

Call for Proposals

Research



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European Universities Alliance
Research, Innovation, Technology

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Horizon 2020

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1. Introduction

FILMEU_RIT brings together four European Higher Education Institutions: Lusófona University, from Lisbon, Portugal; TLU-BFM - Baltic Film and Media School, Tallinn University, from Tallinn, Estonia; LUCA School of Arts, from Brussels, Belgium; and Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art Design and Technology, from Dublin, Ireland. Together, these institutions collaborate around the common objective of jointly promoting high-level research, innovation and educational activities in the multidisciplinary field of Film and Media Arts and, through this collaboration, consolidate the central role of Europe as a world leader in the creative fields. These institutions are jointly promoting the implementation of FILMEU – The European Universities Alliance for Film and Media Arts (Project: 101004047, EPP-EUR-UNIV-2020 — European Universities, EPLUS2020 Action Grant).

FILMEU_RIT will increase the Alliance’s competitiveness and reinforce its ability to develop activities that span all the areas of the knowledge square: education, research, innovation, and service to society, while helping the creative sector to affirm its potential for innovation and resilience in a post COVID-19 context.

FILMEU_RIT’s main objective is the capacitation, in Research and Innovation terms, of the individual HEIs that integrate the Alliance, via the joint design of strategies and action plans that ensure the transformation of the future European University into an Institution that puts Research and Innovation in the fields of Film and Media Arts at the centre of its activities and operates as a highly valuable critical cultural intermediary. This implies that, by 2025, FILMEU must be constituted as an exemplary collaborative structure able to deepen the cooperation between all members of the Alliance and foster their ability to act locally, regionally, and globally in the cultural and creative industries and across other societal areas they impact. The Alliance will implement cooperatively designed policies and action plans in order to increase the profile of Film and Media Arts innovation and research, and develop projects supported by a common agenda for artistic practice-based research that, in a critical and reflexive manner, exploits technologies, consolidates alternative paths for PhDs in this field, and reinforces the societal impact of the knowledge produced in the institutions that integrate the alliance.

In order to attain this, we want to **design and implement a network of centres of competences** named “FILMEU HUB”, based on several common infrastructures – labs – that span the main areas of research and technical expertise on which the consortium is focused. These hubs support the emergence of **dynamic research clusters** organised in a “bottom up” manner that integrate researchers coming from the different HEIs

according to their interests and areas of expertise. Their overall objective is to develop cross-disciplinary projects supported by team-based work, with the intensive use of media technology, which in turn provisions the uptake of collaboration and the rise of areas of excellence that signal the differential nature of the research developed in the scope of the European University.

The emergence of these “dynamic research clusters” should be supported by designing and implementing, in the coming years, a number of pilot artistic research projects.

2. The Clusters and the Pilot projects

At the application stage a model was devised whereby a number of research clusters (5) were pre identified following an initial mapping exercise of existing competences in the four partner HEIs. The proposed model engineers the Alliance as a network that hosts several *clusters* (each one a research group mixing individuals from the different HEIs in the consortium, according to their interests and areas of expertise) and then operates along several loops (implemented joint pilot projects) that represent various stages of relationships among members with the aim of achieving a successful collaborative network. These clusters are organised bottom-up and grow organically, driven by existing collaborations between researchers in the different HEIs. The purpose of the present call is to initiate this collaborative process and start facilitating the emergence of these clusters.

All pilot projects will be exploratory in nature and the objectives of the pilots are to consolidate teams

inside the clusters and to support the definition of the research agenda of the Alliance by focusing on specific thematic areas. These four pilots should be regarded as proof-of-concept instruments. They will support the implementation of joint teams and the definition of a common agenda for research, but they will also help in identifying barriers to cooperation and support the production of a number of recommendations for follow-up steps towards the implementation of a joint research agenda.

