



ELVIS IS ABOUT TO SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL AGAIN AN IMPRESSIVE NEW USE OF ANIMATION

By Karl Cohen

The show tentatively called Elvis Evolution is scheduled to premiere in London in November and then go on a world tour. Resurrecting Elvis may not be your idea of what animation is all about, but bringing inanimate things to life is the basic definition of it. Now, thanks to new developments in technology a new form of entertainment that uses computer animation is being developed and its potential as a commercial form of entertainment might be incredible.

The advanced publicity for the Elvis Evolution show calls it a next-generation tribute with a “jaw dropping concert finale.” It is being produced in Britain by Layered Reality in cooperation with the cooperation of Presley’s estate. They are claiming Elvis is the “biggest star of stage and screen.” Will he soon become the virtual world’s biggest star as well?

Creating stage illusions of deceased performers before a live audience, dates back to the 19th Century and possibly earlier. Stage magicians used to make ghosts appear onstage using an actor and mirrors that were out of sight from the audience. What the audience saw was the actor’s image reflected from the mirror and onto a thin scrim that acted like an invisible screen.

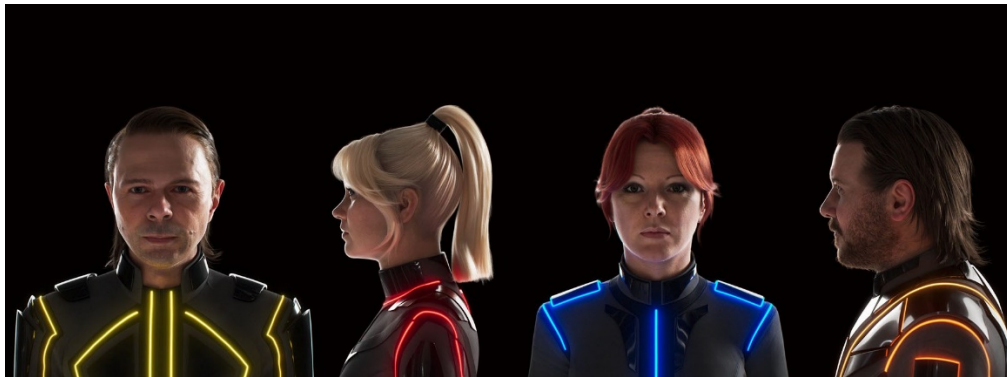
In the 21st Century several productions have used the Musion Eyeliner imaging system that is an updated version of the ghost trick. A mylar screen is used and the lit figure has a black background behind it. That results in the figure self-matting (compositing) so what the audience sees is the lit figure in front of whatever the stage’s backdrop is (often a black curtain).

The video projectors used today are often state of the art, ultra bright 54,000 lumen machines, so people assume the star is really there in the spotlight. Search on your computer for “Musion Eyeliner” to learn details about how the magic is created, <https://www.installation-international.com/case-studies/musion-eyeliner-projects-tupac-s-ghost-at-coachella>



A digital Tupac Shankur

The first modern use of this system that was the well-publicized was Tupac Shankur's appearance on the closing night of the 2012 Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in Southern California. Tupac's fans knew their beloved hip-hop rap star was murdered in Las Vegas in 1996, so their minds must have been blown when he once again appeared on stage. The 3D animation by Digital Domain was realistic enough to amaze a lot of folks. Digital Domaine is best known for their high-end special effects for major Hollywood features (*Titanic*, *Spider-Man Homecoming*, *Avengers: Infinity Wars*, *Terminator: Dark Fate*, and over 100 other films).



The digital stars of ABBA Voyage

The most elaborate and most financially successful show to date has been ABBA Voyage, a 90-minute show featuring the Swedish band's top hits from the 1970s. It is being presented in a specially built 3,000 seat theatre in east London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park using lots of new high energy techniques in lighting, sound and special effects. It combines life size realistic looking digital recreations of ABBA's original singers as they looked about 1977 when they became famous. Their avatars are in the center stage with a live ten-piece band off to one side. There is also an array of special effect lightening instruments and other trippy effects built into the walls and the hall's ceiling.

This amazing extravaganza cost about 140 million pounds (176 million dollars) to produce. Work on it began in 2016. It grossed 1.6 million pounds a week in 2022 (178 million pounds/225 million dollars) in 2022. The show was held over and continued its successful run in 2023. Now performances are scheduled through

November 2024! Impressive videos of the show are online <https://abbavoyage.com/> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZMNciTX7r8>



To make this show a success the producers hired Disney’s Industrial Light and Magic to turn the concept into a reality. Ben Morris was the ILM Visual Supervisor (creative designer) who has received an Academy Award and other honors for his work in special effects. Morris and his crew spent five weeks in Stockholm filming the band members performing their old hits while wearing motion-capture suits.

The production uses a new way to reproduce the images. The gigantic digital performers are reproduced on giant 65 million-pixel LED screens on both sides of the stage.

(Note: Disney bought ILM in 2012, but newspapers still call ILM a George Lucas’s property.)

The brightly lit life-sized figures in center stage are seen against a black background so they stand out against the black stage. The audience assumes they are real 3D figures, but they are actually two-dimensional. Fans are probably too engrossed in the excitement of the event to think about how it is being created.

When you watch the videos of the show you can’t but help notice the moving lights that adds to the excitement. There are over 500 of them and they are divided into 20 sets so their movements can dance across the audience in different ways. Also, in 2024 there will be one or more traveling packages of ABBA.

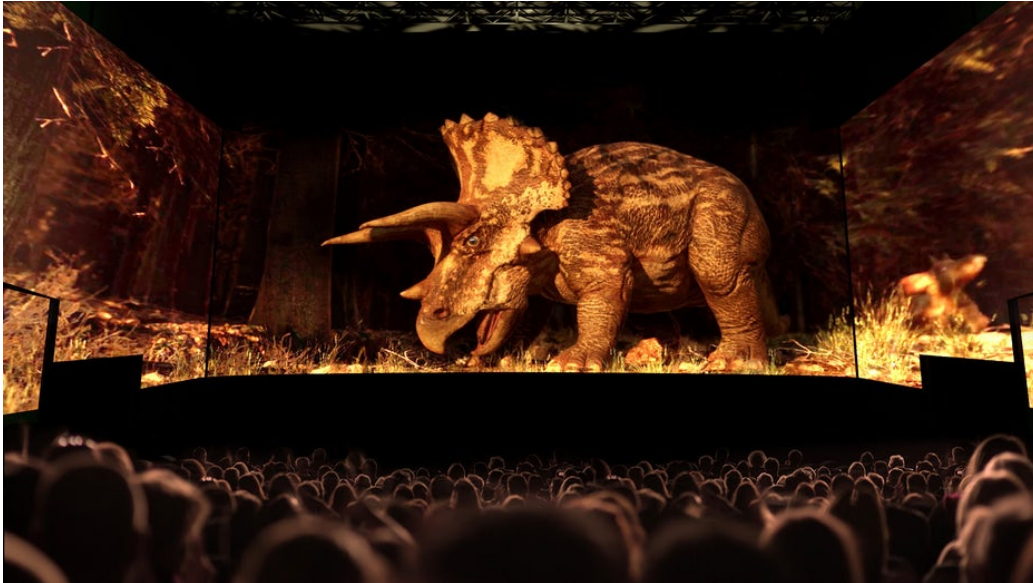


Not all attempts to present “holographic” concerts have been artistically successful. A show that sounded potentially terrific was the Evening with Whitney Houston. The concept was for Whitney to perform and introduce a series of great singers from the past including Michael Jackson, Billie Holiday, and Tupac Shankur. Unfortunately, the producer didn’t work closely with Whitney Houston’s estate when they created her likeness. When her family saw the work being created, they said the animated figure “didn’t look like Whitney.”

