

Bulletin

ORGANIZATIONS OF FILM AUTHORS IN SERBIA



INTERVIEW:

Gianluigi Chiodaroli



International cooperation is essential for the protection of audiovisual authors

CONVERSATION
WITH THE AUTHOR

Darko Bajić

UFUS | AFA

ORGANIZATION OF FILM AUTHORS IN SERBIA

Bulletin

ORGANIZATION OF FILM AUTHORS IN SERBIA
Digital issue

Front cover photo:
Private archive

Publisher:
UFUS AFA ZAŠTITA, Terazije 27/6
11000 Beograd
+381 (0)62 189 11 44
+381 (0)11 624 31 65
office@ufusafazastita.org.rs



I N D E X

Editorial	05
Interview: Gianluigi Chiodaroli	06
Conversation with the author: Darko Bajić	09
Legal advice	18



EDITORIAL

Photo: Vojislav Gelevski



Stefan Gelineo

Director of UFUS AFA

Editorial

As we enter the new year 2026, our collective organisation embarks on an important and responsible task - the renewal of the collective rights management license, issued by the Intellectual Property Office of the Republic of Serbia, valid for a five-year period. Since 2021, when UFUS AFA went through this administrative process, the global audiovisual market has experienced profound, tectonic changes. These shifts have inevitably created the need to substantially enhance and adapt the scope and mechanisms of copyright protection to the realities of a new era.

European collective organisations, including UFUS AFA, are united in one basic principle: authors must be compensated for every use of their work. However, the specific models and scope of copyright protection vary from country to country. In Serbia, film authors currently receive royalties on two grounds - retransmission and a special remuneration fee. However, in other European countries, film authors are entitled to payments on additional bases: from broadcasters, online platforms, cinemas, as well as from the use of audiovisual works in

hotels, means of transport, and in other public spaces. This disparity directly affects the position of domestic authors and their economic security.

The Covid-19 pandemic has further accelerated changes which are already underway. Streaming and other online services have experienced significant growth, accompanied by a radical shift in how audiences consume film and audiovisual content. In 2025, revenues from paid streaming services surpassed those of traditional television channels in Europe for the first time in history, with estimates indicating that this gap will continue to widen in the years to come. Even so, the implementation of legal requirements to pay authors royalties for works distributed on these platforms has been moving at a very slow pace. So far, only a handful of European countries have managed to reach agreements - and even then, only with individual streaming providers - highlighting the magnitude of the challenge that lies ahead.

A particularly complex and worrying problem is the rapid development of new artificial intelligence models. These systems, which have fundamentally changed the modern world, are trained on vast amounts of copyrighted work which is under protection. However, AI companies persistently refuse to uphold the obligation to compensate creators for appropriation of their intellectual work. Technological development and profits it generates is outpacing legislation while authors are being deprived of millions of euros in royalties. Artificial intelligence is not even mentioned in the current Law on Copyright and Related Rights of the Republic of Serbia, or the Draft of the new law.

Serbian film authors deserve equal standing with their colleagues in Europe, ensuring they benefit from the same rights and scope of protection. However, this is not possible without full synchronisation of the Draft of the Law on Copyright and Related Rights with European best practices. UFUS AFA has championed this cause for years - in the interest of its members, but also in the interest of preserving the value of authorship and creativity in a time of profound technological and market changes. We are facing a decisive period for the improvement of authorship rights, in which the renewal of our license represents a vital first step in a long-lasting legislative process.

INTERVIEW

Photo: MRIGHTS

**Gianluigi Chiodaroli**

president and CEO of Italian collective management organization MRIGHTS

International cooperation is essential for the protection of audiovisual authors

Although a relatively new collective management organization, the Italian MRIGHTS have managed to build an enviable international reputation. It is a global company and a member of CISAC and AVACI, the leading international networks that unite copyright collecting societies across the globe, and it also collaborates with numerous CMOs through representation agreements. MRIGHTS and UFUS AFA recently signed an Agreement on Reciprocal Representation, so Serbian and Italian filmmakers will in the future receive royalties for their works rebroadcast in Italy and in Serbia.

In an interview for our Bulletin, Gianluigi Chiodaroli, president and CEO of MRIGHTS, talks about the importance of international cooperation, the level of protection of film authors in Italy, the challenges of protecting rights in the era of technological innovation, as well as the contract that the organization recently reached with Netflix.