3. The Call - Seed Funding

Primary conditions

- Only groups of researchers representing at least 3 of the partner HEIs are eligible;

- A seed funding amount of up to 20K is envisioned per cluster. It is possible for each cluster to propose one or more projects per pilot but the maximum amount of seed funding is 20k per cluster.
- This should not include any HR expenses (budget aside, though consultation with local project offices is required). Fundable items are: artistic production; dissemination (i.e. participation in conferences; fee for open-source publication);
- Accepted proposals must include the following deliverables: artistic outputs; scientific outputs (at least 2 publications in Q1-Q4 international indexed journals; 2 participations with communication in international conferences in the field); educational outputs (i.e. didactic audiovisual materials);
- Maximum duration 20 months

Stages

1 - From idea to proposal

- Idea generation: ideas can be brought up by individual researchers
- Pitching event (pitching event is organised per pilot by the lead institute) - week of February 7 - for the different clusters

2 - Matchmaking

- Proposal writing/preparation - February
- Proposal submission – 4 March (via email to anna.coutinho@filmeu.pt)
- Pilots begin – 4 April.

The Pilots

These are the areas each pilot should explore. Please feel free to send any ideas you already have and which will be further presented and discussed during the brainstorming meetings that will be scheduled soon.

Pilot 1 - Researching the networks of migration within European film archives

(leader: Lusófona university)

- Cluster1 – Intermedia: Narrativity, (Trans) Historicity, Intermediality
- Cluster4 – Early Vision Media: Heritage and Future Media

The history of European film culture is more about connections, networking, and cooperation than about barriers. The spirit of FILMEU's programme perfectly mirrors this idea of cooperation, with people and teaching methods constantly travelling between cultures and institutions. Based on this idea, FILMEU_RIT will provide a platform for research across networks of European film from an archival perspective. The focus of research will be on the historical background of these film networks but, as a practical result, it will provide innovative tools and methods for archival work. Since a significant part of the European film heritage is still considered lost (see www.lost-films.eu/index), especially from the early nitrate period, and there is an urge to identify and preserve the films shot on this vulnerable early film base, the time frame examined by the research would be the period between 1895 and 1953. The project addresses the core topic of preserving and digitising cultural heritage in a context where photographic or filmic documentation of cultural heritage is gaining more and more importance. Making the materiality of our cultural heritage available for consultation and research in a digital and decentralised way can contribute to an idea of common European space and shared cultural heritage, as explained in the report of the European Commission *Cultural Heritage: Digitisation, Online Accessibility and Digital Preservation*. In order to make an effective photographic digitalisation of this heritage it is necessary to establish protocols that use the technological means available in each historical context. These protocols must undergo updates and adaptations to each moment and historical context, and the decision-makers who deal with the archives, whether they are public or private, must recognise the necessity for implementation.

Supported by existing protocols - Metamorfose Preservation Guidelines and Federal Agencies Digital Guidelines Initiative: FADGI - we intend to propose updates to these protocols and put them into practice, ensuring high quality standards, while at the same time conceptually test the proposed models and techniques by focusing on the specific context of migrations. Some of the objectives of the project include:

1. Creation of a photographic documentation laboratory for 2d and 3d cultural heritage;
2. Establishment of photographic and filmic digitalisation protocols for several specificities of originals;

3. Mapping the routes of professional migration, setting up a database of emigrant filmmakers and filmmakers connected to countries other than their homeland;
4. Mapping archival content focused on professional immigrants.

The pilot would focus only on some of these tasks and lay the groundwork for a bigger project to be submitted, likely to a call on cultural heritage in the context of Horizon Europe.

Pilot 2 - Stereoscopic visions of Europe

(leader: Luca)