Footage from An Evening with Whitney in Las Vegas is online. The show uses a live band, singers and dancers. Decide for yourself if the arms are too floppy, her movements are too jerky, if the mouth movement were accurate, etc. The digital “photography” avoids closeups, films her against a black background so she is easy to composite into the movie and the longshot footage of her isn’t that sharp or detailed. Also, Houston was

a light skinned Black woman, but footage of the digital replica in action looks like she is white. The show had a seven-month run in Las Vegas in 2022 and showings continued in 2023. https://www.google.com/search?q=+An+Evening+with+Whitney+%E2%80%93+The+Whitney+Houston+Hologram+Tour&sca_esv=596828094&source=hp&ei=XQ2dZZ

A common misconception is that all of these shows are created with hologram technology. The producers and other involved in this new form of entertainment are using high-resolution technology and they and the press have at times been calling the shows holographic. But they aren't. Lasers are not used to create or project the images in these shows. The use of words related to holograms is there to excite the public into thinking they are going to see cutting edge images. They are, but the misleading vocabulary is simply there to sell tickets by using hot buzz words that suggests something amazing is happening using holograms.



ARE YOU READY TO SEE “HOLOGRAPHIC” DINOSAURS? The thrill of seeing realistic looking life-sized dinosaurs is available in Houston, Texas at their Museum of Natural Science. They opened an \$85 million dinosaur hall in 2012 and in 2022 they opened a “HoloTheater” where you can experience *Dinosaur Discoveries: A Holographic Adventure*. It is in an immersive theater with a giant 60 foot tall and 80 foot wide center screen with “two robust side screen projection surfaces.” The show “brings to life a panoramic, immersive cinema experience.” This is “a 21st Century hologram-driven, must-see attraction.”

Is the above scientifically accurate or a lot of exaggerated hype that was being used to promote the project before it premiered? One clue is that “the museum joined forces with BASS Entertainment, an immersive entertainment company known for its use of holograms featuring legendary artists like Buddy Holly, Roy Orbison and Whitney Huston,”

An interview with Brian Becker, CEO of BASS Xperimental from the *Houston Chronicle* included him being asked “how does it work?” He replied, “We developed a special system called the HoloTheater, which has six projectors and a projection screen (a type of cloth used as a scrim or backdrop) about the size of an IMAX .” That isn't how holograms are displayed. The wrap around field of view is about 150 degrees. The museum also uses the hall for IMAX screenings and Becker says it takes about 25 minutes to switch from showing one format to the other. KC



VINCE COLLIN'S FIRST SHORT FOR 2024 IS 'TO LIVE AND DIE IN AI' Vince has once again started the new year by posting fascinating surreal animation inspired by his subconscious mind. There are also interesting comments from his loyal followers following the video. One fan wrote. "An insightful commentary on one of the most controversial topics of the current age. Uncompromising as always. Or, as the kids say nowadays, 'Based'". Note: Based "originally meant to be addicted to crack cocaine (or acting like you were), but was reclaimed by rapper Lil B for being yourself and not caring what others think of you—to carry yourself with swagger." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAIXFVIpGnY&t=12s>

SF INDIE FESTIVAL

February 8 - 18, 2024 at the Roxie Theater and 4 Star Theater in San Francisco and virtually at sfindie.com



SF INDIE FEST TO SHOW BILL PLYMPTON'S 'SLIDE' Monday, February 12, 2024, 8:30 PM PST Roxie Theater House 2 and online from Feb. 8 – Feb. 18. The tale of a mythical cowboy who appears in a corrupt logging town (circa 1940s) and with the aid of his slide guitar and a giant Hellbug, he's able to battle the evil Mayor and his equally selfish twin brother to clean up the logging town of Sourdough Creek. Plympton's wit and surreal animation takes on the fight for the wild west's fading glory, peppered with swinging western tunes. Shown with *The Odyssey of Cleve & Mike* by Keven A. Webb. An animated musical tribute to bass legend Cleveland "Cleve" Eaton with Mike Watt on an odyssey of surreal bass-centric salvation.

SF INDIE FEST PRESENTS A PROGRAM OF FIVE ANIMATED SHORTS ONLINE



Available February 8, 2024 to Feb. 18. Online. sfindie.com.

Nyanga During the colonial era, Nyanga was kidnapped off the coast of Africa, brought to Mexico and enslaved. Though forced to work on the master's plantation, he never stopped dreaming of freedom. By Medhin Tewelde Serrano, 20 minutes.

Divergence Convergence A year ago, after the war in Ukraine broke out, people of different cultures and backgrounds were in shock, as some of our basic human values and understanding of the world were being stress-tested. By Anton Wong from Hong Kong, 3 min.

The First Gardener A lonely girl runs away from her unloving home and begins her search for food and shelter in an unwelcoming and dystopian world. During her search she faces nothing but rejection and indifference from its self-centered inhabitants which live isolated from each other. In her fearful interactions with the world, she realizes that she is part of the problem and that to connect she has to overcome her own fears to be able to open up her heart and give the world that which she herself seeks. By Jan Capen, Germany, 20 min.

The Grand Book A young woman lives on the streets in a city that is reminiscent of the 1920s in terms of style and technological advancement. This oppressive city has an omnipresent system of cameras and projection screens. Everything that stands out on the street is captured by the cameras and shown publicly, including when the protagonist sleepwalks during her nightmares. This adds to her overall unease until she finds a new perspective on her dreams. Maybe dreaming could be a way for her to find some privacy and let her creativity run wild - a place to be herself. By Arjan Brentjes, Netherland, 20 minutes.

What Humans Do A macro view of human-actions, as told from within a singular body. The film is a catalog of homo sapiens instincts; its sequences interlace extractive qualities of our species with embodied sensory experience, in favor of a mindful awareness of what humans do to their habits and planet Earth at large. By Miranda Javid, USA, 7 min.

UNIVERSAL PICTURES IS THE 2023 BOX OFFICE CHAMP, UNSEATING DISNEY'S 7 YEARS

REIGN IN THAT ROLE Universal's releases generated an estimated \$4.91 billion in movie ticket sales at the global box office, compared to \$4.82 billion for Disney. Disney had been #1 since 2016. The 24 movies Universal released in 2023 generated an estimated \$4.91 billion in worldwide ticket sales, compared to an estimated \$4.83 billion from the 17 titles released by Disney.

