

ASIFA

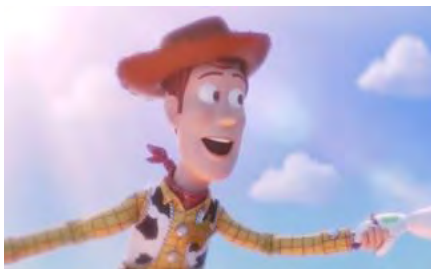
THE INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION ASSOCIATION
May 2019



ASIFA
THE INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 225263
SF, CA 94122



PIXAR SHOWS OFF PART OF ‘TOY STORY 4’ Pixar unveiled the first 17 minutes of the film at CinemaCon. In it Bonnie is starting kindergarten, but doesn’t want to go. In her art class she creates "Forky," a new toy and thanks to the new toy and Woody they help her adjust to being in school. Find out more June 21 when it opens.



IS TOY STORY 4 GOING TO BE A SOAP OPERA? *IndieWire* reports, “Forky, a neurotic toy Bonnie made in school, runs away in a state of existential confusion, and the Sheriff feels duty bound to find him...” The plot thickens when Woody is reunited with Bo Peep, the former love of his life, who’s become a badass free spirit, embracing life’s daily adventures. What’s Woody to do with the rest of his life? ‘I was made to help a child,’ he tells Bo. ‘Change is good,’ she replies.” Later “Woody and Bo have a tender goodbye. Bo’s being passed on to another family, and she invites Woody to run away with her, but he can’t abandon Andy. It’s a moment of regret that he’s carried with him ever since. And Bo’s re-entry in Woody’s life becomes a major ...”

<https://www.indiewire.com/2019/05/toy-story-4-woody-identity-crisis-bo-peep-1202130113/>

PIXAR IS CREATING ‘MONSTERS AT WORK’ FOR TV John Goodman as Sully and Billy Crystal as Mike Wazowski will be joined by franchise newcomers including Ben Feldman, Kelly Marie Tran, Henry Winkler and Lucas Neff. The show will air on Disney +, a streaming platform designed to rival Netflix.

JERRY BECK CALLS ‘MISSING LINK’ ‘A TRIUMPH FOR LAIKA’ He also says that despite somewhat “weak storytelling, *Missing Link* scores on its acting performances and groundbreaking advances in stop-motion animation.”

Rotten Tomatoes, which gave it a 89% rating, said, “Another beautifully animated triumph for Laika, *Missing Link* is a visual treat with lots of humor, plenty of heart, and even a little food for thought.”

The *Hollywood Reporter* said, “*Missing Link*, a globe-trotting Victorian-era adventure that, while often a magnificent sight to behold, never goes the distance in terms of engaging characters and involving plotting. Additionally frustrating matters is the artistic decision to combine the heavily stylized humans and animals with photo-real elements like fabrics and weaponry, which, while making a bold statement, can also be jarringly distracting. The end result, especially coming after 2016’s highly rewarding *Kubo and the Two Strings*, can’t help but feel like a let-down.” <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/rview/missing-link-review-1199084>

What does it cost to promote a film today? *Variety* says “Ads placed for *Missing Link* had an estimated media value of \$5.91 million through Sunday for 1,852 national ad airings on 41 networks. Spend figures are based on estimates generated from April 8-14. Annapurna Pictures prioritized spend across

networks including Nick, NBC and CBS, and during programming such as *SpongeBob SquarePants*, *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* and *The Loud House*.



NANCY PHELPS, OUR ROVING REPORTER, WAS AWARDED A LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD She wrote me, “Last night at the closing ceremony of Animakom I received their life time achievement award. I am very honored and overwhelmed.” Animakom Fest is an international animation festival that took place in Bilbao, Spain from 2 to 8 April 2019. She was invited there to be a judge on the international jury.

LAIKA’S TRAVIS KNIGHT TO DIRECT ‘SIX BILLION DOLLAR MAN’ Travis Knight, CEO of Portland’s LAIKA Studios, whose fifth stop-motion CG feature, *Missing Link* has just announced he will direct *The Six Billion Dollar Man* for Warner Bros. Mark Wahlberg will star, with Sue Kroll, Bill Gerber and Steve Levinson producing from a Bill DuBuque script.

VINCE COLLINS “AN EVENING AT THE 3D LOUNGE” HAS ITS VIDEO PREMIERE *FELT Zine* issue 58 says they are honored to premiere a new animation by a man they call “one of their favorite animators of all times. Vince Collins is a multi-disciplinary

artist who has shared his visions via both hand-drawn and computer-generated processes, keeping an experimental, genre-bending style through both.” <https://news.feltzine.us/>

“One thing that remains consistent whether Collins is working in 2D, 3D, or any Virtual Reality formats is their iconoclastic approach to animation, which aims to take full advantage of the unique aspects of the medium to create an end result which could only happen through animation. In that sense *An Evening At The 3D Lounge* is classic Collins as he weaves a loose narrative, making it difficult to distinguish when one scene ends, and another begins, until the closing scene – when it is time to pick your jaw off the floor, mop up the drool, and try your best to get your mind back in-order to process what you’ve just experienced.”

**YOU ARE INVITED TO ANIMATION
FILM FINALS AT SF STATE**

Animation Finals is **Thursday, May 23rd** at 6pm in Coppola Theater, Fine Arts 101.

**SEE CAÑADA COLLEGE’S 6TH ANNUAL
DIGITAL ART & ANIMATION STUDENT
SHOW**

The screening will be held on Friday, May 17 at 7pm in the Cañada College Main Theatre. Work from all department disciplines will be shown: illustration, photography, animation, compositing, and special effects. Additionally, several films students created through Campus Movie Fest will be shown, including two that will be screened in the Short Film Corner at the Cannes Film Festival. This is the third consecutive time students from the Digital Art & Animation department have been invited to screen their work at Cannes. Admission is free; a suggested donation of \$5 per person benefits the student scholarship fund.

Faculty teaching in the department include Paul Naas (former Disney animator), Susan Weeks (veteran ILM compositor), David Gainey (ex-DreamWorks and ILM), and Billy Burger (former WildBrain and *James and the Giant Peach* animator). Faculty on hiatus include John Hays and Domenic Allen (former Pixar TD, now at Cinesite).



‘PRICED OUT - WHY YOU CAN’T AFFORD A PLACE IN SF’ Joe Sikoryak is the co-producer of this six film series intended to help voters understand the complicated issues behind a simple problem. We’ve been in production and development for almost two years with a very small crew - about 8 of us. The episodes average 2 1/2 minutes each and were written and directed by Joseph Smooke and Dyan Ruiz, local filmmakers who have never tackled animation before. That’s where Joe came in to show them how it could be done, and to shape the story from policy-issues to more of a drama. We hired local illustrator Fred Noland as art director and Brooklyn-based Rip & Roy to handle the animation. Music and sound design are by Rachel Lastimosa.

Joseph and Dyan have had a lot of success with their organization [people.power.media] to produce videos for non-profits and to promote political causes, especially around housing rights and other justice issues. For Priced Out they tackled a variety of themes of gentrification,

redlining, displacement, current State and Local legislation, etc. They’ve begun to teach workshops using the series as well.

Visit their website and meet them at their fundraiser. <https://www.peoplepowermedia.org>.

Roxie Theater on May 14 where all 6 episodes will be shown for the first time. Seats are limited! You can get your tickets here: bit.ly/POatRoxie Co-emceeding the event will be Oscar Grande of PODER (People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights) and Pam Tau Lee of Chinese Progressive Association. The directors, cast and crew will do a Q and A with the audience and press immediately after the screening.

Joe Sikoryak is the producer-director at Apolog Films, 1633 Market Street, SF CA 94103, (510) 407-7121

www.apologfilms.com imdb.me/joesikoryak

PS Joe Sikoryak’s latest live-action short *Snaggletooth* is playing in the Tribeca Film Festival, but he hasn’t abandoned his animation roots.

FRANK FARRIS AND WILLIAM SUSMAN HAVE COMPLETED ‘VIBRATING WALLPAPER’ They are local artists. Frank created the visuals and William the music. See it at <https://youtu.be/XmE4JkNZcnI> For more information visit:

https://works.bepress.com/frank_farris/26/

https://scholarcommons.scu.edu/math_comps_ci/20/ www.susmanmusic.com

SF INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL PRESENTED TWO GOLDEN GATE AWARDS TO ANIMATED WORKS The animated short prize (\$2,000 cash) went to *Selfies* by Claudius Gentinetta from Switzerland. The jury said “this film’s playful take on our social media lives encapsulates the

highs and lows of the human experience, all packed into a succinct 4 minutes. We loved its creative transitions, absurd sense of humor, and painterly style all used expertly to reflect back on ourselves in these rapidly changing times.”

