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Children & Animation

Theresa Plummer-Andrews
Children's Animation, a Universal Language?

Deborah Reber
UNICEF's Animation Consortium for Children's Rights

The Thief and the Cobbler Interview With George Griffin

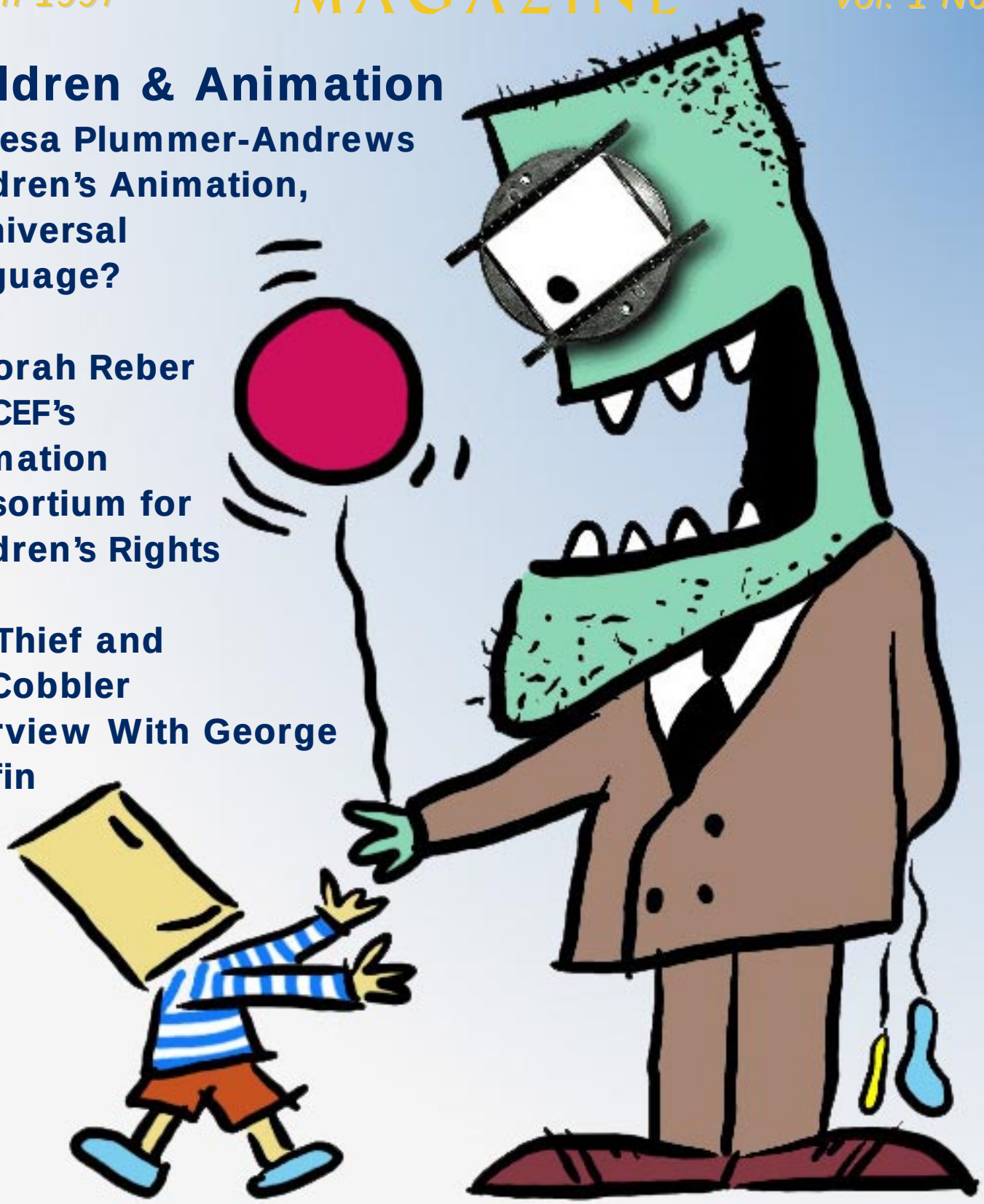


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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

by Harvey Deneroff

The Thief and the Cobbler: A Modest Proposal

When I met former Disney animator, Art Babbit (who was responsible for the dancing mushrooms in Fantasia) towards the end of his life, he said he had only two major goals before he died: one was to set the record straight on the 1941 Disney strike and his role in it; the second was to pass on what he knew about animation to a new generation of artists. His first goal was satisfied by letting historians like myself interview him; the second was done courtesy of Richard Williams, who arranged to have him teach a series of classes at his London studio, which helped train a whole generation of British animators.

Thus, it was perhaps no surprise that, when he died on March 2, 1992, his obituaries in some British papers were bigger than those in Los Angeles, where he spent most of his professional career. One of these obits, written by Les Gibbard, told how Williams got him to, "lecture, direct and animate at his Soho Square studio. He drummed all the rules and cliches into a generation of British artists—then told them to go away and break all the rules.

"An awesome taskmaster," Gibbard went on to say, "he enthused about the boundless horizons of a medium in its infancy: 'We are barely learning to stumble on the stage . . . the pressure of 'time' and 'economics' have so bastardised the medium we have even forgotten how to stumble.'



"Art animated Raggedy Ann and Andy in the US for Dick Williams and, for many years, the world's longest-awaited animated feature, Williams' The Thief and the Cobbler, due to be completed shortly. Then Art Babbitt will live afresh."

However, in May, Richard Williams was fired from the film by the completion bond company and the production was given to Fred Calvert, in Hollywood, to finish. (At the time, I speculated that the production was moved from London, in part, "to avoid the wrath of the British animation community.") Calvert, who worked under the close supervision of Completion Bond Company's Betty Smith, was clearly out of his element in trying to turn Williams' wondrous comic masterpiece into a half-baked Aladdin clone, including the addition of several rather insipid musical numbers. The result, as Alex Williams notes in his review of his father's film in this issue, is something less than grand.

I really do not want to get into a game of who did what to who and why. The fact is that something needs to be done about saving what's left of the The Thief and the Cobbler. First, it is vital that steps be taken to preserve Williams' last workprint, the source of the numerous video copies floating around. This alone, even its incomplete state, would certainly be welcomed



Zig Zag the Grand Vizir, from Richard Williams' *The Thief and the Cobbler.* Courtesy of Alex Williams.

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at film festivals and in a letterboxed laserdisc presentation.(After all, Disney showed a similary incomplete "work in progress edition" of Beauty and the Beast at the New York Film Festival and also released it on laserdisc.)

Beyond that, it is necessary to retrieve and preserve all the unused footage and art work produced over the some 30 years it was in production. For most of that period, The Thief and the Cobbler was mostly used as a training exercise. Thus, when Williams received full funding to finish his film in 1990, only about 10 minutes of what was to be about a 90 minute film were actually finished. This discarded material includes not only the work of Babbitt, but of such legendary masters as Ken Harris (the film's "Master Animator" who used to hang his shingle at Warner Bros.), Lantz veteran Emery Hawkins, and Betty Boop creator Grim Natwick (who was brought out of retirement to work on the film); in addition, it includes some marvelous work of such younger talents as Eric Goldberg, co-director of Disney's Pocohantas, whose animation was mostly left on the cutting room floor by Calvert and company.

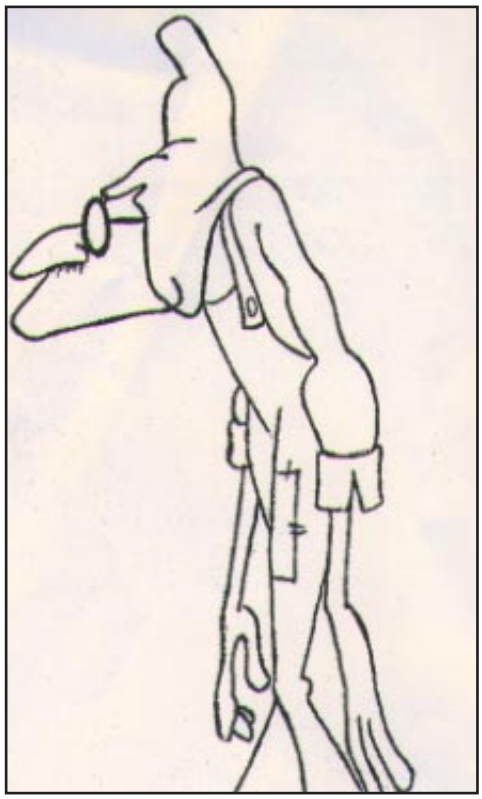
In these days, when the box office returns are being dominated by the newly restored "Special Edition" of George Lucas' Star Wars trilogy, perhaps it is time that the animation community started thinking about getting involved in some serious restoration work of its own. While ASIFA-Hollywood's Adopt-a-Cartoon project is a good starting place, perhaps Disney should step in to get the ball rolling. After all, as seen in its work on Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, it certainly has the necessary expertise to do the job right. But more importantly, through its wholly-owned Miramax subsidiary, it now owns the rights to The Thief and the Cobbler. As Miramax supposedly bought the film after all the damage was done by the Completion Bond Company, it would engender enormous good will and somewhat erase whatever stigma it might have by distributing the current version. It would also help honor the memory Art Babbitt, of one of its greatest artists, the fifth anniversary of whose death is this month.

* * *

Reminder

If you have a video, film, book, or other product you think should be reviewed in Animation World Magazine, please send a review copy and accompanying information to Animation World Magazine, or contact me at editor@awn.com.

—Harvey Deneroff



Art Babbitt in self-portrait as The Cobbler from *The Thief and the Cobbler.*

Letters to the Editor



ASIFA-Sanctioned Festivals

The following two letters were sent in reply to Chris Robinson's "To Be or Not To Be An ASIFA-Sanctioned Festival," which appeared in the January issue of Animation World Magazine.

ASIFA-International's Response

This article came as a great surprise to me. Not the overall message—we had been talking freely in Zagreb, I had encouraged Chris Robinson to air all his feelings on ASIFA, which were the standard feelings festival directors get at some time. I remember in 1971, at my first Annecy festival, I was helping backstage (I have been helping for some time now), when the then festival director was protesting against ASIFA—notwithstanding his being the president of the French ASIFA group. This is normal—filmmakers think about their precious works, festival directors think about their festival and their budget and their position. It is not the same point of view, and we have to adjust.

The surprise came from a public attack with what looked like hate, and a number of somewhat twisted statements on an association of animators. It is not expected from a festival director, and may not give a good image of the celebration he is in charge of, which I regret.

I'll briefly point at some inaccuracies (I have gone into more detail on the ASIFA-International home page):

- *Board members "more concerned with the prestige and benefits of their position." As everywhere, there may be one or two interested (and ill-informed) individuals, for the rest the notion of "prestige and benefits of their position" is an amusing sally, all being suckers agreeing to spend their time and money on obscure chores nobody will ever be thankful for.*
- *"Festival reviews based on the hope of return invitation rather than honesty." It is quite an accusation. Well, whether the review is good or bad, we are invited. We do send our critiques, but not in the spotlight (critiques in a letter do not have the same meaning as critiques on a stage, like here). At any rate, the printed review is mainly the opinion of its author (there is not a censure committee), but we all are aware of the work a festival involves and of the respect we must show to the many people who gave themselves to it.*
- *"Children workshops." Picking on ASIFA about the workshops for the young ones is a strange idea, as well as objecting to children commenting on children rights.*
- *"ASIFA-Canada." In Zagreb, Chris Robinson's assessment of the help from ASIFA-Canada, an exemplary group, was very positive. Now it is the opposite. I'll let Montréal and Vancouver comment, if they wish.*
- *"ASIFA finally contacted us. Unfortunately, all they wanted was to take advantage of the ASIFA rule that obliges festivals to cover all board members' accommodations and pass expenses." Not 22, but one board member asked for it. It was not to go to one more festival, he already had got more than his fill, but to help in a precise way, which he did.*
- *"The ASIFA board recently revised its rules without any festival directors being present." Quite a number of festival directors took part, including the director of the Ottawa Festival: we insisted on having Chris Robinson's opinion.*
- *"Most of us have no idea how one becomes elected to the board." At the same time Chris Robinson was perfectly registering his own candidacy to the ASIFA board! Information comes in ASIFA News and the Secretary General answers letters . . .*

But of course it is very interesting to get critiques, it is a way to

progress.

Communication, for instance, should be improved—being on the board is open, anyone can be a candidate (granted that one has been a member for two years), a new board is elected every three years, all members throughout the world cast their votes. This may not be known well enough. And this is a call for immediate candidacies.

In other respects, more means should be found, without alienating our absolute independence.

I'll point to a critique I have made previously: "The festival must pay for accommodation of all board members, 22 maximum." (The number of board members is actually less than this, and all of them are never present in one festival. Still it can be a burden.) This has been kept as festivals agreed. It is a way to help representatives from many countries meet, which is one of the things festivals are here for. Some festivals go further, offering the board one or two days more, so the working meetings can take place under good conditions.

I agree on guests being of some use to festivals. This happens perhaps more often than Chris Robinson thinks at the moment.

One word about "festivals violating ASIFA rules." Sometimes it is not so, sometimes it is. I am afraid it is in the course of nature, and I must not hide from the public that ASIFA does not have tank divisions to deploy around the festival venue. (The strongest action is not giving patronage anymore; it has happened before, with results.) But these rules—independence, fairness, respect for films and filmmakers—have set necessary and strong standards which cannot be overlooked anymore. Breaches are precisely seen as breaches and are fractional, disputed and changeable phenomena.

The Ottawa Festival can survive without ASIFA, and vice versa. Nevertheless, I hope we shall find harmony between members of the same family, and that the Ottawa Festival will develop into a center of goodwill, creativity, and joy.

This was the New Year's wish from the president of an association full of defects, an irrational grouping which goes without any help, nevertheless attracting mad people from 60 countries.

Michel Ocelot
President
ASIFA-International
Paris

ASIFA-Canada's Response

In a recent article published on the Internet, M. Chris Robinson, the new director of the Ottawa festival, severely criticized ASIFA, the animation association, both the International organization and its Canadian chapter, ASIFA-Canada.

M. Michel Ocelot, president of ASIFA and M. David Erhlich, vice-president, have already responded to M. Robinson. We strongly encourage you to read their replies. However, we, at ASIFA-Canada, feel obliged to answer M. Robinson's provoking diatribe although you can be assured that we all hate wasting our time with such non-productive polemic.

First of all, let's remember that ASIFA-Canada is a non-profit association and the involvement of its members and of its board of directors is strictly voluntary. We are about 225 members and each year 8 to 12 of us are idealistic enough to volunteer our services in order to keep the organization running. (These volunteers he characterizes as "children" and "old boys"!) In the last 25 years, somewhere between a quarter to a half of our members have, at some point participated on the board, generally for a few years, then passed it on to fresh troops and went back to focus on their animation professions.

These are the people that M. Robinson says have "no real grasp of the organizational structure behind the festival". Yet does M. Robinson demonstrate any understanding of the organizational structure of our association? or the work required to maintain it? or the difficulties of being a bilingual organization stretched across this huge continent?

Before the festival, we received M. Robinson at one of our board meetings. By the way, M. Robinson is not a board member so we are surprised to hear him complain about not being always invited. Anyway, in reference to that encounter, he implies in his text that what was suggested to him was for the board members themselves personally and not to help improve the festival. It seems too that he did not appreciate that we would point out some deficiencies in what he presented to us. His international jury was to be exclusively North American and his international festival did not have significant retrospectives from outside North American animation.

We gave him some suggestions and contacts. Our suggestions were followed and that's one of the raison d'être of ASIFA—to advise festivals and push them to not take only the easy way.

ASIFA-Canada has been collaborating with the Ottawa festival since its very beginning as well as with the recent 96 edition in various ways. We never thought it necessary to detail our collaboration with the festival, saying we did this and that, but since M. Robinson hasn't found a better way to thank us

other than to deny our role and insult those who gave their time, we think we should at least inform our members about these issues.

The festival relies on ASIFA-Canada to find an artist to create the official trophies for the festival. We administrate a budget from the festival and assume their production, packing and transport to the festival. The full budget is dedicated exclusively to the artist and the production costs.

We sponsor the "Public Prize"—its creation and cost and in the course of the festival, we distribute, collect and count the ballots and then present the Prize. ASIFA-Canada also prepares and organizes the Norman McLaren Heritage Award.

It is also a tradition to organize or participate in animation workshops and this year, at the festival's request, two of our board members volunteered to organize and conduct a children's workshop. 60 children participated.

We are sorry that M. Robinson's opinion of ASIFA-Canada has changed so dramatically from his positive Zagreb report to Michel Ocelot. We have great difficulty understanding his motivations for such negativity but sincerely hope that he can learn to maturely communicate directly with those he ceases to hold in favor before he flashes these glib displays on the Internet.

The ASIFA-Canada Board
Montréal

Editor's Note: *For further discussion on Robinson's article, including a longer version of Ocelot's reply and David Ehrlich's reply cited above, check out the ASIFA-Internatnional home page at http://samson.hivolda.no:8000/asifa/.*

Jean Luc Xibberas & Annecy

I was rather disappointed to read the interview with Jean Luc Xibberas, the head of the Annecy festival ["Rendezvous In Annecy: An Interview With Jean-Luc Xiberras," by Annick Teninge, in the January 1997 issue of AWM].

This festival has come in for a lot of criticism lately as, although it is the biggest animation festival, it can also be the most infuriating. The embarrassment of the last festivals awards ceremony and the general organization upset enough people that ASIFA-International initiated a campaign to get people to write complaints to the mayor of Annecy, who apparently governs the festival.

A number of people did write, including myself, but, unfortunately, nothing appears to have changed. Mr. Xibberas does not seem to acknowledge the criticisms and your article makes no attempt to address them. Instead, the article comes across as little more than a puff piece. I presume this is because the journalist was Mr. Xibbera's assistant and so had little interest in presenting more interesting and difficult questions.

I know that a lot of people work very hard at Annecy to try to do the best job possible, nevertheless, it seems to be a given that the organization of the festival will be difficult to deal with. In my experience, the festival chose to arbitrarily recognize only one of us for our co-directed film, Bob's Birthday. My partner was not even invited to the festival and her name was not listed as a competition director in a number of the festival's publications. The reason? The festival simply does not recognize co-directors. Why? Just because they don't. That's the answer I got from the festival. No other festival I know has this policy and there is no reason for it. They don't have to pay the expenses for two directors, but they should not be allowed to arbitrarily pretend one of them doesn't exist. It is very insensitive to treat a filmmaker this way.

AWM would be an excellent forum to address this subject, especially in the run up to this summer's festival. Why not garner more opinions about the festival from people and present them to Mr. Xibberas for his response?

I, like so many other people, value the Annecy festival and am very eager to contribute my thoughts in the hope that things might be improved in the future.

David Fine
Snowden Fine Productions
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The author is co-owner with Alison Snowden of Snowden Fine Productions.

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Children's Animation, a Universal Language?

by Theresa Plummer-Andrews



Theresa Plummer Andrews.

It would be unheard of to have a children's television schedule not containing some form of animation, and anyone who has any knowledge of what children around the world watch would acknowledge this fact. But is animation the universal language which travels from country to country whatever it is? I think not, and this is not only attributable to the fact that huge amounts of so-called programming produced are sheer rubbish, which should never have got as far as the animation studio.

There is a vast difference in cultures within Europe alone, never mind the rest of the world, and a lot of programming produced in France, Germany, Scandinavia etc., will never find its way on to British television simply because our child audiences are so different.

French children simply adore series which feature girls as the lead characters, but in England (where most boys have taken male chauvinist pills from the minute they are born) these girl-led items fall flat on their face. Of course, there is always the exception such as Disney's Little Mermaid, but the norm here is for the boy to rule the television set. They will not watch anything with the word "girl" in the title, however powerful the program might be. It is a mystery we are still trying to solve.

Different Strokes

Whilst working on a 16 country co-production titled Animals of Farthing Wood, I discovered other little idiosyncrasies between countries. Our German partners were far more concerned with "emotions" and were uneasy when we had various animals killed off by either man, fire or old age. The French could not tolerate one of the animals accidentally getting drunk and weaving its way down a road shouting "Here we go, here we go," in a wonderful football supporter type manner. When you consider that the French wean their children on red wine, this came as a bit of a surprise to me. The Scandinavians, who have very strict alcohol laws, tolerated the sequence, so long as the animal ended up with a terrible hangover and was berated by its companions for drinking that "terrible liquid that humans drink." Different strokes for different folks.

The English find it difficult to tolerate the style of animation produced for the Japanese home market, and the level of violence in some of their series is quite shocking for us, but quite normal for them. However, many hours of Japanese programming finds its way onto French television in its unedited form and no-one out there seems



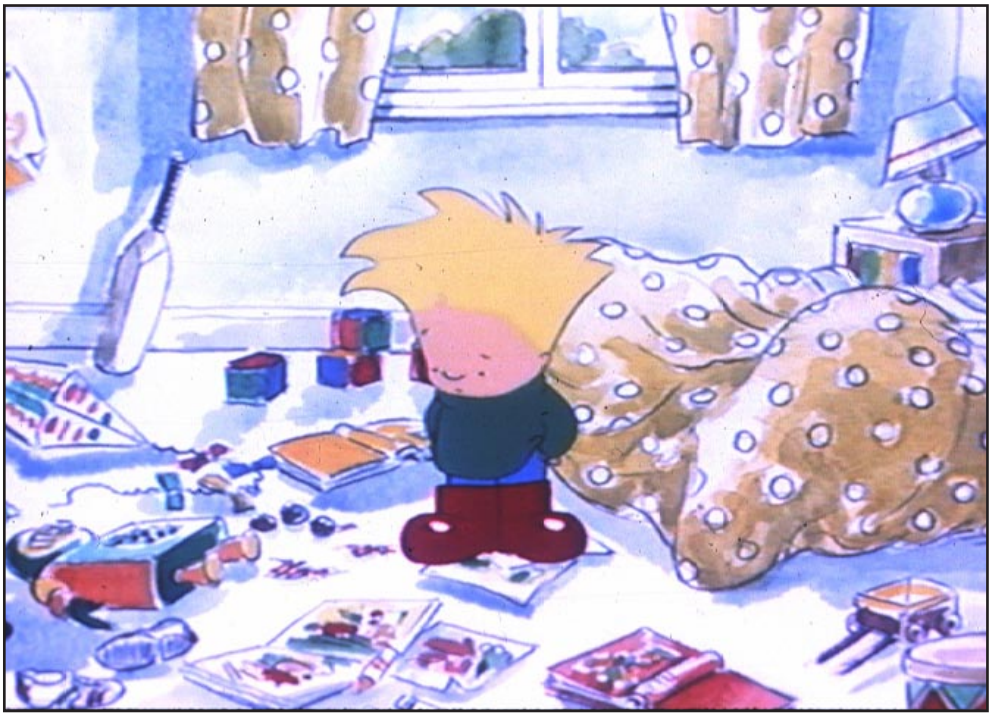
Animals of Farthingwood.

to mind it. It was surprising to hear that although Disney merchandise sells incredibly well in Japan, they do not watch the television shows. So much for a universal language.

One of the latest trends to come out of America is "FCC Friendly" educational programming. We are all aware that you don't need the brains of a rocket scientist to know that children do not wish to come home from a day at school to sit down and have more worthy programming thrown at them. These little people are clever enough to smell the message and simply don't want to watch it, more especially in the patronizing manner in which some of it is presented to them. On the other hand, we have pre-bought two major animation series from America just recently, and one of them has reached such a level of violence that even with careful editing we are having to pull episodes off air because of complaints from the British public. In each episode there are more guns, machine guns, knives and weapons than we can count, and with the current world aversion to violence on television, someone should be monitoring this. There seems to be no balance between the ultra-soft pap and the "shoot 'em until they drop" syndrome.



BBC's *Prince of Atlantis.*



BBC's*Williams Wish Wellingtons.*

A Matter of Funding

The major problem with any programming these days is to get funding. Major broadcasters spend most of their budgets on the Prime Time schedule or in-house production, which means a fight to get enough money to develop and fund good animation. We in the UK find this very frustrating as we have many wonderfully talented animators here who are capable of producing carefully thought out concepts with good scripts, great voices and, of course, superb animation. What most investors fail to recognize is the long term value of really good programming. They all want instant returns from overseas television sales, licensing, merchandising and publishing and are not prepared to wait for these ancillary products to build up. Good animation is a long-term investment and given time, good expertise in sales and marketing and a belief in the product, investors will eventually make their money back to see a profit

French children simply adore series which feature girls as the lead characters, but in England (where most boys have taken male chauvinist pills from the minute they are born) these girl-led items fall flat on their face.

What we find is that children of all ages want to watch programs which have a proper story with a beginning, a middle and an end. Pretty characters waving around on a screen with no reason for being is not euough for our little ones, they want meat in their sandwiches, and as they are our future I think they deserve it.

Theresa Plummer-Andrews is Head of Acquisitions & Creative Development for the BBC.

Sporn's Choice: An Independent's Struggle

by Janet Benn



Michael Sporn.

Michael Sporn is probably the hardest working and definitely the lowest paid producer in the animation industry. His studio, Michael Sporn Animation Inc. was established in New York in 1980, and has turned out more than 20 hours of animation: 30 one-half hour programs and dozens of other pieces of various lengths for film, cable, network, direct-to-video and non-theatrical distribution to the educational film market. This output (averaging more than an hour a year) proves the hard-working part. The explanation for the low pay is a little more complicated.

One would expect that a winner of two Cable Ace Awards, who had also been nominated for an Emmy and an Oscar, would be enjoying a comfortable living by this point in his career. But we know this does not always follow, especially if the person dedicates his life to the artistic exposition of worthy moral tales, eschewing the flash and the fad of the shallow attention getters in the service of the good and most true of the uses of animated films. In these cases, the funders do not pay as well. Then it becomes Sporn's choice: to make the films he wants to make with these low budgets, or to make the films that pay better. Obviously he has chosen the former, and has assembled around him the help he needs, grateful that they also will work for such pay, to make such films as few can equal anywhere. In fact, no one in this country, in my opinion.