We believe that building international trust in MRIGHTS is a key point for the development also in the national level. Nowadays, audiovisual works are distributed worldwide, so it would be nonsense to treat national and foreign authors differently.

Moreover, international networks are always good occasions to confront and learn from the experience of other CMOs, especially when many global challenges are shared – says Mr Chiodaroli.

Are you satisfied with the scope of copyright protection for audiovisual authors in Italy? What are the main advantages and shortcomings of the current legislation?

For sure, Italy has a strong normative framework, also thanks to EU law implementation process. However, I believe that the biggest challenges are making law provisions effective (for example, ensuring that all the users pay the equitable remuneration for the works they exploit) and enhancing transparency mechanism regarding the actual exploitation of works, especially by streaming platforms.



“Italy has a strong normative framework, thanks to EU law implementation process. However, I believe that the biggest challenges are making law provisions effective and enhancing transparency mechanism regarding the actual exploitation of works, especially by streaming platforms.”

You recently signed an agreement with Netflix and, a few months earlier, with Prime Video. We all know how challenging it is to negotiate with global streaming platforms, and what MRIGHTS did is very important for audiovisual authors all over the Europe. What were the key obstacles in reaching these deals?

I believe that MRIGHTS benefited from several factors in these negotiations: a proactive and professional approach towards users; timely requests and reply; an in-depth analysis on the information shared and, more in general, a patient work of balancing between two opposite interests.

Despite the efforts of European CMOs, authors are still the “weaker link” when it comes to negotiating contracts with producers. What is the situation in Italy in this regard?

In Italy as well, authors suffer from this asymmetry of power. As a CMO, we try to offer our authors high-quality support services also in this field: we want our authors to know that MRIGHTS is always supporting them and protecting their creativity.

How can fairness in authors’ remuneration be ensured in today’s environment, marked by the rise of AI companies, streaming platforms, and other online services? Can international cooperation between CMOs and professional guilds help strengthen the authors’ position?

International cooperation is essential for raising awareness on the issue; it would be even more efficient if all the rightholders – authors, performers, producers

from any field – worked together. However, I personally believe that, as with the advent of Internet at the end of last century, this is just a matter of change of technology and CMOs must be ready to keep the pace with that. That means, first, training our staff; second, improving IT infrastructure to make it really interoperative; and finally, becoming open and creative in offering new models of remuneration.

What policy changes would you like to see at the EU or national level to better protect audiovisual authors?

We insist that ensuring actual, true transparency mechanism and exchange of information would be crucial. When users are aware that their business have less secrets, the protection of rightholders is likely to increase, as their CMOs know exactly what to ask for and where to act.

At the EU level, a stronger, modernized, and common legal framework – especially regarding enforcement measures – would be useful. A reliable and efficient alternative dispute resolution mechanism should be also of help.

What advice would you give to emerging creators who are navigating rights management for the first time?

Simply to be more and more demanding towards their CMO and ask not only for royalties, but also for more clarity, more tailored services, an easier approach, and less bureaucracy.





“New Year’s performance and gift package distribution for the children and grandchildren of UFUS AFA members”



CONVERSATION WITH THE AUTHOR

Photo: M. Rupen



Darko Bajić

director, screenwriter, professor and president of the Board of Directors of UFUS AFA

We need a strategy for the development of Serbian cinema

As a director, screenwriter, producer and retired professor of the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade, teaching for almost four decades, Darko Bajić is one of the most important authors in Serbian and former Yugoslav cinematography. One of the inaugural members of UFUS AFA and recently elected president of the Board of Directors, Bajić has also been a strong advocate for respecting the dignity of movie directors, as well as copyright and the art of cinema itself, for decades. He maintains that critical and provocative films can inspire audiences and stimulate awareness, as exemplified by his very own work.

He achieved cult status with his very first television series, the social drama **“Sivi dom”** (Grey Shelter), followed by **“Zaboravljeni”** (The Forgotten) and the generational cult film **“Crni bombardier”** (The Black Bomber). Bajić is also the author of many other legendary and award-winning movies, such as the film **“Balkanska pravila”**

(Balkan Rules), **“Rat uživo”** (War Live), **“Na lepom plavom Dunavu”** (On the Beautiful Blue Danube), **“Bićemo prvaci sveta”** (We will be Champions of the World), **“U ime naroda”** (In the Name of the People) ...

His documentary film **“Film davne budućnosti”** (Film from a Distant Future) was dedicated to the greats of cinematic art, while **“Linija života”** (Life Line) tells the story of his father, Miloš Bajić - the first Yugoslav abstract painter and one of the few survivors of the notorious Mauthausen concentration camp...