In the New Visions category ***Cold Pudding Settles Love*** by Urszula Palusińska from Poland received the \$2,000 cash prize. The jury described their selection as “hypnotic disco ball suits, body casts, neon skies, ghost like limousine rides, and mysterious powerful figures that make up a bleak disorienting world, captured vividly with lo-fi mixed media animation. This film demands repeated viewing to unpack the many themes and dreamlike moments that stayed with us days after seeing it.”

DISNEY IS KEEPING THEIR OFFENSIVE FILMS IN THEIR VAULT They will not air ***Song of the South*** on Disney+ and will cut the mention of a crow named Jim in ***Dumbo*** (nor is he mentioned in Tim Burton’s ***Dumbo***).



THE NEXT MAJOR EXHIBIT AT THE WALT DISNEY FAMILY MUSEUM WILL BE “MICKEY MOUSE: FROM WALT TO THE WORLD” The exhibition will chronicle Mickey’s impact and influence on art and entertainment over the past nine decades and tells the story of his origin, rise to fame, and enduring world-wide appeal, juxtaposed with Walt Disney’s inspiring and parallel story. It

will run from May 16 - Jan 6, 2020; in the Diane Disney Miller Exhibition Hall.

The exhibit features more than 400 objects, even rare and never-before-seen original sketches, plus character model sheets, concept artwork, nostalgic merchandise, vintage photographs, modern and contemporary Mickey art (by Andy Warhol, Wayne Thiebaud, Damien Hirst, Gottfried Helnwein, Matsumi Kanemitsu, Sirron Norris, and others). There will also be a selection of Mickey’s animated short films through the years being shown.

DISNEY ANIMATION DIRECTOR RICH MOORE HAS JUMPED SHIP AND HAS JOINED SONY His departure was called “a big coup for Sony’s burgeoning animation arm” by [Bill Desowitz](#) on *Indiewire*. Moore’s directing credits include ***Wreck-It Ralph***, ***Zootopia***, and ***Ralph Breaks the Internet***. Moore had previously worked on ***The Simpsons***. By adding Moore, Sony Animation is in a position to be the hottest studio in Hollywood. Sony also has Phil Lord and Chris Miller who produced ***Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse***. Moore says Sony’s vision is to give filmmakers and artists the freedom to take risks, and to really push the envelope when it comes to visual style and breadth of storytelling. “I can’t wait to be a part of shaping the studio’s future.”

Sony is presently working on three animated features. ***Vivo*** (November 6th, 2020) is the Lin-Manuel Miranda musical with 11 original songs by the ***Hamilton*** creator. It is being directed by Kirk De Micco (***The Croods***). It is about a capuchin monkey that ventures from Havana to Miami to achieve a musical dream.

Miller and Lord are producing a sci-fi comedy about a road trip interrupted by a tech uprising. It was previously titled ***The Mitchells vs. the Machines*** and it is slated for early 2020. Sony is also producing ***Hotel***

Transylvania 4, slated for a December 21, 2021 release.

**SHOW YOUR ANIMATION IN
THE ASIFA-SAN FRANCISCO
SPRING CELEBRATION.**

**WE WANT TO SHOW YOUR
WORK!**

Once again ASIFA-SF has teamed up with Professor Tim Harrington of SF City College to honor the creative works being done by established independent animators and emerging students.

The event will be

TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 6:30 – 8:30 pm public invited, City College of SF. Visual Arts Building, room 115, free.

The audience will get to vote for the best works.

If your work is shown and you want a free copy of the show, let us know and we will include it in a DVD of the program as a way of saying thank you. (The DVD is not for sale. It is just for your use.)

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Everyone is welcomed to submit animated work to our jury. There is no fee and you do not need to be a member of ASIFA-SF or be a student. Send entries as a file or a link to Tim Harrington. He prefers you use a **Google form** at: <https://forms.gle/j24Wd5xU1tay1qWT9>

While he prefer all entries to be submitted through the Google Forms link, if you don't have a Google account you can contact him directly for an alternate submission option. Email him at: tharring@ccsf.edu

OH MY GOSH!!!

**OUR SPRING ANIMATION SHOW WILL
PREMIERE BILL PLYMPTON'S NEW,
VERY NAUGHTY CARTOON *SEX AND
VIOLENCE #3***

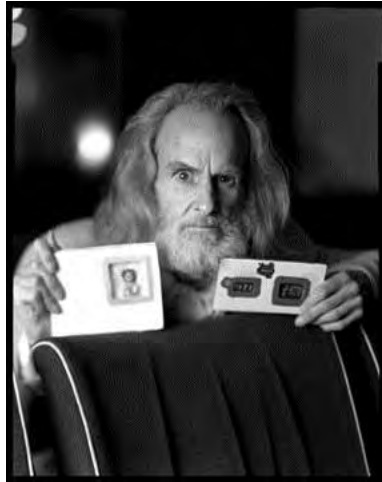
**ENTER THE BRAINWASH MOVIE
FESTIVAL. THEY ARE CELEBRATING
THEIR 25 ANNIVERSARY!** This is an animation friendly event and each year they award animators prizes. Last year their top winners were animated including their 2nd Grand Prize Award going to *Twice Upon a Time* by Vojin Vasovic and the First Prize Award going to *High Five the formation about Cactus* by Christopher Allan Thomas.

For information about submissions visit <http://www.brainwashm.com/2019-call/> or FilmfreeWay, Withoutabox and other major online submission platforms. ASIFA members can request an entry fee discount on Filmfreeway with the code: BWanima.

The festival will be July 12th, 13th, 19th and 20th, with a hot little Silver Anniversary Celebration party on the 21st all at Nimby in Oakland. At the 25th Silver Anniversary party they will be showing retro reels of notable Brainwash trailers, pilots and shows of the past, including animation, time lapse and CGI. Several of the pieces are by ASIFA members. They will show Scott Bartlett's last movie, *Find Your Place*, which was produced by ASIFA member Dave Krzysik, 3 short animations by D. J. Krzysik & M. D. Kuczajda that feature their Hamp character and *Thought Bubble* by Billy Greene and Jean Margaret. They are also planning another entire show of animation for the Chabot Space and Science Center. They have been producing shows there since 2006.

In October they plan to start a monthly series of shows at Bridge Storage and Arts in Richmond, CA.

Brainwash Movies / 1675 7th Street, #23302 / Oakland,



Legendary ANIMATOR Bruce Bickford has died.

He was 72 and in poor health. His best known work is probably *Baby Snakes*, made for Frank Zappa in 1970s. *Animation Magazine* has published a detailed obituary that includes an informative interview with him. There is also a lot on him on YouTube.

<https://www.animationmagazine.net/people/p/assings/stop-motion-animator-artist-bruce-bickford-dies-age-72/> <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLd07g8egs2OPQqkRKpJ6Vg>

PHIL LORD, CHRIS MILLER LEAVE FOX FOR SONY WITH NINE-FIGURE DEAL

Sony has a five year deal with the hottest team in animation. Their credits include *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs*, and *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*. They have multiple projects in the works including more with Marvel.



DISNEY+ WILL BE EXCLUSIVE STREAMING HOME FOR 'THE SIMPSONS'

You will find them there starting this November. They are presently airing the 29th season and have renewed the 30th and 31st seasons. *The Simpsons* is now the longest-running primetime scripted show in television history, having surpassed *Gunsmoke* during its 29th season. Disney+ will begin this coming November broadcasting their shows.

OTHER ANIMATION OFFERINGS COMING TO DISNEY+

Other programs that have been announced are shows on *Frozen* products including promotions on *Frozen 2*. They are also making an unscripted series about the inner workings of Pixar and several shorts featuring a *Toy Story 4* character. Disney's Marvel line will get a "What If" series.

Projects for the Disney+ service will also include a *Phineas and Ferb* feature and shorts featuring other characters from the *Toy Story* franchise. *LampLife*, will be a *Toy Story* spinoff short starring Bo Peep that follows where she was between movies. *Forky Asks a Question*, in which the *Toy Story 4* character tries to understand the world he's just been born into. They join the previously announced [Monsters at Work](#) and [Star Wars: The Clone Wars](#).



NAACP AWARDS The winner for Outstanding Children's Program at the NAACP Awards was *Doc McStuffins* (Disney Junior). The other nominees were *Marvel's Avengers: Black Panther's Quest* (Disney XD), *Motown Magic* (Netflix), *Sesame Street* (HBO) and *Top Chef Junior* (Universal Kids).



GKIDS AND A PARTNER IN BEIJING PRESENTED AN ANIMATION FESTIVAL THERE IN APRIL

GKIDS and Beijing Film Panorama partnered to present [Animation is Film Beijing](#) as part of the Beijing International Film Festival. It was the largest slate of non-Chinese feature film animation ever presented in China. They premiered in China works that are critically-acclaimed and groundbreaking from around the world. The program was modeled after the GKIDS' festival Animation is Film that was presented in LA last year. This was important exposure for animation as the BJIFF is among the largest film festivals in the world. Last year they sold 230,000 tickets.

