

Bulletin

ORGANIZATIONS OF FILM AUTHORS IN SERBIA



INTERVIEW :

Radivoje Raša Andrić

Film Director



The law should regulate other forms of exploitation of copyrighted works as well, rather than leaving us waiting for years for a new Copyright Law and a new Law on Cinematography in Serbia

CONVERSATION
WITH THE AUTHOR

Tatjana Tanja Brzaković

Director and Screenwriter

UFUS | AFA

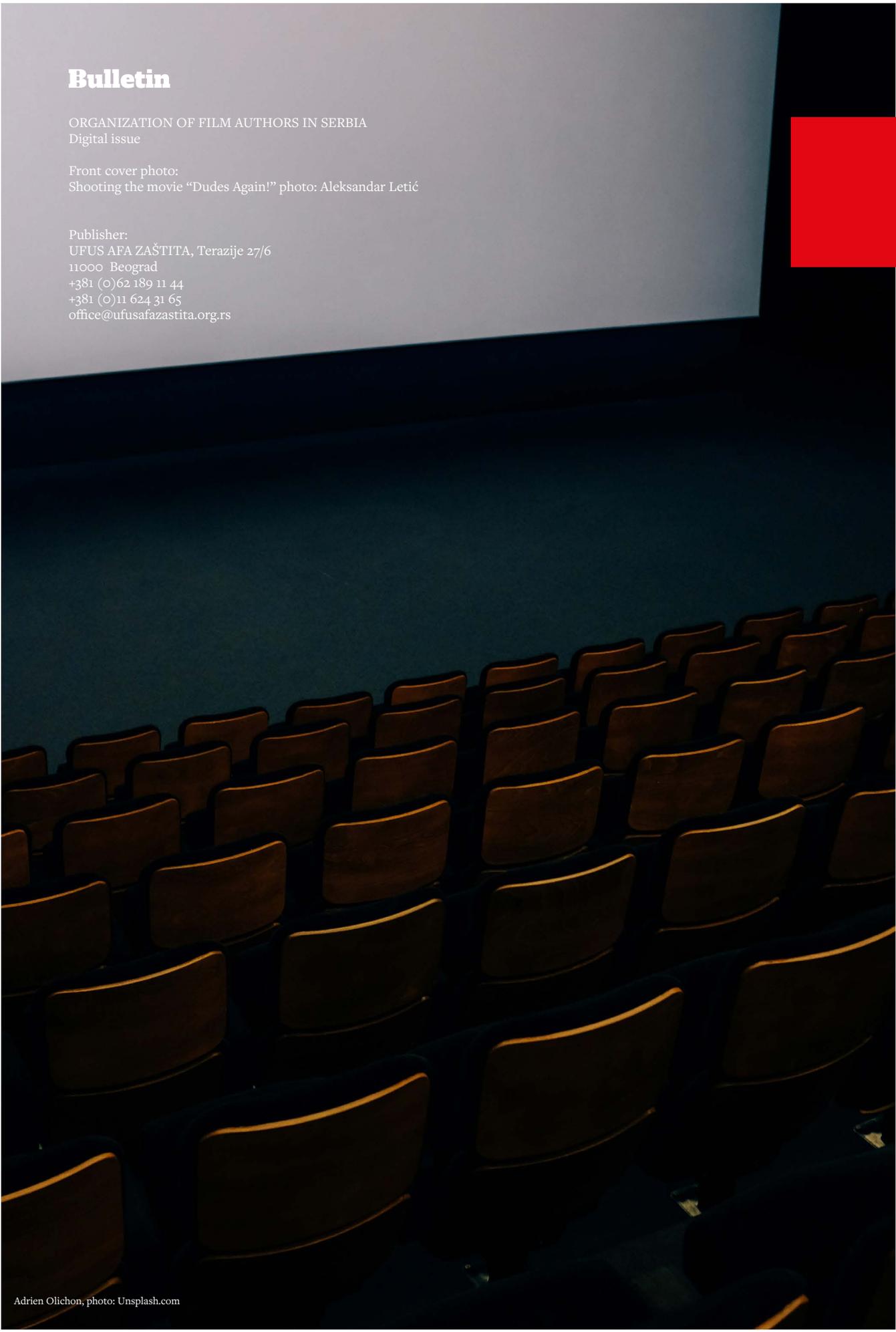
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EDITORIAL

