

February 2023



**THE GOLDEN GLOBES PICK GUILLERMO DEL TORO'S 'PINOCCHIO' AS THE BEST ANIMATED FEATURE** The other films nominated in this category were *Inu-Oh*, *Marcel the Shell With Shoes On*, *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish* and *Turning Red*.

Disney live action products won the most awards of the evening, nine awards for their movies and TV shows. Disney's Searchlight division won three awards for *The Banshees of Inisherin*. It won the best musical/comedy prize and two trophies for writing,

*Avatar: The Way of Water* was shut out at the Globes (13 years ago *Avatar* won their best drama prize and director, **James Cameron**, won best director). The new sequel also failing to get on the BAFTA longlist for best film.

The Sunday *NY Times*, Jan. 8, ran a full page ad in color for del Toro's film. It notes it had already won 15 awards and was nominated for a lot of other prizes

**THE CRITICS CHOICE WINNER OF BEST ANIMATED FEATURE IS DEL TORO'S 'PINOCCHIO'** The other nominated films were *Marcel the Shell with Shoes On*, *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish*, *Turning Red*, and *Wendell & Wild*. *Avatar* won the special effects award.

**THE PRODUCERS GUILD OF AMERICA NOMINATED FILMS FOR BEST PRODUCER OF AN ANIMATED FEATURE ARE:** *Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio*, *Marcel the Shell with Shoes On*, *Minions: The Rise of Gru*, *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish*, and *Turning Red*. The 34th annual Producers Guild Awards will take place on Feb. 25 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Los Angeles.

**'AVATAR' IS QUICKLY CLIMBING THE BOX OFFICE LADDER OF SUCCESS** although the film's opening week box office totals didn't meet the industries expectations for it, by the end of December it had crossed the billion dollar mark. About a week later it overtook *Top Gun - Maverick*, *Frozen 2* and several other features that had grossed over a billion dollars. It was sailing past several films on the list of the top 10 grossing film of all times. It quickly became the second-highest grossing film of the pandemic era. Only *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (\$1.916 billion) was in the way of it becoming the number one film of the Covid era.

**It made it!** On January 23 the *Hollywood Reporter* announced it passed the two billion mark.

When doing press for the film, Cameron suggested it would need to earn about \$2 billion to be a success; however, sources say the break-even number was actually around \$1.4 billion. *Avatar, The Way of Water* is said to be one of the most expensive movies ever made with an estimated production budget of more than \$400 million. Adding the marketing budget, the producers probably spent over \$600 million.

The new *Avatar* runs three hours and 12 minutes, whereas the first *Avatar* ran 30 minutes shorter. The first feature opened in December 2009 with a relatively modest \$77 million start, but it finished with a final gross of \$2.92 billion globally. Will the sequel to that? Even Covid hasn't slowed it down as the film is even doing quite well in China.

Disney looks forward to releasing *Avatar 3* as soon as possible. The live footage is already in the can and the special effects/animation are in the process of being created. *Avatar 4* and *5* have been written and some footage for the 4<sup>th</sup> sequel has already been shot.



**A MAJOR DISNEY EXHIBIT HONORING THE 100<sup>TH</sup> YEAR OF ITS EXISTENCE OPENS FEB 18 IN PHILADELPHIA** *Disney100: The Exhibition* is opening at Philadelphia's Franklin Institute and then will go on a global five-year tour. It is featuring more than 250 items, ranging from the young Mickey Mouse to recent items from Pixar, Marvel, *Star Wars* and *Avatar*.

The present corporation dates back to Oct. 16, 1923 when Walt Disney and his brother Roy O. Disney signed a contract to make a series of six *Alice in Cartoonland*-cartoons with theatrical film distributor M.J. Winkler. Advance publicity for the exhibit mentions it includes numerous items from the Disney Archives in Los Angeles. It is scheduled to be seen in Chicago, Kansas City, Munich, Germany and other cities around the world.



**'SEA BEAST' IS NETFLIX'S MOST VIEWED FILM - A SEQUEL IS IN THE WORKS** Chris Williams is not only working on the sequel but he has also started work on an "original fantasy." *Beast 2* got the green light when the first film became the most viewed animated movie in the streamer's history.

Williams enjoyed working at Disney for 25 years and had won an Oscar for *Big Hero 6* and a nomination for *Moana*, but he realized he wanted to do more with his life. In 2018 he asked Netflix if they might want to expand into animation. Their response is obvious and Williams was soon developing an adventure film, *The Sea Beast*.

In an interview with *The Hollywood Reporter* about his leap to Netflix he told them he was comfortable working at Disney, but he wanted "to tell a story that sat outside the bounds of what you normally consider a North American feature animation. You can get creative satisfaction by pushing on boundaries at big companies, but I reached a point where I didn't want to nudge the boundary, I wanted to leap over it."