Animation is Film Beijing presented 15 feature films from Asia, Europe, North America, and South America. The films were Asian or Chinese premieres at the festival. The complete program was *Another Day Of Life*, Poland/Spain/Germany/Belgium/Hungary, Raúl de la Fuente, Damian Nenow, 2018; *Bunuel in the Labyrinth of Turtles*, Spain, Salvador Simo, 2018; *Dragon Ball Super: Broly*, Japan, by Tatsuya Nagamine, 2018; *The Iron Giant*, U.S., Brad Bird, 1999; *Modest Heroes*, Japan, Hiromasa Yonebayashi, Yoshiyuki Momose, Akihiko Yamashita, 2018; *Penguin Highway*, Japan, Hiroyasu Ishida, 2018; *Ruben Brandt: Collector*, Hungary, Milorad Krstić, 2018; *This Magnificent Cake*, Belgium/France/Netherlands, Emma De Swaef, Marc James Roels, 2018;(appearing with *This Magnificent Cake* were the shorts *Solar Walk*, Germany, Réka Bucsi, 2017; *Odd Is An Egg*, Portugal, Kristin Ulseth, 2016); *Tito And The Birds*, Brazil, Gustavo Steinberg, André Catoto, Gabriel Bitar, 2018.

A special tribute in Beijing was a Mamoru Hosoda Retrospective. They presented *The Girl Who Leapt Through Time* (Japan, 2006), *Summer Wars* (Japan, 2009), *Wolf Children* (Japan, 2012), *The Boy and the Beast* (Japan, 2015) and *Mirai* (Japan, 2018).

SHOULD APRIL 19, BE A NATIONAL BIRTHDAY?

The first *Simpsons* short *Good Night Simpsons* was on the 3rd episode of *The Tracey Ullman Show*. It aired Sunday, April 19, 1987 at 9pm. It was animated by Wes Archer, Bill Kopp, and David Silverman.

<https://vimeo.com/104478284>



PENGUIN HIGHWAY JUST OPENED IN THE BAY AREA It is by director Hiroyasu Ishida. The *Variety* reviewer asked, “Why are small, cat-size penguins appearing in the middle of a small-town field?” He called it “an irresistibly out-there mystery that plays like a cross between *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and *Stranger Things*... An impressive first feature from director Hiroyasu Ishida (whose 2011 graduation short, *Rain Town*, is worth looking up online), *Penguin Highway* sticks to the big-eyed, fine-limbed aesthetic seen in most adult-targeted anime but fleshes out the characters at the screenplay level, such that the entire enterprise stands apart — it’s a notch better even than last year’s Oscar-nominated *Mirai*. That the Academy recognized *Mirai*, making it the first non-Studio Ghibli anime to be nominated, suggests that Americans are slowly embracing the artistic merits of a medium being produced at such a volume that many don’t know where to begin trying to keep up with all that cartoon content.

THE FOURTH GLAS ANIMATION FESTIVAL

Reviews and comments by Marty McNamara, Steve Segal, Heather McNabb, Dan McHale, Karen Folger Jacobs, and Micheal Lipman



They presented a tribute to Koji Yamamura who created the Academy Award–nominated short, *Mount Head*.

GLAS Festival 2019

by Marty McNamara

The fourth GLAS Animation festival in Berkeley featured its most impressive collection of guest filmmakers yet, including such major international figures as Koji Yamamura, Michelle Cournoyer, Dennis Tupicoff and Marc James Roels. Combined with a strong selection of films in competition, this has made GLAS the finest annual animation event in the United States. It has been a real pleasure to watch GLAS emerge and thrive under its young team of programmers, Jeannette Bonds and Sean Buckelew, and its selection committee.



Michelle Cournoyer, *The Hat*

International Guests of the Festival

Leading off the retrospectives was Canadian Film Board stalwart Michelle Cournoyer, whose symbolic social commentaries have dazzled us

for decades. Her most-awarded masterwork, *The Hat*, traces the pervasive psychological trauma of childhood sexual abuse and its lingering influence on the adult life of a sex worker. It was a bold statement by Cournoyer and the NFB in 1999 and remains a classic of metamorphic character animation and a uniquely powerful portrait today. Unfortunately her only personal appearance with Q&A was scheduled for late Thursday afternoon, creating work conflicts for some of us. Luckily, many were already familiar with *Accordeon*, *Soif*, and her other fine work.

A master of many art media, Japan's Koji Yamamura last visited ASIFA-SF when his brilliant adaptation of a traditional "rakugo" story, *Mt. Head* was nominated for an Academy Award. (It lost to *The ChubbChubbs* [sic] in one of Oscar's most ludicrous moments!) Since then his creations have taken on Kafka, Satie, Muybridge and ... the Japanese whaling industry (in his beautiful PSA for Greenpeace.) His triumphant return screening also included *A Child's Metaphysics*, *The Old Crocodile*, and the seldom-seen *Fig*, creating a varied program of literate and inventive narratives.



Australian Dennis Tupicoff also visited ASIFA following *Chainsaw* winning the Grand Prix at Ottawa in 2008. He pushes the boundaries of the animated documentary in many ways, from the shocking realism of *Darra Dogs* to the surreal memoir *Into the Dark* to recapitulation of the heartbreaking interview in *His Mother's Voice*. Sadly his separate lecture to dispel the belief that all his films deal with death instead will actually

reinforce that over-simplification. No matter; his films stand for themselves.



The youngest international guest animator was Belgian Marc James Roels, whose puppet films with Emma de Swaef have opened the stop-motion world to the needle-felting aesthetic. Their all-wool sets and characters softened the impact of edgy narratives and made nudity cuddly in both their landmark short *Oh Willy* and their exciting new historical feature *This Magnificent Cake*. Roels' talk provided a wealth of information regarding their unusual production methodology. *This Magnificent Cake* is a refreshing change from the tired formulaic scripts and shallow values of the moribund Hollywood animation industry, even if it does whitewash its depiction of Belgian colonial tyrant Leopold II, one of the greatest mass murderers in world history. He was not the focus of this exploration.

From Valence and Paris, Luce Grosjean contributed the unique perspective of an international distributor specializing in independent short films. A separate Miyu Distribution screening of recent collected works complemented her informative presentation on the nuts and bolts of author-film distribution. This topic is often neglected in festivals, so it was an inspired move by GLAS to host Grosjean's clear and informative lessons.

Shanghai-based Kim Laughton made an exciting presentation on hyper-real digital art and the possibilities of human interactivity. As he was plied for additional technical

information, this quickly became a discussion of the graphic capabilities of numerous software packages. Following his talk many in the audience walked directly to the Berkeley Art Center to view and interact with his stunning VR installation, literally seeing first-hand what he had been talking about. This beautifully complemented the VR demo of John Kahr's *The Age of Sail* at the Hotel Shattuck Plaza, with Cassidy Curtis and other Google Spotlight Story staffers on duty.

Stateside Guests

One American guest was so little known on the animation festival circuit, despite a sizable body of work, that his retrospective was a first glimpse to many in the Bay Area. A few other independent animators have displayed their work outside the circuit for many years; Leif Marcussen and William Kentridge come to mind.

Jim Trainor draws on animal behaviors and primitive tribal customs for inspiration in creating dark versions of the nature documentary or the ethnographic film. His animation is intentionally crude and often illustrates the narration literally, simply replicating the voice track. This can make lengthy films seem even longer. However, the voice tracks are not those of an objective narrator, but the interior monologues of the animal characters. This adds a twisted anthropomorphism, which emphasizes the harsh cruelty of the animal behaviors and questions the barbarism of comparable human activity.

We always knew that films like *Watership Down* and *Bambi* contained harmful lessons for those who would interpret any behavior of talking anthropomorphic animals as a mirror of human behavior. Trainor intentionally pushes this inappropriate

anthropomorphism to the extreme, then leave it to the audience to draw their own conclusions.

GLAS also featured numerous screenings, workshops and panels that focused on feature-length films and animated television series. Foremost among them were Ancey Cristal winner Denis Do's *Funan* and a three-film tribute to recently deceased Studio Ghibli giant Isao Takahata.

Three artists working out of Southern California brought their expertise to the festival, charting their career paths and imparting advice to aspiring artist-entrepreneurs in separate presentations. English transplant Julia Pott will see her "*Summer Camp Island*" series premiere this year on Cartoon Network. Director-producer Christy Karacas is best known for the *Robotomy*, *Superjail!* and *Ballmastrz 9009* series. At Disney Josie Trinidad rose to Co-Head of Story on *Zootopia* after working on *The Princess and the Frog*, *Tangled*, and *Wreck-It Ralph*. Each of those presentations conflicted with competition screenings that I attended, but people who were able to attend gave rave reviews.

