

Oct. 2022

**THE ANIMATION SHOW OF SHOW  
IS COMING IN NOVEMBER  
7 PAGES OF DETAILS  
AT END OF THIS ISSUE**



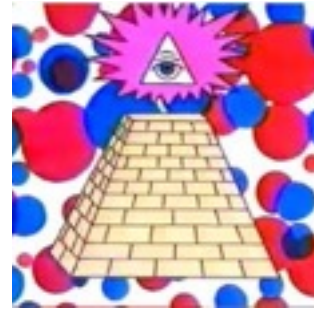
*Quasi at the Quackadero*

**MOTION PICTURE ACADEMY OF ARTS  
AND SCIENCE TO HONOR SALLY  
CRUIKSHANK AND VINCE COLLINS OCT.  
24** The program is called **Sally Cruikshank &  
Vince Collins: Cartoons for Convoluted  
Craniums! With Sally Cruikshank in person,**  
Mon, Oct. 24, 2022, 8pm.

Sally Cruikshank and Vince Collins both studied animation at the San Francisco Art Institute in the early 1970s and were two of the most brilliantly creative talents of the new wave of experimental animators then emerging. “Both were influenced by classic cartoons and underground comics, and their respective approaches in boldly colorful cel animation reflected an appropriately surreal and anarchic response to an America still deeply embroiled in the Vietnam War, in a post-psychedelic era marked by massive upheaval and unrest. Cel animation had long been the standard medium of the industry, but few American experimental animators engaged with it as deeply and creatively as Cruikshank and Collins. Its historical identity and aesthetic properties represent a unique visual language offering vibrant approaches to movement, color, layering, and form, and these two artists explored its qualities in radical and innovative ways.”

“Vince Collins won a Student Academy Award for his 1974 film *Euphoria* and continued to produce a hyper-distinctive body of short animation work into the 1980s that combined vividly colorful, mind-melting abstractions with weird and

unpredictable transformations. Employing a visual vocabulary of often eccentric grotesquerie in constant flux, Collins gained perhaps his widest



notoriety for the singularly creative and provocative cult short *Malice in Wonderland* (1982), made in collaboration with his wife, the artist Miwako Collins. The Academy Film Archive has been restoring Collins’s complete body of short films since 2019, and this program will represent the world premiere of these new restorations, featuring films not previously distributed or seen for decades.”

“Cruikshank’s classic *Quasi at the Quackadero* (1975) is one of the most widely circulated independent animated shorts in the history of the medium, earning it a well-deserved spot on the National Film Registry. Tapping into some of the same uneasy and hysterical energy that Collins also mined, Cruikshank’s films often explore a fascination with the mayhem and imagination of classic studio animation from the early 1930s, transporting that energy to a contemporary context in which the surrealism and character tropes take on a complex significance and satirical humor. What better way to respond to a world gone mad than with something even madder? Cruikshank’s films reside at the Academy Film Archive. The program features beautiful film prints donated to the Archive by Cruikshank and her husband, Jon Davison.”

All films courtesy of the Academy Film Archive with immense thanks to Vince Collins, Sally Cruikshank, and Jon Davison. Thanks to the National Archives and Records Administration for their assistance in the restoration of **200**.

Programmed and note by Academy Film Archive Senior Film Preservationist Mark Toscano. Vince Collins’ *Ingemination*, 1972; *Gilgamish*, 1973; *Random Artifacts* 1974; *Euphoria*, 1974;

*Fantasy* 1976; *200, Sketches*, 1977; *Malice in Wonderland*, 1982, *Life Is Flashing Before Your Eyes*, 1984.

Sally Cruikshank, *Ducky*, 1971; *Fun on Mars*, 1971; *Chow Fun!* 1972; *Quasi at the Quackadero*, 1975; *Make Me Psychic*, 1978; *Quasi's Cabaret Trailer*, 1981; and *Face Like a Frog*, 1987. Total program runtime: 69.5 min.

**LOTS OF ANIMATION IS INCLUDED IN THE 45<sup>TH</sup> MILL VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL** The Festival runs October 6-16, 2022 and can be seen both online and in person. Program guide is at <https://www.mvff.com/mvff45-program-guide/>



*My Name is Fear*, “an adorably animated short teaches us about an emotion that can often be hard to comprehend, but nevertheless plays an integral part in our psychological development.” It is in the program *Animation for All*

**SHORTS PROGRAM: ANIMATION FOR ALL** is a 70 minute program that plays **Oct. 15 at 11 AM** in the Sequoia 1 theatre and online on **Oct. 5, 11PM.**

It is a family show (Ages 5 and up) of films for audiences of every age to enjoy. Funny characters and curious kids mingle with gentle lessons about kindness to animals, why not to be afraid of being afraid, how dandelions are born, and other lessons: *Kayak* (Solène Bosseboeuf, Flore Dechorgnat, Tiphaine Klein, Auguste Lefort & Antoine Rossi, France 2021, 6 min), *Andy A Dog's Tale* (James Wheless, US 2021, 8 min), *Bench* (Rich Webber, UK 2020, 2 min), *Kiko and the Animals* (Yawen Zheng, France/Switzerland 2020, 7 min), *My Name Is Fear* (Eliza Płoceniak-Alvarez, Germany 2021, 5 min), *The Most Boring Granny in the Whole World* (Damaris Zielke, Germany 2022, 7 min), *Patouille and the Parachute Seeds* (Inès Bernard-Espina, Mélody Boulissière & Clémentine Campos, France 2021, 6

min), *Salt* (Alicia Scott Nichols, US 2020, 6 min), *Winter Sleep* (Katerina Karhankova & Alexandra Majova, Czech Republic 2020, 7 min), *Wolf and Cub* (Marvin Bynoe, US 2021, 8 min), *Step by Step* (Fanny Paoli, Anabelle David, Emma Gach, Claire Robert, Julie Valentin & Thēodore Janvier, France 2021, 7 min). The films are in English or are nonverbal.

*Andy a Dogs Tale* was created in the Bay Area. It is a wonderful feel-good, uplifting tale of a puppy who overcomes a series of obstacles to find his purpose in life. Director Jamy Wheless is head of IGNITE Animation Studios in Petaluma.



*Andy a Dogs Tale*

The film's Executive Producer is Jean Schulz, Charles Schulz's widow and President of the BOD at the Charles Schulz Museum. The film is in the *Animation is for All* program.

Jamy Wheless had previously produced and directed the charming animated short *The Pig on the Hill*, 2018, based on the 2013 children's book by the English author John Kelly. The film was narrated by Pierce Brosnan and featured a score by Oscar-nominated composer songwriter Matthew Wilder. Jamy is a former ILM special effects artist who worked on the *Star Wars* prequels and *Pirates of the Caribbean*. The following address includes a back story about *Andy a Dogs Tale* and a copy of his delightful short *The Pig on the Hill*.

<https://www.petaluma360.com/article/entertainment/new-film-filled-with-puppy-love-and-a-message/>

**OTHER ANIMATED SHORTS BEING SHOWN** There are 14 additional animated shorts at the festival. *No Time* by Miriam Hitchcock who lives in Santa Cruz has a mesmerizing cello soundtrack that enlivens a series of animated images that address climate change and the political climate.

*Of Wood* by Owen Klatter is a brilliant and innovative experimental stop-motion film made

with an original technique of progressively carving images into a large round of wood. It is enhanced with wooden objects coming out of the wood. Owen has a long list of credits that include working on *Nightmare before Christmas*, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1*, Disney's *Dinosaur*, *Anomalisa*, and *James and the Giant Peach*.