His method is the artist's: to apply his own original ideas to the solving of a problem, which for him is always to tell a story. "In my films, the story is paramount, *the* most important element," says Sporn. So, all the other elements: the sound, the music, the design and the animation all must serve the story. I believe that it is in the choosing and combining of these elements that resides Sporn's genius, so that the sum exceeds the parts.

Animation with a Social Conscience

"I don't make films for animators," Sporn says, "I make films that need to be made because they have something to say about life." Two of his most recent films, *Champagne* and *Whitewash,* stand apart from the rest of American films made in these days of the "toon boom." They come at the end of a long line of films he's made in New York which are about socially conscious issues. *The Red Shoes*, done for HBO in 1989, moves Hans Christian Andersen's story to a black neighborhood, where a little girl learns the value of humility and true friendship; another HBO production of an Andersen tale was *The Little Match Girl* in 1990, where another little girl inspires compassion for the homeless (but does not die, as in the original).

"I don't make films for animators. I make films that need to be made because they have something to say about life."

1991's *Jazztime Tale* tells the story of the discovery of Thomas (Fats) Waller through the encounter of two girls, one white and one black. Their circumstances reveal a gentle lesson about racial harmony. The story was written by Maxine Fisher, who went on to adapt a Creole folktale to address modern problems of lonely poor older people and young female children with too much responsibility for their age in *The Talking Eggs,* made in 1992 for PBS. The film's main character, Selina, is encouraged to follow her

dreams in spite of her situation. Helene Angel, the little girl in *Whitewash* (1994) who is the victim of a racist attack, also learns to trust in her future when her family and her community rally around her. In Sporn's latest film, *Champagne* (1996), it is as if he's found the real-life embodiment of the positive outlook and life-affirming lessons of his own films.



Champagne.

Champagne, an Animated Documentary

Champagne is the story of a 14-year-old girl who lives in a foster home for children whose mothers are in prison. "It's an animated documentary," Sporn said. "In fact, I entered it in this year's Academy Award competition in the Documentary Category!"

The voice track is a monologue spoken by the title character, a real girl named Champagne, who was brought to Michael's attention by Maxine Fisher, the story and screenwriter of many of has films. Maxine had volunteered for a literacy program, which brought her to the convent where Champagne lived along with several other girls in the same situation. Maxine began taking Champagne to cultural events around the city, and in time, brought her to see Michael's studio one Saturday. After seeing the place and Sporn's work, Champagne said to him "You should make a film about me!" Immediately, he set up a tape recorder and taped Champagne's answers to questions posed by Maxine and himself. The resulting 90 minutes of tape was edited down to 15, and Maxine's voice was added back as the interviewer.

When Sporn brought the idea to a backer with whom he had worked successfully before, he was surprised to hear that they were not interested, in fact, could not imagine anyone being interested in such a story. Michael decided to do it himself. Over the next three years, as his time and money would allow, *Champagne* became a 13-minute film, designed by Sporn and Jason McDonald, and scored by Caleb Sampson.

Production Methods

The first half of the film was animated completely by Michael without a storyboard or layouts. Holding the sequence of scenes in his head, he would animate without a lot of preparation, roughing out the action as he went, and making the drawings one after the other. This straight-ahead method is one generally used by only the most experienced animators, as there are no extreme drawings to inbetween, that is, no major positions done beforehand to be connected by all the intermediate inbetween drawings later. "I'd say I do up to 75% of all the animation in my films, and I make less than the animators I hire to work with me." A heavy load for a producer who also reps himself, has no agent, and even writes most of his own contracts.

Also, since he's perfected the technique of animating in ink, he doesn't need to clean-up (redraw with a single clean line in pencil), nor is it necessary for him and his staff to ink the clean drawings onto acetate cels. In almost all of Sporn's films, including *Champagne* and *Whitewash*, the ink drawings are themselves colored with the chosen media for that film, then aligned and pasted to the cels with rubber cement. When they are cut out with a sharp knife and the excess paper is peeled away, the colored drawings remain on the cel instead of the usual inked and painted version. The advantage of this method is not economics but aesthetic, as any medium that can be applied to paper can be used, thus an endless variety of looks can be achieved with texture and shading as well as subtle color. His staff's judgement must be good. Thus, once Michael

has trained of these talented individuals, he tries to keep using them (e.g., Christine O'Neill has been with Sporn since 1981).

Much of the expressive movement in these films is accomplished with less than full animation. Michael doesn't like the term "limited" when it comes to his films: he prefers to quote Howard Beckerman, veteran New York animator and historian, who says, "It's not limited animation, it's *enough* animation." More or less drawings are used as the action requires, directed with a practiced eye.

Collaborators in Art and Music

Jason McDonald designed and storyboarded the second half of *Champagne*; he also painted all the backgrounds for the film. A talented Parsons graduate, he has worked on several of Sporn's recent productions. He was responsible for the design of some of the most memorable scenes in the film, including where Champagne is visiting her mother in a maximum security jail: the look is cubist-inspired, the walls fragmented into faceted color areas, and the arrangement of characters and settings in abundant empty space conveys feelings of loneliness and isolation.

His use of color and abstract character designs to illustrate emotional states is mirrored in Sporn's scenes. Michael's use of stark islands of light in blackness serve as pointers to highlight Champagne's words, especially her recollections of her unhappy early childhood. The styles are matched well, and further enhanced by Michael's masterful use of camera moves. He gets more out of each scene this way, enlivening every shot as he underscores the emotional content and dramatic intent much as his composer, Caleb Sampson, does in creating the film score.

Caleb Sampson scored *Whitewash* as well as *Champagne*, and many other Sporn productions. In fact, his first "paying gig" in the film score business was for Sporn. He has worked with other producers and has just finished his first feature film, directed by Erroll Morris. Caleb credits Sporn for getting him started, calling him "an idealist, artistically and socially", and appreciates Michael's "poetic, gentle view" of the world.



Whitewash.

The advantage of this method is not economics but aesthetic, as any medium that can be applied to paper can be used, thus an endless variety of looks can be achieved with texture and shading as well as subtle color.

Although the initial ideas about the music come from Sporn, this first consultation can last all of three minutes. Then, armed with an animatic (essentially a filmed storyboard with scenes roughly timed as they would be in the final animation), Sampson goes to work. For *Champagne*, however, the score was written to the completed final animation.

The filmmaker leaves the musician to complete the first rough version of the score without interference; eventually, they'll settle on a final form. Sporn says "Once I've got that music, I know I've *got* the film." He likes to give his contributors a lot of freedom, because he knows that will allow them to do their heartfelt best. Sampson says, "When I do my best, he knows it—there's no conflict in terms of artistic vision." All of his work for Sporn exhibits a tremendous range of musical styles. In *Champagne* there's orchestral moodiness presented simply; in *Whitewash,* the score's more complex and accommodates songs from other artists, done as a mix of rap and pop, gospel and jazz, as if sampled from the neighborhood streets.

John Hubley's Influence

In both films, the design of the characters is based on real people, but not the idealized, exaggerated forms of "reality"-based shows like *Batman* or *Superman.* The influence of John Hubley, for whom Michael worked for years, shows in both the design and visualizing techniques of some passages, which are reminiscent of *Everybody Rides the Carousel,* on which Sporn was assistant director.

"Hubley was one of my heroes. Ever since I knew about him, I wanted to work for him," Michael said simply.

The Hubleys pioneered the technique of using improvised voice tracks, presenting a situation or idea to their voice actors and recording the result: hours of their children pretending to catch a bird (Moonbird), for example, or Dizzy Gillespie's musings on the world's condition (The Hole), all edited later. Champagne's words are all her own, but, unlike Hubley, it is one of only two films for which he recorded a voice without a script. The other time is in Whitewash where a group of children are discussing how to help their classmate through the bad feelings resulting from a racially-motivated attack. The kids were asked what they thought of the incident, and their responses were recorded. The voice of one child, played by Randall Kaplan, was separated from the group as a linking device, to make it seem as if they were all talking in the same room together. This edit works very well, bringing the reality of their feelings to this delicate situation, to which they found graceful and simple solutions unforeseen by the scriptwriter, Ntozake Shange. This delicate operation was performed by editor Ed Askinazi. Michael gives him a large, early credit in the films he didd, as editing is key to the final look of Sporn's films, more so than is the norm in other animation.

Origins of Whitewash

HBO at first thought that Whitewash would be made as a live-action documentary; but when the victims' mother would not allow them to cooperate with the network, animation seemed the only way out. When HBO's Sheila Nevins brought the idea to Michael, he thought Ntozake Shange might adapt an interesting screenplay from his original treatment. He had seen her hit show, For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide (When the Rainbow is Enuf), and even though he didn't know if she had ever written for the small screen before, he called her. As it turned out, her script needed to be extended, and, with barely enough time to meet a three-month deadline, Sporn's ingenuity was tested. With the children's participation, the story was completed to everyone's satisfaction and to considerable critical acclaim. Whitewash has won 10 awards, including a Carnegie Medal for Best Children's Program, was nominated for an Emmy for the voice acting of Ruby Dee, as well as for two CableAce awards, including one for the screenplay.



Jazztime Tale.

Once again, Sporn's camera is active in the story's exposition, staying close on the main characters, except through the mugging sequence. He plans the camera framing and movement as if it were a person watching the events as they happen. He doesn't like point-of-view shots, which might have been one choice for showing the upsetting and violent attack. He took the opposite route, framing this part of the film as if the observer were all the way across the street. This was a difficult sequence for him to direct, and one he found impossible to animate. He gave the job to a new artist on his staff, Rodolfo Dammagio, who, because of his background in a much broader cartoon style, made the attackers more grotesque than any of Michael's other characters. This, along with the viewpoint, increases the impact of the violence. "I didn't want Bugs Bunny violence, I wanted the feeling of real violence, though it was difficult to find out how to show it," says Sporn.

Also, a change in the background color and lighting adds to the feeling of irrecoverable loss in the children's lives. Nothing after this would be the same. This effect is achieved throught the skills of Bridget Thorne, background painter and production designer, who was one of the first artists hired to work at Michael Sporne Animation.

At one point in the film, the grandmother, played by Ruby Dee, talks about the beginnings of the civil rights struggle. We see a very different graphic style used to show the dogs attacking the Selma marchers, Martin Luther King, and other scenes: jagged scratchy outlines enclose stark greys, blacks and whites on a blank background; the pictures pop on to the screen in a staccato rhythm, startling and flashbulb-sudden. This is tough material even for adults to watch. In the *New York Daily News* review of *Whitewash*, Kenneth M. Chanko said, "At its best, animation speaks to the heart and mind more vividly than real-life depictions. It can also interpret difficult scenes or events that kids can more readily digest. *Whitewash* . . . is an exceptionally knowing animated production."



The Red Shoes.

Not Storytelling as Usual

To accentuate the differences in as-quoted passages of time in his films, Sporn will use a change in graphic style and/or camera technique to set those dream or flashback sequences apart. In addition, his story structure is often modified to incorporate deliberate changes in tense or point of view. Michael says he is "fascinated with the use of time in film," and that, although it is difficult to do in animation, he forces himself to "play around with the story structure . . . anything to change the as-usual straight-ahead telling out of the story." He then can satisfy his impulse to experiment in the context of the storytelling he loves so well.

Michael's films let kids talk; they also do not talk down to them. Words like "sophisticated", "refreshing", and "thought-provoking" are often used by reviewers to describe his work, as well as that "they're entertaining for adults as well." Does Sporn intend his films primarily for children? "No", he said, "I make all my films for myself first. It just so happens that the children's market has been the most receptive." He wants his films to be seen: the unyielding format is not a burden; in fact, he'd never think of making a film without considering the potential market, even if the distribution outlet is not always clear, as was the case with *Champagne*. "Nobody wanted to put it on television at first, but it's been doing very well in the nontheatrical educational market." It's a film for young girls who need the sort of confidence-building triumph over adversity that is personified by Champagne, who says, "Just because you've had a bad life, doesn't mean you're ruined forever."

Michael's films let kids talk; they also do not talk down to them.

And Now for Something a Little Different

Michael Sporn has always wanted to do features in New York. He's saying now that it looks very likely that he will be able to start work soon on one of the several projects he has been promoting over the last few years, an urban update of *Thumbelina*. He admits that the story is a bit more "commercial" than the films noted above, but with the introduction of modern elements, including the race question, it's certain that the result will be more meaningful than any fairy tale-based film to date. "How a tiny woman helps the world !," is Sporn's jocular encapsulation of the plot.

And the work will stay in New York: "My work has a lot to do with the city; it's got to be done here, where people [who will work on the film] are living their lives in the city." He'll be using those same personal production methods that have proven the most versatile and cost-effective for him over the past 17 years as an independent producer. I can't wait.

Janet Benn began her animation career in New York at The Hubley Studio in 1975 on Everybody Rides the Carousel, *on which Michael Sporn was Assistant Director. Subsequently, they could sometimes be found working on the same productions and on the Executive Board of ASIFA-East; after Sporn opened his own studio he hired Janet as Production Coordinator on the titles for Sidney Lumet's* Garbo Talks. *Since then, they have rarely been seen together and only at public functions. Seriously, folks, Janet has been to every one of Michael's Christmas parties since 1980.*

Yvonne Andersen: Profile of a Pioneer

by Wendy Jackson



Yvonne Andersen

As an animation artist, teacher, filmmaker and author, Yvonne Andersen has influenced the lives and work of hundreds of people. From organizing exhibitions and experimental film screenings, to teaching animation to children and adults at her Yellow Ball Workshop, she has been a radical and innovative pioneer in everything she's done. I spent some time talking with Yvonne and a few of her students and collaborators to learn more about her fascinating life.

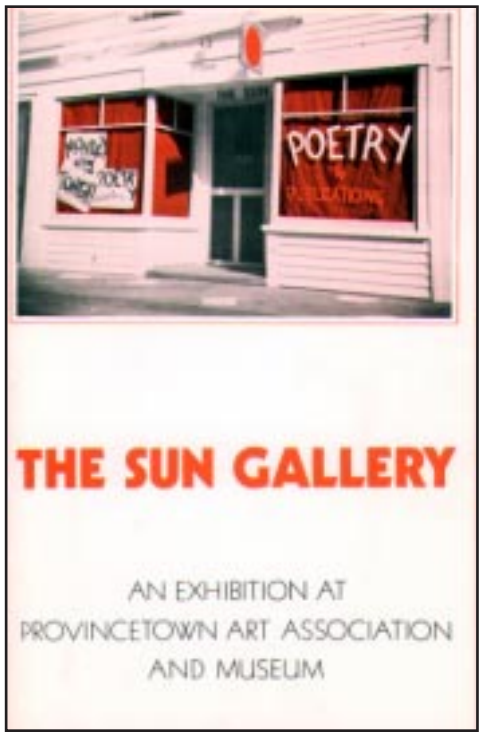
The Sun Gallery

In 1955, Yvonne Andersen and her husband, Dominic Falcone, opened The Sun Gallery, a revolutionary art space on the tip of Cape Cod, in Provincetown, Massachusetts. Set up in a storefront, and open only in the summertime, the gallery featured weekly exhibitions of work by up and coming avant-garde artists of the time. "Our goal was to find new artists, who possibly hadn't had shows before, who had interesting work." Yvonne recollects. Red Grooms, Lester Johnson, Robert and Mary Frank, Vera Williams, Tony Vevers and Alex Katz were among the 100 artists who exhibited at The Sun Gallery during its five year life span, 1955-59. Many of these went on to have great renown and extensive careers in the art world. "I was criticized for some of the people we gave first one-man shows to," she recalls, "but after the second year, everyone wanted to have a show in our gallery, because people were becoming famous."

One such artist was Red Grooms, formerly known as Charles Rogers Grooms. He adopted the nickname "Red" after being renamed for his first one-man show at The Sun Gallery, and the name stuck with him. Today, Grooms is an established New York artist, with paintings lithographs, sculptures and other works selling for tens of thousands of dollars a piece. (Yvonne recalls that they didn't sell a single piece at his first one-man show!). "Yvonne Andersen was one of the paramount influences on my life as an artist," Grooms said recently. "I was lucky enough to meet Yvonne and Dominic upon my arrival in Provincetown the summer of 1957, when their magical Sun Gallery was in full bloom. Yvonne not only showed me the way to the future of art, she also taught me carpentry."

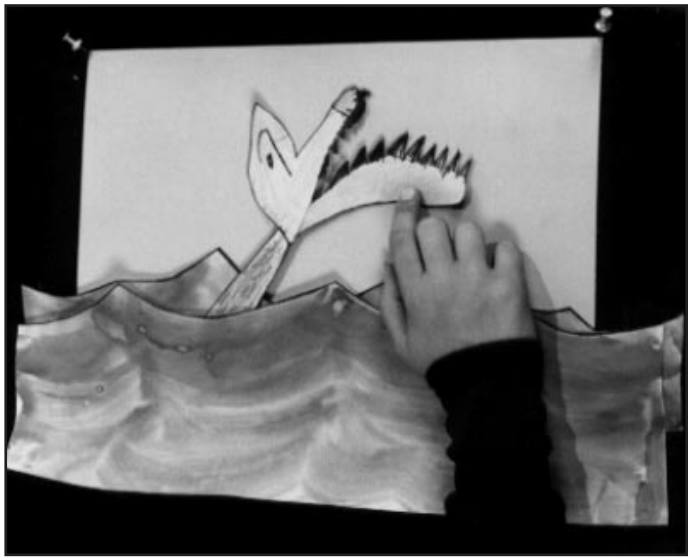
Events, Screenings and Installations

In addition to exhibitions of paintings, sculpture, and other static works, The Sun Gallery was also



Brochure from The Provincetown Art Association and Museum's 1981 retrospective of The Sun Gallery.

host to events such as installations, classes, performance art, and film screenings. "The gallery was run almost like a theater," recalls Andersen. "We didn't just have exhibitions, we had possibly the first environment." One of the visiting artists was Alan Kaprow, an early pioneer in the American performance art movement known for his "happenings." Grooms also presented several performances in these years, of which he said "[I was] plunging into the unknown, something existential, just letting it happen. It was the opposite of literary theater; rough, crude, but stimulating."





Paul Falcone, age 6, working on *Underwater Creatures*.

At that time, Andersen was also presenting programs of experimental films at night; she said that, "The film screenings were highly controversial. Even in New York, people were hearing about what we were showing." Renting 16mm prints from many now-defunct distributors like Brandon and Contemporary Films, Andersen was disappointed by the limited selection of animated films. She recalls, "I was always trying to get good variety for my programs: documentary, fiction, maybe a few features, and animation. But there wasn't too much high-quality animation. And what little there was, was very expensive. That's when I said, 'Well, I'll just make some stuff for the show.' I had never animated before. I couldn't even run a movie projector." So, Yvonne invested in a camera and some equipment, learning by trial and error. "I found out it wasn't quite as easy as I thought it might be. But that's how I started." she adds.

The first film finished was *Spaghetti Trouble,* made together with Red Grooms in 1963, and still in distribution by the Filmmaker's Co-op in New York. From then on, she and Dominic went on to make many more films—several in collaboration with Red Grooms, including *Fat Feet, Meow, Meow* and *Appolinaire Unexpected.* Independently, and in collaboration, Yvonne has produced more than nine shorts films, most recently *We Will Live Forever,* an animated illustration of a poem by Dominic Falcone.

"The next thing I knew, there were always little people sitting in those little chairs, using up my art supplies!"

Yellow Ball Workshop: Accidental Beginnings

By 1960, Yvonne and Dominic had closed the gallery and were raising their two children, Jean and Paul Falcone, in Everett, Massachusetts. Thinking back to the beginnings of her teaching activities, Yvonne recalls a seemingly unrelated incident. "We had moved into a new apartment, and we had to get some furniture for it. My mother-in-law knew this guy who tore down old buildings and schools, so we went to get some used furniture. They had all these little children's chairs, they were exquisite, and only 50 cents each. So I bought 8 of them, took them home, and put them around the work table." Andersen had always provided plenty of art supplies for her own children, who often had friends over to make art projects. Soon enough, children were coming to the house, asking to come in and play, even when her own children weren't home. "The next thing I knew, there were always little people sitting in those little chairs, using up my art supplies!" recalls Andersen. "They were doing very good work, so I decided I might as well get it organized." So, in 1963, the Yellow Ball Workshop was born when Yvonne began offering art classes in her home, for two hours every Saturday, charging each child only one dollar per lesson to cover the cost of supplies.

The evolution of the art classes into animation workshops was not something that Yvonne had planned. "One day, I showed the students the film that Red and I had made, and they wanted to make a

film, too." she recalls. "One of the boys had lots of good ideas, but he never really made anything. So I said 'Well, you write a script and we'll do it.' The next week the boy came in with a script. So there I was, I was stuck, we had to do it!" The first film they made was *The Amazing Colossal Man,* a group project with papier-mâché characters shot in stop-motion on 16mm film.

Word spread about the animation workshops, and the class size tripled from 12 to 36. Yellow Ball films were screened with acclaim at universities and festivals, a compilation of them winning first prize at the Rhode Island Film Festival. The $300. in prize money enabled Yvonne to pay off the film lab bills that had added up.

In The Public Eye

Before long, people were beginning to notice her and she was being approached in all directions. "I didn't know it at the time, but apparently nobody had done this before," Yvonne said, recalling the overwhelming attention that ensued. Schools and educational institutions began purchasing and renting the children's films. She appeared as a guest on the *Mike Douglas Show* and the *Today* show, and in 1970, she produced a 13 minute documentary for CBS television called *Let's Make a Film.* That same year, Yvonne was approached by two different publishers to write instructional books about animation, resulting in the publication of *Make Your Own Animated Movies,* written for children, and *Teaching Film Animation to Children,* done for adults. From 1973-77, Yvonne wrote a regular column on animation techniques for *Super-8 Filmmaker Magazine.*



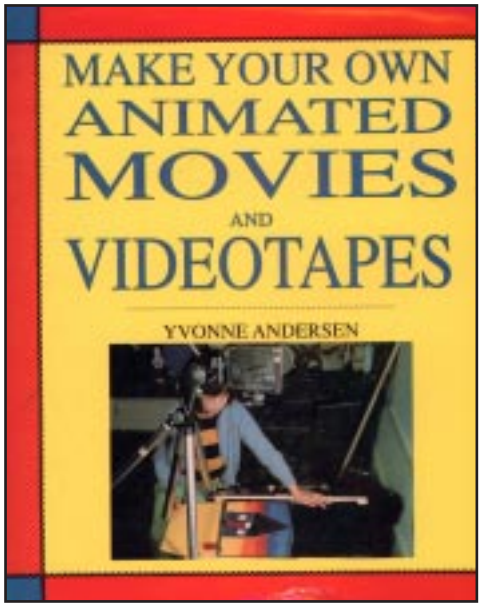
We Will Live Forever **by Yvonne Andersen and Dominic Falcone.**

All of this attention even led to commercial projects for Yvonne and her students, bringing in some money to finance the film, supplies and accumulating lab bills. Such kid-produced films that came out of Yellow Ball include four "peacock logo" spots for NBC, test commercials for Cheetos snacks, an educational series for Westinghouse, vignettes for the children's show, *Hot Dog,* and opening films for the White House conference on children.

Expanding to venues outside of her home studio, Yvonne began teaching more involved classes at elementary schools and community centers, such as Project Incorporated in Cambridge. It was at the Newton Creative Arts Center, where she taught a six-week summer class, that Yvonne first met Amy Kravitz, one of several students who went on to careers in animation. Amy recalls, "When I was a child in her class, one of the most important things Yvonne did was take me seriously. She took all of us seriously. She was direct, contained, structured and responsible. She almost never praised us—she worked with us. She helped us make our ideas concrete, to make things happen. Yvonne has the magic ability to make learning exciting and gratifying."

"When I was a child in her class, one of the most important things Yvonne did was take me seriously. She took all of us seriously."

Through a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, Yvonne was soon traveling all over the country, offering three-month workshops in elementary schools, sometimes bringing a teaching assistant with her to stay on longer. In all, the films produced by Yvonne's young students have won more than 125 awards at international film festivals. In a review of a Yellow Ball retrospective screening in *The Village Voice,* Jonas Mekas said, "The feeling that comes through, the amazing strength and directness with which children can catch a mood, a situation, their humor. Without any exaggeration,



Andersen's book published by Little, Brown in 1991.

these are about the best animated films made anywhere today."

In 1985 and 1987, once Yvonne was teaching at the college level, she traveled to Armenia to work on a collaboration with an organization called International Artists for Peace. Sixty American artists and children were sent to the Soviet Union to create art projects in association with Armenian children and artists. The resulting projects were *A Drop of Honey* and *The Golden Ball,* both short animated films based on Armenian folk tales.

While continuing with the classes for children, Yvonne began offering extended-period courses for adults. Once a month, she offered three day intensive adult workshops. "It started off with one person." recalls Anderson. "A woman from a university in Pennsylvania called up and asked for a private workshop." The rest is history. A wide variety of people came to the weekend workshops for a variety of reasons: teachers, librarians, people who worked in hospitals and maximum security reformatories, even people sent by the State Department from Nigeria. Each of them took with them an experience that they could then go and share with their own students. In this way, Yvonne educated a whole new generation of educators, many of whom are now teaching animation workshops of their own.

Rhode Island School of Design

In 1979, Yvonne was invited to teach animation part time at Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), one of the premier art institutions in the country. "At first I didn't think too much about it," Yvonne said, "but then I realized it would present me with an opportunity to stay in one place for once, instead of being on the road all the time. So I did it." Five years later, she was brought on full time, and served as head of the Film and Video Department for nine years.

Yvonne educated a whole new generation of educators, many of whom are now teaching animation workshops of their own.