Photo: Vojislav Gelevski

**Stefan Gelineo***Director of UFUS AFA*

Editorial

After more than five years of waiting, the Draft Law on Copyright and Related Rights of the Republic of Serbia has once again been returned to the legislative procedure. Although the competent Ministry of Economy set an extremely short deadline – only a few days – for the submission of comments, UFUS AFA nevertheless managed to prepare and submit its proposal for amendments and supplements, together with a detailed explanation of its objections to the proposed text. Although a public consultation was already held three years ago, the Ministry of Economy has announced a new consultation on a minimally revised version of the Draft Law, following a short period of “consultations.” The competent ministry has not yet specified whether these consultations will be held in person, online, or whether interested parties will submit their comments on this important document by mail.

With the support of our members, film authors, and other rights holders, our organization has repeatedly highlighted numerous shortcomings in the proposed legal solution through various mechanisms. In accordance with the new deadline set by the relevant ministry, we will once again submit our comments on the proposed document. The shortcomings that we had previously warned the

legislative authorities about stem from the fact that decisions concerning the rights of film authors were made without their involvement, which is why certain provisions in the Draft are contrary to professional and international practice. Namely, despite the fact that a significant part of this legislative act concerns cinematography and the audiovisual sector, neither our collective organization nor any representative association of film authors participated in the work of the Working Group.

If such a Draft Law were to be adopted, it would represent yet another missed opportunity for Serbia to catch up with Europe in the field of copyright protection. Namely, the law that Serbia plans to adopt in 2026 relies on EU directives from 2012 and 2014, even though the EU adopted new rules as early as 2019, regulating numerous issues faced by authors in the digital environment. In this way, Serbian authors would continue to create and work under rules that are fourteen years old, while their European colleagues enjoy a broader scope of protection and have access to mechanisms that are not available to our authors, such as the institution of fair remuneration. At a time when artists around the world are joining forces to defend their copyright in the face of challenges brought about by new technologies, primarily artificial intelligence, the Serbian Draft Law on Copyright and Related Rights does not contain a single word about this contemporary phenomenon.

UFUS AFA does not seek any privileged position for film authors in relation to their colleagues from other artistic fields. We are simply asking for something that should go without saying: an equal position for our authors in relation to their European colleagues, as well as a law that will recognize the real challenges of contemporary creative work.

Therefore, it is important to state clearly: the Law on Copyright and Related Rights cannot be enacted without the authors. Even less can it be passed as a compromise that ignores contemporary technological changes and international practice. Today, Serbia has the opportunity to introduce a modern, European law that will protect creative work and enable the development of the domestic audiovisual industry. At the same time, however, there is also a real risk that we will once again adopt a regulation that will already be outdated at the moment it enters into force.

It is in everyone’s interest – authors, producers, the state, and the public alike – that this does not happen. For that reason, we expect the voice of authors to finally be heard and taken into account in the further legislative process, so that the forthcoming law will be the one designed for the future, and not a document that will keep us years behind the rest of the world.

INTERVIEW

Photo: Zoran Ilić



Radivoje Raša Andrić

Film Director

The law should regulate other forms of exploitation of copyrighted works as well, rather than leaving us waiting for years for a new Copyright Law and a new Law on Cinematography

Director Radivoje Raša Andrić is behind some of the most watched and beloved Serbian films, including the hit comedies *Tri palme za dve bitange i ribicu* (Three Palms for Two Punks and a Babe), *Munje!* (Dudes, 2000), and *Kad porastem biću kengur* (When I Grow Up I'll Be a Kangaroo, 2003), as well as the children's film *Leto kad sam naučila da letim* (How I Learned to Fly). Andrić not only knows "how to make a film" – which was also the title of his children's book published in 2007 – but also how to make a successful film that audiences will love. Andrić shares the fate of many of his colleagues, who have long gaps between two films

and in the meantime take on various jobs, often unpaid. He is one of the few successful directors who also works as an assistant director for his colleagues because, as he says, "the job is extremely interesting and involves a different level of responsibility."

