FIAF publications review #2
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FIAF is the peak international body representing film archives around the world. The organisation has issued a number of books, journals and brochures over the years. This is the second in a series of reviews discussing some of these publications.

The Journal of Film Preservation is (usually) published twice a year. It is the Federation’s forum for discussion of all aspects of moving image archiving and preservation. The journal covers both theoretical and technical topics, and gives reports on film restoration projects and practises at film archives. The most recent issue available online is #84 from Apr. 2011.

This issue contains articles about the five big international film festivals and two important silent film festivals in Italy (Bologna, Pordenone), the discovery of 16mm nitrate film (!) in Italy, articles on film restorations and retrieval of archival materials, and the 50th anniversary of the Cinemathèque in Grenoble. An editorial by Michael Loebenstein (now head of the NFSA) reflects on the problems with archiving digital cinema — a topic that is discussed very seriously among film curators (see also several reports on the NFSA blog, e.g., www.nfsa.gov.au/blog/2011/08/08/keep-your-analogue-copies/).

The previous issue (#83, Nov. 2010) reports on a Belgian collection of cinema equipment, the reconstruction of a Norwegian silent film, the history of Latin American cinema, the collection of the film museum in Turin (Italy), history of copyright and legal deposit in Italy, and reminiscences on the Cinemateca de Cuba.

Issue #82 (Apr. 2010) contains many articles on FIAF and its history, articles on special collections (such as glass plate negatives, animation films, magic lantern slides, sport films, home movies, an avant-garde-film collection in America, and one of slapstick comedies in the Czech Republic), historical research and film festivals.

All journal issues also contain information on FIAF activities, obituaries, and reviews of books and newly released DVDs of restored films.

The publication is truly international and prints articles in English, French and Spanish. Until recently, an English summary accompanied each French or Spanish article, but this has unfortunately now been discontinued. Not everyone can be expected to be a polyglot, and the summary in a widely spoken language as English was very useful. Now I struggle my way through some of the articles…

In conclusion, I found the Journal to be very interesting reading, especially reports on collections and archives around the world, or the restoration and history of films and cinematographic equipment. The section on new DVDs always has interesting information about film classics and restored silent films.

Last October, FIAF launched a new electronic newsletter, the FIAF bulletin online, which is apparently circulated three times a year. It aims to report about the activities of FIAF, current projects, and news from affiliated film archives.