

June 2022



CHRISTIANE CEGAVSKE'S COTTONFLESH SACRIFICE ART SHOW AND IMMERSIVE INSTALLATION!

Cottonflesh Sacrifice is a multimedia collection of artwork by 2019 John Simon Guggenheim Fellow Christiane Cegavske. The show features an immersive installation that includes among other things Cegavske's stop-motion animated projections and life-sized cotton rag dolls hanging from nine foot high utility poles and accompanied by a musical soundscape by Karie Jacobson and Drew Kowalski of the Dagens.

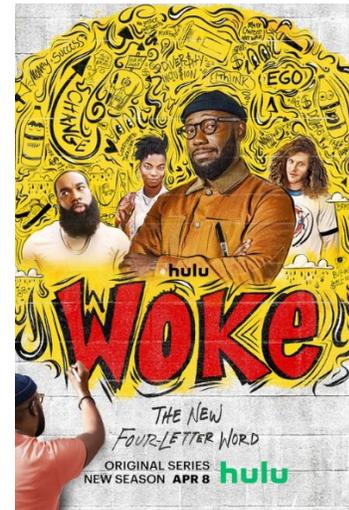
Cegavske invites you to enter her dreamlike world of imagery evoking feminine archetypes, fantastical creatures, dolls and fairy tales, birth and death. Experience the impact of the symbolic language on multiple levels as they are immersed in this unique universe. The gallery is housed in a former mortuary. Does it have strange vibrations?

The opening event happens Saturday, July 9th, 6-9 pm. A screening of her stop-motion animated feature *Blood Tea and Red String* and artist talk takes place July 13th at 8 pm. The exhibit runs July 9th-August 13th at UMA Gallery Oakland, 3630 Telegraph Avenue, Oakland, CA 94609.

Christiane is a skilled surrealist who creates mysterious stop-motion animated films, impressive puppets and lots of other magical things. She teaches at a major art museum in Kansas City, is a graduate of the San Francisco Art Institute and comes from Portland.

By all means explore her website. The Tubi link will take you to a new version of her first feature. She plans to show clips from her latest work in progress at UMA. <http://christianecegavske.com>

UMA's website lists some interesting events. <https://www.umagalleryoakland.com/events>



AN EXHIBIT ABOUT KEITH KNIGHT'S 'WOKE' IS AT THE CARTOON ART MUSEUM UNTIL JUNE 26

This retrospective exhibition at the museum features one of the most unique voices in contemporary comics, Keith Knight, as he looks back on his formative years in San Francisco in the 1990s and 2000s. He was a young Black cartoonist documenting his life in his weekly autobiographical comic *The K Chronicles*. On display are comics that document an unforgettable, transitional era for the City by the Bay, and provide the foundation for Knight's television series *Woke*. A selection of props featured in Hulu's *Woke* are also included in this exhibition, courtesy of Sony Pictures Television.

Also on display is **A Treasury of Animation**, an exhibit of original art from the museum's permanent collection. It features art from the 1920s to the present.

SEE THE FIRST TRAILER FOR 'AVATAR, THE WAY OF WATER'

The sequel has been in development since 2017 and the third film is being made at the same time. Two more instalments are set to go into production once post-production on the third film has completed. Disney will release the first sequel this December. In the trailer's first 24 hours online it was viewed 148.6 million times.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zw1yQ1uuq7Y>

REPUBLICANS ARE OUT TO GET DISNEY

Disney is under siege by Republican lawmakers. Disney would lose its copyright for Mickey Mouse if a law slashing the duration of ownership was passed. Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) has proposed legislation that limits copyright protection to 56 years.



'ETERNAL SPRING' WILL BE THE OPENING NIGHT FILM OF SF DOC FEST JUNE 1

Facing denunciations by the Chinese state media, an engineer named Liang and a hulking grain worker called "Big Truck," members of the banned group Falun Gong, execute a bold and perilous plan to hack into state television.

In the aftermath, police raids sweep Changchun City, and illustrator Daxiong (*Justice League, Star Wars*), is forced to flee. He arrives in North America, blaming the hijacking for worsening a violent repression. His views about the TV hijacking are challenged when he meets the lone surviving participant to have escaped China, now living in Seoul. Combining present-day footage with 3D animation inspired by Daxiong's art, the animation retraces the event—bringing to life an unprecedented story of defiance.

The 86 min., made in Canada, screens Wed, Jun 1st, 8:45 PM at the Roxie Theater and online during the festival. The festival runs June 1–12. <https://www.filmfestival.gr/en/movie-tdf/movie/14148>

The festival will also present two animated shorts. *Dreamer of a Final Theory* is an animated conversation with the late, great theoretical physicist and Nobel Laureate, Steven Weinberg. Excerpts are from interviews recorded between 2020 and 2021.

Freedom Swimmer is a film that helps make sense of the present tensions between China and Hong Kong by shedding light on the past. *Freedom Swimmer* documents one of the most extraordinary mass escapes of the 20th century—and offers context for a city that has tried to rebel recently. This hybrid, poetic documentary, interweaving extraordinary hand-drawn animation and film, tells the tale of a grandfather's perilous swim from China to Hong Kong during the Cultural Revolution. It is a tale that parallels his granddaughter's participation in mass protests now, and the building pressure for her to escape Hong Kong as new National Security Laws set in. This film is a story of fear to freedom.