At the beginning of the interview for the Bulletin, we asked our interlocutor what the recipe for a good and highly viewed film is.

I make what I like, what I would want to watch on the screen myself. That's how I think about scenes as well, and apparently I'm lucky that what I like also appeals to the audience. Because when you start calculating and thinking about what is currently popular and what the audience might like – you lose your way and no longer have a clear criterion.

Believe it or not, with *How I Learned to Fly*, the pandemic actually "helped" us, because filming was postponed for a year, which gave us time for thorough preparations. Then, there was a risk that the lead actress, the young Klara Hrvanović, might outgrow the role, so the producers decided to begin filming even though COVID was still ongoing, with production organized under numerous restrictive measures. But that year of waiting actually helped us, because Nikola Todorović Pačke, my assistant for working with children – and later my assistant director – and I spent more than a year working with Klara and the rest of the cast, instead of just three months. We had time for rehearsals, to see what didn't work, what worked well, and what needed to be changed. So a great deal of work lies behind that success.

Although you are a successful director yourself, throughout your career you have also worked as an assistant director on your colleagues' projects?

I enjoy working as an assistant; it's more interesting because then I'm in contact not only with the crew, but also with various specialists. In the course of a single day,



“My films have been shown on transoceanic flights, and as the author, I receive nothing from that.”



Dudes

you might talk to a shepherd with a flock of fifty sheep that need to pass through the shot, and to a chemistry professor, because you need to prepare an experiment for filming the next day. When you're the director, you mainly communicate with the director of photography, occasionally with the assistant set designer, and that's about it – you're staring at the monitor like crazy, asking yourself: Is it clear? Is it interesting? And you're trying to keep it as short as possible.

Sometimes I also work as a script doctor, but I rarely manage to get paid for it. Sometimes I'm even embarrassed to ask for money, because the people asking for help are usually first-time directors, students, or friends. And since this is a small country with a small film industry, everyone is my friend – so how do you ask friends for money? Besides, it's an interesting job. The point isn't to say, "I wouldn't do it this way, but that way." Rather, it's about finding what works in what already exists, bringing those elements to the forefront, and solving problems by using elements that are already present in the script but simply not arranged well.

Have you had long gaps between the films?

I can't say that anything in particular was holding me back. The longest break, between *When I Grow Up I'll Be a Kangaroo* and *How I Leaned to Fly*, lasted 16 or 17 years. But twice I spent five years working on two TV series that were never made. Those are the ones that ended up in the drawer, even though, as far as I'm concerned, they were perfect.

Producer Milko Josifov told me after *Kangaroo*: "Cinemas are going to collapse, and we should turn to making TV series." I was shocked by those words, but then I remembered that when we finished *Dudes*, he had told

me to wait with distribution until autumn, until Slobodan Milošević stepped down from power. And that's exactly what happened – *Dudes* went on to achieve huge success. The film owes part of that success to the fact that it appeared at the right moment, when people were happy – after a dictatorship, they had finally welcomed democracy.

So Milko turned out to be right about that as well – and about cinemas, which began to close and move into shopping malls. Cineplexes are a product of pure industry. For domestic films, it's important that they stay in theaters as long as possible, because there is usually not enough money for advertising – most of the budget goes into production and post-production, so word-of-mouth promotion is crucial for us. And weeks are needed for that kind of buzz to spread, but cineplexes don't allow that.

Why are there long gaps between two films? There's also that old producers' rule – the three points of the triangle: fast, cheap, and good. But all three can't work at the same time. If, for example, there isn't enough money, then the process simply has to take longer. And since there's never enough money here, it inevitably takes a long time.

As far as working on the script is concerned, the longer it takes, the better. In Hollywood and other well-developed film industries, scripts are often written by teams of people. Even though in the end only one person is usually credited,

“For domestic films, it's important that they remain in cinemas for a long time – word-of-mouth promotion is crucial.”



“I make the kind of films I would want to watch myself – and it seems the audience likes them too.”

as many as fifteen people may have worked on the text beforehand. In our environment, there simply isn't enough money to pay fifteen people – there is barely enough even for one screenwriter, which is why the process takes so long. But as I mentioned, for a screenwriter that can actually be a good thing. You can't just write the first draft of a script and immediately start with the second. The text needs to “settle” – you have to step away, maybe even work on something else for a few weeks or months. Then, when you return to it, new solutions emerge, because your mind is rested and not burdened by the previous version.

