



**LITTLE FLUFFY CLOUDS HAS CREATED ‘YELLOWSTONE 88 - SONG OF FIRE’** It is a 2D hand drawn animated short that tells the story of the devastating fires that engulfed the park for five months in 1988. The fires didn't end until winter storms extinguished them. Despite the horror and devastation, life returned and continues for the plants and animals of the area.

It is a handsome work with a soft spoken poem by Betsy de Fries read by Peter Coyote. *Song of Fire* was created by Betsy de Fries Little Fluffy Clouds' director/producer and co-founder and her co-founder and director/ animator Jerry van de Beek. The music was composed and performed by Mark Murphy who is part of the Irish rock and roll band The Devlins. He recorded his contribution at Secrets and Machines in Dublin.

The art in the film was first drawn using Autodesk Sketchbook Pro and cleaned up using Illustrator. Then each illustration was split up into hundreds of flat elements and recompiled in After Effects, carefully placing each element in a different depth layer to create a multiplane effect when there is camera motion.

[https://www.littlefluffyclouds.com/LFC\\_Production/Yellowstone88.html](https://www.littlefluffyclouds.com/LFC_Production/Yellowstone88.html)

After viewing the film scroll down as it provides all kinds of facts about the fires (costs to put it out, numbers and kinds of mammals killed, number of fires caused by man, by lightning, etc.). Here is a link to an informative article about the production in *Stash Magazine*. <https://www.stashmedia.tv/yellowstone-88-short-film-by-little-fluffy-clouds/>

**DOC FEST WILL INCLUDE A PART ANIMATED FEATURE AND AN ANIMATED SHORT** *Dear Mr. Brody*, directed by Keith Maitland is the winner of the festival's top prize, the Vanguard Award. It is a psychedelic journey into the heart (and bank account) of Michael Brody, Jr, a hippie-millionaire who promoted world peace and caused a frenzy when he publicly announced a \$25 million giveaway to anyone in need. This gesture put Brody and his wife into the media spotlight and resulted in mobs of people camping on their lawn and it their getting too much mail. Fifty years later, 12 boxes of letters pleading for Brody's help were discovered—unopened.

A festival press release calls *Dear Mr. Brody* the Centerpiece film of the SF DocFest. It uses a mix of some psychedelic animation, live-action re-enactments, and archival footage. "The aesthetic concept of the film plays on Maitland's own imagination of a three dimensional, immersive experience."

*Yello* "is a colorful and moving animated documentary. In it we follow Michelle, a young lady as she prepares to fly at the airport." It was directed by King Yaw Soon, a local animator who lives on Nob Hill. He is a video editor at Electronic Arts, has work on line and won 1st place in the "In Time of COVID19 Video Contest." He was a cinema major at SF State.

The 20th San Francisco Documentary Film Festival will take place from June 3rd through 20<sup>th</sup>, both online and in theaters this year. The full program will be announced May 18th. [sfindie.com](http://sfindie.com)



**‘DEAR MR. BRODY’ WINS THE NON-FICTION VANGUARD AWARD AT DOC FEST** SF DocFest prides itself on recognizing those unconventional, creative risk-taking filmmakers that are redefining the cinematic form and are someone to watch. Keith Maitland is the latest filmmaker the festival has recognized.

Keith Maitland began his career on the streets of New York, working on the fiction side of the industry as a DGA Trainee and Assistant Director. After 7 seasons with NBC's *Law & Order*, and working on a variety of features, Maitland was inspired by his documentary-photographer wife, Sarah Wilson, to try his hand at non-fiction storytelling.

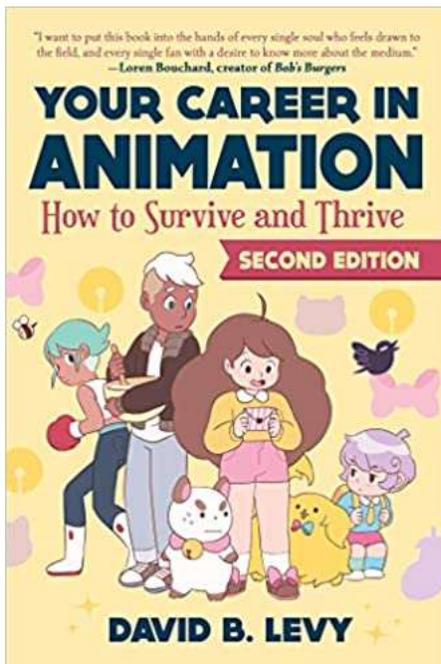
On the heels of *Tower*, an animated school-shooting documentary, *Variety* named Maitland one of "10 Documakers to Watch." *Tower* won multiple festival awards, as well as the Emmy for Best Historical Documentary.

As a filmmaker, Keith Maitland pushes artistic boundaries and redefines the cinematic form, especially with his eagerly anticipated new hybrid documentary, *Dear Mr. Brody*.