They say “it’s easy to be a general after the battle,” but a director also needs to address historical themes in search of “echoes of the past” which are still relevant. Whether they ‘repeat’ themselves or not, whether we have declared them ‘conspiracy theories’ or not – isn’t important! The author embarks on a journey as an explorer, striving to awaken the conscience and awareness of both himself and the viewers. On social networks, we are overwhelmed with false news, intrigues, and politically tuned interests of various regimes, 24 hours a day. This is why, in a time of distorted values, reactionary tendencies and historical revisionism, we benefit from engaging with the experiences of our ancestors and their testimonies and insights regarding the world they knew from a modern-day perspective. We may also find their misconceptions, but we can certainly rediscover some long-forgotten values,” the speaker states at the beginning of the conversation for the UFUS AFA Bulletin.

Do films still have the power to change the world in this day and age?

Humanity reshapes the world. Movies can change a man. Film has the ability to provoke, to unsettle, and to awaken, compelling us to interpret the era we inhabit and explore its truths. The art of cinema also represents a unique document which can serve as a visual testimony of the human experience in the future. For the first time



“The author is a free spirit, without prejudice - open to the world around them. Their work represents a personal, unbiased, and honest view of politics, society, and morality. Often, their work is conditioned by ideologies and, even more frequently, by seductive contemporary political trends and bureaucratic cultural sensitivity imposed as an alternative to their freedom of choice.”

in the 21st century, humanity - thanks to Lumière and Manaki - can look upon more than a century preserved on film: from customs, architecture, fashion, and speech, to behaviour, morality, and the very ideas and illusions filmmakers left as an archive for the future.

The age of digital technology has enabled humanity to record everything it sees indiscriminately. This has created a massive “video landfill” we are leaving behind. This is why, like personal hygiene, we should learn how to clean up “digital trash” from our computers and phones. Do not forget the old master of cinema, Hitchcock, who said: “Drama is life with the dull bits left out.” For there is a real danger that AI will incorporate all of this as the heritage of mankind. Consider how foolish we might seem to our descendants if this truly happens. Remember how our ancestors tried to leave a coherent message - and often a legacy - for future generations in just a few frames at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century. Let us strive to understand them and ensure we remain comprehensible to those who follow us.

Will Cinemas Survive?

Nearly two decades ago, my daughter Darja - a production student at the time - and I renovated the neglected “Balkan” cinema. We held regular screenings of the best domestic and international films from authors all over the world. It was an act of rebellion against the sale of small silver screens in the city centre and proof that they had a future. Unfortunately, a former Minister of Culture decided that “fast-food cinemas” are supposed to be the future and sold off all of the smaller venues. These places were eventually devastated, even though the buyers were legally obligated to continue their cinematic activities. When you watch a movie in a cinema, you can hear the different reactions around you; in this way, you

communicate both with the audience and the film itself. Every time a screening ends, and you step out of the theatre, you carry with you not only scenes from the movie but also the reaction of the crowd. It is a special feeling that enriches your life. After every performance, you have a clearer sense of the environment around you.

The dialogue between the audience and the film often reveals more about the time we live in than the endless stream of news from countless networks. Cinema is an island of freedom. This is why it is essential - and why it is a big mistake - that Serbia doesn't have a single cinema dedicated to domestic film.”



The film scene must strive to draw new, younger audiences by integrating dramatic and cinematic arts into the curriculum, promoting domestic and regional works, and establishing a network of cinemas across Serbia. If the American industry has cinema multiplex franchises worldwide, and if Europe invests in the premieres of its films within the region, why should the Balkan states not encourage the promotion of their own films in European cinemas? This June, the second Balkan Film



Directors Festival (BFFR) will take place in Belgrade, supported by the European Association of Film Directors (FERA), bringing together distinguished authors and representatives of Balkan directors' associations. Its central theme will be: "The visibility of Balkan cinema within Europe and across the world."

Do contemporary market models, funds and co-productions leave enough room for authors to express themselves?