‘ROBOT DREAMS’ RECREATES NYC IN THE 1980S

Pablo Berger’s *Robot Dreams* is about the friendship between a dog and a robot and much of it takes place in New York's East Village. It is winning awards in Europe and is set to open this year in the US. It is a Spanish/French hand-drawn drama/comedy based on Sarah Varon’s wordless graphic novel about a bittersweet friendship between lonely dog and robot.

The film just received an Oscar nomination. It won the Annecy Contrecham Award along with The Animation is Film Festival’s Grand Jury Prize.



‘NIMONA’ JUST RECEIVED AN OSCAR NOMINATION The film was rescued by Annapurna and Netflix after Disney shuttered Blue Sky. It is adapted from ND Stevenson’s best-selling LGBTQ graphic novel about the titular, shape-shifting teen (Chloë Grace Moretz) who battles xenophobia in a futuristic medieval world. Nimona teams up with a knight (Riz Ahmed) framed for murder, who must confront his bestie-turned-rival (Eugene Lee Yang). The animation from [DNEG](#) (capturing the spirit of the Blue Sky design) has a quirky 2D aesthetic that’s perfect for the tone and setting. Comment about the film is by Bill Desowitz. IndieWire **Note:** In February 2021, Disney canceled *Nimona* when it shut down Blue Sky Studios, citing "current economic realities" brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.



THE FIVE FEATURES NOMINATED FOR THE OSCAR FOR BEST ANIMATED FEATURE ARE:
The Boy and the Heron (Hayao Miyazaki and Toshio Suzuki) This is the seventh category nomination for Japan’s Studio Ghibli, the animation studio Miyazaki co-founded. He previously won the best animated feature Oscar in 2003 for his film *Spirited Away*.

Elemental (Peter Sohn and Denise Ream)

Nimona (Nick Bruno, Troy Quane, Karen Ryan and Julie Zackary)

Robot Dreams (Pablo Berger, Ibon Cormenzana, Ignasi Estapé and Sandra Tapia Díaz)

Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse (Kemp Powers, Justin K. Thompson, Phil Lord, Christopher Miller and Amy Pascal)

AND THE FIVE FILMS NOMINATED FOR BEST ANIMATED SHORT OSCAR ARE:

Letter to a Pig, Tal Kantor and Amit R. Gicelter from Israel

Ninety-Five Senses, Jerusha Hess and Jared Hess from U.S.A.

Our Uniform, Yegane Moghaddam from Iran

Pachyderme, Stéphanie Clément and Marc Rius from France

War Is Over! Inspired by the Music of John & Yoko, Dave Mullins and Brad Booker, New Zealand – U.S.A.

'WINNIE THE POOH: BLOOD AND HONEY,' GOT LOTS OF RAZZIE NOMINATIONS The Razzies, aka the Golden Raspberry Awards, gave the tasteless feature inspired by Disney's *Winnie the Pooh*, nominations for Worst Picture of the Year, Worst Screen Couple (Pooh & Piglet as Blood-Thirsty Slasher/Killers), Worst Prequel, Remake, Rip-Off or Sequel, and Worst Director (Rhys Frake-Waterfield). This turkey actually got reviews and all agreed it sucks. The online trailer is in fact awful.

AWARDS FOR BEST ANIMATED FEATURE

At the Critics' Choice Awards, they nominated *The Boy and the Heron*, *Elemental*, *Nimona*, *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem* and *Wish*. The winner was *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*.

Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse also won the Best Animated Feature from The Washington, D.C. Area Film Critics Association, and the Atlanta Film Critics Circle. The Women's Film Critics Circle gave the Best Animated Female Award to Gwen Stacy (Hailee Steinfeld) in '*Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*.

At the Golden Globe Awards *The Boy and the Heron* won Best Animated Motion Picture. The film was competed with *Elemental* (Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures), *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* (Sony Pictures Releasing), *The Super Mario Bros. Movie* (Universal Pictures), *Suzume* (Crunchyroll / Sony Pictures Entertainment) and *Wish* (Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures). The Boston Society of Film Critics, Chicago Film Critics Association, and New York Film Critics Circle, and The LA Film Critics Association Awards chose *The Boy and the Heron* as the best animated feature. The LA Film Critics Association Awards also named their runner-up as *Robot Dreams*.

BRITISH ACADEMY FILM AWARDS (BAFTA) NOMINATIONS WERE ANNOUNCED JAN. 18 The longlists were announced Jan. 5. The 8 features are *The Boy and the Heron*, *Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget*, *Elemental*, *Nimona*, *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*, *The Super Mario Bros. Movie*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem*, and *Wish*. That list was selected from 17 films that were eligible to be considered. The four nominated films for Best Animated feature are *The Boy and the Heron*, *Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget*, *Elemental* and *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*. The award ceremony will be held Sunday, February 18.

The Boy and The Heron was also being considered for best film not in the English language. 59 films were considered. *Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget* was also being considered for best British feature. 76 films were considered, 15 made this list and 5 got nominations. *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* was also on the longlists for special effects and original score. None of the above received nominations.

In the British short animation category six films made the longlist. They are *Crab Day*, *Sweet Like Lemons*, *The Smeds and the Smoos*, *Visible Mending*, *Wild Summon* and *World to Roam*. *Crab Day*, *Visible Mending* and *Wild Summon* received nominations.

ANIMATED FEATURES OPENING IN 2024



2024年、全世界展開決定！

GREAT
razbliuto
PRETENDER

ティザーPV

©WIT STUDIO/Great Pretenders

Great Pretender Razbliuto opened Jan. 9 (WIT Studio/Crunchyroll) It is the sequel to *Great Pretender*, an anime released in 2020. The new film is a heist movie that introduces a new con artist and expands on the story of the original crew while building up a thrilling scheme. <https://www.cbr.com/crunchyroll-great-pretender-razbliuto-usa-theatrical-release/>



Orion and the Dark Opens Feb. 2 (DreamWorks/Netflix) *Orion and the Dark* has a script by Charlie Kaufman who penned *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* and the stop-motion *Anomalisa*. Jacob Tremblay is a young kid scared of everything. He embarks on an adventure full of strange creatures where he will face his greatest fears — even some that are friendlier than he thought. A film website says previews suggest lots of interesting imagery, some inspired by the Muppets and others by Werner Herzog. I'd say watch the trailer and see if it is anything you might enjoy. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDnWXSniOpA>

The Tiger's Apprentice opens Feb. 2 (Paramount Animation/Paramount+) The project was first announced over 15 years ago by Cartoon Network. the film will finally be released by Paramount, Paramount+ It follows a Chinese-American boy who discovers he comes from a long line of people with magical protectors. As the apprentice of a shape-shifting tiger, the boy must learn the necessary magic to protect an ancient phoenix. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JK2rqxLLMRw>



Kung Fu Panda 4 opens March 8 (DreamWorks/Universal) In the franchise’s fourth installment, Jack Black’s Po the Panda will face his biggest challenge yet: retirement. The film sees Po training the next Dragon Warrior while becoming a spiritual leader, “which is sure to lead to plenty of ridiculously funny scenarios.”