'MY LOVE AFFAIR WITH MARRIAGE' IS OFF TO A GREAT START

besides playing at the Tribeca June 11th, 12th, and 19th. It will have its European premiere on June 15th at Anecy. Signe calls Anecy the greatest animation festival in the world! Signe and Sturgis will fly to France after the second Tribeca screening and they will be back in New York in time for the third Tribeca screening. She says “it means a lot of rushing about, but we want to be at all Tribeca and Anecy screenings.”

That isn't all the excitement for her. The same week as Anecy and Tribeca the film has its Latin American premiere in Mexico at the Guadalajara International Film Festival. Her Latvian producer Roberts Vinovskis will represent the film at that prestigious festival.



SEE A PORTRAIT OF GROMIT'S FRIEND WALLACE CREATED OUT OF A 40 POUND BLOCK OF CHEDDER CHEESE

This cheesy work of art is online at https://old.reddit.com/r/nextfuckinglevel/comments/uf86ng/amazing_stopmotion_as_wallace_is_sculpted_from_a/

LAST MINUTE ITEM

PHIL TIPPETT'S 'MAD GOD' OPENS AT THE ROXIE, Starts Friday, June 17

<https://www.madgodmovie.com/madgod-trailer>

HAVE NETFLIX'S DAYS AS A GREAT SAVIOR OF THE ANIMATION INDUSTRY

COME TO AN END? Netflix has had a spectacular ride to the top of its industry by being an impressive innovator. They started in 1997 when they began to offer online movie rentals. Netflix.com became the first online company in the DVD rental and sales business and they developed a successful subscription service. They offered unlimited DVD rentals for one low monthly price and introduced a personalized movie recommendation system based on Netflix members' ratings.

In 2007 they introduced streaming, which allowed members to instantly watch television shows and films on their home computers. In 2013 they launched their first slate of original programming and became the first internet TV network nominated for the Emmy Awards. By 2015 they had over 50 million members globally and over 100 million by 2017.

In 2017 they won their first Oscar. It was for Best Documentary Short Subject (*The White Helmets*). Since then they have been involved with several films that been given Academy Award Nominations. Their film *Roma* received ten nominations this year including Best Picture, Best Original Screenplay, Best Actress, and Best Supporting Actress. It won Oscars for Best Foreign Language Film, Best Cinematography and Best Director

As for the Emmys, in 2018 they had the most nominated Emmy Awards (112 of them) and 23 were winners. By the end of 2018 their stock market value was almost \$165 billion while Disney was \$130 billion.

Netflix changed how and what we watch. They disrupted the broadcast and cable TV industries as well as the sales of DVDs. They transformed their service by studying what their members like and then offered improvements. Enormous amounts of content was made available on demand 24/7 and they still spend lavishly on producing original material. They have been an ad free network. They also let you binge on whatever you wished to consume. Their computers study your likes and offer you suggestions on what else might appeal to your tastes. They became the world's most valuable streaming service. In the last 12 months Netflix stock (NFLX) reached an all-time high of \$700.99 a share.

Then things changed. On April 19, 2022, the company announced that their first quarterly report for stockholders contained bad news. Prior reports had always shown a growth in the number of subscribers, but they lost about 200,000 subscribers

when they had previously stated that they “expected to add 2.5 million net subscribers during first quarter 2022.” As you might expect the stock crashed. In the first week of May it hit a low of \$175.81. Now the stock seems to have leveled off around that price. After all the company is still making a profit. They posted \$1.6 billion in profit over the first quarter of 2022, from \$7.8 billion in sales.

The future of Netflix's stock doesn't look great. They now say they expect to lose another 2 million subscribers in the second quarter, partly due to its closing down their business in Russia. Inflation is also driving consumers to cut back on expenses and Netflix now has formidable rivals in the streaming business including Disney+, Amazon's Freevee, Apple, Warner Bros., Discovery, NBC's Peacock, Fox's Tubi, Paramount Global and the Roku Channel.

Netflix has announced cost saving measures. Most affect their live action productions, but at least one major animation project has been cancelled plus a few kiddie cartoons. Last year the trades were excited that Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, the Duchess of Sussex, were creating *Pearl*, an animated series about a young girl inspired by influential women in history. The project may have started development last July, but it got the axe in May. A second animated project pitched by Prince Harry is still in production.

As for the stockholders, several law firms have announced a class action suit against Netflix for presenting misleading information. It will probably be an ugly legal battle.

One Hollywood producer announced his belief that Netflix's troubles included their spending too much money up front on projects. He said they were paying their creative talent as if each film was going to be a winner instead of holding back and paying less up front. He felt they should just pay bonuses if the writers and artists actually create profitable work.



'LUCK' WITH JANE FONDA AS THE DRAGON'S VOICE and Simon Pegg appear in

Luck, premiering globally on Apple TV+ on August 5, 2022. It was directed by Peggy Holmes from a script by Kiel Murray. John Lasseter was a producer on the production.

“Luck is different all around the world,” explains a black cat named Bob, in the opening seconds of the film. The story follows Sam Greenfield, the unluckiest person in the world, as she enters the Land of Luck on a quest to bring some good luck home for her best friend. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sx_pxejch2g



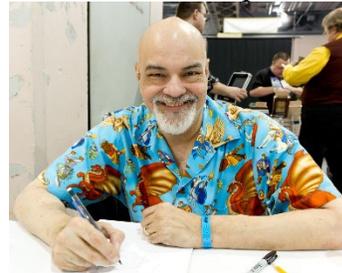
ELECTRONIC ARTS TO END PARTNERSHIP WITH FIFA Electronic Arts is parting ways with FIFA after their next video game is released, ending a 20-year partnership producing what became the world’s most popular soccer game. EA said that it will create a new soccer brand called “EA Sports FC,” which would leverage more than what EA has secured through its FIFA games. FIFA promises that its brand will continue with new game publishers. EIFA says “a number of new non-simulation games are already under production and will launch during the third quarter of this year.” No further details were announced.