Cluster2 – Inter-actions: Creative Technology and Medium Exploration

Before stereoscopic photography, peeping was a popular media practice. Since the 18th Century lensed and boxed apparatuses have aroused wonder and seduced audiences by showing daylight scenes of distant cities turning into enchanting night views. These mysterious eye machines have developed a culture of peeping (Huhtamo, 2006) sustained by a solid media system whose role in the rapid success of later peep media, such as stereoscopic photography, remains unstudied. Against this background, our project aims to examine the particular contribution of the media system of cosmoramas to the rapid implementation of stereoscopic photography in the four countries that integrated the Alliance in the 19th century. Emerging after the panoramas and a few years before the diorama, the cosmoramas, or views of the world, were the most enduring 'orama' shows and the only ones with a peeping system. These new and sophisticated 19th-century curiosity shows followed the curiosity cabinets and peep shows that had previously occupied the fairgrounds. Installed in large and permanent premises in city centres, these fashionable picture galleries placed their images behind walls, accustoming the bourgeois public to observe them through lenses. The visual pleasure of peeking into an image with modelled space and an enhanced depth both corresponded to a new way of observing, and satisfied curiositas, that is, the intellectual curiosity recognised since the Enlightenment as a legitimate exercise of knowledge. Our pilot sets out to integrate these previous optical media in the history of stereoscopic photography, and to rethink the success of the latter within a wider, more multifaceted historical, cultural, and conceptual framework that combines Media Theory concepts with a Media Archaeology methodology. The project will stem from a preliminary study developed by researchers in the Alliance that has identified in the Portuguese and Spanish press a wide network of cosmoramas distributed by the main cities of the

Peninsula and which had integrated stereoscopic photography in their exhibitions since the 1860s. Through the cosmorama advertisements published between 1822 and 1872 in the Iberian newspapers, the project will analyse one of the first media networks for the production, distribution and exhibition of images in Europe.

This information will trigger a search for optical and stereoscopic views in the four European countries' (Portugal, Ireland, Estonia and Belgium) art and cinema collections which will be incorporated into a digital catalogue, a geolocation visualisation, and a virtual reality app; media technologies that will be used as tools to study the circulation of the images, their subject matters, and in particular, to examine and compare their depth and light effects. This will be a material and visual analysis that will allow us to assess how these extra visual features boosted these media as early travelling and instruction systems. On the other hand, it will also enable the examination of their intermedia practices through case studies such as the stereo transparencies or the large pierced photographs for the megalethoscope. In parallel, the discourse analysis of the cosmorama advertisements will be undertaken with the aim of identifying the *topoi*, or frequent figures employed by the rhetoric of these shows in the four studied countries. This Media Archaeology methodology will also allow for a deeper analysis of the cosmos imaginary fabricated by these discourses promoting a Mondo Nuovo while exhibiting at the same time a Eurocentric iconography which fenced off the colonial territories.

Pilot 3 - Future visions – volumetric cinema prototype

(leader: IADT)

Cluster2 - Inter-actions: Creative Technology and Medium Exploration

Cluster3 – Volumetric cinema: future scenarios and entrepreneurship

Cinema is always in a state of becoming. We are constantly revising what cinema stands for as a concept, a construct and a social activity. There are now more ways of producing and experiencing films than ever before and with this pilot project we particularly want to address the question of how the affordances of new cinematic modalities (in particular VR and XR) and new forms of outlets (in particular physical 3d spaces) affect the unitarian understanding of the medium. We are focusing on cinematic experiences that go beyond the screen and in order to explore this we will prototype and test a volumetric cinema pilot episode of a drama series co-produced between the four schools in the consortium. Our research can be labelled as audience studies on spaces of reception, but besides exploring new modes of spectatorship, we also explore the

technological and artistic implications of this mode of production and its implications for both artists and industry. The pilot will last a total of 24 months including six months for actual production of the volumetric cinema prototype. This pilot is regarded as the initial exploratory stage in a much larger project on the affordances of volumetric cinema. We will apply to specific local funding for further development of the project.

Pilot 4 - Future sounds – 360° immersive sound applications and mapping

(leader: BFM/TLU)

