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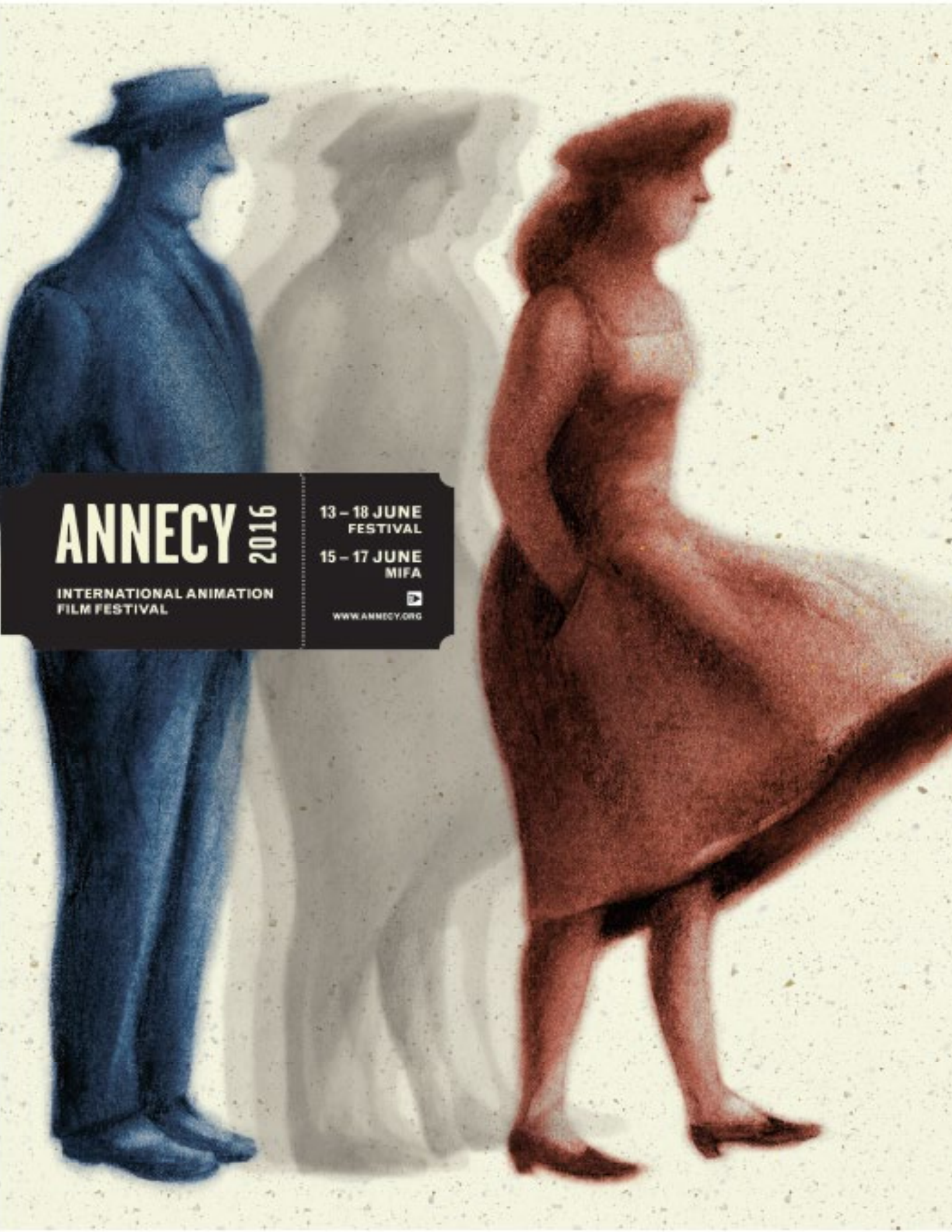
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Letter from the ASIFA Treasurer

What ASIFA has Meant to Me

I first got involved in my local ASIFA chapter in 2009, as part of my desire to support the amazing animation community in Portland, Oregon. I greatly appreciate that ASIFA gives chapters the autonomy and flexibility to manage their own activities and membership, while offering a large support network. Over the years, my involvement in the international organization has grown and evolved, culminating in my recent election to the role of Treasurer.

ASIFA has always been a place to share my love of animation with like-minded people, and has created countless opportunities for me to meet and connect with animators and animation-lovers all over the world. It is an amazing resource for learning, sharing, and growing the art and the business of animation. The people I have met through ASIFA have been fascinating people to chat with at a festival, after a screening, or over a cocktail, and many of them have become deep and life-long friends. ASIFA members are not only artists and writers and animators and academics, but they are people who care about each other, who devote time and energy and resources to sharing with and supporting each other. They represent the very best of the animation world, and I am honored to participate in such a wonderful group.

The role of Treasurer may seem like a boring but necessary job. However, I see it as a significant opportunity to provide the concrete, meaningful tools necessary for the organization to meet our goals and fulfill our mission. I want to continue the fantastic work of my predecessors, while working to make the association more effective and more transparent. I also hope to use the role to build a greater sense of community and connectedness among our chapters.

I have a lot to learn in order to get up to speed and be fully effective, and I am looking forward to growing in the role. And I am always willing to listen to any questions or concerns, or just to say hi. Please feel free to contact me at treasurer@asifa.net

The Single Woman

Writer/Director Signe Baumane, praying to the ancient Latvian gods of film.

By Richard O'Connor

Signe's World

A person who spends four years making a film about suicide and depression might be expected to live at the edge of the world.

Not exactly the end of civilization, Signe Baumane's workshop overlooks the anchor point of a short pier where the East River rejoins the Hudson in New York Harbor. From her seventh floor perch, the Verrazano Bridge dominates the horizon and the ridges of Staten Island try their best impersonation of a Mediterranean coastal town. Head against the window, a slight twist of the neck brings Manhattan into view. Brimming and boiling, even on the most pacific day, the rolling water draws all the attention. This same river lured Spalding Gray after years of resistance -his humor no longer strong enough to resist the water's leaden swirl. Now it wraps around this warehouse joining the ever present gulls in a white noise soundtrack.

"I know what is wrong with my film," she starts, sounding as if this train of thought will ride for hours. "There is too much voice over. Everyone tells me this, and I know it, but that is how I've done it. It is about depression. Worst of all, it is animation about serious things. I see what they don't like. I see what upsets them about it. The voice over is huge problem. But that is how it happened, that's the film I wanted to make."

Rocks in My Pockets is narrated by Signe herself, Latvian accent and everything. Her voice floats

over the picture -thousands of drawings from her own hand- sometimes commenting on the action, sometimes adding detail and sometimes wandering altogether elsewhere. It's easy to see how this concoction could overpower an audience. The film is like standing under a waterfall. Until technology catches up with science fiction, until there's a device that will allow one person to step inside another's head, rare films like this may be the closest thing to rummaging through a stranger's brain -family heirlooms, historical artifacts, old trophies, books and boxes too precious to toss but stashed away not important enough for daily use.

"My grandmother must be at the center of my brain. She is standing confused in the water, not understanding why she doesn't sink. I think like her, I want to survive - but I don't want to live."

Conundrums beat the pulse of Rocks in My Pockets, none more central than the divergent desires to disappear or to be loved. Within the film, one might wonder if these are variations on the same thing - the pull of two directions - the desire to be a wife versus the desire to escape, to disappear yet to survive.

Her self-portrait on screen, while no doubt authentic, doesn't fully connect with what can best be described as Signe's impressive social bearing. Gracious, opinionated, forthright, engaging. Few animators have the developed and refined interpersonal skills that Signe Baumane has. She will spot a young animator shyly sipping from a Solo cup, take them by the hand and proudly introduce them around the room going person-to-person with a sales pitch that would catch P. T. Barnum's attention.

"I'm a loner," she insists, "I feel comfortable being alone." She might attract a crowd of enthusiasts while out on the town, but her return to the solitary harbor view comes as soon as she finds an escape. Perhaps it's that space in between, the anonymous hours on the subway, where the burden of the past and the weight of the future sink onto the nickel-rubbing present. Isn't this where all Americans - 20 year transplants like Signe, and native born alike - live their lives? Riding the highway between where they were and where they think they want to be. Encased in an anonymous cocoon of steel and glass, by themselves in the midst of thousands, where one slight move in the proper direction could bring it all to a glorious conclusion. Signe's underground passage from the Manhattan canyons (and center of social life, even for the animators who can't afford to live there) takes her underneath the World Trade Center, below the East River, passed the billion

Signe posing with a papier maché piece of the film's set.

dollar home of the Brooklyn Nets and one hundred blocks down Fourth Avenue. Passed the Gowanus Canal Superfund site where artists have recently settled amongst the two hundred years of industrial by-product, passed the VFW Hall with its plaque commemorating the 1st Maryland Regiment of the Battle of Brooklyn, passed the Greenwood Cemetery - New York's 19th Century version of Central Park where families would picnic on top of the dead.

When the trains are running as planned, the trip takes over an hour. Another ten minutes on foot, downhill towards the water, the ticky-tacky four-family row homes give way to machine shops (they always smell to me of Saturdays) which are separated from the pornography stores by the highway overpass. The earth flattens, the street widens, traffic disappears. There's a sleeping guard at the entrance to the largely unoccupied industrial park with Signe's studio. With the river in view, and the world at your back - this place seems almost liveable.

With very little financial resource to make Rocks In My Pockets, the ability to lead a solitary life came as a blessing. Through much of the production, the crew consisted of one person: Signe Baumane. This ballooned to four (including herself) by the end of production. Using some economical techniques learned while working with Bill Plympton after her emigration to New York from Latvia, the film required 30 to 60 drawings to be created each day. Signe drew every frame, and worked with her three assistants to digitally color and composite them.

"Give me a crayon or a pencil and I'd doodle dinosaurs and spaceships and cats and dogs all over the house."

Becoming an animator

The typical story goes something like this: I always loved to draw. From an early age I would draw all over everything. Give me a crayon or a pencil and I'd doodle dinosaurs and spaceships and cats and dogs all over the house. My parents even had to put butcher paper on all the surfaces so I didn't ruin the paint job. Then I saw The Little Mermaid (or Bambi or Cinderella or some other such thing), I didn't know how they did it - but I knew that's what I wanted to do. The autobiographical segments of Rocks in My Pockets contain sex, love, abortion, worry, anti-psychotic prescriptions, confusion, conflict - all sorts of things, but no mention of the filmmaker's interest in cartooning, film or animation. Signe didn't cover all the tablecloths in Riga with scribbles resembling penises. She didn't make little comics about misunderstood heroines. She was interested in storytelling, in words.

Latvia had been a part of the Soviet Union her entire life, but Russian was still a second

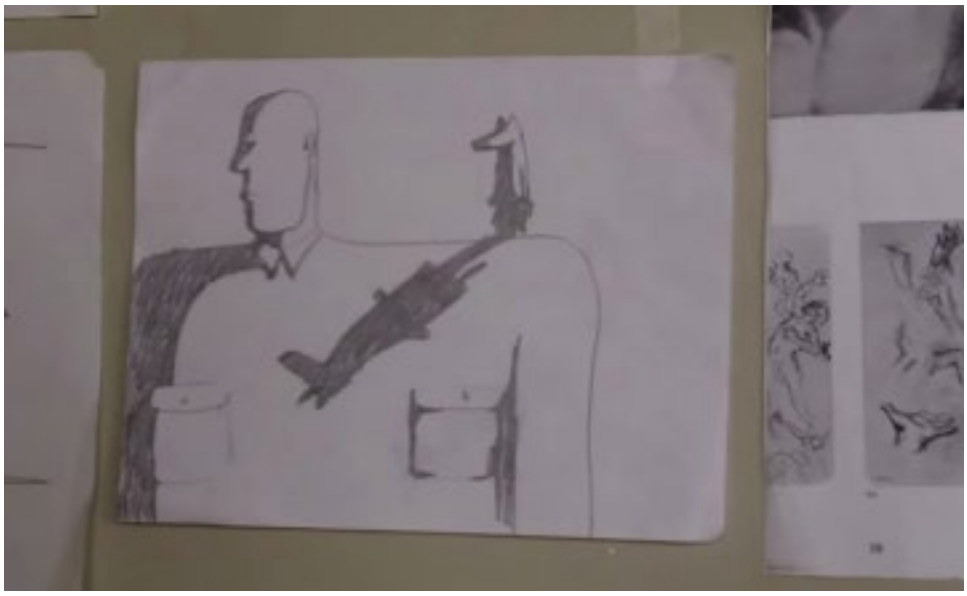
language. The Russian language shares a thing or two with Latvian - the word for “depression”, for example, in both languages takes the feminine gender. The subtleties of Schopenhauer, already difficult enough in German became even more complicated when processed through a Russian translation. Her sketchbook doodles were born from a struggle to understand. Language had been her means to describe and understand the world and no longer sufficed.

Flipping through pencil animation

Realizing that her newly minted degree in philosophy might help her secure an assistant position on the long track to professor within the university system, Signe quickly concluded that she could do much worse than work as an artist.