David Jackson, vice president of EA Sports told the BBC that the publisher has plans to extend the game beyond interactive matches, but that the licensing restrictions imposed by FIFA were prohibitive. “We engage in play as a primary form of interactive experience. Soon, watching and creating content are going to be equally as important for fans,” said Jackson.

Electronic Arts has attracted criticism for the ‘loot box’ style, charging players to build their own superstar sides. In 2018, Belgium effectively banned loot box mechanics in games as a form of unregulated gambling. Governments around the world have since looked into tightening regulations.

A SECOND ‘DON’T SAY GAY’ BILL IN FLORIDA HAS BEEN INTRODUCED Florida’s legislature has introduced a bill that would allow parents to sue school districts if they consider lessons

not to be ‘age-appropriate.’ The first new law affects teachers entering their classrooms in July. They must restrict discussions on sexual orientation and gender identity. If the proposed law passes parents will be able to sue if a teacher crosses the line of age appropriate speech. Florida’s governor, Ron DeSantis, argues that this bill is for parents who want their children to “get an education, not an indoctrination”. Critics say the bill will harm LGBTQ children and leave teachers fearing lawsuits. It also is a serious free speech/censorship issue. This mess started when Disney employees who opposed the law, before it passed, protested the law and put pressure on their new CEO to speak out against it.



GEORGE PEREZ, LEGENDARY ‘CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS’ AND ‘WONDER WOMAN’ COMIC BOOK ARTIST, DIES AT 67 He came to prominence in the 1970s penciling *The Avengers* for Marvel Comics, and returned to the franchise in the 1990s. In the 1980s he penciled *The New Teen Titans*, which became one of DC Comics’ top-selling series. He penciled DC’s landmark limited series *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, followed by relaunching *Wonder Women* as both writer and penciller for the rebooted series. In the meantime, he worked on other comics published by Marvel, DC, and other companies into the 2010s. He was known for his detailed and realistic rendering, and his facility with complex crowd scenes.



A theatre lobby in China inspired by artwork in *Alien 4DX* MIGHT BE THE ULTIMATE FILM EXPERIENCE! I got 3 emails on May 19 from

people excited about the format. Steve Segal saw *Dr. Strange* shown this way and wrote, “I saw it in 4DX, which is all the bells and whistles, specifically moving seats, wind, smoke, strobe lights, water (spray and drip), and other stuff. It is still showing in 4DX (which includes 3D in this case) on Friday at The Stonestown. It's not cheap, about \$20, but you should experience it at least once. It's like seeing a whole movie at a theme park.” (Note: The new CGV Cinemas (in the old 1000 Van Ness location) also has 4DX.

Gary Meyer, who spent many decades owning and running movie theatres, says, “The format is very popular in Korea and Mexico.” 4DX incorporates on-screen visuals with synchronized motion seats and environmental effects such as water, wind, fog, scent, snow and more, to enhance the action on screen.” 4DX is state-of-the-art film technology developed by CJ 4DPLEX, a Korean company. Steve Segal adds that not everything shown in 4DX is in 3-D.

Gary added that another amazing new system is Dolby Cinema. Head of distribution at Paramount said “Dolby Cinema is the best way to see *Top Gun Maverick* which seems to be an AMC exclusive. Seeing it in 4DX would be overwhelming.” I've seen a feature in the Dolby system and it really was an impressive super wide-screen experience that also has fabulous sound. (KC)

Going to the movies has been changing to compete with the internet and TV. I just read that the Stonestown multiplex also has an immersive Screen-X 270-degree theatre, which covers the viewers' entire field of vision.



If you are curious about the history of “Cinema of the Future,” Gary Meyer’s online magazine *Eat Drink Film* ran an excellent 3 part article on the growth of technology. It is loaded with

wonderful rare clips of cutting edge entertainment from the 19th Century to the present. Of course there is the Lumière Brothers’ *Arrival of a Train*, Abel Gance’s *Napoleon*, scary 3D films from the early 1950s, *This is Cinerama* and dozens of other rare clips. There are also lots of unexpected surprises, even the absurd trailer for *Panorama Blue*, shot in 70mm. It is a hoot.

<https://eatdrinkfilms.com/2014/12/11/going-deep-into-immersive-cinema/>



NEW YORK TIMES CRITIC FINDS LITTLE TO GET EXCITED ABOUT IN CHIP ‘N DALE’S ‘RESCUE RANGERS’ Calum Marsh writes it off as a derivative film. “If there’s going to be a movie about nobodies like Chip and Dale, it only seems right that it should include such wide-ranging animated allusions as *South Park*, *Rugrats* and *The Polar Express*. He notes they were a short lived TV show for kids on the Disney channel. He believes “hardly anybody remembers the original *Rescue Rangers*, and that few who do remember it fondly... the movie has some of the hip flair and anarchic meta-humor of *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, as well as an irreverent, self-referential attitude that’s rather appealing.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4Z0GHWH60>



MONSTRA

The 21st LISBON Animation Festival
16 – 27 March 2022, Lisbon, Portugal
By Nancy Denney-Phelps

Monstra is twelve days crammed full of animation. Along with the international competition,

shorts, features, and student films there is a super shorts competition for films three minutes and under and other special events. For me, the heart of the competition programs is the SPA Vasco Granja Award for the best Portuguese animation. Sponsored by the Portuguese Society of Authors (SPA), the award is named for Vasco Granja who was a primary promoter of Portuguese animation and comics via his show on Portuguese public television and in print.