The other films are *Bench* by Rich Webber, *How I got my Wrinkles* by Claude Delafosse, *Midnight Smoker* by Jeremy Gautama, *My Name is Maalum* by Luísa Copetti, *Oink* by Mascha Halberstad, *The Past* by Hamid Mohammadi, *The Pioneers* by Simon Cottee, *Schattendachs* by Louis Hartmann, *Silver* by Haley Stemmons, *Stache Society* by Olive Corine Read, *A Steller Vacation!* by Noah Shin, and *The White Rose* by Ian Kim.



**ANIMATED FEATURE**  
**HOME IS SOMEWHERE ELSE**

BAY AREA PREMIERE

**Directors: Carlos Hagerman, Jorge Villalobos**  
 Mexico/US 2022, 87 mins,

Set against the perennial immigration debate in the United States, this animated documentary goes beyond rhetoric to give voice to those who've experienced the inhumane consequences of official policy. Each of three stories is presented in its own imaginative visual style: The crayon-scribbled world of a child conveys the tale of an 11-year-old US citizen whose undocumented father is detained; a painterly watercolor canvas illuminates the situation of two teenaged sisters living on opposite sides of the US/Mexico border; and the plight of a slam poet-activist raised in small-town Utah and

deported to a country he never knew is rendered in bold colors as his words unify all three vignettes. The exquisite artistry of the differing styles serves each storyteller well, adding layers of nuance and restoring humanity to headlines. At times fanciful, as when a cut watermelon transforms into a swimming pool of pink water, this dazzling work is always heartfelt. *In English and Spanish with English subtitles.*

Premiere Oct. 9 at 7PM. Lark Theatre in Larkspur. October 14 at 12PM, Sequoia 1 in Mill Valley, online Oct. 5 at 11 PM. Trailer and review at <https://www.cartoonbrew.com/feature-film/home-is-somewhere-else-quantum-cowboys-218080.html>

**STEVE SEGAL'S 'MISFIT' IS SCREENING IN ALBANY OCT. 11**

*Misfit* will screen at the Albany Twin Theatre on Solano Avenue in Albany on Tuesday, October 11 at the 7 and 9:30 shows.



**WELCOME BACK HENRY SELICK. HOPEFULLY HIS NEW FEATURE 'WENDELL & WILD' WILL BE ANOTHER MASTERPIECE**

Thirteen years ago his brilliant *Coraline* was released and long before that *The Nightmare Before Christmas* came out. Now, at long last his *Wendell & Wild* has premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival on Sept.11. It will debut in theaters on October 21 and on Netflix October 28.

The film has been described as a work from the “delightfully wicked minds” of Henry Selick and producer Jordan Peele. It is, an animated tale about scheming demon brothers Wendell (Keegan-Michael Key) and Wild (Peele), who enlist the aid of 13-year-old Kat Elliot, a tough teen who is burdened with guilt, to summon them to the Land of the Living. But what Kat demands in return leads to a brilliantly bizarre and comedic adventure like no other, an animated fantasy that defies the law of

life and death, all told through the handmade artistry of stop motion. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KNUZsLfAMqk>

**‘WENDELL & WILD’ IS “A PLAYFULLY DEVIIOUS ANIMATED ROMP FROM JORDAN PEELE AND HENRY SELICK”**

A critic from the *Hollywood Reporter*, who saw Selick’s new film in Toronto was inspired to write, “He returns with a fresh, highly original concoction of playful Grand Guignol proportions” and that his collaboration with Jordan Peele complements Selick’s nightmarish world of demon siblings, reanimated cadavers and penguin nuns, with a touch of “subversive punk rock sensibility.” As for the audience, they greeted it “with a roar of approval.”

The reviewer also called it “diabolically entertaining,” and “the gorgeously intricate, wondrous stop-motion landscape is ultimately pure Selick, imbued with a fitting color scheme of swirling, eerily glowing greens and purples choreographed against a mischievous score by Bruno Coulais that effectively sets the mood for the film’s pre-Halloween arrival. It is rated PG-13, and it runs 1 hour 45 min.



**PIXAR ARTISTS SEEM TO HAVE HAD A LOT OF FUN CREATING ‘CARS ON THE ROAD’ FOR DISNEY+** They turned John Lasseter’s *Cars* sequel into a silly road move with one stop taking them to a dinosaur park in Utah. *Cars on the Road* is series of nine road trips (episodes) that has Mater and Lightning McQueen going to the wedding of Mater’s sitter. Another stop where the animators must have had fun was a visit to a haunted hotel. It is a combination of the Overlook Hotel from *The Shining* and Disneyland’s Haunted Mansion. Another stop is a visit to a movie set where a sci-fi parody, *Attack of the Space Zombies from Planet*

*B*, is being filmed. See a slightly insane trailer for *Cars on the Road* is at:

[https://www.reddit.com/r/Pixar/comments/wdl69z/cars\\_on\\_the\\_road\\_official\\_trailer\\_disney/](https://www.reddit.com/r/Pixar/comments/wdl69z/cars_on_the_road_official_trailer_disney/)



*Unofficial Reality*

**VINCE COLLINS HAS JUST FINISHED ‘CLICKBAIT CONTENT FACTORY’** His mind is successfully working overtime creating impossible art. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VYpcKAFcZc>

Discovered several rarely seen older works including *Animation School Reunion* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbYWG5967Ps>

For an innocent film try *Fun with Computers* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ocgp5TasjEY> And for totally logical art there is *Unofficial Reality* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzCEFB-akQ4>



**A PRIVATE COLLECTION OF TV ANIMATION ART IS BEING SOLD** From the fall of 2016 until the spring of 2017, the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, Mass., hosted the exhibition “Hanna-Barbera: The Architects of Saturday Morning.” It belonged to Mike Fazio, who ran a gallery selling animation art. He is also the author of the book *The Flintstones: A Modern Stone Age Phenomenon*. The show included original animation art, sketches and model sheets

from *The Flintstones*, which, on Sept. 30, 1960, became primetime television's first animated series. It was the only successful primetime animated show until *The Simpsons* debuted 30 years later.

Ten of Fazio's works that were displayed by the Rockwell Museum were auctioned off Sept. 23 -26 at Heritage Auctions in Texas. Thirty other pieces will be auctioned off at a later date. The recent auction also included Ed Benedict's early renderings of a thin Fred Flintstone, Wilma Flintstone looking blonder and a younger Betty Rubble with a different hairstyle. Benedict's early pencil sketch of the Flintstones' "split-level cave" was sold. Another unusual item auctioned off that was quite daring for its time was showing Wilma pregnant (third season).

Fazio said, "I always thought I would keep my Flintstones collection, but now I'm retired. It's time for others to enjoy it."

**'CHAINSAW MAN' IS FOR PEOPLE WHO DIG ANIMATED AMIME VIOLENCE.** Viz Media distributes the manga in English, and all eleven volumes of part one are out now. The trailer will appeal to fans of cartoon mayhem. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20Si967iTdk>



**DAN McHALE'S LATEST SHORT WILL BE SHOWN LOCALLY BY SF SHORTS AND AT THE DAVIS FILM FESTIVAL** *Tangent 61* is a handsome abstract short that will be shown by SF Shorts in early Oct, and by the Davis Film Festival in November. *Tangent 61* is about a dot that becomes a line that turns into...a triangle! What other eternal shapes may emerge as we travel through zones of color? It Features a richly layered soundtrack by Berlin based composer Christof Vonderau. <http://sfshorts.com>

Dan was inspired by Swedish artist and mystic Wilma Af Klint and German abstract

animation pioneer Oskar Fischinger. Rule #1, in his productions, no representations!