Until college, her creative output was primarily written. Primarily and prodigiously. And precociously, writing a novel at age eight and having her first work published when she was 14. In Moscow, with her language skills largely nullified, she pursued her interest in dance. Drawing followed. When words didn’t work, so on to the purely visual, gestural and external.

Animation came to Signe in her twenties, towards the end of her college years. In the last few months finishing her philosophy degree from Moscow University - which she calls the Harvard of the Soviet Union - a classmate noticed the sketches in her notebooks and encouraged her to apply for work at an animation studio. The Simpsons had begun broadcasting in post-Perestroika Moscow. This impressed her, even with limited English, it was exciting and unlike anything she had previously seen.



Drawings on the wall.

SHORT FILMS

“What I truly enjoy is the relationship of language to image,” she says. This offers an insight in how to view, or maybe more properly how to read, her film. “People need some assurance along the way. You can’t just show them a bunch of images.”

She had made a half dozen short films before she began to use narration with “Five Fucking Fables” in 2002. Other short films with similar visual and narrative approaches followed roughly every two years. During the last of these, 2009’s “Birth”, she found herself in a creative crisis. “Where’s the challenge?” she thought.

A conversation with animator/director Andy London helped convince her to pursue longer format work. “People who make short films are mentally ill - like me,” her self-inclusion implying that short filmmakers are even crazier than at first glance. “You do it to communicate your eternal soul and you hope to connect to other people. But the stakes are low.” A feature film would offer the opportunity to develop characters and to address an idea from multiple angles.

GETTING STARTED: SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT, CHOSING A TECHNIQUE

The process started with words. Signe wrote “three or four” live action scripts. One, “Love and Health Insurance”, addressed abortion and picked up praise from producers and festival programmers, but the path to feature film production - even in the low budget independent universe - was too arduous for an artist with no track record in the field.

“I was going to do it myself, but where do I start? What do I know about camera and lighting? Nothing! So you need to find a cameraman. Animation people don’t foster those relationships. There’s no way you can make the movie if you don’t know the craft. So I decided – animation because I knew the process.”

Testing for stop motion

“I started as if it were a short film. Of course, you don’t start unless you’re delusional - otherwise you don’t start. When you enter something new you don’t know what will happen, if it isn’t nerve-wracking it isn’t experimental.” In 2010 she finished the script. The script called for a mixture of ideas - the real interacting with the surreal, combining two dimensional drawings with three dimensional papier-mâché, and fundamentally - the tousled relationship between language and images.

The process, she says, “You do it. In hindsight, it’s not so simple. I have these interests. How do I bring them together? Let me combine what I know. I know how to take pictures. I know papier-mâché. I know how to draw. Let me combine them.”

"You never learn from other people's mistakes, only your own."

FUNDRAISING

Even with a small production team, a big film costs money. Rocks in My Pockets received a few grants, including the New York State Council on the Arts, The Jerome Foundation, and a private donation through Women Make Movies which also served as the film's fiscal sponsor. [sidebar] An additional eight thousand dollars were raised through fundraising events.

Audio production was the biggest expense, as it often is for the independent animator. Doing all the voice work herself, Signe still required a professional audio engineer and recording studio. She also decided to engage a voice coach, Sturgis Warner (also the film's producer), to work with her on diction and intonation.

Music, sound design and mix add significantly to expenses. In this case, the worst case scenario presented itself when Signe had to replace the first composer due to scheduling and creative conflicts. The first musician already paid, the already cramped budget had to make room for the replacement.

In November 2012 animation was completed. With a few weeks of art production and post-production expenses, Signe turned to Kickstarter as means to both alert people to the project and bring in the financing to help push through the last steps of the process.

Initially, she was reluctant to crowd fund. "I couldn't stand the public humiliation if we didn't make it." Citing Michael Sporn's unsuccessful drive to finance Poe, "if he can't do it, who can? He had all of those readers on the Splog [his blog]. He's famous!"

Nonetheless, she set out to raise $42,800 in thirty days and ultimately reached $50,780. The stress of the campaign, though, left her in poor health. As the Kickstarter concluded she experienced severe migraines and vertigo. It seemed like it took just as much work to raise the money as it did to make the film. This may be a truism that applies to all forms of independent film.

Along with the film's "problems", Signe also has clear sight of its appeal. "Who wants to see a film about depressed women?" she asks. "You know exactly who wants to watch." One festival director turned down the film, but then shared it with three colleagues - all women, all of whom pressed him to program it. This was a film they wanted to see, the story was familiar to them, filled with characters they recognized.

The "problems" Signe sees in Rocks in My Pockets make it extraordinary. The problems she has fought throughout her life - the problems her ancestors have fought - won't be defeated by one film. Her words and images give it expression, give us all a glimpse into that urge to walk down the slope, to the pier and keep going.

Richard O'Connor makes films that nobody likes and doesn't like most films that other people make.

If it Ain't Broke: Contemporary Uses of Traditional Techniques

By Keltie Duncan

The following is a collection of thoughts and justifications for the curation of a special screening called "If it Ain't Broke: Contemporary Uses of Analog Techniques" from the 2015 Ottawa International Animation Festival.

Computers are great. It isn't too much of an exaggeration to say that computers continually revolutionize the way just about everything is done, including animation. Though there is always a danger with something so exciting and accessible of losing the mastery in glitz and spectacle, animation created with computers is as capable of challenging and expanding the medium as much as any analog technique that's come before it. With all the dazzle of digital techniques, it's interesting to find a film that downplays that dazzle to create something with integrity, or which at least acknowledges the dazzle for what it is and really goes for it. Computers are also generally, yes, easy, but also allow for such complete control over any possible detail of a project that for notoriously meticulous and introverted people like many animators, it's understandably preferable sometimes to use available tools to mimic a texture or a form that could exist IRL, but would be so difficult/time consuming/expensive to materialize that why would you? No objections.
However.

Sometimes in this crazy e-universe it's nice to encounter genuine moments of realness. You know? To engage with remnants of a physical existence that is often implied and less often present. One of the side effects of digital everything is a new appreciation for non-digital anything. What was once so prevalent is all of a sudden a novelty, usually before anyone who has lived through the changes has even noticed. For an animator today to make the conscious choice to draw on paper, toil over a light table with a pile of sand or scratch on film, that's a big deal. That's unique. It feels like every other film used to be paint on glass. Paper cut outs? Dime a dozen. Stream of consciousness morph animation? Everywhere. Charcoal was for drawing with. Film was a given, and the term 'film' was referring to a physical material. Plasticine! Multiplanes! Pencil crayons; remember those? I haven't seen a good pencil crayon mark in a dog's age.

Look at us now: so much recent exploration seems to be taking place deep within a computer. Now computers are the 'given' and any use of film is almost unheard of. While this is still incredibly exciting, and there are as many interesting things going on with animation today as there has always been, it does seem notable these days when a filmmaker either minimizes the role of trendy digital tools in favor of traditional techniques, or shirks them entirely. It was surprising to realize lately just how rare and novel it is to see a purist non-digital animation.
With this in mind I put together a screening at the most recent Ottawa International Animation Festival that celebrated and rewarded films made within the last couple of years which used, at least as the primary technique, non-digital animation techniques. A major responsibility of events like Annecy and Ottawa is to keep folks abreast of the goings on in the animation world. A privilege of receiving the latest films from a wide range of today's practicing animators means an obligation to represent an accurate picture of the most interesting, ground-breaking, entertaining, unique and comprehensive array of what the programmers see over any given selection year.

Part of fulfilling that duty is creating space for the under-represented filmmakers, genres or techniques, which also complement the competition screenings and rounds out the picture of independent animation that is presented. It seems that these types of films are less and less common and it is important to encourage the maintenance of the techniques. “If it Ain’t Broke” was a collection of films that embody the non-digital spirit in this very digital age. The programme highlighted films created using (mostly) analog techniques, not because of any dislike of digital tools and aesthetics, but because it’s increasingly special to come across films created today using anything but watching Chad Gadya (2015) by Nina Paley is a perfect example of the sense of awe, wonder and whimsy the intricacies of analog techniques can inspire in a viewer. The film is a series of animation loops hand embroidered onto hundreds of matzo covers - an “embroidermation” as Paley calls it – resulting in a film that is undeniably painstaking and of the physical world. The hand rendered Passover folk song is very much a product of today in its viral video quotient, but goes far beyond a momentary thrill of novelty through its technique. It is of another time in its method and the artist’s hand is not only palpable, but is the star of the show. What stitches (har) the 1950s recording of a traditional folk song with the story being told in the images is exactly the tactility of the craftwork in each frame. The use of embroidery is the soul that fills the 2:54 minute body of the film and, while it helps to be familiar with the how-to’s of animation and to fully grasp the amount of work that went into it, anyone can almost literally feel Paley’s respect and pride for tradition, family and cultural celebration. Another stand out analog film made this year is Chulyen: A Crow’s Tale (2015) by Agnès Patron & Cerise Lopez, a pencil on paper 20-minute epic that tells the tale of Chulyen, the folkloric Nootka/Tanaina crow trickster. The film, completely black and white, uses traditional animation techniques, but if compared to historical examples of the same methods is slightly more rough around the edges. Where in the past this could be a point of criticism, the film’s slightly crude, yet wonderfully detailed, drawings are what give the film its thoroughly compelling, engaging and engrossing quality. That the entire film takes place among forests and lakes long before humans ruined anything seems only fitting to be rendered in pencil. The technique, as with Paley’s film, is the unifying element that conveys an unarticulated element of the story and draws (har har) out part of our senses that bolsters the film’s intent. The folktale is interesting, but it is really brought to life through the specific choice of technique.

There is a special enjoyment in watching non-digital animation these days, made so enjoyable in part because of its now relative scarcity. With the rise of a new medium comes an adjustment for existing media, but a forced examination and reconsideration doesn’t spell disaster. Encountering new applications of existing techniques is exciting, and encountering past examples in a new context is just as interesting. Though things are constantly evolving and those shifts are important, it’s equally as important to save space for masterful examples of tried and true techniques. If it ain’t broke, right?

Keltie Duncan is the Programming and Technical Manager of the Ottawa International Animation Festival.

SCRATCH, CRACKLE & POP! An Interview with Steven Woloshen

by Kelly Gallagher

Celebrated filmmaker and passionate evangelist of handcrafted cinema, Steven Woloshen, has released his latest colorfully informative book on handmade film techniques, Scratch, Crackle & Pop: a whole grains approach to making films without a camera. The book is more than just a technically immersive crash course for those interested in learning handmade filmmaking processes; it is an encouraging and welcoming text that both beginning and established filmmakers will benefit from reading, thanks to Woloshen's ability to enthusiastically and authentically address a large audience. His passion for tactile processes jumps off the page and feels tangible itself, something for us to hold onto while reading the book. In an age when competition is often more encouraged within the art world than collaboration, Woloshen adamantly opts for collaboration. Through the demystifying and sharing of his personal filmmaking processes and honed techniques, both within this new book and within his real life through innumerable community film workshops, he encouragingly invites everyone to join him along the often rewarding adventure of cameraless filmmaking. We should only hope more animators and filmmakers begin to take more seriously the important work of sharing and demystifying their artistic practices within their communities, creating accessibility around animation and filmmaking. I had the pleasure of digging into the book more deeply with Steven.

Steven Woloshen

Kelly Gallagher: You mention in the introduction to the book that though many texts don't already exist like this, there are a few, one of

which is Helen Hill's brilliant Recipes for Disaster. As the title of her "handcrafted film cookbooklet" suggests, concepts such as disaster or failure are embraced in cameraless filmmaking. In Scratch, Crackle & Pop! you insist on encouraging viewers to embrace handmade filmmaking processes because they are a space to be playful, to experiment, and to continually be learning. In this realm of filmmaking, "mistakes" or "mess-ups" or even potential "disasters" can turn into accidentally beautiful and important seconds within a film. Do you find that these characteristics of handmade films make them feel exceptionally inviting to newcomers of filmmaking? In what ways are the concepts of "play" and "chance" celebrated and praised within the cameraless filmmaking form?

Steven Woloshen: I was greatly influenced by Recipes for Disaster. When I wrote the proposal for Scratch, Crackle & Pop, I referred to Hill's book and Brakhage's The Giving and Taking Book. I am always hopeful that a community of filmmakers will gather their experiences and create another "cookbooklet." When I finished the book earlier this year, I created a website to promote the ideology behind its creation. I felt that it was important to include a page where readers could upload their own recipes to share them with other filmmakers. This feeling of "give and take" is at the heart of my philosophy. Alongside the artistic risk taking, "mess-ups" and the community spirit is the love and respect that comes with the sharing of ideas and experiences.

KG: Mentioned in the foreword by Marco De Blois, and exemplified in your personal case studies throughout the book, it is apparent that direct animation filmmaking practices harken on lineages and histories from both the experimental cinema realm and animation realm. Could you talk about what it means to straddle both worlds? In what ways do both communities value or give shape to handmade filmmaking processes?