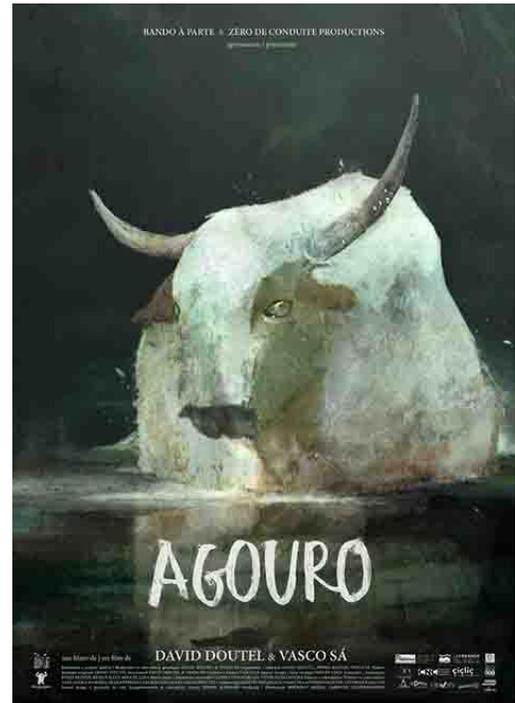
The entire Portuguese Competition was strong, but when I saw *Do Lixo (The Garbage Man)* I felt sure that it was a winner. I was right. The director and script writer, Laura Goncalves, not only took home the SPA Vasco Granja, she was also awarded the Audience Award for the best Portuguese film as well as the Best Portuguese Film in the International Competition.



The Garbage Man takes place on a hot August afternoon. A family is gathered around a table eating lunch. Each family member has memories of Uncle Botao to relate to. His life slowly unfolds from the days of Salazar's over-thirty-year dictatorship of Portugal to Botao's immigration to France where he worked as a garbage man for thirty years. He is especially remembered for the times he arrived back in his native village for a visit with a van full of "garbage" that he transformed into treasures.

The eleven-minute film is an animated documentary based on interviews that Laura did with her family about her Uncle Botao. The lovely film is a combination of 2D animation and painting.

The Garbage Man was produced at BAP Animation Studio in Porto. This year BAP celebrates ten years of creating and producing lovely films. Founded in 2011 as part of Bando á Parte Production Studio, BAP Studio broke away and became BAP Collective Animation Studio.



BAP is truly a collective, with a strong core team of six people. They have been responsible for such award-winning films as David Doutel and Vasco Sá's *Fuligem (Soot)* in 2012 and *Agouro* in 2018. Alexandra Ramires created the hauntingly beautiful *Elo* at BAP and Alex Siqueiras' multi-award-winning *Purple Boy* was also produced there.

Thanks to their vast experience and success over the past ten years, the studio now has strong international co-production partners in several countries such as France, Croatia, and Brazil.

BAP Studio is not resting on its laurels; they have several projects in the works right now. Collective member Victor Hugo Rocha is in production on *Das Pernas Altas (The Long Legged Man)*. The team of David Doutel and Vasco Sá are also at work on a new project.

To celebrate the studio's tenth anniversary, Monstra presented a special tribute program beginning with Luis Soares 2012 *Outro Homem Qualquer (Any Other Man)* and ending with the 2020 *Elo*.

This year the festival's guest country was Bulgaria. The first experiments with animation in the country began in the late 1920s. In 1948 the Department of Drawing and Puppet Animation was established as part of the nationalized Bulgarian Cinematography, the state directorate that supervised all film studio productions. Independent animation began in the 1950s.

Todor Dinov, considered the father of Bulgarian animation, developed what has come to be known as

the “Bulgarian Animation School.” This style was characterized by avant-garde aesthetics with borderline absurd stories. Dinov’s 1980 short film *The Rain of Paris* is a good example of this style of animation. In the film a street artist draws pictures on the pavement of a Paris street, asking passers-by for money. After a rain shower, all of the chalk drawings are erased and the artist begins all over again.

Animation and documentary filmmaker Gospodin Nedelchev-Dido, in a play on Dinov’s film title, paid homage to Todor Dinov in his 2003 documentary *The Paris Rain of Bulgarian Animation*. The fascinating portrait of the great animator was screened at Monstra.



My favorite Bulgarian screening was *Mark & Verse*. Pairing an animator with a poet to create animated poetry has become a popular way to make poetry more accessible to a wider audience, and from Estonia to South Africa, each collection has its own distinct character.

Bulgaria joined the list with *Mark & Verse*. It is a long-term project created and curated by animator Vessela Dantcheva and produced by Compote Collective. Founded in 2008, the Compote Collective is an animation company composed of twenty artists in Sofia.

The twelve short films in the program were created in a variety of animation styles. Petya Zlateva’s *Tasks of the Day* is beautifully drawn. Based on a poem by Stefan Ivanov, it is about a woman who is looking for an escape from solitude in the routine of daily tasks. Instead of getting her life in order, she discovers madness and chaos, which overwhelms her. Petya said that the inspiration for her film came from “the fast rhythm and unobtrusive sense of sadness in the poem”.

Tasks of the Day became Oscar qualified in 2019 when it took the top honors at the In the Palace Short Film Festival in Varna, Bulgaria. The film has stood the test of time and after the isolation during Covid it has taken on a whole new meaning.