**SF Shorts is also showing:**

***Black Slide*** by Uri Lotan, Israel. Eviah, a timid boy on the brink of puberty, sneaks into the Black Slide, the most terrifying ride at the water park. It will teach him some lessons.

***How To Lose Weight and Look Great*** by Nolan Wang. An autobiographical animation about being diagnosed with life-threatening brain cancer, while navigating awkward interactions with others.

***Parallax*** by Hayato Nove, Japan. Hand-drawn cell animation exploring the differences in parallel perceptions.

***The Many Benefits of Heartbreak*** by Luke Schroeder. A collaged animation, collecting memoirs, recordings, and music, following the death of the filmmaker's mother in 2021.

***There's a Bison on The Prairie*** by Morgan Miller. A satirical animation that chronicles evolution and the development of the carnivore.

The SF Shorts screening begin October 7<sup>TH</sup>/

<http://sfshorts.com/>

**WHAT IS ANNECY LIKE?** From reading Nancy's articles over the years I imagined a quaint small picturesque historic town. When I came across a video of a person's first impressions of the famous animation festival, I was fascinated that it was almost totally different from what I expected to see. . <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87ND44b4qy4>



**13<sup>th</sup> GOLDEN KUCER INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FESTIVAL**  
**25 – 29 May 2022 Sofia, Bulgaria**  
**By Nancy Denney-Phelps**

The Golden Kucer International Animation Festival celebrated its 13<sup>th</sup> edition with workshops and a bevy of films. This year's special guest was noted Argentina animator, Juan Pablo Zaramella from Argentina. His 2007 short film *Lapsus* is one of my all-time favorite films.

*Luminaris* (2011), which uses pixilation to blend live actors with animated objects, has won 324 international awards including the Audience Award and Fipresci Film Critics Award at Annecy. The film holds the Guinness World Record as the most awarded short film in history.

I had the honor to be on the jury with Juan Pablo and animator Dalibor Rajninger After from Sofia. We awarded the Grand Prix to German director Thomas Stellmach for his film *The Sausage Run*.



**Thomas Stellmach with a zoetrope strip from *The Sausage Run***

This clever film tells the tragic story of a little lamb with the help of multiple zoetropes. Stellmach has come up with a novel way to tell his story using this 19<sup>th</sup> Century invention. The entire 10-minute film takes place using zoetropes to magically display his sequences of drawn images as simple, repetitive movements of one second each.

In 2016 Stellmach, along with his former teacher, the renowned Dutch animator, director, and writer Paul Driessen, developed a story which could be told using zoetropes. Adapting *Little Red Riding Hood* seemed perfect because Thomas and Paul could play with various animation cycles, like walking through the woods, looking out a window, or saying goodbye, etc.

Talking about the story, the director said “Doing things again and again defines the storyline in *The Sausage Run*. It poses the critical question, how much of our unconscious habits and common expectations determine our life”.



**The Sausage Run**

About developing the idea of telling a story with a zoetrope Thomas said, “Since my *Spinning Animation Workshops* I’m fascinated by the hypnotic impact of zoetropes. I developed a performance, which presents the workshop results in an audio-visual live show on 8 zoetrope-like optical devices, which I call *The Spinning Animation Show*.”



**Sausage Run Zoetropes**

It is loosely based on the Grimm’s fairy tale *Little Red Riding Hood*, but Stellmach has reversed the roles of the humans and animals. Her mother is a sheep, grandfather is a ram, and Little Red Riding Hood is a lamb. The forester and his wife are dogs who love sausage and the wolf has become the butcher who has a serious problem. He has run out of meat.



In awarding the Grand Prix the jury said “*The Sausage Run* absolutely deserves the award (and

many more!). It was a very easy decision for all the members of the jury, we love the film. It's fresh, smart, and connects with the soul of the origin of animation art". The film's trailer shows the zoetrope technique at work.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2\\_Px-Sggq\\_Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_Px-Sggq_Y)

The other top award at the festival is the Proiko Proikov. It is named for the famous Bulgarian artist, animator and director of such films as the 1984 *Sing Cowboys*. In the eight-minute film Proikov turns the classic Western television show on its head. The boy watching television enters into the screen and becomes part of the action. The film features the song *The Devil Went Down to Georgia* by Charlie Daniels.



*Shell in Love.*

As an educator Proiko is credited with introducing a multitude of young artists to the art of animation. To pay homage and to remember this great Bulgarian animator, The Golden Kucer Festival awards the Proiko Proikov Award to Svilen Dimitrov for *Shell in Love*. It is the story of a timid snail, scarred by a childhood trauma, who spends his time hiding away in his shell where he has created an imaginary version of the outside world. After a chance encounter with love, he is forced to face his fears and discover the wonders of the real world. The sixteen minute film combines 2D and 3D animation with a lovely score by Petko Manchev. See a trailer and film clip at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YiWuOlmTuqc> and the clip is at <https://player.vimeo.com/video/595218686>

The festival places an emphasis on workshops for children and university students. Juan Pablo Zaramella presented a Masterclass at the New Bulgarian University. This was not a one-hour lecture, but an entire afternoon of a hands-on workshop.

After a brief introduction by Juan Pablo, the students divided up into groups of 4 or 5. They

then devised their very short stop motion script, split up the duties, and selected props from the large array of items available. The room was a beehive of activity.



**Juan Pablo Zaramella shooting his film about shoes**

While the students were hard at work, Juan Pablo made his own very clever film involving shoes. The afternoon ended with a screening of all of the films. Obviously, the students listened to what Juan Pablo had to say because there were some excellent pieces of work.

For the children, Sophia animator and book illustrator Bogomila Todorova taught the art of bringing characters from the Bulgarian children's book *Molivia* to life. First, she showed the class how to make characters from the book in plasticine and/or cuts outs. Then they animated their characters. At the end of the workshop they made their characters talk. Throughout the workshop Vanaya Taya, author of *Molivia*, read from the book with and to the children.

Elena Shagay and her two young daughters Masha and Dasha, from the Ukraine, gave a delightful and delicious workshop. Young people decorated various shaped gingerbread cookies and then used them as characters in their stop-motion films. Of course, after finishing shooting, many of the delicious stars of the film were eaten.



*Lets Meet Yesterday*

The festival screenings along with opening and closing nights were held at the National Academy of Theatre and Film Arts. At the opening night party, I was pleased to meet Iva Tokmakchieva. In 2020 Iva won the ASIFA 'Association Internationale du Film d'Animation' competition for the Best Student Film for her film *Lets Meet Yesterday*. It was her graduation film from The New Bulgarian University. Iva is working on a new film, *Balconada*, which was selected for the CEE Animation Workshop which helped her prepare for the 2021 MIFA Pitches. The film is being produced by Vessela Dantcheva at the Compote Collective. Part of the ASIFA prize money was used for her trip to Annecy. See *Lets Meet Yesterday* at <https://vimeo.com/433150619>

The 2022 edition of the festival screened 120 films from 98 countries. The festival takes its name from Koukeri dancers, one of the symbols of Bulgaria. The ritual dates to the pagan past. Koukeri dancers were believed to chase away evil spirits and bring health and wealth.