What if a script becomes outdated?

That can happen, and in that case, you just give up. There are scripts that simply can't be written. I've only encountered this once. We wanted to make a film based on a play. The theatrical text was excellent, entertaining, funny, and we even found a good approach to adapt it for film, but... we wrote version after version, and it just wouldn't come together. In the end, we realized that some things can't be transferred from one medium to another. Of course, it also happens that *you* give up on a script. Even if you're satisfied with what you've written, you can't get it made, and after some time and several failed attempts, you say, “Alright, this goes into the drawer.” I have several such scripts that, after long work, have become almost like books for filming. Every sentence in the script corresponds to a single shot.

It seems that making a film has never been easy in our country – there are so many unforeseen circumstances, budgets are modest, and directors face countless challenges.

But without that, it would be boring – it would feel like we're working in a Social Accounting Service. Instead, every day, every minute, there's a new problem. It's important to solve it as quickly as possible, without everyone arguing. I hate blame games when something goes wrong – it's a

waste of time. I don't care who's at fault. No one needs to apologize – I just want to hear how we're going to solve the problem.

It's also important to anticipate everything that could go wrong, and that comes with experience. Predicting problems is the most important job of an assistant director. You have to have Plan B, C, and D already during preparations, and then, on set, you constantly look ahead to prevent or at least minimize issues. At the beginning of shooting, when the producer or director give a short speech, I usually only say two things: first of all, that everyone should always put safety first, because with the pace and panic on set, injuries can happen; second of all, if you realize you've made a mistake, please tell me immediately. That way, we have time to figure out how to fix it. If you wait until right before the shot, everything stops – the shooting, the whole set comes to a halt.

Are full cinemas enough reward for all the effort?

I'm happiest when we finish. Whether I'm the director or just a member of the crew, knowing that we went through “hell” without anyone getting hurt or seriously arguing is already a great success. During the making of *How I Learned to Fly*, my biggest success was that two crew members – a guy and a girl – fell in love and, a year after filming, had a child. That truly marked the film for me. Of course – when the theaters start filling up and we get the audience's reactions, you can finally breathe. When I'm preparing a film, I don't think about making it a hit; my main thought



When I Grow Up I'll Be a Kangaroo, photo FCS

is, “let’s just not embarrass ourselves.” I want to make sure we don’t create something unwatchable, boring, silly, or unnecessary. Every success is rewarding, especially when ordinary people tell you that something touched them, that they cried or laughed at certain scenes.

Good collaboration in the region is most visible on film; almost all productions are made with a mixed crew.

It’s a logical partnership because we share the same or similar language and cultural space. It’s also much more profitable to treat Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia as one market rather than individually. People in the cultural field tend to be the most open, so collaboration naturally starts with them, and then the economy follows – because, as we know, money and shared interests bring people together.

You’ve been with our organization since its founding. How has the copyright protection system progressed in our country, and what could be improved?

Our organization is now fully established, so it seems as if it has always been here. But it was a huge struggle just to get it founded, then to start operating and collecting royalties. For years we waited for our laws to align with the European Union, since it was expected that we would join. In the end, some others, smarter than me, realized that this probably wouldn’t happen – or if it did, who knows how far in the future – so they took matters into

“People in culture are the first to break down borders – economics follows afterward.”

their own hands. It started with SOKOJ (Serbian Music Authors’ Organization), but today we, as film authors, have our own organization that functions very well, and from the reports I read, I’d say there is forward-thinking involved. I’ve heard some excellent proposals, like the idea of creating a retirement home for film workers. That was also my dream – to make films, earn money, and open a retirement home for us, so that when we grow old, we can be together, just like we often spent three or four months together on location. Of course, I never managed to earn anywhere near enough money to realize my idea, but perhaps UFUS AFA will succeed.

Regarding expanding the scope of protection, my two films were recently shown on transatlantic flights to the U.S., and as the author, I receive nothing from that. So there is definitely room to regulate such and other forms of exploitation of copyrighted works, as other countries have done, instead of waiting for years for a new Copyright Act and a new Cinematography Act. The initiative to amend this long-shelved law and adapt it to modern times has been restarted, and I hope we will succeed in that.