The minute I heard the soundtrack for *Love in the Time of Tourism* I had a nostalgic feeling that I knew this place. It turns out that it was recorded on Olvera Street, a historic location in downtown Los Angeles. Since the 1820s when what is now California was still part of Mexico, the street was a center of community life. It remained the center until Los Angeles expanded. Today the street attracts over two million visitors a year to its restaurants and vendors’ stalls. The author of the poem, Petar Tchouhov, wrote it in “an attempt to immortalize a memory from Olvera Street”.

The animation for *Love in the Time of Tourism* created by Vessela Dantcheva uses bold lines filled in with bright, vibrant colors to bring the street to life. The film is full of the food, music, and tourism on Olvera Street. I could almost smell and taste the street as I watched the film.

Sadly, I was only at the festival for four days so I missed a great deal. I did have the opportunity to see *Dozens of Norths*. It is the first feature-length film by the award-winning Japanese animator Koji Yamamura. He was nominated for an Oscar in 2002 for his short animation *Mt. Head*.

The official synopsis of the film is “North is everywhere solitary. Here is all North. This is a record of the people I met in the North. However, my memory is fragmented and does not get the point at all. Now I’m starting to wonder if my efforts came to nothing. I’m just getting the occasional recognition of the existence of the world through the dull pain changes shape little by little.”

I have watched the film twice and I guess that is what I saw but I’m really not sure. The film is visually stunning, which is what I would expect from a film by Koji because he is a master of the drawn image. It is based on his illustrations that were serialized on the cover of the monthly literary magazine *Bubgu-Kai* from 2012 to 2014.

About the film the filmmaker says “with this film, I hope to explore the invisible source of anxiety and suffering while depicting the absurdity and sadness of human existence, to finally make people feel even a little bit of hope for the real world.”

The first time that I watched the film I sat back and drank in the beautiful images, music, and sound design. There is no dialogue but written text which stayed on the screen long enough that you can comfortably read it. During the second viewing, I concentrated on the text. The music also added a lot to the feel of the film for me. For it, Koji used the music of the Dutch bandleader, composer, arranger, and sax player Willem Breuker (1944 – 2010).

I don't think this is a film for everyone. I found the beautiful film very Zen but some people that I talked to found it very slow. If you expect a plot that is laid out for you and fast-paced action this is not the film for you; however, if you sit back, relax and let the beautiful images carry you away you should find it a very enjoyable seventy minutes.

Dozens of Norths is just beginning its festival tour. It has already been awarded the Special Jury Award for Feature Films at the Eighth New Chitose Airport International Animation Festival in Japan. It also garnered an Excellence Award at the Japan Media Arts Festival.

Lisbon is a beautiful city with many wonderful attractions. Ponte de Abril Bridge was built by the American Bridge Company which also constructed the Golden Gate Bridge and you can't miss the similarities to the famous San Francisco landmark. The city also boasts one of the biggest and best flea markets in the world. It is also home to some of the best food in the world and, of course, there is fado, a style of Portuguese singing that is famous for its expressive and melancholy character.

The city is also home to the Museu da Marioneta (The Puppet Museum). Portugal has a long tradition of puppet theatre. The museum has the largest collection of Portuguese-made puppets in the world as well as an extensive assemblage of marionettes and masks from all over the world. Located in the historic Convento das Bernardas which was founded in 1653, the museum is a place that should not be missed when you visit Lisbon. You can watch a video about the museum on their website: museudamarioneta.pt



For the last fifteen years, Monstra and the museum have partnered to organize a special exhibition during the festival. This year's presentation was On the Other Side of the Camera, My Grandfather's Demons. The exhibition featured sets, props, and characters from Portuguese animator Diogo Carvalho's upcoming eighty-minute feature film *My Grandfather's Demons*. This will be the first Portuguese feature-length stop motion puppet film.

It is the story of Rosa, a successful professional working in a big city. The sudden death of her grandfather brings her back to the isolated house where she was raised. Full of anxiety, stress, and remorse she decides to rebuild the ruined house and fields that she has inherited. As she gradually learns her grandfather's secrets, she also confronts her own demons.



The exhibition featured many of the intricate sets created for the film including a large detailed diorama of the house and the surrounding hillside. There was also a making-of video. The story takes place in the Trás-os-montes region of Portugal with rolling hills and dry plateaus. It is obvious that a great deal of research went into the creation of the sets. The look and texture of the terra cotta house, the landscape, and the vegetation seem so real that if they had not been miniatures, it would have been easy to mistake them for the real thing.

My Grandfather's Demons is slated for release in mid-2022. I am looking forward to seeing how the sets transfer to the big screen.

A second exhibition was mounted at the Sociedade Nacional De Belas-Artes. It contained more than two hundred works by Great Britain's master of drawing, Joanna Quinn, and Bulgarian Anri Koulev.



Joanna's section featured almost one hundred original drawings from all eight of her films. Beginning with her 1986 raucous comedy *Girl's Night Out*, which first introduced us to Joanna's endearing character Beryl, the exhibition was an amazing collection of the brilliant animator's work. There was also a video with a larger-than-life Joanna talking about her work.



Some of Joanna Quinn's friends

Anri Koulev is a director and illustrator. His work was represented by a retrospective of six dozen of his drawings ranging in topic from politics and erotica to animation.

A third part of the exhibition was a tribute to BAP Studio's anniversary. It contained original artwork from eight of the studio's films.