He was excited about the freedom that exists at Netflix to do your own thing. "I felt so supported throughout the making of *Sea Beast*, even though it was a massively ambitious movie. That represents a financial investment and risk, and they were always cool letting me making the movie I wanted to make. I always value people's opinions and I will always listen to what anyone has to say. But they never forced my hand and they never made me do anything other than let me do the movie I wanted to make. And I really appreciated that. And so I wanted to do it again." He was pleased that the company asked him to start a second project while *Sea Beast* was in post-production.

Netflix has become, almost overnight, a major producer of animation and at this point they offer animators a chance to create original concepts of what an animated feature can be. Hopefully, that creative freedom will continue and new directions for what an animated feature can be will materialize. They have given Williams, del Toro, Selick and others a lot of creative freedom. Williams discusses the opportunity Netflix gave him in a long article at: <https://film.netflixawards.com/the-sea-beast>

**NOT EVERYBODY IS A FAN OF 'MARCEL THE SHELL' A** noted European animation authority wrote me, "I watched *Marcel the Shell with Shoes On* last night and I am appalled to think that any reputable awards organization could possibly consider it as a winner. The guy is lucky to have a partner/wife who can make a weird voice. The film is mildly funny in places, but 91 minutes of it is too much and the animation is nothing new or creative. I hate to think that that is what the American animation might be coming to."

**'ACCORDIAN JOE' WITH BIMBO AND A PRIMITIVE FORM OF BETTY BOOP (1930):** A friend just found it. It is **politically incorrect**. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=F4kURkP\\_L9A&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1gnqu69EUM4zKhHK3IKwe2COOmZ4RTfpEIJi9KNG-Sj0aegm0ffNnO728](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=F4kURkP_L9A&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1gnqu69EUM4zKhHK3IKwe2COOmZ4RTfpEIJi9KNG-Sj0aegm0ffNnO728)





**SF INDIE FEST WILL PREMIERE TWO ANIMATED FEATURES THIS MONTH.** Shows can be attended in-person at the Roxie Theater in SF and can be seen virtually online from February 2 to February 12. Tickets for shows at the Roxie Theater are \$15. Tickets for virtual show tickets are \$10. For more information and tickets, visit [www.sfindie.com](http://www.sfindie.com) or call 415-662-3378

### The Animated Features

**QUANTUM COWBOY**, directed by Geoff Marslett, two hapless drifters team up with a woman to recover her land. They trek across 1870's southern Arizona to find an elusive frontier musician. This award-winning film features 12 different styles of animation.

**UNICORN WARS**, directed by Alberto Vázquez, asks what is the origin of evil? In a fantastic antiwar fable, the teddy bear army indoctrinates young bears to fight a war against the unicorns because of the threat they pose.

### Animation Shorts Program

**FIRST VENTURE**, directed by Zoe Morgan, an electric cat meets his alien best friend for the first time, except this isn't the first time they've met. Why do things always get crazy when time travel is involved?

**HOT TODDY**, directed by Mary Sette, imagine if Humphrey Bogart wore Limited Too tops. Imagine if we all still wore Limited Too! *Hot Toddy* is an animated teeny-bopper whodunit about two ex-BFFS and the buckets of blood between them, only some courtesy of their estrogenic cycles.

**LITTLE HURTS**, directed by Debra Solomon. An errand at the dry cleaners unleashes a free-for-all of fat-shaming, body image demons and family dieting obsessions.

**THE BENEFACTORS**, directed by Christophe Lopez-Huici, a weary young man thinks he found the perfect patrons for his rickshaw tours, but he soon finds out that his new customers can be very demanding.

**THE INTERROGATION**, directed by Marisa Cohen, Peter Issac Alexander. Based on the award-winning *The Cloaked Realm Universe* created by Peter Issac Alexander and Marisa L. Cohen, *The Interrogation* features hand-drawn animation, an original score by John Baxter, and sound design by Dara Crawford.

### Additional Animated Shorts

**EX CETERA**, directed by Jon Portman, a group of bored roommates spy on their neighbor's disturbing ritual. The film is playing with *Unicorn Wars*.

**CALL IT WHAT YOU WILL**, directed by Deanna Wardin. Paper cut stop-motion animation follows the journey of unimposing devotion, abandonment and loss. Music by Joey Henry.



A rendering of the proposed Universal theme park in Frisco, Texas.

**UNIVERSAL HAS ANNOUNCED PLANS TO OPEN A THEME PARK IN FRISCO!** The company announced plans for a new park in Frisco, Texas, which will be aimed at “younger audiences” and “sized for a regional audience.” The park will be situated on part of 97 acres recently purchased by Universal. The company also plans to add an adjacent themed hotel. The company stressed this will be unlike its existing parks in Florida, California, Japan, Singapore and China or the proposed horror theme park they are developing in Los Vegas.

Frisco has a population of just over 200,000 and is in Northern Texas. The mayor says, “Frisco is one of the fastest growing cities in the U.S. and has been recognized as a great place to plant professional roots and raise a family.” The timeline for the park has not been released nor have they announced why anyone would want to go there.