**LOCARNO FESTIVAL TO HONOR 'RETURN OF THE JEDI' AND 'JURASSIC PARK' VFX ARTIST PHIL TIPPETT WITH THEIR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD** The Locarno Film Festival (Switzerland) will honor U.S. animator and visual effects artist Phil Tippett, with a lifetime achievement award. The festival is honoring him for his work behind the scenes that has “has extended the horizons of filmic iconography”

Phil, whose studio is in the East Bay, won two Oscars for his work on “The *Return of the Jedi* and *Jurassic Park*. The upcoming festival (August 4 – 14) will host the world premiere of Tippett’s experimental stop-motion film *Mad God*, that has been in development for years. It is set in a world of monsters, mad scientists and war pigs, and was funded by fans through Kickstarter. Locarno will fete Tippett with its Vision Award.



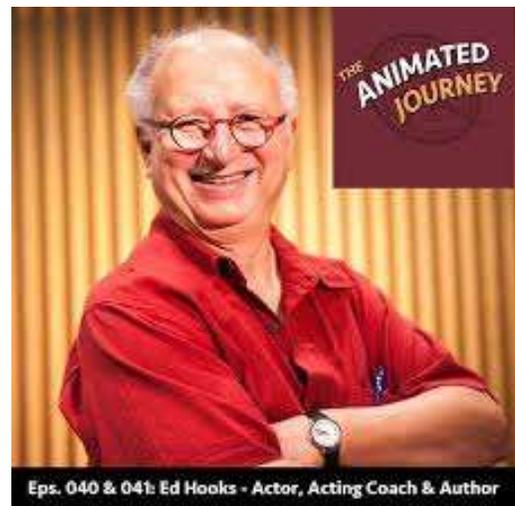
**'YOUR CAREER IN ANIMATION'** by David Levy who is a former president of ASIFA-East (NY City). He now leads a team at Disney+ developing projects. He is also an award winning animator whose personal work

has delighted us in past shows of the winners of the annual ASIFA-East annual competition. His book is an excellent career guide/reference book for anybody wanting to advance their career or planning one in animation.

The book is full of personal accounts and tips. He also goes into a lot of practical things including some of the worst mistakes people can make. He gives a great deal of frank, practical advice on many things, even how to pick your fights and tips on how not to try to impress a future employer if you catch their attention at the wrong time.

David knows hundreds of successful people and many are quoted in his text. They range from young animators to directors, studio heads and administrators. He also provides useful tips on unexpected topics like making the most use of the times when you are unemployed. He knows most people are not on a career path that will take them straight to the top. He even talks about his learning a software program when he was briefly unemployed when he was just starting his career. He also mentioned a woman who took time off and ended up producing an exceptional work that made her famous.

David’s book is over 300 pages of useful information that should be helpful for anybody who wants to work in the industry. It is useful advice, no matter where you are on your ladder to success, from a student starting a career to an animator who is getting ready to pitch a show to a network. Unlike some books that are hard to find at a reasonable price, copies of the new edition can be bought for under \$20 and prices for used copies (probably the first edition) start at \$2.50 from Amazon.



**'PIVOT POINT' WITH JOSEPH DeBEASI INTERVIEWED ED 'ACTING FOR ANIMATORS' HOOKS** Ed Hooks is an actor and acting teacher who wrote several books on acting before he was hired in 1996 to teach acting to animators at PDI (when they

were creating their first feature, *Antz* with Woody Allen for DreamWorks). He quickly discovered creating an animated performance is quite different from how actors work on stage. He ended up creating a superior method, wrote the book *Acting for Animators* (now in its fourth edition), and has traveled around the world teaching animators how to improve their characters' performances. I found this long interview quite informative.(KC)

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/episode-45-with-ed-hooks/id1516759542?i=1000520232889>

**MAJOR RAY HARRYHAUSEN, HOLLYWOOD'S GREAT SPECIAL EFFECTS LEGEND, HAS A MAJOR EXHIBITION IN EDINBURGH** The biggest ever exhibition devoted to his special effects work has reopened in Edinburgh, Scotland. Work from his great films including *Jason and the Argonauts* and *Clash of the Titans*, is on display along with rarely-seen photographs, posters, storyboards and illustrations. It is at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. The show ends February 20, 2022.



**DON HERTZFELDT RAISED \$455,385 FROM 5,620 BACKERS USING KICKSTARTER!** That is an amazing amount of money for an independent animator whose characters are stick figures. This suggests you don't have to draw like a Disney animator to be successful if your content appeals to your audience and is well produced. What surprises me is he was only asking for a small amount (around \$3,000) to produce a Blu-ray disc, but his fans showered him money so he can continue to produce more episodes of *World of Tomorrow* and other products.

Part of Don's Kickstarter success is he offered interesting gifts to his supporters. There are signed original prints of his art, a 1,000 piece jigsaw puzzles of it, courtesy DVDs and now Blu-ray discs plus other things depending on how much is donated to produce the Blu-ray discs.