SW: That's a really good question. When I went to film school in the 1980s, it was a badge of honor to be put in one camp or another. But here we are in the 21st century. I don't think that there is a clear division in these communities any more. We have so many creative stories to tell and so many tools to help with the task of self-expression, that the mediums of expression have therefore become very pluralistic. I am an experimental filmmaker for one project but I could be a traditional animator for another project as well. The one issue that is very relevant today is access to the tools and experiences of other filmmakers. I wrote these books and host workshops to address these issues. I also want to dispel any myths about the decline of one medium and the rise of others. I'm here to dialogue, discuss and work through any of the roadblocks that served to keep us apart. We all know that some artists are living silent and secluded lives - becoming separated from their homelands, communal experiences and community leaders. I want to bring artist and audience together with simple tools and overlooked means of expression.

When I began making handmade films in the late 1970s, I never looked in any specific direction. I made films only with a strong sense of curiosity. I owned all my equipment so I never had to discuss the methods of getting from script to screen. In Scratch, Crackle & Pop! I can only recall my own beginning and I hope my achievements touch other filmmakers as well. When I first proposed the idea of this handmade filmmaking manual - thirty years later, I had to ask myself if I was an experimental animator using non –traditional methods or if I'm an experimental filmmaker - creating films as a Dadaist or Surrealist would in the early 1930s whilst incorporating animated sensibilities into my experimental films.

KG: I greatly enjoyed the inclusion of actual samples of film leader in the book. Seeing them and touching them made me reflect on the immediate, sheer enjoyment that comes with tactile filmmaking processes. You discuss the importance of immediacy in the book, citing handmade film's fairly accessible tools, and the lack of need for storyboards and animatics- all qualities that have drawn you to champion this filmmaking form. Could you speak to the notions of tactility, immediacy (/but also patience), and accessibility as they relate to your own processes and the desire to share these processes with others?

SW: The leader was a very important part of the book. I am aware that everybody is only getting 16 frames (8 frames of clear leader and 8 frames of black leader) but it is important that I use this as a prop to explain these little squares of plastic as a vital surface for the filmmaking process. In many of my master-classes, I point to the calendar people analogy; basically, there are two types of people. The first type put a monthly calendar on the wall, then mark a deadline with an "X" at the end of the month. The other type tacks up a daily date book and peels off each day until the deadline is reached and then, are surprised that so much time has been squandered when the deadline arrives. When I look at a strip of film, I feel like the monthly wall calendar person – dividing my time and tasks, my motion and memories until I reach the final destination.

As a result of this calendar analogy, I included the film strip to remind the reader that handmade filmmaking isn't necessarily a "flipbook" experience. The movement has to be imagined in linear space with the aid of film frame intervals. For example, if we can imagine an animated gesture, how would it be achieved in eight frames? Additionally, what would you want to illustrate in eight frames?

KG: The book's guide to testing for emulsion versus base side of celluloid made me smile- you mention that one trick to find the emulsion side is to put one's lips to each side of the celluloid so that one can realize the sticky side (the emulsion side.) This trick prompted me to reflect on notions of intimacy in handmade practices. Some of your own cameraless films (eg: The Curse of the Voodoo Child) are incredibly intimate and personal pieces. In what ways do intimacy, physicality, and abstraction- qualities of handmade filmmaking that you explore in your work and throughout the book- lend themselves to personal filmmaking and explorations of the deeply personal?

SW: In workshops, I start every practical session with this lip test. Sometimes, it freaks people out. I don't set out to make students "kiss" film but then I explain how we should take risks to achieve our results. They laugh at first but then the idea of testing organic materials begins to sink into their processes. I remind them that just like other animators who have

to lean over to adjust puppets or have to jump up and down in a pixilated film, our physical/tactile creations add to the memories of our production steps. In many ways, my book opens this door. Even the extreme microscopic photographs of my drawing and painting tools are a reminder of the small and intimate world of handmade filmmaking – a world that could fit into a shoebox or your shirt pocket.

KG: After thoroughly preparing readers of your book to learn the techniques of handmade filmmaking through case studies from your own films, you make sure to dedicate time at the end of the book to help readers organize their own handmade filmmaking workshops. You mention that in your own utopia, (and I agree!), there would be handmade filmmaking workshops at every film festival and community center. Could you talk about the importance of emphasizing and championing filmmaking workshops in your book as well as within your own life as a filmmaker who has successfully organized and participated in so many? For a filmmaking form that can often be incredibly solitary, you also mention in the book other various ways you've found to collaborate with others (whether it's using someone else's filmed footage to animate onto, or animating 10 seconds of a collaborative film involving many other filmmakers). Can you speak to the advantages of handmade filmmaking processes as they relate to both solitary activity and collaborative activity?

SW: I have hosted a lot of workshops. I feel that they are the real incubators for abstract ideas. I want people to learn from each other. I want them to share, talk, laugh and shake off the stresses of the working day. In workshops we learn about one another in addition to ourselves. It is also important to see how miniature experiments become large ideas when we put them on a large screen for others to view. There is no pride or ego in a group workshop. Our goal is to excel beyond our own grasp and into the hearts of each other.

When I was a guest of the 2007 Animateka Animation Festival in Ljubljana, Igor had the bright idea to recreate the handmade film workshop as a communal tool. Instead of giving me a ten-hour working session in a small room with a limited number of students, he opened the experience to anybody and everybody who walked into the cinema lobby. I met lots of Ljubljana residents, animators and festival guests. This was an eye opening experience. Talk about "meeting on the level and parting on the square." When we screened the final film (with live music no less) the audience knew they were a part of the screen. That's what I call collaboration between the audience and the artist.

KG: Something I found incredibly useful about Scratch, Crackle & Pop! was its embrace of contemporary and accessible digital technologies. For example, at one point you offer suggestions for accessible digital scanning options and include mention of a smartphone stop motion application. I find this important because so many young and new filmmakers will find something like that to be far more available than an Oxberry film scanner. Could you discuss the challenges in putting together a book that both celebrates handmade practices, celluloid and film tactility, while also navigating the reality of the material conditions surrounding many newly interested filmmakers of today's day and age?

SW: When I set off the write this book in 2010, I was very headstrong about the use of traditional methods, which included real film stocks with emulsions. But times changed and film equipment is increasingly hard to obtain. In 2012, I hosted a small workshop in Brussels. The students used simple tools, but in the end, the filmstrips were too short to load

into the projector. I put lots of white leader at the head but the images still flew by at a very quick pace. It was the last time that I relied on a 16mm projector to screen film for students. In 2013, I looked into small USB microscopes in conjunction with Dragonframe. I really liked the versatility that digitized film brought to the workshop environment. We can also add audio tracks and compare the effect of sound on abstract imagery. In a 2014 Poznan workshop, we animated a film frame while the ink was spreading over its surface. Suddenly, two animated forms were colliding. This was something new! But this also raises a question: Do you still need to use real film or would any small canvas be sufficient to create happy accidents? In the end, though, the re-evaluation of your skill set can be as important as the medium itself.

When the microscopes are aimed at film stock, there are so many new sources of inspiration.

Recently, I have become very interested in the concept of the secret cinema. As a result of the microscopes and scanners, I have been very interested in the exploitation of the perforations, the countdown leaders and the optical soundtracks that are all part of the cinematic identity. When the microscopes are aimed at film stock, there are so many new sources of inspiration.

KG: As an experimental animator myself who often uses cameraless filmmaking practices, I found that I was initially drawn to direct animation as a result of some of the feminist politics surrounding many cameraless practices and techniques. When I saw Naomi Uman's Removed and read about her detourning domestic household cleaning products and nail polish to create the film, I was immediately drawn in. Learning about the women who have made major contributions to cameraless practices but have been often written out of its history (Evelyn Lambert co-directed many of Norman McLaren's most well known films, Elisabeth Thuillier and her company of 200 women colorists did all the meticulous paint work directly onto celluloid for Melies' fantastical films), always makes me inevitably want to shout their names from the rooftops. What are some ways you think that the important work of demystification can expand beyond making processes and techniques accessible but also branch out politically and make the varied and complex histories of cameraless filmmaking also more accessible and transparent?

SW: For the last year and a half I have been working in film conservation. In that time, I've seen a lot of short films by female animators/directors. The titles and subject matter of the films are rarely talked about, the names are not common and all the work that they contributed to the art of film has fallen by the wayside. Some of the reasons became glaringly obvious: Musical rights were not renewed; new distribution formats were not explored and female directors were not properly encouraged to explore independent paths.

When I began writing Scratch, Crackle & Pop! I had to maintain conscience awareness about the shaky social state of independent analog filmmaking. Uman's films are remembered because we talk about them, write about and share her techniques with words - like you did when you asked me this question. I felt that technical tools and tips were not the only topic that should fill this book. We

have to maintain our uniqueness and individuality and that includes, a close vigil on the distribution, dissemination and the conservation of our films. I am hoping that this book and future writing efforts will steer away from the academic questions and focus on the accessibility of media. So far, the motto, "we share words" is the strongest reason to keep writing books – a selfless motivation to help keep all artists' work seen and appreciated.

KG: In Scratch, Crackle & Pop! during the case study of your film "Playtime," you explore the processes you used to create a film with the earth (literally soil), which aided in the decay of film footage of old Hollywood trailers. While reading this section of the book, I couldn't help but think about it a bit metaphorically (in addition to the helpful concrete techniques being explored). In many ways, handmade filmmaking is a refusal of standard industry practices and modes of making. More and more handcrafted filmmakers are working to connect with each other, share resources with each other, help each other out on projects, and create works that are in direct opposition to what the mainstream film and animation industries promote and create. Do you feel that handmade filmmaking is an inherently "radical" practice, generally in opposition to other modes of more mainstream film and animation production?

SW: In handmade filmmaking, I believe that the subject and the object are very close to each other. I often wonder what would happen if we abstracted from the objective world? (When I say objective though, I mean the world as it was recorded through the lens.) For my work, I think found footage and appropriated images from Hollywood films are essential subjects to explore the language film movement and iconography. When I was writing my first book Recipes for Reconstruction, the derailment of the Hollywood standard was an important element in reconstituting film. Burial, decay and fermentation should be seen as valuable tools in filmmaking. Mortality is such a powerful subject and the lifespan of the physical image is such a useful object that they both belong together. I want all aspects of "objective" cinema to be part of the handmade experience.

KG: What inspires you to continue the meticulous and important work of demystifying experimental animation practices? What do you hope will come from the continued dissemination and further reading by new audiences of Scratch, Crackle & Pop!? Do you hope that more filmmakers feel encouraged to demystify their own filmmaker practices and techniques? In what ways does this kind of work help build community?

SW: I have met a lot of animators and filmmakers who have overestimated the audiences' curiosity. They wonder why nobody "likes" the things they find important in the world. They realize that all the prizes and awards can't be of service to the community or to arts so they wag their finger instead. I have read the comments of so many dismissive artists that I felt it was time to nurture the film community in optimistic, relevant and timely methods.

Inevitably, it is my hope that everybody who tries handmade filmmaking will share their methodology, their joys, failures and secret desires with other artists. I have great faith in book making. Since I have been working in the film conservation field, I feel that the printed word may be the only artifact that survives the test of time. I want to leave a simple blueprint to engage my children.

Kelly Gallagher is an experimental animator and filmmaker whose research explores the political potential and radical aesthetics of animation.

Dave Cox: Toronto Independent Animation Pioneer

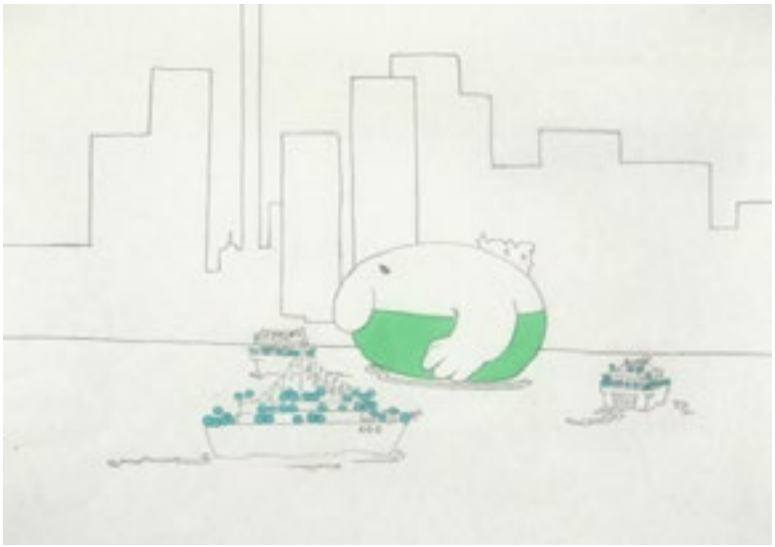
By Patrick Jenkins

Dave Cox is a pioneer of Toronto Independent Animation. Between 1976 and 1982, Cox created 4 independent short films, in the midst of working on a flurry of TVOntario and Sesame Street shorts, and public service commercials at his day job.

His films include *Symbiosis* (1976), a hand drawn film about Toronto Island and its community of residents. In this film, when Toronto City Council wants to bulldoze the island residents' homes to create parkland, the Island stands up and wades away, roaming the Saint Lawrence Seaway and the Atlantic East Coast, trying to find a new home. When no civilized nation would admit the island, it returns home to a welcoming Toronto, who had missed it, and the island and its residents live in peace with the city.

