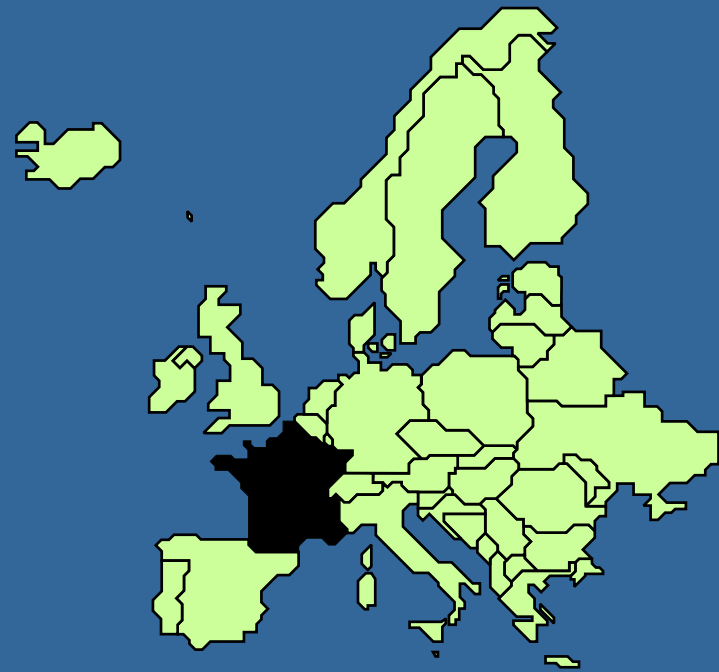


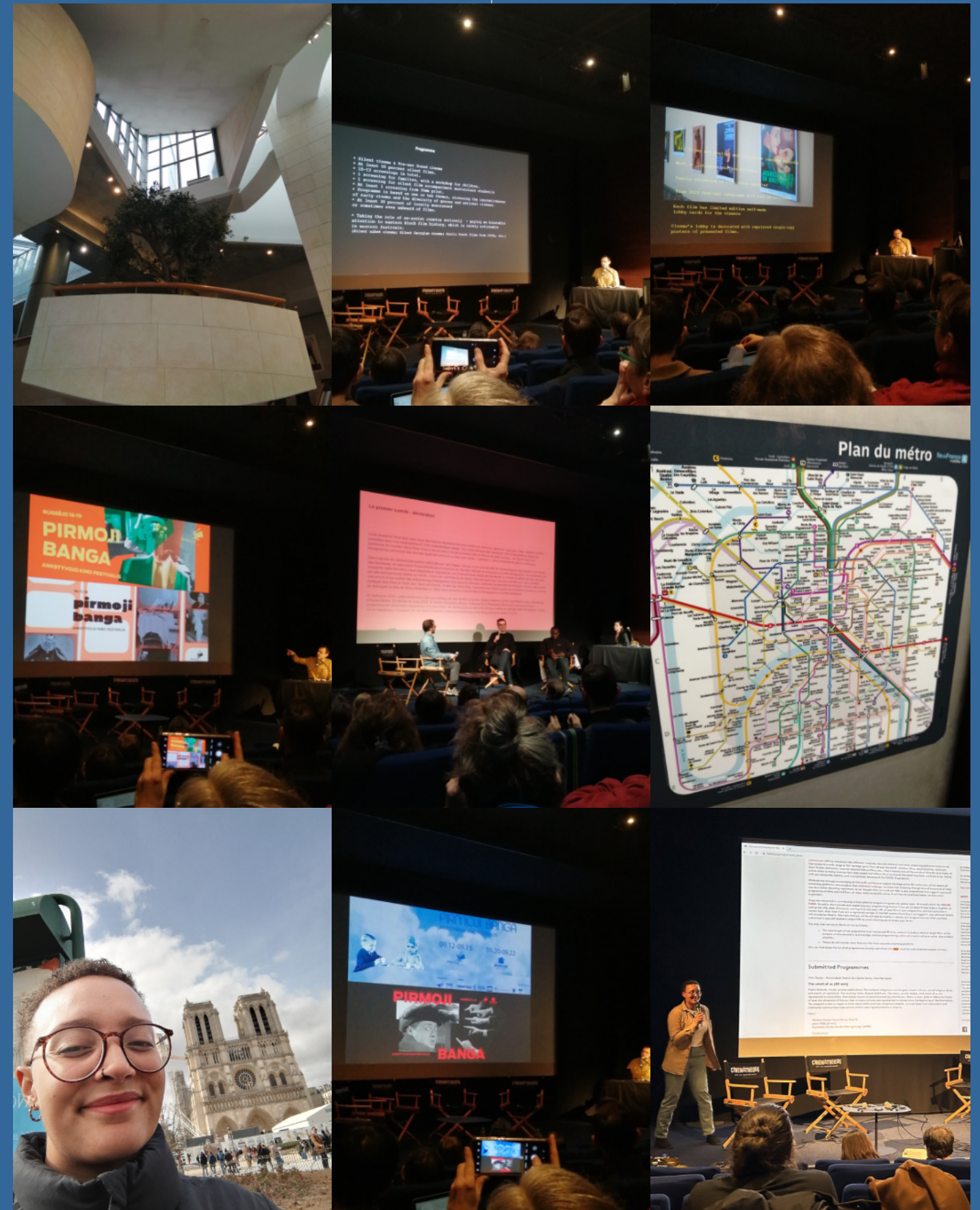
Monday 6 March 2023 FIAB Course

Next on my trip, I had a two day winter school on 'Programming Film Archives' ran by FIAB in Paris. The first day of the course was all about women in archives and documentary archives. Day two was about the new generation of archive film festivals, DVD publishing of archive film, access to archives collections by programmes, and finally a session on Alice Diop's *La Cinémathèque idéale des banlieues du monde* project. We also had to contribute to a programming-based challenge in which we were given a theme and had to create a programme using digitised archives online.

A lot of what was said about challenges for women programmers, and lack of representation in the archive, could also be applied to Black/African filmmakers. Which then of course makes me consider the cumulative barriers for Black women in film.



PARIS,
FRANCE



Is there a lack of female representation in African cinema and why are women more likely to make shorts and documentaries?

It was interesting to discuss the trends of women in archives, being more representative in documentary films and shorts, and also having smaller repertoires. It made me wonder about how we can see this reflected in the FESPACO awards system. Given they now have categories for documentaries, shorts etc in their awards, I wonder what is the proportion of women winners to men and in which categories? There was a clear divide in one of the panel conversations about whether or not programmers should be able to project from archive 35mm copies of print, if the archives have a better restored digital version. I am of the opinion that the original format is always to be strived for, but I understand if the material is too delicate or precious then digital understandable. However, there

were some archives that just felt that whichever was the 'best' quality should be what is screened. It reminded me of a heated discussion my film friends had one morning about the lack of 35mm screenings at BFI Southbank. Is it a debate between purists and rationalists? Or is there always a justification that perhaps we just can't see? Again, perhaps it's down to restrictive legislation/rights or practical barriers?

Another interesting aspect was getting to know smaller European and East Asian archives that had more in common with South Africa's National Archive than say the French and British archives, which were well represented in the course. We discussed as a group with the smaller underfunded organisations what are the 'alternative course discussions' we would love to have but are more challenging to talk about, such as:

- Different sizes, different issues

- How much control does the government have over national archives

- Politics of the archive: War, borders and the rise of the right wing

How can you work with archives that have a strong national political agenda?

- How to approach archive discussion from a non-Western position

- Good examples of archive practise in 'bad' situations