South Korean artist Jisoo Kim led a Sunday morning illustration workshop. Her personal animated films have been very interesting, particularly *The Bathhouse*, and her artwork was what made it excel. (In fact I would have liked *The Bathhouse* even better without the superfluous titles that obscured those visuals.) I doubt that she screened any of her films at the workshop, but her illustration credentials are stellar.

<https://vimeo.com/4932080>

I have fond personal memories of the Cardiff and Platform (Portland) animation festivals, both directed by Irene Kotlarz, who curated two screenings of British Animation at GLAS. Somehow she was able to put together

one program from the 1980s and one from the 1990s and still omit such stalwarts as Mark Baker, Erika Russell, Barry Purves, Alison Snowden, David Anderson, Jeff Newitt, and Peter Lord. That tells you how fertile the animation environment was in the UK at that time!

All these special programs complemented several key presentations by major institutions. Nickelodeon staged a discussion of *Getting the Perfect Gig* in addition to their separate Meet and Greet and Networking Mixer. The Animation Guild organized a presentation on *How to Pitch your Film*. Netflix put together a panel to explore all its exciting new projects. Most were held in the David Brower Center and were well attended by throngs of ambitious young artists.

The Competition Jury Awards

2017-18 was an extremely fertile period for international animation. There were so many high quality films of comparable value that the top festival awards were dispersed to many different and equally worthy recipients. For example ASIFA recently screened Best of Stuttgart 2018 and Best of Ottawa 2018 reels that had completely different run lists of award winners!

Meghan Oretsky, on staff at Vimeo since 2014, served on the Competition Jury with Koji Yamamura and Dennis Tupicoff. Each of them chose one film for Special Mention.

Tupicoff selected *Fly in the Restaurant* by Xi Chen, a strangely non-committal long take depicting a microcosm of urban Chinese life from a rotating high perspective within a single claustrophobic room.

<https://magazine.renderosity.com/article/5179/glas-festival-winner-a-fly-in-the-restaurant-by-xi-chen>



Yamamura chose to award Justine Vuylsteker for *Embraced*, a French-Canadian co-produced pinscreen animation, which ASIFA featured in our NFB premiere event last Fall. This heartfelt film portrayed a woman tortured by love for both her present and past lover. The time frame was not clear, so some would assume she was instead torn between her partner and another current lover, but this would not diminish the film's emotion at all.

<https://www.nfb.ca/film/embraced>

Meghan Oretsky picked *The Night of the Plastic Bags* by Gabriel Harel. I loved this too, but considered it an absurd comic horror story rather than an urgent call to action. The woman, desperate to become impregnated, rehearsing her clichéd rationale, and oblivious to any danger other than her biological time clock, can only be taken as humorous. This comic character may undercut the social significance of the environmental message, but does not weaken the film. (This must be the year for absurd animated horror/suspense comedies as *Fire in Cardboard City*, a New Zealand entry by Phil Brough in the Family Competition was another fine example.)

<https://mubi.com/films/the-night-of-the-plastic-bags>



The New Talent Award went to *Bloeistraat 11* by Nienke Deutz from the Netherlands. This coming-of-age story of two young girls is a unique blend of drawn characters on a stop-motion set that won the Grand Prix at Annecy. Seldom do we see animation that captures the subtlety and complexity of an adolescent relationship so well.

www.nienkedeutz.com/bloeistraat-11

The High Risk Award was given to *Egg* by Martina Scarpelli, a French-Danish production. Her highly stylized depiction of an eating disorder seems perfect for this award. Its geometric enclosure implies entrapment, and the limited color scheme suggests blandness. Most of all, the food choice reflects the femininity of the ovum and the hormonal imbalance sustained.

The Grand Prix Controversy

It has been quite a few years since we have seen a consensus “Grand Prix Film”, a major work by an established artist of consummate skill that stands head-and-shoulders above the field. Think Suzie Templeton’s *Peter and the Wolf*, Alexander Petrov’s *The Old Man and the Sea*, or Frederick Back’s *The Man Who Planted Trees*. In most years the choice is not so easy.



Tomek Popakul: *Acid Rain*

Praised by many, reviled by some, *Acid Rain* by Poland’s Tomek Popakul won the GLAS 2019 Grand Prix. The degree of polarity of audience response to this immersive trip into the rave subculture was surprising, but I can understand both sides and Popakul might too.

In the film a naïve young girl, Mloda, escapes a drab urban environment, is picked up by an older and unstable male drug dealer, moves into his camper under presumably platonic terms, and embarks with him on a trip that slowly becomes progressively weirder. Suffice to say that the wisdom of her choices is suspect.

Popakul says, “In the film, I wanted to express mixed feelings of fascination and disgust, a sense of community and alienation in the crowd. I wanted to show naïve spirituality and low human ‘dirt’, nature and civilization as well as hunger for colors and gray everyday life in the post-communist landscape of Eastern Europe.”

Professional animators in the audience were exhibiting mixed feelings toward the film itself though, rather than toward the drug experience. From my personal perspective, the film’s color palette and sound design sustain the sensory impression of the rave admirably. Both are highly stylized. By contrast the film’s motion capture is extremely realistic, and this uneasy blend of real and unreal imparts the feeling of watching real characters while one’s brain is clouded over. Some may claim that this juxtaposition is intentional and can transform random cinematographic and editing flaws into assets that enhance the drugged feeling. Others may assert that it merely camouflages mistakes and lowers our standard of assessing the visuals.

In the lengthy narrative, Popakul’s ambivalence toward the subject tends to flatten

the story arc. In a climate of unreality one can gradually become numb to revulsion and even to peril. Yet when Mloda finally encounters imminent danger, she is able to simply disengage unscathed. Some might consider this ending anti-climactic and the opposite of a cautionary tale for young women. Yet it is easy to admire the quality of Acid Rain's art direction and soundtrack, and savor Popakul's impressive achievement in recreating this tactile environment.

Other Awards



Two special cash prizes were awarded this year by FX and Vimeo. The new FXX Elevation Award highlights one filmmaker whose film demonstrate FX Network's values of fearless storytelling, compelling characters, and a distinct point of view on the human condition. The award was given to Sophie Koko Gate and her gender-bending anthropomorphic *Slug Life*. She will receive a \$25,000 all-in development and production deal with FX to produce and air her next animated short film. While in production, *Slug Life* was a centerpiece of Gate's talk at last year's GLAS. Anyone who has viewed the viscous, slithery mating ritual of hermaphroditic slugs would be surprised that Gate did not win all the awards at GLAS 2019!
<https://vimeo.com/sophiekokogate>



Meghan Oretsky awarded *Les levres gercées*, the Vimeo Staff Pick Award

The award was \$2,500 plus a next-day online Vimeo launch to Kelsi Phung and Fabien Corre for *Les levres gercées*, a sensitive portrayal of strife between a parent and her LGBTQ child. The story in this French student film from Les Gobelins is conveyed exclusively through verbal exposition. The visuals remain neutral and suggest stasis with surprisingly centered compositions. Most importantly, it is encouraging to see this progressive topic advanced and awarded.

<https://www.cartoonbrew.com/cartoon-brew-pick/short-pick-of-the-day-les-levres-gercees..>

Luce Grosjean, Christy Karacas and Marc James Roels judged the US, Family and GIF competitions. The GIF prize was awarded to Brandon Buir.

Another film in which the soundtrack did all the heavy lifting was Peter Millard's *Dum dee bolala dum*, when received Honorable Mention in the Family Competition. Millard is a GLAS regular from the UK who is very gifted in fashioning silly, humorous voice tracks with singing and signal processing. The single disjointed character walk cycle on screen adds very little and that is the joke. In truth Millard's other film in the main competition, *Egg Touching*, was much funnier, although its placement in the same program with the aforementioned *Egg* was quite strange.

www.hellopetermillard.com/dum-dee-bolala-dum

The winner of the Family Competition was *Kuap* by Swiss director Nils Hedinger, a charming story of a tadpole who somehow is left behind when the others move on as frogs. Lessons on solitude, ingenuity, friendship, growth and diversity are plentiful. Using a live-action pond with tiny composited cartoon characters was an astute design choice, as its dimensions create an expansive world.

GLAS is particularly interested in highlighting and nurturing American independent animation.

Special Mention in the US Competition went to another nurturer, Steven Subotnick, who is both an instructor at RISD and a dad. His film *Ballerina* clearly drew on his family research, as the daughter whose early triumphs and frustrations had inspired this portrayal of a budding dancer was happily watching the awards ceremony in the audience. *Ballerina* beautifully captured the gamut of emotions that children and their parents all experience at that age.

A Cal Arts student entry was chosen as the Best US Film. *Sparky* by Xinbaonuzi was structured as a daydream fantasy, opening and closing at a windowsill. Aided by the soundtrack, its floating motion design felt dreamlike, even without weighted waking scenes for contrast, and the dreamer's mood remained surprisingly constant. *Sparky* may have been "a dream without a theme," but drifted pleasantly to its wry conclusion.