**“Looking forward to the issue. Best reading for the month!,” Jim**



**MICROSOFT VIDEO GAME WORKERS VOTE TO JOIN AN UNION** The successful organizing of about 300 employees at Microsoft was a major victory as the company has been non-union since it was founded. ZeniMax, a video game company Microsoft acquired in 2021, has become the first Microsoft division to unionize. They are now represented by the Communications Workers of America.

The unionization move at ZeniMax Media, which Microsoft acquired for about \$7.5 billion, did not come about in the usual way, a union election run by the National Labor Relations Board. Instead, the company allowed workers to express their preferences by either signing a union authorization card or voting anonymously. Microsoft remained neutral throughout the union campaign and didn't hold anti-union meetings or sending out messages that many companies do in their attempt to keep out unions. It turned out that Microsoft is trying to acquire Activision Blizzard, a much bigger game company that is undergoing unionization (two branches have already voted to join the union, a third is about to vote and two others are in the process of gathering signature cards) so to avoid interfering with an election Microsoft chose to remain neutral.

Computer game employees have been complaining for decades about crunch time and other grievances. They endure grueling stretches of work shortly before a title is released and sometimes don't get paid overtime. Many don't try to unionize because they are hired as freelance artists and some get to work remotely so they feel independent. They still are stuck with management giving them outrageous deadlines that keeps them working overtime for many weeks at a time.



Those who fought to unionize ZeniMax hope to change the company's approach to promoting workers. Game companies often assign workers more responsibility, but it seems they can be arbitrary at times about compensation for the added work. The union also hopes to negotiate more flexible policies on remote work.



**THE NEW TV SERIES 'VELMA' GETS MIXED REVIEWS** *The NY Times* review said the TV series *Velma* is an “animated mystery-solver for an older audience and gives her a string of fun, spooky and sly new adventures... The new *Velma* is too quick and dry-witted to get bogged down with the yearnings of a cartoon character – or, for that matter with any single subject. In (Mindy) Kaling's immensely enjoyable and zippy reimagining, *Velma* is crudely drawn proof that life is too short to pledge loyalty to overarching themes or storylines. A master of moving fast and freewheeling, Kaling brings her A-game to this goofy project, which she made with Charlie Grandy, her longtime collaborator.”

*The Hollywood Reporter* reviewer called HBO Max's *Velma* “too snarky for its own good.” *Velma* is an adult-oriented animated TV series about the early days of the Scooby-Doo gang, minus Scooby-Doo. It isn't the *Scooby-Doo* you may remember, and the dog isn't in it. “From its first minutes, *Velma* is a thoroughly meta affair, winking at the sillier staples of the *Scooby-Doo* universe, at the lore and the stereotypes built around its characters, at the absurdity of TV screenwriting conventions in general. But if *Velma* delights in sending up all the usual tropes, it seems somewhat less sure of what it has to offer in their stead. <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/tv/tv-reviews/velma-hbo-max-mindy-kaling-constance-wu-1235292034/>



**A VASTLY DIFFERENT VIEW OF ‘VELMA’** A *Guardian* writer said, “Everyone hates Velma the lesbian detective. Is she really an insult to Scooby-Doo fans? Leftwingers, rightwingers: Mindy Kaling’s new TV show has outraged them all. She’d have gotten away with it, if it wasn’t for those meddling viewers.”

“Whatever their political persuasion, everyone seems to hate it. (Except rather weirdly the *Guardian* gave it four out of five stars.) The cartoon premiered last week to mostly abysmal reviews. (Rotten Tomatoes critics gave it a 55% while the public gave it a 7%). Things are so dire that there are even conspiracy theories swirling that Mindy Kaling made Velma terrible on purpose in order to make the left look bad.” (A reference to a review in *Forbes*)

“Why would Kaling do something like that? I have no idea. My understanding is that she probably didn’t and that people are just getting angry online because people like getting angry online. The left appears to be angry at Kaling because she once liked a tweet by JK Rowling, which supposedly means she is an irredeemable transphobe who should be cancelled immediately. The right, meanwhile, doesn’t seem to like the fact that Velma is a lesbian in the show and Kaling is a brown woman. One rightwing comedian called it “openly racist against white people.” Other people are saying the series is “insulting to the Scooby-Doo fanbase.” The series touches pretty much every aspect of the culture wars.

“I’m afraid I can’t give you more insight on *Velma* than that because I haven’t actually watched the series and I never will. No offense to Scooby-Doo, but I have no desire to see an edgy adult version of it.” Another writer claims *Velma* is harmfully stereotyping Indian women.

**DISNEY HAS ANNOUNCED THEY WILL PRODUCE ‘TRON 3’** The film, titled *Tron: Ares*, has a script by Jesse Wigutow. It will follow 2010’s *Tron: Legacy*. Disney released the original *Tron* in 1982 with Jeff Bridges. Years ago Arne Wong presented ASIFA-SF a program on his work that included what was once seen as amazing computer animation. (Actually only some of it was CG.)