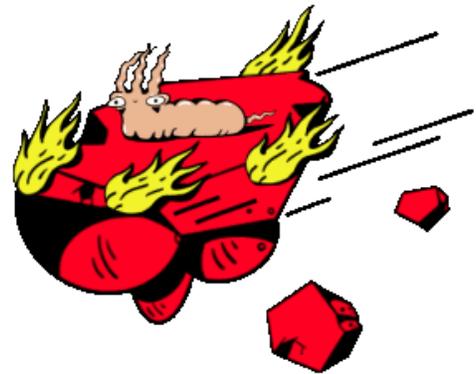
This year the café at the cinema was closed so the nearby Cinemateca Portuguesa restaurant became the new festival café. I can't believe that in all of the years I have been visiting Lisbon I have never discovered the Cinemateca. It is a real treasure. Founded in the early 1950s, it promotes the

conservation and knowledge of cinematographic history. The cinema has two screening rooms showing prints of classic films. The building also has a Museum of Cinema which contains an impressive collection of antique cinema equipment. There is a bookstore and a restaurant that serves delicious food and drink at a very reasonable price.

I would like to thank Vitor Carrico press and PR manager at Turismo de Lisbon for arranging my visit to the festival. I also thank production manager Priscila Carvalho for all of her assistance in making my trip run smoothly. As always my stay at the Hotel Florida was delightful and perfect for any movie buff with each room named after a different movie star and original movie posters in each room.

The next MONSTRA will be held 16–27 March 2023

You can learn more about the festival at <http://monstrafestival.com>



KABOOM ANIMATION FESTIVAL
28 March – 3 April 2022
Amsterdam and Utrecht, The
Netherlands
By Nancy Denny-Phelps

Kaboom Animation Festival has become so spectacular that one city and one opening night isn't big enough. Before the festival takes over the entire world, it has expanded from Amsterdam and taken over Utrecht which is 44 kilometers away. There were two opening night celebrations, one in each city.

Kaboom Industry Days were held in Utrecht. The yearly event is designed to give the Dutch animation community a forum to share new ideas, network, and foster collaborations. A Masterclass on the creative role of a producer was given by Ivan Zuber, producer of *Mum Is Pouring Rain*. The film

won the Jury Prize in the Special Television Category at Annecy in 2021.

The Dutch Academy for Film hosted a speed dating session for animators interested in working with documentary filmmakers in search of animators. A panel highlighting success stories from smaller European regions featured director Tomm Moore of Cartoon Saloon (Ireland); Claus Toksvig Kjaer, producer at Nonlum Animation Studio (Denmark); and creative producer Olivier Catherine of Pictanovo (Hauts-de-France Region).

The second Industry Day was designed for young professionals. Almost everyone wants to be an animator, but there are many other available positions that are involved in making an animated film. A panel of professionals made up of a composer, a 2D animator, and a set designer discussed exactly what they do and the path that led them to doing it. A highlight of the day was an overview of some important projects that have been created in The Netherlands in the past year and what it took to create those projects from start to finish.

There were screenings in Utrecht for the public ranging from Dutch Shorts and International Competitions to feature films. On Wednesday, while screenings continued for one last day in Utrecht most of the action moved to Amsterdam and the magnificent Eye. It is the museum for film in The Netherlands and it has three screening rooms.



The magnificent Eye museum

Wednesday saw the second opening night which, after a short welcome, featured a screening of *Where is Anne Frank?* from director Ari Folman. I am a big fan of Ari's previous films, *Waltz with Bashir* and *The Congress* so I was looking forward to seeing his latest film. Rather than focusing on Anne in the film, Folman created Kitty as the central character. During her time in the attic Anne, as we all know, kept a diary and in it she addressed letters to various friends, real and imaginary. Her "special friend" was Kitty.

In *Where is Anne Frank?* Kitty was brought to life by animators from fifteen different countries under Folman's direction. The film begins seventy-



five years after Anne's death when Kitty comes to life in the house where Anne and her family were hiding. Kitty is alone and confused that her friend is not there. She sets out to find Anne.

The film is composed of 159,000 drawings. A team of animators created a miniature model of the attic which was used to record images of real scenery. Folman then added 2D animated characters in front of these backgrounds.



Ari Folman

It is extremely important for audiences to understand why Anne Frank and her family were forced to hide in an attic, especially in these terrible times. Unfortunately, I don't think that this film tells that story effectively. The film came across to me as a sanitized, a Disneyfied version of what actually happened. It is so "kid friendly" that it is easy to miss why Anne is in hiding. I hope that any parent who takes their child to see this film will have a talk with the child before they go to the theatre to explain to the child what the film is about and why Anne is forced to have imaginary friends. The most important role for the film is to clearly explain what the holocaust was about and why it happened.

Ari Folman was slated to be present at the festival, but due to travel difficulties he was forced to join us on Zoom. In a separate program he talked about the making of the film.



Poupelle of Chimney Town

A feature film for the entire family that I enjoyed was *Poupelle of Chimney Town*. The film is Japanese animator Yasuke Hirota's directorial debut. It is based on Nishino Akihiro's popular book which sold over 700,000 copies. Akihiro wrote the screenplay and was one of the producers.

Chimney Town is covered in smoke. No one can even remember what stars are. Lubicchi, a young chimney sweep, and his very smelly friend Poupelle who is made out of trash, believe that stars are real and set out to prove it.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgFNHC1j-Fc>

The visually lovely film is about friendship and though first and foremost it is about believing in yourself, it also has an ecological theme about what smoke can do to a town and the health of a person. The film gets its messages across without being preachy or in your face and can be enjoyed by the entire family.