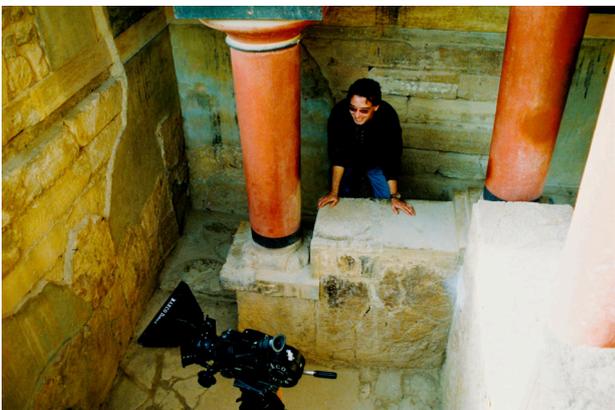
I have a lot of respect for European funds, but I think they may have fallen into a bureaucratic cycle of oversimplified themes. While these subjects are certainly relevant for the contemporary world, competitions must remain open to diverse ideas from modern authors. This paves the way for a critical, provocative response to the turbulent global political scene. Too often, officials readily endorse so-called 'politically correct themes,' and filmmakers who align their work accordingly are rewarded, while those who do not see their chances diminished. Increasingly, contemporary authors accept this cultural sensitivity - political, gender, moral, and other forms of correctness - which can sometimes constrain creative freedom but also encourage a climate of conformism, resulting in a recognisable or uniform cinematography.

Even so, Europe continues to produce outstanding authors who succeed in creating remarkable work. In several countries, cinematography has been declared a matter of national cultural importance, with increased budgetary support and tax incentives encouraging businesses to invest in film production. The selection of projects has been entrusted to artistic directors and

panels with proven achievements in national cinema. In this way, the authenticity of national film has been cultivated, and - with additional support for screenings and promotion abroad - these works have gained visibility and respect in international cinematic circles.

For more than a decade, you have been actively promoting the creative strength of directors in your own work as an author, but also by launching a Festival for Yugoslav Film Directors. Later, in cooperation with producer Dr. Darja Bajić Božović and director Uroš Tomić, you founded the Balkan Film Directing Festival as well as the Annual Award for Film and Television Directors. How do you see the position of film directors in Serbia today, and how does this compare with the region and Europe?

Television series provide our colleagues with continuity in their work and a means of livelihood. Many directors have managed to create outstanding productions, especially those who proposed the theme and participated in the creation of the entire series from the get-go. However, the need for commissioners to fill 24 hours of programming - often without public tenders - has led to the hyperproduction of TV series. This has inevitably resulted in a decline in quality. In such cases, the choice of subject matter has less to do with the director's decision than with those who control the programming. What they call 'crowd-pleasing' brings the 'shadowland' of commercialised and oversimplified content.



Balkan rules, photo: Jaša Josimović



The Forgotten, photo Jaša Josimović



Beautiful Blue Danube, photo Tatjana Krstevski

At the same time, the role of the director has been significantly undermined. In the announcements for series and films on TV and cable channels, directors are rarely acknowledged as authors in program descriptions. In the opening credits of a TV series, the names of station directors, editors, and even producers are highlighted, despite their limited involvement in the creative process. Executive producers and showrunners are given prominent billing, signing themselves as “creative authors,” which can be justified in some cases, but the director’s contribution should not be diminished, nor their right to the final edit taken away. In order to increase their creative role and decision-making power, producers - borrowing from American industry practices - have introduced the method of having three or more authors work on a single series. Directors, therefore, lose the possibility to create independently and often accept compromises to the detriment of the artistic work. In this way, audiences are unfulfilled, and the director is reduced to a performer of film tasks. Increasingly, even during editing, the director no longer has the final word.

I deeply respect my collaborators during filmmaking, but for a director to be the author of their film - from the initial idea, scriptwriting, filming, all the way to postproduction - they must be the one who makes the decisions. This is not a whim - it is the law of the profession. All other collaborators participate in realising the director’s vision and the style of the future film, but it is the director who

takes responsibility and makes the final decision! Why would anyone take authorship away from the director? If producers, screenwriters, actors, and cinematographers are also directors of a film - which is not often the case - then they are indeed the authors of that film.

So, the director is the author of the film, the screenwriter is the author of the script, the cinematographer is the author of the image, and the producer is the author of the creative idea for the film. When this hierarchy is established, everything becomes clearer: film is a pyramidal organisation in which the director transforms something that was once an idea or words on paper into life, into a moving cinematic image. This is the process that establishes the director as the author of the film.