Photo: Aleksandar Letić



How I Learned to Fly, photo: Sense Production

“Artificial intelligence will never be able to replace humans. It will always be copies of someone else’s work.”

How do you view artificial intelligence – as a useful tool, or are you worried it might one day take over your job?

I barely even use Google search, so I’m probably not the best person to answer this. I imagine research would be much easier and faster using AI, but I don’t do that because even ordinary Google searches distract me, and I end up spending hours looking at completely unrelated things. I’m a curious person – I want to read everything myself, so it’s better for me to do research ‘on foot,’ the old-fashioned way. I used to read a lot of science fiction, and everything happening today – environmental problems, this Orwellian world, dystopias, artificial intelligence – all of it was imagined by clever and inventive people back in the ‘60s and ‘70s. None of this surprises me, because it’s already been written about in those books.

Do you think technology and machines will ever be able to replace human imagination?

No, I’m certain they won’t. When you don’t have enough money for a film, it limits you, but it also pushes you to figure out how to hold the audience’s attention through substance and wit, not just flashy visuals. It’s much harder to capture viewers’ attention with limited resources – not just financial, but also technical and technological. I think even the term “artificial intelligence” is misleading, because it’s not intelligence.

It’s just a program that processes a huge amount of data and recombines it – it doesn’t create anything truly new. True intelligence means taking what you know, combining it, and creating something original. A machine cannot do that. I spoke with a colleague who experimented with giving scripts and synopses to AI for editing. He said that, in terms of dramaturgy, the program offered quite a few good ideas – but that’s all. It could gather those good ideas from existing films or books on dramaturgy, but dialogue and things like that were catastrophic. Sure, it will probably improve over time, but I don’t think it will ever be able to replace a human. It will always be copying someone else’s work.

What terrifies me is the idea that someone could make a film with, say, Marlon Brando. I don’t even like it when films are dubbed – for example, John Wayne speaking Slovenian – and I definitely don’t like the idea of bringing the dead back to life.

What are you currently working on?

I’m always working, otherwise I’d be bored. I work on several fronts because the film world is what it is. Lately, I’ve been focusing more intensely on two projects, while in the background I have another three or four. It’s hard to announce anything. So many times I’ve been one hundred percent sure I’d shoot something, and then it all falls through. Life in the Balkans is very interesting, but I wish it could be at least a little more boring.



Three Punks for Two Punks and a Babe



Founders' Meeting of UFUS AFA



CONVERSATION WITH THE AUTHOR

Photo: Privatna arhiva



Tatjana Tanja Brzaković

Director and Screenwriter

A film doesn't work if there's no empathy between the audience and the characters

Director and screenwriter Tatjana Tanja Brzaković, a member of the European Film Academy and longtime UFUS AFA member, after a series of successful and award-winning documentaries (including *Jovica i njegovi zubi* [*Jovica and His Teeth*], *Doći će žuti ljudi sa istoka i piće vodu sa Morave* [*The Chinese Will Come*], *Prizori iz života džukca* [*Life of a Mutt*]), will soon present her first feature-length fiction film – *Kuća* (*The House*). This family drama tells the story of a returnee from Germany, a subject that is particularly close to the director, who has been living and working in Germany for many years.

In an interview for the Bulletin, we discussed the position of film artists in Serbia and Germany, the challenges posed by artificial intelligence, as well as the “multitasking” common to many creators,

where, as in the case of our interviewee, it sometimes happens that two films are being completed at the same time.

The filming of *The House* was completed a year and a half ago, with only a few minor technical details left to finalize. We hope – though much depends on factors beyond our control – that the film will be ready for promotion at a summer festival in the region.

Filming itself is the easiest part of the process, but everything else related to production and financing is extremely challenging. I don't want to sound overexcited, as the journey to completing the film was arduous, but we hope that all the effort will pay off.

I'm fortunate that this year, hopefully, I'll also be presenting the documentary *Sjeti se moje pjesme* (*Remember My Song*), co-directed by Jelena Bosanac. It was a long process, and without the co-production, it probably would never have been completed. It wasn't planned to have two films in production at the same time, but creators often have to multitask and work on several projects simultaneously, so sometimes deadlines just end up overlapping.

