

FROM SHORT TO FEATURE SCRIPT

"From Short to Feature" is a professional training program developed by La Fémis based on its experience in scriptwriting training. La Fémis offers this program inspired by the combination of its expertise in both initial and continuous education. This training is designed to support writers and directors from the Dominican Republic in writing their script for a feature-length fiction film, with the support of DGCINE.

This 10-day course is designed to strengthen the acquisition of skills specific to writing a feature film synopsis.

Public & Prerequisites

This course is aimed at authors, directors of the Dominican Republic who have already spent a few years directing and/or writing short film scripts and who wish to learn how to write for feature films. These writers and directors should already have laid the foundations of a feature film project in a few articulated pages.

During this two-week theoretical and practical training course, they will be able to write a more elaborate synopsis, a solid basis for a possible future script with dialogue.

Training objectives

Short film authors will learn how to best develop the synopsis for their own feature film. By improving their scriptwriting skills, aimed at developing feature film scripts. Thus, gaining trust in their capabilities: they will learn that they can do it. And do it well. Useful writing tools will be taught. How to choose which to use and apply them to each author's own personal project will be the goal of the practical exercises. From idea to structured synopsis, in two 5-day sessions.

Pedagogical aims:

- To learn how to structure one's own idea,
- To find which characters are necessary for the development of the script,
- To build a story and the tension of the feature length film compared to short film,
- To determine the genre and the thematic stakes of the film,
- To begin to think of the rhythm, the style, the visual world.

At the end of this training, authors will have achieved a strong synopsis which will enable them to lay the foundation of the future feature length script.

Workshop director

Eric COLLINS

Born in the Village (NYC) in the sixties, the offspring of a Libertarian beatnik and a Midwest hippie, Eric was raised "on the road": a Flower Child growing under the sun of Manhattan, Woodstock, London, Amsterdam and Paris, before being rooted in the French countryside at the age of eight. This "back to Earth" childhood in the farmlands of the Loire Valley, within an American household, made him bi-cultural, and then led to studying Modern Literature in Paris.

Eric's credits as a feature film screenwriter include *The Forbidden Chapter* (2006) directed by Fariborz Kamkari (San Sebastián International Film Festival), *And Now Ladies & Gentlemen* (2002) directed by Claude Lelouch with Jeremy Irons, *Le Prince du Pacifique* (2000) directed by Alain Corneau, *Hanuman* (1998) directed by Frédéric Fougère, *The Lover* (1992) directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud ; and films in development such as *Aggiornamento* (with Daniel Cattani), *Mr. G.* (directed by Dito Tsintsadze), *Charles Baudelaire & Jeanne Duval* (Régine Abadia), *Professor of Dreams* (biopic of 2006 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus), *The Alchemist* (adaptation of Paulo Coelho's novel for Warner Bros.), *Oregon* (directed by Fred "Rock'n roll control" Saurel)...

Eric has guided numerous writer workshops (éQuinoxe, SOURCES, La Fémis, FOCAL, Le Groupe Ouest, MEDIA, Berlinale Talents, Toronto International Film Festival) and seminars (Cannes, Berlinale Talents, Toronto International Film Festival), as well as working as a script doctor, on films such as *Quiet Migration* (2023) Malene Choi (premiered as part of Berlinale Panorama), *The Last Hero* (2023) Žiga Virč (in post-production), *Secaderos/Tobacco Barns* (2022) Rocío Mesa (San Sebastian), *Sole* (2019) Carlo Sironi (Venice, European Awards), *Polsestra/Half-Sister* (2019) Damjan Kozole (Eurimages, Karlovy Vary), *Mater* (2019) Jure Pavlovic (Tallinn Black Nights, Vilnius), *Cleo* (2018) Eva Cools (Belgian Best Screenplay, Rome Film Fest), *Daha* (2018) directed by Onur Saylak (Karlovy Vary International Film Festival), *The Mover* (2018) Dāvis Šīmanis (Locarno, Tallinn, Latvian Oscar submission), *The Migrumpies* (2017) Arman T. Riahi (Max Ophüls, Austrian Film Awards), *Beyond the Walls* (2012) directed by David Lambert (Cannes Critics Week & Golden Camera), *The Counterfeiters* (2007) directed by Stefan Ruzowitzky (Oscar for Best Foreign Film), *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories* (2001) directed by Rolf de Heer with Richard Dreyfuss...