The ritual varies from one part of Bulgaria to another, but one thing never changes - only young single men participate. The one exception is the leader of the group. He is a married man. Usually, he is the wealthiest man in the village or the father of twins.

The dancers dress in furry coats and belts with bells hanging from them. They wear masks or paint their faces. The Koukeri dance on New Year's Eve. It is interesting to note that Italy and Spain have similar traditions.

The festival was held in Sofia, a lovely city. The people are lovely and gracious and if you take a trip to the coast, the Black Sea is a wonderful place to relax.

The Golden Kuker Animation Festival, 2003, will take place May 25 to 29. Details in Cyrillic at: [www.Animationfest-bg.eu](http://www.Animationfest-bg.eu)



### **FLEETS OF COMPUTER CONTROLLED DRONES ARE LIGHTING UP EVENING SKIES WITH A NEW KIND OF ANIMATION**

**BY KC** In 2012 at Ars Electronica Futurelab, Europe's major emerging computer technology show, the world was introduced to the first drone light show. The world-premiere used 49 small drones known as quadcopters to take off, fly in changing formations and land. Battery powered LED lights that could be turned on and off and blinked were attached to each drone. See **49 quadcopters in outdoor-formation-flight, Ars Electronica Futurelab, Linz, Austria** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ShGI5rQK3ew>

The art of drone light shows emerged slowly at first with the shows being performed at special events including the premiere of the film *Star Trek into Darkness* next to Tower Bridge in London in 2013. In November 2015 at Ars Electronica Futurelab, the first Guinness World Record was established when Intel sponsored 100 drones flying at the same time. A small orchestra accompanied the event. **The Making of Drone 100** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTwX1Z68qMY>

By the late teens several drone companies had been created around the world and they were creating larger and more aesthetically pleasing performances. Today, shows of 100 to 500 drones are becoming common; however, there is a report of an event in China where over 5,000 drones were flown.

As this is being written the aesthetics of drone shows is advancing to the point that some people are speculating that the shows might replace 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks celebrations. Drones don't



pollute, are not noisy, and are just as exciting visually. Two spectacular videos are performances by the company Verge Aero from Philadelphia, PA. They won the 2022 top prize on America's Got Talent: Extreme.

[https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?f\\_r=y\\_h\\_s-trp-001&ei=UTF-8&hsimp=yhs-001&hspart=trp&p=verge+aero+drone+show&type=Y143\\_F163\\_201897\\_102620#id=3&vid=7dd7f5ad8a60164ff01fced669e81dc7&action=click](https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?f_r=y_h_s-trp-001&ei=UTF-8&hsimp=yhs-001&hspart=trp&p=verge+aero+drone+show&type=Y143_F163_201897_102620#id=3&vid=7dd7f5ad8a60164ff01fced669e81dc7&action=click)

Verge Aero presented an encore performance on America's Got Talent: Extreme **Bonus Performance: Verge Aero Delivers a Gorgeous Drone Show | AGT: Extreme 2022,** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X\\_jaWDs3PGg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_jaWDs3PGg)



**NEWS ABOUT WORK IN PROGRESS AT PIXAR** At D23, Disney's annual show for fans in Anaheim, the company announced two new Pixar productions to be released in 2024. There will be a sequel to *Inside Out*, and *Elio*, an alien movie. They didn't specify if these would be theatrical or streaming plays. *Inside Out* earned excellent reviews and \$857.6 million worldwide. In the sequel Riley will be a teenager and will have new emotions to deal with.

*Elio*, will focus on an 11-year-old who makes first contact with aliens. The project is headed by Mary Alice Drumm, who was a producer on *Coco*, and *Coco* screenwriter Adrian Molina. Yonas Kibreab will voice the title role, with America Ferrera voicing Elio's mother.

Pixar also showed footage from *Elemental* which will be released June 16, 2023. "It tells the love story of Ember (a fiery young woman) and Wade (a water guy) who can't touch each other and

must journey through a city where fire, water, land and air residents live together." (???) The film is being directed by Peter Sohn, who directed *The Good Dinosaur* (2015). He appeared onstage with producer Denise Ream to reveal the lead characters will be voiced by Leah Lewis and Mamoudou Athie.

The studio also announced that Will Forte will voice a softball Coach named Dan in their upcoming series *Win or Lose*, their first foray into longform TV storytelling.



### **WILLIAM KENTRIDGE RETROSPECTIVE HAS OPENED IN LONDON**

The show spans 45 years of his work. A recurring theme is the violence of apartheid, inequality and brutality of life. It shows up in his drawn images that merge into animations, filmed performance and sculpture. The retrospective show is at the Royal Academy and it runs from September 24 to December 11.

A review of the exhibit in the *Guardian* praised *Waiting for Sibyl* as his most exciting work in the exhibit. It was commissioned for Teatro dell'Opera in Rome in 2019.

"It is projected behind an almost bare stage, and we are at the entrance to the Underworld, where the anxious would leave questions, written on leaves, asking about their fate for the Sibyl to answer. She wrote her replies on leaves, but no one could tell to whom her answers were addressed."

"Kentridge's Sibyl mixes animation and filmed shadow-play, using drawing and actors projected life-size. Sculptures become turning silhouettes and silhouettes become drawings. Figures become trees and trees become birds. The transitions are ravishing. A lone dancer, frenetic and passionate, becomes a Goya drawing, a bird,

an electric fan. Trees dance on an enormously enlarged page alongside the Sibyl's often enigmatic answers. 'You will live longer than a horse but not nearly so long as a crow... Start dying, assiduously, wisely, optimistically. Waste no time.' Screens drop and rotate and fold into one another, and people move among scraps of windblown paper, as though in a gale. 'Starve the algorithm,' the papers say, and 'the execution site is never empty.' Beautiful voices rise and fall in music composed by Nhlanhla Mahlangu and Kyle Shepherd. Relentless, vertiginous and astonishing, I found myself unexpectedly moved among this play of illusions and shadows. Sibyl is Kentridge at his best.'

A 20 second TV promo for *Waiting for Sybil*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yLRA9G> <https://vimeo.com/357556673> pXRbw

See a 5 minute clip of a rehearsal at *Sibyl*,

*William Kentridge, Teaser*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-3FrPnBTcI>

See a video from it being presented in South Africa

<https://vimeo.com/357556673>



**YOU CAN SEE A LIVE PERFORMANCE OF 'WAITING FOR SIBYL'** If the show interests you it will have its US premiere at CAL Performances in Berkeley in the Zellerbach Hall, March 17 – 19, 2023.

The chamber opera *Waiting for the Sibyl* features nine vocalists and dancers interacting with Kentridge's distinctive stage design, which energizes the action of the performers with hand-painted sets, animated ink drawings, swirling projected text, collage, and shadow play. The music is composed by Nhlanhla Mahlangu and Kyle Shepherd, and layers South African vocal harmonies with rhythmic chants and piano accompaniment.

[https://calperformances.org/events/2022-23/illuminations-human-and-machine/william-kentridges-sibyl/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIgJbA4Zan-gIVYRpMCh1G0Q-2EAAYASAAEgKIWPD\\_BwE&gclid=aw.ds](https://calperformances.org/events/2022-23/illuminations-human-and-machine/william-kentridges-sibyl/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIgJbA4Zan-gIVYRpMCh1G0Q-2EAAYASAAEgKIWPD_BwE&gclid=aw.ds)



**NETFLIX ANIMATION LAYS OFF 30 EMPLOYEES** Netflix has reorganized their animation division and is outsourcing more production. Earlier this year they appointed Karen Toliver as vice president of animated film content and Traci Balthazor as vice president of animated film production. The downsizing does not mean they are decreasing their output. Instead they want to accelerate the development by having most of the work done by 800 employees based in Sydney and Vancouver.