Neglected Gems

My favorite film of the entire festival was *Agouro* by Portuguese directors David Doutel and Vasco Sa, a brooding study of a mountain farmer, his mentally disturbed cousin, and a seed bull in an isolated cabin by a frozen lake. A

smoldering tension builds visually with beautiful imagery and striking depth. The visual language is eloquent and the final character dilemma is wrenching. I met the directors at Annecy and hope that their film is eventually recognized for its subtlety, poignancy and power.

Former GLAS Grand Prix winner Marta Pajek from Poland entered *III*, the final segment of her trilogy. Her character animation of a sexual tryst between mutually aggressive partners is unorthodox and superb. The film falls apart when a song bursts onto the soundtrack, takes us out of the moment, and makes the message literal and obvious. It's a shame, because the brilliant animation is so much better than the music. It's well worth seeing until the last few minutes.

This year's festival included several wickedly funny films, including the aforementioned *Egg Touching* and the "cg with a stop-motion look" *Fire in Cardboard City*. Also worthy of mention are *Wildebeest* by Nicolas Keppens and Matthaias Plips from Belgium, portraying an elderly couple on safari, and *Hors Piste* a precocious French student film by Leo Brunel, Loris Cavalier, Camille Jalabert, Oscar Malet, depicting a maladroit ski rescue patrol.

Other especially noteworthy entries included two new examples of the needle-felting technique, *Good Intentions* by Anna Mantzaris (UK) and *Sister* by Siqi Song (China/USA). *The Bird and the Whale* by Carol Freeman (Ireland) was fine paint-on-glass animation. *The Sister's Bedroom* by Claire Brognez (Canada) was an impressive handling of delicate adolescent sexuality. *Kids* by Michael Frei & Mario von Rickenbach (Switzerland) was the latest work by one of last year's guests at GLAS. *Agua Viva* by Alexa Lim Haas (US) presented a fresh

perspective on immigration and was also included in the *Borscht Corp* screening. *Albatross Soup* by Winnie Cheung (US) and *Bike Trip* by Tom Schroeder (US) were both finely animated American films.

Annual Suggestion List

1) Holding the Tupicoff and Trainor retrospectives at the Pacific Film Archive was a great idea. It is a terrific theatre and the location is ideal. Any additional screenings at the PFA or possibly even using one of their gallery spaces would be fantastic, if they are interested. The Berkeley Art Center is great too, but has size limitations and is quite a walk, particularly in the rain.

2) In the early morning *Meet the Filmmakers* conferences, please tailor questions that are specific to each film, rather than generic questions directed to the entire group of directors. I realize that this would require considerably more time and effort from the moderator, but quite a few attendees expressed frustration that each filmmaker felt obligated to answer each generic question, even if they felt they had nothing much to say. With this many directors in attendance, it would be helpful to use the limited time more efficiently.

(Note: A big thank you to Jeannette and Company for specifying on the GLAS website which Competition Program each film will be in! That really helps.)

Can't wait to take part in GLAS 2020!

GLAS by Steve Segal

For the fourth consecutive year The GLAS Animation Festival has blown into Berkeley the weekend on March 21. It is the brainchild of animators and animation enthusiasts Janette Bonds Einar Baldvin and Sean Buckelew. The programs consisted of several retrospectives,

industry panels, an interactive display, an installation, competition screenings and special films. This year the program went very smoothly, almost all started and ended on time.

My first experience was the Google Spotlight mini epic *Age of Sea* directed by Oscar winner John Kahrs. I had seen this on screen presented as a normal film with changes in camera angles in Ron Diamond's *Animation Show of Shows*, and I really liked it. So much in fact that I was skeptical that it could work as a VR experience, since the viewer decides where to look and the film was perfectly edited. This VR version is so skillfully done and immersive I highly recommend trying it if you get a chance.

The programs began Thursday and went until late Sunday, with a party every night. From Friday thru Sunday each day started with a free breakfast, followed by a discussion among the filmmakers who had been presented the night before. This is a change from previous years where the filmmakers appeared immediately after the screening, but this proved to be cumbersome and too brief.

Even though the festival favors independent animation, every year they have big names in animation. They have had Brad Bird (*Incredibles*), Miller / Lord (*Lego Movie*, *SpiderVerse*), Jorge Gutierrez (*Il Tigre*, *The Book of Life*). This year they focused more on experimental filmmakers who have a lower profile but are just as talented filmmakers. Koji Yamamura was one of the key guests. He is from Tokyo, his films feature a surreal illustrative style and even more surreal stories. The best of his oeuvre being his Oscar nominated *Mount Head*. He revealed that he likes to animate directly on paper, often straight ahead, then scans the drawings in to the computer for finishing. A few years ago I had the good fortune to visit his animation gallery and shop in Tokyo called Au Praxinoscope, if

you find yourself in Tokyo check it out, but check his website first because he's only open a few days a week.

One of the more intriguing panels was provided by Netflix, which is heavily invested in animation of all types. One of the key players on the panel is legendary animator James Baxter who supervised the hand drawn animation in *Mary Poppins Returns*. He is currently involved with several projects, including one very exciting feature which has been in production in Spain for many years before Netflix picked it up. *Klaus* is about a downtrodden mail carrier who encounters Santa Claus.

Another Netflix panelist was former Pixar storyboard artist Alex Woo who is supervising a preschool show *Go! Go! Cory Carson*. It seems he encountered the most restrictions from the usually hands-off Netflix, obviously because it's directed at small children. Alex first came to the attention of the animation world with his homage to 40's serials *Rex Steele: Nazi Smasher*. Shion Takeuchi was a writer on *Monsters University* and *Inside Out* was also on the panel. After Pixar she turned her focus on writing and storyboarding on several animated series, *The Regular Show* (Cartoon Network), and the cult hit *Gravity Falls*.

Jay Oliva has been developing a series based on the graphic novel *Trese*. He joked several times that the only reason he got the job was that Netflix wanted to adapt a Filipino graphic novel and that is his nationality. He later revealed that the company told him that his projects always seem to get large numbers of viewers, so he was the obvious choice.

Another upcoming Netflix project mentioned in passing, Henry Selick's stop motion feature *Wendell and Wild* is being made in Portland though not by Laika, and another animated

feature is *Jacob and the Seabeast* from *Big Hero 6* Director Chris Williams.

Another useful panel was How to Pitch Your Film (to people who can actually get your project made). The panelists were from varied outlets: Rob Pereyda an anime expert from Viz Media and Henshin, Asalle Tanha from Cartoon Network, John Agbaje from FX Networks and Luce Grosjean of Miyu Distribution.

The panelists all agreed that you need to get an agent and a lawyer and you need to make sure your pitch is short and well thought out. If a studio rep wants a "General" meeting, it's just to get to know you, it is not a pitch mtg, but several added that you should have your project ready in case they ask what you're working on. Finally they agreed that you need to know who you're pitching to, and to match content to the network.

All-purpose CG artist Kim Laughton was responsible for this year's installation, which was an interactive image of CG wheat brushed by a CG hand inspired by a scene in *Gladiator*, supposedly a representation of your own hand as you passed it over a sensing device.

In his presentation he revealed that the hand had to be pre-rendered and from my visit to the display that was obvious, the CG hand didn't turn nor did the fingers move as mine did. Still all involved are to be applauded for trying something ambitious on a tight budget and with a short schedule.

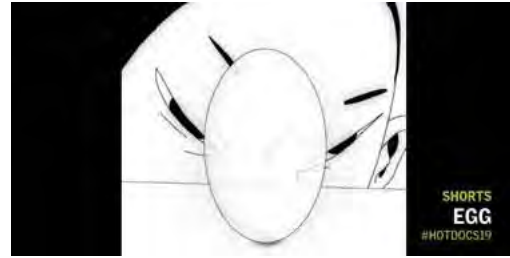
One of the invited guests was Michele Cournoyer, an independent animator working at the NFBC. Her stark pen and ink works feature constant transformations in exploring female issues. In the Q&A she revealed that she usually doesn't have a specific plan for her action, and works straight ahead.

Marc James Roels is a stop-motion expert. He showed his featurette *This Magnificent Cake*,

and showed some fascinating behind the scenes footage. He also showed some production footage of a commercial where he used real time puppetry, which was especially interesting. I was able to talk to him about the challenges of getting an odd length film (45 minutes) seen, I could relate as I had some challenges getting my 38 minute film into festivals.

Julia Pott has created episodes of the *Adventure Time* TV Series. She is a British animation director, writer and actress living in Brooklyn, NY. She is known for *Belly* (2011), *Summer Camp Island* (2016) and *World of Tomorrow* (2015). She was funny and irreverent and made the focus of her talk about how she and her GLAS staff interviewer, Tom C J Brown, have been best friends for years. As expatriate animators from England working in the USA, their paths seem to have crossed countless times.