Eric wrote and directed a number of video games (*The Crew 2*, *Mission Impossible*, *La Femme Nikita*, *Alone in the Dark IV*, *Voodoo Kid*) and documentary films (*Titanic* for Discovery Channel/Canal+)...

Eric was vice-president of the French screenwriters' guild (UGS), treasurer of the European Screenwriters' Federation (FSE), president of the International European Screenwriters' Festival (RISE)...

▪ **Session 1 (Days 1 to 5) – Conceptualization**

- Day 1: Your Idea

What is your idea? Your point of view? What do you wish to share? With whom? Is this fitting for a feature film? For our times? For your genre? How will people react?

Exercises: how to pitch; have a clear logline, a tagline... define the core of your idea.

- Day 2: Your Main Character

Who is your main character? What defines them? What do they want? What do they fear? What might they lose? How are they unique? How and why do we care for them?

Exercises: how to use needs & wants; create a basic backstory that will impact events...

- Day 3: Your Story

Where are you going: what is your end? Where and how do you start? What are the main beats of your story? What type of structure to favor? What genre-markers to use?

Exercises: various general structures (3 acts ; cyclical ; frame story ; non-Western...).

- Day 4: Plot- or character-driven?

Whichever you favor, you will need both. Character and plot being revealed through obstacles. Character feeding your plot, and your plot defining your character.

Exercises: the inner aspects (character psychology...) and the external (the events...).

- Day 5: Bringing It All Together

Restructuring your idea, as it takes on the life of your character, and unfolds through your choice of structured events—while making sure your voice is seen and heard.

Exercises: incorporating your style, your visual universe, your world, your point of view...

▪ **During the week-end break**

Exercises: prepare your new, clearer, richer pitch, logline, tagline & short synopsis.

▪ **Session 2 (Days 6 to 10) – Building up & unfolding**

- Day 6: Character Constellation

Who are your secondary characters? The allies, the rivals, the opponents...? Bringing out the flesh of your film, through character interaction & viewer identification.

Exercises: give each character an identity ; archetypes not stereotypes ; believability...

- Day 7: Arranging Your Beats

What all is happening, and how to set this up while thinking in terms of feature film rhythm? Dramatic tension? When to lessen the pressure, how to hook the viewers?

Exercises: audience expectations ; twists & turns ; dramatic irony vs. surprise...

- Day 8: Bring It All Together Once Again

You have a lot: main & secondary characters, plot & B-plot, the story & the topic—now to fuse things, have psychology symbolized in events, visualize inner thoughts...

Exercises: thematic stakes ; set-up/pay-off ; the journey in the story ; emotional events...

- Day 9: Make It Grow

Push things further than the synopsis, to prepare for other texts (author's note, character description...) by looking into all character and plot arcs, the topics...

Exercises: finding the tone of the dialog; visualizing the actual opening & climax...

- Day 10: Boil It Back Down

All we will have done will be useful for the writing of the feature film. Now it is time to "kill your darlings" and know what to cut and what to keep for a good synopsis.

Exercises: prioritize ; extract what is telling ; create emotional images ; synopsise...

▪ **After the session**

The participants will know what they wish to tell, where it starts and how it gets to the end, with which characters and what themes, and how to tell this in a gripping synopsis.

Practical information

Number of participants: 8 maximum

Number of hours: 70 hours (two 5-day sessions)

Rythm of the training: 2 weeks full-time.

Training dates: from the 8th to the 19th of July 2024, sessions times will be announced later (daytime and not evening sessions).