Cluster 5 – Sound & Drama: audiovisual imagination

With the advancement of sound recording and reproduction technology, and with its use in new technologies, from games to cinema and music, immersive sound enhances the realisation, centred on the subject, of a space delimited by sound and time. With the torsion of these two primordial elements, space and time, which are part of any human experience, the use of immersive sound deepens the field of the figurative spectrum and its materialities. New means of sound transmission, combined with increasingly individual and three-dimensional reception, allow for a scenic and sonic density that is the result of a constant interaction of the “spectator” or auditory with the creation and its progression, whether dealing with the traditional filmic categories of music, dialogue or sound fx, synchronised to an image, or accompanying the development of acts or a live performance. As with other activities in the creative industries, immersive sound has produced a deterritorialisation of the spectrum and functions as an agent that enhances greater affinities with content, overcoming the relationship that human beings developed in the 20th century between action and reaction and even interaction. The creative moment arises from the simultaneity of an act in permanent construction in space and time, developed by the immersive sound and the general virtuality promoted by technology. The appearance of recording and sound reproduction technology that approached the spatial effects of the sound source was only possible with the passage of a stereo and surrounding sound for diffusion, even using image and broadcasting, based on the use of recently emerged technologies such as Dolby Atmos Home and MPEG-H 3D Audio. Thus, all content that requires a strong presence of sound, and where this is a central element of phenomenology or meaning, the recording and diffusion in these new technologies enable greater immersion in the three dimensionality of the film or the game (as examples). The academy should investigate which arts and creative content are best suited to these new sound spectra, and also promote their use in new audiovisual realities, individually or collectively.

Pilot 5 - Policies

(leader: BFM/Tallinn University & Lusófona University)

Cluster2 - Inter-actions: Creative Technology and Medium Exploration

In a context of profound transformation and fast-paced change, film and audiovisual are being moulded by new regulatory frameworks, emergent technologies and changing audience behaviours. Research endeavours in this domain should target all these elements with a clear focus on the identification of trends and changing patterns and how these processes generate new creative and artistic opportunities but also generate new needs on the producers and creators' side and impel transformations that should be studied.

4. The Call - Outcome

On 15 March 2022, FilmEU announced five innovative research projects in film and media arts.

Five pilot research projects, investigating everything from artificial intelligence to zoetropes, have been launched by FilmEU, the European Universities Alliance for film and media arts. With funding from the EU's Horizon 2020 programme (FilmEU_RIT), five multinational, multidisciplinary teams of researchers will collaborate for the next 20 months, identifying new ways of working together and demonstrating the importance of artistic research and of experimental and practice-led approaches.

These pilot projects will provide a foundation for interdisciplinary research clusters spanning all of the FilmEU institutions, further positioning FilmEU as a critical cultural intermediary for Europe's creative industries.

Reflecting the collective strength of applied and experimental research across FilmEU, a number of projects engage with technologies past, present, and future. "Immersive Memories" will carry out artistic experimentation with hybrid animation film artefacts, combining the analogue and the digital (with VR, film and photo formats from across the decades) and revisiting early devices such as the Zoetrope, the 19th century image projector. It will culminate in physical and virtual exhibitions, accompanied by documentation of the experimental processes deployed. "Creative Collaboration with AI" will see the researchers engage with natural language processing in order to produce a 'co-authored' mini-series, further developed through live action role play workshops. In doing so, the team will also consider the material and political implications of the use of AI in artistic production.

FilmEU's research will make it possible for other researchers, in film and media but also across other fields, to access crucial resources. "TEASA: The European Archive of Short Animation" is an investigation of a future relational database and digital archive of European short animated film. Through identifying current resources and collections, and building as proof of concept a database of a sample of material, the team will identify the next steps for a project that has the potential to support artistic, historical and contemporary research across Europe and beyond. "Decolonising the Panorama of Congo" is a virtual heritage artistic research project revisiting a version of immersive media that prevailed a century ago. The Panorama of Congo, last displayed in Brussels in 1935, will be photographed, re-curated in a modern VR environment, and explored in light of critical and postcolonial insights, in cooperation with the War Heritage Institute and the Africa Museum, and with Congolese artists and scholars.

Each of the FilmEU institutions have long explored film and media arts from a diverse range of perspectives, across the arts and sciences. "Artistic research and cognitive film studies" will promote a transdisciplinary understanding of cinema, exploring artistic creative practices (e.g. sound design and cinematography) in the context of the fast-developing field of cognitive film studies, which explores the implications of embodied cognition for our understanding of the arts.

In announcing these five projects, the FilmEU Management Board expressed its welcome for the broad range of research proposals submitted, and recognised the strength of other proposals on topics including hypermodern cinema, VR representations of the natural environment, and wearable technology. These ideas will be taken forward through further exploratory discussions between the researchers.