Don Hertzfeldt was born in 1976. By the time he was in his early 20s his work was being shown in animation packages by Spike and Mike. Don also became a star on the festival circuit due to his success at

Sundance and other festivals. He has had more films shown in competition at Sundance than any other filmmaker, with eight: *Rejected*, *The Meaning of Life*, *Everything Will Be OK*, *I Am So Proud of You*, *Wisdom Teeth*, *It's Such a Beautiful Day*, *World of Tomorrow*, and *World of Tomorrow Episode Two*. In 2013 Sundance Film Festival invited him to serve on the Short Film Awards Jury. He is also the only filmmaker to have won the Sundance Film Festival's Grand Jury Prize for Short Films twice.

**RECENT COMPUTER ANIMATION SOFTWARE CONTINUES TO EXPAND WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR HOME SYSTEM** Ben Ridgway sent us links to things you might want to experiment with. The first is Realtime 3D character customization and animation using the Unreal Engine. It lets you come really close to falling into the uncanny valley. <https://www.unrealengine.com/en-US/blog/a-sneak-peek-at-metahuman-creator-high-fidelity-digital-humans-made-easy> The second uses Realtime 2D puppetry using Adobe Character Animator. They are now adding full body rigs that work with video capture [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXB7aA0X1bI&ab\\_channel=OkaySamurai](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXB7aA0X1bI&ab_channel=OkaySamurai)



**'PEPITO' IS A DELIGHTFUL ANIMATED DOG OPERA** This heart-warming work features cutout animation directed by Espranza Guevara who is a graduate of Univ. of Southern Calif. The music was composed by Nicolas Lell Benavides, and the libretto by Marella Martin Koch for New Opera West, a LA area group. The opera was commissioned by Emily Thebaut, a co-founder of Muttville, a nonprofit dedicated to rescuing and caring for senior dogs in San Francisco. It really is a delightful film. 🐕 <https://www.newoperawest.org/pepito-animated-dog-opera>



**THE ANNECY FESTIVAL WILL BE ONLINE JUNE 14-19**

In 2021, the Anecy International Animation Film Festival has received for the Short Films, Graduation Films, and TV and Commissioned Films categories, over 2,700 films coming from almost one hundred different countries. Discover some of the Official Selection in competition (excluding the Feature Films and TV Films), special programs related to the edition's themes, as well as exclusive content such as the previews and cartes blanches, whose programs are prepared by the festival's partners.

<https://www.anecy.org/2021-offers/moviegoers-online>



**KABOOM INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FESTIVAL ONLINE, 27 March to 3 April 2021**

**Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
Kaboom Lit Up the Sky with A BIG BANG**

**By Nancy Denney-Phelps**

Kaboom International Animation Festival burst onto my television screen with a spectacular shower of films and fun. Even though we couldn't all be there together in person, Midnight Madness brought us all together when each viewer was projected onto the screen in tiny little squares.

The festival screened three hundred thirty-three films of which thirteen were feature films, plus Kaboom introduced a brand-new annual award. I was honored that the festival selected me to give The Nancy Award. I could select any one film in competition to give my award to, and the winner received a Kaboom trophy with a very fitting special present - a wine tasting with me during next year's festival.

It was a very difficult decision deciding who to give the award to this year as there were so many excellent films. I finally decided that I would award a film that was not only exceptionally good but that people might not go to see because it is based on a classic Russian story by Gogol and the opera by Shostakovich. My award went to Russian animator Andrey Kinzanovsky for his feature film *The Nose or the Conspiracy of Mavericks*.



**Nancy presenting the Nancy Award**

The film treats history in an irreverent manner while conveying the horrors of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The one-hour twenty-minute stop motion opera is a cheerfully grim look at the follies of the period. You don't have to be a student of Russian history to appreciate the absurdity of the situation that Gogol depicted in his book *The Nose* and that Shostakovich set to music in his opera of the same name. The film is rich and complex. *The Nose or the Conspiracy of Mavericks* won a Special Jury Prize for the best feature film at Anecy in 2020 as well as the European Film Award for the Best Animated Feature Film.



**The Nose or the Conspiracy of Mavericks**

In honor of the establishment of The Nancy Award I was invited to curate a program of films that changed my life. I had a hard time narrowing my selection down to just eight films, ranging from Monique Renault's 1980 *Borderline 1 + 2* to the 2013 *Brutus* by Svetlana Filippova. I also prerecorded an introduction to my program.

One highlight of the 7 shorts competition screenings was *Affairs of the Art*, the long-awaited film by Joanna Quinn and writer/producer Les Mills. It continues the thirty-three-year-long journey of Beryl which began with the hilarious *Girl's Night Out*, Joanna's graduation film from 1988. In that film she goes with a group of "the girls" to a club with male strippers.



Beryl's evolution and her search for a meaningful career in her latest film give us a closer look at our heroine's childhood and her family. Her older sister Beverly plays a prominent role in *Affairs of the Arts*; her husband becomes her "muse" and model, and for the first time we also meet her geeky son, Colin.