Do your colleagues in Germany struggle in the same way? Funding for filmmaking is higher there, but competition is also stronger.

The competition is definitely tougher. A larger budget from the state, regional funds, or television stations doesn't make it easier to make a film – quite the opposite. I think that, compared to Serbia, it's much harder to take the first step in Germany. In Serbia, we start from the point that the Film Center must support a film, otherwise it simply won't happen. But even that can sometimes turn into a vicious circle, as was the case with *The House*. You receive support from the Film Center of Serbia (FCS), but the amount is so small that it's not enough to complete



*“Empathy is what connects all films,
regardless of genre or era.”*

the film. If, as in my case, you're 50 years old and getting the chance to make your first feature film, you don't want to give up or wait for a bigger budget or better circumstances – you just move forward with production.

In Germany, it's different: you cannot even begin production without first securing a contract with a television station that will broadcast the film. This is extremely difficult, and without it, no fund will provide financing. Of course, I'm talking about creators who don't regularly appear at major festivals. For well-known authors, the rules are different: they often receive funding early on from distributors or through the sale of rights for the international market. For all others, a television station must first support the project before funding can be sought from the numerous funds available in Germany – ranging from the federal fund at the national level to regional funds. There are also co-productions, Eurimages, and other sources. In this sense, it's harder to get a film off the ground here, but once you take that first step, the process moves much faster.

How do you recognize that a story is worth turning into a film?

I suppose every creator starts with what personally interests them and what they themselves would want



Life of a Mutt: ©Boško Dorđević

In the photograph: Tanja Brzaković and dogs in a shelter

to watch, and only then develops the idea. Some stories stay with us for years, whether we're making a feature film or a documentary. Production and financing take a long time, and then comes the film's festival, theatrical, or television life, so we remain connected to the subject for a long period. That's why the crucial question for me is: do I want to devote myself to this for such a long time, and do I have the strength to do so? For example, when I was making the documentary *Life of a Mutt* about stray dogs, it was emotionally very challenging for me.

Whether a topic can be realized depends on many other factors, not just my motivation or the motivation of the team wanting to work on it. For example, the German public broadcaster ZDF rejected the film *The House* – not because they thought it was bad, quite the opposite – but because it wasn't a topic they were currently focusing on or interested in. The question then becomes whether, like many others, you'll focus on current topics – those you hope will receive funding. Still, even though such calculations are often made, I believe there must also be personal interest and a genuine desire to tell a story about the subject.

Which of your films are you most satisfied with?

That's like asking a parent to choose their favorite child (laughs). But if I had to pick, I would say the documentary *Life of a Mutt*, because it was emotionally the most challenging for me. When I finished it, I told myself: “I don't have to do anything else.” I think it was the film I was most satisfied with artistically. I would have loved for it to be used in education. We offered it to schools, and the ministry agreed to include it as part of an optional curriculum, but I'm not sure why it wasn't implemented more widely.



Remember My Song: ©Boško Dorđević

In the photograph: Tanja Brzaković, Jelena Bosanac, Nebojša Miljković, producent, Seka Berlinerka



“UFUS AFA is very active and advocates for authors – not only in collecting our royalties but also in improving protection. Much can be changed, but that requires a good law.”

You teach at the University of Osnabrück. What is it like working with students?

These are students from various fields of study who choose a course during the semester that isn't directly related to their major but could be useful later in life. Sociology, design, law, and economics students, for example, choose to spend a block week during the semester working on film. For me, it's an extremely interesting experience, because I interact with young people who don't have a direct connection to film – they're not creators, but consumers. It's fascinating to see which topics interest them and how they choose to approach them. By the end of our time together, each of them produces a short film.

We live in challenging times, with many things changing – including the art of filmmaking. What remains the same?

I think it's the empathy created by a film's story, which connects the audience to the characters. This is something that connects all genres and eras. If we make films that are completely detached from the characters and their stories, with no connection between the audience and the protagonists – even if our protagonists are robots – the film simply doesn't work unless we establish an empathetic bond with them.

How much is artificial intelligence discussed in Germany?