**PEOPLE STILL LOVE THE STAR WARS BRAND** The trailer for the third season of Lucasfilm’s *The Mandalorian* drew a record 83.5 million views in its first 24 hours after premiering Jan. 16 during the NFL wild card playoff game.

**A DISNEY STOCKHOLDER IS TRYING TO BATTLE THE CORPORATION** Nelson Peltz, an activist investor, is waging a proxy battle against the company. He is seeking a seat on the board and a say in the company’s strategy. Disney responded by released a slideshow outlining its argument against Peltz. They say he “does not understand Disney’s businesses, and lacks the skills and experience to assist the board in delivering shareholder value in a rapidly shifting media ecosystem.”

Disney has acknowledged that some of the things Peltz is pushing for are taking place, including implementing a cost-reduction plan and “streamlining our organizational structure to enhance productivity.”

Peltz has a history of challenging the leaderships of companies that he has invested in and he is described as a Trump supporter. After January 6 he apologized for having once backed him.

**BOB CHAPEK WAS FIRED AS DISNEY’S CEO, BUT HE LEFT AS A VERY RICH MAN** He earned \$24.2 million in compensation for the last fiscal 2022 year he worked. (It ended Sept. 30.) Disney says his severance package is valued at \$20.4 million.

**WHY HAS THE GLAS ANIMATION FESTIVAL MOVED FROM BERKELEY TO SANTA CRUZ?** The Shattuck Theatres closed last year and now the Regal Theatres on Shattuck, the last commercial movie theatres in downtown Berkeley is closing. (The Regal has filed for Chapter 11 as rents were going up, attendance went down due to Covid, etc.). The only movie theatres left open in Berkeley are the Pacific Film Archive and the Elmwood.



**THE POPPY JASPER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL INCLUDES SEVERAL ANIMATED SHORTS**

The 17<sup>th</sup> edition, April 12-19th 2023 Film Festival, will be shown in Gilroy, Morgan Hill, Hollister, San Juan Bautista and thereabouts. The festival shows films that inspire, delight, and educate. While it is not primarily an animation festival, there are 17 animated entries this year that are definitely worth checking out. These notes are by the G Man. He was on the selection committee.

*The Social Chameleon* (USA, 9:30) 3D CGI Cosmo the chameleon doesn't fit in with the other animals. No matter how hard he tries, he just can't seem to find his place in the jungle. Then, everything changes when he meets another chameleon who shows him how to live by his own true colors!

*Inside My Heart* (Canada, 1:49) 2D I was concerned that this film would somehow be an anti-abortion, pro-life message. Thankfully, it is not. It's just a student project about a baby girl who is in gestation. She might not be growing inside a belly, but she is growing inside a heart that already dreams of her arrival.

*The Perfect Fit* (Lithuania, 10:30) 2D A nonverbal autistic boy named Patrick lives in a children's home. After seeing a parrot in the zoo, he becomes obsessed with them, which makes it even harder for him to belong and find parents who want to adopt him.

*Kiss 'n' Ride* (USA, 7:46) 2D hand drawn. On her way home from a lovely cafe date, a woman finds reminders of her date in every little thing, prompting her to fall in love with the Chicago winter night around her and dream of the date ending differently.

*Another Swell Day* (USA, 3:28) 2D An animation following a young girl who has been recently diagnosed with a rare blood disease known as HAE (Hereditary Angioedema). It is a story of a nervous child growing into a confident adult who has refused to let her trials overwhelm her. It is dedicated to all HAE patients and all the trials that they go through.

*@scroll\_alice* (UK, 3:37) 2D GFX An experimental short about our love-hate relationship with Instagram and our photo-editing mania.

*The Truth Within* (USA, 3:10) 3D CGI Amazing student project from the Ringling College of Art + Design in Sarasota, FL. In a Make-a-Bear Store, a hard-boiled teddy bear detective is alerted by his lover of a dead body that has been found...

*Reaper* (USA, 3:43) 2D hand drawn The Grim Reaper attempts to capture a lost soul. (This one brings me back to the good old days of Spike & Mike ...)

*Solan* (Iran, 3:00) 3D CGI A child becomes a victim of parental differences.

*Inertia* (Belgium, 10:56) 2D hand drawn A story of a young woman who refuses to accept change in her life. Instead of facing facts, she chooses to look the other way and continue her life as it were. However, the change itself won't let her.

*Dehbaraftab Village* (Iran, 8:00) 2D An old woman reviews her son's life from his birthday to his child's wedding day. We are accompanied by the real life of the old woman's son from birth to his wedding day. The poacher changes the situation.

*Where the Winds Die* (Iran, 13:00) 2D A haunting re-enactment of a 1987 bombing of a Kurdish city in June 1987. This one deserves to be in the Animation Show of Shows.