Another invited guest was Josie Trinidad, an effervescent Disney story artist who loves her job in the Disney story dept. She desperately wanted to be a Disney animator but her tiger mom wanted her to be a lawyer or doctor. She put it all on the line only to discover that she just didn't have what it takes to be a high level animator, but her dream of working for Disney couldn't be quelled, so she discovered a talent for story. She joined Disney in 2004 as a story apprentice. Then worked on *The Princess and the Frog*, *Tangled*, *Wreck-It Ralph*, and *Zootopia* and the shorts *How to Hook Up Your Home Theater* and *The Ballad of Nessie*. Finally she became head of story for *Ralph Breaks the Internet*. And now she is preparing to direct a project she was forbidden to disclose.



The Winning Films

Steve Segal adds, “The competition films were varied and engrossing. A few challenged my personal sensibilities, but that’s what festivals are for. If you missed it I hope you will consider attending next year.”

Grand Prix - [Acid Rain](#) by Tomek Popakul

New Talent Award - [Bloeistraat 11](#) by Nienke Deutz

High Risk Award - [Egg](#) by *Martina Scarpelli*

Meghan Oretsky Special Mention - [The Night of the Plastic Bags](#) by Gabriel Harel

Koji Yamamura Special Mention - [Embraced](#) by Justine Vuylsteker pin-screen

Dennis Tupicoff Special Mention - [Fly in the Restaurant](#) by Xi Chen

FXX Elevation Award - Sophie Koko Gate - [Slug Life](#)

Vimeo Staff Pick Award – [Les lèvres gercées](#) by Kelsi Phung and Fabien Corre

Family Competition Honorable Mention - [Dum dee bolala dum](#) by Peter Millard

Family Competition Award Winner - [Kuap](#) by Nils Hedinger

Best Gif Award presented by Giphy to Brandon Buir

US Special Mention - [Ballerina](#) by Steven Subotnick

Best US Film - *Sparky* by Xijnbaonuzi

HELLO GLAS by Heather McNabb

Heather McNabb wrote, “I most certainly did go to GLAS again this year and had an excellent time. I attended with a co-worker and between us we got to see almost everything.

One thing that seems really special about GLAS is how it blends US industry work with independent, international, and experimental animation. The family programs and the feature showings were a highlight for me, especially *Funan*, but I like how there is a broad range of work that appeals to many sensibilities.

The morning group Q&As are still a really great innovation; much more conducive to discussion than trying to have them right before or after a screening. The new ticketing system wasn't perfect but it worked fine. The quality of the panel discussions and workshops was pretty good, and I hope they continue to expand the hands-on ...**Hello GLAS!**

My major quibble with GLAS overall is that it doesn't yet feel like a "locals" event. Almost everyone I met there is LA based. I would love it if more Bay Area animators showed up and were in the competitions.”

GLAS by Karen Jacobs

Karen Jacobs was interested in an illustration workshop at GLAS. She wrote, “one of six downtown Berkeley venues of the fourth GLAS animation festival, the East Bay Media Center hosted animation screenings and a workshop on March 21-24 2019. The festival provided warm settings for enthusiastic animators from our country and others to hang out, evolve friendships and possible collaborations. Twenty-four attendees drew in the illustration workshop taught by animator Jason Kim, a graduate of Animation High School in her native Korea.”

GLAS IS AN UNBELIEVABLE JEWEL

By Micheal Lipman

Micheal Lipman loves GLAS, and you too can join him there next March. He writes “GLAS is just an unbelievable jewel and I feel SO LUCKY to live so closely. I went to all the screenings every day — so that's approx. 10 hours of animation x 4 days! Just completely “refueling” if you know what I mean. And there are MANY less student works in the Fest this year. They keep getting better and better at curating the shows.”

**SUPPORT ANIMATION AS A GREAT
ART FORM!**

PLAN TO ATTEND GLAS 2020

IN BERKELEY!

GLAS GOES TO PORTLAND The world of independent animation continues. On the weekend of **May 25-26**, NWAf and the Hollywood Theatre are pleased to introduce Portland audiences to the GLAS Animation Festival from Berkeley.

Brainchild of director Jeanette Bonds, GLAS has quickly become the USA's premiere animation event. Since our first event in 2011, NWAf has hosted 150 screenings, which showcased 1142 juried film selections. Behind the scenes, hundreds of animators have helped us choose the exemplary works that best represent this magical art form. The festival has been an enormous labor of love... And it's time to say goodbye. Thank you, everyone, for sharing the adventure. Please join us on **Friday May 24th** for one last show: a celebration of the most popular fan favorites from these past eight years.

Bernie Sanders is picking on Disney He suggests they should use *Avengers* profits to **Pay All Their Staff a Middle-Class Wage**. "That would be truly heroic if Disney used its profits from *Avengers* to pay all of its workers a middle-class wage, instead of paying its CEO Bob Iger \$65.6 million," he tweeted.



ROSTO, REST IN PEACE

by Nancy Denney-Phelps

On 7 March 2019 noted Dutch filmmaker, artist, and musician Rosto left this planet much too soon at the age of 50. On 8 April, the three remaining members of Thee Wreckers Band, Wrecker Folley, Wrecker Wally, and Wrecker Rooney, gathered at the Eye Film Institute in Amsterdam along with Rosto's many friends and admirers to celebrate his life and work which were intertwined.

The Wreckers began in 1993 "when the noisy outfit of young misfits started playing cover versions of their favorite songs", according to the group's website. As happens with bands, The Wreckers never officially broke up but they lost the lure of the road and pop music fame.

In 1995 Rosto came up with the first series of songs following a loose, intuitive concept about landscapes and crossroads. The songs inspired his serial multi-media online graphic novel *Mind My Gap* which he published from 1998 to 2014. The stories went on to become their own

short film trilogy which included *Jona/Tomberry* which won the Grand Prix Canal + at Cannes in 2005. The re-born (Thee One, Thee Only) Thee Wreckers Band transformed into being part of Rosto's music/film projects with W. Wally singing, W. Folly on drums and percussion, W. Rooney playing electric and acoustic bass, and W. Rosto on guitars, keyboard, and singing backup vocals.

As part of the 8 April tribute, *Thee Wreckers Tetralogy* was screened. The 4 short films are each based on a song performed by the group. The 2008 six minute *No Place Like Home* is about keeping a dream alive. It was followed in 2012 by the 10-minute *Lonely Bones*, a hallucinogenic film about dreams and sacrifices. In 2015 *Splintertime* was released. In the 11-minute film, a band of dreamy spirits in an ambulance come to the end and run out of road.

The final film of the Tetralogy, *Reruns*, was released last year. The 14-minute trip through a sunken maze of memories and dreams won the International Grand Prix at the 2019 Anima Brussels International Animation Festival. The festival's closing night ceremony was also dedicated to Rosto.

The tribute concluded with a screening of *Everything is Different, Nothing Has Changed*. The 20-minute behind-the-scenes documentary about the band, the music, and the films was made by Rob Gradisen and Joao Costa. In it, Rosto talks about his amazing journey through life, his dreams, and why it took him 10 years to complete *Thee Wreckers Tetralogy*.

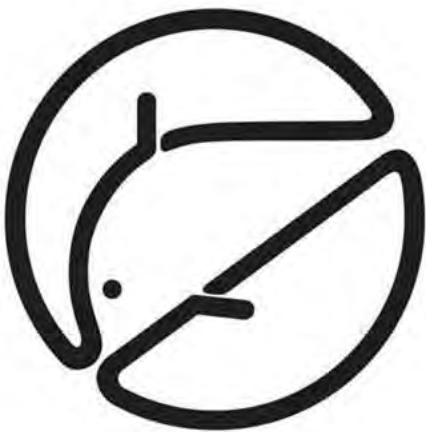
Rosto was a filmmaker, artist, director, writer, producer, illustrator, designer, actor, and animator whose driving force was music. I loved all of his films but if I had to pick just one it would be his 30-minute animated musical *The*

Monster of Nix. The 2011 film about Willy, a troubled boy, who fights the destructive force of an all-devouring monster in the village of Nix is a fairytale for all ages. The film took 6 years to produce and featured collaborations with The Metropole Orchestra, The Residents, Terry Gilliam, and Tom Waits.

Rosto may be gone but his films remind us of him. As I raised a glass of red wine to him at the memorial I thought of all the pleasure his films have given me and how much I will miss a very gentle, sweet friend.

Rosto is survived by his wife Suzi Templeton, his son Max, and daughter Rosie.

Note: Nancy told me a few days before she wrote the above article, "The memorial wasn't sad at all but a lovely tribute to him and his work. It was held at the EYE Theatre, the Dutch National Film Museum, where KLIK is held. There were a few short speeches from the other Wreckers, Suzie, and his producer but mostly it was a documentary that was made about him two years ago and then four of his films. Then we all drank and had a good time. www.thewreckers.com Or www.rostoad.com



CINANIMA – A JEWEL IN THE ANIMATION FESTIVAL CROWN

12- 18 November 2018, Espinho, Portugal

by Nancy Denev-Phelps

Cinanima celebrated its 42nd anniversary in 2018 making it one of the oldest and most prestigious animation festivals in the world. The festival takes place in Espinho, located 2 ½ hours north of Lisbon. It is a beautiful seaside town with wide beaches and picturesque Portuguese fishing boats.