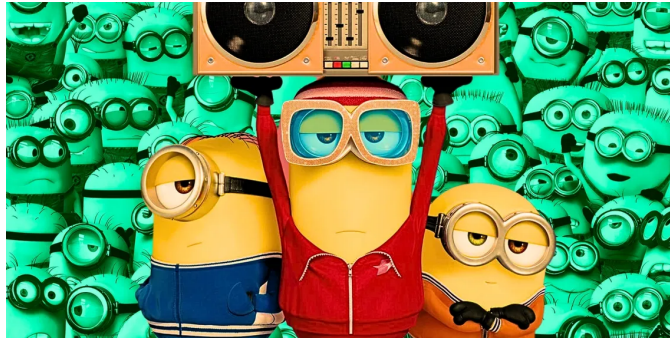
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5o-reTATkBU>



The Garfield Movie opens May 24 (DNEG Animation/Sony Pictures Releasing) **The Garfield Movie** uses Samuel L. Jackson as the voice of Garfield’s estranged father, Vic, and Harvey Guillen (star of ***Puss in Boots: The Last Wish***) as Garfield’s best friend Odie. DNEG Animation created ***Ron’s Gone Wrong*** and ***Entergalactic***. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FiiuSM9pOQk>



Inside Out 2 opens June 14. Pixar’s first sequel goes inside the head of a teenager to experience a complex, deeply relatable story about growing up and facing the worst thing: anxiety. Maya Hawke joins the cast as Anxiety, while Liza Lapira and Tony Hale replace Mindy Kaling and Bill Hader as Disgust and Fear.



Despicable Me 4 opens July 3 (Illumination/Universal) It has been 7 years since the last “Despicable Me” movie. Details have not been announced but you probably have some idea about what to expect. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYaZlsoxTHo> And a short that goes with the feature <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bMUeohERDNY>



Transformers One opens Sept. 13 (Paramount Animation) *Transformers One* will tell the origin story of Optimus Prime and Megatron as they go from friends to sworn enemies. Much of the film will be set on the home world of Cybertron, which has only been shown briefly in the live-action movies, giving *Transformers One* a huge canvas with which to play. Josh Cooley director of *Toy Story 4*) will direct. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_oLJIFes9XU

The Wild Robot opens Sept. 20 (DreamWorks/Universal) The feature is based on Peter Brown’s illustrated book about a robot that is washed ashore on a deserted island, who must embark on a journey of survival and discovery when she inadvertently becomes the protector of an orphaned gosling bird.

The Lord of the Rings: The War of the Rohirrim (Sola Entertainment/New Line Cinema, December 13) It’s been almost 10 years since we last visited Middle-earth on the big screen. *The War of the Rohirrim* is said to be a “sweet high fantasy with an epic, 2D anime film based on the appendices of *The Lord of the Rings*.” The film “tells the story of the House of Eorl that ruled Rohan, specifically about the daughter of Helm Hammerhand, after whom Helm’s Deep was named.” The preview shown at Ancey made it clear this movie is cut from the same cloth as the Peter Jackson films, as it draws inspiration from the WETA archives and brings back Stephen Gallagher (*The Hobbit*) to compose the score. Seeing a big 2D fantasy movie on the big screen doesn’t happen every day, which makes this a special cinematic event one that every Tolkien and animation fan should be excited about. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PKbnivdwheY>

ANOTHER 'JURASSIC PARK' SEQUEL IS IN THE WORKS Universal's next *Jurassic World* is being written by David Koepp who wrote the original *Jurassic Park* and the sequel *Jurassic Park: The Lost World*. It may be released in 2025 release date. There is no director named yet, but Frank Marshall, who oversaw the trilogy, is producing it.

UNIVERSAL IS PRODUCING A LIVE ACTION VERSION OF 'HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON'

The cast of Universal's live-action adaptation will include Nick Frost as Gobber the Belch, one of the Vikings. Nick is a British actor known for starring in *Shaun of the Dead* and *Hot Fuzz*. Dean DeBlois, who co-wrote and directed the original animated trilogy, is producing, writing and directing it.

NETFLIX TO DISTRIBUTE WORK FROM STUDIO PONOC They will be their exclusive streaming home. They were formed in founded in 2015 by former Studio Ghibli producer Yoshiaki Nishimura. The first feature will be *The Imaginary*, will stream later this year after a theatrical run in Japan.

DISNEY HAS TOLD PIXAR TO LAYOFF A LOT OF PEOPLE IN SECOND HALF OF 2024



Pixar has been ordered by Disney to layoff an undetermined number of staffers in the second half of 2024. Sources at Pixar estimate it might be as high as 20% of the workforce. Pixar is presently wrapping up productions on several projects that were in the works in 2023, when Disney started to cut its payrolls. The cuts were under consideration previously, but were on hold while existing projects needed to be completed. Pixar's upcoming film slate includes *Inside Out 2* in 2024, *Elio* in 2025 and two untitled films set for 2026 release. In mid-2023, Pixar laid off 75 employees as part of Disney's companywide cutbacks.

LAST MINUTE PLUG FOR 'GODZILLA MIMUS ONE' – IT IS ALSO OUT IN BLACK AND WHITE

The editor of a serious movie magazine wrote me. "*Godzilla Minus One* is one of my 2023 favorites. Now in a clever marketing concept they are bringing it back in black and white as a tribute to the original. I love that this under \$15 million budgeted film has great special effects that are Oscar nominated, but the movie is much more than a monster romp with a serious story and is terrifically acted and directed."

LITTLE FLUFFY CLOUDS HAS UPDATED THEIR ALREADY IMPRESSIVE WEBSITE <https://www.littlefluffyclouds.com/#aboutLFC>

COMING IN THE MARCH 2024 NEWSLETTER



**DISCOVER THE POWER OF SERIOUS ANIMATION
RARELY SEEN FILMS ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST**



te me,

**TBILISI INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FESTIVAL – TIAF
2 – 5 November 2023 Tbilisi, Republic of Georgia
By Nancy Denney-Phelps**

When I was invited to be head of the jury at the Tbilisi International Animation Festival, I was very excited. I had been to The Republic of Georgia once before for the excellent Tofuzi Animation Festival in Batumi that is on the other side of the country from Tbilisi on the Black Sea.

I had already seen several of the films in the Short Film Competition. I have watched *Dies Irae* several times and I always enjoy it. The tagline is “Two playful angels, seven sinful pigs, and one poor righteous soul”. The action, and there is plenty of it, takes place in and around a four-story three-flat building, happening in a butcher shop, on the roof of the building, and in the street. The 8- minute film is morbid and hilariously funny if you like black humor. With the action going on through the building and street, there is a lot to watch; so the film needs more than one or two viewings to take it all in. The title of the film, *Dies Irae*, literally means “day of wrath” and describes Judgement Day. Derived from a Medieval Latin poem, it is also one of the most famous melodies of the Gregorian Chant. Composers from Mozart to Verdi have set the words to music.