*My Dear Son* (Hong Kong/UK, 9:00) 2D Cutouts This one is insane: In a capitalist city, where people have kids to be proud of, a woman, Rose, unexpectedly gives birth to a cat son. The Baby doesn't behave as an ordinary baby and Rose struggles to love him. Rose tries her best to change him, even if it means changing his true nature.

*Thou Shalt Dance* (Iran, 8:54) A mixture of 2D hand-drawn and 3D stop-motion! On a normal day, a normal man finds an abnormal solution for his problem.

*The Sprayer* (Iran, 9:00) This stop-motion looks like something from LAIKA, it's that good! In the land occupied with the sprayers army, no one has the right to grow any kind of plants either in public or private. One day one of the soldiers finds a seed buried deep down in the dust...

*Fobi* (Iran, 12:57) A little girl faces her fear of spiders. Amazing stop-motion!

*The Savior* (Iran, 15:00) Live-action with 2D animated sequences. A little girl lives with her dad in a village with his dad. After losing her mom, she tries to save the fishes instead.

Note: At last year's festival, our own Steve Segal won an award for his short, *Misfit!*

For details about the 17<sup>th</sup> festival visit [www.pjiff.org](http://www.pjiff.org)



## THE ANIMATTIKON PROJECT NUMBER 5

25 to 30<sup>th</sup> October 2022

By Nancy Denny-Phelps

If one is good, two is even better

A festival in both Limassol and Paphos, Cyprus

The Animattikon Project has traditionally taken place in Paphos, however, this year the festival added programs in Limassol, 42 miles away. Limassol is home to The Cyprus University of Technology, which has an animation department. The first four days of the festival were spent during the day with the students at the university.

My presentation on *Unsung Women Heroes of Animation* kicked off the festival. In it I talk about women who blazed the animation trail forging historic animation landmarks in the early days of a male-dominated industry. After a brief introduction to eight women, I focused in depth on the career of Joy Batchelor, the creative force behind England's Halas and Batchelor Animation Company. It was very gratifying to see a room full of young female students with one lone male student there.

Nik and I also gave a lesson on pitching. I talked about the nuts and bolts of constructing an effective pitch and Nik taught the students the very important skills of stage presence and how to use a microphone. After our presentation, we had the students put the new skills they had learned into practice by speaking for one minute on any topic of their choice. That gave each student an opportunity to understand what is needed to develop the skills required whether you are going to pitch a project or pitch yourself when applying for a job.

Joanna Quinn and Les Mills were also festival guests. The pair created Beryl, one of the most iconic characters in animation. They have received two Academy Award nominations, won BAFTAS, and numerous festival awards. I had the pleasure of interviewing Joanna in front of the students. That was followed by Joanna interviewing her scriptwriter and real-life partner, Les Mills. Les talked about where his ideas come from and how he shapes them into stories. The talented couple also discussed how they have managed to not kill each other after thirty years of making films together. I am not sure how much the students learned from us but they did laugh a lot.

Evenings were devoted to watching the film programs at the beautiful Rialto Theatre. Originally built in 1930, it was the first modern cinema on the island of Cyprus. Now it is home to both film and live performances.



Opening at The Rialto Theatre

One of my favorite films was in the Children's Competition. *Mouse House* was directed and animated by Slovenian Timon Leder. In the hand-drawn, eight-minute film, two mice are searching for food in an old house when they suddenly discover a big wheel of cheese and a hungry cat. The fatter of the two mice finds a way into the interior of the cheese wheel and he begins to eat away. As the cheese rolls over, the entry hole becomes blocked. The mouse doesn't realize that he is trapped until after he carves out a cheesy mansion. When he finally eats his way through the cheese crust



the palace is gone, the mouse has eaten it all. But wait, what about the cat who is still lurking nearby? The cat begins to chase the two mice. Will they make it to safety in time?

Leder deals with the subject of greed in a way that young people can understand. *Mouse House* is also a relevant film for adults in an age where money and possessions seem to have become more important to many people than kindness and concern for our fellow man.



*Mouse House*

The Children's jury, composed of Cypriot animator Nicos Synnas, Yiannis Piliastides from Cyprus, and Dutch-born teacher Dr. Alexis Chaviaras, were also delighted by *Mouse House*. They awarded the film the Golden Hat for the Best Children's Film.

I had the pleasure of being a member of the International Student Jury along with Les Mills and Georgia Doetzer, Chief Executive of the Rialto Theatre. The theatre is one of the co-organizers of the festival. In 2017 Ms. Doetzer was the Artistic Director of the European Capital of Culture Paphos. She was the person who proposed to festival director Chaolambos Margritis the idea to organize an event related to animation for the 2017 celebration. That is how the Animattikon Project was born.

Several of the student films were very strong this year, showing originality in stories and techniques. The jury finally decided to award top honors to *Avant Card*. The five-minute film is Stella Raith's graduation film from the Filmakademie Baden-Wuerttemberg.