This sixteen-minute film takes Beryl and her family to a whole new level of eccentricity as they unleash their obsessions with drawing, pet taxidermy, and everything in between. If you haven't seen the other three Beryl films, I suggest that you pop a big bowl of popcorn, open a bottle of wine, and spend a delightful evening with the endearing, madcap Welsh woman Beryl.



Why Slugs Have No Legs

I don't know what they are putting in the water in Switzerland but they are turning out some very wacky films. *Why Slugs Have No Legs* by Aline Hochli definitely qualifies in that category. The 10-minute film is about slugs and how they have a hard time keeping up with the pace of life in the fast-paced city of insects.

When a recession becomes a financial crisis in the insect city, the industrious bees see a solution; get rid of the slow working slugs. They, much like women in today's society, become the first casualty on the workplace treadmill. The slugs don't seem to be

bothered. They drive off in their very funny-looking car to home where they begin to party.

Lest this sound like a dreary film, it is anything but that. I never thought that I would find slugs endearing and humorous but these three are. The background art is delightfully quirky and colorful. The song that runs through the film composed by Thomas and Samuel Schranz will start your toe-tapping and then you won't be able to stop humming it.

I have been a fan of Russian animator Sasha Svirsky's work ever since I saw his 2010 film *Sirens*. His films have always been off-beat, original, and extremely experimental. His latest film *My Galactic Twin Galaction* takes his work in a different but equally excellent and entertaining direction. Unlike his previous films, which do not have a distinct, recognizable plot, this six-and-a-half-minute film is about a guy who receives a strange email from a previously unknown to him galactic twin named Galaction. His twin tells him that there is trouble in a neighboring galaxy caused by evil forces and Galaction asks his twin to join the struggle against evil. The film is colorful, full of humor, and violence. *My Galactic Twin Galaction* premiered at the Berlinale in 2020.



See Me

The twenty-six films in the two Dutch competition programs are proof that animation production is alive and thriving in The Netherlands. *See Me* by Patty Stenger and Yvonne Kroese is about a small girl with very freaky eyes. She is the only child amid an adult cocktail party and she might as well be invisible because no one notices her, not even her own mother. Her imagination begins to run wild as the legs of an adult become wooden tree branches. A small cute dog turns into a gigantic monster and the sardines on the canapés appear to be alive. She has to do something very drastic to get the adults' attention, and she does. The nine-minute film took home the Best Dutch Film Award.



**Hideous Henk**

Junaid Chundrigar scripted and directed *Hideous Hink* made for a Dutch TV pilot competition. The nine-minute film is about an ugly little chihuahua who gets adopted from the pound by a young woman. Hink is very excited with visions of delicious meals and a comfy bed. When it turns out that his new owner only wants to use him to get more Instagram followers by dressing him up in silly outfits, he tries desperately to escape. Every attempt that he makes to get away from her and her cute doggie clothes only makes him more popular on the site. The humorous television series is aimed at young adults. I found it a very funny film since I live with a little dog who has quite a wardrobe.

The New Directions Program was devoted to voices from countries that do not have a tradition of making animated films or are underrepresented in European cinemas. The little trip around the world took the audience to such far-flung places as Cypress, Moldova, Indonesia, Uganda, Lebanon, Columbia, Syria, and the Dominican Republic.

The Off Beat Shorts program was curated by animator Paul Bush and Kaboom staffer Anna Eijsbouts. All of the films were totally off the beaten track storywise, or in the technique used, or both. According to the curators' statement "these animated shorts bring something you never knew you wanted". As I watched the sixteen films in the program, some no more than two or three minutes long, I found myself thinking why am I watching this? But I was too intrigued to see what would come next.

Renowned Dutch animator Gerrit van Dijk passed away in 2012. During the final 6 months of his life, he made one drawing a night to create his last animated film, *The Last Picture Show*. Filmmaker Emma Westermann documented the final months of van Dijk's life and the nightly drawings that he created in her fifty-six-minute film *Counting My Drawings* that was screened at the festival.



**Pas à deux**

Kaboom also paid tribute to Gerrit with a retrospective of his work. The screening included the 2 films for which the multi-award-winning director received Golden Bears at the Berlinale, the 1988 *Pas a Deux* which he made with his sister-in-law Monique Renault and *I Move So I Am* (1997). The program ended with *The Last Picture Show*, a lovely tribute to an influential Dutch animator.

The festival offered the opportunity to binge-watch 5 episodes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> season of Cartoon Network's *Summer Camp Island*. In Julia Pott's long-running television series, best friends Oscar Peltzer and Hedgehog enter a magical summer camp by mistake and go on bizarre adventures. It was the evening for beer and potato chips.

Kaboom featured several live online events. Beryl Exposed --- The Naked Truth was a conversation between Joanna Quinn, Les Mills, and Kaboom programmer Anna Eijsbouts. Joanna is always entertaining and humorous and Les is quite droll, so any conversation with the pair is always delightful.