As in the Yellow Ball days, Yvonne expects a lot from her students, and she is recognized for her organized, almost militant teaching style. Even in her first introductory animation courses at RISD, she taught sophisticated filmmaking from day one, having her students make complete films, from A/B rolling and negative cutting to sound design and answer printing. Shortly after Yvonne started full time at RISD, Yvonne's former student/teaching assistant Amy Kravitz joined the department; by then, she was a CalArts graduate and award-winning independent filmmaker.

Today, RISD has one of the best fine art animation programs available, with Yvonne teaching Introduction to Animation, Puppet Animation and Special Effects courses, while Amy and her husband, Steve Subotnick, teach the advanced and degree project courses. Every year, a new generation of animators comes out of the program, armed with Yvonne's training and instilled with her love for the art of animation. She gives her students something to take with them. I should know . . . I'm one of them.

Books by Yvonne Andersen

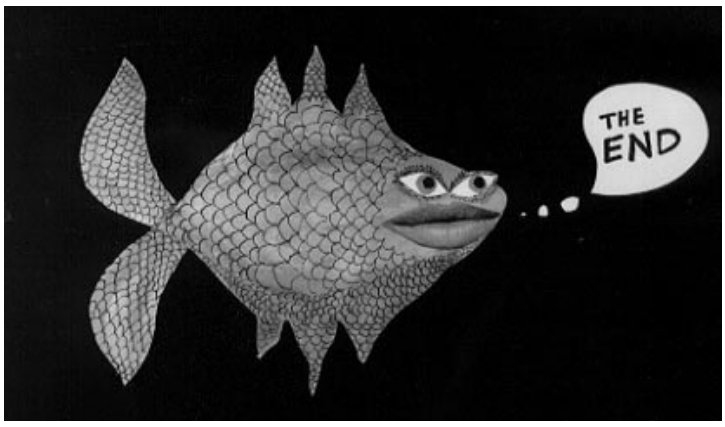
Teaching Film Animation to Children (Van Nostrand Reinhold 1970)
Make Your Own Animated Movies and Videotapes (Little, Brown, 1991)
Make Your Own Animated Movies (Little, Brown, 1991)

Films by Yvonne Andersen

The Laundry, 3 minutes, 1962
One Hot Dog With Mustard, 12 minutes, 1962
Spaghetti Trouble, 2 minutes, 1963
Fat Feet, 20 minutes, 1966
Meow, Meow, 8 minutes, 1969
Let's Make A Film, 13 minutes, 1970
I Saw Their Angry Faces, 12 minutes, 1977
We Will Live Forever, 5 minutes, 1994

Many of the above and several reels of student films are available on film and video from:
Yellow Ball Workshop, 62 Tarbell Ave. Lexington, MA 02173 USA.

Wendy Jackson is Associate Editor of Animation World Magazine, *and is one of Yvonne Andersen's former students at the Rhode Island School of Design.*



Just A Fishment of My Imagination **by Carol Sones, age 16.**

Folk Animation: Low Tech Art in the High Tech Age

by John Serpentelli



John Serpentelli

The connection between children and animation seems simple enough. To a child, anything is possible and the same is true for animation. Despite this obvious link; it is very rare that children get to make animation. The reason that springs to mind is that the technology has not allowed this to happen with great ease. Of course, there have been adults and organizations that have dedicated themselves to bringing film equipment to children, but it is expensive and cumbersome. What will happen when high technology, as it becomes more affordable and portable, can provide children with the means to express themselves in the art form that best suits their unique abilities? Who will be in charge of the creative output, the children or the technology?

Children have the ability to devour all art forms and appreciate artists without bothering with "matters of great consequence," such as in what genre does the work of art belong or where has the artist shown the work. Since animation is an art form that can involve almost all other art forms and children can directly encounter the art world in an unfiltered manner, they have the ideal qualifications for creating what I call "folk animation." Children make folk animation when they disregard the rules of conventional animation and the established art world. Given the chance and access to the necessary tools, children can capture the essence of something: its look, its movement, its sound with all the truly important details, rather than just following a formula or coloring within the lines.

If you have ever closely watched a child make art, you have realized that it just isn't true that children have short attention spans and are incapable of sustained concentration. The capturing of the details becomes crucial, not for the sake of permanent documentation, but rather as a representation of the thing at that moment in time. A thing, as all children know, can look very different from one moment to the next. A thing is always in the state of flux, it changes depending on where you stand, what has happened before, and what is about to happen. A child will adapt the drawing of a thing to better explain it in its current state.

Children have the ability to devour all art forms and appreciate artists without bothering with "matters of great consequence," such as in what genre does the work of art belong or where has the artist shown the work.

Children are interested not only in capturing the look of a thing but also in its sound. Their pictures and sounds can tell you something; they can tell stories. People can't resist telling stories. We start almost immediately; babies tell stories long before

any adults figure any of it out; so many great stories are lost this way. For adults, it may be hard to understand a story, but it's usually not as hard as it is to tell a story. For babies and young children, it's not difficult at all to tell a story, or to tell a story over and over, or one little piece of a story over and over. So many, many details to capture.

Children, of course, tell stories with words and pictures. They have no difficulty telling a story with words and pictures at the same time. While a child introduces the main characters' "personalities" by putting on disguised voices, the characters are being formed on the page with meaningful lines and gestures. As more details of the plot are revealed , more details are added to the page. The drawing, in a sense, is moving. The child, in a sense, is making a film. For that matter, a child coloring a picture while providing the soundtrack is engaging in the most basic form of interactive multimedia.



John Serpentelli and one of his classes. Photo by Deborah Reber.

The appreciation of child's art or of folk art is not just a warm feeling of charm," but more of a fascination in a novel way of seeing, thinking and representing the everyday world.

Some Girls in the Hood

My experiences making animation collaborations with children began when I had the idea to let children tell their stories in the art form that they love. What I envisioned was a classroom of bright-eyed eight-year olds; what I was led to was a correctional high school for girls with weapons offenses. This twist of fate turned out to be a fortunate blending of adult experience with childlike expression. This particular group of African-American girls had a great deal to say in their art due to their rather troubled lives, yet they did so in a refreshingly uninhibited manner due to an overall lack of formal art training or preconceived notions. The drawings were not the typical "studied" illustrations found in so many high school art classes; the drawings still had a link to an honest, precise and freer style of early childhood; the difference being that the subject matter was now drive-by shootings, winning the lottery, and racial identity on the evening news.

The final outcome, Some Girls in the Hood, was made by a group of girls who are virtually absent in mass media, let alone have access to make media; so, not surprisingly, they had doubts that they would really be making an animated film that might be seen by someone outside their world. Right from the start, my intention was not to give the basics of assembly-line animation, or even the basics of formal drawing lessons. Instead, I was more interested in what would happen if they could, with as little intervention as possible, make an animated film. The simple idea was to capture what was important to them in an art form that, although familiar, is not usually an option for personal expression. In order to unburdened the class of the notion that we would be attempting to imitate a big-budget, Hollywood," animated, musical extravaganza, I showed them examples of fine art animation that demonstrated that there was more than one way to skin a mouse. The girls responded strongly to the idea that they could actually make an animated film that meant something to them.

Ultimately, the girls came up with the overall concept, produced the drawings and paintings, wrote the script and provided the narration. The result was a film that we viewed over and over, each time one of the young artists would point out a specific detail that they had included. They were there in the animation; they were telling their story complete with soundtrack and moving pictures. The film does suffer from one aspect of "low tech": it has a soundtrack which at times is difficult to hear, but due to the directness by which the film was made, the girls' "voices" are heard loud and clear.

I believe that it is this low tech directness, the folk animation qualities, that enabled the film to be seen outside of the correctional high school. It was broadcast on several local television stations in two states, won numerous film festival awards,

has been shown in galleries and art museums, and even now, some four years later, it is still being invited to festivals as far away as Amsterdam and Germany.

Narrative Quilts

I have since had the good fortune to make several more films collaboratively with children. I was commissioned by Children's Television Workshop to create an animated segment for Sesame Street. This time, I was collaborating with a group of much younger artists. We looked at the art of Romare Bearden as a source for stylistic inspiration for the 8 foot collage that became the background for our cutout animated film. We also made a public service announcement for UNICEF, where we paid homage to Joan Miro in the visual style of the art and the dreamlike style of the story. With a different group of collaborators, I invited an artist and her 80-year-old mother to show the children how to make narrative quilts. The final animated project, Dream Quilt, is a patching together of the children's personal memories and imagination with their painted and collaged quilt squares. Once Upon a Time . . ., a short history of the USA as explained by Jason Walker, age 8 is a collaborative film made with composer Robert Moran. This "history tale" was originally told to Moran by 8-year olds, then transformed into slides of black and white American folk art characters. In this new version, I took the original designs from the slides and simply made the story move, and added the voice of a child to narrate. It's as basic as a child telling a familiar story with words and pictures—at the same time.



Students filming artwork for *Dream Quilt*. Photo by Deborah Reber

The appreciation of child's art or of folk art is not just a warm feeling of "charm," but more of a fascination in a novel way of seeing, thinking and representing the everyday world. A simplified yet intricate way of making sense or responding to whatever it was that caught your attention while you were doing something else. Capturing this creative process in the state of movement is the catalyst for making collaborative folk animation.

A child coloring a picture while providing the soundtrack is engaging in the most basic form of interactive multimedia.

It will be fascinating to see how technology will change the way children tell stories. If the technology merely provides the equivalent of an animated coloring book, then that would be a grave disservice to children and they, more than likely, would be insulted or at least bored. Hopefully technology will provide a means for children to create animated films with the flexibility of a piece of paper and a few crayons; after all, no one has ever been that inspired by a well executed coloring book page—low tech or high tech.



Students filming artwork for *Dream Quilt*. Photo by Deborah Reber.

John Serpentelli has had his animation collaborations seen on Nickelodeon, Sesame Street and in The New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York City. He is the Owner and Creative Director of Art & Animation Station, a fine art animation school in Philadelphia .

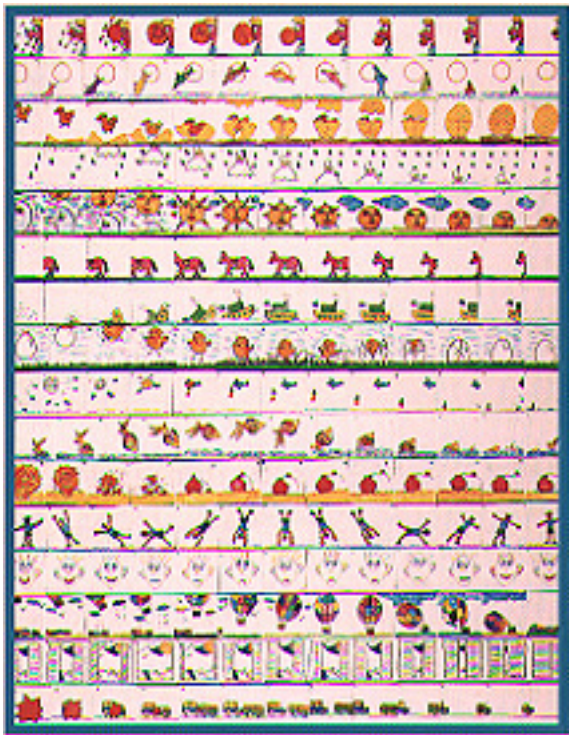
Kids Making Animation: A Sampling of Children's Animation Workshops Around the World

Compiled by Wendy Jackson

Across the globe, there are pioneering people sharing their love for the art and craft of animation through teaching children. Some workshops are affiliated with the ASIFA International Children's Workshop initiative, while others are run independently of any other groups. From cameraless techniques such as Zoetropes and drawing on film, to drawn, cutout and model animation, these workshops have one thing in common: they teach children to understand abstract concepts of time, movement and design, while giving them an opportunity to express themselves creatively. Here are profiles of what some teachers are doing.

Carousel, Tel-Aviv, Israel

Eitan Oded heads up this workshop, which finds its home base "all over the country," with funding derived from "school budgets, parents, and educational funds." This independent workshop is designed for children ages 6-17. Oded reports that, he's "a computer systems analyzer, freelance journalist, interior and graphic designer, and a teacher of animation, art and photography."



Zoetrope strips made by children in Israel.

"Carousel," Oded notes, is a "one-time animation workshop, aimed at giving the inexperienced participant the basic experience of creating a short animation film. I don't need any special preparation to do the workshop, but I can start at once. I use a big Zoetrope to show the animations, and we usually record the short films on video as well.

"One of the most rewarding experiences I have had occurred when I was asked to do a workshop in a special school for mentally disabled children. I was a little skeptical about the

chance for the activity to succeed, but I decided to try it anyway. All the teachers warned me to lower my expectations, so I would not be disappointed. We started the workshop with many anxieties, but finished with lots of joy and happiness. The films were wonderful and especially colorful. The sensation and the atmosphere during the whole workshop was happy and everyone was smiling."

Eitan Oded, 32 Har-Zion Blvd., Tel-Aviv 66047 Israel, Tel/fax: 972-3-6391555.

Tekenfilm Club, Amsterdam

The Tekenfilm Club is located in Veenendaal, Utrecht, The Netherlands, and draws its faculty and funding from Rembrandt College; it is headed by independent filmmaker Monique Renault, whose films include Pas a Deux and Borderline. It teaches its workshops to children up to 13-years old. Its mission is, "To give children a different look at what they take for granted when they passively watch TV. To make them critique and show them how it moves. How long is a second?"

The workshops take place each Thursday afternoon for an hour-and-a-half over a 6 six week period with 20 children. It teaches its kids to do flipbooks, drawing on film, animation on paper and pixilation.

Monique Renault,
Nieuwerdammerdijk 157
10-25-LG Amsterdam,
The Netherlands.

Animation Workshop, Baco Bampo, Mexico

In November of 1996, Austrian artists James Clay and Renate Zuniga traveled to Baco Bampo, the remote village of the Yoreme Indians in Wayparin, Mexico. Here, they presented a one-month animation workshop for the children in the village. Four minutes of animation were produced by 12 children who had never even seen animation before. The film they created was based on a ceremony called "La Danza del Venaldo" which is very important to the cultural and religious life of the village, a mix between Spanish Catholocism and native Shamanism.

Every detail of the Baco Bampo project had to be thoroughly planned in advance, as there would be no supplies available in the village. There is no electricity, so Clay and Zuniga had to bring flashlights to use underneath the makeshift animation drawing tables (see photo). They also brought with them all paper, pencils, and art supplies, even hand-made animation peg-bars made of metal strips and pieces of wooden dowel. Film was processed in Mexico city after the workshop was complete. Clay recalls that it was difficult to get the classes started on schedule, as there were no watches or clocks in the village, the children just showed up at irregular times. The solution to this problem turned out to be to make the classes start first thing in the morning.

The workshop was funded by donations from the city of Vienna, the Austrian Ministry of Culture, UNESCO, and Austrian television, which also produced a 15 minute documentary film, featuring the children's animation and covering the entire workshop in Baco Bampo.

James Clay is a member of the ASIFA International Children's Workshop group, and teaches animation in Austrian schools and prisons.

James Clay,
Siebenbrunengasse 92/12/35,
A-1050 Vienna, Austria
Tel: 1-555-8535.



James Clay with animation students in Mexico.

Single-Frame Studio, Norwich, Vermont, USA

Independent animation teacher Gail Banker states as her mission to "foster the understanding of hand-crafted filmmaking." With more than 12 years experience teaching animation to people of all ages, Gail has educated all kinds of people about the art of animation. In addition to teaching animation part-time at a New Hampshire middle school, and for six weeks each

summer at a Massachusetts arts program, she operates a variety of workshops out of her home studio in Norwich, Vermont.

Funded by a modest tuition, Single-Frame Studio offers spring and fall workshops, which are 20 hours each taught over the course of 6 weeks; they cover flipbooks, cutouts, clay animation, object animation, pixillation, sand animation, collage, and "any other techniques students wish to explore, with the exception of computer animation." The films are shot on super-8 film and screened at a special showing for family and friends at the end of the six weeks, then transferred to video for the students to keep.

In a course for more advanced students, called "Kids Speaking to Kids," the students create public service announcements on subjects such as substance abuse, racial tensions, sexual harassment, HIV prevention and substance abuse. The PSAs are then presented in doctor's offices and on local public access cable stations.

Gail herein shares with us her favorite teaching exercise: Round Robin Flipbooks.

"This is a beginning exercise for three or more students. Using a 100-sheet, 6" x 9" blank pad of paper, trace a rectangle on the last page that will represent the 3 x 4 ratio of the movie screen. Then mark both side ends of the book with a line corresponding to the top line of the rectangle.

"Now open the book from the top, and on the second page from the top, make a simple drawing in the (visualized) space of the rectangle. Don't become too involved in this drawing, because you will not really be working with it. When the drawing is complete, flip the above page down and make a tracing of your drawing. Now you have two identical drawings. Tear out the top page and pass it to the person on your right. When you receive a drawing from your neighbor, tape it into the pad on the last page, where you made the rectangle.

"Bind the top of the pad with masking tape, so that the pages will not come loose while you are drawing. Now you are ready to start drawing animation in your flipbook. Everyone should use the same kind of pen so that the line throughout will be consistent. Begin with the blank page above the drawing (your neighbor's) that you just taped in. Trace, and gradually begin to change the drawing a little bit each page, until (98 pages later) you transform the image into your original drawing.

"When everyone has completed their flipbooks, film them frame by frame, in order so that the first drawing of each book corresponds with the last drawing of the previous book. Depending upon how many students are involved in this exercise, you may have a longer film with no pre-determined beginning or end. It is interesting to see how themes emerge and re-emerge in this exercise."

Gail Banker, Single-Frame Studio, 212 Waterman Hill Rd. Norwich, VT 05055-9687 USA Tel: 802-649-1081 Fax: 603-650-6898 Email: gailb@hhs.edu.

Camera Enfants Admis, Liege, Belgium

Camera Enfants Admis (CEA) (which translates as Camera Children Admitted) is an association that aims at initiating the public into audiovisual media from early childhood on up. They have developed standard programs which are adapted according to the wishes of teachers. The workshops teach a variety of techniques, including cartoons, cutouts, and puppets. They are held all year long at schools, and are usually given over 1-10 three-hour periods in a classroom. During holidays, they like to give week-long workshops open to everybody, from 5 to 95.

The CEA's mission is "to develop the critical mind of the media 'customers' we have become." The staff works in school circles and in youth centers, both in Belgium and all over Europe. The association also organizes weekly workshops for children, evening classes for adults and introductory courses during school holidays. One of its main activities is to facilitate the creation of short animated films by giving participants the opportunity to engage in all stages of the animation process.

CEA also puts on two "didactic itinerant exhibitions," takes part in international festivals, as well as in competitions and cultural meetings "as much in Belgium as abroad."

Jean-Luc Slock, Veronique Michel, Camera Enfants Admis, Cour St. Gilles, 35, 4000 Liege Belgium Tel: 4-253-5957 Fax: 4-252-5631.

Inner-City Arts, Los Angeles, California USA

Inner-City Arts is a private non-profit art school located in downtown Los Angeles, which hosts a Teen Saturday Animation Program and a biweekly Animation Program for Elementary School Children.

Their mission is to explore the artistic potential of animation.





Inner-City Arts in Los Angeles

Teenage students do hands-on work with Sony animation equipment, see videos and films of cutting-edge animation, do group and individual projects in a variety of media. It works with 450 elementary children a day on weekdays, year round, in visual arts, animation, ceramics, dance, drama, music and language arts. Its Saturday component offers a teen animation program taught in collaboration with California Institute of the Arts graduate students.

"There was a young girl in our first elementary animation program who hated animation. The CalArts student teachers worked hard with her and turned her on to the creative process—she did a 180 degree turn; she became so good and so fast that she wound up helping her classmates.

"To see the excitement on the faces of new students as they first experience the Zoetrope, which allows a strip of 12 drawings to become animation."

Inner-City Arts, 720 Kohler Street Los Angeles, CA 90021 USA. Tel: 213-627-9621 Fax: 213-627-6469.

Animathon International Inc., Mont Saint-Hilaire, Quebec, Canada

This private organization, whose faculty includes André Leduc, producer, and Florence Bolté, Professor of Cinema and Scriptwriting. It is funded by asking for "financial participation" from host organizations and/or from participants. Leduc sent in the following description of what it's all about:

Ludoptik

"Ludoptik is a workshop for making optical toys such as Thaumatropes, Phenakistoscopes, Zoetropes, or flipbooks without frame-by-frame filming. It is ideal for young children, ages 6-13 years old, as it takes only a few hours to show students the frame-by-frame principle and initiate them into the world of cinema and animation. Simple exercises help students understand the phenomenon of retinal persistence and enable them to grasp the technique of quickly creating animated images, without using a camera. The toys created could then be filmed frame by frame and turned into an animated video.

Animathon

"The word animathon, which is a combination of the words animation and marathon, expresses the two aspects of our project, i.e. the production of an animated film in record time. Usually it takes several weeks or even months to produce an animated film. The animathon takes place on the challenge of producing an animated film in record time, all participants are working against the clock. An animation film produced by 6 to 8 people that runs about 30 seconds from start to finish takes about 30 hours. This is indeed "record time". A standard animathon lasts between 24 and 32 hours.

"Before starting the animation, the team agrees to the graphic style they want at the storyboard stage. The final prototype evolves after swapping drawings, trying out various possibilities, and making a few compromises. The drawings are usually shot frame-by-frame on Super VHS video. Our setup also equips us to shoot

a range of mediums: VHS, Betacam, 35mm or 16mm. No previous experience is necessary to participate. The workshop makes animated cinema available to everyone who wants to participate in a game, produce a film, and see the results quickly. These films are based on music, which is an international language; they address a vast international public, unhampered by language barriers. This activity can be done with children from 14 years old.

"Teaching animation is a way of communication by knowing new people and culture. With Animathon those past years, we have been in communication with thousands of people from 6 to 79 years old in 15 countries. For us, making an animation is a human experience through art; it is also being close to the imaginary which is always a privilege. Everywhere we go, we have memorable experiences. We would like to share one of them with you.

Teaching Animation to the Blind

"In 1991, two young nonsighted people registered to participate in an Animathon workshop. We had to adapt our equipment to meet their needs. We had no doubts about their capability to draw; the muscular memory principle—developed by Norman McLaren—which enable one to reproduce a drawing and then keep the movement memory for the following ones, reassured us.

"The mark system is usually determined by transparency; it defines the field/space in which the animator can work. In order to simplify it, we created cardboard guages that we put above the drawing paper and the lugs to insure stability and shooting within the norms. We chose scented pencils to help them identify the colors: strawberry for red, mint for green, blueberry for blue, coffee for brown, etc.

"These two youngsters, with an animator, started the marathon with some anxiety. They soon felt more confident as, within an hour, quicker than the others, they built their screenplay by listening to the music. They immediately recognized a musical leitmotiv and decided to built their screenplay using it. In the same way, these musical pieces allowed them to use less drawings. They found an humorist Title, the Man Who Planted/Dumped in the Trees, in reference to their handicap (and to Frédérick Back's The Man Who Planted Trees), and started working.

"During the workshop, they refused to use the scented pencils that they found disgusting. They accepted the cardboard guide and finished their film in time.

"They demystified to our eyes and ears the relation of the man to art. Their speech can be summarized by this question, debated during these hours spent together: 'Who can claim to art, the sighted or nonsighted people?" As the nonsighted has no visual reference, isn't he the one who can?"



Child drawing on an "animation stand" made of bricks and sheet plastic.

Animathon International Inc., BP 85019 , Mont Saint-Hilaire Quebec J3H2P6 CANADA. Tel: 514-467-8909 Fax: 514-467-7625. Email: animathon@animathon.com. Internet: www.animathon.com.

Atelier de cinema d'animation d'Annecy et de Haute-Savoie (A.A.A.), France

(Please also see Nicole Salomon's article on this workshop in the April 1996 issue of Animation World Magazine.)

Besides Nicole Salomon, the workshop is staffed by Laurent

Alessandrini, Karine Jeannet and various professional animators who come as guests. The age of children in the program ranges from 5 to 20 on up. Funding comes from the Ministries of Culture and National Education, CNC, City of Annecy, and the District of Haute-Savoie,.

The workshops will usually enroll up to 20 to 30 students. During the school week, they get students from local elementary and secondary schools, when the kids and their teacher come there instead of their regular school.

Films are made using 16mm or in UMatic video, usually with drawings and some cutouts, on a theme they have chosen previously. A collective storyboard is decided upon on the first morning of the week. Then each student chooses a segment that he/she draws, animates and shoots. On the last day of the week, "the classes take care of their soundtracks."

During the week, the children go through each step of the animation process, ending with a finished film that is the result of a collective effort, in which everyone has participated in. As a result, the students "become more critical spectators."

For individuals, the workshop offers three hour sessions on Wednesdays, either in the morning or afternoon during the school year. During short holidays, it holds 4-5 day workshops, lasting 6 hours a day, for kids 7 on up.

All A.A.A. workshops cover various frame-by-frame techniques, starting with optical toys and screening of auteur films. Techniques used include drawings, cutouts, plasticine, pixilation, powders, objects, puppet and direct-on-film animation. Each participant works on either a personal or collective project, based on a technique they chose.

When asked about their most memorable experience, Nicole Salomon noted that, "Each time we have animators as instructors who do not speak French, the communication between them and the kids becomes totally visual: pantomime, drawings and gestures. And at the end, there is no misunderstanding.

"The best time teaching animation is when the first results are visible. The students are fascinated when they see what they've done. Even their line tests make them happy: they have created life!

She concluded that, "The greatest challenge is to have the less talented kids be able to get results and take an active part in the class production."

Nicole Salomon, A.A.A., 4 passage des Clercs - BP 426 - 74020 Annecy Cedex, France. Tel : (0)4-50-45-1930 Fax : (0)4-50-45-9985.