This year 1,508 films from 69 countries were submitted to the festival with 110 films selected for the competition programs. I was extremely honoured to be a member of the International Jury for Student Films. Along with my fellow jurors animator/producer Irina Calado and producer Willem Thijssen, I watched 36 student films in our category.

Maybe the fresh sea air, the fishing boats and the delicious food got us in the mood, but our jury definitely felt the complex nature of tango as we watched Marta Szymanska's *Tango of Desire*. Her tango is not an erotic dance, full of desire and aggression, but a dance of sorrow and longing. The Polish animator used paint to emphasize the flow of movement and essence most effectively. Our jury gave *Tango of Desire* a Special Mention.

Our second Special Mention went to *Music and Clowns*, a 7 minute animated documentary about living with someone with Downs syndrome. Animator Alex Widdowson's brother Jamie has Downs syndrome. In the film, Alex discusses with his parents what it is like to raise a child with this syndrome. Using hand-drawn images and live action, he gives us a look into his brother's world where, despite the fact that Jamie is close to non-verbal, he is funny,

charming and perceptive, and sometimes frustrating.

We awarded the International Student Film/Gaston Roch Award to Orsolya Lang from Hungary. Her 10-minute film *Off Season* utilizes drawing-on-paper to capture the feeling of a small fishing village offseason. The villagers go about their daily routines living side by side waiting for spring and the return of the tourists. Each day seems much like the last one, but sometimes there is a special day. It's not easy to recognize how special the day is until after it has passed. *Off Season* is about just such a day.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=anFlWyvky8g>

One of the great pleasures at Cinanima is the opportunity to see a wide range of Portuguese animation. There are 3 separate categories in the National Competition: Young Portuguese Director over 18 Years, Young Portuguese Director Under 18 Years of Age, and the prestigious Antonio Gaio Award for the Best Professional Portuguese Film. Antonio Gaio was the founder of Cinanima. Sadly he passed away in 2015 at the age of 90, but his legacy lives on in the guise of the award named for him.

The Antonio Gaio jury selected *Agouro* by David Doutel and Vasco Se as the Best Professional Portuguese Film. The film also received a Special Mention from the International Jury in the Short Film 5 to 24 Minute category. *Agouro* is a film that I especially like. It is about relationships and choices that have to be made in life. I've written about the film at length several times so I won't go into detail about the story again but if you ever have the opportunity to see this beautiful film don't miss it.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGQDNoy2oi0>

The future of Portuguese animation looks bright. The Young Directors 18 to 30 Years Old category showcased 12 films by up and coming young animators. Several of the films dealt with contemporary issues. The jury recognized *The Voyager* by Joao Gonzalez as the best film in the category. In the film, a pianist lives alone in a big city. He suffers from agoraphobia (an irrational fear of leaving home and of public spaces). Eventually, he is forced to leave his house to fill a prescription, forcing him to face his greatest fears. Trying to avoid contact with other people is impossible out in the world, and little by little he comes to the realization that he is not completely alone and is able to overcome his fears. *The Voyager* deals with an all too common problem in modern society, reflecting an increasingly individualized, less community-centred way of life.

Gonzalez composed and performed the piano music for the film's soundtrack. He said that he would like to have the opportunity to have the film screened live with him playing the piano accompaniment.

Voices in the Wind was created by four young directors: Pero Ferreira, Elton Fortes, Feliz Lim, and Pedro Ferreira. In the film, 3 immigrants from different countries tell compelling stories of their voyages from their homeland to their eventual settling in Portugal. Although the animation was not particularly strong, the stories were very compelling and the young animators definitely show promise.

In *Right to Say No*, Ines Delicioso tackles the issue of abusive relationships with sensitivity. The extremely short 1-minute film is narrated by a teenage abuse victim. I think that this film could be developed into a longer project quite successfully. The Young Director over 18 Jury gave the film a Special Mention.

Along with the competition screenings, there were numerous special screenings and retrospectives. Renowned Portuguese animator Regina Pessoa curated a 2 part program titled *Animation Through Women's Eyes*. In describing her choice of films, Regina wrote in the catalogue, "This program reflects 3 generations of women whom I admire and respect . . . it also reflects 3 moments of my life as an author: as an apprentice, as a colleague, and now, perhaps as a veteran to the eyes of younger people". The program also included some of my favourite films.

It was a delight to see Caroline Leaf's film *The Street* as part of Regina's program. The 1976 film is as touching and beautiful today as when it was made. It is based on a short story by Mordecai Richler about his memories of growing up in Montreal Canada's Jewish community. Caroline used watercolour and ink to tell the story of a family that is taking care of their dying grandmother and the young son who is impatient to get the private room that he has been promised as soon as she passes away.

Regina also included such classic films as Joanna Quinn's *Body Beautiful*. There is no way that you can keep from laughing at Beryl's adventures as she gets revenge against her macho supervisor who continually taunts her about her weight. At the opposite end of the spectrum is the beautiful Russian film by Anna Budanova *Among the Black Waves*. Based upon an ancient Norse legend where souls of drowned people turn into seals, a hunter steals a sea-girl's skin and she can't turn back into an animal. She becomes his wife but her heart is still in the sea.

Homage was paid to the great pioneer of Serbian animation Nikola Majdak. In a career spanning over 60 years, he worked as a director, director of photography, cameraman, editor, and animator. His 1963 films *The Soloist* and *The*

Chalk-Man were the first cartoon films made in Belgrade. Nikola passed away in 2013 but the 11 films screened at his retrospective show he left behind an impressive body of work.

Balkanima Festival producer and organizer Milan Milosavljevic selected 10 films for *New Hope: Recent Serbian Animation*. After a period in the early 2000s, when animation struggled to survive in Serbia, there was a resurgence of interest in 2013 when Ana Nedeljkova and Nikola Majdak Jr.'s *Rabbitland* won an award in the Generation 14+ category at the Berlinale. Subsequently, the Film Center Serbia has established financing for the production of animated shorts. The films in Milan's program represent this new generation of Serbian animators.

2018 marked the 100th anniversary of the restoration of Lithuania's independence. To mark this important event Valentas Askinis, Director of the Tindirindis Animation Festival in Vilnius, curated a program of 11 films. The 1970 film *Initiative* by Antanas Janauskas was produced at Lietuvos Kino Studio. It was founded in 1940 and is the oldest film production company in Lithuania. Valentas' program showed what a wide range of animation topics and styles the country fosters.

A separate program of Lithuanian animation for children included animator and caricaturist Ilja Bereznickas' *The Last Christmas Gift*, 1985. Ilja has been animating for over 40 years and his films are full of wit and charm. *The Last Christmas Gift* is a humorous story about how Santa discovers when he is out delivering presents that there is one gift left over. . . and so what to do with it? The solution is guaranteed to make the entire family smile.

The 110th anniversary of the birth of Lithuanian animation will be celebrated in 2020. Wladyslaw Starewicz began working

with film and animation in Kaunas, the second largest city in Lithuania. In 1910 he filmed the first puppet animation film *Lucanus Cervus* there. Starewicz began another 5 animated films in Lithuania but did not complete them until after he moved to Moscow in 1912.



Vera Neubauer and Nancy

With such an amazing pool of talent on the Cinanima festival juries, there were a remarkable number of high-quality workshops and master classes. International Jury member Vera Neubauer's work in a variety of mediums from crocheting and drawing to experimenting with everyday objects and live actors have earned her 2 BAFTAs and numerous other awards. Women in Animation has called this British animator "... the terrorist branch of the art form, the Red Brigade of animated film" and any master class that she gives is sure to be not only instructive but fun as well. At Cinanima her Form and Content session dealt with how form, technique, and style influence content.



Estonian animator Riho Unt has created 2 of my favourite films, the 2005 *Brothers Bearheart* and *The Master* (2015) which won Riho a Crystal in Annecy. *Brothers Bearheart* is a delightful tale about 3 bears - Henry, Vincent, and August; three artists who appear in Paris after their mother, an artist, is shot by a hunter in the forest while she is out painting. But, it is not just any hunter - he is the Russian painter Ivan Shishkin. When they discover that Shishkin not only killed their mother but signed his name to her painting, the 3 bears go on an odyssey to right this wrong. The three heroes of the film are based on the 3 bear cubs from the painting *Morning in a Pine Forest* by Ivan Shishkin which is in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow. *Brothers Bearheart* never fails to make me smile when I watch this puppet animation, which I do frequently.



