



From darkness the inspiration rose

A narrative from FilmFunen's film tourism conference in the film studios in the South Funen village Fjellebroen



In the beginning there was darkness.

Darkness and the cold, but yet a faint humming of activity.

Slowly, the room became lighter and the darkness was banished to the sides – however, still radiating from the black walls in the film studios which framed the very distinctive, yet well-suited location for the innovative event of the day. In the light of the spotlights, the empty lines of chairs, the screen and the projector became visible, waiting to convey the message of the day. The representatives from Visit Odense were ready to receive the guests with name tags, brochures and chocolate from a local manufacturer.



Towards the beginning of the conference at 11 am., the approximately 135 guests began arriving. The large room's dim and silent atmosphere was filled with joyful greetings, reunions and chattering, which emerged into an expectant humming braving the penetrating cold. A cold residing in the room after the May night's unexpected frost, but which, in a way, further emphasised the unconventional character of the location. The line of chairs were filled and the conference could begin.



Film Fyn



It is the regional film fund, FilmFunen, North Sea Screen Partners (NSSP) and Tietgen Business College that were behind the Film Tourism Conference which took place on 4 May 2011 in idyllic surroundings in the South Funen village Fjællebroen. More precisely, it is head of development at FilmFunen, Julie Lindegaard, who has taken the initiative and holds the desire to introduce the concept of film tourism to the Danish tourist industry and share experiences with the rest of the North Sea region. Therefore, she invited tourist organisations, the tourist trade, politicians, officials and operators from cultural institutions to the conference on film tourism, and the participant list did also witness a broad representation of the various segments. Julie Lindegaard herself welcomed the participants and presented a program of international speakers, who, within each their specific field, hold experiences on film tourism abroad.



To begin with, the CEO of Horesta, Katja Oestergaard, gave the official welcome speech. She stressed her personal perception that tourism and film must be able to achieve profitable synergies. She holds a vision of some of South Funen's characteristic fields of strength like gastronomy, film and tourism joining their forces and opening up for an increased and revised tourism focus. The advantage stands right in front of you! Tourism generates jobs which cannot be outsourced. It takes place right here and right now – simultaneously with the effects of globalisation contributing to an increased travel activity among

ordinary people chasing the good experience.

The German film tourism expert, Dr. Stefan Roesch, was the first speaker to take the platform. He conveyed the message that film tourism is an opportunity with great potential for the tourism industry. By means of several examples, he emphasised the value of exploiting film locations for tourist purposes. He underlined that you can gain advantage of the film tourism possibilities throughout the entire film production, not only when the movie hits the cinemas. In other words, it is a question of contacting the producer as early in the process as possible so that the tourist organisation offers itself as a partner from the beginning in order to build positive relations with the production company. The objective is to establish mutual contracts to which both parties contribute. The production companies are cash driven which is why they must be offered a concrete profit. This way, the opportunity of an actual 'destination placement' exists. The advantage of 'destination placement' compared to 'product placement' is that the underlying sponsor cannot be identified and it holds an opportunity to enrich a specific geographic area with a positive image. Surveys have shown that such a positive image will influence the image of the entire country, because the country itself becomes attractive to the tourists who do not necessarily go to the country just to see the specific film location.



The tools to promote film tourism are many, but some of the most applied are websites, guide books, location maps and the attraction value of the actors.

Although only certain kinds of films generate location interest, the figures speak for themselves. The payoff is obvious! The positive aspects and effects are numerous. In short, Dr. Stefan Roesch's advice to the tourism industry was to allocate time and money with the purpose of keeping up to date with potential film projects and

establishing knowledge of the payoff which collaboration with a film production may generate. A film tourism network is needed which take steps towards increased film tourism – and the rest will follow.

Pierre Tolcini, who is Visit Sweden's country manager in France, took his starting point in the Millenium-trilogy and told the audience how a large impact can be made on film tourism although the means are minimal. However, it is important not to deemphasize the tasks connected with film tourism work. The preparations, e.g. market and consumer analysis, are essential to the implementation of a well-planned and structured tourism initiative. The preparations form a basis for the selection of marketing tools used to reach the specific target group.