**TO HONOR THE PASSING OF THE QUEEN HERE IS THE VIDEO OF HER HAVING TEA WITH A VERY SPECIAL GUEST.** Buckingham Palace confirms the queen has a delightful sense of humor and that is her majesty in the video. CBS News reported that after she died officials asked mourners not to leave toy Paddington Bears and marmalade sandwiches at outdoor memorials. This is the full uncut 2+ minute film.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/video/newsalerts/video-2701209/Queen-opens-Platinum-Party-Palace-Paddington-Bear-sketch.html>



Henry Selick will be there

## ANIMATION IS FILM FESTIVAL

In Los Angeles October 21 to 23 plus a surprise screening on October 29.

For details <https://animationisfilm.com/>

### OPENING NIGHT

**WENDELL & WILD** (USA, US Premiere) Netflix release. Director Henry Selick attending

### COMPETITION LINE-UP

**GOLD KINGDOM AND WATER KINGDOM** (Japan, World Premiere) by Kotono Watanabe.

**TITINA**– (Norway, Belgium, World Premiere), Director Kajsa Næss attending.

**AURORA'S SUNRISE** – (Armenia, Germany, Lithuania, North American Premiere), Director Inna Sahakyan attending.

**MY FATHER'S DRAGON**, (Ireland, France; N. American premiere). The newest film from Oscar-nominated Nora Twomey and Cartoon Saloon, based on the Newbery-winning children's book, this animated film follows a young boy who runs away to an island to rescue and befriend a young dragon. A Netflix release. Director Nora Twomey attending.

**LITTLE NICOLAS** (France,| Luxenberg, US premiere) Winner of the Cristal Award at Annecy, based on a children's series about a mischievous boy, his schoolmates, teacher, and parents in Paris in the 1960s.

**OINK** – (Netherlands, Belgium, West Coast premiere). When Babs receives a pig named Oink as a present she convinces her parents to keep it, but... Director Mascha Halberstad attending

**PERLIMPS** – (BRAZIL / West Coast premiere) Director Alê Abreu attending

**UNICORN WARS** – (Spain, France, West Coast premiere)

### SPECIAL EVENTS & STUDIO SCREENINGS:

**LUCK** (Apple Original Films & Skydance Animation), Director Peggy Holmes attending  
**NEW GODS: YANG JIAN** (GKIDS, from China) features awe-inspiring action sequences set against breathtaking and wildly imaginative environments..  
**ONI: THUNDER GOD'S TALE** (Tonko House, Netflix Anime) Japanese mythological. Attending: Dice Tsutsumi (Director/Creator), Sara K. Sampson (Producer), Robert Kondo (Executive Producer and Production Designer), Kane Lee (Executive Producer).

### WORK IN PROGRESS

**PUSS-IN-BOOTS: THE LAST WISH** (Dreamworks Animation): Director Joel Crawford  
**STRANGE WORLD** (Walt Disney)

**SUMMER GHOST** – (GKIDS): Director Loundraw attending

**TURNING RED** (PIXAR): Director Domee Shi and producer Lindsey Collins attending.

### SHORTS PRESENTATIONS

**SHORTS #1** is a program of shorts from around the world.

**SHORTS #2** is a program of student films.

**SHORTS #3** is a program of animation by women.

### AIF ONLINE PANELS

One is **Designing Storytelling**. The other is **(Almost) On Their Own** about low budget independent animated features.



### AWARD-WINNING ISRAELI ANIMATOR GIL ALKABETZ HAS DIED AT 64

Alkabetz was best known for his witty, smart and thought-provoking animated shorts which commented on the follies of life, politics and human nature. He was one of my favorite animators, his work was featured in Ron Diamond's **Animation Show of Show** (*Good and Better* is in the new edition of the show) and a loving

tribute is posted on [awn.com](http://awn.com) with links to several of his films. More are posted elsewhere. Just Google his name and enjoy his creative genius.

<https://www.awn.com/news/award-winning-independent-animator-gil-alkabetz-dies-65>



**TRAILER FOR 'STRANGE WORLD'** It is Disney's Thanksgiving release. Yes, it looks strange. <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-features/disney-strange-world-trailer-concept-art-1235223223/>



Activists are subverting billboards in Europe



**McEVROY ARTS HAS A HANDSOME EXHIBIT ON COLOR THAT INCLUDES A FINE SELECTION OF ABSTRACT EXPERIMENTAL FILMS. IT IS PART OF THE GALLERY EXHIBIT** Visible Light, the 2 hour film program includes Marv Newland's film *CMYK*, 2011, a collage made with found symbol that was made for the National Film Board of Canada, and Larry Cuba's *Two Space*, 1979, a pioneering work of computer animation. There are other animated experiences awaiting you including Kerry Laitala's *Terra Incognita*, A 3D stereoscopic film (glasses are provided). The film program was curated by Sam Sharkland, Liz Keim and Kathleen Maguire from the Exploratorium.

The film program is part of an enjoyable large exhibit called Color Code. It features art from the McEvoy Family Collection. It is on display Sept. 23 to January 21, 2023. The gallery hours are 11 AM to 6 PM. Wednesday through Saturday. Admission is free. 1150 25<sup>th</sup> Street, Building B in the Dogpatch neighborhood. Lots of free parking in the long driveway.



**THE QUEEN'S NEW KNIGHTS** Former Disney CEO Bob Iger and *Star Wars* composer John Williams are the latest Hollywood industry members to receive an honorary knighthood. The honor grants both the title of KBE aka Knight Commander of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. Bestowed by Queen Elizabeth II, who died on Sept. 7, Iger and Williams are just two among a larger 2022 class of approved honorary British awards.



**THE ANIMATION SHOW OF SHOWS IS COMING IN NOVEMBER**

**RON DIAMOND IS HOSTING THE EVENT**  
**The new 22<sup>nd</sup> Festival will be at**  
**San Francisco State Nov. 3, free to**  
**members & guests**

**DETAILS WILL BE EMAILED TO MEMBERS,**  
**Please renew your membership. Our post**  
**Covid local rate is only \$15. \$30 with**  
**international as well**

**The 22<sup>nd</sup> show will also be playing at**  
**commercial theatres as well.**  
**THE RAFAEL, Sneak Preview, Wed. Nov. 2**  
**THE LARK in Larkspur, starting Fri. Nov. 4**  
**THE PARKWAY, in Oakland, starting Nov. 4**

Ron is also showing the 22<sup>nd</sup> Festival at SF City College,  
Ohlone, CCA and UC Davis.

The 21<sup>st</sup> program at Cañada College and San Jose State  
and the 20<sup>th</sup> show at Berkeley City College

**SEE THE 22ND ANNUAL ANIMATION**  
**SHOW OF SHOWS TRAILER**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=brOHMQG1ngY>

**-press release-**

**THE 22ND ANNUAL ANIMATION SHOW OF**  
**SHOWS OFFERS HUMOR AND**  
**REFLECTION ON THE HUMAN CONDITION**

After a two-year Covid hiatus, the ANIMATION SHOW OF SHOWS returns to theaters and campuses across North America this fall. This 22<sup>nd</sup> edition comprises 10 films -- nine recent, along with one restored classic -- which deal with both the anxieties and hopes of a world faced with a seemingly endless series of existential crises. All are inventive, their tone ranges from the whimsical to the profound; their techniques, from stop-motion to hand-drawn to computer-aided.