The director of the film is listed as the Maru Collective Group from Australia. I tried to find out more about them, but all I could come up with is that they are a collective of people from various countries that love to make animation. If anyone out there knows anything about them, please let me know because I am curious about exactly who they are and what other films they have made.

Directors Dotan Goldwasser and Yoav Brill from Israel made a 14-minute film, *Temporarily Removed*, which is about loneliness, modern art, and air conditioning. A middle-aged female security guard feels that she

is the queen of her exhibition room in the museum. When she is forced to leave her post due to a malfunctioning air conditioner, her world is suddenly turned upside down. The film mixes humor and pathos while taking us behind the scenes of what goes on in a museum.

Our jury unanimously gave the Grand Prix to *The Last Bar*. The film director Arne Hai's diploma project at Filmkademie Baden-Württemberg, is the story of Melvin who is kicked out of the family home on his 21st birthday when his father accuses him of laziness. Troubled by obsessive thoughts and inner demons, Melvin finds himself on the edge of a cliff, far up North at the edge of civilization.

The last thing that he expects to find there is a bar, the Last Bar, run by an old lady in a wheelchair who insists that Melvin come in. Once inside, he gets acquainted with the quirky characters in the bar and he finally comes face to face with death, where he takes responsibility for the first time in his life. In the end he realizes that he has found a warm place for himself amid all of the darkness that surrounds him in the last bar.

The director says that the 13-minute 21-second stop-motion film is a pilot for a series, but the film can stand alone perfectly well. The story is compelling and you care about the characters in the film. The construction and movement of the puppets is flawless. The film won Gold at the Young Directors Award in 2023 at Cannes. I look forward to the next adventure with Melvin and the rest of the characters.



In her film in the Georgian National Competition, *Oh! Mother, Mother*, Khatuna Tatuashvili poses the question “Can you love your cat too much?”. Mother takes overprotective parenting of her beloved cat way over the top when she builds a suite of armor for him. The one-minute film is very cute and anyone who loves their cat will recognize a little bit of themselves in it. I enjoyed meeting Khatuna in Tbilisi; she gave me a lovely drawing of the cat in his suit of armor which is now framed and on my wall.



My Grandmother

Georgia has a rich animation history dating back to 1929 when Kote Mikaberidze created *My Grandmother (Chemi Bebia)*. In the 1990s an economic and political crisis began in Georgia that harmed the entire film industry, including animation. Studios were destroyed and over the next ten years, only twenty-five short films were made in the entire country. By 2000 the situation had stabilized and Georgia was once again producing award-winning films.

In 2017 Dato Kiknavelidze created Georgia's first 3D animated film, *Geno*. Inspired by the ever-growing problem of the loss of wildlife habitat, the film is set around a lake and its animal and insect inhabitants who are faced with losing their natural habitat due to the construction of new houses. *Geno* was screened at numerous festivals including Annecy and the Trickfilm Festival in Stuttgart.



Geno

In 2017 Dato Kiknavelidze created Georgia's first 3D animated film, **Geno**. Inspired by the ever-growing problem of the loss of wildlife habitat, the film is set around a lake and its animal and insect inhabitants who are faced with losing their natural habitat due to the construction of new houses.

Geno was screened at numerous festivals including Annecy and the Trickfilm Festival in Stuttgart. Mariam Kapanadze was awarded both the Jury Award and the Audience Award in 2021 at the Paris International Animation Film Festival for her film **Abandoned Village**. The title of the film is a metaphor for a person who has forgotten the feeling that comes from approaching the world with love. Mariam also received The Japanese Foreign Affairs Ministry Award for **Abandoned Village**.



Illustrator and animator Ana Chubinidze's 2016 debut film **The Pocket Man** is about a tiny man who lives in a suitcase. One day an elderly blind man accidentally crashes into the suitcase and it pops open. The two men become friends and the little man soon finds a home in the blind man's pocket where he becomes the blind man's eyes and guide. The film, produced by Folimage, was the first joint Georgian/French animated project. It has won several awards.

Ana's second film, **Franzy's Soup Kitchen** (2021) is based on a book that she wrote and illustrated about the lonely alien chief Franzy who discovers that her special pink soup is not only delicious but is also magical. When she shares it with starving creatures living on a strange planet Franzy isn't lonely any longer. The 8-minute 30-second film was a co-production between Folimage and Pocket Studio in Georgia. The film won 24 awards and was selected for 137 festivals.

During TIAF, Ana gave a workshop on stop motion using **Franzy's Soup Kitchen** as a case study. Khatuna Tatuashvili also used her **Oh! Mother, Mother** to demonstrate how a film goes from idea to the audience. A masterclass was also given by Elene Tavadze and Sofo Tchintcharauli discussed innovations in Georgian puppet animation.

One of the great pleasures of my visit to the festival was getting to know Tamu Abramidze, my translator and guide. From the moment she picked me up at the airport in the middle of the night I immediately liked her. Her sense of humor coupled with good common sense and a keen knowledge of her city let me see and learn things that I would never have known on my own.

Tbilisi is one of the oldest cities in the world. It existed as the capital of the kingdom of Iberia,

and its Old Town was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2007. One afternoon Tamu took me on a tour of the fascinating old part of the city. Tbilisi's old town is built on a hillside on the Western side of the Mtkvari River which runs through the city. Walking through the winding streets with its mixture of architectural styles you get a true feeling of history.



I was enchanted by the clock tower outside of the puppet theatre, which is truly a fairy tale creation. It was built by Georgian theatre and film director Reza Levanovich Gabriadze, who the theatre is named after. There is an angel that comes out and strikes the bell with a small hammer on the hour and a small mechanical puppet theatre inside the tower that twice a day at noon and 15h00 puts on a show called The Circle of Life. Constructed in 2010, the tower is decorated with hundreds of tiles designed by Gabriadze. Unfortunately, I didn't get to see the clock in action but it is quite a magnificent structure just to see.



The sulfur baths

Tbilisi has numerous sulfur baths. The name of the city means warm place and it is built on top of thermal springs. The water contains so much sulfur that you can smell it as you walk along the river bank. The water temperature is between 40° to 50° C. I was told that the interiors of the baths range from ultra-luxurious and expensive to basic, but whatever your budget is, in the end, it is the same sulfur water in all of them. You can also opt for a massage and scrub down along with your soak.

Narikala Fortress overlooks the Mtkvari River. Consisting of two walled sections between the sulfur baths and the Tbilisi Botanical Gardens, the walls date from various periods, the earliest being from the 4th century when it was a Persian citadel. Most of the present walls were built in the 8th century by the Arab emirs, whose palaces were inside the fortress. Georgians refer to her as Mother Fortress. There is a 20-meter-high statue of Mother Georgia or Karlis Deda, built in 1958 to commemorate Tbilisi's 1500th anniversary. She is the symbol of the Georgian national character: a woman in traditional Georgian dress holding a bowl of wine in her left hand to welcome those who come in friendship and her right hand holds a sword for those who come as enemies. Standing near the fortress she can be seen from the entire city.