*Avant Card* is about Ernst, a figure on a postcard in a revolving card stand. While other cards are looked at and purchased, no one seems interested in Ernst and his message to "Be Happy". He is getting more and more dejected until a person finally picks up his card. But he is returned to the rack crooked. This brings his world into unbalance and he falls out of the rack. For Ernst a big adventure is about to begin.



*Avant Card*

What makes this film so delightful is that Raith, in a tribute to animation, combines different styles and techniques to take the viewer on a trip through animation history. *Avant Card* uses 2D, 3D, Real film, and stop-motion in a film that is full of joy, energy, and creativity.

Anyone who knows Professor Andreas Hykade, Head of Animation Directing at Filmakademie Baden-Wuerttemberg will instantly recognize Ernst as a thinly disguised Andreas. With his ever-present black hat and red scarf, the film also utilizes a minimalist design style reminiscent of noted filmmaker Hykade's own animation style. At the end of the film, as a fun in-joke, we hear a few words of Andreas' voice talking to his student.



*In His Mercy*

The Student Jury was also extremely impressed with Christoph Buttner's *In His Mercy (In Seiner Grade)* based on a short story by the 17<sup>th</sup> century French symbolist writer Auguste de Villius de L'Isle-Adam. The story revolves around a convict who is told by the prison director that he will be executed the next day. Mysteriously, later that night his cell door opens. Exhausted from endless interrogations, the convict drags himself through the dark prison corridors. On his odyssey to gain freedom, he is tossed back and forth through opposing mental states from his fear of being discovered, his hope for salvation, and periods of sheer madness.



The eleven-minute film in black and white uses 2D animation and rotoscoping along with a woodcut print style to tell its strong story. *In His Mercy* is Buttner's graduation film from Filmuniversit at Babelsberg Konrad Wolf in Potsdam, Germany. The film was awarded a Special Mention by our jury.

The Golden Hat International Film Award jury was composed of Joanna Quinn; Eleni Mouri, Professor of Animation in the Department of Graphic Design and Visual Communication of the University of West Attica, Greece; and German writer and director Christa Pfafferoth. Unfortunately, Christa was not able to attend the festival in person due to Covid, but she did watch the films and participated in jury deliberation via the internet.

The jury awarded the Golden Hat International Film Award to Jonathan Laskar for his nine-minute film *The Record*. In the film, an antique musical instrument dealer receives an old vinyl record from a traveler. The magical record reads your mind and plays your lost memories back to you. Obsessed with this endless record, the antique dealer listens to it again and again as his memories resurface.

Unlike many films that illuminate the main characters in color and their memories in black and white, the Swiss animator chose to draw the present in black and white and the memories in color. Laskar said that he chose to use color for the past because "a traumatic event made the protagonist lose his visions of color. It is only after having found the vinyl that this buried memory finds a colored vision of the present world again".

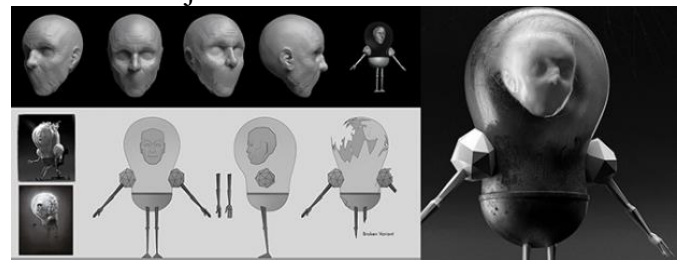
The closing ceremony and party were held in Limassol. After four days in the lovely seaside city we returned to Paphos and The Animattikon Project's original home at the Attikon Multicultural Space. The project is named for the historic theatre, one of the first cinemas in Cyprus. The cinema opened in 1938 and closed at the beginning of the 2000s. In 2017, after being abandoned for many years, the building was renovated and transformed into a multi-use cultural space.

The opening event at the Multi-Cultural Space was a screening of short animation to celebrate International Animation Day. As part of the annual worldwide celebration, the Cyprus chapter of ASIFA organized the free screening. The special program had a strong emphasis on films from the Eastern Mediterranean region.

I was pleasantly surprised to see *Honayn's Shoes* by Egyptian educator and animator Mohamed Ghazala. The film is about a lost nomad's search in the desert, with his camel, for his lost shoe. Nik Phelps wrote and performed the music for the 2009 film. The 65-minute program also included films from Cyprus, Greece, Turkey, Jordan, and Israel. The festival also screened the same Official Selection of Films for Children that was shown in Limassol.

The closing party in Paphos was at the inviting Craft Bar. This year the bar, located in the pedestrian area of the city in an old house, has expanded and opened up to include the vacant building behind the bar. The new space is designed for live performances and screenings. The original bar is still a magical space with plants and artwork. There is also a front garden space that is a perfect place for drinks on warm summer nights.

Because it was the 30<sup>th</sup> of October and almost Halloween, the evening began with a screening of short, spooky horror films. The audience got to select which film would be awarded the Golden Hat for the Best Animated Horror Film of 2022. The winner was *Mulm* by German animators Carol Ratajczak and Tobias Trebeljahr.