Symbiosis won a prize at the 1976 Ottawa International Animation Festival and was

invited to festivals around the world. It was screened at animation festivals in Annecy, France; London, England; Odense, Denmark; Melbourne, Australia; and at Filmex in California. Cox wrote, storyboarded, and directed the film, with Ken Stephenson animating, and Dave Campbell colouring and doing everything else that needed doing.



Symbiosis

Cox's next film, *Bible Plus* (1977) is a frenetic retelling of major stories from the Bible, including Adam and Eve, Noah, the Parting of the Red Sea, etc., all depicted by animating a field of 400 square 3/8" ceramic tiles. It was shot in one weekend, with no sleep. Cox had no idea what the content of the film would be until he started the filming process Friday afternoon.

The following year, 1978, Cox created his most ambitious film, In *His Own Image*, where the Greek god Zeus is seen toiling at his drafting board, trying to design a creature to inhabit the Earth, only to see things go awry.

Cox's last independent film *The Christmas Card* (1982) is 30 second animated Christmas story about a cat trying to teach 3 chickens and a rooster how to sing a Christmas Carol.
Dave, along with his wife Dale, both now retired, worked for years as highly regarded Animation professionals in the Canadian Animation Industry.
In June 2015, I visited them at their home in beautiful Glen Williams, Ontario and interviewed them about their adventures in Canadian Independent Animation filmmaking.

Patrick Jenkins: How did you get started in animation?

Dave Cox: I was a horrible student in high school, but I was always expected to be a visual artist. I quit school in grade 12 because I was bored, although I am now represented on their Wall of Fame. I worked in a paper mill for a couple of years, where I got to learn a lot about paper. In 1967, I was accepted into Sheridan College in Brampton for Commercial Art. In my second year there, I had an option to participate the burgeoning animation program. I completed the program and went on to be the Resident Animation Artist at the College, doing animation for the school's athletic and other departments.

In 1972, I was hired as an Animation Director with Bob Kain at Videoart Productions in Toronto along with a few talented grads. We did 3 television series on mathematics for TV Ontario and a myriad of short industrial and educational animations. I enjoyed working there writing, designing, directing, and animating. In 1978, my new wife Dale, who had been working at Rainbow Animation, had signed on at Nelvana Limited, and became their new production manager. In 1983, Nelvana asked Dale and I to go to Tokyo, Japan to work for a year on the TV series "Inspector Gadget" as overseas directors. That was culturally most glorious and challenging. When we returned to Canada, I began freelancing on several TV series at Nelvana.

PJ: How did these independent films of yours come about?

DC: At Videoart, the things we were doing at the time were low budget and we worked long hours and weekends to finish them. We were working hard and long, but we certainly weren't thriving. My nickname for a while was "Death Warmed Over". At the time there were only four small animation companies and one commercial house in Toronto. The guys I was working with, Dave Campbell, Terry Godfrey, Les McBride, and Ken Stephenson, were incredibly talented, and I felt that we were ready and able to do something (hopefully) special. We were never going to go anywhere just pounding out our volume. Bob Kain, the benevolent owner of Videoart Productions decided that I could exchange work for using the equipment, the animation camera, and synchronizer, etc.

PJ: So that would be your first independent film *Symbiosis*?

DC: Yes, it was a film about the struggle to maintain homes on Toronto Island as homes. This was in 1976.

PJ: What surprises me is that many people who go into the industry, never make their own films, but you did!

DC: Well I've always been a sort of self-starter. I wrote the film because of the Toronto Islands. Dale and I used to spend a lot of time on the Islands feeding the geese and we liked the idea of maintaining a community of small houses out there. We would have loved to live there and we had friends out there! We wanted to preserve the idea of community.

PJ: To preserve the Island Community!

DC: Yes. Toronto City Hall wanted to bulldoze the houses and turn the Island into a parkland. I responded the only way I could, by doing a film!

PJ: Was it done during the Studio's down time?

Dave: For sure. We had a month and we did the 3 minutes, from start to finish, in that time. We had to finish it in order to submit it to the 1976 Ottawa International Animation Festival, the first international animation festival in Canada. It was our full time project for that month. It was drawn on paper with pencil, and coloured with magic markers.

A month or so later, we received a call from the Festival office, informing us that it was accepted for competition. I bought a case of Baby Duck (an inexpensive sparkling rosé wine) to celebrate with the crew. Dale and I went to Ottawa on our belated honeymoon to attend the Festival. We sat there and watched our film and all the other films. We'd never been to a Festival before.

Symbiosis ended up winning First Prize in the under 3 minutes animation category! We got all kinds of reviews of the film and we received offers to distribute it. The film got a huge reaction from around the world. It was applauded by the Society for the Preservation of the Built Environment. We got all kinds of interesting responses to it.

We were little celebrities in Toronto because, as we understand it, no local person had ever won a prize at a major international animation festival before that. We started getting better jobs because Bob Kain at Videoart put the award notice in Marketing Magazine.

PJ: So it achieved what you wanted it to do? It created new opportunities for the studio and the crew?

DC: Yes. It expanded our opportunities.

PJ: What other festivals did it go to?

DC: It went to the Melbourne International Film Festival. I think they liked the line in our film that goes, "Like more respectable islands like Australia and Madagascar!" (Laughs) It was invited and appeared at the Odense, Denmark; Lucca, Italy; Teheran, Iran; London, England; Filmex, USA; the first edition of Festival of Festivals in Toronto, as well as the

Canadian Film Awards. It was also screened at the Annecy International Animation Festival in France, in English, without subtitles, so nobody applauded. Eventually, the International Film Bureau in Chicago acquired distribution rights.

PJ: Why were the people in Symbiosis depicted as blobs?

Making a 3-minute film from sound recording to screen in a month was almost impossible.

DC: The earth was a blob so the people were also blobs. We had to keep the 1800 drawings simple because we had so little time. Making a 3-minute film from sound recording to screen in a month was almost impossible. Every line we add to a character takes time and diminishes the quality of the animation. Blobs were also the best way to present the political satire without insulting the unnamed city.

PJ: Your next film was Bible Plus (1977). How did that come about?

DC: In 1968, at Sheridan College I had done a little b&w film test animating 3/8-inch ceramic tiles with stop motion animation. Because my Graphic Arts studies included half-tone printing, the little dot patterns that are used to offset print photographs in magazines, I'm sure this was a big influence and inspiration for me to do the first experimental tile film. I wanted to create imagery using little black and white tiles, similar to the black on white half-tone dot patterns.

I had seen some of the Whitney brothers' analog continuous motion computer animation at the time, and I hoped I might be successful using punch cards to manipulate the pixels. I presented it to the Sheridan College's Computer Department for guidance and was discouraged graciously.

So years later in 1976, I created *Bible Plus* using the same stop motion technique to animate the tiles.

PJ: Interesting the look of the film resembles early computer graphics. How did you come up with the idea for this film?

DC: Well one Friday afternoon, I went down to the studio with the tiles and I started animating. It was done in a weekend. I had no storyboard. I had just won a prize at Ottawa for *Symbiosis* and I wanted to make a film for the next Ottawa festival. I used the tiles because they were easy to manipulate, shoot, manipulate, shoot. I booked the camera for the weekend and went in and did it on my own. It was just me. I didn't get any sleep.

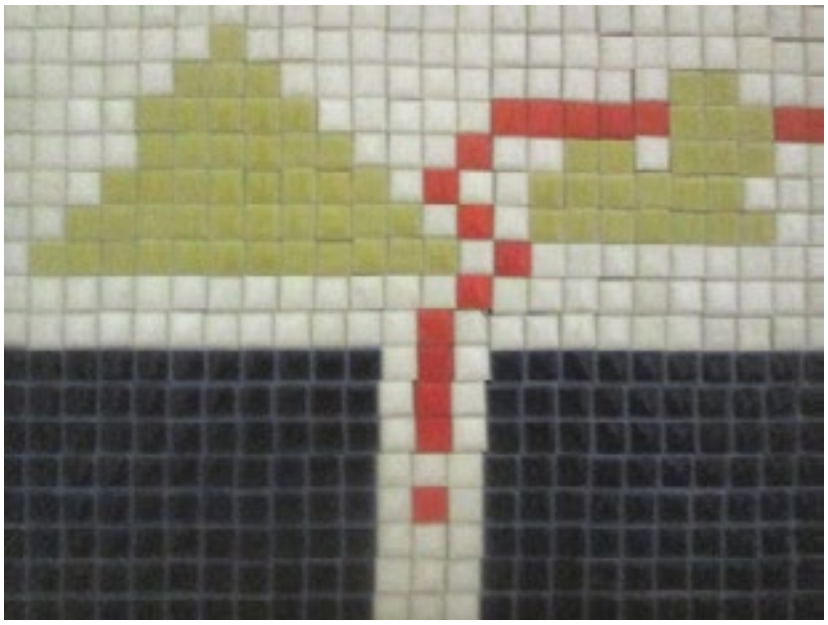
PJ: You just made the film up on the fly?

DC: Well, I had the idea of the extension of the Bible as a story. I knew I would have plenty of time to imagine each next sequence as I shuffled along frame by frame. During each segment, I improvised the next, and so on. I had no initial plan for the film. I finished the last major scene (the creator's hand wiping the devastated earth from the screen) and realized that it was already 8:30 p.m. on Sunday night. I executed the credits at about 5:30 a.m. on Monday. I dropped the film at the lab and went home to sleep. ...Ahhhhhhh!

PJ: You also had your hand in the frame.

DC: Yeah, well it was supposed to be me as God, the Creator, of course.

PJ: It's a story that everybody knows. What were you saying about the Bible? Was it meant to be sarcastic?



Bible Plus

DC: No, it's a book that everybody knows. If sarcastic at all, it was more against the type of humans we seem to be becoming over the centuries. All I knew was I was going in to make a film. I just needed a concept.

PJ: I think the humour is that the events of the Bible, which took place over eons, are depicted quickly, in fast forward movement, using very simplified imagery in 3 minutes. It's a challenge for the viewer to identify what Bible story is being told at any given time because the imagery is so reduced. It uses the viewer's imagination. The sequence where Moses parts the Red Sea, the sea is just a line.

DC: In retrospect, time constraints dictated that I did one 2-frame move and shoot, every 2 minutes, whether the action was simple or complex. I was working with a field of almost 400 tiles.

PJ: How did *Bible Plus* do for you?

DC: I don't think it did very much. It wasn't accepted at the Ottawa Animation Festival. I did it mostly because I wanted to keep a promise to myself to make a film that year.

Dale Cox: The Festival of Festivals (the original name for the Toronto International Film Festival) screened *Bible Plus*.

PJ: Great! This brings us to your next film In His Own Image (1978). Are you still trying to do a film a year at this point?

DC: Yes but it was hard to find time. I turned down 25 jobs that year. It was expensive to produce a film, because not only was I was losing potential income, I would have to pay the expenses of making the film out of my own pocket. This film was screened in competition at the 1978 Ottawa International Animation Festival in the Children's Category.

PJ: How did this film start?

DC: Well I had an idea on the plane back from Annecy in France in 1977. I had storyboard paper with me. I sat down and sketched out the concept. By the time we landed back home in Toronto, I had the story roughed out on paper.

PJ: Did anything get you thinking about being the Creator again? (Laughs)

DC: Well I wanted him to be Zeus, the Greek God, to make it universal. I wanted to make this film to poke fun at the ongoing debate between evolutionists versus the creationists, and whether God created man or man created God. Zeus was simply a designer creating an inhabitant for our planet. Zeus starts as a blob of blue and sketches a similar single cell blob on his drawing board. As he adds human features and appendages and characteristics, Zeus is affected similarly until he is disappointed by the antics of his creation and starts

again with another similar blob. We were a small crew doing this film, Dave Campbell, my wife Dale, narration by Cec Linder and special sound effects by Lare Scholtis.

PJ: In the film Zeus designs man, but man seems to get out of control?

DC: He designs Man, but supposedly, he does so over thousands of years rather, than seven days. Then he realizes his folly, humanity is making a mess of things on earth.

PJ: The twist is, that at the end of the film, Zeus tries again to design a new creature to inhabit the earth and comes up with a dinosaur.

DC: It's a process that Zeus seems to accept as he tries to design an alternate creature for Earth and he is changed accordingly. The idea is fairly simple. He and everything he designs in the film starts as a blob, and everything he designs is in his own image and vice versa.

PJ: He wants everything to look like himself?

DC: Almost every designer leaves their own stamp on their characters and their creations represent them to the world. It took about a month to do the film. It's 7 minutes and 20 seconds long and was photographed with no cuts in the negative. I was working at home. It was self-financed.

PJ: None of these films were made for a studio. You owned your films?
DC: Yes I paid for everything. I have written, designed, storyboarded, animated, directed, inked, painted, shot, and edited many films for studios for pay, but these were self financed and administered.

PJ: Did you make any more of your own films after In His Own Image?

DC: No. I got very busy with commercial work.

Dale Cox: It was a booming time for the animation industry.