“Animation is a natural medium for dealing with abstract ideas and deeply felt concerns, and the ANIMATION SHOW OF SHOWS has always strived to scour the world for the most affecting and engaging films,” says founder and curator Ron Diamond. “While the recent films were conceived and some finished, before the Covid lockdowns, all but the most abstract display a concern with the ways in which we are all interconnected...or sadly alienated from our sense of human connection.”

This general issue appears in many forms and styles: While "Beyond Noh" cleverly shows the prevalence of masks through all cultures, and "Rain" humorously explores the dangers of groupthink, "Ties" takes the notion of connectedness from the metaphorical to the actual.

The nine new films come from Europe, Asia, and North America. The program culminates with a striking restored 4K digital remaster by the Academy Film Archive of Frederic Back's classic 1987 Oscar-winner, "The Man Who Planted Trees."

As a bonus, an exhibition of original production art from the films listed below will be presented at selected art house theaters and on college and university campuses. The ANIMATION SHOW OF SHOWS is funded by major studios, companies, schools, and hundreds of animation lovers around the world.

**This year's films are:**

*Beyond Noh* -- Patrick Smith/Kaori Ishida (U.S./Japan)

*Empty Places* -- Geoffroy de Crecy (France)

*Beseder (Good and Better)* -- Gil Alkabetz (Germany)

*Zoizoglyph* -- Jeanne Apergis (France)

*Rain (Deszcz)* -- Piotr Milczarek (Poland)

*Average Happiness* -- Maja Gehrig (Switzerland)

*Aurora* -- Jo Meuris (U.S.)

*Yes-People* -- Gísli Darri Halldórsson (Iceland)

*Ties* -- Dina Velikovskaya (Germany/Russia)

*The Man Who Planted Trees* -- Frederic Back (Canada)

**REFLECTION ON THE HUMAN CONDITION**  
**THE 22<sup>nd</sup> ANIMATION SHOW OF**  
**SHOWS**



### **Beyond Noh**

3m55s, color, Stop Motion Animation, No dialogue,  
US & Japan, 2020.

World Premiere: Tribeca Film Festival, New York  
City 2020

Set to a driving percussive score, "Beyond Noh" rhythmically shows us 3475 masks in under four minutes, creating a constantly mutating, almost dancing image -- moving from Japanese Noh masks to a variety of tribal ritual masks and on to every possible Halloween mask, from Guy Fawkes to Marvel Comics to the Simpsons.

*Over the past few years, I've learned the striking visual power of objects. The everyday objects that surround us in our lives, or are displayed in the media, are a credible vehicle for expressing many ideas about our world, if organized to do so. A simple 24 frames per second juxtaposition brings these objects to life, creating a mesmerizing effect that has the distinct ability to convey complex ideas, and concise visual interpretations of culture, economics, personality, and philosophy.*

*The origin of "Beyond Noh" can be traced to 1996, when I saw an exhibition of Balinese Barong Masks in New York, I was so enthralled with the craftsmanship, meaning, and beauty, that three months later I found myself in Mas, Bali, studying mask making. Every culture throughout history has created masks, and I wanted this film to be a grand narrative through history, featuring the 9000 year old masks from the Judean desert, all the way to contemporary plastic masks of "Hello Kitty."*

Patrick Smith

Director Patrick Smith's formative years were spent as a storyboard artist for Walt Disney and animation director for MTV. Smith is a member of

the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and a fellow of the New York Foundation of the Arts. His other films include *Gun Shop* (2019), *Candy Shop* (2019), *Pour 585* (2018), *Punch Everyone* (2017), *Body of Water* (2017), *Pittari* (2017), *Masks* (2011), *Puppet* (2006), *Handshake* (2005), *Moving Along* (2004), *Delivery* (2003), *Drink* (2000).

Writer/producer Kaori Ishida is a Japanese translator and cultural historian who has worked through-out Japan, Southeast Asia, and the US. For the past six years Kaori has produced and collaborated on several award-winning animated short films.

Beyond Noh won the Best Animation Award at the 2020 Woodstock Film Festival.



### **Empty Places**

8m49s, color, 3D computer animation, No dialogue, France, 2020.

First Public Performance: Annecy International Animation Festival, 2020

Geoffroy de Crécy presents a portrait of a literally dehumanized world. A record player repeatedly plays Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata. Elevator doors open and close. A luggage carousel goes round and round, a machine spits out tennis balls, a train mindlessly continues its route. But there is no one to pick up the bags, to hit the balls, to ride the train. It is as though everyone in the world has suddenly vanished without explanation, leaving our objects to futilely serve a non-existent populace. Director Geoffroy de Crecy describes his film as "an ode to the melancholy of machines," and the melancholy is palpable.

*My influences are currently certain photographers and illustrators. I love William Egglestone and Stephen Shore pictures. Both of*

these photographers focus less on persons, and more on places or objects. They really convey the mood of a country, or historic period with pictures of common places. I'm also greatly influenced by the work of Milton Glaser.

Geoffroy de Crécy

For the past ten years, animator Geoffroy de Crécy has also been developing work on the border between illustration and animation, which has led him to create images, still or animated, for the press and advertising. This research about "animated illustration" led him to work on very simple series of loops that had a great success on the internet, especially on his Instagram account. His earlier films include "Dog Days" (2007) and "Etienne de Crécy: Am I Wrong" (2000).



### **Beseder (Good and Better)**

4m23s, color, 2D hand drawn animation, Hebrew (subtitled English), Germany, 2021. First Public Performance: Animix Festival 2021, Tel Aviv

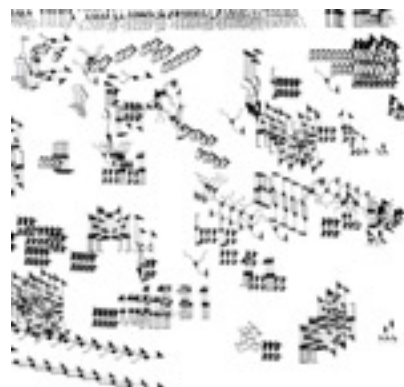
"So hard to think it's gonna be good and better. It's too complicated. So easy to think it's gonna be bad and worse." So goes Tova Gertner's graceful, melancholy waltz. Director Gil Alkabetz presents us with a series of surreal vignettes, invoking famous works by (among others) Picasso, Dali, Magritte, Duchamp, and Saul Steinberg. Many involve distortions of the human form, in the manner of Bill Plympton, the result is

unsettling (even when funny), bemoaning the human tendency toward pessimism.

*The film "Beseder" emerged from my collaboration with the musician and singer Tova Gertner. Each of us brought his own personal world, and from the meeting of these worlds the film was born, without any declaration of intent or common concept being formulated. For my part, I put together various illustrations of mine as short loops to Tova Gartner's song. Thus, a kind of reflection on human existence arose quite spontaneously, with a topical reference to the experience of living during the Corona period.*

Gil Alkabetz

Born in the kibbutz Mashabei Sade in Israel in 1957, Gil Alkabetz studied graphic design at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem. Following school, he went to work as an animator and director at the Jerusalem-based studio Frame by Frame and worked as a freelance animator and illustrator. In addition to his work as an independent filmmaker, Alkabetz has taught animation and illustration at various schools in Europe and the U.S. and has served on juries and had retrospectives at many international film festivals. His numerous award-winning films include "Swamp" (1991), "Rubicon" (1997), and "Morir de Amor" (2004). He is currently a professor at University Potsdam Babelsberg.