*Mulm*

The seven-minute film is set in a surreal desert of backpackers where N., a scientist, is trying to communicate with a distant planet. Upset by the constant noise of his neighbor's cat, N. is unable to concentrate and work. He slowly slides into madness. I never did figure out what the backpackers were doing but they were there.

Carol and Tobias from the Filmakademie Baden-Wurttemberg used music, sound, and noises to communicate their story instead of dialogue. I especially liked the cat with the human face which reminded me of the dog with the human face in the 1978 classic horror film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*.

Following the short films the audience was treated to the classic silent film *Nosferatu* directed by F. W. Murnau. 2022 marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the release of the film. The screening was accompanied by an original improvised score

performed by George Bizios, Ronja Burve and Omiros Miltiadous.

After the screening, the party moved back into the main part of the very welcoming bar where our genial host and bar man supreme Christakis made sure that there were plenty of drinks and snacks for all of us.

The Animattikon Project is organized by Kimonos Art Center and the Department of Multimedia and Graphic Arts of the Cyprus University of Technology. The driving force behind the Art Center and the festival is Charalambos Margaritis who co-founded the Art Center in 2015. He is also the director of the festival.



Charalambos Margaritis at the Kimonos Art Center

Charalambos is joined at the center by Yiannis Sakellis and Paris Cristodoulou. Along with their individual projects, the center offers a complete educational program with courses for children and adults in painting, printmaking, photography, sculpture, animation, and various other art forms. The Art Center also sponsors a residency program open to artists in all mediums from throughout the world. You can learn more about The Kimonos Art Center at: [www.kimonosartcenter.com](http://www.kimonosartcenter.com)

Charalambos' brother, Kyriakos Margaritis, is an author living in Athens. He wrote his first novel at the age of 16 and now has 15 books in print. He is also an excellent tour guide and wonderful company.

He tries whenever possible to return home to Cyprus for the festival and finds time during the festival to take Nik and me on tours of parts of the island that we would never see otherwise.

This year he took Nik and me along with Athens documentary maker Christos Panagos to the Mavri Sinia, the mountains above Paphos. It is a whole new world where the fresh air smells of pine trees. It was a lovely place for drinks at an outdoor café located below a monastery. In our travels with Kyriakos we have seen the vast banana groves and visited historic sites such as the Archaeological Site of Nea Paphos which has some of the most beautiful and well-preserved Roman mosaics. It is lovely to visit a festival and learn more about the culture of the country as well.



Nancy and Kyriakos Margaritis\*

A big thank you to Charalambos Margaritis for inviting us to be part of the festival and to the entire festival staff for the great care they took of us. Also a big thank you to Kyriakos for our wonderful tours. I already have the last week of October marked on my calendar and am looking forward to the 6<sup>th</sup> Animattikon Project.

Learn more about the festival and how to enter a film visit [www.animattikon.com](http://www.animattikon.com)

\*note: That is a shipwreck in the background. Nancy says, "There is another larger wrecked ship nearer to the city. A few years ago an enterprising entrepreneur came up with idea of turning the two boats into night clubs. Luckily the powers that be denied the permits.

**THE NOMINATED FILMS FOR THE BAFTA AWARDS ARE:** for Best Animated Film *Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio*, *Marcel the Shell with Shoes On*, *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish*, *Turning Red*. *Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio* was also nominated for best production design. *Avatar* has been nominated for special effects.

The films nominated for best British short animated film are *The Boy*, *The Mole*, *The Fox and the Horse*, *Middle Watch* and *Your Mountain is Waiting*.



**LAST CHANCE TO SEE RON DIAMOND'S 'ANIMATION SHOW OF SHOWS'** It will be at the Alamo Draft House in SF on 1/30, 1/31 on their big screen in their main 300 seat theater.  
<https://drafthouse.com/sf/show/the-22nd-annual-animation-show-of-shows?cinemaId=0801>



**'AVATAR: THE WAY OF WATER' HAS PASSED THE TWO BILLION MARK!**

On January 23 it had earned \$598 million domestically and \$1.426 billion overseas, including an impressive \$230 from China.

**THE GOLDEN RASPBERRY AWARDS HAVE PRESENTED SIX NOMINATIONS TO DISNEY'S 'PINOCCHIO'** While *del Toro's Pinocchio* has only been nominated for one Oscar, *Disney's Pinocchio* has been nominated for six Razzies! Only the film *Blonde* has been bestowed with more nominations. It received eight.

Disney is up against stiff competition for the **Worst Picture of 2022**. The nominated films in that race are *Blonde*, *Disney's Pinocchio*, *Good Mourning*, *The King's Daughter* and *Morbius*.