The couple founded Beryl Productions in the 1980s. The studio is named after their comical and loveable star of four of their films. They have gone on to make numerous other films including *Famous Fred* (1996) and *The Wife of Bath* (1998) which have been nominated for Oscars. Their films, which are beautifully drawn by Joanna and written and produced by Les, have won numerous awards at festivals. They are also well known for their commercial work such as the Charmin Toilet Paper bear.

While the pair chatted with Anna about their studio and their latest Beryl film, they sipped Beryl Cocktails, which the festival staff had created especially for them. If you want to sip a Beryl while watching *Affairs of the Art* at your next online festival here is the recipe:

Put ice in a champagne glass  
Pour in 40 to 50 ml. gin  
Add 125 ml. rose lemonade  
In a small bowl mix blue curacao with whipped  
cream and layer it on top of the drink  
Garnish with rose petals

The drink is both delicious and as colorful as Beryl.

From his New York apartment, the always brilliantly hued Tom C J Brown (*T.O.M.*, 2007; *The Event*, 2012; *Teeth*, 2015;) talked about the subject How to Sell Out And Be Happy. As a freelancer in the world of advertising, pitching is an important part of Tom's work life.



Tom C. J. Brown

During his session, he shared some of his tried and true techniques on how to impress a prospective client, or as Tom puts it “. . . how to profit and be joyful from selling your soul and creative spirit to the devil”.

In Tom's spare time he performs live with the audiovisual duo Magnetic Foragers. He also showed us his lockdown project. During his time at home, he built a harp. He talked about his love of music and even revealed that his secret desire is to be director of the Metropolitan Opera. His talk was an hour of good advice coupled with a lot of entertainment.

Along with excellent programs, Kaboom is about fun and getting everyone into the act. The Kaboom Improv Orchestra was all about participation and having fun. First the online “musicians” built their instruments with whatever they had around the house, mostly cardboard and paper. Then there was a rehearsal and finally, they created a soundtrack for the Fleisher Brothers silent animation *Sing, You Sinners*. You can watch the entire process from making the instruments to the performance at Kaboom Improv Orchestra on YouTube. Why not

build your own instrument along with the other participants and play along with the video.

Women Watching Porn is an educational podcast about female pleasure, hosted by Laura, Cris, and Maxi. Episode 25 was presented at Kaboom as part of the festival live events. The discussion ranged from porn ethics, female pleasure, to the perverse appeal of the unreal behavior.

Films shown as part of the Women Watching Porn event included episodes one to three of Signe Baumann's *Teat Beat of Sex* and *Vagina* by Dutch animator Andreia Dobrota. For this episode of their podcast the ladies were joined by award-winning porn director Jennifer Lyon Bell. After earning a BA in Psychology from Harvard University, Bell moved to Amsterdam where she received an MA in Film and Television Studies from the University of Amsterdam. With Blue Artichoke Films in Amsterdam, she mixes arthouse films and documentaries with pornography. Her film *Wild Card* was screened as part of Women Watching Porn segment. You can watch their Kaboom podcast and find a list of the films they screened along with links to them on their website at [womenwatchingporn.com](http://womenwatchingporn.com)

Day one of the two-day Industry Days was devoted to examining the future of the industry and film educational institutions in The Netherlands. I enjoyed the studio presentations by five of the leading studios in the country: Ambassadors, Blender, Holy Motion, Morphle, and Submarine. They are all very different. Because the visits had to be done in zoom, we received actual tours of the studios instead of presentations from a stage with slides. Seeing the actual studios is a lot more interesting as we were able to see how each studio is set up. It gave us a clear idea of the work capabilities and style of each one.

The second Industry Day was devoted to Young Professionals. Industry films are not made alone. When the film credits roll what does each person do exactly? What jobs are available in the industry after graduation? Professionals with different skills talked about their career paths and what their role is in the production of a film.

The newest graduates from The Netherlands film schools had a chance to be introduced to the audience and show their graduation film or showreel. This was followed by the opportunity to have one on one meetings with industry professionals.

This year Belgian animator Britt Raes (Childs Play, Catherine) was a member of the jury. She loves to draw animal role reversals where the owner becomes the animal's pet. People were invited to send in a video of them with their pets along with a story about the four-

legged members of their family. Four were chosen to appear live via zoom to tell the story while Britt drew them. Miss Coco Chanel (Nancy's dog), Nik and I were selected and the lovely drawing of the three of us a perfect reminder of an extremely special edition of Kaboom. You can check out Britt's flipped portraits on her Instagram site @We\_are\_petlovers

There were so many excellent programs that it was impossible to watch everything. The technicians did a beautiful job and from this side of the zoom screen, everything looked good. No matter what, we all know that nothing compares to being at a festival live, but Kaboom came as close as possible with its online interactive events and excellent programs.