Wendy Jackson is Associate Editor of Animation World Magazine. *As an animator, she has been involved with teaching animation to children and teenagers for the past six years.*

Editor's Note: *In the future, Animation World Network would like to publish information about additional animation workshops, classes and training programs around the world. Please tell us about workshops you know about or are involved with, by writing to editor@awn.com.*

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unicef Draws on Talent to Advance Children's Rights

by Deborah Reber

Since its inception, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has worked on behalf of children on the basis of need, regardless of race, nationality, status or political belief. As the twentieth century draws to a close, a key part of UNICEF's role has become to raise the world's awareness and mobilize its resources in favor of children.

Although UNICEF has been using animation as a tool for education and change for several years now, its most recent animation initiative has mobilized the global animation industry on an unprecedented scale. UNICEF's International Animation Consortium for Child Rights has brought together nearly 80 top animation studios, animators and distributors to produce 30-second television spots to increase awareness of children's rights.

The Idea

It all started when C.J. Kettler, President and Chief Operating Officer of Sunbow Entertainment, approached UNICEF with the idea of having studios produce animated shorts illustrating key articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This UN document, drafted in 1989, outlines rights that every child should have, including the right to a name and nationality, freedom of expression and opinion, and protection from sexual exploitation and child labor. The shorts would be televised worldwide as public service announcements (PSAs). UNICEF immediately saw the potential of such a campaign.



In the fall of 1995, UNICEF began approaching animation studios about the Consortium, and found the industry was extremely receptive. Among the first 30 Consortium members to sign up were Hanna-Barbera Cartoons, HBO Animation, MTV Animation, Nickelodeon USA, Warner Bros. Feature Animation and Walt Disney Feature Animation. Since then, more than 40 companies from around the world have come on board, from Future Art in Korea to Hahn Films in Germany. In order to join the Consortium, a studio agrees to donate staff time and services to fully produce a 30-second PSA, using new characters and original animation created especially for the campaign.

The studios work closely with UNICEF to ensure that their animated interpretation of the Convention article is culturally sensitive and globally applicable. However, the creative vision of the individual producers is of paramount important to the success of the project. By working with animators from around the world, diversity of style and content will be ensured, and the campaign will truly be a global one. The spots in production to date represent a variety of animation techniques, including cutout, CGI, stop-motion, sand animation, and traditional cel.

The creative vision of the individual producers is of paramount important to the success of the project.

From Nickelodeon to . . .

Nickelodeon USA was among the first companies to produce their spot, which came out of a



***Protection of Privacy* PSA by Polish Television.**

unique collaboration between Nickelodeon, Pixar, and Higashi Glaser Design. The three companies had been looking for an opportunity to work together, and the UNICEF project seemed ideal. The group chose to animated a child's right to freedom of expression, a topic which fit well into Nickelodeon's "kids are powerful" philosophy. "Whether you are someone that is really loud and sings, or you dance, or you write poetry, it's all valid and it doesn't have to look a certain way to be acceptable," said Nickelodeon's Karen Fowler, describing why they chose the topic.

After months of storyboard development, character designs, and coast-to-coast conference calls, the end result was Look Away, animated in Pixar's now famous computer animation, which tells the story of a child expressing himself in front of a disapproving parent. In the end, the parent becomes inspired by the child's ability to express, and begins to do the same. Nickelodeon producer Amy Friedman hopes the PSA can have a far-reaching impact. "Most of the time moving images are used either to get ratings or to sell products. It would be really wonderful if this spot could play a role in making freedom of expression part of our value system," said Friedman.

Cedar Brook Middle School to . . .

Although the Consortium is mostly made up of animation studios, an animation club at Cedar Brook Middle School near Philadelphia has joined the big dogs of animation to express themselves. "I read about the Animation Consortium in the ASIFA newsletter and thought it sounded like a great project to work on with kids. I think it's very important to give kids an idea of how their voice is important and an opportunity to have their voices heard, because that is almost never the case," said independent animation and teacher John Serpentelli, who runs the after school club. Last summer, Serpentelli found a local company to sponsor the cost of the animation project, and set about producing a spot on a child's right to have access to appropriate information.

Serpentelli is now working with a new group of youngsters to produce yet another spot for the campaign, this one dealing with a child's right to a safe and clean environment. The class is using cut-outs, based largely on the style of artist Henri Matisse, to tell their story. Club members have embraced this opportunity to speak their mind and have a chance to make a difference. Said member Amanda Leigh, "I feel that the environment is very important. By ruining it, we are ruining our own lives. Our public service announcement will help people to realize our problem. Not only will it touch children, but also adults."

In doing this project, the kids have also come to learn first-hand why animation is such a great tool for getting across messages on social change. "There's a limited amount of words and feelings that you can use to describe how you feel, but with animation you just do whatever you want and really express your feelings or emotions in anyway you want to," said young animator Julie Herman.

Independent Animators in Developing Countries

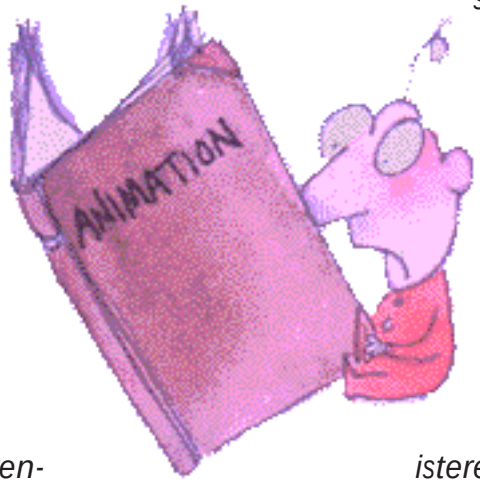
In addition to large animation studios and John Serpentelli's middle school club, independent animators in developing countries will be participating in the Cartoons for Children's Rights campaign as well. Betty Cohen, President of the Cartoon Network, one of the largest cable networks

in the world, was determined to include this population of artists in the Consortium. To encourage their participation, the Cartoon Network donated $75,000—$3,000 for each participating artist from a developing country to cover production costs. These grants are intended to fund the work of an additional 20 animators from countries including Bolivia, Brazil and Ghana, and Indonesia.

With production of the campaign securely underway, UNICEF is now beginning to solicit the support of broadcasters worldwide and ensure that the PSAs get on the air. At the suggestion of ABC/Disney Cable Networks President Geraldine Laybourne, UNICEF is approaching broadcasters to join the Consortium as "Charter Members." Charter Members agree to include the Cartoons for Children's Rights spots in their regular programming schedules. Several North American and European broadcasters have already pledged their support.

"There's a limited amount of words and feelings that you can use to describe how you feel, but with animation you just do whatever you want and really express your feelings or emotions in anyway you want to."

The cartoons will be distributed through UNICEF's field offices and National Committees, in part through UNICEF's major broadcast initiative, the International Children's Day of Broadcasting. UNICEF plans to distribute the nearly 100 spots in 6-month increments, with one-third of the PSAs being distributed for broadcast at a time. "We hope that our distribution plan makes the campaign more manageable to broadcasters, while giving animation studios plenty of time to work the creation of their spot into their production schedules," said William Hetzer, Chief, UNICEF's Broadcast and Electronic Communication Section.



UNICEF Animation mascot.

One of the strengths of animation is its longevity—audiences still love cartoons that are decades old—and its potential for other multimedia uses. UNICEF hopes that the colorful, international animation campaign will be kept alive through a number of related initiatives long after its broadcast debut. "We have some of the most talented animators in the business creating animation for UNICEF," said honorary Consortium Executive Producer Buzz Potamkin, a former executive producer at Hanna-Barbera who now works independently. "When the Consortium is over, we'll have nearly 100 great spots to work with in the form of TV specials, books and possibly even merchandising_all promoting the rights of children." The spots may also be distributed to schools as part of an educational program.

And indeed, UNICEF has already begun working on a coffee table book about children's rights, as interpreted through the Animation Consortium members. The book will profile the animators' personal journeys in developing their contributions, while highlighting the experiences of real kids around the world who are facing these serious issues everyday. UNICEF hopes to release the book in conjunction with the broadcast premiere of the campaign at the end of 1997.

While administered by UNICEF, the International Animation Consortium for Child Rights is overseen by a 15-member Steering Committee, made up of studio heads and corporate managers from the largest animation studios worldwide. Roy Disney, Vice Chairman of the Board, The Walt Disney Company, is the Honorary Chairman of the Steering Committee.

Deborah Reber (dreber@unicef.org) has been an Animation Development Consultant with UNICEF for the past two years, and currently oversees the Cartoons for Children's Rights campaign, as well as other animation advocacy activities.

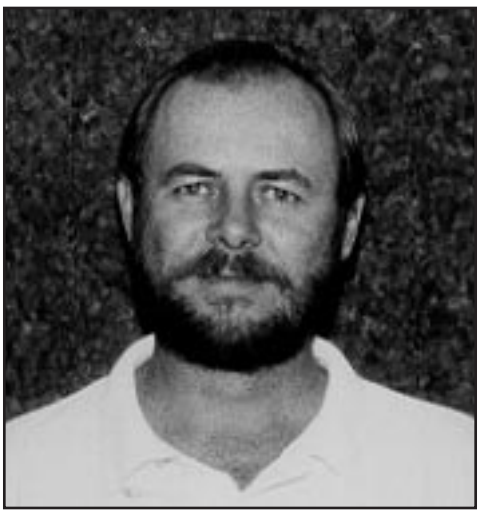
The Making of CHILD SOLDIERS

by John W. Rice



It involved around 150 people, most working well into their own time; it seemed everyone at Fil-Cartoons wanted to "do" something, to contribute in some way, to say that they helped in the making of Child Soldiers.

Several months ago, Bill Dennis, then president and general manager of Fil-Cartoons, Manila, received a request from UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) to be a participating studio in a worldwide animation consortium that is producing a series of public service commercials to be aired around the world. The UNICEF Animation Consortium, the organization created specifically for this purpose, has acquired the assistance of most if not all of the world's leaders in animation. Disney, Warner Bros., Hanna-Barbera, DreamWorks and countless others were tapped to produce animated features on children's rights covered in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. By popularizing children's needs and rights, the animation industry will assist in making the global television audience more conscious of its duties and obligations to children everywhere. Each participating studio will create and produce a 30-second feature on a specific child right selected in consultation with UNICEF. Bill Dennis accepted immediately, delighted that Fil-Cartoons had been included with such high profile studios.



John Rice.

Fil-Cartoons has, over the years, produced several shows for UNICEF, most notably some of the highly popular and acclaimed Meena series, which deal with the rights of



Clown sequence from *Child Soldiers*.

girls in a rural Asia. For this project, there were many "headings" to choose from, such as: A child's right to free speech, to play, to education, to a caring family, etc. We eventually decided on the child's right not to go to war. It was quite amazing to learn how many children and youth are actually fighting in wars across the world, getting killed or maimed. This heading seemed to hold special significance here in the Philippines, as until quite recently, government forces clashed many times with anti-government insurgents that were partly comprised of youths fighting and dying for a cause many suspected they knew or cared little about.

Until quite recently, government forces clashed many times with anti-government insurgents that were partly comprised of youths fighting and dying for a cause many suspected they knew or cared little about.

Showing What We Could Do

After receiving the green light from UNICEF we promptly got started. Fil-Cartoons is a major production house, and although not unfamiliar with preproduction, the bulk of our work in the past, as with most Asian animation studios, has been from layout to workprint; so this was a great opportunity for us to show what we could do. The problem was how to portray such a sensitive subject in only 30 seconds. This posed quite a challenge, so my fellow animation directors Achiu So and Ric Jamlig, and I began work on what turned out to be the first of many possible scenarios. We were having fun, and once or twice thought we'd cracked the problem, only to be sent literally, back to the drawing board.

Bill Dennis, as producer was not an easy person to impress, and he wanted to be impressed. He was very much involved in the initial creative aspects of the spot. He wanted something special, being only too aware that it would be an international showcase for the talents and creativity of Fil-Cartoons and it's artists.

Eventually, Child Soldiers took shape. The main character, Carlos, about 13 years old, dark haired with slightly olive skin, is part of a group of friends seen in typical childhood situations. His friends are an ethnic mix of Asians, Africans and Europeans. The location could have been any one of many countries.

We open on Carlos and his friends, at the circus, laughing at the antics of a colorful clown, very upbeat, noisy, happy, etc. Then we cross dissolve though a series of happy childhood situations as the mood and tempo changes to what we now realize is reality: Carlos and his friends standing against a bombed out shell of a building, looking like a disheveled rag tag group of child soldiers as shadows of passing tanks glide over them. We then hear the simple line of voice-over narration, "'To some children, childhood is just a dream." This return to reality is reflected in the colors, from bright colors to greys and blues, in the music, from gay circus tunes to the sound of tanks rolling along a gravel road. Carlos dreaming of what might have, what should have been.

We wanted to keep Child



Classroom sequence from *Child Soldiers*.



Left to right: Nary Jamgig, Bill Dennis, and John Rice.

Soldiers wholly within the studio. The original music was written and performed by Egay Bugas and Rommie Fabian, who are equally proficient as animators. For the voice-over narration, we tested around 30 people around the studio and finally decided on Alice Manuel, head of the Administration Department. She spoke the line with such deep conviction that perhaps came, in part, from being the mother of 2 teenage boys. The models were designed by Ric Jamlig. Nary Jamlig as the animator, reminds us how talented and versatile Filipino animators are.

I asked some of the people who worked on Child Soldiers their thoughts on the project. Here is what they had to say:

Rex Avila, Head, Background Department: *I produced nine background studies for Child Soldiers; and although the style was not extremely difficult, careful attention had to be paid to achieving the correct atmosphere. My own childhood was so happy and carefree, it really brings home the plight of these desperate children. My heart goes out to them.*

Grace Yoingco, Head, Ink & Paint Department: *As a mother, the images portrayed in the film really make me aware of the fate of children in other parts of the world, whose fate is so much more unsettled and unsure than that of my own. I pray that all the children in the world can grow up enjoying a happy childhood as mine are.*

Ellen Santiago, Color Stylist: *Getting the colors right for this project had many demanding aspects, enhancing the happy moments and solemnifying the downward aspects. I carefully researched the different skin shades of each race portrayed. I hope our small effort goes a small way to eliminating this dreadful use of human life.*

Lani Manapsal, Cel Painter: *It's an honor to be part of this project. The destruction and wanton abuse of such young lives is so wrong. I hope and pray this evil will end soon.*

Au Uaje, Head, Special Effects Department: *The tears flowing, such a strong scene. We experimented with using glue, pantone, airbrush and dry brush to get just the correct effect. I think the realism of the shot will bring home the crass futility of child soldiers.*

Teddy Rodriguez, Head, Final Checking: *I felt privileged to have been a part of the project. If only, in a small way, it may start to bring to an end the evil that is war and the disregard of human life. This is such a worthwhile film.*

Dong Bagos, Xerox Checking: *This film had complications—most of it was on 24 field. I hope that these atrocities it helps to bring to light will soon be only bad memories.*

Nary Jamlig, Animator: *Youth is the only hope of the future—for God's sake, stop killing the world's children!*

Boatman Lacamiento, Layout Artist: *"To some children, childhood is just a dream." When I read this line on the storyboard, I realized exactly what this project involved. I had to come up with layouts that could put over this dreadful practice and in some way help to stop it altogether. It was a film I thought very relevant and I was very happy to have been asked to work on it.*

Alice Manuel, Administration Head (Voice-Over): *Doing the voice-over for this project was considerably more difficult than I thought. After viewing the rushes, I felt inspired as I delivered the line. Such a sensitive issue. As a mother, I knew what this film is all about.*

Each comment is similar and they all relished working on such a socially relevant film. I also enjoyed the experience enormously. It is not often that one gets to work on a project from its conception to completion. And, as a parent, I too hope we may have helped put an end to child soldiers.

John W. Rice is an Animation Director at Fil-Cartoons.

Trees for Life:

Making Life Better Through Fruit Trees and Animation

by Heather Kenyon

Balbir Mathur is a man with a mission. And no small mission at that. He wants to plant 100 million fruit trees by the year 2000. He has already helped with the planting of tens of millions of trees and his movement is gaining speed. More than three million people have participated in Mathur's vision by helping to plant trees in Brazil, Nepal, India and Guatemala. Likened to Johnny Appleseed, the enthusiastic Mathur is tireless, working toward helping others help themselves and now animation is becoming an increasingly important tool to him and Trees for Life.

Mathur founded Trees for Life, a nonprofit movement that plants fruit trees in developing nations, as a reaction to many questions he was pondering while working as a management consultant. "I was thinking about, `Who am I? Am I a human being? What does that mean? How do I wish to respond to that? What do I want to do as a result?'" By 1984 he had an answer and Trees for Life was born. The newly planted fruit trees not only provide food for hungry people and protect the environment, they also become a source of income.

We have all heard the Chinese proverb: If you give a person a fish you feed him for a day; teach him how to fish and he will never be hungry again. Trees for Life is even more proactive. The organization is all about self-help at a grassroots level. Trees for Life believes in educating people who will then teach others how to plant trees. So, going back to our proverb, Trees for Life doesn't just teach people how to fish, they teach people how to make fishing poles and expect them to go teach others.



Excerpt from Frédéric Back's animation storyboard for *The Trees for Life Story.*

"Some people don't know how to plant trees. So we teach them. Some people don't have seeds. So we send them. We are here just to provide the missing elements. We look at ourselves as servants, servants to the people who are serving their communities," Mathur explains.

Animation is Key

Therefore, communication is the key to the organization's success. How well volunteers in the field communicate new ideas and techniques directly relates to the program's success. The communication tool of choice is becoming animation. Animation transcends cultural barriers and becomes a universal language that is easily understood by those who are word illiterate. "Animation is key to transferring knowledge to the poorest poor in the world," Mathur agrees.

Their first animated project is a 10-minute film which relates the story of Trees for Life. It is being created by Frédéric Back, who won an Academy Award for his The Man Who Planted Trees. "Back is our patron saint," says Mathur.

Back is just as complimentary of Mathur. "Trees for Life and my ideas are very similar. I was very glad to know of Trees for Life and I was

happy I had a chance to work on this beautiful story and try to make as many people as possible learn what mankind could achieve."

Now more than ever Back's original message is crucial. In the past 200 years, half of the earth's trees have been destroyed. However, both Back and Mathur are very upbeat and positive about the effects humans can have if they choose to act responsibly. "I believe very much in the power we have. In the long run we can make a tremendous change. We can change the world with every little choice we make," says Back.



"I find this world joyful, full of uncharted potential. We say to children, `This is not a hopeless place. This is a place we love. Let's make sure it stays this way, a beautiful planet,'" Mathur says. Trees for Life distributes educational packages to 55,000 schools across the United States, representing 2 million students. Every one of these students receives packets of seeds that they are encouraged to grow either in the classroom or at home. Then, the students feel as though they are taking part in the grand solution.

Schools, churches and communities will receive the completed animated history of Trees for Life to raise awareness of the group. "Animation is a wonderful media to describe, not always reality, but a message that is strong. You can create a reality that is very attractive and you can reach everyone - children and adults. In a short time you can see an evolution, the contrasts of situations," says Back. "It shows how important the dreams of children are. It will help people to remember the dreams of childhood so that they are not lost with the currents of life. The world could be as bright as it was."

Beyond Back

Trees for Life is headquartered in Wichita, Kansas and run by highly qualified professionals and volunteers who sometimes leave behind high paying jobs in order to join this coalition. While Back is completing the key animation, Trees for Life is looking for other animators to help them finish their film. Mathur has already begun to set up an animation studio in Wichita where volunteers can learn the process and will then spread out, like missionaries, to teach.

Mathur reached out to the professional animation community this past fall. He and his wife, Treva, who is just as dedicated, visited Los Angeles for a week. During their visit they met with a host of interested parties including: Ron Diamond of Animation World Network, animator Leon Joosen, educators Bruce Royer and Linda Crain, historian Charles Solomon, animator John Ramirez and Warner Bros. Feature Animation where they received a first hand look at Dave Master's new program where students are taught animation via interactive television. Mathur was so impressed with the generosity of the animation community, that he is planning yet another trip. In the meantime, however, Reeves Lehmann from New York's School of Visual Arts (SVA) traveled to Kansas for six days in January to assess how the two groups could work together. He even taught a workshop on "How to write a creative story" for the Trees for Life staff. "It was a fabulous experience for us," enthuses Mathur.

"Soon Trees for Life will be joined by some of our animation faculty and students to complete their project. It is a thrill to combine our new generation of animators with such a worthy cause," says Lehmann, SVA's Chairman of Film, Video and Animation. Mathur maintains though that the organization will stay a small flexible unit in order to best utilize its limited resources.

The newly planted fruit trees not only provide food for hungry people and protect the environment, they also become a source of income.

"Traditionally, the SVA student body has taken a strong role in supporting the community," explains Lehmann. "After meeting Balbir Mathur for just a few minutes I knew that the Trees for Life animation proposal would be the kind of project SVA could assist in developing."

The Los Angeles trip has hurried along their second animated project. This film will be directed toward people in India to educate them about a remarkable tree that grows in their own backyard. Each year in India, 500,000 children are blinded and millions more die due to vitamin A deficiency. In the midst of this horror, however, a tree called the drumstick tree exists. The drumstick tree's leaves contain 10 times more vitamin A than carrots and are a commonly accepted form of food. Trees for Life has already developed an educational package explaining the nutritional value of these leaves. Now, they are teaming up with several other groups to create an ani-

mated video which discusses the use of these leaves in a healthy diet. This film will utilize paper cutouts and include artists from India and Guatemala. Production will begin on April 1and Mathur maintains that this is not an April's fool. "We already have the storyboard and Frédéric is going to be here to start us off." The project will be completed by July.

But of course, Mathur's dreams do not end with these two animated shorts and US schools. As usual, he has much grander schemes. First, he realizes that they have to set up a truly working studio in Kansas. "Anyone who would like to come work with us, even for a few days, would be most welcome." Trees for Life is looking for animation savvy individuals to help train their core group of workers or donate equipment. Then "we will pass on this knowledge to others," says Mathur. He has hopes of opening up an animation studio in Allahabad, India where school children will learn to use the art of animation to express themselves and their concerns. "They have to ask and answer their own questions." More animation studios in other developing nations would then be planned based on the success of the model in India.

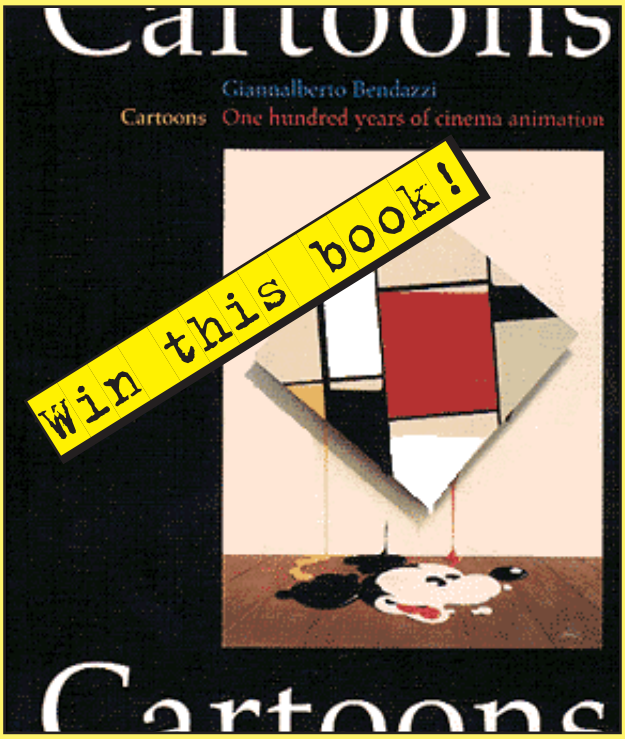
"In the long run we can make a tremendous change. We can change the world with every little choice we make."

However, whatever the future holds, Mathur feels this group is already an overwhelming success. In fact, he cannot truly count the number of trees the group has planted because the movement is so successful at working on a community level. "It just spreads. We cannot control it . . . We are people who are dancing and our life missions are already completed just when we arrive here (at Trees for Life). I don't plant trees because of ambitions, goals or dreams. I plant them because this is the gift I give to my beloved, this planet."



If you would like to help or learn more about Trees for Life, check out their Web page on AWN, or in North America, call them toll free at 1-800-873-3736.

Heather Kenyon is Manager of Production Information at Hanna-Barbera Cartoons and a freelance writer.



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An Interview With GEORGE GRIFFIN



by Ann C. Philippon

As the quintessential independent American animator, George Griffin produces films which defy categorization. Part of what makes viewing a cross-section of Griffin films intriguing is the variety of approaches he takes to his subjects, rarely repeating a theme or style. In some of his earlier works, such as *Head* and *Lineage*, Griffin explores the depths and boundaries of his art, mixing animation with live action, flip-books and trick photography. During the same period, however, he also produced strictly narrative films, such as the whimsically satirical *The Club*.

Later, during the 1980s, Griffin's style changed; his films became less confrontational and subversive in their relationship to the audience, and more traditionally "cartoony and entertaining." Nonetheless, he continued to examine his artistic heritage in works like *Flying Fur*, which entangles a cast of crazy animal characters in a frantic Tom and Jerry soundtrack. He also produced more narrative projects, such as *It's an O.K. Life*, done for PBS, and tackled intensely personal emotions in *Thicket*.

While busy with freelance commercial projects in the late 80s and early 90s, Griffin also made playful films such as *Ko-Ko*, which synchronizes a dancing collage of magazine art with a Charlie Parker recording, and the sarcastic *New Fangled*, a humbling caricature of advertising creativity.

Though not particularly ideological, they were revolutionary, perfect analogs for the defiant anarchism of the counterculture.

Most recently, Griffin has returned to the traditional narrative in *A Little Routine*, which provides a charming and intimate glimpse into father/daughter bedtime routines.