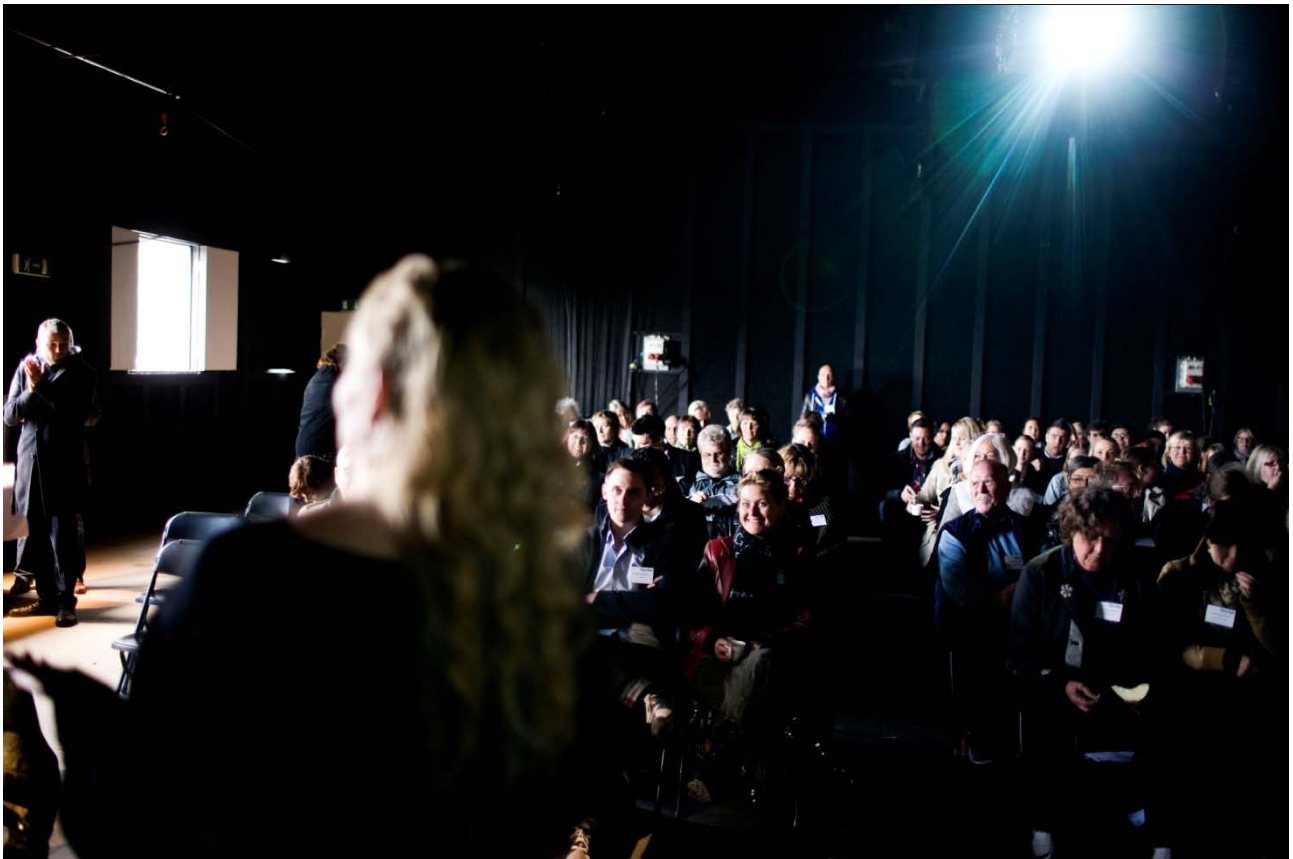
Based on such analysis, Visit Sweden implemented a Millenium campaign in France with the purpose of increasing film tourism in Sweden. The result was a yearly increase of 3% in the number of bed nights in Stockholm. The fact that Sweden has succeeded in exploiting its film successes within the tourism field is, among others, visible therein that tourism is Sweden's largest export industry and that foreign tourists travel to Sweden more than to the other Scandinavian countries.



The conference's academic input was presented by tourism and IT researcher, Mads Boedker. His presentation served as a contrast to the more practice-oriented presentations on the programme. Mads Boedker's focus was on the tourist instead of tourism. He presented different types of tourists together with potential tolls and services which can be applied in order to meet the tourist's demand for good experiences, authenticity and originality. Today's consumer culture in general is characterised by products surrounded by storytelling and added meaning, linking the product to something original. Same aspects apply to tourism. However, it is important to notice that today's consumer possesses more control over and freedom in their lives and they hold the ability to co-produce their experiences, a.o. by means of new technological production and distribution possibilities. Therefore, Mads Boedker stressed that it is important to consider the level of control exerted over the visitors of a tourist attraction. He offered a range of input meant to serve as inspiration to the tourism industry. Among



other things, he urged the tourism organizations to strive for the creation of networks on location, for bringing out the authenticity and the 'little' meeting with the local community as a way to communicate the history and add the demanded content to the attraction.



Next speaker on the stand was Henrik Moeller from the Danish film production company ASA Film. ASA Film is behind the production of the famous Danish 'Far til Fire'-films, and the company is in the process of establishing a division in Svendborg on South Funen. In principal, ASA Film is characterised by being a factory 'without wall', whose physical presence in a specific geographical area is determined by co-financing possibilities. Their actions on South Funen are thus decided, solely, by the presence of the regional Film Fund and the co-financing that they bring into the production.

Finally, head of development at Film Funen, Julie Lindegaard, took the stand and gave an introduction to the initiatives that Film Funen has taken in order to integrate film tourism at the Danish portfolio of tourism offers.



Such an exact initiative was made public at the conference – that is, an Iphone application developed by Film funen in cooperation with students from Tietgen Business College. The application offers knowledge of and maps the locations in which Susanne Bier's Oscar winning film "In a Better World" was shot.



Film Fyn



The website www.filmturist.dk is likewise one of Film Funen's initiatives and is a part of the pilot project on film tourism. At this site, all knowledge of film tourism that the project generates is brought together, and it functions as an information center for Film Funen's partners so that the entire region may gain advantage of the experiences in order to obtain a larger and stronger focus on the possibilities of film tourism. Julie Lindegaard says: "For now, the most important point is to talk about film tourism and to get in contact with local partners." As the conference proceeded and the crowd, together with the sunshine, heated to room, the inspiration and spirit of the audience became obvious. Hence, the conference achieved its objective. That is, to get the train going together with the tourism industry and other relevant stakeholder with a hope that it will reach its destination in near future.