Address of the training: Cinemateca Dominicana, Plaza de la Cultura Juan Pablo Duarte, Pedro Henríquez Ureña Avenue, Santo Domingo

Pedagogical cost per participants: Free. Participants are going to be selected by a jury committee (jury composed by a Fémis representation, the trainer, Eric Collins, and a DGCine Representative).

terms and conditions of application

To submit your application:

- Fill out the application form <https://forms.office.com/r/yqFqkCUzJp> and complete with:
 - A motivation letter (1 page maximum, PDF format)
 - An updated resume (1 file, PDF format)
 - Links towards short films directed by the applicant (in the application form)
 - A synopsis (1/2 to 1 page maximum) of the writing project the applicant wishes to develop in the workshop (1 file, PDF format)
 - A digital identity photo (1 file, JPG format)
 - The scan of the ID paper (1 file, JPG or PDF format)

Once you have completed your application files, please send it to formacion@dgcine.gob.do

Deadline for application: Sunday, the 26th of May 2024

Results of deliberation: Monday, the 3rd of June 2024

Dates of the workshop: July 8 to 19, 2024

La Fémis

Founded in 1986, La Fémis is a national state school supervised by the French Ministry of Culture and the French Ministry of Higher education, funded by the CNC (Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée).

The French international award-winning film director Michel Hazanavicius chairs the school. He is a director, but also producer, screenwriter and film editor best known for his 2011 film, *The Artist*, which won the Academy Award for Best Picture at the 84th Academy Awards among other awards. He also directed spy film parodies *Office of Strategic Services 117: Cairo*, *Nest of Spies* (2006) and *Office of Strategic Services 117: Lost in Rio* (2009). His latest film *Final Cut* (2022) was the opening film of Cannes festival 2022. Nathalie Coste Cerdan is the Director General.

Since 1986, La Fémis has trained over 1 800 students in all filmmaking skills: directors, screenwriters, producers, editors, DoP, sound engineers, production designers, continuity supervisors, distributors and exhibitors.

In 2013, La Fémis has created a new department training student in TV series writing and 2015, a one-year full-time training program for 4 young aspiring filmmakers without diploma requirement called *La Résidence*. From 2022, *La Résidence* has been extended in a 2-year course program.

The school has also a research program named SACRe which was developed within the research and higher education cluster PSL (Paris Sciences et Lettres).

Students from the initial training are selected for admission to La Fémis by a competitive examination taken after two or three years of university-level education. All classes are taught by working professionals. Under the direction of 24 Department Heads who design the curricula, over 1000 professionals come each year to give lectures, practical trainings and to supervise the work produced by the students. There is no faculty.

Since 1996, in addition to its initial training, La Fémis has been designing and organizing continuing training courses for film and audiovisual professionals wishing to improve their skills and acquire new professional practices in the fields of scriptwriting, Documentary filmmaking, Cinematographic exhibition, series creation, Film criticism, European production: Ludwigsburg-Paris workshop.

La Fémis has come to be a reference in France and abroad, providing an excellent level of training (60 students are selected each year among some 1 500 candidates), based on high standards regarding films, permanent transversal collaborations between the various departments and more generally, courses balanced between artistic research, professional development and technical training.

Since its creation, La Fémis students have directed more than 3 000 short films, fictions and documentaries. Often more than mere exercises, some of these films are genuine works containing the seeds of new talents, which have been selected and rewarded in many festivals (Cannes Film Festival, Berlin Film Festival, Clermont Ferrand Short Film Festival...)

Alumni have turned into directors such as Emmanuelle Bercot, Claire Burger, Thomas Cailley, Julia Ducournau, Jean-Paul Civeyrac, Samuel Collardey, Antony Cordier, Émilie Deleuze, Arnaud des Pallières, Ariane Doublet, Deniz Gamze Ergüven, Noémie Lvovsky, Laetitia Masson, Léa Mysius, François Ozon, Céline Sciamma, Marina de Van, Rebecca Zlotowski and many others. La Fémis has also trained well known cinematographers, sound engineers, mixers, editors...

Contacts

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