Rather than invoking a recurring style, all of these distinct films are linked instead by their personal expression of the artist's maturation. Griffin's body of work represents what it means to be an independent animator; his free experimentation with style and technique defines an art which is constantly in process and an artist who embraces his own evolution.

In my recent email correspondence with Griffin, I asked him, "*What first inspired your interest in animation?*"

I grew up in an art-loving family. My father had been a newspaper cartoonist as a teenager before turning to architecture; he had natural drafting talent which he exercised in a deliberate, self-confident manner. My mother was a marvelous piano player and acted in community theater. My sisters both played (viola, clarinet) in the local symphony orchestra.

I learned to value drawing and music; the one linear, precise, and highly personal, the other emotional, yet interpretive. Though I had numerous early, inconclusive music lessons (piano, cello, saxophone), the influence shows up in

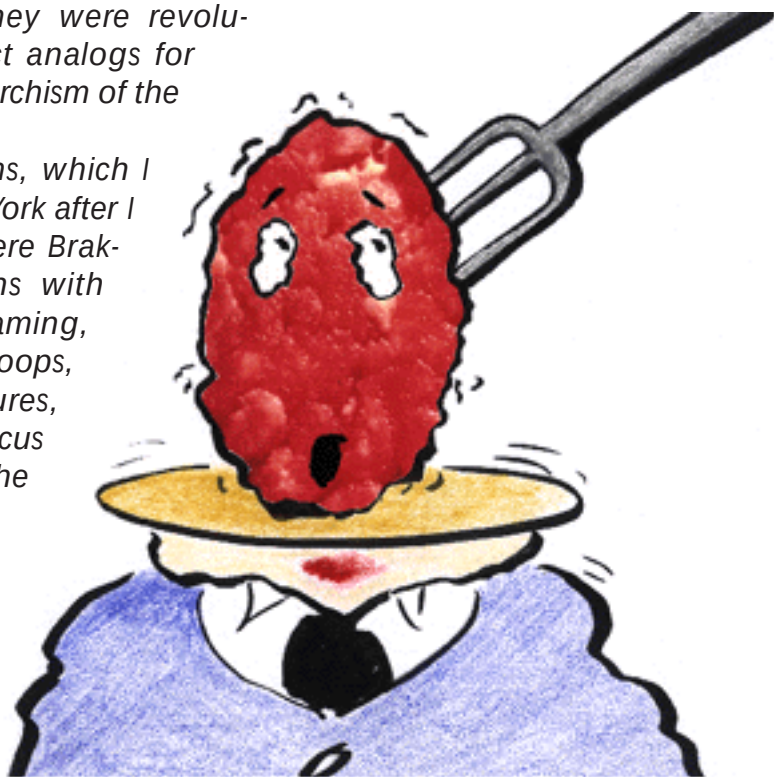
my sense of rhythmic montage and animation, and my notion of putting on a show. Particular music has provided the temporal backbone for some films (Ko-Ko, Thicket, Trikfilm 3), while improvised jazz riffs have been mixed as tracks for others (Head, Viewmaster, A Little Routine). Though my ability to draw was inherited and encouraged at every opportunity, I also felt quite intimidated by my father's clear mastery. Rather than compete with him directly, I chose parallel interests (photography, cooking, electronics) and didn't ever pursue formal art education. But through these activities, I learned many of the skills necessary for both art-making in general and animation in particular.

What kind of experience had you had as an artist by the time you graduated from Dartmouth? Whose work influenced you?

I graduated in 1967, two years late because I had dropped out in my sophomore year. After two years in the army and my hometown school, the University of Tennessee, I returned to Dartmouth. I majored in Political Science, but was quite active as a cartoonist for the literary magazine, and for antiwar posters and broadsides. There I learned the rudiments of typositing and silk-screening, often over the objections of the professional staff. I wolfed down everything the film society offered and was impressed with visiting artists Stan Brakhage and Jonas Mekas, and the films of Robert Breer and Stan Vanderbeek. These film explorers were my introduction to animation as an experimental form, which might include drawing, photography, scratching, burning. Though not particularly ideological, they were revolutionary, perfect analogs for the defiant anarchism of the counterculture.

My first films, which I made in New York after I graduated, were Brakhage imitations with rapid single-framing, vertiginous swoops, double exposures, and random focus —all shot off the cuff in 8mm.

In 1968, I gave up the security of a day job, bought a used Bolex, and attempted to teach myself how to animate. What came out was warmed-over Brakhage with glimpses of static drawings. Very disappointing. Yet, while job hunting, Fred Mogubgub liked them so much he offered to give me money for a workprint. Another job interview resulted in my drawing (and redrawing) a storyboard for John Hubley. These encounters with demigods of animation were great for morale.



New Fangled.

I got a job as a photographer's assistant (more accurately described as messenger), which resulted in a tip that a commercial animation studio needed an apprentice (or as the union labeled it, a "Xerox Operator"). By the end of the year, I was drawing inbetweens for spots animated by Jack Schnerk, formerly of Disney, and designed by Tomi Ungerer, an acerbically witty Swiss cartoonist.

I worked there at Focus Design for about a year before being laid off. I then worked as a freelance assistant animator, then animator, at various New York commercial studios for the next three years. Here I encountered a kind of aristocracy of character animation: crusty, old geezers in two-toned shoes, with plastic pocket protectors. Actually they were quite a varied lot, while I was definitely the hippie with a college degree. By assisting the likes of Marty Taras, Johnny Gentillela, George Rufle, and Dante Barbetta, I learned that there was no single road to "good animation." Their drawings ranged from chicken scratches of pure volumes, to violently reworked roughs, to perfectly rendered, "cleaned up" illustrations. What these men all had was a sublime sense of timing, posing, and problem solving. Because my lowly duty was often to redraw animators' roughs to conform to character models, then do inbetweens, then flip the drawings for the animator, director, or clients, I could learn from the whole process.

As I learned more of the history of animation, I began to formu-

late a critical analysis of the studio system and recognized the need for another production model.

The most important first step was simply "doing my own thing." During slow periods, I drew my first flipbook (abstract shapes that transformed to faces) and also practiced animating a rudimentary walk cycle. While making One Man's Laundry during this time, I hit upon a number of techniques which made one-person production feasible.

These experiences suggested that the studios' division of labor and the alienation of the worker/artist from the final product would conspire to limit any artist who wanted to control the final work on the screen. I resolved to work toward an ideal: to write, design, animate, and shoot with one sweep of the hand. This meant forgoing cels, working and finishing directly on paper, cutting where necessary, and if possible, shooting at the same time, thereby collapsing the rigorous functional geometries which the animation industry had copied so well from Detroit.

The more I believed this line, the more I pounded my shoe on the podium, and found to my delight that I wasn't alone. Of course, there were other more emotional factors: I had an enormous disrespect for authority and couldn't handle criticism well; I was allergic to some cute character designs and found that super smooth lines required a skill I didn't possess. I was quite dismayed by Ralph Bakshi's slicking up of Robert Crumb's cat in Fritz the Cat. I didn't draw cats fast enough and refused to clean-up Rufle's brilliant tornado-like drawings, which lead to my firing.(In retrospect, the actual film ain't nearly as bad as I then thought.)

Linda Simensky recently described "New York animators" as a "surly, black-clad bunch, who smoke, say whatever is on their mind, and can't draw—or can't or won't follow directions." That pretty well summarizes my position then, and still resonates today, especially the "can't draw" part. My ideas about art tend to favor experimental exploration over illustration, mistakes over professionally "good" work, primitivism over sophistication, the personal over the commercial. (Remember, Emile Cohl was an "Incoherent" before he started to animate, stick figures at that).



A Little Routine.

In 1978 you put together a book entitled Frames, *a collection of drawings and statements by 69 independent American animators. How much interaction did you have and do you currently have with contemporary animators in New York or elsewhere?*

Frames grew out of a series of loosely organized meetings of animators and filmmakers held in the mid to late 70s (including Al Jarnow, Anita Thacher, Kathy Rose, Victor Faccinto). We were a kind of Downtown ASIFA, with an experimental, slightly conspiratorial, anti-commercial attitude. We were convinced that our films had more in common with the art world than the cartoon world and long debated who we were and what we were doing. The group's most tangible outcome was programming a show of films and artwork as a sidebar of the 1978 New York Film Festival, and Frames was as an extension of that show, a kind of manifesto of experimental animation.

We requested contributions from optical filmmakers like Pat O'Neill, Gary Beydler, and Ken Kobland which we hoped would expand what was meant by "experimental animation." Another aim was to obliterate the phony distinction between abstract and representational, even "cartoon" art. That many of the pages could be cut up and bound together as flipbooks was an unexpected delight.

In retrospect, I am less convinced that the art of animation

has as much to do with paintings and drawings, which are really by-products ripped out of context, as with their synthetic fusion in time. The real art takes place on a bright screen, in a dark room, where the audience sees shadows cast from duplicated film. Being cheaply reproducible as "media," it will always have an uphill battle to claim status as an art commodity.

Today's scene has been radically transformed by MTV, Nickelodeon, and others. ASIFA-East is much more open to personal, experimental work. Students are hired to do interactive web animation. It's all a little amazing.

Your video collection, Griffiti, *spans the period from 1973 to 1994, including over 13 independently produced and commissioned films. What's missing?*

In general, I left out early work I considered derivative or awkward, or which was designed for gallery installation. The first group included very early films (*The Candy Machine, One Man's Laundry, Rapid Transit, Displacement,* among others). The latter group, produced during the late 70s, were mostly silent serial pieces dealing with variations on color cycles (*Step Print*), methods of duplication and representation (*Block Print*), and perception of movement (*Thumbnail Sketches*). Whatever else *Griffiti* might be or become, it does deliver a good cross-section of my work, with particular emphasis on the last 15 years.

An integral element in films such as Trikfilm 3, Head, Viewmaster, *and* Lineage *is your fascination with the artistic process of animation. You seem eager to inspire equal fascination in this process in your audience by revealing some of its tricks, tools and challenges. Was this a primary goal for these films? Do you think one of these films achieves this goal better than another?*

Here I encountered a kind of aristocracy of character animation: crusty, old geezers in two-toned shoes, with plastic pocket protectors.

This self-consciousness grew out of various tendencies to become my one "Big Idea." The art world ferment of the 60s and 70s contained strong flavors of minimalism, process, conceptualism. If narrativity and objecthood were in retreat, then what better focus than the filmmaking process itself.

But the more I developed this concept during the mid-70s, the more I became aware that I was repeating a major theme of animation's pioneers—James Stuart Blackton, Emile Cohl, Winsor McCay, the Fleischers. What for them had been a continuation of vaudeville's "lightening sketch" routines, for me became a simple skeleton on which to build complex, personal, even mysterious stories. Instead of backing off for fear of plagiarism, I plowed ahead, thinking that reworking the ancient themes would act as a kind of restorative, "back-to-basics" hustle to counter the slick monolith of factory-based cel animation.

In addition to the reflexive impulse to consciously include the filmmaker's craft (especially the busy, manipulative hands), I turned the camera on my talking and gesticulating face. This automatically alluded to an autobiographical tendency in experimental film at the time, even though I sought to modify any hint of earnestness with abstraction and irony. *Head* started out as a self-portrait and ended more as a portrait of eccentric, obsessive animation techniques.

I can't call any one film more successful than any other. But here are my thumbnail comments: *Trikfilm 3* was one of a series "animator-at-work-on-a-flipbook" pieces. *Head* was conceived as kind of *Trikfilm 4,* but it grew beyond its borders and became both more personal and open-ended. *Viewmaster* was the most elegant, concise, conceptual, and entertaining, because its length was determined by a formula (it used but eight drawings) and it contained images which were pleasing to the mind, if not exactly funny (a naked man, woman, and dog; stick figure waiters, running blobs, and a faint hint of Mutoscopic self-reference). *Lineage* was as far as I went toward a summation of statements on process and artistic paternity.

My ideas about art tend to favor experimental exploration over illustration, mistakes over professionally "good" work, primitivism over sophistication, the personal over the commercial.

Particularly in Trikfilm 3, Head, *and* Lineage, *you take great pleasure in walking the line between reality and illusion. You invite the viewer to step into the animation process with you as his/her guide, betraying some "tricks of the trade" along the way. No sooner has this supposed breach of process been committed, however, than the viewer finds him/herself further*

from reality than ever. Your images begin to transform in the unnerving environment that is the intersection of photographic reality and illusion.

Just as you can't teach someone to make art, you can't demonstrate a process or cinematic trick within a movie without resorting to more analogies, metaphors—tricks. Behind the guy who is behind the black velvet curtain, there's another . . . well, something. Gears and levers; a Rube Goldberg diagram. My reflexive films tend to abuse their own documentary authority by playing with photographic "reality" as if it were yet another pallet in the animator's toolbox. Animated drawings, which conventionally connote fantasy, can lead a viewer to deal with very real psychological or social themes.

Lineage (1979) has been called your most ambitious work. I enjoyed watching this film, but honestly I also had some trouble understanding it. You seemed to be targeting formalism; yet the film felt quite analytic and overwhelmingly layered with meaning. When you began Lineage, *what were your plans for its message or meaning? In the end, did the film accomplish what you originally intended?*

As to why I made Lineage, I often cite the frustration of teaching a year in the windowless basement of Harvard's Carpenter Center, surrounded by wise guys, unable to do my own work. Back in New York City the next year, a lot of stuff just tumbled out. Conflicted you say? No doubt. The analytic component is actually a mixture of self-parody and earnestness which made sense to me at the time. Consistency in art seems to be most critical when words are a major part of the mixture.

Today I see it as a kind of polemical essay demanding that animation have its own avant-garde—an unapologetic, un-edited, not for primetime region, quite outside but somehow tethered to the mainstream.

Another theme is my attempt to find reconciliation with my fathers, both biological and artistic (Cohl and McCay). I try to get at the philosophical nut embedded in the animation process but I also attempt to pay spoken homage to emotional content and the therapeutic quality of laughter; silly cartoons do have a place in my life, much larger that I was ever able to admit. (This was demonstrated more visually in my next two films, It's an O.K. Life *and* Flying Fur.*)*



Flying Fur.

Giannalberto Bendazzi, in his book Cartoons, *notes that in the 1980s you backed down a bit from your earlier extremist position against the studio system. The films on* Griffiti *postdating* Lineage *(1979) do indeed have a very different feeling. Can you talk about what happened in the 80s and how your work changed?*

It is indeed exhilarating to be called an "extremist" (at least in regard to my criticism of the studio system). My article, "Cartoon, Anti-Cartoon," in Gerald Peary's anthology, The American Animated Cartoon *(1980), was a kind of manifesto trumpeting a brave new era for animation. It was written after* Head, *when the New York City group was just getting together. Animation companies were, with very few exceptions, in artistic decline; no shorts were being produced, Saturday morning children's shows were universally acknowledged as dreck, commercials had recoiled from the Pop explosion and were playing it safe, and features hadn't yet caught fire. So, while it seemed a bit radical to insist that the future would smile warmly only on the independent animator, being loyal to your friends while standing up to the perceived threat of assembly-line mediocrity seemed perfectly reasonable. And, when one considers the current upsurge of computer animation and the Internet, there's always the fall back position of being ahead of one's time.*

But by the 80s things began to change. My debt to cartoon history came to the fore. I attempted to negotiate a place for myself and others within that lineage, claiming that Disney had unfairly usurped the term and contracted its meaning to only one slick sen-

sibility. "Cartoon" originally meant sketch, plan, or provisional drawing for a final work, such as a stained glass window. Nothing about cute, anthropomorphic animals. So my current job description ("makes animated cartoons") covers all bases.

Animated drawings, which conventionally connote fantasy, can lead a viewer to deal with very real psychological or social themes.

The breakout films, It's an O.K. Life and Flying Fur, while made for different reasons, were both cartoony and entertaining. It's an O.K. Life was a three-minute diary of a little man's life in the future depending heavily on voice over narration, spoken by Marshall Efron. It's an O.K. Life demonstrated the practicality of a collaborative studio cartoon, produced on a deadline and budget, using "independent" designs and techniques. Flying Fur, in contrast, was much more reflexive in its cartoonal acknowledgments. A 1940s Tom and Jerry soundtrack (created by Scott Bradley) provided the rhythmic organization, while archetypal chase scenes were reinterpreted for a cast of simply-sketched animals and a square man. So, after the introspective intensity of speaking directly in Lineage, which concluded the "anti-cartoons," I quite naturally retreated to rework more traditional forms of storytelling, in which formalist chicanery was backgrounded as a kind of leitmotif.

Do you most enjoy working on your independent, non-commercial work?

For the past 10 years, I have made a living directing TV commercials in my own studio, Metropolis Graphics, which has maintained an association with larger California companies, Colossal Pictures and now Klasky Csupo. I also take other commissioned assignments, as I have since the early 70s. In addition to this freelance work I have also received grants for my independent work. The professional work is generally performed in a scaled down studio setting with a small ad hoc staff of two to three artists, who tend to be independent filmmakers or painters. More often now the independent work is done the same way, though considerably more time is spent alone writing, drawing, animating before helping hands arrive. Both types of work provide valuable technical experience, which often has a crossover value. But I do keep the two worlds apart. One is essentially collaborative, the other is my own voice and vision.

It's an O.K. Life was made for PBS (which edited out the ending for broadcast), but I claim authorship of the whole film. My role as line producer for R.O. Blechman's Soldier's Tale in 1985 was another positive experience, even though it entailed working within the dreaded studio system. And a number TV spots, while not done in "my style," forced me to develop new ways of working with traditional material. My current involvement with the computer, for example, can be traced to my problem-solving work in commercial production.

New Fangled and A Little Routine are quite accessible, particularly relative to your earliest work. Has your approach to your independent films changed a great deal since you began regularly doing commercial work?

I don't think they are more accessible for that reason. I certainly wouldn't have made a parodic piece like New Fangled before having some experience in the creative side of the advertising world. I think A Little Routine is my most personal and revealing film, perhaps because of its accessibility.

How do you look back on films like Trikfilm 3, Head, and Lineage now? Do they still convey the same messages and evoke the same self-reflection and questions that you originally intended?

It's the nature of art, music, and literature to change in our reception and interpretation through the years. Everything above suggests that I would see my films differently now. Much of the intellectual content in these films seems pleasingly naive now. But even as I was making them, my main interest was more visual than verbal; this continues to be true for me.

Ann C. Philippon is a freelance writer and recent graduate of Dartmouth College where she studied art history and physics. She remains at Dartmouth working under a grant from the National Science Foundation.

Going on Their Own in Vancouver

by Sean Maclennan Murch

The Vancouver animation business is thriving. Broadcast and production clients come from around the world to have their shows designed, storyboarded, laid out and animated here. The city currently houses over 10 classical animation studios working on a variety of feature, television, interactive, and commercial projects. Local producers are widely used by companies such as MTV, Nickelodeon, Disney, Nelvana, Fox, HBO, and Warner Bros.; and this past year, Disney Television opened its own studio in downtown Vancouver to produce, in conjunction with Disney Toronto, direct-to-video features.

Many studios have come to realize that while "service work" is lucrative and often necessary for short-term survival, long-term growth will ultimately be determined by the ownership of rights.

Companies such as International Rocketship, Gord Stanfeild Animation, and Delany and Friends have been in business for well over a decade. Newer studios include Studio B, Barking Bullfrog, A.K.A, Bardel and Natterjack (where I am director of development). These companies have all enjoyed a great deal of success and international recognition over the past decade. Why then does it prove so difficult for local companies to get their own projects financed? Much like the local live-action film industry, the majority of production in Vancouver exists as contract work for larger, Los Angeles-based, companies.



Sean Murch.

Many studios have come to realize that while this "service work" is lucrative and often necessary for short-term survival, long-term growth will ultimately be determined by the ownership of rights. For Studio B's Blair Peters, creativity is also part of this equation. He notes that, "The scripts we have coming in on a service basis aren't always our cup of tea. Even though some of the projects we have now are good, like Tex Avery Theater, which is a great show—we're really able to make a cartoon the old way. Still, we have to rework and rewrite, make the gags funny and develop the look of the characters. We don't mind doing that, it's our job. But we don't own any of those characters. I think that's why Studio B wants to do their own stuff. We've got artists here who are good friends that we want to keep. To do that we have to involve them in development and also look at their ideas."

The same holds true for Natterjack. While the quality of the contract work we currently have is very high, it is also important to nurture the creativity of our designers and animators. One of the best ways to do this is to develop original projects we can call our own. Thus, we have recently begun development on three internally-designed shows, which has done much to lift the general mood of



Wayne Sterloff.

the studio. The trick, of course, is to find creative ways to finance such development until a full production budget can be raised.

The Co-Production Way

One of the more popular methods of easing into original production is to do a co-production with a foreign studio. The supposition being that it is easier to raise half of the financing domestically, relying on a partner to raise the other half abroad. There are government incentives in place for this type of international cooperation, but local studios are often skeptical about the relative merits of such a move.

Peters, in talking about Studio B's tentative venture into this arena, recalled that, one of its clients "wanted to do a co-production on a show for which we did the first season. It wasn't doing well in the ratings, so it wasn't in our best interests to do that as a co-production. What I'd rather do is keep doing the service work, where you're guaranteed your income, then pool that and develop our own shows. At that point we would pursue possible co-production partners, broadcasters, and distributors. That's our mandate anyway. Talk to me in a few weeks, and I may have changed my mind."

Whether or not one goes the co-production route, there is still the issue of how to secure a domestic presale. This is becoming more and more difficult in today's climate. Canadian broadcasters often rely on the larger Eastern producers, or look to the US for their animation programming. More often than not, they are looking for finished programming, rather than a project in development.

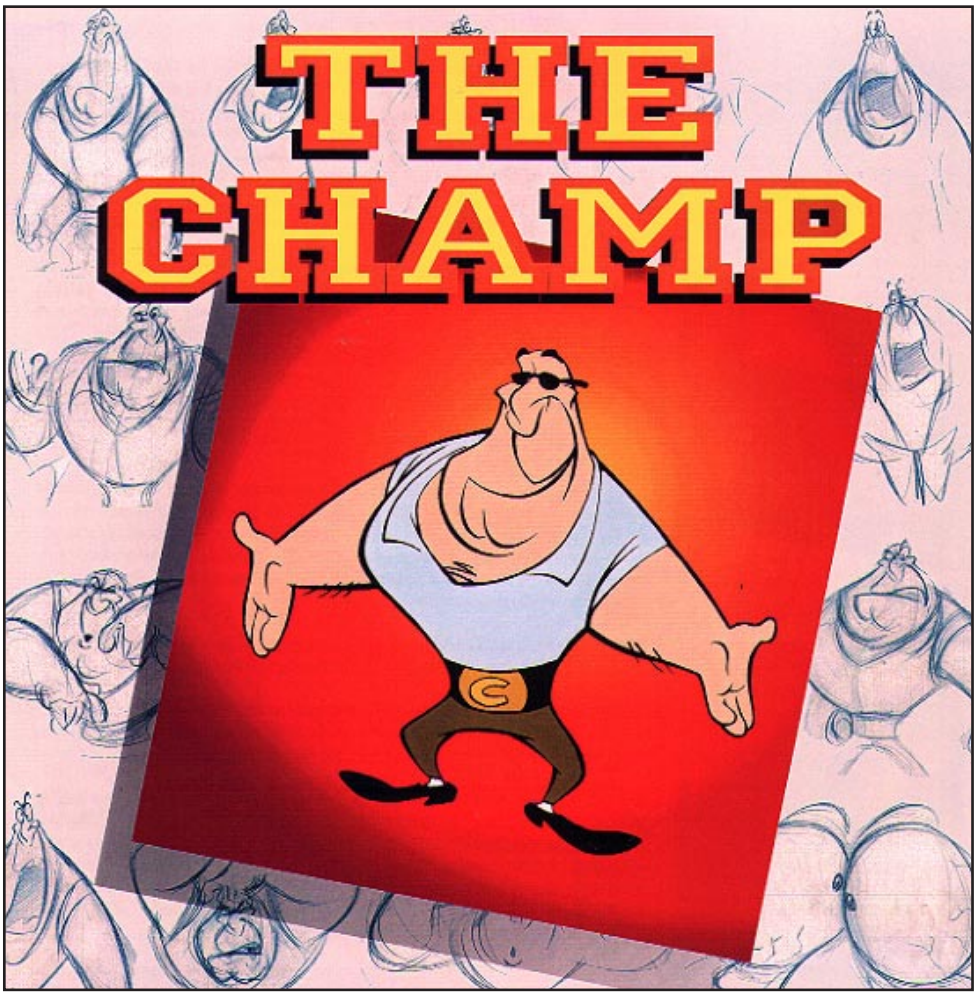
"Everyone wants a proven property," Blair points out "whether it's a comic book, a toy, or whatever. That causes a problem for studios that want to develop original properties. At some point someone has to take a risk. That's what we're trying to convince the Canadian broadcasters to do."

"Everyone wants a proven property, whether it's a comic book, a toy, or whatever."

The Rocketship Solution

Marv Newland, of International Rocketship, found a different solution to the lack of available financing. He has, for the past 15 years, produced his own, original shows in their entirety before taking them to market. Using the profits from his high-end service work, Marv is able to fund at least one short each year. "The whole concept of the studio," he says, "was to produce our own animated films. We own those films, so we have a library of shorts and are steadily adding to it."

How does Rocketship recoup its costs and get its shows to market?



Natterjack Animation's *The Champ*.