For years, you have publicly advocated for improving the status of national cinematography and increasing the film budget (currently about 0.14 per cent), for

“In the coming year, UFUS AFA PROTECTION expects the renewal of its operating license. I am confident that this process will be seamless, as the organisation has recently achieved significant progress in conservation, effectively improving the social status of film authors. The cable operator market has been fully covered, and the royalty fund has increased significantly.”

appointing professionals to Film Centre of Serbia committees, and you have publicly criticised the lack of film production financing in 2025, which affects the continuity of both authors and cinematography as a whole. What is the solution?

FIRST: Directors must fight for their status as film authors, but also for changes in the Copyright Law. The legislator must recognise that Serbian film authors deserve to be materially protected during any exploitation of their work, as other European countries have already recognised. In Europe, film authors have the right to fair compensation for broadcasting, rebroadcasting, public communication, online and every other commercial use of their work. We expect our legislation to align with positive examples from global and European markets, which will significantly increase compensation for the broadcasting of films by our authors and members of the UFUS AFA organisation.

SECOND: The film scene must fight for realistic increases in financial stimulus for cinematography. In comparison, HAVC in Croatia allocates more than one million euros for the co-financing of a single film, while in Serbia the average amount allocated for the same purpose is about 300,000 euros. This is one of the reasons why Serbian cinematography is in crisis. Under these conditions, for the film industry to overcome the year-long freeze on production funds, we must fight for an increase in state subsidies to €20 million from the Serbian budget (approximately 0.28%). This stimulus must become a permanent solution for every future production year. In my opinion, this would be sufficient to take Serbian cinematography out of the major crisis it entered last year and allow for its uninterrupted operation.

Last year's budgetary freeze also affected regional co-productions. The consequences are severe: our films can no longer apply for European funds, which typically require at least two regional co-producers. This has left us without an additional influx of capital for projects. Furthermore, a "backlog" of unfilmed movies has accumulated (which received funds in both old and new

“The director’s provocative vision - as a film author - and their keen critical insight ‘cannot change the world,’ but they can enrich the lives of viewers and influence their freedom of thought and speech.”

competitions), meaning films from several production years are now competing for the same limited resources. Due to this intense competition, many projects must apply multiple times within the region, which further stalls co-production and causes our projects to fail when applying for other European funds.

The previous year has passed without adequate solutions, despite the proposal by the former acting director of the Serbian Film Centre (FCS) to increase insufficient grants awarded in previous competitions. This increase was necessary to keep up with the rising cost of film crews and equipment, driven by high demand due to the hyper-production of TV series and services provided to foreign productions. While foreign productions in Serbia rightfully enjoy the right to incentives - a standard practice worldwide - domestic cinematography should also reinstate the right to a VAT refund on production investments. Domestic filmmakers deserve the same financial consideration as foreign ones.

THIRD: One of the solutions lies in fighting for new legal provisions within the Law on Cinematography and the Law on Culture in order to encourage private investment in film. The law must protect and provide benefits for investors who are interested in funding culture and new Serbian cinema. The Law on Cinematography should introduce regulation to ensure a percentage of gambling revenues, as well as a portion of the fees paid by TV stations for the use of national frequencies, would be allocated directly to the Serbian Film Fund. In this way, television stations could stimulate cinematic production without any additional out-of-pocket investment.

FOURTH: The film scene must insist on the idea of the founders of the Film Centre of Serbia that this institution should receive independent status and be managed by filmmakers. Films should be free of political correctness. Film is a testimony of its time. Restricting the creativity of authors is dangerous, not only because of censorship of artistic freedom, but also because an even greater danger is approaching - artificial intelligence. Of course, AI as a tool will always be helpful, provided it does not take on the role of author, the role of creator of an artistic work, because of the laziness of artists, in order to speed up the production process of films and eventually perhaps even accept its thematic choices. AI already offers this now, so films can achieve commercial success faster.

AI has both audio and visual, sound and image, but it does not have the authentic cinematic language and style of its creator, the author. Does AI therefore offer us some new “correctness”? Will artificial intelligence, as a synthesised experience of humanity, even need an artist at all, or will the artist who resists be declared a disruptive factor and placed on an AI blacklist? Something like a warning from Orwell’s 1984. The future of a society and the entire world will largely depend on how we use AI. Let’s hope it won’t be anything like Nobel or Oppenheimer. This could already be an idea for my new film: “Do you really, still think, that film hasn’t changed the world?”

Serbian film authors, like many of their colleagues from the region, share a common struggle - the five to seven-year journey it takes a film from the first draft of a script to the cinema. What advice do you give your students as a professor and mentor? How do you encourage them to persevere?