It's talked about a lot, because it's a topic that affects all areas of life – from industry to the arts. In Germany,

however, changes are usually implemented through institutions and professional associations. Artificial intelligence, or generated programs, “learn” from content created by humans, and if they use copyrighted works, they need to pay for it. It is unacceptable for machines to be trained using other people's films and scripts, especially if they might later replace human creators. I hope that doesn't happen. Artificial intelligence is a major issue that isn't going away; in fact, it will become increasingly important in our industry. I also hope that over time it will be regulated by law in a way that helps protect our professions as much as possible.

I am part of the expert team for the EU “Media” program, which proposes new projects. Among these are stories about new technologies and their applications. In that context, I cannot judge negatively a proposal from a company that, for example, wants to improve set design using artificial intelligence, especially when it would be impossible to create that set in reality. This is a good solution, both environmentally and in terms of speeding up production and reducing costs. That's why it's important to value what is positive and distinguish it from what could be potentially harmful.

You mentioned that AI can be a useful tool, but can it replace a creator's imagination?

Maybe it can, because it can draw ideas from a wide range of sources. One human brain, one person's imagination – even that of a genius artist – has its limits. But what AI cannot do is evoke true empathy. It can simulate it, but



The house; in the photograph: Anica Dobra, Miralem Zubčević



The house; in the photograph: Miralem Zubčević, Jelena Bosanac, David Stanču

“I am most satisfied with the film that was emotionally the hardest for me.”

only a human can judge whether it really works and how to convey it to the audience. After all, films are ultimately made for people, not robots.

What are some other current issues in Germany regarding copyright protection?

Streaming platforms remain an unresolved issue. Associations are pushing for legal regulation, but the problem is that platforms do not provide accurate viewership data, making it difficult to calculate royalties for authors. Netflix, Amazon, and other platforms are not willing to comply, but if regulations are put in place, they will have to. Everyone hopes that, together with this year’s increase in Germany’s film budget, it could provide a significant boost to the film industry.

In Germany, media libraries are also very prominent. Even public broadcasters offer content and series that are available exclusively through their media libraries. Since these are state-owned institutions, everything is clearly defined, and the system protects the authors.

Are you satisfied with the work of UFUS AFA Zaštita, and what could be improved?

Much can be improved, but that requires a good law. The organization is very active and advocates for authors – not only in collecting our royalties, but also in improving protection. I follow all the updates regularly, and if I lived in Serbia, I would gladly personally get involved. You have my full support.

“Artificial intelligence, or generated programs, ‘learn’ from content created by humans, and if they use copyrighted works, they need to pay for it.”



Remember My Song: film still



*The house: ©Boško Đorđević
In the photograph: Tanja Brzaković*



*Life of a Mutt: ©Tanja Brzaković
in the photograph: Boško Đorđević, DoP i Dona*

LEGAL ADVICE

Photo: Aleksandar Carević



Stevan Pajović

Attorney, "T-S Legal" Law Office

The “Over-the-Top” Digital Revolution: Everything You Need to Know About OTT Platforms

In the modern digital ecosystem, the term **OTT (Over-the-Top)** has become synonymous with a shift in the way we consume information, communicate, and, above all, watch video content. Although it is often associated exclusively with services such as Netflix, OTT represents a broader technological concept that has fundamentally transformed the traditional telecommunications and media industries.

What Is an OTT Service?

An OTT service refers to content, an application, or a service delivered to users via the public internet. The essence of the term “Over-the-Top” lies in the fact that the provider operates independently of traditional operators, using the internet as a universal transmission channel on top of which an additional service is layered. In this way, an OTT provider leverages existing global connectivity

to deliver its digital product directly to users, bypassing traditional intermediaries and their closed infrastructure. Because of this type of architecture, in which only the content is controlled while the network itself is not, OTT services do not include only video platforms, but also:

- **Communication services:** Viber, WhatsApp, Telegram, and Skype, which have replaced traditional SMS messaging and phone calls.
- **Data-sharing and e-commerce platforms:** Facebook, Google, and Amazon.
- **Resource-sharing services:** Uber and Airbnb.

All of these services share a common feature: they operate remotely through electronic equipment used for data processing and storage, completely independent of which internet provider grants users access to the network.