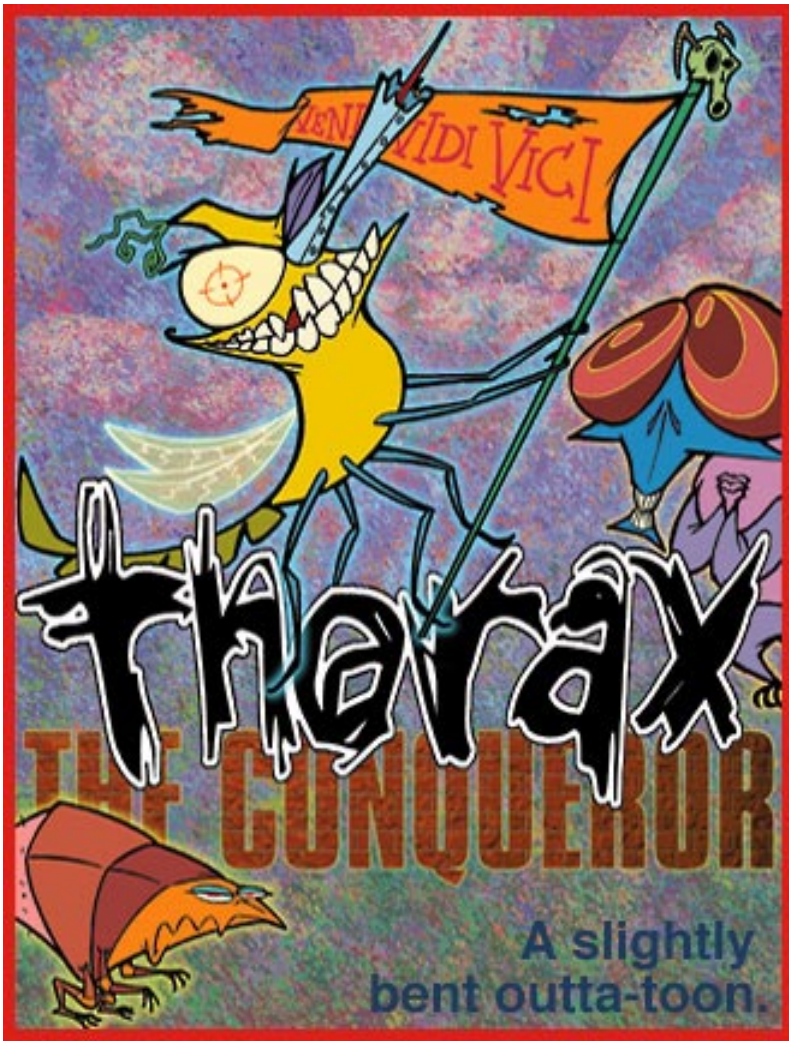
"It's pretty easy, actually." Marv replied. "Selling the first one is difficult, but once you've established a client list, those clients pretty much stick around, especially European television. For a while, we had to meet with people interested in our films. Now, whenever we enter festivals—and we try to do all of the major festivals—if the film is any good the broadcasters will fax you back a contract. You either go with those terms, or maybe fax back to negotiate, then settle it and sign. There are always new outlets for the films. This was a great year for royalties, I don't know why, even early films like Sing Beast Sing and Anijam, 1980-1984 productions, did well.They are good and entertaining enough so that, if someone hasn't seen them, they don't care what year it was made in. That helps us a lot."

A Balancing Act

Rocketship is in an enviable position. They have been in the business for over 20 years, and have built up a loyal following. For many studios though, it is a constant balancing act. The majority of Vancouver's animation houses are animator owned and operated. Often these animator/owners are already wearing a number of hats and they usually don't relish the idea of also donning a suit and trying to "sell" their work.

"I don't want to be a distributor," Peters states. "In five years I don't want to be at NATPE, wearing a suit, but at the same time we know that right now people want to make the connection with our studio. Once our first show is sold, I don't want to be selling individual territories and all that. I'd rather have a distributor take its cut and give us the money to work on the shows."

The sentiment is a common one. Wayne Sterloff, of BC Film, a local funding agency, has been working at getting indigenous projects financed for many years. Through BC Film, many Vancouver studios have access to development and production financing. Wayne, who recognizes the need for local animators to reach out to the marketplace, notes that, "There aren't many hard core entrepreneurs in the animation community. A lot of the men and women who are interested in animation come from a creative arts background, and they're not interested at all in setting up a sales and distribution entity. It may hurt them to spend money on advertising and promotion, and marketing expenses, or to send a salesperson over to MIP-Asia, in Hong Kong, and back. It's a real hurdle for most animators to get over, in terms of reaching that goal of gaining some independence and creating security.



Bardel Animation's *Thorax the Conqueror.*

"There are a number of animation companies who have said, 'Look, we've got to secure our company and we want to buy some new technology. The bank wants a 5-year projection that's based on having some assets, not just bidding for service work.' But, on the other hand, the profit margin on straight service work currently is fairly attractive, and people can see a future there. But if you want to make your future more than 2 or 3 years out, if you want to see a company that's here 5 or 10 years from now, you're going to have to take a look at owning part of the assets that you're manufacturing."

In many cases, Vancouver studios have formed partnerships with existing distributors, or have hired people to search out development financing. There are also a number of executive producers at large who will work on retainer, performing a similar service. This is one way to lessen the cost of entering into

development, though it generally requires that some of the "back end" be given up in the process. At Natterjack, we have realized the importance of allocating some funds to original production. Whether its in the form of advertising or traveling to conferences such as NATPE and MIP, a portion of the company's budget will always be devoted to developing and financing our own product.

"What else am I going to do with my life? I love animation. I love making pictures."

Seeing the Light of Day

The truth is that Vancouver studios *are* moving forward with their plans for self sufficiency. A number of projects within the last year have tasted success. Mainframe's 3-D animated series, *ReBoot,* will be in it's third season this year, while its new series, *Beast Wars,* has been fully funded and is currently in production. Local animator Gord Stanfield has presold his *Kleo the Misfit Unicorn.*. Herve Beddard retains the North American rights to *Billy the Cat.* Chris Delany is currently producing *Nilus the Sandman.* Slowly but surely, Vancouver projects are seeing the light of day. It is a case of staying power, determination, and developing the right property for the current market.

Marv Newland succinctly captures the prevailing sentiment among many local animators when he says, "What else am I going to do with my life? I love animation. I love making pictures. I would like it if I could just sit in a room and make short films for the rest of my life. . That's really what interests me. It's the closest thing to what pure animation is all about. I came up wrong. I didn't learn about working for TV series and all that. I started making my own pictures.

"So, I think if you want to make an animated film, even commercials, you make your storyboard, you design your characters, put some words in their mouths if you need them, get some music, and that's that. As the years go by, though, you do fewer of those things. You're handed things to do and told how to do them, sometimes by people with little or no animation experience. Each time someone hands you something to do, or tells you how to do it, the less interested you become, and the more money you make. So I'd just like to make my own pictures, and if there's some way I can get a sandwich at lunch and a coffee, and do some surfing, and have a roof over my head, then that's what I'd do."

Sean Maclennan Murch spent four years in London working as both a producer and executive producer. For the last two years he has been based in Vancouver, where he is currently employed as the Director of Development at Natterjack Animation Co. Ltd.

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The Thief And The Cobbler

by Alex Williams

Editor's Note: *In August 1995, a film titled* Arabian Knights *briefly appeared in American movie houses, hardly making a dent in the box office. Nevertheless, many in the animation community started to realize that this was no ordinary film, but rather a film assembled from the ruins of Richard Williams' magnum opus,* The Thief and the Cobbler, *which has now been released to the home video under its original title. While* Animation World Magazine *usually does not like to review films in their video version after they have been shown theatrically, we thought it would be interesting to have Richard Williams' son Alex take a gander at this version, which he had not seen before, and give us his reactions; some of my own comments on the film can be found in this issue's* Editor's Notebook.

The Thief and the Cobbler was to have been the greatest animated film ever made, the culmination of the a lifetime's work by master animator Richard Williams. Based on the art of the Middle East, and in particular on the miniatures produced in Safavid Persia circa 1500, the film was at least 30 Years in the making, and became a legend in the animation industry.

The version released on video by Miramax, described as "a musically-charged animated epic created by Richard Williams, the Oscar winning animator of Who Framed Roger Rabbit," is a degraded version of Williams' masterpiece, hardly worthy of the name it bears. It is the same film formerly released theatrically as Arabian Knight, a work of such startling bad taste that it discredits all who were involved in its completion. The film is more or less unwatchable, a collage of laughably third rate animation interspersed with scenes of remarkable beauty, leftovers from the original cut. Worst of all are the three song sequences, banal and depressingly mediocre, and a bad soundtrack, featuring the voices of Jonathan Winters, as The Thief, and Matthew Broderick, as The Cobbler. Both

The film is more or less unwatchable, a collage of laughably third rate animation interspersed with scenes of remarkable beauty, leftovers from the original cut.



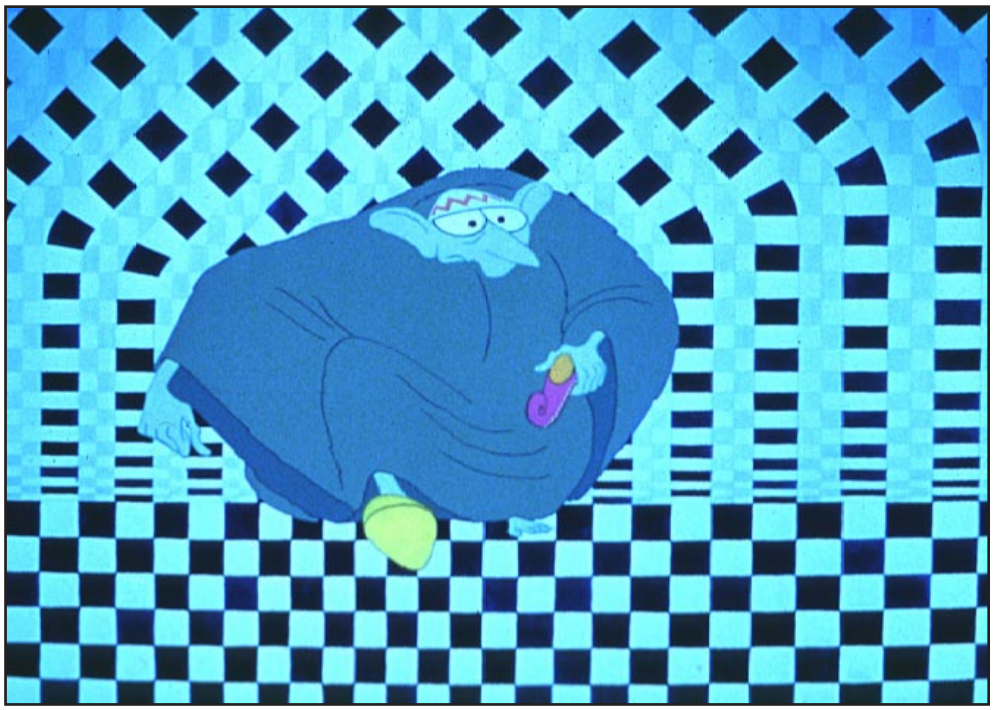
The Cobbler and The Princess.

characters were conceived by Williams as silent stars, without voice. Neither Broderick's endless plot commentaries nor Winters' unceasing and unfunny monologues add anything but noise to the film.

As Williams' involvement with the movie came to an end, the destruction of his life's work had begun.

having won an Oscar for his short film *A Christmas Carol* in 1972, picked up two more Oscars in 1990 for his groundbreaking work on *Who Framed Roger Rabbit.* Bankable at last, Williams was courted by producer Jake Eberts, and Warner Bros. agreed to finance and distribute *The Thief.*

Work began in earnest in the spring of 1990. Williams and his team of London animators labored to produce a work of lyrical beauty.



The Thief tries to escape through an Escher-like landscape in the palace.

Unlike Anything Attempted Before

The story of *The Thief and the Cobbler* began in London in the late 1960s, as Richard Williams began work on an obscure film which was to evolve over many years before reaching its final form. Working with illustrator Errol Le Cain and Art Designer Roy Naisbitt, Williams found a unique style based on Oriental and Eastern art, Unlike anything attempted before or since, and completely unlike Disney's *Aladdin, The Thief* did not attract full financial backing from a major studio until early 1990. Williams,

Those fortunate enough to have seen the original director's cut (much-duplicated copies of which circulate throughout the close-knit animation industry) will be familiar with a work of epic grandeur and remarkable ambition. The destruction of the evil One-Eye's war machine at the end of the film is a sequence of breathtaking complexity and beauty, a symphony of destruction in which sound effects, music and animation combine to create an almost balletic climax. The film, including this final sequence, was entirely hand drawn, traced and painted in the traditional fashion onto celluloid, It is often said that much of the impressive work in *The Thief* could be easily done today by computer-generated animation, but this is to miss the point. The use of Persian motifs lends the film a graphic two-and-a half-dimensional quality which defies normal physical laws. Such an eccentric vision could only have been produced by a human hand.

Williams, a perfectionist to the end, was unable to complete *The Thief* on time. In late 1991, the Completion Bond Company, worried by the size of their financial exposure, sent animator Fred Calvert to London to assess the situation. In early 1992, despite the fact that the film was just 10-15 minutes from completion, Warner Bros. pulled out of the project, and the bond company lost their nerve. *The Thief* was completed from Los Angeles, farmed out around the world by Calvert, and was eventually picked up by Miramax. As Williams' involvement with the movie came to an end, the destruction of his life's work had begun.

Fred Calvert's involvement with the completion of the film is perhaps the most discreditable aspect of the story. Unable to appreciate the remarkable nature of the project he had inherited, he sent the inevitable song sequences to be completed in Korea by animators used to working on Saturday morning children's cartoons. That these sequences look grotesque when juxtaposed with Williams' original work should have come as no surprise. Fred Calvert's leading role in butchering *The Thief* has become perhaps his most infamous contribution to the medium.

The Spirit of the Film

It is hard, looking at this Miramax video release, to find the spirit of

the film as it was originally conceived. The character of The Thief was intended as a mute, a Chaplinesque primitive, subtle and understated. By stealing the three golden balls which protect the Golden City, he unwittingly creates havoc and destruction around him. Superimposed over these scenes is Jonathan Winters' voice, ceaselessly cracking pointless jokes like an unwanted barroom companion. It is as if those responsible for the completion of the film were terrified of silence, overlaying every quiet moment in the film with endless chatter. Matthew Broderick's narration strives to explain what does not need explaining, robbing the story of subtlety or surprises. The film condescends to the the audience, insulting its intelligence.

For those courageous enough to sit it out, I recommend watching with the sound turned off.

There remains some beautiful animation in this fractured version of Richard Williams' epic; these include the opening sequence, where The Thief and The Cobbler get tangled up with each other and roll down the steps of the Cobbler's shop, interrupting Zig Zag's march through the city, the chase through the palace through Escher-like optical illusions, and a little of the final war machine sequence. For those courageous enough to sit it out, I recommend watching with the sound turned off. Save for Vincent Price's brilliant valedictory performance as Zig Zag, the evil Grand Vizier, all but a handful of the carefully selected original voice talents have been replaced with other, less suitable, actors. Even John Leatherbarrow's superb camerawork has been made to appear unremarkable, the once subtle colors now vulgar and garish. Finally, the substitution of Baghdad for the Golden City seems in extraordinarily bad taste for a film originally released shortly after the Gulf War.



The Thief hiding in a plant.

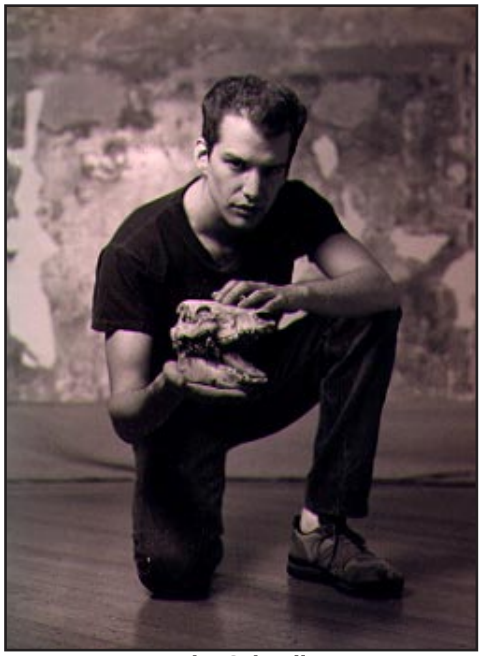
Dick Williams spent 30 years trying to pull off an animation masterpiece, a true work of art, the like of which may never be seen or attempted again. It is sad that so little of his original vision made it into this video release. It is probably little consolation to Williams himself that the Completion Bond Company has since gone out of business, largely as a result of the costs of completing The Thief.

The Thief and the Cobbler. **Director:** *Richard Williams.* **Screenplay:** *Richard Williams.* **Executive Producer:** *Jake Eberts.* **Musical Score:** *Robert Folk.* **Songs by:** *Robert Folk & Norman Gimbel.* **Producers:** *Richard Williams & Imogen Sutton.* **Director, L.A. Production:** *Fred Calvert.* **Producer, L.A.:** *Bette L. Smith.* **Art Director:** *Roy Naisbitt.* **Master Animator:** *Ken Harris.* **Background Stylist:** *Errol LeCain.* **Director of Photography:** *John Leatherbarrow.* **Artistic Supervisors: Special Effects:** *John M. Cousen.* **Character Animation:** *Neil Boyle & Tim Watts.* **Background:** *Paul Dilworth.* **Lead Animators** *included: Art Babbitt, Steven Evangelatos, Emery Hawkins, Richard Williams, Alex Williams, and many others.*

Alex Williams is an animator at Warner Bros. Feature Animation, currently working on The Quest For Camelot. *He spent two years animating on* The Thief and the Cobbler, *which was directed by his father Richard. He also teaches an animation class at The California Institute of The Arts, and does a weekly cartoon strip* Queen's Counsel *for* The London Times.

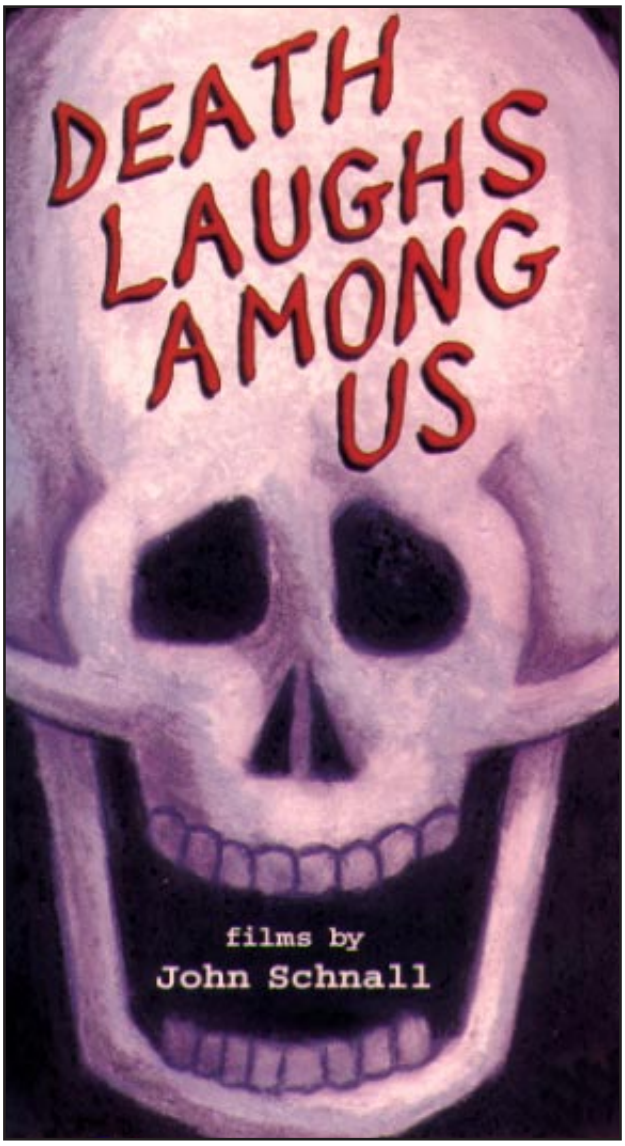
Reviews in Brief

by Wendy Jackson



John Schnall.

Death Laughs Among Us: The Films of John Schnall



Independent animator John Schnall has put together a home video of his short films in association with Poteet Music, an independent record distributor based in New Jersey. Among the community of East Coast independents, Schnall is notably prolific; in this regard, his colleague Steve Dovas said that, "To me, what has been most admirable about his career has been the regularity with which he's turned out his funny, wierd, and wholly singular, self-produced animated films." All this abundance has driven Schnall to be able to release a 40-minute video collection at a relatively early age.

Death Laughs Among Us features seven of Schnall's 2-D animations, most of which, as the title indicates, are at once humorous and macabre. I Was A Thanksgiving Turkey and Goodnight Norma . . .Goodnight Milton reveal his dark sense of humor by presenting atypical perspectives on everyday occurences. Buy My Film! and Opposing Views are like little animated punchlines to jokes formed in the depths of the filmmaker's mind. Independents will particularly appreciate the humor in Buy My Film!, which portrays the feelings of any independent filmmaker seeking distribution for their work. My personal favorite is Frankenstein, which uses 35mm photography of live actors for an eerie, almost pixilated stop-motion effect.

Death Laughs Among Us is available in the US for $20.00 each (including postage) from Poteet Music, Schnall Tape: AWN, 625 Washington Street #5, Hoboken, NJ 07030 USA, poteet@panix.com.

Björk Gets Animated With John Kricfalusi.

Ren & Stimpy creator John Kricfalusi has made his first music video for Icelandic beauty Björk, who is an equally outrageous and innovative artist. Illustrating the song "I Miss You," the video features John K's stupid yet loveable character Jimmy the Idiot Boy cavorting with a bubbly animated version of the singer. A variety of techniques are used, including traditional 2-D cel animation by Kricfalusi's own Spumco Productions and Colorkey Productions, 3-D computer animation supervised by Charlie Gibson at Rhythm & Hues, real-time motion-capture animation by House of Moves, plus blue screen mattes bringing in live-action into the mix. (The live-action sequences with Björk were shot in a Los Angeles studio in just one day.)



I Miss You.

Björk, a long-time fan of Kricfalusi's work, insisted that he do a video for her when they met at one of her concerts. She was so pleased when she first saw John's storyboard that she apparently proclaimed, "It's just like Christmas!" and did not ask for any changes.

The video is becoming something of a novelty, since MTV edited the director's cut to remove an end sequence featuring the animated Jimmy and Björk dancing underneath what look like a cross between rubber nipples and condoms on top of her actual (live-action) chest. It is ironic that the network cut that sequence while keeping shots of Björk violently ripping up a chicken, and even Jimmy himself. But fret not, devoted fans; the director's cut can be seen in rotation on that other music channel, The Box, as well as on MTV's new alternative sister network M2. The video is also included in promotions of the new RealVideo technology, which enables full-motion video to be displayed over the Internet.

John Kricfalusi and his production company Spumco are also turning heads with its new toy lines (see Toy Fair article, this issue). At this rate, maybe it's time to stop calling him *Ren & Stimpy*'s creator and start calling him the creator of Jimmy the Idiot Boy . . . Yeah, I think there's a nice ring to that!

Wendy Jackson is Associate Editor of Animation World Magazine.

KLIC's Online Animated Musical: Real-Time Animation on the Web?

by Jami Maloney

Kids' Light Intertainment Channel (KLIC) has produced the first animated musical for children on the Internet, using Enliven Viewer, one of the hottest new technologies available for creating interactive content on the Web. With Enliven, a plug-in application for Web browsers like Microsoft Internet Explorer and Netscape, the animation begins to run right away, using a streaming technology to play the first segment, while the other segments download in the background.



The Body Shop.

Hardly a traditional musical, KLIC's site features Swampland of Gross, Snitchragula, and Alien Body Shop, animated segments that participants visit and play. Children ages 8-12 are the target audience for the show. Some of the content is truly tasteless in a way kids giggle over, but is not violent and is intended to be good fun.

Snitchragula, the title character, is an ancient fortune teller, who greets viewers with a wary eye and invites questions. Like a darker version of the hugely popular Magic 8 Ball game, Snitch varies her answers in an amusing and scathing manner. This animation, although fairly limited, is a popular part of the site and has a quick download time.

Alien Body Shop, a Dr. Seuss meets Goosebumps-style scene, is a place where viewers can develop a character of their own out of a wild assortment of body parts and watch the assembled parts move. Several combinations of parts are possible, so characters can be developed and redeveloped until the perfect specimen takes form. Using Enliven interactively to develop characters might be a powerful tool for gaming companies looking for feedback on successful character types, according to Wendy Robbins, producer for Kids' Light Intertainment. Most people playing Alien Body Shop choose the same character composite initially, meaning that it has the most universal appeal. (This animation is available both as an Enliven and a Shockwave file.)

Swampland of Gross, the portion of the site best fitting the description of animated musical, has a large cast of characters singing and moving through different areas of a bizarre and fantastically colored world. The animation here is more extensive, involving more complicated interaction and has a multipart story. (It also requires more download time than the other segments.) Recommended: View this segment as a grand finale to your visit. Kids can engage in a slime fight between two groups of characters, pick some interesting objects out of a variety of pulsating noses, and make a fart symphony. "Younger



The main menu.

kids especially love to slime," said Robbins. "They keep coming back to that part over and over."

More From KLIC

KLIC has recently added an online shopping area to the site, called the "Outta Space Store," where shoppers can purchase such grossessities as slime chemistry sets, edible brains, squid spit, mucus-making kits and Gurgly Gutz.

Plans for upcoming additions to KLIC include a chat area for kids to meet and discuss animation, the Internet, and stories, and a mad libs page, where wacky and nonsensical stories are created by inserting random words into a predefined story. Additional animated musical stories like Swampland of Gross will be added in the months to come.

"KLIC is not stereotypical multimedia development," said Paul Santinelli, product manager at Narrative. "It's one of the most fun and engaging things out there for kids who are dialing up and looking for interesting sites." KLIC is run by a talented and energetic crew who have a strong sense of what kids like to see and play with, and their initial offering gives us a vision of the range of multimedia content that will be available within the next 12 months: Web-based animated games with sound and relatively fast download times. The games are relatively simple, and the animation is still somewhat limited compared with an 8x CD-ROM-driven game, but the improvements in speed and interactivity are tremendous compared with other products available on the Web.