In these difficult times, when students are fighting for their ideals, trying to create a better professional and existential future for themselves, I keep hearing how no one wants to talk to anyone else. I have taught many classes, more than 150 students, and every one of them had their own political opinions, their own opinions regarding film and art in general, and we discussed them. Because professors should talk to students, get to know them, and find what makes them unique - to teach them to be themselves and not to copy others.

The professor is there to guide them through the elements of film language, which can transform an idea they carry within them into a cinematic image. If they don’t succeed in demonstrating their ‘love for film’ or ‘desire to change the world’ freely in their own vision and imagination in order to become a professional, this idea remains trapped inside the student forever, and they never get to show their talent. I try to give most students the strength and conviction to make feature films. Every young person



In the Name of the People

“It is vital that UFUS AFA PROTECTION, along with other associations of film artists, becomes an active participant in the implementation of the new Law on Copyright and Related Rights and the Law on Cinematography and Other Audiovisual Arts. Together, we are ready to fight for a law tailored to the author, and we are prepared to participate in the further development of professional Serbian cinematography with concrete and precise proposals.”

is afraid of that; they somehow make a short film, but not a long, feature-length format. Fortunately, I have managed to support some students who have successfully filmed their features; I was there to help them with my experience and knowledge of the issues facing filmmaking in Serbia. I helped them to achieve the status of authors in professional associations to successfully navigate film funds (student film, debut film), with my advice and connections. I also assisted them in assembling budgets for their films. The fear disappeared, and they bravely made films about the reality of our world. Many of them are successful directors to date, and I am very proud of that. We must foster and develop this kind of dialogue in politics as well.

As a member of the Board of UFUS AFA, and recently as president, you have collaborated with numerous similar organisations from the region and Europe and participated in international conferences... Can you compare the system of copyright protection in Serbia with the region and in Europe?

Our organisation’s ranking as 11th in Europe for collecting royalties from cable operators is an outstanding achievement. For the first time, authors can truly count on receiving royalties they have rightfully earned - payments that were withheld for 120 years. However, this success also raises an important question: how can we safeguard film as an art form, and how can we approach its preservation?

After a series of meetings, conversations, and discussions with colleagues from Europe, I came to the conclusion that bureaucracy has also interfered here. Even though this was probably done with the intention of simplifying the way authors are protected, they made a huge mistake by calling it ‘audiovisual art’. How can it be called “audio” when film primarily communicates visually by images? I propose cinematography should remain what it is. It has its own history, theory, its own genres, its own language of film. The fact that audiovisual media today uses the language of film and the experience of cinematography, as well as communication with the audience, does not give them the right to categorise film into the very broad field of audiovisual activity. On the contrary, we have cinematography and then there are audiovisual arts.

Another issue is that all the novelties of digital technology are now entering this audiovisual sphere, which has led to the possibility of filmmaking with a mobile phone, and every picture or recording you post on YouTube is considered a sufficient reason to become an author - but what kind of author? Certainly not of a film. This is why it is necessary to separate these two fields, to preserve the achievements of cinematography, and to allow audiovisual works to develop in all areas of artistic creation - on television, in painting, and in other fields of culture. This will also lead to a strategy for what awaits us in the new era that will be transformed by the use of AI. That is why cinematography needs to remain where it is, and for audiovisual to be defined by outlining its own