DC:I was working seven days a week. I had no time to do my own work. I couldn't say 'no' to work. Oh I did another independent animated film later in 1982, called *The Christmas Card.* It was 30 seconds long. I had been sending out Christmas Cards every year for 18 years, and I wanted to make an animated Christmas card. I figured the only way to deliver it was to buy broadcast time on City TV in Toronto. So we bought 4 X thirty-second spots for our local friends and we sent 16mm rolls of film to anyone out of town because there was no such thing as home video at the time.

PJ: What's the story of the film?

DC: A cat, our cat, is singing and conducting, trying to teach 3 musically challenged chickens and a rooster to sing Christmas Carols. They were our chickens as well. At one point the cat turns the book of music right side up on the music stand and they all start singing "Jingle Bells" in unison. At the end we pull back to reveal that they are in the barn next to our house here in Glen Williams. The Disney Channel and Swiss Television purchased it. We didn't have a chance to enter it in the festival circuit that year but it was shown at Annecy Festival in France and the FilmEx Festival in Los Angeles. We worked in Tokyo all of that year and couldn't control the international shipping from there.

PJ: Thanks for speaking with me about your work. I'm looking forward to your further adventures.

DC: It was our pleasure to share what we old folks remember about our past lives.

Patrick Jenkins is an award winning Canadian artist, animator and documentary filmmaker.

Riho Unt Talks *The Master*

By Jeannette Bonds

Jeannette Bonds: *The Master* is based on *Popi and Huhuu* by Friedebert Tuglas. What drew you to this story and what does it mean to you personally?

Riho Unt: I first read the short story *Popi and Huhuu* in high school. I had to read it as it is a literary classic and furthermore, compulsory reading. I hated the story from the bottom of my heart. It exuded such depressiveness, fear, hopelessness, disaster – it was too much for a young person. And now, 45 years later, my view of it has changed to the opposite. I have grown to like this story "thanks" to the erratic world we now live in, full of conflicts and oppositions. The animated film *The Master* is a reflection of what we see and feel around us and to which we have no straightforward solution. F. Tuglas wrote *Popi and Huhuu* exactly 100 years ago when Europe and the entire world were facing the horrors of the war.

JB: The characters' facial expressions are distinct and subtle. The ape's face carries with it a subtle but inherent cruelty while the dog displays just the right amount of positivity and curiosity. What was the process like in creating these characters? Was it difficult to find the balance and not take their natural expressions too far?

RU: Creating an animation character is one of the most complicated and exciting processes. The characters are like tools that help to tell the story and thus the tools must always be of great quality. All the prep work, filming a real dachshund in order to capture his nature and manners or watching monkeys at the zoo was indeed necessary, but the right choices are still made by your own imagination, experience and fantasy. In the end it is the story that dictates everything. For example, I experimented with a dog puppet that had a lot of moving details in his face, but it did not agree with the whole, it was too "animation-like." So I decided to keep the droopy ears and large expressive eyes. As for the chimpanzee, I also preferred more body language and action in this man-made environment to the 3D-style grimaces. I considered minimalism and precision of movement more important regarding the feeling of this story. I remember when I was setting up the last scene, the dachshund lying on his side dead on the ground in the puddle of blood, my hands actually refused to do it. This little fellow made of wire and fabric had really gotten under my skin.

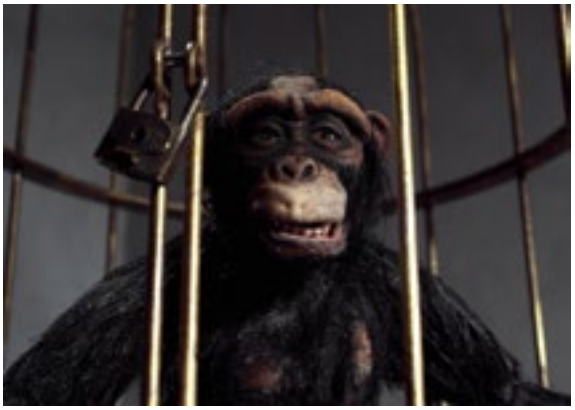
JB: Additionally, when you are dealing with animating animals that are telling a distinct story, particularly a character as realistic looking as a chimpanzee how do

you find the balance between animating them realistically and finding the stylization required for animation?

RU: This was one of the main questions before we started to shoot the film, whether to add human-like nuances to the animals in order to be able to tell the story more accurately or leave the animals as they are. There is always a threat of over-doing; the story should have credibility to express the drama in its full swing. It was easier with the chimpanzee, because his movements, reactions and nature are more similar to the human being, at least from the outside. Even the drunken hung-over monkey is holding his head with two hands just like a human. We had to be more lenient with the dachshund. For example, Popi is looking at the family photos that had been scattered around by the monkey and his tail begins to wag of the joy of recognition. But all in all, the keyword was still realism.

JB: Are there any differences between the original story and the film?

RU: The storyline is the same, but the details differ. In the initial script as well as Tuglas's story the Master was actually at first exposed – an old hunched grey-haired man, who leaves from home and never returns. When I had shot the first three minutes, it became clear to me that the story would run better without the human being, it enables the audience to decide what or who the master was or why was he not coming back. The character that I added to the story is the small butterfly in the jar that helped me to express the dog's feelings more precisely – longing and hope. And the end of the film is different: in Tuglas's version the agony of these two animals was ended by a bomb that the chimpanzee had discovered by accident. I decided to torture the audience longer with a revolver.

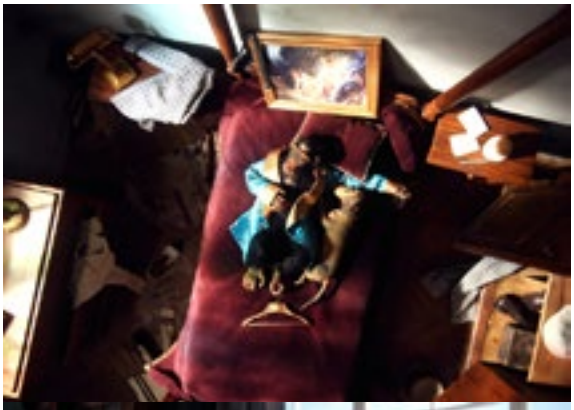


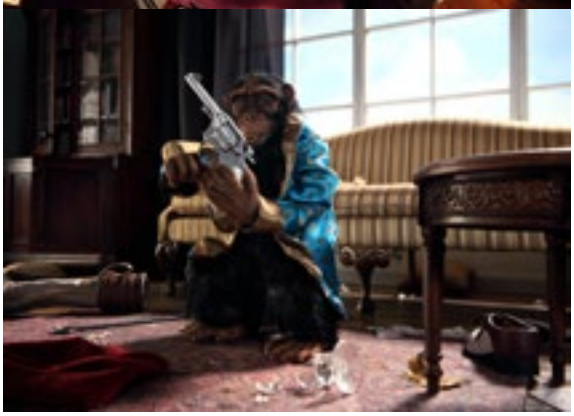
JB: So much of the story is told with the production design. The space itself carries its own narrative for the audience to extract meaning from. As the film progresses the viewer's associations with the objects in the space transform. Could you tell us about some of the background elements you felt were important to enhancing the spatial narrative embedded within the film?

RU: I have actually graduated as an interior decorator and designing and furnishing a room created no specific problems for me. As I voluntarily gave up on using a human character I had to compensate it with space that would speak about the Master. The furniture, paintings on the walls, butterfly frames etc. – all of it reflects the nature of the person, his habits and beliefs. I also wished to irritate the audience and create opposing ideas of the Master. Take the bedroom, for example: a religious stained glass window on one of the walls and François Boucher's nude painting on the other. Which of them suits the two masters, the stained glass for the human being and the erotic painting to the chimpanzee or the other way round? This problem I leave to the audience to decide.

JB: The film does an excellent job of hierarchically carrying multiple perspectives, that of the dog, the ape, and the audience. Was this balance difficult to maintain?

RU: No, I would not say that. These characters began to determine their own frame size and angle in the course of shooting. One is big, aggressive and strong; the other is small, frail and vulnerable. However, I would put the audience in the dog's "paws" in order to look for





the truth and the right master to serve. Would you prefer to stand by the door and wait for the good and old one that you have mere memories of or succumb to the new one?

JB: What does the relationship between humans and apes mean to you personally?

RU: Actually, I have never given much thought to that problem, although I was born in the Monkey year. I do not even know, what this sign system is supposed to mean, we all evolved from apes!? Or did people who are born in the Horse year evolve from horses? I'd rather be a dachshund: stubborn, opinionated and quick to taking offence, just as I am.

JB: Class and war seem to be important aspects of the film, however you address both of these indirectly. Could you talk about the relationship between class and war on the film?

RU: I am trying to determine the meaning of war in this film. I would name it war with oneself. War within us. What kind of masters are we? For small children the masters are their parents, teachers for students, rulers for countries and nations and if their nature and behavior are similar to Huhuu's, then it can actually result in the worst – the war.

JB: Could you tell us about the production process behind the film? (How much time it took you to complete, the size of your team, what challenges you faced during the making of this film).

RU: *The Master* has been one of the easiest and problem-free films that I have made! All the elements necessary for the smooth production of the film – good script, professional creative team, positive atmosphere and thorough research – it all worked perfectly. The puppets and decorations were ready in four months. Their scale in relation to the real world was 1:4. This large size was determined by the dog's feet that had to be tall enough to be able to be animated normally. It took 4,5 months to shoot and the team consisted of 25 persons. I am especially happy and pleased about the music. The world famous composer Arvo Pärt gave me the permission to use his music in my film.

JB: The first and last shot of the film focus on the couch. However the audience has a very different association between our associations with the couch in the beginning versus the end. Was it always your intent to have the first and last shot be the same?

RU: This neoclassicist striped couch that looks like a tiger is the most important piece of furniture or even the third character. The couch is the dachshund's ally, who offered him shelter and protected him from the chimpanzee. The fireplace in the opposite, warm and calming, the large window above the couch reflecting a hopeful blue light. The couch has definitely deserved the honour of being the main character in the first and the last frame!

Jeannette Bonds is Co-Founder and Director of GLAS Animation.

Climbing Over the Garden Wall: A Conversation with Patrick McHale

By Crystal Chan

When you watch Patrick McHale's *Over the Garden Wall* you feel like you're on a Victorian-era amusement park ride – a haunted, Halloween ride. The ten-part Cartoon Network miniseries first aired in November 2014. Now, a new DVD release makes for perfect viewing on a fall night.

Each eleven-minute episode finds the two main characters, brothers named Wirt (Elijah Wood) and Greg (Collin Dean), wandering lost through the forest of the Unknown, a forest somehow both spooky and quaint. The real delight of the show is its charming old-timey aesthetic. The colours are faded and the character designs reminiscent of old picture books.

McHale started at the Cartoon network as a writer on *Adventure Time*. He first introduced Wirt and Greg's universe in a short he created for Cartoon Network in 2013. Named *Tome of the Unknown*, the short recounts the brothers' literal wild goose hunt – they look for a goose, then ride off on it. It's a fitting start to a show that plays like an animated, adult Mother Goose.

ASIFA Magazine's Crystal Chan spoke with McHale about the series:

Crystal Chan: After working on Adventure Time at Cartoon Network, how did Over the Garden Wall, come to be?

Patrick McHale: From outline to final picture it was a year. But conceptually it was simmering since 2006. In 2006 I pitched a show called *Tome of the Unknown* to Cartoon Network. But that was right out of school. I was pitching a bunch of stuff. I was developing a pilot called *Space Planet* for Cartoon Network and then when *Adventure Time* got picked up I dropped everything to work on Adventure Time and stopped developing stuff. So then when I moved back to the east coast, at that point I was just writing on *Adventure Time* remotely and it seemed like I had more time to devote to my own things. So I talked to Cartoon Network about pitching something again and I just brought up my old idea, kind of revised it a bit.

You can make comparisons to *Adventure Time* or *[The Marvelous Misadventures of] Flapjack.* I worked on both of those shows, so I think I learned certain things and I influenced certain things on both of those shows. I learned a lot working on *Adventure Time.* I used that knowledge to make *Over the Garden Wall*. In terms of the character design, my draftsmanship is limited so I turned to design things simpler so that I can draw them. And I can make

them act with some depth. Otherwise if it's too complicated I'm just going to end up following my own model sheet or something and then not getting the right emotion and comedy out of it.

CC: Where does the old folk tale, old folk song look and sound of *Over the Garden Wall* **come from? Were you inspired by old imagery, audio? Maybe some old films or old advertisements?**

PM: Well I think a lot of the influence from it came from some time I spent in Concord, Massachusetts. It was all *'Grey Gardens'* and colonial houses and stuff there. And so that mix of things sort of settled in my head as something that I liked. One of the things I like to do is look at old illustrations and think of my own stories for them. In the1800s they would publish these books that are just basically like clip art, images they had, and then someone would write some text to make a little story based on the image. And they're pretty bad, a lot of the time. It would be like a picture of a dog and say: 'John's dog was a fluffy dog and it would wait for John outside sitting in the grass everyday when he went to school.' And there'd be just a picture of a dog and you could tell they were just writing some random junk based on the image. But I kind of liked taking that approach. So I was finding a bunch of imagery that I liked like old postcards and these no-name old illustrations in old books, and then sketching a bunch of stuff, and then building the stories around that.