KLIC partnered with Narrative Communications during Enliven's beta testing phase in 1996, and developed their animated segments as a way to showcase their wildly colored and imaginative designs as part of the Narrative gallery of animation.

Enliven

Enliven is the first product on the market to stream Macromedia Director files, which is one of the most common multimedia formats on the Web. Animations in this format are CD-ROM-quality, since individual elements of the presentation are decompressed as they are delivered to the browser. "Downloading animation, people are patient for about 1 to 1-1/2 minutes, and then they move on," noted Santinelli. "Enliven is unique in the sense that you can download large animations and see them right away."

Some of the content is truly tasteless in a way kids giggle over, but is not violent and is intended to be good fun.

Although it competes with other plug-ins like Macromedia's Shockwave and recently acquired Flash, Enliven outstrips both in download speed and in streaming audio. For example, a 2.5 MB animation downloads in 30-40 seconds over a 14.4 kbps modem. The same file run by other "download and run" plugins could require up to 8 minutes to play. Macromedia Flash works in much the same way



The Swampland of Gross.

as Enliven to stream video, but requires use of a separate plugin such as Real Audio to deliver sound.

The Enliven suite of software, produced by Narrative Communications, includes the Viewer, Enliven Producer, and Enliven Server. Microsoft is now bundling the Enliven Viewer with ActiveX Internet Explorer 3.0. "Enliven will enable more informative, entertaining and interactive multimedia content on the Web for Microsoft Internet Explorer users," according to John Ludwig, Vice President of Microsoft's Internet Platform Tools Division. Netscape users can download the new Viewer free of charge from Narrative's site. Enliven takes about 1 MB of disk space to install.

Narrative runs a professional developer's program for multimedia designers and online developers to learn about the Enliven suite of products and showcase their work on the Web. Enliven Producer, a post-production environment for developers, sells for $249, and allows programmers to create their work directly or translate files from Macromedia Director. This technology enables CD-ROM companies to produce demos for the Web directly from their existing products, which instantly gives them a much wider audience. Other potential applications include visual and interactive training and support applications, engaging marketing and sales tools, and educational games.

Kids can engage in a slime fight between two groups of characters, pick some interesting objects out of a variety of pulsating noses, and make a fart symphony.



The Swampland of Gross.

The third portion of the Enliven product system, Enliven Server, is a high-performance server, providing an industrial-strength platform for continuous multimedia streaming to thousands of simultaneous users, while ensuring a high level of quality across large networks. A starter package, including a three-stream license for Enliven Server and a copy of Enliven Producer, is available for $695 through Narrative. For high-performance sites, Producer is available in 20, 50, or 100 stream configurations starting at $5,600.

Enliven is not available currently for Macintosh or UNIX users, although a version for the Mac is planned when its new operating system becomes available. System requirements for viewing the KLIC site: a 14.4 kbps modem or higher, Microsoft Windows 95 or Windows NT, Netscape Navigator 2.0 or higher, or Internet Explorer 3.0. Narrative has just upgraded the Enliven viewer to eliminate a couple of bugs which caused download flows to halt without warning.

Programs like Enliven make developing more entertaining and innovative Web sites possible, further defining the Internet as an entertainment medium. With millions of new users coming online this year due to the advent of Web TV, expectations are at an all-time high. "We've developed some great technology to make the Web more engaging," said Santinelli. "We're moving the animation trend onto the Web."

KLIC: http://www.kidslight.com
Enliven: http://www.narrative.com

KLIC. Produced & Written by Wendy Robbins & Miriam Cutler; Associate Producers: Tiffany Robinson & Michelle Emch; Music & Sound Effects: Miriam Cutler; Animation: Maja Aimskou; Artwork: Wendy Robbins, Shane Donohue, Alex Kohnke; Programming & Design: Stefan Kosel; Enlivenizing (& some Lingo Programming): The Fabulous Zeek; Voices: Wendy Robbins, Miriam Cutler.

Jami Maloney is a graphic designer, animator, and writer living in the Los Angeles area.

Animating Web Sites: Macromedia Flash

by Guillaume Calop

Macromedia recently acquired FutureWave Software company, and with it, added FutureSplash Animator *to its Shockwave family of Web-based multimedia players. Now called* Macromedia Flash, *this animation authoring and viewing package is available to professional and amateur designers alike. AWN Webmaster Guillaume Calop gave the product a spin, and created a few animations in the process,*

Macromedia Flash is a versatile multimedia authoring program for Windows 95/NT, Macintosh or Power Macintosh, which allows you to draw, animate, move objects, and create interactive buttons for Web pages. Flash documents are small, thereby enabling to speed through standard modem connections. The animation is streaming, meaning it plays as it loads, so there is virtually no download time. The Flash viewer plug-in is contained within the "Shockwave Essentials" download package currently available; but for those who don't have this package, the viewer plug-in is very light (80-150k), so downloading is a breeze.

As an authoring tool, Flash is somewhere between two sides of the spectrum; it offers a more powerful, high-quality alternative to simple GIF animations or QuickTime movies, yet it is much easier to work with then high-end and expensive programs like Macromedia Director. Integrated lessons make learning simple. To animate in Flash, you can either draw each frame and background, or import them from programs such as Illustrator, FreeHand, or any other vector-based graphic product. Because it is a vector-based



program, you don't need to have great drawing skills, or a graphic palette. You can easily smooth curves, draw straight lines, rectangles, circles, and of course, add colors, solid or gradient. And, being vector-based, as there are no pixels, you can add plenty of details and zoom in indefinitely without sacrificing quality.

Placing the frames on different layers, you can still see all the images at once through its onion skin feature. With motion interpolation, one drawing can be animated by following a path. You can also rotate an image while following the path, in a scaled regulation (for example, from small to big).

The animated interactive buttons are a fun way to spice up web pages. They can be set to do several different functions, including changing shape when the mouse is dragged over it or when it is pushed, stopping or starting an animation, and of course, leading to another Web page.

Embedding Flash files on Web pages is easy, with different configurations available; however, you do need to set up your server to recognize the document, which can be a problem depending on your Internet service provider. At $249.00, the program is not cheap, but compared to Director, it's a steal.

Check out the Flash animations created by the AWN Webmaster.

Links to other examples:
http://www.macromedia.com/shockwave/epicenter/

Guillaume Calop is AWN's Webmaster and Animation World Magazine's *Technical Editor.*

Imagina 97

by Jean Segura

From its start, Imagina has been organized by the French National Audiovisual Institute (INA) to coincide with the Monte Carlo Television Festival (this year celebrating its 37th anniversary). The 16th annual Imagina conference was held from February 19-21 in Monaco and highlighted new imaging and communications technologies.

Traditionally, Imagina, like the American SIGGRAPH conference, has been devoted entirely to computer graphics and special effects for film and television. Gradually, it has added such areas as virtual reality, virtual communities on the Internet, new mediums of communication between man and computer, interactive games and Internet games, and complex modeling techniques for creating virtual characters or environments.

Among computer graphic professionals, the event attracts artists, animated and live-action film producers and writers, game and multimedia publishers and writers, website users and creators, as well as architects, designers, doctors, military personnel, etc.

A modest-sized event when it began in 1988 (1,400 people), Imagina 97 topped 7,000 visitors, confirming it as the most important European conference in the field.

Imagina itself revolves around three subdivisions: the professional exhibition, the conferences, and the Pixel-INA competitions awarding prizes to the best computer-generated work—animated films and special effects.

Several Works Seen at Imagina 97

Virtual Monaco: A virtual flight through Monaco and its harbor was presented by Intel at the Intergraph stand. This project was undertaken by the Marseilles

par Jean Segura

Depuis 15 ans, Imagina est une manifestation organisée par l'Institut National Audiovisuel français (INA) dans le cadre du Festival de Télévision de Monte-Carlo (37e édition en 1997) sur le thème des nouvelles technologies de l'image et de la communication.

La seizième édition d'Imagina s'est tenue du 19 au 21 février à Monaco. Traditionnellement Imagina, comme le Siggraph aux Etats-Unis, a toujours été consacré au graphique par ordinateur et aux effets spéciaux pour le cinéma et la télévision. Puis peu à peu elle s'est enrichie de thèmes comme la réalité virtuelle, les communautés virtuelles sur Internet, les nouveaux modes de communication homme machine, les jeux interactifs et les jeux en réseau, les techniques de modélisation complexes des personnages ou des scènes virtuelles, etc.

Aux côtés des professionnels de l'image informatique au sens large on trouve des artistes, producteurs et auteurs de films de fictions ou d'animation, des éditeurs et auteurs de jeux et de produits multimédias, des concepteurs et utilisateurs de sites web, mais aussi des architectes, designers, médecins, militaires, etc.

De taille modeste à ses débuts (1400 personnes en 1988), Imagina a reçu près de 7000 visiteurs en 1997. Imagina a réussi ainsi à s'affirmer comme le plus grand rendez vous européen dans son domaine.

Imagina s'articule en trois sous ensembles : l'exposition professionnelle, les conférences et les compétitions des Prix Pixel-Ina récompensant les meilleures œuvres créées sur ordinateur: films d'animation et effets spéciaux.

Quelques réalisations vues à Imagina 97

Monaco Virtuel : Présentée par Intel sur le stand

company VSM using Division dVise software for Windows NT. The hardware was the Intergraph workstation TDZ-410 with a dual processor Pentium Pro 200 MHz, equipped with a Z25 GT graphic accelerator and geometric accelerator. This interactive model is the preliminary step to the creation of a future protected walkway at the port of Condamine (Monaco).

Delphi Reincarnated: EDF, Imagina's official partner, presented a 3-D reconstruction of the monuments that once stood at the present day archeological site in Delphi, Greece. These monuments date back to the 4th century B.C. Sponsored by the MÈcÈnat Technologique et Scientifique of EDF for the Athens French School, the project is the result of a collaboration between the Nancy School of Architecture, the Bordeaux Museum of Archeology and EDF.

Madracers, the new simulation film done with computer graphics by France's ExMachina, depicts an interplanetary chase in a rococo style, which is quite a change from the everyday space rockets à la *Star Wars.* This film is expected to come out in Iwerks theaters using 3-D projection, as well as in a game version.



***The Green Man*, by Jodi Whitsel**
(Texas A&M University Visualization Lab)

2nd World is a multimedia game consisting of a virtual online walk. The product of Cryo Interactive Entertainment, it is published by Canal+ Multimedia (a subsidiary of Canal+ TV company). It contains a graphic database of a virtual city (a 3-D reconstitution of Paris and its streets, with virtual buildings and apartments, etc.) on a CD-ROM (for Windows). First, a user selects how their personalized digital avatar will look, then connects via the Internet to the 2nd World server. One can explore the different Parisian districts from any direction one chooses: streets, stores, monuments, as in any real city. It is hardly a rare occurrence to encounter other avatars out for a virtual walk at the same time. Not only is *2nd World* a meeting place, there are other services available: games, activities, a newspaper and even a polling place. A new democracy is born!

Tian an Men is a short 3-D film made by Pasquale Croce and Arnaud Lamorlette (Buf Compagnie) for Amnesty International. This short has hardly been seen since it has been banned. It depicts the famous Chinese demonstration, where one person stopped a tank cold

Intergraph, la promenade virtuelle sur le rocher de Monaco est un projet en mode réalité virtuelle réalisé par la société marseillaise VSM avec le logiciel dVise de Division, version Windows NT. Ce dernier tourne sur station Intergraph TDZ-410 à bi-processeurs Pentium Pro 200 MHz équipé de l'accélérateur graphique Z25 GT et d'un accélérateur géométrique. Cette maquette virtuelle interactive vise à prévisualiser l'implantation de la future digue de protection du port de la Condamine dans le paysage côtier monégasque.

Delphes Reconstitué : EDF, partenaire officiel d'Imagina, a présenté une reconstitution 3D en relief des monuments disparus de *Marmaria*, site archéologique de Delphes en Grèce datant du IVème siècle avant JC. Cette reconstitution réalisée dans le cadre du Mécénat Technologique et Scientifique d'EDF au profit de l'Ecole Française d'Athènes est le fruit d'une collaboration entre l'Ecole d'Architecture de Nancy, la Maison de l'Archéologie de Bordeaux et la DER d'EDF.

Madracers, nouveau film de simulation en images de synthèse réalisé chez ExMachina, met en scène une course poursuite de vaisseaux interplanétaires au look plutôt rococo qui change des habituels avions-fusées à la "star wars". Notons que *Madracers,* qui est prévu pour une projection en relief pour les salles du réseau Iwerks, devrait aussi être décliné sous forme de jeu.

Le *2eme Monde* est un jeu multimédia de promenade virtuelle en ligne conçu et réalisé par Cryo Interactive Entertainment et édité par Canal+ Multimédia. Les données graphiques de la ville virtuelle (une reconstitution 3D de Paris avec ses rues, des immeubles et des appartements, etc.) sont stockées sur un CR-Rom (version Windows). Pour s'y promener, on choisit d'abord son apparence sous la forme d'un avatar numérique personnalisé, puis on se connecte via Internet sur le serveur "2eme Monde". On peut alors explorer les quartiers déjà modélisés de ce Paris virtuel, et ce dans la direction que l'on veut: rues, magasins, monuments se succèdent comme dans la vraie ville. Au gré de cette promenade il n'est pas rare de rencontrer les avatars d'autres "flâneurs" branchés sur le serveur au même moment. Non seulement le 2eme Monde est un lieu de rencontres et de communication, mais il possède en outre des services, des jeux, des anima-

in Tian an Men Square. A mix of real images (provided by the BBC) and 3-D computer graphics that replicate the other tanks and the rest of the square take us into the heart of the action, besides the student confronted by a tank, as if all in one single camera movement. The new 3-D images combine perfectly with the original sequences to give an illusion of a real newsreel, even to the point of integrating the identical "white noise." Tian an Men received the Imagina jury's special mention.



Bob and Scott **, by Oliver Bonnet and Laurent Bounoure (Protécréa/TF1).**

Six Conference Sessions

"Narration. Interaction"—More and more, interactive media (CD-ROM, Internet) are mixing narrative with active public intervention: possibly to change the story line, to add new characters and situations. Presentations by: Greg Roach (Hyperbole Studios, USA), Andy Cameron (Antirom, UK) Troy Bolotnick (LightSpeed Media, USA), Chris Crawford (Chris Crawford Games, USA), Ramesh Jain (University of California, San Diego, USA) and Gilberte Houbart (MIT, USA).

"Virtual Communities and Video Games: 3-D on the Network"—A journey into some of the more recent creations of some of the ambitious projects take take one into new realms of communication, where players from all over the world plug into shared virtual worlds. Presentations by: Yuzo Naritomi (Sega, Japan), Greg Richardson (3DO Company, USA), Robert Rockwell (Black Sun Interactive, Germany), Gurrminder Singh (Institute System of Singapore), Philippe Ulrich (Cryo, France) and Alain LeDiberder (Canal +, France).

"From Image to Model"—New techniques, analysis and image identification, sample objects seen from multiple angles, analysis of image sequences, morphing

tions, un journal, et même un bureau de vote. Pour la naissance d'une nouvelle démocratie!

Tian An Men est un film très court réalisé par Pasquale Croce et Arnaud Lamorlette (Buf Compagnie) pour Amnesty International, un clip que presque personne n'a vu, puisqu'il est interdit. On y voit la fameuse scène du manifestant chinois arrêtant à lui tout seul une colonne de chars pendant les manifestations de la place Tian An Men. Par un enchaînement subtil entre images réelles (source vidéo de la BBC) et images de synthèse 3D (qui reproduit les chars et la place Tian An Men), on se retrouve comme transporté à côté de l'étudiant face aux chars, le tout semblant filmé en un seul mouvement de caméra. La partie 3D donne l'illusion d'être également une bande d'actualité car maquillée avec le même bruit de fond qui caractérisait la vidéo d'origine. Tian An Men a reçu la mention spéciale du jury d'Imagina.

Six sessions de conférences

"Narration. Interaction" - De plus en plus, des médias interactifs (CD-ROM, Internet) combinent le récit et l'intervention active du public : changement du cours de la narration, apparition de nouveaux personnages et de situations nouvelles.

Orateurs : Greg Roach (Hyperbole Studios, USA), Andy Cameron (Antirom, RU), Troy Bolotnick (LightSpeed Media, USA), Chris Crawford (Chris Crawford Games, USA), Ramesh Jain (University of California, San Diego, USA) et Gilberte Houbart (MIT, USA).

"Communautés virtuelles et jeux vidéo: la 3D à la rencontre du réseau" - A travers quelques unes des réalisations les plus récentes ou des projets les plus ambitieux, on découvre de nouveaux univers de communication qui permettent à des joueurs du monde entier de se connecter entre eux à l'intérieur de mondes virtuels partagés.

Orateurs : Yuzo Naritomi (Sega, Japon), Greg Richardson (3DO Company, USA), Robert Rockwell (Black Sun Interactive, Allemagne), Gurrminder Singh (Institute of System of Singapore), Philippe Ulrich (Cryo Interactive Entertainment, France) & Alain LeDiberder (Canal+, France).

"De l'image au modèle" - De nouvelles techniques d'analyse et de reconnaissance d'images, d'échantillonnages d'objets vus sous plusieurs angles, d'analyse de séquences d'images, de morphing ou de manipulation des représentations faciales de manière prévisible permettent désormais de créer des modèles virtuels directement à partir d'éléments de la réalité.

or foreseeable manipulation of facial aspects. It is now possible to create virtual models directly from real elements. Presentations by: Takedo Kanade (Carnegie Mellon University, USA), Thomas Vetter (Max-Planck Institute, Germany), Luc Robert (INRIA, France), Steven Steitz (University of Wisconsin at Madison, USA), Duncan Rowland & Michel Burt (St. Andrew University, Scotland) and Fabio Pettinati (Apple, USA).

"Setting in Motion"—After the shapes are modeled, the movements then must be modeled (dancing, walking, smiling, frowning) so as to animate the virtual characters and environments. This requires the use of complex movement analysis techniques, capturing the gestures, facial expressions and full body movements within a given space, or even creative techniques to invent the movements. Presentations by: Hal Bertram (Jim Henson's Creature Shop, UK), Ken Perlin (New York University, USA), Kazuyuki Ebihara (ATR, Japan), Gilles Dietrich (INSEP, France), Michiel Van de Panne (University of Toronto, Canada), Agnès Saulnier & Pierre-Emmanuel Chaut (INA, France).

"Knowing and Understanding in 3-D"—Three-D, now available on the Web, is a supplemental instrument for Internet surfing. Whether educative or fun, 3-D (on or offline) is a form of exploration and discovery into our world of knowledge: medicine, archeology, and museum technology were the examples elaborated on. Presentations by: Fabio Pettinati (Apple, USA), Jack Lancaster (Research Imaging Center, USA), Christian Laroche (Ecole Française d'Athènes, Greece) & Guillaume Thibault (EDF, France), Emmanuel Forsans (Cryo Interactive Entertainment, France), Dennis Cosgrove (University of Virginia, USA), Delle Maxwell (Silicon Graphics, USA).

"Subtle and Spectacular Effects"—An annual favorite at Imagina, this session is devoted to special effects in movies: obvious effects that result in the invention of the most unimaginable creatures, or invisible effects that render the scene in all its realistic splendor. Presentations by: Jan Kounen (director) & Rodolphe Chabrier (Mac Guff Ligne, France) for the feature movie Le Dobermann (director Jan Kounen), Kelley Ray (Sony Pictures Imageworks, USA) for the feature movie The Craft (director Andrew Fleming), Stefen Fangmeier (Industrial Light & Magic, USA) for the feature movie Twister (director Jan De Bont), Valérie Delahaye (Digital Domain, USA), Antoine Simkine (Duboi, France) for the feature movies Mordbüro (director Lionel Kopp) and Didier (director Alain Chabat), Mike Boudry (Computer Film Company, UK).

Orateurs : Takeo Kanade (Carnegie Mellon University, USA), Thomas Vetter (Max-Planck Institut, Allemagne), Luc Robert (INRIA, France), Steven Seitz (University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA), Duncan Rowland & Michael Burt (St-Andrew University, Ecosse, RU) et Fabio Pettinati (Apple, USA).

"Mises en mouvements" - Après avoir modélisé les formes, on modélise le mouvement (danse, marche, sourire et grimaces) pour donner vie aux personnages et scènes virtuels. On utilise pour cela des techniques d'analyse des mouvements complexes, de captures de la gestuelle, des expressions du visage et des mouvements du corps entier à l'intérieur de l'espace, ou encore des techniques de création pure de mouvements.

Orateurs : Hal Bertram (Jim Henson's Creature Shop, RU), Ken Perlin (NY University, USA), Kazuyuki Ebihara (ATR, Japon), Gilles Dietrich (INSEP, France), Michiel Van de Panne (University of Toronto, Canada), Agnès Saulnier & Pierre-Emmanuel Chaut (INA, France).

"3D pour connaître. 3D pour comprendre" - La 3D, désormais accessible sur le web, est un instrument supplémentaire de navigation dans l'Internet. Sous des formes heuristique ou ludique, la 3D (hors ligne ou en ligne) reste aussi un moyen d'exploration et de découverte des différents champs de la connaissance: médecine, archéologie ou muséographie sont quelques uns des exemples donnés ici.

Orateurs : Fabio Pettinati (Apple, USA), Jack Lancaster (Research Imaging Center, USA), Christian Laroche (Ecole Française d'Athènes, Grèce) & Guillaume Thibault (EDF, France), Emmanuel Forsans (Cryo Interactive Entertainment, France), Dennis Cosgrove (University of Virginia, USA), Delle Maxwell (Silicon Graphics, USA).

"Effets subtils et spectaculaires" - Evénement annuel d'Imagina, cette session est consacrée aux effets spéciaux pour le cinéma: effets évidents qui permettent d'inventer les créatures les plus insolites de l'imaginaire, ou effets invisibles qui permettent de composer avec une grande maîtrise des scènes à l'apparence réaliste.

Orateurs : Jan Kounen (Réalisateur) & Rodolphe Chabrier (Mac Guff Ligne, France) pour le film Le Dobermann (réalisateur Jan Kounen) , Kelley Ray (Sony Pictures Image Works, USA) pour le film The Craft (réalisateur Andrew Fleming), Stefen Fangmeier (Industrial Light & Magic, USA) pour le film Twister (réalisateur Jan De Bont), Valérie Delahaye (Digital Domain, USA), Antoine Simkine (Duboi, France) pour les films Mordbüro (réalisateur Lionel Kopp) et Didier (réalisateur Alain Chabat), Mike Boudry (Computer Film

The Professional Exhibition

This year there were about 100 participants, of which I would like to point out the following:

- *Graphic workstation manufacturers: Digital Equipment, Intergraph, Silicon Graphics.*
- *Two-D and 3-D software publishers: Alias Wavefront, Animation Science Corp. Autodesk, Discreet Logic, Softimage.*
- *Three-D object database publishers: Rem Infografica, Viewpoint DataLabs ;*
- *Suppliers of motion capture systems: Motion Analysis Corp., Qualisys AB.*
- *Hardware suppliers : Barco, Tektonix Theta Scan.*
- *Regional and institutional companies: ElectricitÈ de France (EDF), VallÈe de l'Image (The Regional Council of Burgundy) ;*
- *TV stations: Canal +.*

Pixel-INA Awards

More than 500 works from almost 30 countries were entered in this competition. The Imagina jury selected 67 works to be screened, representing the production of 25 different countries.

Jury Prizes

- *Grand Prix Imagina: Joe's Apartment: Funky Towel by Jon Payson and Chris Wedge (Blue Sky Studios), USA.*
- *Media Prize for Best European Creation: Superstition by Ray Spencer and Sylvain Delaine (New Wave International/Movida), Belgium.*
- *Special Jury Mention: Tian An Men by Buf Compagnie, Pasquale Croce & Arnaud Lamorlette (Buf Compagnie), France.*
- *3-DAnimation: Mars Attacks by Tim Burton and Industrial Light & Magic (Tim Burton/Larry Franco), USA.*

The Pixel-INA prizes based on votes by attendees at the end of the two official conference screenings (10 categories):

- *Music Video: Whatever You Want (Tina Turner) by Stéphane Sednaoui (Propaganda Communications) & Stéphanie Lang (Cinesite Europe), (Propaganda Communications), UK.*
- *Credits: Homage to Jessie Owens & Carl Lewis by Pitof Duboi (Wind Luc Dayan Productions, Canal +), France.*
- *Fiction: ADN by Patrick Cherau and Marc Thonon (Okenite), France.*
- *Games: Tomb Raider by Core Design (Eidos Company, RU).*

L'exposition professionnelle

Cette année l'exposition regroupait une centaine d'exposants. Nous avons retenu :

- *Constructeurs de stations de travail graphique: Digital Equipment, Intergraph, Silicon Graphics ;*
- *Editeurs de logiciels 2D et 3D: Alias Wavefront, Animation Science Corp, Autodesk, Discreet Logic, Softimage ;*
- *Editeurs de banque de données d'objets 3D : Rem Infografica, Viewpoint DataLabs ;*
- *Fournisseurs de systèmes de capture des mouvements : Motion Analysis Corp, Qualisys AB*
- *Fournisseurs de matériel : Barco, Tektronix, Theta Scan ;*
- *Compagnies institutionnelles et régionales : Electricité de France (EDF) Vallée de l'Image (Conseil Régional de Bourgogne).*
- *Chaîne de TV : Canal+*



***Down In the Dumps* by Philips Media.**

Prix Pixel-INA/Pixel-INA Awards

Plus de 500 oeuvres provenant de près de 30 pays ont concouru dans la compétition. Le jury d'Imagina a sélectionné sur ce nombre 67 oeuvres représentant la production de 25 pays.