Mother Georgia overlooking the city

After the tour of old town, Tamu took me up into the mountains to Mtatsminda Park on top of a Mountain. The views are fantastic. We were so high up that the city looked like a miniature diorama.

The park is a lovely place to stroll around. There is a restaurant, a Ferris wheel on the edge of the mountain, carousels, a roller coaster, a playground for smaller children and much more. There is also a lovely little outdoor café where you can also get a hologram of yourself made.

It was a lovely place for a stroll amid the beautiful trees. I had dinner with the festival staff at the Taglura Restaurant in the foothills on the road to Mtatsminda Park. The restaurant serves delicious traditional food family style. They make the most delicious, juicy dumplings that I have ever eaten and their wine was excellent. It was lovely to spend some relaxed time with everyone.

We were joined at dinner by my fellow juror Ketevan Janelidze. She is a producer, film historian, and researcher of Georgian cinematography. I enjoyed talking about film with her and on the closing night she gave me a lovely present, a Georgian table runner with a traditional design on it. It is just lovely.

My big culinary discovery in Tbilisi was Lobio, a bean stew. Lobio in Georgian translates to beans. Ground walnuts are used as a thickening agent and added to the mashed beans. Special spices are also needed to get just the right flavors. Dato Kiknavelidze gave me a lovely present, a bag full of packages of all the spices that I need to make Lobio at home.

On my last evening in Tbilisi after the awards ceremony, I was taken to a true feast at a restaurant in town. The long table in our private room was full of festival staff and Georgian animators. The food started coming, and coming, and coming. Dato kept ordering more dumplings, more of them than even I could eat which I didn't think was possible. Also, there were many toasts with delicious Georgian wine. It was an evening full of laughter that I will never forget.



The Lobby

I don't usually write about hotel rooms that I stay in but the Rooms Hotel in Tbilisi is truly unique. The first thing that you notice when you enter the hotel is a room with every wall covered in floor-to-ceiling bookcases filled with books. There are also chairs and couches to relax in when you find a book that you want to read. Just my sort of room. The building was a publishing house during the Soviet era and even though its amenities are completely up to date, everything possible has been done to preserve the history of the original

building. There are extremely high ceilings and warehouse-style windows, reclaimed wood, and I was told that all of the wallpaper in the rooms and public areas is handmade.

My room, which was quite large, had a dark wood floor, an old-fashioned desk with a swivel chair with a rotary dial telephone that worked. I also had an easy chair with an ottoman. The breakfasts were astonishing with buffet islands holding everything imaginable from fresh fruits and pastries to pate and hummus. There were three chefs to fix anything that you might want and waiters who came to your table to see if you wanted the chefs to fix you anything special. There was a common room with an excellent stereo system and a good collection of records that you were welcome to play. I found out that during the warmer months of the year old black-and-white movie clips are shown on a brick wall in the garden bar area. If I were ever going to spend the rest of my life in a hotel The Rooms hotel would be it.



L to R Festival Director Lila Kiknavelidze, fellow juror Ketevan Janejidze, and Nancy

All too soon and far too early, before sunrise, Tamu and Dato arrived to drive me to the airport. Tamu gave me two lovely books, one of Georgian poetry and the other book, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, written by Shota Rustaveli. It is a Georgian medieval epic poem that was written in the 12th or 13th century, Rustaveli is Georgia's national poet. The poem consists of over 1,600 Rustavelian Quatrains and is considered to be a masterpiece of Georgian literature. Tamu told me that it is one of her favorite books and I certainly enjoyed reading it.

There is no way that I can thank Tamu for all of her kindness and most of all for her company. We have forged a bond and have stayed in touch. Dato was also wonderful company. He was so busy keeping everything running smoothly at both festival theatres which were a block apart, but he was never too busy to flash a smile while he was on the run. A very big thank you goes to festival director Lali Kiknavelidze for inviting me to be on the jury and giving me such wonderful hospitality. I will never forget my time in Tbilisi.



FREDRIKSTAD ANIMATION FESTIVAL

19-22 October 2023
By Nancy Denney-Phelps

I love going to Norway but I had only been there in the Fall. Going there in the Summer this year was a bonus as I was on selection committees for the first time. When Anders Narverud Moen, Director of the Fredrikstad Animation Festival, invited me to be part of the selection committee for the festival in July I was very excited. I love going to Norway but I had only been there in the Fall.

Unlike many other festivals, the films were first sent to me at home to watch and evaluate. Then the festival brought me to Fredrikstad for the deliberations and final decision-making with the other two members of the committee, animator and VR artist Gina Thorstensen from Oslo and Anders.

We three worked very well together, usually all of us agreeing on the fate of a film. The entire process took us just one intense day. I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know Gina and although I have known Anders for quite a while, it was lovely to get to know him much better. He was a tremendous host, treating Gina and me to a marvelous dinner at a sushi restaurant and a night of good conversation at a local bar after our day of hard work. I also discovered that Fredrikstad has the best pulled pork sandwich that I have ever had with a wonderful pickled red cabbage.

The bus trip to and from Oslo Airport to Fredrikstad was beautiful. The trees were all green and beautiful wildflowers were all in bloom instead of the leaves turning colors and starting to fall which is what I am used to.

Being on the selection committee meant that I was invited back in October for the festival. The Fredrikstad Animation Festival is the oldest and largest animation festival in the Nordic region dating back to 1994 and the Animerte Dager in Oslo. Fredrikstad is one of nine animation festivals that nominate films for the prestigious European Animation Award Cartoon d'Or.



The centerpiece of the festival is the Nordic/Baltic competition. Films in this category compete for the Grand Prix, Best Nordic/Baltic Short Film, and the Audience Award. The short film jury that chose the Grand Prix, Best Nordic/Baltic film, and Best Student Film were animator/performance artist Sara Koppel, freelance programmer and curator Niels Putman from Belgium, and Konrad Hjemlin from Norway. Konrad made the multi-award-winning film *The Harbourmaster* about a swan that went from being a beloved town icon to becoming a wanted criminal.

They awarded the Grand Prix to Milly Yencken for her graduation film *The Eastern Rain*. The Australian-born animator is studying at The Estonian Academy of Arts in Tallinn. Her film ponders the question “What would we do if it rained indoors instead of outside”? In their statement the jury said “This brave film fluidly blends its circular narrative with a powerful artistic and poetic visual language, effectively presenting something both abstract and expressionistic. In this surreal world, the wondrous, colorful brushstrokes that meet with shades of gray are supported by a meditative and equally strong soundscape -ultimately drenching us as if we are dancing in the rain”.

I was quite happy to see the Best Nordic/Baltic Short Film Award go to *Blush – An Extraordinary Voyage* by Liti Yli-Harja of Finland. The story revolves around an eighteen-year-old Finnish-Kosovan boy named Fatu and his best friend Rai, a young woman on the autism spectrum. Fatu is about to go out in public wearing makeup for the first time and is scared. Luckily Rai is there to support him through it all.