Classification of OTT Platforms for Audiovisual Content

If we focus on the distribution of media content, OTT platforms can be divided into three main groups, depending on whose content they offer and what type of control they exercise:

1. Specialized (proprietary) platforms

These are platforms where the provider offers exclusively its own media service, over which it has full editorial control. The provider independently selects the content and determines its order and visibility. In essence, these platforms function as **media service providers** that distribute content in two basic formats: as **linear programming** (broadcast according to a predetermined schedule) or as **on-demand services**. Typical examples include global services such as **Netflix** and **Amazon Prime**, as well as regional platforms such as **Pickbox** or the domestic platform **Klik Pink**.

2. Aggregator (open) platforms

These providers function as digital intermediaries, offering the media services of other media service providers in one place. They do not curate or edit the programs; instead, they obtain the right from other providers to include them



in the offering of their OTT service without the right to modify the content. Examples of this model include Klik TV, Net TV Plus, and Google TV. In essence, this involves the retransmission of third-party programming, which makes these platforms direct competitors to the services of traditional cable operators. Unlike cable systems tied to a fixed location, these OTT aggregators allow users to access the same television channels from anywhere, provided that an internet connection is available.

3. Hybrid models

Many modern providers, such as the EON platform, combine these approaches. They enable users to access linear television programs from other broadcasters (acting as an operator), while at the same time offering their own on-demand content catalogs (acting as a media service provider).

Business Models: How Do OTT Platforms Generate Revenue?

Several models dominate the market, defining the economic relationship with users. These models differ depending on whether users pay for access to an entire catalog, a single title, or simply the streaming of television channels.

Within the retransmission model of linear programming, users typically pay a fixed monthly fee to access television channels in real time via the internet. This model is used by aggregator platforms that retransmit television programming from other broadcasters, providing users with the same live viewing experience traditionally offered by cable operators.

A notable phenomenon is FAST TV, which combines the linear experience of traditional television with OTT technology. It offers viewers free, ad-supported content, effectively closing the business model loop by returning to a modernized concept of “free-to-air” TV programming.

When it comes to on-demand content, the most common model is **SVOD** (Subscription Video on Demand), where users pay a monthly subscription for unlimited access to a catalog of movies and series (e.g., Netflix, Disney+). In contrast, **AVOD** (Advertising-based Video on Demand) relies on free content funded by ads (e.g., YouTube, Pluto TV). For users who prefer selective access, there is **TVOD** (Transactional Video on Demand), which works

on a “rent a title” basis (e.g., Apple TV/iTunes), while **PVOD** (Premium Video on Demand) offers exclusive early access to cinema releases for an additional fee.

Many modern platforms today are hybrid: within a single subscription, they allow users to watch linear channels (retransmissions) as well as access a rich on-demand video library.

Protecting Copyright: From Linear Programming to On-Demand Video

From the perspective of intellectual property protection, it is crucial to clearly define how content is used, as this determines the regime under which rights are exercised:

- **Broadcasting:** This term is used exclusively for **linear services**, where television programming is aired according to a predetermined schedule. When a platform broadcasts its own programming, the rights are managed **individually** – through direct negotiations with the copyright holders of the works included in that programming.
- **Retransmission:** Characteristic of platforms such as **EON TV**, which take over and distribute channels from other broadcasters in real time. Since the platform cannot know at every moment whose works are included in the retransmitted programming, **collective rights management** through organizations (e.g., UFUS AFA Zaštita) is necessary. This ensures that authors are compensated and that the platform can operate legally without negotiating with thousands of individual rights holders.
- **Making works available interactively:** This refers to **non-linear** (on-demand) services, where users choose when to access specific content from the catalog (e.g., **Netflix**). As with original broadcasting, rights are managed **individually** here as well, since the platform has full control over which works are included in its digital catalog.

Conclusion

OTT platforms have evolved from a technological curiosity into key players that set the rules in the media market. While they offer users unprecedented flexibility, their complex nature requires a deep understanding of legal aspects – from distribution methods to specific copyright protection models that ensure the sustainability of the entire creative industry.



*The house: © Boško Đorđević
In the photograph: Aleksandar Kalezić, DoP, Miralem Zubčević, actor; David Stanču*



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