### **Zoizoglyph**

7m44s, minimal color, 2D hand drawn animation, France, 2021.

First Public Performance: Annecy International Animation Festival 2021

Those worried about the future of animation (or art in general) can take heart. This wildly inventive

short is the work of Jeanne Apergis, who was born in 2000.

A bunch of little bird-like figures pop up on screen. They organize themselves into phalanxes; one outlier joins them, setting off a chain reaction that drives them across the screen. Their movements generate the soundtrack. As they cascade, there is the illusion of watching an optical representation of the sound.

"The film was born from two desires," Apergis says. "On the one hand, to associate the movement of sound and images in direct interaction. To hear what we see and see what we hear. On the other hand, to study the various paths, aspects, fate of crowds: order, disorder, resilience, imbalance, ceremony, war. Movement is at the origin of sound and images."

The result is perhaps the most abstract of the films in this program. At one point, Apergis has her little beasts regroup in images of war, but, outside of that, this truly is about the relationship of sound and image.

*This is my first film, self-produced, drawn by hand, and assembled on the computer, sound and image. I drew a dozen movements and characters by hand and associated a sound to each. Crowds organize themselves like the notes on sheet music, creating stumbling systems. This machine stutters as it tries to constantly reinvent itself. Near the end, a disruptive fly interferes, onto which each viewer can project a meaning of their own.*

*Completely self-produced with my hands and my computer, this is my first personal experience in animation. I am also continuing my work on crowds with projects combining animation, staging, installations, sculptures, shadow theater.*

Jeanne Apergis

Director Jeanne Apergis was born on June 11, 2000 in Paris, to an artistic family. When she was little, she discovered the film "Le roi et l'oiseau" by Paul Grimault, the books and illustrations of Tomi Ungerer, and the paintings of Paul Klee, which have influenced her work. She is a student at the Villa Arson in Nice since 2019.



### **Rain (Deszcz)**

5m13s, color, 2D Hand Drawn Animation, no dialogue, Poland, 2020.

First public performance: Annecy International Animation Festival 2019

A man stands on the roof of an impossibly tall skyscraper, having a smoke. Someone playfully sneaks up behind him, so startling him that he falls off the roof. The company CEO, sitting in his office, is the first to see the body dropping past his window. He leaps up, grabs a cape, and flies down to rescue the faller. Meanwhile, many other employees, seeing the rescue, gather on the roof and start jumping themselves. Groupthink? A new ice-bucket challenge? Digging the thrill of jumping and being rescued by a superhero? While dozens jump, the CEO, exhausted, gives up the cause, as more bodies fly by the windows.

This humans-as-lemmings scenario can be read any number of ways, all of them damning views of human nature.

*"The Rain" is a simple animated film on collective consciousness. It talks about how no accountability for our actions pushes us to thoughtlessly follow the crowd, which may lead to a tragedy. The film also depicts a struggle of an individual with collective hypnosis and its consequences for both the individual and the crowd.*

Piotr Milczarek

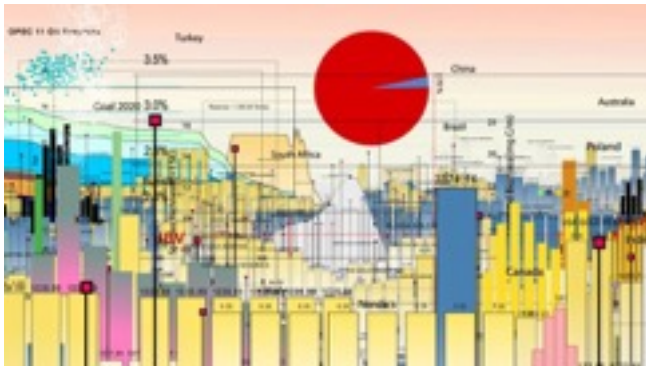
Piotr Milczarek was born and lives in Lodz. He studied animation and special effects at the Film School in Lodz, where he is currently working as an assistant. He belongs to group of animators whose path to film began with a fascination for comics. This is his source of inspiration, as well as the creative experience gained in the field of comics, significantly influenced the artistic shape of his films. He



describes his heroes and the world that surrounds them with a simple, expressive line.

Piotr Milczarek is currently working on "There Will Be No Other End" -- a light seven-minute animated film about stupidity.

"Rain" has won many awards, including Best First Film at the Annecy International Animation Film Festival 2019 and the Special International Jury Prize at the 18th International Animation Festival in Hiroshima, Japan 2020. Milczarek's earlier films include "Happy Birthday!" (2011), "Make It Rain" (2010), "Riverdance - Thunderstorm" (2010), "Fly Sits - Tape of Truth" (2010), "Spiders - Spiders" (2008), "Cockroach" (2006), "Mister Mister" (2005), "Jarosław" (2004), "War of the Worlds" (2004), and "Cartoon" (2003).



### Average Happiness

7m03s, color, 2D Hand Drawn Animation, No dialogue, Switzerland, 2019

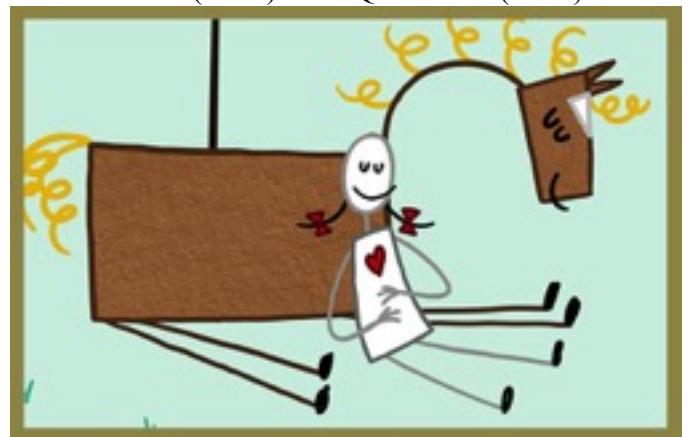
A statistics professor is delivering a very dry lecture on "Introductory Econometrics for Finance 1 & 7," using "average happiness" as an example. It's so dry that the graphs he's explaining seem to get bored. They mutate themselves into stark images, flowing and overlapping, exuberant and colorful, although the subject matter they represent -- energy usage, mortality rates, war -- is often downbeat. Working from found footage, director Maja Gehrig alternately connects and disconnects the images from the real-world aspects they are meant to convey. "I took them out of their context to give a new context in my film." Joy Frempong's music and Peter Bräker's sound-design make the diagram-world real and buoyantly express the mood of the diagrams.

*The title of the film implies a criticism of statistics – can happiness be expressed in numbers? Of course not. That is what interest me about Statistics. The fact that we would like to have certainty, to measure and prove all kinds of aspects of our lives, keeps being abstract to me. Sometimes I have the impression that Statistics became a substitute for religion, making the film, I realized that also I am a believer, and that I believe in Uncertainty. In my opinion there is no certainty existing in this world and therefore nothing that can proved.*

Maja Gehrig

At the time Maja Gehrig made her choice of study, animation as a professional field was almost unknown in Switzerland. After studying industrial design and media art, she discovered her love for animated film at EestiJoonisfilmin in Tallinn, Estonia. After experimenting with installations and performance, she realized animated film was her priority.