I waited six years for Dutch animators Jantiene de Kroon and Remco Polman to finish their short film *Camouflage* and the wait was definitely worth it. The 18-minute hand drawn dystopian thriller combines horror and science fiction as the story of Amouf, an office worker, unfolds. Amouf desperately tries to hold his life together as the world around him gets darker and darker. De Jager (The Hunter) is a flamboyant and highly intimidating creature. She is a hate instigating vigilante, who has sworn to protect the city from invaders by systematically hunting down and destroying those who are weak. Amouf in his grey trench coat, hat, and briefcase appears to be every inch the office worker. Appearances are not always what they seem. Will he be able to push his quest to survive to the limits? You'll have to watch the film to find out.



Camouflage tells a good story with sparse dialogue. Alex Debicki's analogue synthesizer music is used more for emphasis rather than background sounds. The film is delightfully dark but there are also touching moments. The style of drawing is like a graphic novel which makes sense because Remco is also a comic book artist. The script is by both Jantiene and Remco but the dialogue was written by her. The film consists of about three hundred twenty-three shots with no fewer than eight hundred character animations.

Jantiene told me that "Remco always wanted to do something with the political reality of persecuting people, wrapped in a genre metaphor." She went on to say that "with this film, we try to ask the question to what extent being different is allowed in our own world, whether that concerns behavior, appearance, or origin. A suggestion that we would like to pass on to the viewer, is that everybody might be a little bit like our main character Amouf, a consideration with which we hope to raise a number of disturbing but important questions: Are we as a humanity in the core afraid of ourselves? Is that what feeds the fear of those who are different? Is fear of difference actually a form of prejudice?"

At the Kaboom festival I have the honor to present The Nancy Award to any film in competition of my choice and this year my award went to Jantiene and Remco for *Camouflage*. I always love a good horror film and one that makes me think is even better. This film has a frightening, thought provoking story combined with beautiful animation, humor and pathos.

Along with The Nancy Award, the film has won two Best Animation Awards. One was from Brazil's Rock Horror Festival, the other was from the Shortcutz Animation Award in Amsterdam. The film

is currently nominated in the Best Animation category at the NFMLA, which is organized by the Academy of Motion Pictures and Arts in Los Angeles.



Princes and Princesses

Kaboom has a different theme each year. For 2022 it was Myths and Fairytales. I was delighted to see French animator Michel Ocelot's stunning silhouette film *Princes et Princesses*. In this animated fantasy, a girl and a boy meet each evening in an abandoned shadow theatre along with an old theatre technician. The children dress up, and create magical stories which they act out.

Princes and Princesses was created using a special style of cut out animation, with black silhouetted characters performing the action against backlit backdrops in stunning colors. The film is made up of six episodes from the original eight that were a French television series. After you have seen the film, you will want to watch it over and over again to catch all of the delicate details. Unfortunately, it is not shown often enough in theatres but it is available on DVD. This beautiful seventy-minute animated fantasy, created in 2000, has stood the test of time and is as delightful to watch now as when I first saw it over twenty years ago.

Fairy Tales from Around the World on 16mm was a magical program. Of the eight films in the program, it was especially wonderful to see two classics by the late, great Gene Deitch.

In *A Story, A Story* Gene brought Gail Harley's book of the same name to life. The 1973 film tells how African folk tales were acquired from the God who possessed them. Legend tells that Ananse the Spider Man spun a web to reach the sky to buy stories from the Sky God.

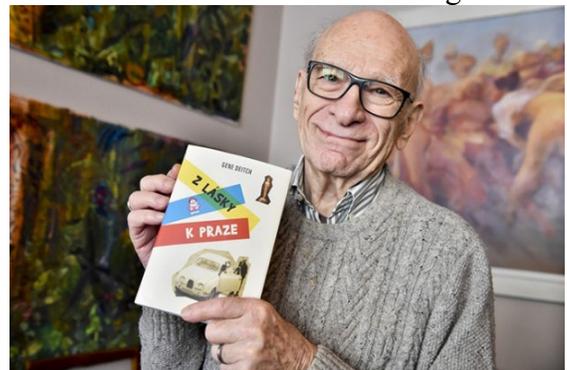
The second film by Gene is one of my all-time favorite animated films. *Strega Nona* (1977) was



Strega Nona

based on a book by Tomie De Paola that is a quite funny. In the film the kindly witch Strega Nona has left her not too bright assistant, Big Anthony, in charge of her house while she is away. Big Anthony, left alone with Strega Nona's magic pasta pot, runs into big trouble when he decides to show off to the villagers that he knows the magic secret of how to make the pot work. Once he gets the pasta pot going though, he doesn't know how to make it stop. Gradually, the house fills with pasta, then it flows out into the village streets and finally to the surrounding hills. **(It was banned from a number of children's libraries in the United States for depicting magic, witches, and witchcraft in a positive light. KC)**

Gene's real life was as magical as his films. In 1953 he arrived in Prague for what was supposed to be fifteen days of work at a studio. It turned into the rest of his life when he met Zdenka Najmanova, who became his wife. She was working at the studio where he was and it was love at first sight.



The late Gene Deitch with *For The Love of Prague*

Gene was the only American living in Prague under Communist rule. He wrote about his love for Zdenka, Prague, and living behind the Iron Curtain in his book, *For the Love of Prague* which is available on Amazon.

Gene drew both Popeye and Tom and Jerry at one point in his career. In 1961 he received an Oscar for *Munro* which was written by Jules Feiffer. It is about a very young boy who is drafted into the Army

by mistake, but nobody is willing to recognize that the Army has made a bureaucratic mistake.

