HERMAN VAN EYKEN: There’s only one way to really enjoy a job and that’s being passionate about it. There’s no way I could have happiness, knowing that I could do better. And every time I make a film, I see nothing but the mistakes in my film. But I know that will be exactly the ground for me to want to make a new film. And so, that has never stopped.

So, I’m from Belgium, a very tiny, little dot. Half of the population of Australia, though. My father died when I was very young. I do remember him working all the time. I remember him being a rather severe but kind person. But I think what I most remember is him never coming back, you know, the emptiness that he left behind.

My mother and me, being the youngest one, I was the one who stayed the longest period watching television with her because that’s what we did at that time, you know, after school. And I could always convince her to watch the curio films, the films that I knew were on the German channel for instance. And I watched them actually with her, on my side, most of the time, even if it was deep in the night. Often having discussions afterwards about the films where we didn’t share the same viewpoint, of course. But I think that’s been very instrumental for me in being so taken by cinema.

I was at a certain moment, having my own company making the films, and one of my friends was asked to look into a kind of renewal of people to come and teach in my alma mater in the film school. And he said, “Well, you made so many things, Herman, why don’t you come and talk a little bit about that?”

From one guest lecture, it became a course. From a course, it became a number of courses. Then they asked me on a number of opinions on a number of things and with it, in the minimum of time, I was head of film. Then I was acting director. So it came very fast. I found it a relief to stop for a while, so intensively make films, and actually start to reflect on your films because if you teach about your experience to these young, emerging film makers, you better have a good story, you know. You have to have to tell something that makes sense for them.

Welcome everyone. This year, we’re going to be 10 years old, as Griffith Film School and there’s just one question that I want to drop in the middle and that is, “Where do we take it from here?”

Nicholas Oughton (Griffith Film School lecturer): I still come back to the real question, which is, “what is the film school for the 21st century? You know, what defines it?”

Griffith Film School lecturer: A terrific asset of this school is its international connections. International connections with the guest artists that you bring in and also the students from other countries who come here and study here.
Margaret McVeigh (Griffith Film School Lecturer): We are in a college of art. We are grounded in our craft and our knowledge of our craft and our tools. I think that, you know, we will do our students a great service if we remember that.

HERMAN VAN EYKEN: The vision for the Film School to make sure that nationally, the people in Sydney and Melbourne, know that there is a serious player with them in Brisbane. I think that’s something that is now starting to happen. There is a great team here.

Griffith Film School Lecturer: Because games development in such a vast set of skills, you’re basically simulating worlds.

HERMAN VAN EYKEN: Together with animation and games in film, we have a formidable team here. There is a willingness from the team here to make this work. I think that the dynamic of the school has changed dramatically. We are not just delivering a curriculum from A to Z and that’s it. If you do that, just a curriculum from A to Z, then you just do the bare minimum. That’s where it starts for me. That’s not where it should end.

So, we do need to bring in high flyers, big players. The players that our students are also interested in but also that they might not know. So, whatever is happening on the international stage, and on the national stage, we need to have connections to.

(Video clip from the Asia Pacific Screen Awards)
"Hello and welcome to the fifth Asia Pacific Screen Awards in the beautiful Queensland"

Brisbane has this incredible dialogue with the Asia Pacific, where it is basically building itself as the gateway to the Asia Pacific. And in our area, it’s a fantastic opportunity because we have the Asia Pacific Screen Awards. So, building connections through the Asia Pacific Screen Awards with our colleagues from the Asia Pacific, with all the film schools in the Asia Pacific, if we can actually really, really build up that relationship and be part of that gateway drive from Brisbane towards the Asia Pacific, I think it’s an incredible opportunity. And I think that can make us an outstanding school where quite all the other players in Australia are going to be jealous of.

End credit:

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