I agreed with the jury when they said “. . . While on the surface it’s a deeply personal depiction of a charming friendship, the film also tells a bigger story concerning our society’s prejudices and does it all fabulously”. A complete list of all of the winning films is at the end of the article.



Doris & Bethan in Marbella Mayhem

My particular favorite film was ***Doris & Bettan -Marabella Mayhem*** by Swedish cartoonist, illustrator, and first-time director Ellen Ekman. This film is *Thelma and Louise* meets *Wonder Woman*. Doris and Bettan are two retired, but certainly not retiring, women enjoying the sun on a beach that they have visited for years together. Topless, smoking, and sipping cocktails, they are thoroughly enjoying themselves. Since their last visit, a luxury hotel has been built and has taken over the beach. After complaints about the two women from a hotel guest, the manager tries to kick Doris and Bettan out. Oh boy, is he in for a surprise! I have not laughed so long and hard at a film in quite a while.

Along with the excellent film programs, there were numerous special events and exhibitions. One of my favorites was a VR project created by my fellow selection committee member Gina Thorstensen. ***Kabaret*** is an interactive VR experience about synchronized coral spawning and a singing shrimp who worries about the future. The piece is playful, yet thought-provoking, taking the viewer from the edge of our galaxy to the depths of the ocean, ending up on a coral reef in mating season, but all is not well. I was charmed when a cute little squid came and sat on my hand but also quite aware of the challenges the VR gave to the viewer about the necessity to save coral reefs.

Kabaret is part musical, part documentary and is completely magical. Gina emailed me that “. . . the title of the piece, ***Kabaret***, is a wordplay on the Norwegian dish of seafood and peas in aspic and musical cabaret. The concept got lost at some point in the production, but it serves as a framework to create the story and I think that it is fun, even if no one understands the connection anymore”.

Sara Koppel is a unique voice in the world of animation and performance art. She began animating on paper as a fourteen-year-old punk in 1984 and she is still at it. Her multi-award-winning films such as ***Little Vulvah and Her Clitoral Awareness*** deal with adult issues such as gender, sexuality, and the environment.



Sara Koppel and Festival Director Anders Narverud Moen

In Fredrikstad, Sara mounted an exhibition of her augmented reality work with both sensual films and environmental themes, where her analog work is mixed with new AR technology. You could go to the festival website, scan a QR code and download the artwork to enjoy at home if you couldn’t visit the exhibition in

person. You could also purchase a digital pass to the festival which gave you access to all of the films from the 19th to the 30th of October.

Riekeles Gallery, founded in 2021 in Berlin, presents and archives the art of animated background painting. Backgrounds are usually only on the screen for only a few seconds and although you would notice if they were not there, little attention is usually paid to them. The exhibition of *Anime Architecture* in the theatre lobby was the first presentation in Norway by the Riekeles Gallery of iconic anime backgrounds. It was an impressive exhibition.

Curator Stefan Riekeles first visited the studios of Tokyo's animation artists fifteen years ago and discovered a treasure trove of image boards, technical layouts, and vibrant colored backgrounds from the golden age of Japanese sci-fi anime dating back to the 1980s. These works can stand on their own as pieces of art. His research in the field of anime backgrounds led him to write *Anime Architecture* (Thames and Hudson, 2020).



Anime background art exhibition

The festival exhibition showcased high-grade 1:1 reproductions of urban architecture made for the screen by Hiromasa Ogura (*Ghost in the Shell, Patlabor – The Movie*), Toshiharu Mizutani (*AKIRA*), Hiroshi Ohno (*AKIRA*), and Shuichi Kusamori (*Ghost in the Shell, Metropolis*). These acclaimed artists belong to a generation of illustrators who drew animation only by hand. Although today computer graphics are used across all areas of production, paper, pencils, and brushes are still their primary tools to create intricate attention to detail.

Stefan Riekeles presented *Building Neo-Tokyo, the World of AKIRA* as part of EDUFEST, a seminar aimed at students. Storm Studios, a visual effects company based in Oslo, and Fortiche, a creative, animation and production studio in Paris, Montpellier, and Las Palmas Spain were also part of EDUFEST. Charles Bouet, CG pipeline supervisor at Fortiche and Espen Nordahl, head of VFX at Storm Studios talked to the students about how they create mind-blowing visual effects, their respective careers and what their day-to-day responsibilities are. At another session, there was an opportunity for students to bring their portfolios and receive a critique from a professional.



Art on Wheels van

Two Art on Wheels vans were parked outside the entrance to the theatre. The project is a contemporary art exhibition aimed at children and young people. The new artworks are created by Zahars Ze, Jurgis Peters and Eva Vevere from Latvia and Oda Bremnes of Norway. Art on Wheels offers interactive exhibitions featuring four original artworks comprised of VR, sound, and kinetics with the theme of Creation of New Worlds.

Exhibition curator Sandra Kempele says, “We aim to create a positive experience of visiting a contemporary art exhibition. It should be a creative, active, and inspiring experience for children and youth, promoting the accessibility of visual art outside the capital city of Latvia. The *ART ON WHEELS* project initiates a dialogue between artists and students, actively involving children in the process of creating artwork and addressing topics that are important to children and youth”.

Children actively engage with the artworks using VR glasses and hands-on interaction. The exhibition also includes various activities relating to the four artworks. The two specially fitted-out mini vans visit schools, festivals, and art institutions throughout Latvia and Norway.

Although we are far from being children, Nik and I both took turns with the VR glasses. Even though the project is designed for children and young people we both thoroughly enjoyed it. The production that I experienced was very well made. I felt like I was moving around the solar system in outer space.

A major part of the Fredrikstad Animation Festival is Animation Production Day. It is designed for members of the Nordic professional industry to network and learn about new technology and ideas. Part of Animation Production Day is the Nordic forum which is a collaboration among several Nordic organizations within the animation industry. Studios present works in progress, discuss new techniques, and discuss the state of Nordic Animation as well as giving a historical look back at the industry. This year Liisa Vahakyla, Finnish journalist and executive director of Finnanimation, the network of Finnish animation producers, presented her new book on Nordic animation. The book examines the state of Nordic animation as well as presents historical information before moving on to present-day studios.

A panel of industry members from Norway and France discussed their experiences of working together on film production and how to distribute film to an international market. At a panel on co-financing your film several representatives from funding organizations such as the Norwegian Film Institute were on hand to introduce their organizations and talk about funding possibilities.



Hisko Hulsing and Nancy

Dutch Director Hisko Hulsing has become known for the painterly quality of his work such as the semi-autobiographical film *Junkyard*. He also directed the Amazon Original series *Undone*. It is Amazon Prime Video’s first animated series for adults. He led a team of artists in creating a wide range of oil paintings that made up the backgrounds of each frame of the series which included 150 to 200 hand-painted canvases per episode. In his masterclass, Hisko talked about his methods and how he builds scenes and talked about his work with Amazon.

Each year the festival gives a Life Time Achievement Award. This year’s recipient was producer John M. Jacobsen. He is considered the grand master of Norwegian film, playing an important role in the establishment of the internationally recognized CGI, animation, and VFX communities.