Tom Hanks' performance as Gepetto is a serious contender for *Worst Actor of the Year*. Will it win the *Worst Remake/Rip-Off/Sequel* prize? Other nominations go to Lorraine Bracco (voice only) for *Worst Supporting Actress*; Robert Zemeckis for *Worst Director*, and Robert Zemeckis and Chris Weitz (not authorized by the estate of Carlo Collodi) for the *Worst Screenplay*. The *Hollywood Reporter* suggests Disney distinguished itself for making a "wholly unnecessary (and oddly creepy) live-action/CGI remake of *Pinocchio*." The award winners will be announced a day before the Oscars, on March 11.

**GUILLERMO DEL TORO TO BE HONORED BY ART DIRECTORS GUILD** He will receive the William Cameron Menzies Award on Feb. 18 at the 27th ADG Awards in Los Angeles.

**THE OSCAR NOMINATED ANIMATION Best Animated Feature Film**

*Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio*, Guillermo del Toro, Mark Gustafson, Gary Ungar and Alex Bulkeley

*Marcel the Shell With Shoes On*, Dean Fleischer Camp, Elisabeth Holm, Andrew Goldman, Caroline Kaplan and Paul Mezey

*Puss in Boots: The Last Wish*, Joel Crawford and Mark Swift

*The Sea Beast*, Chris Williams and Jed Schluger  
*Turning Red*, Domee Shi and Lindsey Collins

**Best Animated Short Film**

*The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse*, Charlie Mackesy and Matthew Freud

*The Flying Sailor*, Amanda Forbis and Wendy Tilby

*Ice Merchants*, João Gonzalez and Bruno Caetano  
*My Year of Dicks*, Sara Gunnarsdóttir and Pamela Ribon

*An Ostrich Told Me the World Is Fake and I Think I Believe It*, Lachlan Pendragon

**PHIL TIPPRTT'S 'MAD GOD' IS NOMINATED FOR THE VISUAL EFFECTS SOCIETY'S AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING VISUAL EFFECTS IN AN ANIMATED FEATURE**

The artists who worked on the film include Chris Morley, Phil Tippett, Ken Rogerson and Tom Gibbons. The other films in that category are *Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio*, *The Sea Beast*, *Strange World*, and *Turning Red*. The 21st annual Visual Effects Society Awards will take place February 15 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel. Phil's studio is in the East Bay. For a full list of the nominated films visit <https://www.indiewire.com/2023/01/avatar-the-way-of-water-record-nominations-ves-awards-1234800630/>



**I'M SORRY TO REPORT THE PASSING OF A GOOD FRIEND OF ANIMATION, BILL DENNIS** He was a friend and there will be a tribute to him in the next issue. If you knew him you are welcomed to contribute one of your memories of him. He had a wonderful life working behind the scenes in animation.



## THE 2023 GIANNALBERTO BENDAZZI AWARD GOES TO NANCY DENNEY-PHELPS

Last year the Paris International Animation Film Festival created the Giannalberto Benazir Award and presented it to Marco de Blois of the Cinémathèque Québécoise for his years of supporting the art of animation. \

This year the festival decided to present the award to Nancy Denney-Phelps “for her work that gives us a better understanding and knowledge of this wonderful world of animated cinema so we can enjoy it even more!”

Nancy was chosen because she has a similar passion for animation as Marco de Blois. Nancy Denney-Phelps shares her love of animation both in her writings and in her contributions to festivals and conferences. Her writings appear in different publications including her lively blog on AWN (Animation World Network) that is read by people across the globe. It is a mixture of reviews of films, reports of conferences and parties, and sharing the atmosphere of each festival... and always with a lot of great photos taken on the spot.

Future annual awards will put the spotlight on persons that make us, by their work as festival organizers, journalists, specialists, cinema managers, researchers... go-betweens that promote their love of animation. They have a passion for the art of frame by frame cinema. Through their work we can rediscover hidden treasures from the past, the gems of today and the future great names of animation.

Marco de Blois was the first to receive the Prize. And this year the festival in Paris wanted to award somebody with the same touching and passionate personality. The same enthusiasm to share the knowledge, the passion for animation and for the people who are making this cinema.

The award is named after Giannalberto Bendazzi (1946-2021), the noted author of *Animation, A World History* and a score of other books and articles. One of his important research projects was rediscovering Quirino Cristiani, the creator of the first silent and sound animated features.

### ASIFA-SF IS A VOLUNTEER RUN ASSOCIATION

*Newsletter Editor:* Karl Cohen

*Contributors* include Nancy Denney-Phelps and the G Man.

*Proofreaders* Jim Middleton, Scot Kravitz, Paul Naas.

*Special thanks* and congratulations to Nancy Denney-Phelps who was just given the Giannalberto Bendazzi Award in Paris. She 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. Membership is normally \$21 a year with the e-mailed newsletter, but right now we have a **COVID 19 SPECIAL OFFER** As we get back in action we are only asking \$15 a year, or \$30 if you wish to help the international a The award is named after Giannalberto Bendazzi (1946-2021), the noted author of the *Animation, A World History* and a score of other books and articles. One of his important research projects was rediscovering Quirino Cristiani, the creator of the first silent and sound animated features. ssociation as well.

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