Her previous films include "Filmo Amourette" (2009) and "Queen Po" (2015).



### Aurora

5m15s, color, 2D hand drawn animation, US, 2020.  
First Public Screening: University Video and Film Association Conference July 2020

"Aurora" has the simplest of stories: Jojo is a pig-tailed little girl who falls in love with a horse named Aurora. When Aurora moves away, Jojo's heart is broken. But, after a while, another horse comes into her life, and, while he's definitely *not* Aurora, the girl comes to love him, and her heart begins to heal.

Director Jo Meuris narrates the tale and animates it in an appropriately childlike style: the

events transpire on a flat, two-dimensional plane; the characters, human and equine, are essentially stick figures. The result is a charming, bittersweet expression of love lost, regained, and replicated -- with a nod to the ways in which our lost loves live on in our memories and dreams.

*The one thing people always want to know is if (or how much of) the story is true. So... Yes. It was inspired by a horse named Aurora. But like every good story some parts were embellished. Some heavily... But that doesn't mean that every emotion behind the story and the film wasn't honest and true...*

Jo Meuris

Jo Meuris is a Dutch-Canadian, Asian-Caribbean film-maker from Canada. She studied animation and film at Concordia University in Montreal and graduated with a BFA in 1998. Her previous films include "Without Wings" (2010) and "Why Use Animation" (2015). "Aurora" has won multiple awards, including Best of Fest Outstanding Short Animation at the Animalis Fabula Film Festival, Best Animation at Paris Play Film Festival, and Best Animated Short at the Silver State Film Festival.



### **Yes-People (Já fólkioð)**

8m35s, color, 3D computer graphics animation, US, 2019.

First public screening: Minimalen Short Film Festival Norway, 2020

In this Oscar-nominated short, Gísli Darri Halldórsson presents a day in the life of the residents of an apartment building, as they wordlessly go about their business... or *almost* wordlessly: the one word we hear repeatedly is "Ja" (yes). A music teacher sends her son off to school (where he daydreams) and gives a lesson to an apparently hopeless flautist; the super shovels

the sidewalk and happily returns to his libidinous wife; a bureaucrat goes to his office, leaving his frustrated wife to drink away her loneliness.

As is often the case in real life, these neighbors barely interact with anyone other than their own families. But the thin walls create a sort of vague community through sound. Music, TV, and lovemaking are all loud enough to breach the solitude of apartment living.

*The idea for "Yes-People" came about when I was telling my Irish friends about the multi-meaning word "já" (yes) in Icelandic. I was looking for restrictions to induce creativity and thought a one-word-film would be a wonderful framework to animate lots of characters using the silent-film tradition but adding the musicality of the voice...a semi-silent film. To me, the word itself was not that important.*

Gísli Darri Halldórsson

Director Bio: Born in Iceland in 1978, Gísli has been a professional animator since 2007, working in England, Ireland, Germany, and Iceland on feature-films, short-films, TV, commercials, and music videos. In addition to its Oscar nomination, "Yes-People" was named Best Short Film at the Icelandic Film & TV awards; Best Nordic-Baltic Short Film at the Frederikstad Animation Festival in Norway, Best Icelandic Short Film at the Reykjavík International Film Festival, and Best European Short Film at the Weird International Animation Film Festival in Spain.

Halldórsson's other films are "The Great Unrest" (2008), "Bert" (2006), "Whatever" (2005), "Frog's Blues" (2001), "Reykjavík Safari" (2001), "Gogh Syndrome" (2000), and Kókó (1999).



**Ties**

7m36s, color, Stop Motion replacement animation,  
Germany / Russia 2019.

First public performance: DOK Leipzig, Germany,  
September 2019.

As a young woman leaves for college, a thread from her skirt gets caught on her old swing. When she walks to the waiting cab, her skirt doesn't unravel, but the swing does. All the lines that compose the swing pull away until it collapses. But it doesn't stop there: apparently, all the objects we've seen -- the house, the yard, even her parents -- are **connected** lines of the same thread. As she gets on a plane and flies away, the contents of her home, then the building itself, and finally even her father all come unraveled. Only the actions of her mom are able to break the thread and stop this wholesale destruction. Mom is even able to reconstruct her husband out of the jumble of thread.

Russian animator Dina Velikovskaya's film converts the age-old notion of "family ties" into a graphic reality. The girl's departure is a metaphor for "empty nest" syndrome. It unravels the family unit, which then has to find the strength to reformulate their lives in her absence.

*Animation for me is a tool to communicate with the world and especially with loved ones. I view my films as my moving picture diary. I am fascinated by the ability of short animation films to express an idea using limited means and time. The ability to crystallize the most important and to embody in a form that is adequate to the idea. I believe that all elements of the film should work for the idea and technique is an important part of the means of expressing the idea of a film.*

Dina Velikovskaya

Dina Velikovskaya was born in Moscow in 1984. After graduating from the animation department of Russian State University of Cinematography (VGIK) in 2011, she continued her studies at High Animation School-Studio "SHAR" (Moscow). In 2018 she became a member of The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

"Ties" has won numerous awards at festivals around the globe, including Suzdal Animation Film Festival (Russia), Savigny Animation Film

Festival 2021 (Switzerland), and the New York City Short Film Festival 2020.

Velikovskaya's earlier films are "Kukuschka" (2016), "About a Mother" (2015), "My Strange Grandfather" (2011), "Pages of Fear" (2010), "The Bridge" (2011).



### **The Man Who Planted Trees**

This year's ANIMATION SHOW OF SHOWS ends with Frederic Back's 1987 classic, "The Man Who Planted Trees," presented in a striking restored 4K digital remaster by the Academy Film Archive and color corrected for ANIMATION SHOW OF SHOWS at Picture Shop Post by Sr. Colorist Kris Santa Cruz. The Oscar-winning film, narrated by Christopher Plummer, tells the story of a young man's encounter with an isolated shepherd, Elzéard Bouffier, who is determined to renew his barren landscape by planting thousands of trees. Based on a possibly autobiographical 1953 fable by Jean Giono, it's a beautifully hand-drawn epic -- an environmental plea ahead of its time. As the shepherd's efforts bear fruit, the film's palette gradually moves from dusty browns to a range of colors, evoking memories of the great impressionist painters.

"I can't emphasize how great an impact this film had on me when it was first released," says ANIMATION SHOW OF SHOWS curator Ron Diamond. "It was an inspiration, both aesthetically and ideologically -- and its message is even more relevant as the effects of global climate change become increasingly devastating. When I heard about the movie's new restoration, it was impossible not to include it in the program. This story of one man's success at battling the

world's deterioration is the perfect note of hope to end on."

Back, who died in 2013, practiced what he preached, devoting much time and energy throughout his life to the protection of animals and the preservation of the environment. A lifelong vegetarian who himself planted some 10,000 trees on his country estate near Montréal, he was a founding member of the Québec Society for the Defense of Animals (SQDA) and the Society for Overcoming Pollution, as well as a member of the Société d'Eau Secours!, devoted to protecting water resources.

"The Man Who Planted Trees" earned Back his second Oscar. It also won literally scores of awards at festivals around the world. His other films included "The Mighty River" (1993), "Crac" (1980, for which he received his first Oscar), "Tout Rien" (1978), "Illusion" (1975), "Inon" (1972), and "Abracadabra" (1970).

Film notes by Ron Diamond

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

*Newsletter Editor:* Karl Cohen

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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.

*Our website and blog is:* [www.asifa-sf.org](http://www.asifa-sf.org)

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