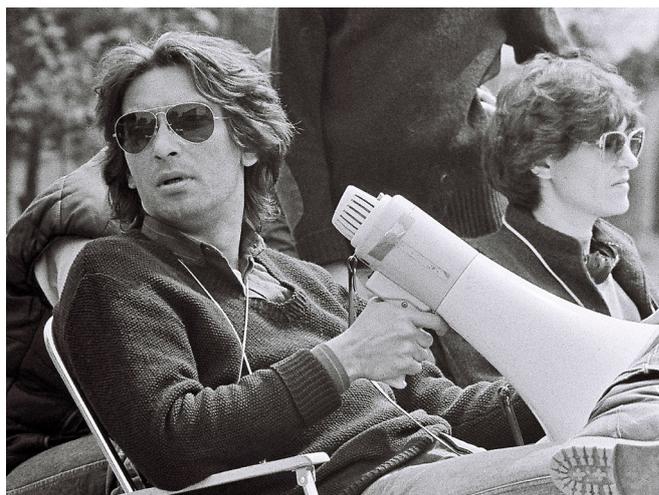
We will be Champions of the World

boundaries first. Film has its own specific requirements, its own form and method of production, and a specific way of communication that must be preserved and encouraged (cinema, festivals...). This doesn't mean authors from these two fields should not cooperate or that the value of creators should not be recognised, but rather that each should build their own standards of value and quality for the future. Keeping in mind that film authors often create artistic works in both fields, this can be a path toward a joint struggle for greater rights for authors and more professional production. American and European methods of production should not be confused. In America, the producer invests their own money, takes out a loan, perhaps even mortgages their house to make a film, and then has the right to influence the outcome of the film they believe will achieve greater profit on the market. All the greatest American directors began by working for a studio, only to establish their own production companies later with a desire to regain control over the films they have made. In the same way, authors who work on television series must assert themselves to be recognised and respected as creators of artistic works. Filming a TV series is a very difficult and responsible task because you appear before millions of viewers. Every television station has its own specific standards and "political correctness" which must be respected, but that does not mean you should avoid dealing with taboo subjects. In "The Grey Shelter" (Sivi Dom), I dealt with juvenile detention centres at a time when this topic was taboo. Back then, I was accused "this only exists in

American film," or "the number of delinquents increased after the series was broadcast." But then the topic opened up - educators, directors of correctional institutions began to speak about the major problems they faced because the law was not consistent, because society didn't care for those children, they left them to the 'law of the street'. It became clear that juvenile delinquency had increased because of the large number of people from abroad at that time (guest workers), and the neglect of society as a whole and systemic failure to resolve the problem prevented the adequate resocialization of youths into society. Society rejected them because of their past instead of accepting them.

What are the main plans and challenges of the UFUS AFA organization in 2026?

In the coming year, we are looking forward to the renewal of our operating license. I am confident this process will be seamless, since the organisation has already achieved significant progress in recent years and safeguarded authors effectively. The cable operator market is now fully covered, and the royalty fund has been successfully expanded. Our attention to the social problems of our members and young colleagues represents another success, as well as figuring out how to enable authors to receive means of existence during



Grey Shelter

periods when they don't have many work opportunities, so they can dedicate themselves to creative work and new films. Because that new film is an asset which enriches Serbian cinematography and culture. To succeed in this endeavour, we have to protect our authors with the Law on Copyright and the Law on Cinematography. Major omissions have occurred in this regard. Therefore, we must become active participants in the drafting of the new Law on Copyright and Related Rights. We are ready to fight for a law tailored to authors and to participate in its creation with concrete and precise proposals.

We have already been working on this for a long time with film professionals and experts from various fields. The entire film scene needs to unite with less intrigue, and start thinking about the future. We need to think constructively about the Film Centre and the national budget for cinematography - push for an increase from the current 0.67% of the budget to at least 1.5% for all creative professionals. In addition, we aim to significantly increase the minimum allocation of 0.014%, which is currently reserved for cinematography. This doesn't have to rely solely on the budget; we are preparing proposals modelled after France, Germany, England, and other culturally developed countries, where funding is drawn from other economic and social resources.

We aim to highlight the significance of Serbian Cinema, locally and globally. Film can, step by step, show Serbia in a different, more authentic light. Let us remember that Serbian (or rather Yugoslav) film was world-renowned during the era of the 'Black Wave' - a time when cinema was critical and yet the state in turn financed those films. Criticism does not imply animosity, nor an effort to politicise, or take sides; rather, it is an attempt to explore how we can create art in this country with more freedom and depth - art which inspires freedom of thought and dialogue throughout the cultural horizon.



Grey Shelter



We will be Champions of the World

LEGAL ADVICE

Photo: Aleksandar Carević



Stevan Pajović

Attorney, "T-S Legal" Law Office

Artificial Intelligence and Blockchain Technologies in Collective Rights Management: Challenges and Future Potentials

Artificial intelligence (AI) and blockchain technology offer significant opportunities for improving the work of collective rights management organisations, but they also introduce challenges which require in-depth understanding and adaptation. Although these technological tools are designed to increase efficiency, transparency, and security in the process of protecting and collecting copyright, their widespread application in everyday operations is still developing and faces certain obstacles and uncertainties.

