between screenwriters and producers working in both fields, respectively at Docville festival in Leuven and Anima festival in Brussels. We also co-organized a workshop with John Vorhaus which was highly attended.

Over the past years the Flemish Screenwriters Guild has developed good contacts with the major Film Festivals. Our annual cooperation with the festivals of Ghent, Ostend and Leuven (short movies) continues. This year we consolidated our cooperation with **Docville, Anima and Theater aan Zee**, and started working together with the **Are You Series?** festival in Brussel.

Lastly, we took part in the **reorganization of the Ensors** (the Flemish Film Awards). The awards are now voted by an academy consisting of all working professionals. For the first time this year, awards were also given out for tv-fiction, including an award for best screenplay.