

Animation studios in Gottwaldov and Lodz (1945/47-1990) - Comparative Collective Biography

Animated film studios in Zlín (Czech Republic) and Łódź (Poland) were among the most successful film production centers in the Eastern Bloc. World-renowned personalities such as Karel Zeman, Hermína Týrlová, Daniel Szczechura or Zbigniew Rybczyński have worked there, and their films have won the world's most prestigious awards at festivals in Cannes, Venice, and Locarno or the Oscar Academy Award. During their existence, both studios have produced thousands of animated, puppet and combined films; an important part of their work was custom production as well, especially for television. Besides animation movies, also fiction, documentary, school or advertising films were produced in these studios. However, the history of the successful and prominent animated production of these studios has so far been presented only by popularizing or commemorative publications, portraits of individual filmmakers or analysis of selected films.

The project aims to analyze and compare Gottwaldov and Lodz film animation centers. The animated production of the Short Film company's branch in Gottwaldov (which later became an independent Film Studio Gottwaldov) followed the film production of the Baťa Company in the 1930s, was created outside of the administrative center of film production in Prague. The specific position of the in Zlín/Gottwaldov and Studio of Small Film Forms Se-Ma-For Łódź studios makes them an ideal focus of a comparative research. The research would be methodologically based on prosopographic research (i.e., on collective monographs of a selected group of studio workers). In similarity to Gottwaldov, Łódź has its tradition of film production cultivated outside the administrative center in Warsaw. The efficiency of the networks in Gottwaldov and Łódź were conditioned by the success of the local filmmaking and creative authority of the filmmakers, and, at the same time, the networks helped to maintain the production quality. This research opens the possibility to compare the structure and intensity of the personal, material, and institutional ties that "formed" these studios. The Łódź and Zlín productions are key elements of the heritage of Polish and Czech film animation and therefore an important element of the study will be to determine the nature of this heritage and the methods of shaping and managing the heritage of Polish and Czech film animation.

Answers to research questions - provided through film analyses, archival queries and interviews with the filmmakers - will enable a more complete and nuanced knowledge about Polish and Czech film animation. The research will result in studies on Polish and Czech animation - two collective monographs (one in Czech and one in Polish), three English-language texts published in magazines from the SCOPUS database and thematic issue of a Scopus indexed journal (in English). The collected data on animation studio workers will be published in the form of an online database. Publications concerning animation centers in Gottwaldov and Lodz are to fill the gap in research on production culture in relation to animated film during the communist era and political transformation, both in Czechoslovakia and Poland.