I want to thank the festival's Artistic Director Aneta Ozorek for creating The Nancy Award and Maarten van Gageldonk, Head Programmer, for answering all of my questions so promptly. The exact date for the 2022 edition has not been set yet but it will be sometime in the Spring. You can find out more about this year's festival and keep up to date with what is happening at Kaboom on the website:

**[kaboomfestival.nl](http://kaboomfestival.nl)**



## 9th CEE ANIMATION FORUM ONLINE

April 26 – 29 and May 4-6, 2021

By Nancy Denney-Phelps

The CEE (Central and Eastern European) Animation Forum is an event designed to support professional animators with an emphasis on those in Central and Eastern Europe. This year the online event was spread over two weeks. April 26 – 29 was devoted to the pitching competition while the industry events were on May 4 – 6.

Pitching forums are an important way for animators to help fund their films, find co-producers and services that they need, and a chance to network. CEE is a leading regional pitching, financing, and co-production event aiming at boosting the selected project's potential,

visibility, and giving them access to a wider European market. The pitched projects competed for various prizes in the total amount of 15,000 Euros in cash and free scholarships or direct access to prestigious European events such as Cartoon Forum, Cartoon Movie, Cartoon Springboard, Cartoon 360 and/or animation production days. To allow filmmakers to move forward with their projects as well as to enhance their artistic skills, two scholarships to CEE Animation Workshop or Animation Sans Frontieres training programs were also awarded, along with a direct invitation to the residency at Ciclic Animation-Val de Loire.

Animond Investment Fund for the Development and Production of Animation awarded 2,000 Euros for one selected project along with an offer for that project to be added to the Animond Investment Portfolio. Both ANIMARKT and Kids Kino Industry offered full accreditation to selected projects. So, there was a lot to pitch for.

40 projects selected from the 116 submitted were chosen to pitch their films which were in various stages of development. Each pitching team received coaching sessions to help develop cohesive presentations. The coaching began in March with an initial introductory session given by Bonnie Williams, a professional pitching and public speaking coach. Next, each team received two one on one direct online consultations with Williams, Matthieu Darras or Katrin Nandelstadt.

The 5 categories included seven feature films, eleven short films, nine series and television specials, three XR immersive media projects, and ten films in the Rising Star category. New this year at CEE, the Rising Star category is for student projects. It is aimed at increasing the quality of university projects through the challenge of preparing a pitch and experiencing a real market situation. Along with the opportunity to see work by talented young animators, CEE hopes to initiate dialogue between schools with their new category.



Desire to Win

The Rising Star award went to Michaela Rezova, a student at the Academy of Art, Architecture, and Design in Prague, Czech Republic. Her animated documentary, *Desire to Win*, is a stop motion animation of sports sculptures by Czech artist Zdenek Nemecek. Seen as

silent witnesses of the previous regime, Michaela plans to bring the artworks to life to tell the story of the now-forgotten sculptor and the difficult period of the previous regime. She plans to use interviews with members of Nemecek's family, athletes of that period, and art theorists in her film.

*Desire to Win* also received an ANIMARKT Award which means I will have an opportunity to talk to Micheala in-depth about her film since I am the pitching coach in Lodz, Poland.



In the Rising Star competition, I was also impressed by *Holes*, an autobiographical film by Sofiya Kruglikova. It is about loneliness and the holes it leaves in you. At the age of seventeen Sofiya left her native Russia and moved to Slovenia. Seventeen is a difficult age to leave all of your friends and everything familiar to you behind. She addressed sadness and loneliness in a beautiful hand-drawn style. She is an exceptionally good illustrator and from what I saw of her pitch her visuals convey a cold loneliness. In her director's statement, she wrote "loneliness is probably an illness of the twenty-first century. Nowadays people of my age are thinking more and more about inner harmony and sense of life."

Sofiya graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana in 2017 with a degree in visual communication. She is currently working on *Holes* as her Master's Thesis.

In the short film category, two projects caught my eye. *Hello Summer* is an eight-minute artistic film for children by Martin Smatana, creator of the multi-award-winning film *The Kite*. Aimed at five -to-eight-year olds and their families, the film will be stop motion with no dialogue.



*Hello Summer* will be based on childhood memories of summer vacations Martin went on with his parents and brother. Before the holiday, they all were full of expectations and always imagined they would have the best time ever. As soon as they arrived at their destination everybody began arguing about what they should do first. They each went their own way but quite quickly they missed each other and met up again to find something to do that they could all agree on.

The story is very sweet and the animation style of French Riviera Retro fits the story perfectly. Martin believes that children can understand serious situations if they are presented properly. His previous film, *The Kite*, about his grandfather's death, was very well received by young children.



In a totally different vein, Dutch director Thijs Koole is a type 1 diabetic. His project *Sugar, Blood, Insulin-Diary of a Type 1 Diabetic* looks like it will be a very honest film about the emotional experience of living with a potentially deadly disease. He plans an introspective journey through his life from age eighteen when his pancreas gave out, to age thirty-two. Even though the affliction comes with a myriad of challenges Thijs says it is "not all gloom and as with all challenges in life they can teach you a great deal about yourself . . . and others".