I think when writing a specific story I wouldn't start with the music first. The music would sort of settle in as I was trying to write it. If I have a story about a cabbage farm or something then I'm listening to some sort of music and it would sort of

slowly seep into the story and sort of make sense. And if it didn't make sense I'd change the music I was listening to until it did make sense, and build the story structure around that. In the writing process music becomes a very important part of how I would structure a story.

CC: Can you tell me about the final music in the show?

PM: I co-wrote some of the stuff with the composers, Blasting Company. And then some of the stuff was written by board artists themselves. But I think most of it was written by the Blasting Company or me and the Blasting Company. And I sang a song for episode nine. I did some sound effect things. It was really fun. That was the most fun part of working on the show I think, working with the composers to get the music right.

CC: Have you ever been surprised by a reaction to the show?

PM: There are a lot of responses about comparisons to Dante's *Inferno*. Which is a neat one. Every once in a while I get a message from someone who had a strong emotional connection with it – either that they have social anxiety or they have issues with their siblings. People seem to really think that it was an honest representation of those things and they gain something from it. That's probably the most surprising and good thing.

CC: You've said there's some of yourself in a character like Wirt.

PM: Once I started having to be in charge of people and be a director where you had to talk to people all the time and do emails I started getting social anxiety. Which I never really had that bad before. And then I started feeling it. So Wirt kind of got more and more of that.

CC: Even his costume was based on something you made for yourself, right?

PM: Around 2006 I was trying to think of a way to perform music and I was wondering if I wore a costume it might be more, I don't know, David Bowie-esque. Where I'm playing a character rather than being me onstage. And so I made this costume. I

got this old civil war cloak and made this red hat and all this stuff. And I never performed, but then I liked the imagery of it and it seemed to be funny. It sort of looked like a magician's outfit. Sort of looked like a gnome. Sort of looked like a vampire with a red hat. And it seemed to make sense for Wirt, who was trying to find himself and wasn't really sure who he was.

Wirt is the closest physically to me too, but I think all the characters are pretty equally inspired by me. Not to be an egocentric, but when writing I start creating characters that I feel like have good dynamics with each other. And then when writing the actual dialogue, I think about my own personal experience and experience with other people. And so I feel like Beatrice a lot, too: I have these things I can't tell people about, and I get angsty. So writing Beatrice's dialogue is a way of pulling that out. And then with Greg, it's a way to revisit when I was a little kid and having fun and not worrying about all that junk. All the characters, when you're writing, it's all just different pieces that live inside of you. So when the storyboard artist and the writers were writing dialogue I think they were all putting themselves into it as well. So it's a mixture of everybody.

CC: Would you think about doing live action or music or something else?

PM: I had a camera when I was in college but it got stolen, so then I stopped doing live action and haven't really done anything since then. But I like it. And musically, I'm not really a musician, but I like writing songs so working with Blasting Company is probably a lot easier for me. But I like writing. I wrote one book. And it's so fun to just write, just stick to yourself and change things and then you're done. But I think what's nice about animation is you can do all these different things and put it all together with acting and drawing and music: everything.

www.cartoonnetwork.com/video/over-the-garden-wall

Crystal Chan is a writer and editor based in Montreal.

New Publications

Obsession. Perversion. Rebellion. Twisted ***Dreams of Central European Animation.***

Edited by Olga and Michał Bobrowski

The collective volume *Obsession. Perversion. Rebellion. Twisted Dreams of Central European Animation* consists of articles dedicated to the subversive and suppressed motifs in auteur animated films from Visegrad countries and Italy. The authors—among them Marcin Giżycki (Animator Festival, Rhode Island School of Design, USA), Bogusław Zmudziński (Etiuda & Anima International Film Festival; AGH University of Science and Technology, Krakow), Guo Chunning (Renmin University, Beijing), Denis Viren (National Institute of Arts, Moscow), and Paola Bristot (Academy of Fine Arts, Venice)—examine the artistic works in the contexts of Central European politics and societies and also investigate careers of particular artists from the region.

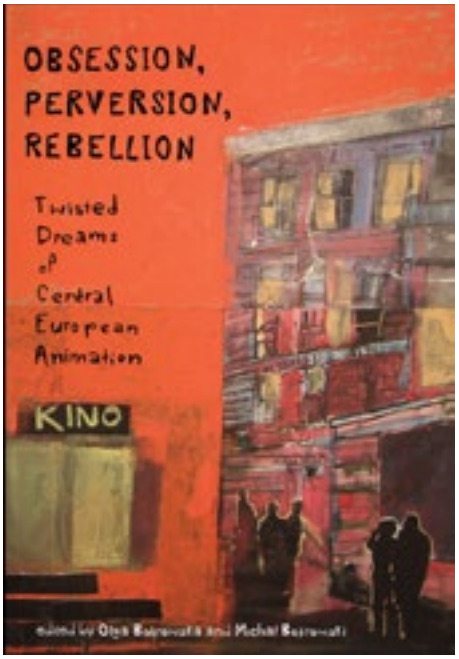
The papers, written by scholars from Poland, Czech Republic, Russia, Italy and China, outline the landscape of animated film, an art that engages both the senses and the intellect. The authors draw readers' attention to several issues, among them to the question of the "powerless" feature of Polish animated satire; the resemblance between animated documentary medium of the New Chinese School of animation and contemporary Polish and Czech productions; the intertextual relationship between animated westerns and the live-action cinema of Sergio Leone and Sam Peckinpah; the artistic personalities of Jan Švankmajer, Zdzisław Kudła, and Alexander Sroczyński.

The Authors: Marcin Giżycki, Olga Bobrowska, Chunning Guo, Bogusław Zmudziński, Jiri Nedela, Michał Bobrowski, Denis Viren, Stefan Bielański, Paola Bristot, Andrea Martignoni, Giuseppe Sedia, Martyna Olszowska, Wiola Sowa, Robert Sowa.

How can I get a copy of the book?

The publication is now available for readers and is distributed for free. Anyone wishing a copy of the book may write to stoptrikfestival@gmail.com with the request (the ordering party will be asked to provide costs of delivery).

The publication is published by Galeria Bielska BWA and financed by International Visegrad Fund (project *Twisted Dreams of History. Subversiveness and Deformation in Animated Film from V4 Countries*),



Institute of Political Science of Pedagogical University of Kraków (Faculty of Humanities), and Italian Cultural Institute in Kraków.

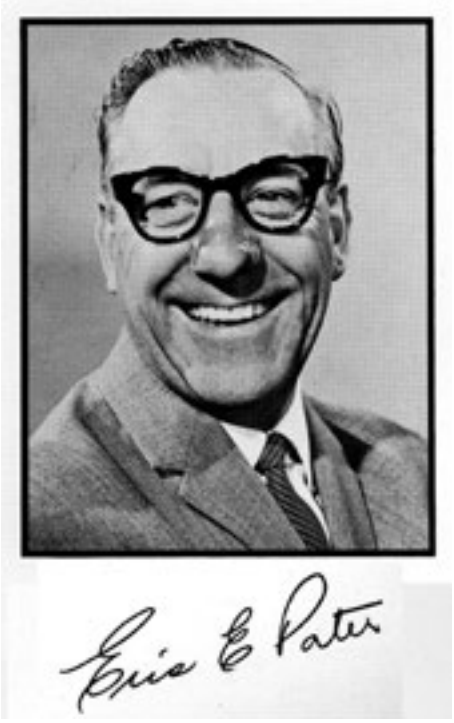
Zbigniew Czapla
ASIFA Poland

ASIFA- Australia

A Tribute to Eric Porter—Australia's Walt Disney
Eric Porter (1911–83) was the single most important figure in the history of Australian animation. From his beginnings as a child-vaudevillian/lightning-sketch artist and, later, that light-bulb moment when he saw his first Mickey Mouse cartoon as a teenager, Eric Porter went on to cement his place as father of Australian animation over the next 50 years.

Revered as "Australia's Walt Disney," he founded the first Australian professional production company, Eric Porter Productions, which eventually closed in 1975. He was an early adopter and, in 1938, produced Australia's first animated cartoon in color, called *Waste Not, Want Not*, starring his own creation, Willie the Wombat.

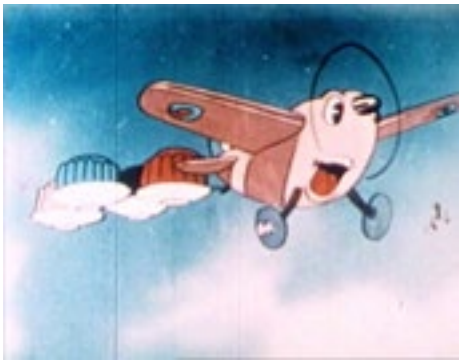
Eric Porter is also credited for some of Australia's most memorable and iconic advertising



characters such as Aeroplane Jelly's Bertie the Aeroplane, Louie the Fly for Mortein fly spray and, for an aerosol furniture polish, Mr. Sheen.

However, his magnum opus was *Marco Polo Junior Versus The Red Dragon* (1972). Proclaimed as Australia's first animated feature film, it tells of the exciting adventures of Marco Polo Junior, the 49th heir of the original Marco Polo, who is guided by the easterly star to Xanadu, to rescue Princess Shining Moon from the evil clutches of The Red Dragon. The voice talent features American 60's teen idol, Bobby Rydell, as Marco Polo Junior, and renowned Australian actor, Kevin Golsby, as The Red Dragon. Eric Porter oversaw the production at his Sydney studio of the entirely hand-drawn film, which involved more than 70 artists and took two years to complete.

43 years after its initial release, and after some restoration by the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia (NFSA), *Marco Polo Junior Versus The Red Dragon* returned to the screen once more for the special occasion of the centennial celebrations of Australian animation last year at the Melbourne International Animation Festival (MIAF) and the 2nd Queensland season of the Australian International Animation Festival (AIAF) at the Griffith Film School Cinema in Brisbane. Animation veteran Cam Ford, one of the two animation



Bertie the Aeroplane from the classic Aeroplane Jelly commercial from 1948. Image courtesy of NFSA and Gaby Porter

The hero, Marco Polo Junior, from the film Marco Polo Junior Versus The Red Dragon. Image courtesy of NFSA and Gaby Porter.

Waste Not, Want Not (1938) featuring Willie the Wombat. Image courtesy of NFSA and Gaby Porter.

sequence directors that worked on the film, was present for the screening in Melbourne, as was Eric Porter's son, John Porter. At the screening in Brisbane, Cam Ford was this time joined by Kevin Golsby and Yvonne Impiombato. Yvonne was one of the few female animators on the film. She animated the heroine of the story, Princess Shining Moon.

Yvonne Impiombato, Cam Ford, and Kevin Golsby at AIAF Brisbane 2015.

Cam Ford disclosed that Eric Porter shared a long term correspondence with his hero Walt Disney, who told him the secrets of successful animation. It is the subject of a new documentary in development called *Letter To Walt* (see https://www.documentaryaustralia.com.au/films/763/letter-to-walt).

Eric Porter learned his craft through trial and error but, thanks to his determination, he left behind a legacy to which that animation industry will be forever in debt.

Marco Polo Junior Versus The Red Dragon is now available on DVD with special extras, including the making of the film, exclusively from NFSA (see http://shop.nfsa.gov.au/product_info.php?products_id=4076).

The Australian International Animation Festival: Brisbane is an Animation Alliance Australia Inc. (ASIFA Australia) event proudly supported by Screen Queensland and the Queensland Government.

A wild storm at sea, conjured by The Red Dragon, threatens to end Marco Polo Junior's journey. A thrilling scene from Marco Polo Junior Versus The Red Dragon brilliantly animated by Toshio Tsuchiya, head animator for special effects. Image courtesy of NFSA and Gaby Porter.

Trent Ellis
President, Animation Alliance Australia Inc. | ASIFA Australia

An original cel on display of The Red Dragon and Princess Shining Moon.

ASIFA- Croatia

ASIFA Croatia started a new program that will present various ASIFA chapters through the year. The program is called “Animation Evenings” and the first Animation Evening was held in January 2016, presenting ASIFA Hellas’s program. The second Animation Evening presented Best of ASIFA—a special screening made for the ASIFA 50th anniversary. ASIFA China was presented in March and, in early May, ASIFA Israel presented a selection of films from VAFI – International Children and Youth Animation Film Festival, which was held in Varaždin from 19 to 26 April, with Israel as partner. The selection of films for the Israel program was made by Tsvika Oren.

Animation Evenings, held in Zagreb in Cinema Tuškanac, have the aim to join professionals, students and animation lovers in Croatia in a non-festival atmosphere.

At the end of 2015, Vesna Dovniković left her position as ASIFA Croatia president, which she held from 2003, and elected new president was Maša Udovičić. Vesna Dovniković stayed as ASIFA Croatia representative in the ASIFA Board of Directors and in the managing committee of ASIFA Croatia, along with Margit Antauer, Sandra Malenica (vice president) and Hrvoje Selec (secretary).

