

STORY LAB CUBA

Cinematic Story Development

Workshop Description

‘The Universe is made of stories, not atoms’. (Muriel Rukeyser)

‘Every picture tells a story’. So the saying goes. Whether it be Einstein telling a story in order to explain his theory of gravity, an African elder teaching children about the history of their people, Brazilian miners sitting in a bar reflecting on a day’s work, young Chinese men and women expressing their feelings around their love lives, or doting British parents teaching their children about the challenges of life ahead. It seems impossible for us to make sense of anything, to engage with anything - whether these ‘anythings’ be facts, feelings or mysteries - unless it is through story.

The ubiquitous nature of story means that we are all actually storytellers, employing various narrative forms depending on context, expressive tools and objectives. The computer game, the poem, the annual accounts, the documentary film, the mathematical formula, the archeological exhibition, the sociology lecture, the theatre performance, the business plan and the conversation are a few examples of the numerous narrative forms which all have the one quality in common: they are telling us a story. It is therefore critical for anyone wishing to articulate themselves that they understand what story is, how to work with it and what it means to be a creative storyteller.

Starting from the premise that everything starts with feelings, this workshop will explore the nature of creativity and story with the particular objective of creating moving image narratives. You will explore creative thinking in imagery, unlock creative potential, articulate creative vision and develop the ability to tell engaging stories with images and sounds. You will then develop particular stories and, as one of the unique qualities of this course, you will write a complete treatment or screenplay that tells a story that you feel is necessary to share.

Objectives

During this workshop, you will:

- Work with key concepts and terms related to creativity, story and narrative.
- Develop a number of short stories and narratives based around your own experiences and circumstances.
- Engage in creative discussion with colleagues, sharing knowledge and experience.
- Create a complete first draft treatment or screenplay - anything from short to feature length - as a final output from the course.

Learning Outcomes

Following this workshop, you will have:

- Developed an understanding of key concepts and terms of creativity, story and narrative and will be able to apply these concepts and terms to your area of experience.
- Deployed visual and aural imagery as a narrative tools for exploring problems and articulating feelings and knowledge.
- Discovered ways of using creative techniques.
- Developed an understanding of sources of creative ideas.
- Discovered possible ways of transposing creative and narrative solutions from one area of activity to another.
- Refreshed your outlook on your own creative activities.
- Come closer to understanding how to embed story and narrative as a creative tool in your area of practice and activity.
- Learned about the key strengths of the moving image medium and how to tell effective stories using visual and aural narratives.

Course Details

Workshop length: 2 weeks full time, residential. Number of Participants: 8 - 12. Workshop location will be at the Escuela Internacional de Cine y Television, Cuba.

Week One

- Seminars and screening sessions exploring the nature of creativity.
- Seminars and screening sessions exploring the nature of storytelling.
- Practical creativity and narrative exercises.
- Sharing outcomes of practical creativity and narrative exercises.
- Individual tutorials developing ideas for final treatment or screenplay.

Week Two

- Writing first draft of a substantive treatment or screenplay.
- Individual tutorials.
- Critical group reflections on ideas development.
- Presenting final first draft treatment or screenplay to fellow participants.

It will be necessary to have a laptop or notepad for writing work on.

Teacher

Erik Knudsen

Erik Knudsen is a filmmaker and Professor of Film Practice at the University of Salford, Manchester, UK. He is a former Head of the School of Media, Music and Performance and a former Director of Graduate Studies. Earlier roles have included programme leading the MA in Fiction Film Production, the MA in Television Documentary Production and the MA in Wildlife Documentary Production.

He is also visiting professor, and the former Head of the Editing Department, at the Escuela Internacional de Cine y Television in Cuba. He is on the Editorial Board of the Journal of Media Practice and a member of the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Peer Review College. He publishes widely on film practice, his most recent book being, 'Creative Documentary: Theory and Practice' published in 2011.

As a filmmaker his films include: The Raven On The Jetty (88 min., fiction 2014), The Silent Accomplice (74 min., fiction, 2011), Vainilla Chip (17 min., Documentary, 2009), Veil (for Horse & Bamboo Theatre Company's touring show, 2008), Heart of Gold (40 min., documentary, 2006), Sea of Madness (86 min., fiction, 2006), Brannigan's March (99 min., fiction, 2004), Bed of Flowers (50 min., documentary, 2001), Signs of Life (70 min., fiction, 1999), Reunion (50 min., documentary, 1995), One Day Tafo (70 min., documentary, 1991).