The 2D hand-drawn film will feature black and white backgrounds with color used only for the main characters. *Sugar, Blood, Insulin-Diary of a Type 1 Diabetic* sounds like a film that any family with a diabetic member or friend should watch.

When projects pitched in the series and television specials category come to fruition there will be some interesting shows on the small screen. *Starting with Hope* pitched by French animator Sonia Velvien is planned as a thirteen-episode series about depression. Based on personal stories about real people who fought against depression and won, each episode will start with the person's life before depression. It will then take the viewer through the battle to conquer this terrible debilitating disease until he/she is finally able to conquer it.

In the feature film category, one project that fascinated me was *Vast Blue Antarctica*. The feature film, presented by Director Christos Panagos and

Producer Charalambos Mardaritis, will be produced in Cyprus. The animated documentary will focus on Alexander Gautier, a French woodworker who works in the maintenance service for the infrastructure of the French scientific mission in Antarctica. Christos first met Alexander in Cyprus a few months before his initial trip to Antarctica, the only continent with no permanent human habitation or native population. They met again about a month before Alexander's second trip when he was eager and impatient to return to the cold place as soon as possible and stay as long as he was physically able.

The film will follow Alexander's train of thought and reflections about running away into the unknown, the vast whiteness of the continent, and his experiences as a worker there. It will also delve into his concept of home, the feeling of being in exile, isolation, loneliness, death, which is always present there, and the purpose of life.

At CEE *Vast Blue Antarctica* received the audience award. Of the more than one thousand online votes cast the project received two hundred nineteen votes, with the highest voting ratio surpassing 4.2 out of a possible 5. The Audience Award is €1000. I am happy to know that there are many more people than just me that want to see the project completed.

The film was also awarded direct access to Cartoon Movie. Created in 1999, Cartoon Movie is a pitching event held yearly in France for feature films.



In the series and television specials category, another project Cyprus won was *The Olive Branch* directed by Magnus Kravik and produced by Maria Pavlou is a 2D animated series about the adventures of three friends growing up on the beautiful Mediterranean island of Cyprus. Amira, Stephano, and Yani enjoy growing up in rural Cyprus. Aimed at the six to eleven-year-old age group the series will incorporate folktales, comedy and mystery. Each of the twenty-six episodes aims to give the young friends the ability to strengthen their friendship while slowly growing into their personalities. *The Olive Branch* was also selected for the Kids Kino Industry Award.

Established in 2017, Kids Kino Industry, the industry arm of the Kids Kino International Film Festival in Poland, is an international pitching forum for films and series aimed at the children's market.

I was not aware of the beautiful tapestries woven by Frida Hansen until I listened to Hilde Kristen Kios' pitch for her VR project *Finding Frida*. Hansen (1855 – 1931) was a pioneer in the development of Norwegian textile art. Primarily working in the Art Nouveau style, in 1900 she exhibited her tapestry titled *Milky Way* at the World's Fair in Paris where it won a Gold Medal. Frida created large tapestries with literary and floral motifs.

She was a pioneer at a time when the woman's rights movement in Europe was gaining momentum. In 1893 she wove a large-scale tapestry titled *Dandelion* which was commissioned by the Norwegian Association for Women's Rights for the Chicago World's Fair. The symbolic motif depicts a woman in the middle surrounded by women bearing dandelions in bud, bloom, and seed. The tapestry became an important work of art for the early women's movement and an expression of Norwegian women's struggle against oppression.

In awarding the VR Award to Hilde Kristen Kios the jury stated "Considerable thought has been given to the role of the audience in the story and to incorporating meaningful interactivity to add to the magic. Taking the aesthetic lead from Frida's tapestries will allow people to dive deep inside her art and mind"; I agree with them and am looking forward to the finished project which I think will be a work of art itself.

I find her work as fascinating as it is beautiful. If you are not familiar with "the other Frida" do check out Frida Hansen's tapestries.

The jury award-winning projects along with the Audience Award-winning project will be presented at a special CEE animation pitching presentation which will be part of the official MIFA 2021 program.

Although the online version of CEE limited personal connections, the organizers met their goal of creating a space for networking and exchanging information. Following the pitching sessions on all three days, CEE attendees could take advantage of the online one-on-one meetings. You could book a 20-minute meeting with as many registered participants as you like. This offered an excellent opportunity to find co-producers, world sales agents, broadcasters, streaming platforms, distributors, representatives of public funds, and financiers by presenting a project personally.

Unfortunately, I was not able to watch as much of the three Industrial Days as I would have liked. I did watch the first day's presentation given by Maria Silvia Gatta, Policy Officer in the EU Commission. She talked about the new programming scheme for the MEDIA sub-program Creative Europe. MEDIA provides funding for the development, promotion, and distribution of

European film and animation worldwide. A separate panel discussion then focused on regional funding possibilities for animated projects.