In January 2016, Vesna Dovniković was elected for the sixth time in a row as general secretary of International ASIFA (representatives of thirty-six ASIFA chapters on all continents had the right to vote via secret ballot).

ASIFA Croatia can be followed on www.asifa.hr and on www.facebook.com/asifa.croatia and can be contacted on asifa.croatia@gmail.com

Sandra Malenica

Vesna Dovnikovic

ASIFA- Hellas

ASIFA Hellas members, volunteers, and guests at the opening of the retrospective exhibition.

ASIFA Hellas Celebrates 70 Years of Greek Animation

2015 was a year of change for the Greek chapter of ASIFA. ASIFA Greece changed its name to ASIFA Hellas, took the form of a not-for-profit company, and elected a new administration board, aiming to implement an ambitious infrastructure program for the benefit of Greek animation. The new administration board is composed of Vassilios Karamitsanis (president), Panagiotis Kyriakoulakos (vice-president in charge of secretariat), Angelos Rouvas (treasurer), Anastasia Dimitra (in charge of international relations), and Vassilis Kroustallis (in charge of membership development). The first decision of the new administration recognized the work of previous president Ioannis Vassiliadis by naming him honorary president of ASIFA Hellas, and endorsed the implementation of actions designated before the constitution of the new board, (from September 2014 to March 2015), including the celebration of 70 years of Greek Animation.

The change of ASIFA Hellas's legal status was registered in May 2015.

Uniting Greek Animators

In 2015, Greek animation celebrated 70 years of creative efforts, since the public screening of Duce Narrates, the first Greek animation short by Stamatis Polenakis, in 1945. The film was made during the German-Italian occupation of Greece and exalted the heroic resistance of the Greek Army against the Italian invasion via Albania in 1940, in the beginning of the second World War. For ASIFA Hellas, the opportunity to relate the 70th anniversary of Greek animation to the restructuring of the Greek animation industry was an obvious choice, in order to unite Greek animators in a collective effort and promote international awareness of this milestone.

An Action with Multiple Events

ASIFA Hellas designed a multi-event program organized by a specially appointed organizing committee (A. Dimitra, P. Kyriakoulakos, A. Rouvas), and also participated in several events organized by third parties, such as ASIFA Croatia screenings, cinema and animation festivals in Greece and abroad (Athens, Stuttgart, Syros, Corfu, Thessaloniki), and special screenings organized by the Hellenic Cultural Foundation and the Greek Secretariat for Information and Communication: these were presented at animation festivals or special events abroad (Serbia-Balakanima, Romania-Anim'est, Egypt). Anastasia Dimitra, Vassilis Karamitsanis, Vassilis Kroustallis, Angelos Rouvas, and Aristarchos Papadaniil represented ASIFA Hellas in these events, introducing the Greek animation anthologies and responding to audiences.

The organizing committee was assisted in these events with support from several professional bodies and a grant from Stavros Niarchos Foundation. The events organized by ASIFA Hellas for the celebration of 70 years of Greek Animation were the following:

Animation Business Days at Innovathens (Technopolis of the City of Athens, October 21-25, 2015), informing young animators on European market figures and financing programs, such as Creative Europe-MEDIA and CARTOON, and the development of an Animation Cluster (more on this below). Joan Lofts (producer of *Peppa Pig*) and Benoit Maujean (technical director of *Asterix, the House of Gods*) were the invited speakers from abroad, and the event was supported by the Greek Film Center, Creative Media-Europe, and AKTO, a private animation school.

International Animation Day at the Auditorium Theo Angelopoulos (Athens French Institute, October 23, 2015), including an anthology of Japanese Animation selected by ASIFA; award-winning films from Animasyros and BeThere! Corfu Animation Festivals and CARTOON D'OR 2014; and an anthology of French films selected by AFCA, including a selection of student films from French schools. A roundtable on animation education compared the situation in Greece, explained by P. Kyriakoulakos and A. Dimitra, with the French paradigm, analyzed by Moira Marguin (CFT Gobelins).

Retrospective Exhibition at the Athens School of Fine Arts, displaying works made by 80 Greek animators, and screening 100 animation films selected from 1,700 shorts registered in greekanimation.com web portal, co-organizer of the event. Five roundtables assembled fifteen Greek creators, producers, and scholars, who discussed the past, present, and future of Greek animation.

Children's Workshops during the retrospective exhibition (November 9-27, 2015), and onsite in schools (through December 20, 2015). During the exhibition, children's workshops were supported by technological sponsor Samsung, with tablets, curved monitors and media players made available for the event.

Detail of a puppet by Stratos Stasinos, the pioneer of Greek animation to whom the event was dedicated.

Animation Business Workshop at Innovathens (November 9-13, 2015), an opportunity for young Greek professionals to meet with international experts such as Joan Lofts and Jason Robertson (University of the West of Scotland), and prepare their projects for pitching in international markets.

Children in action at a workshop at Athens School of Fine Arts.

Pitching at Innovathens in front of experts and participants.

Greek Animation Prize at Romantso (January 31, 2016), awarding the best Greek animated short film from among 50 works presented in Greek festivals during 2015. The prize was awarded by the Greek Film Center to Effie Pappa for her creation *My Stuffed Granny*. Three special mentions recognized the works of Nasos Vakalis (*Diner for Few*), Angelos Roditakis (*Safe Place*), and Katerina Avraam (*The Ordeal*). The vote of ASIFA Hellas members for the prize was coordinated by Vassilis Kroustallis.

What Will Be

Efforts aimed at the development of infrastructures for the production, distribution, and marketing of Greek animation will continue through September, 2016. The deliverables of these events will include the publishing of an e-book and a printed catalog in two languages Greek and English, and an English translation of the content of greekanimation.com. Promotional events are scheduled to present Greek animation in Hong Kong and Singapore, and a retrospective exhibition will be proposed to Greek municipalities and cultural institutions.

Next steps for the Greek animation infrastructure, under the auspices of ASIFA Hellas, were presented in Thessaloniki, during the International Film Festival and Forum (November 15, 2015) by the Organizing Committee of the Action and the President of the Greek Animation Union. ASIFA Hellas will act as a consultant for the formation of an Animation Cluster, grouping companies, schools, and consultants in order to promote Greek animation internationally. Other initiatives include the institution of a Master's Degree in Greek universities, and the creation of an animation co-production fund to develop international projects.

International networking is crucial for the restructuring of Greek Animation. The European Training Network in Animation (ETNA), CARTOON, and, of

ASIFA Hellas president announces the Greek Animation Prize to winner Effie Pappa (on screen).

The organizing committee and ASIFA Hellas president at the Forum of the 56th International Thessaloniki Film Festival.

course, ASIFA are considered as important partners for the development of the Greek animation infrastructure. In October 2015, CARTOON Forum invited and underwrote the participation of Greek Producer Vicky Miha to their Connection Canada conference. Anastasia Dimitra and her student Johny Pappas participated in CARTOON Springboard in November 2015. ASIFA Hellas will continue to work to enhance Greek participation in marketing events organized by CARTOON.

ASIFA Hellas provided data to the European Animation Study implemented by the European Audiovisual Observatory in 2015, and will continue to support initiatives that contribute to the presentation of Greek Animation Industry abroad.

An important article on the 70 years of Greek animation, entitled *A History of Persistence* and authored by Peter Schavemaker, was published in the February issue of *Animation Magazine.* The author interviewed ten Greek animators and focused on political issues, including the actual economic crisis. His article is based on thorough research (since August 2015) with data provided by greekanimation.com.

ASIFA Hellas wishes to organize the General Assembly of ASIFA in 2016, and an action for financing this initiative is being undertaken by the new administration board.

P. Kyriakoulakos
Vice-president of ASIFA Hellas

ASIFA- Israel

ASIFA Israel's annual general assembly elected a board of two members: Moshe Yahav and Tsvika Oren. Moshe Yahav is an animation director and head of the animation department at Tiltan College of Design and Multimedia, Haifa. Tsvika Oren is a veteran animation director, lecturer, journalist and curator. The latter was also appointed as ASIFA Israel's representative on the ASIFA international board for the next three years.

International Animation Day (IAD) 2015 events in Israel included lectures, workshops and screenings of films from ASIFA Australia, ASIFA Poland, Brazil, O!PLA Festival in Poland and Stuttgart Festival in Germany. The events were organized in Israel's three major cities and in the southern Sapir College.

Events in Tel Aviv were organized by Minshar For Art, Dina Goder's Animatorium, and Avni Institute of Art and Design; in Jerusalem, by IAC, Wild Kids Studio, and Bezalel Academy of Art and Design; in Haifa, at Tiltan College of Design and Multimedia. Haifa's was the biggest event—a whole day of lectures and screenings with around 250 participants.

ASIFA Israel's animation club invitation, March 2016, designed by Yoni Salmon.

ASIFA Israel's animation club, established 2013 in close cooperation with Minshar For Art, continues its monthly meetings: screenings, discussions, and presentations by animation artists who share their films and talk about their creative process.

A wonderful recent development in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem is the establishing of six other initiatives for similar meetings where animation artists meet and share their films.

Several ASIFA members are involved now as mentors in an exciting project that brings together documentary filmmakers and animation artists to develop docu-animation films. This project is one of a number of successful financing and production initiatives developed by the Animation Professions Union. These come as important additions to the growing support of the animation industry by the Jerusalem Film and TV Fund. See their promo at

http://www.facebook.com/The-Jerusalum-Film-Television-Fund-1088231961209240/?-fref=ts (animation at 2:10).

Tsvika Oren

ASIFA- Japan

We, ASIFA-Japan members, are now preparing intensively for our 16th International Animation Festival in Japan—HIROSHIMA 2016, which will be held from August 18–22 this summer!

I am very honored and pleased that Jean-François Laguionie will kindly serve as our International Honorary President of HIROSHIMA 2016. The artwork of our official poster was drawn by Seiichi Hayashi, a famous artist and a member of ASIFA-Japan.

During the five festival days, we usually hold about 70 screening programs, including four international competition programs, and about 700 inspiring animation films will be shown. One of the main characteristics of our festival is that we have a large, high-quality audience, who respects animation filmmakers very much.

In

ASIFA Japan members attending the 33rd General Assembly, Tokyo.

the past, we have held special programs focusing on various different countries, and this year, I am especially planning to focus on Japanese animation, which is expected to become quite a huge program.

We will also hold parties every evening, including the ASIFA Party on the fourth evening, a special picnic on the third day, many other short tours around Hiroshima, and various Japanese cultural experiences, so that you can enjoy and exchange with other participants!

Established in 1985, our festival is a biennial and competitive manifestation, co-organized by Hiroshima City and ASIFA-Japan, under the endorsement of ASIFA. All the artistic aspects are organized by ASIFA-Japan

International Animation Day 2015, at Kyoto University of Art and Design.

members, respecting above all the viewpoint and standpoint of filmmakers, and I, as a filmmaker myself, have been serving as the festival director since the first edition. Please visit our official site (http://hiroanim.org/) for update information, and I truly hope that you will join us this August!

In the meantime, since the previous issue last year, we were pleased to hold International Animation Day (IAD) 2015 in Japan in three cities—Kyoto, Nonoichi, and Hiroshima. IAD 2015 in Kyoto was held at Kyoto University of Art and Design; IAD 2015 in Nonoichi was held at the Nonoichi Center for Interactive Edutainment "Camellia;" IAD 2015 in Hiroshima was held at four venues, including Hiroshima Prefectural Art Museum and Hiroshima City Cinematographic and Audio-Visual Library. For details, please visit our official site: http://asifa.jp/iad15/en/news.html.

Also, on December 11, we had our 33rd General Assembly in Tokyo, and our year-end party as always.

ASIFA-Japan is a friendly national group of 76 active members (as of March 2016), all working in the front line of animation and creative fields in Japan.

Hope to welcome you in HIROSHIMA 2016!

Sayoko Kinoshita
President, ASIFA–Japan

ASIFA- USA– Central

The annual ASIFA–Central Retreat at the Wealthy Theater.

It was November and time for the ASIFA-Central Annual Animators Retreat. This year, the retreat was opened and presided over by our president, Jim Middleton. After a "Welcome to the Retreat" from Jim, followed by a reading from the "Book of McCay" (e.g. "So Many Splendid Sundays" by Winsor McCay), we kicked off the first night with a screening of the "Best of the 2015 Ottawa International Animation Festival." This was the first time we had this screening at our Retreat and, based upon feedback from our audience, it won't be our last!