John began his career in the film industry at the age of 15 as a bouncer and program manager at his local cinema on the outskirts of Oslo. His extensive career has involved film distribution and the development of the emerging video industry but he is primarily known as a producer. In 1997 he created Norway's first full-length animated film, *Solan, Ludvig og med Reverompa (Gurin with the Foxtail)*. Jacobsen has produced 4 full-length animated films and over 50 animated TV episodes featuring *Elias, den lille redningskoyta (Elias, the Little Rescue Boat)* and *Blekkulf. Elias* was nominated for an Emmy. His 2008 production, *Max Manus* is the biggest Norwegian box office success in modern times with 1.2 million tickets sold.

John M. Jacobsen is indeed a worthy winner of the Lifetime Achievement Award. I am sure that he will continue to be a major force in the Norwegian Film Industry for a long time to come.

My job at the festival was to introduce the Nordic/Baltic professional and student films in competition and moderate the director's chat, which I really enjoy doing. Instead of just asking questions, I try to initiate a discussion between the animators on stage and encourage questions from the audience. Seven films were represented at the discussion and I was very pleased that the animators interacted with each other. The audience got into the spirit of the conversations and asked excellent questions.

A big thank you to Anders Narverud Moen for inviting me to be part of the festival and to his staff and volunteers who were all so kind and helpful. I had a wonderful time at the festival and look forward to returning sometime in the future.

The 2024 edition of the festival will take place from 24 -27 October 2024. You can find out more about the 2023 edition at animationfestival.no



'WINNIE THE POOH: BLOOD AND HONEY,' GOT LOTS OF RAZZIE NOMINATIONS The Razzies, aka the Golden Raspberry Awards, gave this tasteless feature (inspired by Disney's *Winnie the Pooh*), five nominations, Worst Picture of the Year, Worst Screen Couple (Pooh & Piglet as Blood-Thirsty Slasher/Killers), Worst Prequel, Remake, Rip-Off or Sequel, and Worst Director (Rhys Frake-Waterfield). This turkey actually got reviews and all agreed it sucks. The online trailer is in fact awful. [Winnie the Pooh: Blood and Honey Trailer #1 \(2023\) \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)



SEE ANDREW CHESWORTH'S 'THE BRAVE LOCOMOTIVE,' "A LOVE LETTER TO THE ANDREWS SISTERS AND 1940S ANIMATION" An impressive tribute to classic Disney animation. It won the best animation award at LA Shorts International Film Festival. <https://www.cartoonbrew.com/>

cartoon-brew-pick/watch-andrew-chesworths-the-brave-locomotive-a-love-letter-to-the-andrews-sisters-and-1940s-animation-237253.html

ASIFA MAGAZINE

The International
Animation Journal
Since 1961



2023 / VOL. 34 / #1

ASIFA'S INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE EDITOR ANNOUNCES I'm pleased to announce that the first installments of our new Academic Resource page is up on the website. Here you will find the proceedings of the 2023 ASIFA International Academic Conference led by ASIFA-CHINA as well as the 50th Anniversary book is available for free download. <https://asifa.net/magazine/asifa-magazine-academic-editions/>

LATE NEWS: BILL PLYMPTON'S 'SLIDE' WINS PRIZE AT SLAMDANCE AND GETS DISTRIBUTION OFFERS! Bill writes, "*SLIDE* just won an Honorable Mention award at the Slamdance Film Festival, in their Breakouts section. That is essentially second place, or the silver award in that category. And the weird thing about this prize is that they were not screening the final version of the film, they were screening one that was a little older and didn't have a perfect soundtrack - so imagine if they had received a newer, finished version!"

"We were also greeted there by a number of distributors, who loved the film and want to handle it, but we must wait until after the screening this weekend at the International Film Festival Rotterdam. We also hope to attract a lot of buyers for the international territories there."

Also, you now have three chances to see *SLIDE* in Feb. in the Bay Area. San Francisco Independent Film Festival, Monday, February 12, 2024, 8:30 PM at the Roxie Theater House 2 and online from Feb. 8 – Feb. 18. Also it will be shown by the Alameda International Film Festival, Alameda, CA, February 22-25

<https://www.alamedafilmfest.com/shop/p/slide-win-person-interview-wbill-plympton>

BILL PLYMPTON WILL PRESENT A MASTER CLASS AT THE ALAMEDA FESTIVAL AND A Q AND A AFTER THE SCREENING

MATEL IS PRODUCING ANIMATED FEATURES *Bob the Builder* is the latest feature project from Mattel, with key voices provided by Anthony Ramos and Jennifer Lopez. Other Mattel property currently in development includes *Hot Wheels* at Warner Bros, and *American Girl*, which will be penned by Lindsey Beer for Paramount. Mattel hit it big with Greta Gerwig's *Barbie* last year. It has earned over \$1.4 billion so far and it is nominated for best picture at the 2024 Oscars.

ANIMATED SHORTS AT SLAMDANCE Animated Shorts Grand Jury Prize: *Edith And The Tall Child* by Kohana Wilson, United States. The Honorable Mention: *Lil Sherbet* by Xinhe Zhao, United States. Bill Plympton's *Slide* won the 2nd prize in the Breakout Feature category.

'**THE TIGER'S APPRENTICE**' is "a fast-paced adventure that should prove highly engaging for its younger target audience when it premieres on Paramount+... A Chinese-American teenager takes on evil forces with the assistance of animal warriors in this animated yarn with voice work from Lucy Liu, Bowen Yang, Sandra Oh and Greta Lee... *The Tiger's Apprentice* doesn't really have the heft for the big screen, for which it was originally intended, but it's easy to imagine it spawning sequels or perhaps a streaming series." *Hollywood Reporter*

ASIFA-SF IS A VOLUNTEER RUN ASSOCIATION

Newsletter Editor: Karl Cohen

Contributors include Nancy Denney-Phelps, Paul Naas, Jim Middleton and other friends of ASIFA

Proofreaders Jim Middleton, Scott Kravitz and Paul Naas

Special thanks to Nancy Denney-Phelps who represents our chapter on the international ASIFA board. Emily Berk is our webmaster, and Eihway Su keeps our email list and does a dozen other things.

ASIFA-SF is a chapter of Association Internationale du Film d'Animation with over 40 chapters around the world. Now that we are supposedly post-Covid we had hopes of a rebound with live events once more, but that isn't happening yet.

**TO KEEP THE CHAPTER ALIVE UNTIL WE CAN FIND VOLUNTEERS TO MAKE THAT HAPPEN WITH
LIVE AND/OR ONLINE PROGRAMS, WE ARE OFFERING A
FREE TEMPORARY MEMBERSHIP
NEW MEMBERS NEEDED, TELL OTHERS TO JOIN
HELP BUILD UP OUR MAILING LIST AGAIN. THAT WILL GET YOU OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FREE AND
WHATEVER SCREENINGS THAT ASIFA-SF MEMBERS GET INVITED TO.
Contact karlcohen@earthlink.net to get on our email list.**