

XX AdN. La historia del festival universitario de cortometrajes más veterano de España

Marta Saavedra, Nicolás Grijalba & Rocío Gago (coords.).

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Twenty editions of the oldest university short film festival in Spain, AdN, have been held since it began in 1997. This short film festival has emerged as another university activity, launched by the Faculty of Communication and Arts of the Universidad Antonio de Nebrija, framed under the ABP methodology—problem-based learning—that encourages students to learn while developing real projects. In this way, the involvement and motivation of the students is encouraged while they put their creativity into action with the aim of participating in a short film competition focused on advertising and cinema.

The book *XX AdN. La historia del festival universitario de cortometrajes más veterano de España* (2023) was coordinated by Marta Saavedra Llamas, Nicolás Grijalba de la Calle and Rocío Gago Gelado. The three coordinators have extensive academic and research experience in studies related to the communication industries, such as film and advertising.

Saavedra is an accredited doctor with a six-year active research term, as well as Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Communication and Arts at the Universidad Antonio de Nebrija. Her research focuses mainly on changes in the media ecosystem in the production and distribution of audiovisual content.

Grijalba holds a PhD in Audiovisual Communication and is Director of the Communication Department in the Faculty of Communication and Arts at Universidad Antonio de Nebrija. His main lines of research deal with film theory and aesthetics, as well as the skills associated with the audiovisual sector.

Gago is an accredited doctor with a six-year active research term, who also directs the Degree in Audiovisual Communication at Universidad Antonio de Nebrija. Her lines of research focus on fiction formats in the audiovisual industry.

The book's coordinators have made a brilliant selection of authors, consisting of professionals from the fields of communication, film, television fiction, entertainment and

advertising, all of whom have extensive experience in the book's subject. The narrative thread of the book recounts the history of the AdN International Short Film Festival in seventeen chapters that provide the reader with a 360° vision of the origin and essence of the festival. Chapters one to five reveal the details of the origins of the university festival; chapters six to nine explain the key aspects of its international expansion, and finally, from chapter ten to seventeen, the need for a university activity such as this is underlined and the key role played by the students in the development of the festival during its twenty editions is highlighted.

The first part of the book, up to chapter five, provides context on the situation of university audiovisual communication studies in Spain, along with a peripheral view of the state of short film festivals at university level on an international scale. Marta Perlado Lamo, Dean of the Faculty of Communication and Arts Universidad Antonio de Nebrija, together with Nicolás Grijalba de la Calle, one of the coordinators of this volume, highlight the main motivation of the AdN Festival: to encourage collaborative work among students. The event, with a (pre)professional character, challenges the students to make decisions and propose specific actions based on the achievement of a real common objective, the celebration of the short film festival.

The second part of the book, from chapter six to nine, tells the story of how the international expansion of the AdN short film festival came about. Marta Saavedra Llamas, another of the book's coordinators, together with Saloomah Yousefian, Director of University Development for Europe and the Middle East at Universidad Antonio de Nebrija, explain how in 2019, the festival celebrated its XVIII edition, coming of age and establishing itself at national level. It is at this point that the directors of the teaching innovation project decide that the time has come to "cross the pond" and give the festival a well-

deserved international passport. As the authors recount in chapter six of the book, the international launch began in Peru, followed by the Dominican Republic and, thirdly, Mexico.

The third part of the book, from chapter ten to chapter seventeen, which concludes the content, recalls the main aim of the AdN festival, the learning and real professional practice of the students. Another of the book's coordinators, Rocío Gago Gelado, together with Irene Caballero González and Christian Álvarez Peralta, directors of the XX edition of the AdN International Festival, talk about the need for a university activity such as this, which has become the longest-running university short film festival in the country. In the last edition of the festival, the twentieth, the two students who wrote chapter ten, together with Gago, were the ones to take the reins of managing the festival. The three authors of the tenth chapter show that the two Roman letters that number the edition of the festival represent both the teamwork carried out by teachers and students, and the similarity of the teamwork that is essential to bring a short film to fruition.

In the seventeen chapters of the book, a friendly, descriptive and approachable tone is employed, whereby the authors involve the readers in the essence of the festival and its history. It is easy to read, but it still contains relevant information told in a narrative that is both simple and educational.

Prior to the publication of the book, there was the contribution of Mar Ramos (2014), in which she analyses the "Project-Based Instruction" method applied to the creation of this university activity. Ramos stresses that the AdN festival requires research and offers opportunities for students to have a platform to exhibit their work. In turn, "it is a complete pre-professional project" (2014, p. 790) in an environment of commitment and motivation on the part of the students.

The volume concludes with an epilogue by Félix Piñuela, Director of *Versión española* and winner of the 2015 AdN Prize of Honour. In closing, the author assures us that the short films serve to remind us that cinema is play, truth and trickery, a style of magic that always needs new tricks in order to continue to exist. In the epilogue, he expresses his gratitude for having been part of the international short film festival and congratulates the festival's organisers for these twenty years, which, he assures us, have flown by.

In short, the book *XX AdN. La historia del festival universitario de cortometrajes más veterano de España* is a perfect journey through the steps that have led a university activity to become an international short film festival of outstanding quality. In broad terms, this book clearly sets out a model of university teaching that encourages student learning with a quality method whereby students put their skills into practice for a real purpose. The text is motivating and reflects a spirit of self-improvement and hard work that is desirable for all university students.

The volume successfully compiles the participation of professionals, teachers and students in its pages to offer an academic proposal that reflects on the need to use practical team methodologies in the university world to challenge students to get the best version of their work and projects.

References

Ramos, M. (2014). The method of project in the studies of the degree in Audiovisual Communication. *Historia y Comunicación Social*, 19, 779-791.