Gene always said that his favorite character was Nudnik which became a Czech television series of twelve episodes.

Gene was fond of saying: “We’ll all die, the goal is not to live forever, the goal is to create something that will.” He certainly did that.

The Fairy Tales from Around the World in 16mm was a program curated and presented by Dutch film historian and collector Roloff de Jeu, who screened films from his private collection. I wish that more festivals would show the old classic animations on 16mm, it is so lovely to see watch them in the way that they were meant to be seen.



Nancy with Tomm Moore

Tomm Moore is the Irish filmmaker, animator, illustrator, and comics artist who co-founded the prestigious studio Cartoon Saloon in Kilkenny, Ireland. He has been responsible for three Academy Award nominated feature films: *The Secret of Kells*, *Song of the Sea*, and *Wolfwalkers*. This beautiful trilogy, based on Irish folklore, has touched children and adults alike. All three are animated classics.

In this age of computer animation, Moore and Cartoon Saloon are strong proponents of hand drawn films. Their latest project is *My Father’s Dragon*. Directed by Nora Twomey (*The Bread Winner*), it is based on a 1948 children’s novel by Ruth Stiles Gannett about a young boy searching for a dragon on a magical island. Among the voice actors are such distinguished names as Rita Moreno and Whoopie Goldberg. The film will be released as a Netflix original film. No exact release date has been announced yet.

The Kaboom festival marked the end of Tomm’s special invitational guest residency in Amsterdam with Kaboom. During his stay he worked on a personal project, drew, and painted. He also met with Dutch students, visited studios and worked on a project for the Dutch Film Fund.

Wolfwalkers was screened as a festival satellite event at Het Ketelhuis, an art house movie theatre in an old factory.

Kaboom is much more than just competition programs. National Film Board of Canada and Kaboom jury member Julie Roy presented a screening of films by the brilliant Canadian animator Michele Cournoyer, and Paul Bush presented two retrospective shows of his inventive films. The films in the program *Challenging the Boundaries* certainly do that.



Co Hoedeman

The renowned Dutch/Canadian puppet master and stop motion animator Co Hoedeman came to us on the big screen via his home in Canada. The special occasion was the publication of his book *Frame by Frame: An Animation Journey*.

Born in The Netherlands during the German occupation in 1940, Co’s life reads like an adventure novel. After surviving the World War II winter of hunger, he left school at the age of fifteen. Whenever he could he took classes at the School of Fine Arts where he first learned animation and began to experiment with new techniques and materials.

At the age of twenty-five, with as he says, a canister of film under his arm he migrated to Canada. His dream of working at the National Film Board of Canada became a reality. He also had the opportunity to study puppet animation in the former Czechoslovakia.



The Sand Castle

Interspersed between Co's story telling he introduced five of his films including his 1977 Oscar winning *The Sand Castle*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hzvqmoPu2H4>

He also showed an episode from his *Ludovic* series about a sweet, adventurous teddy bear with a creative imagination. The series was a hit with children of all ages.

For the perfect end to a perfect show, some of Co's relatives who live in the Netherlands came on stage to greet him on the big screen.

A big thank you to Festival Director Aneta Raketa and the entire Kaboom staff for making my trip to the festival such a lovely experience. I have a very special place in my heart for the festival because I have been on their selection committee for many years and was on the jury of the second edition when the festival was called KLIK. I am ready to start watching films as soon as the call for submissions goes out.

You can learn more about the festival at: <http://www.kaboomfestival.nl>

LAST MINUTE ITEM



This looks like a really low budget work that only a serious gamer might find interesting.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1A_INkOzLTnK0SVbSHxMF7otKaw-sznC0/view



PHIL TIPPETT'S 'MAD GOD' OPENS AT THE ROXIE Starting Friday, June 17

Mad God is an experimental animated film set in a Miltonesque world of monsters, mad scientists, and war pigs. Directed by legendary visual effects and stop-motion craftsman Phil Tippett, the sets, creatures, and spirit of the film are, in every way, independent and straight from the heart. **(IMDB)**

Wikipedia says *Mad God* "opens with a tall figure shrouded in a jacket and gas mask known only as The Assassin shrouded descending into a ruined, hellish world via a diving bell. In his possession The Assassin has a map of the world and a suitcase with a bomb which he has been tasked with detonating behind enemy lines within the desolate world, however the map slowly deteriorates along the way."

<https://www.madgodmovie.com/madgod-trailer>



In the "Bob's Burgers" episode "The Oeder Games," the Belcher family must compete in a water balloon fight in hopes of winning discounted rent.

FOR FANS OF BOB'S BIRTHDAY ON FOX, IN HONOR OF THE FEATURE THAT JUST OPENED, THE 'NEW YORK TIMES' RAN A LIST OF 10 FAVORITE EPISODES. "*Bob* offers a wry twist on the live-action family sitcom, and it has expanded over the years to form a rich world of colorful guest characters." The article offers a primer to the series. So if you are curious, they listed 10 essential episodes and provide details. Read: **'The Bob's Burgers Movie' Is Coming. Here Are 10 Great Episodes.**

The *S.F. Chronicle's* reviewer is a fan of the show, but disliked all the added hyped up music. The shows are online on Hulu. Rotten Tomatoes gave the feature a 90. The trailer is

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hldGGWN9HcI>

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Special thanks to **Nancy Denney-Phelps** who has been having a wonderful time once again going to festivals in Europe. She also 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**. **Due to the lockdown we are only asking \$11 a year while the virus lasts or \$26 if you wish to help the international association. Let's hope it is a limited time offer. We want to hold in-person events again.**

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