The most exciting event of Industry Days for me was the presentation of the long-awaited feature film *Even Mice Belong in Heaven*. The 87-minute film is based on the book by the award-winning Czech author Iva Prochazkova. The story revolves around two mortal enemies, a little mouse and a fox, who after an unfortunate accident meet in animal heaven and become best friends. The puppet animation film directed by Denisa Grimmova and Jan Bubenicek is a Czech, French, Polish, and Slovakian co-production. The film is slated for an Autumn/Winter 2021 release.

A perfect example of the importance and benefits of participating in CEE is the feature film project *Of Unwanted Things and People*. The project was initiated by three producers from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Slovenia who became friends over several years of meeting annually at CEE. They were later joined by a French producer. Their idea is to make a puppet stop motion film in the best tradition of Central European animation. The result is *Of Unwanted People and Things* which is currently in production with an estimated release date of 2023.

Based on a book of short stories by the Czech writer Arnost Goldflam, the film is divided into four interconnected stories. Each segment is directed by a different person from the four coproducing countries.

The story is about an older man who finds a discarded hat where fantastic monsters used to live, two orphans and their strange aunt who turns into a cat when no one is looking at her. There is also a lonely man who knows how to fly and he becomes King of the Birds.

I first became aware of the project when it was initially pitched at CEE a few years ago. I was impressed with the images they showed us and the story as they pitched it. I was happy to see their presentation during this year's Industry Days and to learn that the estimated release date is 2023. I am looking forward to watching what I think will be a beautiful film.

The final event of Industry Days was the awards ceremony.

CEE Animation is supported by the Creative Europe – MEDIA Program of the European Union and co-funded by state funds and foundations and professional organizations from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

I want to thank Marta Jallageas, CEE Animation Public Relations Manager, for inviting me to attend the Forum again this year and hope that next year we will all be able to be there in person.

You can learn more about CEE at: [Ceeanimation.eu/forum/2021-cee-animation-forum](http://Ceeanimation.eu/forum/2021-cee-animation-forum)



### **BILL PLYMPTON IS WORKING ON A COVID 19 FILM THAT IS SEEKING SUPPORT USING KICKSTARTER**

The story follows Demi, a Latina in NYC whose nightmares foreshadow an unprecedented storm, transforming her city and her life. The film is about the anxiety and panic we're all collectively experiencing during the Covid-19 pandemic, highlighting the mental health crisis that has hit the country (and the world) like a tsunami.

<https://scribblejunkies.blogspot.com/> and

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/deminyc/demis-panic>

### **LAST MINUTE NEWS – MARTHA GORZYCKI'S 'VOICES FROM KAW THOO LEI' IS PART OF THE BURMA SPRING BENEFIT FILM FESTIVAL**

A large Bay Area group has organized an online festival to raise money and awareness of the bleak situation happening in Burma. They will present a major benefit June 4 – 14 featuring over a dozen speaking events (live daily, then available as videos) as well as over 30 films (shorts, features). For details visit:

[www.burmaspringbenefitfilmfestival.org](http://www.burmaspringbenefitfilmfestival.org)



# GLAS GRANT

JUNE 1 - AUGUST 1 2021

The GLAS Animation Grant program was designed to support artists and filmmakers making bold, groundbreaking, independent work. In the last three years, we have been able to give out six grants directly to filmmakers towards the development and production of their original short films.

We are pleased to announce some exciting new changes to this program thanks to the generous support of an anonymous donor, GKIDS, and Wacom.

We are delighted not only to increase the number of grants available in this cycle, but also to increase the value of each to create a more substantial impact. Our biggest thanks and acknowledgment go out to GKIDS, Wacom, and the anonymous donor for making this program possible, they have truly built the foundation that directly benefits the artists working in this community.

For the 2021 GLAS Animation Grant Cycle, we will have two grants in the amount of \$3000 each, and a new grant in the amount of \$6000 to support the creation of independent short films. All three recipients will also receive a tablet courtesy of Wacom.

The GLAS Animation Grants are to be awarded to individual filmmakers living and working in the United States. They are not currently available to students or for commercial projects (including music videos, tv show pitches or web series)

Visit our website to find more information regarding deadlines, criteria, application details, instructions, and FAQs:

<http://www.glasanimation.com/grant>

## **ASIFA-SF IS A VOLUNTEER RUN ASSOCIATION**

*Newsletter Editor:* **Karl Cohen**

*Contributors include* **Nancy Denney-Phelps**

*Proofreaders* **Pete Davis** and **David Gladstein**

*Mailing Crew:* **Denise McEvoy, Shirley Smith**

Special thanks to **Marty McNamara** for his article on festivals that Eihway will send soon., **Nancy Denney-Phelps** for representing our chapter on the international ASIFA board and her monthly contributions to the newsletter, to **Emily Berk** our webmaster, and to **Eihway Su** who keeps our mailing 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. Let's hope it is a limited time offer. We want to hold in-person events again.**

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