This issue of Iluminace has its origins in the fourth annual Screen industries in East-Central Europe Conference (SIECE), which was held at Palacký University in Olomouc from 28 to 29 November 2014.\(^1\) Now in its fifth year,\(^2\) the conference, inspired this time by Pierre Bourdieu’s work on cultural production and James F. English’s *The Economy of Prestige*, investigated ‘the generation and dissemination of both symbolic capital and cultural power’. More specifically, it hosted papers considering ‘how markers of cultural value are mobilized in relation to particular institutions, initiatives, people, traditions, works, and awards in the region.’ The relevancy of this topic was linked to the current conditions of media industries ‘where marketing decisions routinely influence media content and its reception, where festivals and awards are ever more important, and where the distinction between texts proper and promotional paratexts is becoming increasingly blurred.’

By focusing on the various functions of symbolic capital in East-Central European media industries, numerous presentations raised issues relating to the limited visibility of this region’s output on international markets and the international festival circuit. The conference also boasted a number of studies considering how the generation of symbolic capital in this region was influenced by its political history. Still others detailed new ways media industries seek to accumulate prestige, such as public-service broadcasters emulating Anglo-American ‘quality television’ production, and the use of film heritage to promote tourism.

Of those 22 presentations delivered in 2014, we selected three to be developed for publication, each focusing on different ways of generating prestige: festivals, co-productions, and distribution. In the first of these, Michał Pabiś-Orzeszyna examines how Camerimage — a Polish festival celebrating cinematographers — attempted to position itself as prestig-
ious. Serving the cultural interests of a single profession within the local field of production rather than promoting an international political or aesthetic agenda, this event challenges the dominant ideology of film festivals, especially their foregrounding of the concept of autonomously produced art. From there, the Czech film historian Pavel Skopal uncovers the symbolic economy of institutional trust behind a series of partnerships between the state-owned film industries of Czechoslovakia and East Germany in the 1970s and 1980s. Skopal argues that they capitalized on the ideological similarities of their respective political masters, and informal professional networks, to limit the usual economic and political risks of coproduction, leading to a cycle of commercially successful children’s films that included *Three Nuts for Cinderella* (1973). Finally, Łukasz Biskupski shines a light on a forgotten chapter in the early film history of Eastern Europe – the pre-WW1 period during which the current Polish market was divided between Germany, Austria, and Russia. Biskupski considers the branding of Pola Negri as the ‘Russian Asta Nielsen’ by Sfinks, a company which after WW1 became one of the most powerful production houses in independent Poland. Taken as a whole, these three revisionist studies problematize current understandings of film festival ideologies of art, of politically motivated coproductions, and of national cinema.

Naturally, a volume such as this cannot include work addressing all of the important issues relating to symbolic capital and cultural power in East-Central Europe’s screen industries, including some raised at the conference itself. Among these were presentations approaching modernist canons and auteur branding, professional prestige in changing production cultures, and star images’ connections to political history. Nevertheless, this issue does once again underscore the importance of the annual SIECE conference as a platform for developing intellectual exchanges in the field and for promoting original research on the Eastern and Central European film and television industries. The present issue would not be possible without the extensive assistance of our partner editor Richard Nowell. A selection of the presentations delivered at the 2015 conference in Bratislava will be included in the fall 2016 issue of *Iluminace*.

P. S.

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