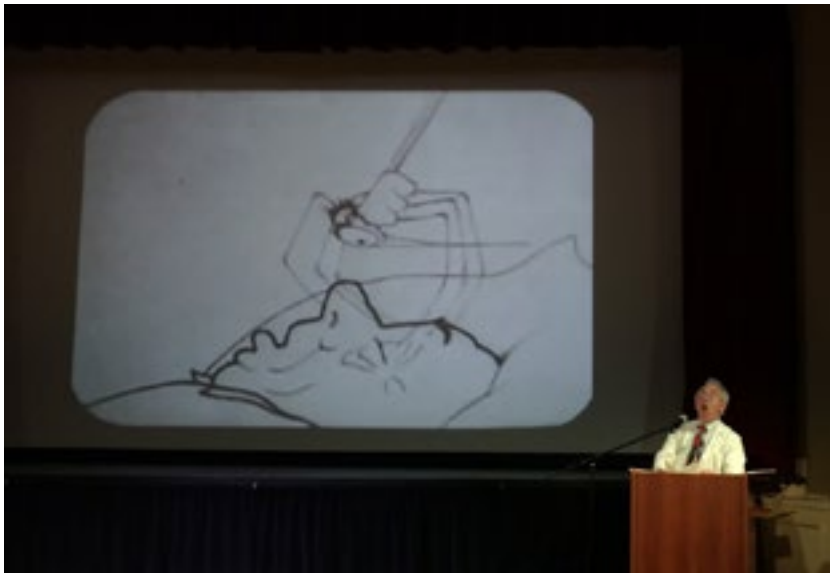
The next day, we spent the morning and a better part of the afternoon hosting a hands-on, traditional, under-the-camera workshop at the Grand Rapids Community Media Center (GRCMC). Our animators and guests had the chance to try out a variety of techniques including stop-motion, paint-on-glass, sand, and clay animation. Also planned for the afternoon were "Microtalks on Animation" but we were all having so much fun, we folded them into the evening "Show-and-Tell" session. So, while everyone drifted in and out for lunch, we kept animating for a just a little while longer. Afterwards, it was back to the Wealthy Theater for the ASIFA International Animation Day screening, curated by Brad Yarhouse.

International Animation Day Coordinator Brad Yarhouse working with a student on a sand animation.

The screening was followed by our annual "Show-and-Tell" session at the GRCMC where we all got a chance to talk about the projects we're working on¬—this time along with our Microtalks session which included Deanna Morse's talk about her artist residency at the Studio of Key West, Jim Middleton's animation of his recent brain scan, and Chuck Wilson's talk on the "Five Things I Wish They Had Told Me in College."

After we broke for dinner, as a group we descended on a local boutique pizza parlor, then it was back to the GRCMC for a quick update on ASIFA–Central, followed by Jim's updated presentation of Winsor McCay's Gertie the Dinosaur titled "Waltz with Me, Gertie"—where he projected a video of the 1914 film, donned a lab coat, and interacted with Gertie, much like McCay did during his vaudeville performances. Next we had

Jim Middleton opening the retreat with a reading from the "Book of McCay".



Brad Yarhouse's talk on Motion Comics, a presentation that he had given previously to the Society for Animation Studies, where he talked about how technology is enhancing and influencing the way we tell stories using the traditional graphic medium of comic books.

We ended the evening with a talk by our guest speaker: "Gary Schwartz's European Adventures." Gary's presentation was one part promotion of his work in Eastern Europe, one part travelogue, and one part recruitment pitch for running youth animation workshops, most recently in Armenia.

Sunday, we wrapped up the retreat with what is becoming an annual tradition: Brad Yarhouse opening up his home for the ASIFA-Central Members' Brunch. Brad's brunch highlights one of the things many of us like most about the Retreat: building up our community by spending some real, quality time talking to our fellow animators. Since our membership is pretty spread out across the Midwest, it's really nice to unplug from our computers and put faces to the names that we've been chatting with online over the previous year.

Gary Schwartz making the case for us to come teach animation in Eastern Europe.

Charles Wilson

ASIFA- USA–East

ASIFA–East has had an active season with new incoming officers and a packed schedule of events.

In Fall 2015, ASIFA–East co-presidents Linda Beck and Dayna Gonzalez and international representative Ray Kosarin announced their intentions to step down from these roles during the 2015–16 season, and requested that a search be initiated for new candidates to step into them. Katie Cropper-Klein volunteered to serve as president, assuming this role at the beginning of 2016, and Robert Lyons volunteered to serve as international representative, which role he assumes at the conclusion of this season. ASIFA–East thanks the outgoing officers for their service and the incoming officers for kindly offering their time and energy to fulfill these roles.

In Fall 2015, ASIFA–East was honored to participate in a screening and commemoration celebrating the life of renowned animation historian and distributor Cecille Starr, hosted by Center for Visual Music, Los Angeles, and New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center, where the event took place, at which veteran animator-historian and ASIFA–East executive board member Howard Beckerman shared his recollections of Starr and her work. For International Animation Day in October, we presented a screening of Berenike Rozgonyi's 2012 documentary Disney of Duivendrecht, about legendary Dutch stop-motion master Joop Geesink, preceded by a lecture on Gessink by ASIFA–East board member and animation historian Bill Lorenzo. Paramount Pictures kindly invited ASIFA–East members to enjoy a screening of the Oscar-nominated, Charlie Kaufman-directed feature Anomalisa. Distributor gKids generously invited members of ASIFA–East to a New York / IFC Film Center premier screening of the new, Oscar-nominated feature Boy and The World, from emerging Brazilian filmmaker Alê Abreu. In January 2016, ASIFA–East hosted our Post-Holiday Party, where the industry in and around New York enjoys the chance to raise a glass with old and new animation friends. In February, indy animator Elliot Cowan presented his multi-award-winning feature The Stressful Adventures of Boxhead and Roundhead, followed by a Q & A.

The highlight of every ASIFA season is our annual ASIFA-East Animation Festival. Launched in 1969, the ASIFA-East Animation Festival is, to our knowledge, the oldest existing animation festival in North America. (Howard Beckerman observes that, as the world's foremost international festivals for many years occurred biannually, this would arguably make the ASIFA-East festival the oldest continually-running animation festival in the world!) Distinguishing ours from other animation festivals is its New York character—while entries and award-winners have come to us from all over the continent, and Oscar winning films have repeatedly been first seen and appreciated by our audience, our festival also serves as a platform of work performed in and around New York City. Also distinguishing our festival is its peer-juried structure: any currently enrolled ASIFA–East member is eligible to vote at our jury nights, enabling independent filmmakers and films opportunity to be seen and celebrated that they may not enjoy at more commercial events. ASIFA–East thanks our 2016 sponsors Bustle.com and Battery Pop for their kind support, and School of Visual Arts and Parsons Institute / The New School for again providing kind assistance and facilities for, respectively, jury screenings and awards night.

A listing of this year's winners, with links to some of the winning films, may be found at http://www.asifaeast.com/festival/2016-winners/.

Ray Kosarin
ASIFA–East

ASIFA- USA– Hollywood

On Feb 6th, 2016 ASIFA–Hollywood held its 43rd Annual Annie Awards™ at UCLA's Royce Hall.

Pixar Animation Studios took home the lion's share of the awards, with 'Inside Out' receiving Best Animated Feature along with eleven other categories, including Outstanding Music, Editing, Production Design, Voice Acting, Writing and Directing.

Jonas Rivera & Pete Docter- Inside Out - Best Film

This year was the first for the Annies new category, Best Animated Feature – Independent, with Filme de Papel's Boy and the World taking the top honor.

The Best Animated Special Production was awarded to He Named Me Malala (Parkes-MacDonald/Little Door); Best Animated Short Subject to World of Tomorrow (Don Hertzfeldt); Best Animated TV/Broadcast Commercial to Man and Dog (Psyop);

Jason Carpenter - He Named Me Malala

Best General Audience Animated TV/Broadcast Production for Preschool Children to Tumble Leaf – "Mirror" (Amazon Studios and Bix Pix Entertainment); Best Animated TV/Broadcast Production for Children to Wander Over Yonder – "The Breakfast" (Disney Television Animation); Best Animated TV/Broadcast Production for a General Audience to The Simpsons – "Halloween of Horror" (Gracie Films in Association with 20th Century Fox Television); Outstanding Achievement for Character Animation in a Live Action Production to The Revenant – "The Bear" (Regency Enterprises, New Regency Pictures, Anonymous Content, M Productions, Appian Way, RatPac-Dune Entertainment); and Best Student Film ed (Sheridan College – Taha Neyestani).

This year's Juried Award recipients included Winsor McCay Lifetime Achievement Award – Joe Ranft (posthumously),

Phil Roman - Winsor McCay Award

Phil Roman and Isao Takahata. The Winsor McCay Award is one of the highest honors given to an individual in the animation industry in recognition for

Boy and the World - Best Animated Feature - Independent

career contributions to the art of animation. Don Hahn was the recipient of this year's June Foray award, which honors an individual who has given significant and benevolent contributions to the art and industry of animation.

Don Hahn - June Foray Award

Joe Ranft WInsor - Daughter Brother

Today, ASIFA–Hollywood is the largest chapter of ASIFA's international organization. ASIFA–Hollywood supports a range of animation activities and preservation efforts through its membership. Current initiatives include the Animation Archive, Animation Aid Foundation, Animation Educators Forum, animated film preservation, special events and screenings.

Created in 1972 by June Foray, today the Annie Awards honor overall excellence as well as individual achievement in a total of 36 categories. For more information on the Annie Awards, please visit www.annieawards.org. For information about ASIFA–Hollywood, and for the complete list of winners, visit www.asifa-hollywood.org.

Jerry Beck -
ASIFA - Hollywood President

Frank Gladstone -
ASIFA - Hollywood Executive Director

Contact information

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AUSTRIA	Thomas Renoldner	Stefan Stratil
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA	Berin Tuzlic	Berin Tuzlic
BULGARIA	Pencho Kunchev	Pencho Kunchev
CARIBBEAN	Camille Selvon Abrahams	Camille Selvon Abrahams
CHILE	Vivienne Barry	Vivienne Barry
CHINA	Li Zhong Qiu	Li Zhong Qiu
CHINA-JILIN	Zheng Liguo	Zheng Liguo
CHINA-XIAMEN	Wu Zhiqiang	Wu Zhiqiang
COLOMBIA	Ricardo Arce	Ricardo Arce
CROATIA	Vesna Dovnikovic	Vesna Dovnikovic
CYPRUS	Yiorgos Tsangaris	Yiorgos Tsangaris
EGYPT	Mohamed Ghazala	Mohamed Ghazala
FINLAND	Heikki Jokinen	Heikki Jokinen
FRANCE	Sabine Zipci	Sabine Zipci
GREECE	Anastasia Dimitra	Yiannis Vassiliadis
HUNGARY	Tamas Patrovits	Tamas Patrovits
INDIA	Bill Dennis	Anand Gurani
INDONESIA	Gotot Prakosa	Gotot Prakosa
IRAN	Noureddin Zarrinkelk	Noureddin Zarrinkelk
ISRAEL	Tsvika Oren	Sarah Hatooka, Tsvika Oren
ITALY	Luca Raffaelli	Alfio Bastiancich
JAPAN	Sayoko Kinoshita	Sayoko Kinoshita
KOREA	Nelson Shin	Nelson Shin
MEXICO	Jose Carlos Garcia de Letona	Jose Carlos Garcia de Letona
POLAND	Mariusz Frukacz	Mariusz Frukacz
ROMANIA	Genevieve Georgesco	Genevieve Georgesco
SERBIA	Bozidar Zecevic	Bozidar Zecevic
SWITZERLAND	Monica Stadler	Jonas Raeber
TURKEY	Berat Ilk	Berat Ilk
UNITED KINGDOM	Margot Grimwood	Margot Grimwood
USA ATLANTA	Fatimah Abdullah	Fatimah Abdullah
USA CENTRAL	Deanna Morse	Jim Middleton
USA COLORADO	Corrie Francis Parks	Ed Desroches
USA EAST	Ray Kosarin	Dayna Gonzalez, Linda Beck
USA HOLLYWOOD	Jamie Kezlarian Bolio	Frank Gladstone
USA PORTLAND	Rebekah Villon	Sven Bonnichsen
USA SAN FRANCISCO	Nancy Denney-Phelps	Karl Cohen

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Call For ASIFA Fees

You may join ASIFA either as a member of a National Group (which in some cases may offer additional benefits such as local screenings, programs and events; contact your National Group for information) or as an individual member-at-large. International ASIFA members receive free entry at the animation festivals in Zagreb, Hiroshima and Espinho, and reduced prices at the Ottawa festival. Each ASIFA National Group sets its own annual membership fee, which includes $15 US (or 15 Euros) for each international member, payable by the Group to ASIFA International. Individual members unaffiliated with a National Group may pay directly to ASIFA International an annual membership of $33 US (or 33 Euros).
ASIFA members in the European region should pay in Euros, in America and Asia in US dollars.

ASIFA National Groups (and individual members-at-large) who pay dues in Euros are requested to make a bank transfer to:
Name of the bank: PSK
Name of the bank account: Association Internationale du Film d'Animation
IBAN: AT156.000.00.00.92171318
BIC: OPSKATWW
Address: A-1018 Wien, Georg-Cochplatz 2 (usually not needed)

Paypal.com payments are also accepted – please contact the ASIFA Treasurer for more information.

THE 16TH INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FESTIVAL

HIROSHIMA 2016

第16回 広島国際アニメーションフェスティバル

2016年8月18日(木)～22日(月)　JMSアステールプラザ

http://hiroanim.org/

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共催：国際アニメーションフィルム協会日本支部（ASIFA-JAPAN）

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