The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Enhancing Efficiency and Rights Management in Collective Organisations

Artificial intelligence stands out as a key tool for improving the efficiency of operational processes in

collective organisations, enabling them to perform tasks faster and more accurately. The most commonly applied technologies relate to rights management systems, which use advanced algorithms to recognise and analyse data within repertoires. These systems automatically identify and classify protected content, which facilitates proper record-keeping and distribution of rights, as well as detecting similarities or duplicates in large databases. One of the most significant benefits of AI in this context is the ability to develop systems which automatically compare data on content usage with the organisation’s repertoire, thereby greatly simplifying the identification and monitoring of usage. These algorithms reduce the time and human labour required for processing information.

In addition, AI technologies allow organisations to efficiently search and analyse large volumes of data, including usage reports, metadata, and content from websites or social networks. They provide immediate insight regarding the usage patterns and presentation forms of protected content, identify trends, and uncover potential abuses. In this way, collective organisations can respond promptly to possible infringements, better align their activities in copyright protection, track market changes more effectively, and further improve their distribution and collection processes. In short, AI is a tool that significantly boosts operational efficiency and precision in rights and content management, thereby directly contributing to the improvement of the entire collective rights management system.

In the customer support segment, AI technologies enable the development of chatbots and virtual assistants that efficiently respond to member inquiries, while in administrative processes, AI tools are used for drafting documents or sending automatic reminders. These applications significantly contribute to reducing operational costs and relieving staff, but their effectiveness still depends on human supervision. It is often emphasised that human supervision is necessary, especially in the segments of identification and distribution of rights, as current systems are still limited in accuracy and transparency.



Here are some other ways that collective management organisations are using AI. For example, they are using AI to detect “pirated” works, identify content that is the result of AI work, and “pollute” works, making them technically unusable for training new AI models. AI-based coding tools can be applied to the development of rights distribution platforms, enabling more efficient content management and protection. In addition, AI-based technologies enable monitoring of web content and social networks to identify important events, activities, or content that organisations can license or otherwise exploit.

On the other hand, the application of blockchain technology in the field of collective rights management remains limited mostly to experimental projects. Although there are initiatives for digital license renewal and features such as “timestamping” for secure content recording, these applications are still in the testing phase. Most opinions indicate that blockchain currently does not provide clear and immediate benefits in everyday work, and most activities focus on research and development of alternative solutions.

Identification of AI-generated Content

Given that works generated by artificial intelligence do not have copyright protection, it is very important for an organisation to identify such works. However, this process represents a significant challenge, since existing tools are limited in terms of technological reliability and efficiency. Most collective management organisations rely on the honesty of authors during this process, asking them to clearly indicate when registering a work whether the content was created or modified with the help of AI. On the other hand, some organisations conduct random checks and selective reviews, where certain works are selected, and the author is required to prove that they made creative choices in the creation process. Ad hoc committees are also formed to assess the originality of suspicious works, while surveying registered content to monitor and identify unusual patterns, such as a large

number of registered works by the same author. These measures aim to establish a balance between respecting authorship rights and protecting against unethical use of AI technologies. However, it is clear that further refinement and development of systems for identifying AI-generated content is necessary, as current tools are not advanced enough to effectively respond to the challenges of digital transformation. In addition, the specificities of certain genres and types of content, especially in audio-visual arts, further complicate the application of AI detection tools. For example, in the music industry, the use of synthetic vocals in genres such as R&B or electronic music causes difficulties in assessing the authenticity and originality of content. In visual arts, the integration of AI technologies into software such as Photoshop makes it difficult to distinguish between works created by artists and those assisted by artificial intelligence.

In conclusion, artificial intelligence has great potential for strengthening the capacities of collective management organisations in the areas of detection, monitoring and rights management. However, its full potential has yet to be realised, primarily due to technical limitations, lack of transparency and an unadapted regulatory framework. Competent institutions and collective management organisations must actively work on the development and implementation of new tools and policies by constantly monitoring and updating procedures to respond to the complexity of the digital age. In the future, the development of artificial intelligence and blockchain technologies is expected to lead to a greater degree of automation and transparency in the area of collective management. However, it is crucial that all participants in the ecosystem, from creators and collective management organisations to regulatory bodies, coordinate in order to protect the rights and interests of all stakeholders. It is possible to ensure fair and effective protection of copyright and related rights in the era of artificial intelligence only with coordination, transparency and continuous improvement.





"The Black Bomber"

Bulletin
ORGANIZATIONS OF FILM AUTHORS IN SERBIA

U F U S | A F A
ORGANIZATION OF FILM AUTHORS IN SERBIA

Follow us
on social media:



www.ufusafazastita.org.rs