The Wing, a work in progress

The Master, based on Estonian author Friedebert Tuglos' short story *Popi and Huhuu*, is a painful reminder that war does not just have a profound effect on those who are fighting but on innocent animals as well. The puppets and sets are so beautifully constructed that it is easy to forget that they are not real as you sink deeper and deeper into the catastrophic events on screen. Riho is currently in production on his new film *The Wings*, another period piece based on the Estonian writer Eduard Bornhohe's inventor character Jaan, who has a desire to fly.

At Riho's masterclass, *Fantasies From The Past*, he expressed his belief that to feel the present better, we have to look back to the past. He believes that there is always something exciting in the past to take with us into the present in order to fantasize about the future. Using *Brothers Bearheart* and *The Master* as examples, he said that this was how those films were born, both being set in the Paris of the 20th century.

Willem Thijssen is one of the most respected producer/directors in animation. In 1985 he received his first Oscar for his work as director of *A Greek Tragedy*. For Michael Dudok de Wit's acclaimed *Father and Daughter*, Willem garnered another Oscar, along with a BAFTA, as the producer of the film. *Father and Daughter* also won the Annecy Grand Prix. Recently he has been connected with *The Monster of Nix* by Rosto and Hisko Hulsing's *Junkyard*.

For Willem's masterclass, *The Production of Short Animated Films*, he introduced a selection of short films that he had produced, giving each one an introduction about the production side of animation.

I was invited to give a presentation at the University of Porto in Porto during the festival. The title of my presentation was *The Unsung Women Heroes in Animation*. I talked

about the lack of respect that pioneering women in animation received from the earliest days of animation up to the 1980s. I also discussed how the situation has changed in some ways, but the glass ceiling for most women in the industry is still there. The talk concerns what can be done to change this situation so that women can receive equal pay and recognition.

In 2018, Portugal lost 3 of its pioneer animators: Servais Tiago (born 1925), Artur Correia (1932), and Alvaro Patricio (1947). Tiago began his career in the 1940s creating children's comics. In 1943, after 4 years of work he completed *Automania*. He used cutout animation which he then put on a 3 level multiplane and filmed it with a Pathe-Baby, the then popular 9.5 mm home camera. *Automania* was shown widely abroad.

He then went to work for Kapa Studios, where he created animated commercials for Lisbon theatres. In 1973 he co-founded MovieCine, a company that lasted for 20 years. Servais Tiago received the Antonio Maria Prize at Cinanima in 2003 to honour his career in animation, especially in the advertising sector.

Artur Correia began his career as a graphic artist and illustrator in 1947. The following year his 60-second film, *O melhor da rua (The Best of the Street)* was the first Portuguese film to win Best Commercial at the Venice Film Festival. It went on to be the first Portuguese animated film to win an award at Annecy.

By early 1973, Correia directed and co-directed commercials as well as the film *I Want the Moon* which won several international festival awards. In the same year, he co-founded Topefilme which produced commercials and commissioned films as well as children's television series. By the 1990s commissions had drastically decreased and the studio was forced

to close in 1994. After that Correia turned to teaching and creating comic books such as his 2003 *Happy History of Portugal*.

Last but not least, Alvaro Patricio started as a graphic designer at Exito Advertising Agency in 1964 where he discovered animation. After creating several publicity campaign films there, he moved to Madrid to work at Moro Creatives where he continued to make films. He returned to Portugal in 1980 to become part of the *RTP* Staff where he created generic character designs that have become an iconic part of Portuguese daily life as openers for popular television programs. He also left his mark on several publications using his pen to create cartoons about social and political criticisms that were often censored by the government.

All 3 of these pioneering directors paved the way for a more democratic society during difficult political times using their work to fight against censorship. The festival honoured their work with an exhibition of their graphic works in the festival theatre lobby.

Brazilian animator, professor, and researcher Elaine Gordeeff launched her book *Aesthetic Interferences: The Stop Motion Technique in Animation Narrative* at Cinanima. The first part of her book is devoted to a brief overview of the development of stop motion animation. This is followed by chapters on the aesthetic and narrative aspects of stop motion versus live action cinema.

Of particular interest is the in-depth discussion of 5 films that the author has selected because she feels that “these shorts stand out for their beauty, technical quality, and for the message they convey”. The 5 films are *Neighbors*, Norman McLaren (1952); *Cinema from a Window*, Quia Rodrigues (1999); *The Old Man and the Sea*, Alexander Petrov (1999); *Adagio*, Garri Bardin (2000); and *Aria*, Piotr

Sapegin (2001). I highly recommend *Aesthetic Interferences: The Stop Motion Technique in Animation Narrative* to anyone working in the field of animation. Even though it was originally written as a scholarly treaty, the author has edited this edition so that anyone who wants to learn more about stop motion animation as an art form will learn a great deal from reading it.

Cinanima was so packed full of film programs, workshops, and master classes that there is no way that I can write about everything. It is definitely a festival that any filmmaker can be proud to have their film selected to be screened at.

Of course, it was not all work. The jury members were invited to a reception at Espinho City Hall to meet Mayor Pinto Moreira where we were treated to delicious Port wine and local delicacies. We were also invited on an excursion to Pocas Port Cellars where we learned about the production of Port, the features that distinguish it, and how to properly taste this unique wine which is only found in Portugal. We all had the opportunity to sample and compare several types and ages of Port. Pocas Port Wine Cellars is an independent family business founded in 1918 and has a truly impressive wine cellar.

Cristina Lima, the backbone of the festival and a wonderful hostess, did everything possible to make my visit to Cinanima memorable. From the beautiful hotel suite with a balcony overlooking the ocean to the many delicious restaurant meals that Cristina arranged for the juries, my week as a jury member is full of lovely memories. I can't thank Cristina and her marvellous staff enough for their generous hospitality.

You can learn more about Cinanima 2018 and how to submit your film for the 2019 edition at:

www.cinanima.pt

After we left Espinho we took the train to Porto for a visit with Vasco Sa and David Doutel at their studio. The pair who created *Soot* in 2014 and the beautifully haunting *Agouro* which is currently winning awards at international festivals are now at work on their first feature film. It was impressive to see their very detailed storyboard for *Agouro* and meet their talented crew of animators. Although their feature film is in a very early stage, from what I saw of the storyboard it looks like it will be another beautiful film. We were treated to a lovely, relaxing lunch with Vasco, David, and their crew at a restaurant near their studio before heading off to Lisbon for a couple of days.

In Lisbon my fellow Cinanima juror Irina Caldo invited us to visit her at studio ate ao Fim do Mundo Studio where she is director and coordinator of the production company's animation department. The studio, whose name means End of the World, was founded in 1998 and works in many different areas including television and film production, broadcast design, visual FX, motion design, digital media, education, and music as well as animation.

Irina gave Nik and me a tour of the various departments in their impressive multi-story building ending with the animation department. Although the department works on various types of projects from children's television to animated feature films, Irina's true love as a producer and animator is animated documentaries.

She has produced such Ani-Docs as *Viewfinder* by Filipe Carvalho about intimate conversations with war journalists and photojournalists who choose to report history in

real time from the most dangerous places in the world. Irina also directed *Mother's Love*, an animated short about love pushed to the limits. I was impressed with ate ao Fim do Mundo and give a thank you to Irinda for taking the time to give us such a thorough and interesting tour.

Portugal is a country that I love to visit. It is full of delicious food, lovely generous people, and home to wonderful, creative animators. I am already looking forward to my next visit.

WOULD YOU BE PROUD TO SAY THIS FESTIVAL SHOWED MY FILM?



Sweaty Eyeballs Animation Festival, now in its 8th year, is expanding to a weekend-long event. The festival takes place October 18-20, 2019 in Baltimore, Maryland and will focus primarily on animated short films (under 20 minutes), including three programs of international work. Along with the international shorts competition programs there will also be a competition program of international student animation.

The festival will also feature a guest animator retrospective, curated programs, a Baltimore animation showcase, a midnight screening, animation workshops, animation projection/installations, and late-night cartoon parties.

LAST MINUTE NEWS

‘UGLY DOLLS’ OPENED MAY 3



HOW SOON WILL IT CLOSE?

The Hollywood Reporter proudly proclaims, “*UglyDolls*, an imbecilic eyesore that could lay claim to being one of the worst movies ever made if it was worth such hyperbole.”

https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/uglydolls-review-1205451?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=THR%20International%20now%202019-05-01%2008:59:41_gszalai&utm_term=hollywoodreporter%20international

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Special thanks to **Marty McNamara, Steve Segal, Heather McNabb, Dan McHale, Karen Folger Jacobs, and Micheal Lipman** who contributed to the GLAS article, to **Nancy Denney-Phelps** for representing our chapter on the international ASIFA board, to **Emily Berk** our webmaster, to **Eihway Su** who keeps our mailing list and other records and to our treasurer **Karen Lithgow**.

ASIFA-SF is a chapter of: **Association Internationale du Film d’Animation** with almost 40 chapters around the world. Membership is \$26 a year with printed newsletter mailed to you or \$21 a year if you want the e-mailed version.

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