Prix décernés par le Jury d'Imagina 97 :

- *Grand Prix Imagina: Joe's Apartment : Funky Towel de Jon Payson & Chris Wedge (Blue Sky Studios), USA.*
- *Prix Media de la meilleure création Européenne : Superstition de Ray Spencer & Sylvain Delaine (New Wave International/Movida), Belgique.*
- *Mention Spéciale du Jury : Tian An Men. de Buf Compagnie, Pasquale Croce & Arnaud Lamorlette.*

Interactive), France.
- Special Effects: *Joe's Apartment* by Jon Payson and Chris Wedge (Blue Sky Studios), USA.
- Commercial: GMEV1: *Appliances* by Joe Johnston (ILM/Kip Larsen), USA.
- Visualization: *Fibonacci and the Golden Mean* (excerpt) by David Fisher (The Palladian Group), USA.
- Art: *Sakuratei* by Koji Matsuoka (Links Corp./Imagica Corp.), Japan.
- Theme Parks: *Superstition* by Ray Spencer and Sylvian Delaine (New Wave International/Movida), Belgium.
- Schools & Universities : *Dust City* by Sébastien Droiun, Cristoph Mutin & Oliver Dumont (Universite de Provence), France.



Down In the Dumps **by Philips Media.**

Others Prizes & Special Mentions

- Soundtrack, presented by the Commission Supérieure Technique: *Dust City* by Sébastien Droiun, Cristoph Mutin and Oliver Dumont (Universite de Provence), France.
- Ricard Prize for Creativity: *Sticky Business* by Ed Taylor (Kingston University), UK.
- SCAM Prize for 3-D: *Cahin Caha* by Michel Bret (Univerity of Paris), France
- SACD Prize for Script: *Joe's Apartment: Funky Towel* by Jon Payson and Chris Wedge (Blue Sky Studios), USA.

Jean Segura is a scientific journalist and consultant, specialized in scientific imaging, computer graphics and virtual reality. His book, Du Scanner aux images numériques *(*From Scanners to Digital Images*), was published by Agfa Gevaert/Nathan.*

(1ère Heure/Buf Compagnie), France.
- *Animation 3D : Mars Attacks.* de Tim Burton & Industrial Light & Magic (Tim Burton/Larry Franco), USA.

Prix Pixel-INA décernés par le public d'Imagina à la suite d'un vote à la fin des deux sessions de projection officielle (10 catégories).

- *Video-clips :Whatever You Want* (Tina Turner) de Stéphane Sednaoui (Propaganda Communications) & Stéphanie Lang (Cinesite Europe), RU.
- *Génériques : Hommage à Jessie Owens & Carl Lewis. Réal : Pitof (Duboi). Prod : Wind Luc Dayan Production/Canal+ (France).*
- *Fiction : ADN. Réal : Patrick Cherreau, Marc Thonon. Prod : Okenite (France).*
- *Jeux : Tomb Raider* de Core Design (Eidos Interactive), France.
- *Effets spéciaux : Joe's Apartment : Funky Towel* de Jon Payson & Chris Wedge (Blue Sky Studios), USA.
- *Publicité : GMEV1 : Appliances* de Joe Johnston (Industrial Light & Magic/Kid Larsen), USA.
- *Visualisation : Fibonacci and the Golden Mean* de David Fisher (The Palladian Group), USA.
- *Art : Sakuratei* de Koji Matsuoka/Links Corp. (Links Corp./Imagica Corp.), Japon.
- *Parc D'attraction : Superstition* de Ray Spencer & Sylvain Delaine (New Wave International/Movida), Belgique.
- *Écoles & Universités : Dust City* de Sébastien Drouin, Christophe Mutin & Olivier Dumont (Université de Provence), France.

Autres Prix & Mentions

- *Mention Bande Sonore Commission Supérieure Technique :Dust City* de Sébastien Drouin, Christophe Mutin & Olivier Dumont (Université de Provence), France.
- *Bourse de la Création Ricard : Sticky Business* de Ed Taylor (Kingston University), RU.
- *Prix 3e Dimension SCAM: Cahin Caha* de Michel Bret (Université Paris 8), France.
- *Prix International du Scénario de la SACD : Joe's Apartment : Funky Towel* de Jon Payson & Chris Wedge (Blue Sky Studios), USA.

Jean Segura est auteur, journaliste scientifique et consultant. Spécialiste de l'imagerie scientifique, de l'image numérique et de la réalité virtuelle. Son livre : Du Scanner aux images numériques *est publié chezAgfa Gevaert/Nathan, Paris.*

16th Brussels Cartoon and Animated Film Festival

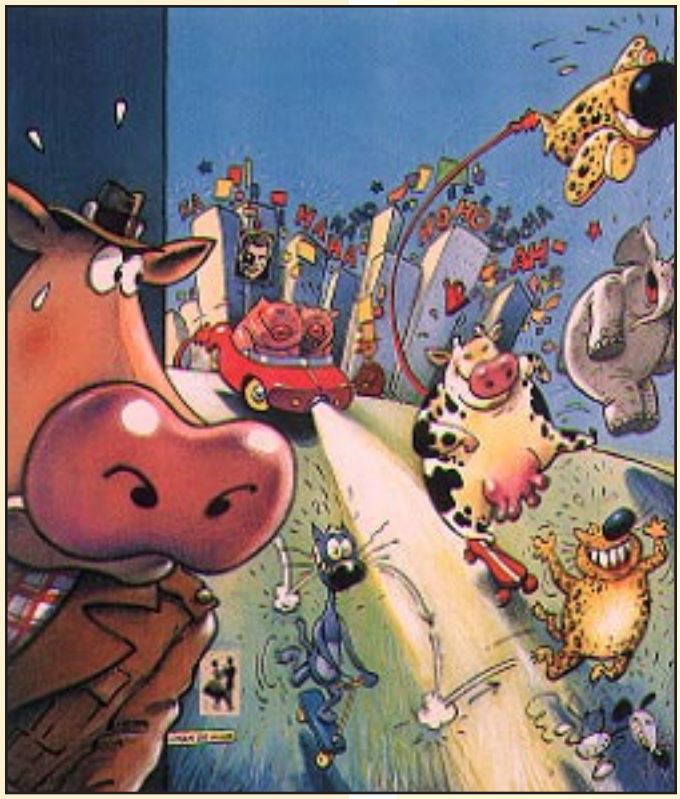
by André Joassin

The sixteenth edition of the Brussels Cartoon and Animated Film Festival, organized by Folioscope, was held from February 4-16, during the Mardi Gras school holiday.

Apart from a retrospective held at the Museum of Cinema, this year's event was limited to one movie theater (Passage 44). The organizers, essentially, had not been able to reach a satisfactory agreement with the Botanique (a publicly-subsidized cultural center) that had served as the venue for specialized programs for previous editions.

Festivalgoers nevertheless didn't suffer because of this, because the team of Philippe Moins and Doris Cleven managed the schedule so as to maintain the event's reputation for strength and diversity. The public acknowledged this by filling the house for both evening and afternoon screenings (these were especially oriented toward young people, who always enjoy the festive ambiance, thanks to the presence of theater troupes, brass bands, clowns and live broadcasts for children by Belgium television).

The programming for young people and for an informed public, shorts and features, auteur films, making of films, and series all found their place next to talks given by representatives of several animation studios (Disney, Clayart, Acme, Hibbert Ralph, Ex-Machina),



Brussels logo by Johan DeMoor.

16e Festival du Dessin animé de Bruxelles

par André Joassin

La seizième édition du Festival du Dessin animé de Bruxelles, organisée par Folioscope se tenait du 4 au 16 février, période de congé scolaire du Mardi Gras.

Mis à part une rétrospective sur les pionniers du genre au Musée du Cinéma, la manifestation belge était circonscrite cette année dans une unique salle (celle du Passage 44). L'organisateur en effet, n'était pas parvenu à reconduire un accord satisfaisant avec le "Botanique" (centre culturel pourtant subsidié par le secteur public) qui, lors des éditions précédentes accueillait les programmes les plus spécialisés.

Les festivaliers n'ont cependant pas pâti de cette restriction car l'équipe de Philippe Moins et Doris Cleven avait adapté la grille horaire de façon à préserver la consistance et la diversité qui ont fait la réputation de la manifestation. Le public ne s'y est d'ailleurs pas trompé en garnissant une fois encore généreusement la salle lors des séances de soirée et d'après-midi (celles-ci étant plus particulièrement orientées vers le jeune public qui y trouve toujours une ambiance festive grâce à la présence de troupes théâtrales, de fanfares, de clowns et grâce aux décrochages en direct d'émissions pour enfants de la télévision belge).

Les programmes pour jeunes côtoyaient donc ceux adressés au public averti, et les courts et longs métrages, films d'auteur, "making of" et séries trou-

producers of children's videos (Ubisoft), and special effects (Industrial Light and Magic, Softimage, Medialab, McGuffligne) . . . .



The 3D screenings. Photo by Marc Bo.

Feature Films

Unlike other international festivals that have strict definitions of what animation is, Brussels uses a much broader definition, which otherwise might seem secondary; for example, it includes live-action films where computer animation clearly plays a part in the creation of special effects. This explains the presence among the Belgian premieres of Jonathan Frakes' *Star Trek: First Contact,* whose visual conception seems more successful than it's somewhat scattered script.

Also on the menu was *Institute Benjamita,* a live-action feature which allowed us to get a deeper knowledge of Stephen and Timothy Quay's universe, for which the festival had paid attention to in the past. These British brothers have made a difficult work, strange but fascinating, much like David Lynch's early films, on human relationships, hierarchies and Kafkaesque mysteries of a boarding school for the less bizarre.

Unlike other festivals that have strict definitions of what animation is, Brussels uses a much broader definition, which otherwise might seem secondary.

Overall, one of the outstanding aspects of the 1997 edition was the significant proportion of features which, "as a rule," are of the type more suitable to the theater's size. But to judge by the titles (previews and revivals), which are being distributed in Belgian, the market remains determined by the stubborn prejudice that tends to reduce animation to a diversion for kids.

For instance, *Pinocchio,* a tender psychological version of Collodi's novel, directed by Steve Barron, benefited from a remarkable integration of the puppet into a world of real actors. On the other hand, the animation of some of the secondary figurines seemed more rudimentary.

vaient leur place à côté de conférences données par des représentants de plusieurs studios d'animation (Disney, Clayart, Acme, Hibbert Ralph, Ex-Machina) de sociétés productrices de jeux vidéos (Ubisoft) ou d'effets spéciaux (Industrial Light and Magic, Softimage, Medialab, Mc Guff Ligne)...

Les longs métrages

Contrairement à d'autres manifestations internationales qui préfèrent prendre en compte les seuls films d'animation au sens strict, le Festival de Bruxelles se veut ouvert à toutes les acceptions du genre, fussent-elles secondaires, y compris par exemple les films "live" où l'infographie intervient simplement dans la réalisation des effets spéciaux. Cela explique la présence parmi les avant-premières belges de *Star Trek: First Contact* de Jonathan Frakes, dont la conception visuelle apparaît plus aboutie que son scénario quelque peu dispersé.

Au menu également *Institute Benjamenta,* long métrage en prises de vue réelles, qui permettait d'approfondir la connaissance de l'univers de Stephen et Timothy Quay sur lesquels le festival avait attiré l'attention les années précédentes. Les frères britanniques signent là une oeuvre ardue, insolite mais fascinante comme l'étaient les premiers David Lynch, sur les interactions humaines, les hiérarchies et les mystères kafkaïens d'un pensionnat pour le moins bizarre.

Plus généralement, l'un des caractères marquants de cette cuvée 1997, résidait dans son importante proportion de longs métrages, calibre "en principe" plus propice à la diffusion en salle. Mais à en juger

I don't need to introduce Space Jam, which catapulted—literally—NBA star Michael Jordan into Warner Bros.' toon world. Then again, it's an undeniable technical accomplishment which helps a script of no particular signficance.

Among the productions benefitting from this type of exposure, one can cite La freccia azzura (The Blue Arrow) by the Italian Énzo d'Alò, an attractive tale for children done with a lucid graphic style, but which suffers from being a bit long.

Contrary to those noted above, many other features haven't found a Belgian distributor. Thus, their presentation here presented a rare chance for the Brussels public to (re)discover them. This was the case with Isao Takahata's poignant Tomb of the Fireflies, whose imagery and subject—children and war—distinguish it from run of the mill anime.



Thomas Schneider (Clayart). Photo by Marc Bo.

Among the feature films specifically aimed at adults, there was Werner II, which presents a new chapter in the comic book hero's adventures, which is very popular in Germany, and Drawn From Memory, an unique autobiographical experience by the Czech-American Paul Fierlinger: The filmmaker recounts his childhood, his youth, his escape from Europe at the start of World War II, his return to Prague where his father became a Communist Party dignitary, and his attempts to fight the regime. Animation may not seem appropriate for such a topic, but as the title suggests, the filmmaker, in a style that wavers between impressionism and gentle caricature, profits from the graphic possibilities to show things as he remembers them and not with objectivety.

Shorts

Ron Diamond, producer of Drawn From Memory, was also at the festival representing Acme Filmworks, a studio which was honored with a retro-

par les titres (avant-premières et reprises confondues) de la sélection bénéficiant d'un diffuseur belge, le marché reste déterminé par le préjugé tenace qui tend à réduire l'animation au divertissement pour enfants.

Contrairement à d'autres manifestations internationales qui préfèrent prendre en compte les seuls films d'animation au sens strict, le Festival de Bruxelles se veut ouvert à toutes les acceptions du genre, fussent-elles secondaires.

Citons Pinocchio, version doucement psychanalytique du conte de Collodi, mis en image par Steve Barron et qui bénéficie d'une remarquable intégration de la marionnette dans un univers d'acteurs. Par contre, l'animation de certaines figurines secondaire semble parfois plus rudimentaire.

Faut-il encore présenter Space Jam qui catapulte – au sens propre – la vedette de la NBA Michael Jordan dans l'univers des toons de la Warner ? Là encore, l'indéniable accomplissement technique sert un script d'une profondeur thématique toute relative.

Parmi les productions bénéficiant d'une diffusion commerciale assez large, on peut encore épingler La freccia azzura de l'italien Enzo d'Alò, joli conte pour enfants au style graphique limpide mais qui pâtit de sa longueur excessive.

Contrairement à ceux déjà cités, bien d'autres longs métrages n'avaient donc trouvé de diffuseur belge. Leur présentation au festival constituait donc pour le public bruxellois une occasion rare de les (re)découvrir. C'est le cas du poignant Tombeau des lucioles de Isao Takahata que ses aspects visuels et son sujet – les enfants et la guerre – distinguent du tout-venant du manga.

Parmi les longs métrages plus spécifiquement destinés aux adultes notons Werner mords la poussière, nouveau chapitre des aventures du personnage de BD très populaire en Allemagne et aussi la singulière expérience autobiographique du tchèque d'Amérique Paul Fierlinger: Drawn From Memory. L'auteur raconte son enfance, sa jeunesse, son départ d'Europe au début de la seconde guerre mondiale, son retour à Prague où son père devint un dignitaire du parti communiste et ses tentatives pour fuir ce régime. Le dessin animé pourrait sembler peu aproprié à un tel sujet. Mais comme le titre le suggère, dans un style oscillant entre impressionnisme et caricature légère, l'auteur profite des possibilités graphiques pour présenter les choses telles que sa mémoire les a retenues et non

spective. It was the occasion to show how just a commercial and advertising campaign on preventative medicine could exhibit the characteristic style of a filmmakerr who was given creative freedom. And for a good reason: Acme has called on the talents of the caliber of Bill Plympton, Paul Driessen, Richard Goleszowski, Gary Bardin, and even Raimund Krumme, who was the subject of a separate tribute.

The filmmaker, in a style that wavers between impressionism and gentle caricature, profits from the graphic possibilities to show things as he remembers them and not with objectivety.

This German filmmaker, whose drawings seem to inspire the scenario and not vice versa. The actions and predicaments of his characters are, in effect, conditioned by the graphic characteristics, geometries, perspectives and optical illusions in his barren and distant world.

As one can see, short films were also shown in restrospectives, as there were six programs dedicated to films of new directors. For instance, festivalgoers could discover The Grey-Bearded Lion directed by Andrei Khrajnovski, from a script by Tonino Guerra, celebrated collaborator of Francesco Rosi, Antonioni, Fellini, the Taviani brothers, Théo Angelopoulos and Andrei Tarkovski, among others. The formality of this metaphysical allegory on the human condition gives it a grave and austere tone, but its aesthetic splendor along with several well-crafted techniques do not leave one indifferent.

Other films worth noting include: The Tale of the Cat and the Moon, an affectionate black and white poem by Portugal's Pedro Serrazina, the deliciously impertinent DNA by Giorgio Valentini, Trainspotter featuring the black comedy of Jeff Newitt and Neville Astley, and, once again, the last Cartoon d'Or winner, Tyron Montgomery's Quest, with its arid world consisting of sand, stones, metal and water.

Graham Ralph's children's fable, The Forgotten Toys, is at once funny and touching, also profited from the work of Bob Hoskins, who lends his voice and temperament to one of the heroes. This Christmas road movie, made for British television, was presented in a 25 minute format particularly well suited to young viewers.

Series

The dynamism of English broadcasters was as telles qu'elles furent objectivement.

Les courts

Ron Diamond, producteur de Drawn From Memory, était également venu au festival pour représenter Acme Filmworks, unité de production à laquelle une rétrospective était consacrée. L'occasion de mesurer à quel point un spot publicitaire, une campagne d'information ou de prévention médicale, un générique . . . peut manifester le style caractéristique de son auteur tout autant qu'une création libre. Et pour cause : Acme fait appel à des talents de la trempe de Bill Plympton, Paul Driessen, Richard Goleszowski, Garry Bardine ou encore Raimund Krumme auquel le festival rendait un autre hommage particulier.

Chez ce créateur allemand, c'est l'image dessinée qui semble induire le scénario et non le contraire. Le comportement et les embarras de ses personnages sont en effet conditionnés par le caractéristiques graphiques, géométriques, les perspectives et les illusions visuelles de son univers dépouillé et distancié.



L-R: Antonio Costa Valente (Animegas), Enzo d'Alo (The Blue Arrow), Alfio Bastiancich (Cartoons on the Bay, Sacis), Yolanda Hornman (CARTOON), Michel Roudévitch (Libération). Photo by Marc Bo.

Comme on peut en juger, le court métrage n'était pas en reste avec ces rétrospectives et six programmes consacrés à des films d'auteur récents. Les festivaliers ont notamment pu découvrir Le Lion à barbe blanche conçu par Andrei Khrajnovski sur un scénario de Tonino Guerra, célèbre collaborateur de Francesco Rosi, Antonioni, Fellini, des frères Taviani, Théo Angelopoulos et Andrei Tarkovski, entre autres. La solennité de cette allégorie métaphysique sur la condition humaine donne au film une tonalité grave et austère, mais la majesté esthétique de l'ensemble où plusieurs techniques se fondent en un tout homogène, ne laisse pas indifférent.

Autres réalisations remarquées: L'histoire du chat et

incredible as ever. Among the series honored at the festival, two were from programs destined for Britain's small screens. *Gogs*, by Deinol Morris and Michael Mort, which uses puppet and plasticine animation, is a prehistoric comedy in the slapstick spirit of naughty students and has an unbridled scatological tone, though perhaps too schematic to be fully effective.

One finds the same "taste" in *Crapston Villas* (another work in 3-D) by Sarah Ann Kennedy, a devastating soap opera parody, which offers a "hideous, dirty and



L-R: Philippe Moins (Festival, recherché par la justice), Anne Dautane (Medialab), Doris Cleven (Festival). Photo by Marc Bo.

nasty" vision of British society, which isn't reticent about neurotics, delinquents, depressives, vulgarians, or senile people. Even the small house cat is known to be depraved and suffering from an incurable digestive problem; the miniature sets, remarkably, do not omit any sordid details: traces of rust on the sinks, wallpaper peeling off because of humidity, endemic disorder, etc. The variety of characters and situations gives the show a certain political incorrectness, a comic strength and a provocative new life to each episode.

The dynamism of English broadcasters was as incredible as ever.

Computer Animation

For scheduling reasons, the '97 festival could not present, as it did before, a program from Imagina 97. But even so, the sessions dedicated to computer animation maintained their popularity. Their success testifies to the curiosity computer graphics continues to elicit. With several exceptions (including *Toy Story*, which was revived at the festival, Jerzy Kular's *Krakken*, the *Insektors* series . . .), we must admit that computer animation remains a subject in itself, and is thus not used enough as a full means of expression in the ser-

la lune, caressant poème en noir et blanc du portugais Pedro Serrazina, le savoureusement impertinent *DNA* de Giorgio Valentini, *Trainspotter* porté par l'humour noir de Jeff Newitt et Neville Astley ou encore, cela va de soi, le dernier "Cartoon d'or" en date: *Quest* de Tyron Montgomery et ses mondes arides successifs de sable, de caillasse, de métal et d'eau.

Le dynamisme de chaînes anglaises ne se dément d'ailleurs pas.

Destiné aux enfants la fable à la fois drôle et émouvante de Graham Ralph *Les jouets abandonnés* bénéficie du travail de l'acteur Bob Hoskins qui prête sa voix et son tempérament à l'un des héros. Ce road-movie de Noël, produit par la télévision britannique se présente en "format" 25 minutes particulièrement bien adapté aux tous jeunes spectateurs.

Les séries

Le dynamisme de chaînes anglaises ne se dément d'ailleurs pas. D'entre les séries mises à l'honneur au festival deux étaient ainsi des programmes destinés aux petits écrans des îles britanniques. *Gogs*, animation de poupées en plasticine de Deinol Morris et Michael Mort est une comédie préhistorique à l'esprit slapstick mal élevé et aux tonalités scatologiques débridées, trop systématiques peut-être pour s'avérer pleinement efficaces. On retrouve ces mêmes "saveurs" dans *Crapston Villas* (autre travail en 3D) de Sarah Ann Kennedy, ravageuse parodie des "soap opera", qui offre une vision "affreux, sales et méchants" de la société britannique en n'en retenant que les figures névrosées, délinquantes, dépressives, vulgaires ou séniles. Même le petit chat de la maison s'avère vicieux et atteint de problèmes digestifs incurables, et les décors miniatures, -remarquables- n'omettent aucun détail sordide: trace de rouille sur les éviers, papiers peints décollés par l'humidité, désordre endémique etc. La variété des personnages et des situations donne à cette série politiquement incorrecte, une puissance comique et provocante renouvelée à chaque épisode.

Les images de synthèse

Pour des raisons de calendrier, le festival 97 ne comprenait pas, comme les précédents, de décentralisation d'Imagina. Mais même sans cela, les séances consacrées aux images de synthèse comptaient encore parmi les plus courues. Ce succès témoigne de la curiosité que l'infographie continue de susciter. A quelques exceptions près (dont *Toy Story* repris au fes-

vice of specific personal creations.

This opinion doesn't deny the convincing results created by these virtual images. But we can still ask oneself the following question: Beyond comedy, can the texture of computer images engender an emotional range equivalent to those produced by traditional means and allow it to have equal effectiveness in as many genres?

Nevertheless, the large selection shown at the Brussels Animation Festival did not elicit a definitive answer to this question.

—*Translated from the French by Harvey Deneroff*

P.S.: Although the Brussels Festival is a noncompetitive, it did award an audience prize, voted on by "special pass" holders based on viewing the short films in the international selection.The winner was *Noël gourmand,* a Belgian student film made at La Cambre by Corinne Kuyl. For the record, films that placed second through eighth were: *Quest* (Germany, Thomas Stellmach & Tyron Montgomery), *Pas de Kadeaux pour Noël* (France,Georges Lacroix), *Estoria do Gato e da lua* (*The Tale of the Cat and the Moon*) (Portugal, Pedro Serrazina), *There is More Than One Way to Kill a Cat* (United Kingdom,David Westland), *Barflies* by Greg Holfeld (Australia), *Capriccio* (Hollan, Ellen Meske), *Bride of Resistor* (USA, Mark Gustafson), and *Bernol's Family* (Belgium, Luc Otter).

André Joassin is a Brussels-based journalist for Le Soir *and Canal +.*



Recordings of *Bla Bla* (RTBF show) took place every evening. Photo by Marc Bo.
Enregistrement en direct de l'émission pour enfants "Bla Bla" (RTFB), tous les jours de 18 à 19 heures. Photo by Marc Bo.

tival, *Krakken* de Jerzy Kular, la série *Insektors . . .*), force est pourtant de constater que dans de nombreux cas, cette technique reste un sujet en soi et n'est donc pas assez utilisée comme un moyen d'expression complet, au service de créations personnelles spécifiques.

Cette opinion ne remet évidemment pas en cause les résultats probants obtenus grâce aux images virtuelles dans le domaine des effets spéciaux ou dans celui de la publicité. Mais il est encore permis de se poser la question suivante: au-delà du trait humoristique, la texture même des images de synthèse peut-elle engendrer une gamme d'émotion équivalente à celle produite par l'image traditionnelle et permet-elle d'aborder avec efficacité autant de registres ?

Dans un style oscillant entre impressionnisme et caricature légère, l'auteur profite des possibilités graphiques pour présenter les choses telles que sa mémoire les a retenues et non telles qu'elles furent objectivement.

La sélection pourtant large du Festival du Dessin animé de Bruxelles n'apportait pas encore de réponse définitive à cette interrogation.

Nota: Bien que le Festival de Bruxelles soit non compétitif, il a décerné un prix du Jury [voté par les festivaliers titulaires de la carte "passeport"] parmi les films du programme de courts métrages internationaux. Le gagnant est Noël gourmand film belge de fin d'etudes, par Corinne Kuyl de l'Ecole de la Cambre. Pour information, les films ayant obtenu le plus grand nombre de voix sont, par ordre décroissant: Quest (Allemagne, Thomas Stellmach & Tyron Montgomery), Pas de Kadeaux pour Noël (France,Georges Lacroix), Estoria do Gato e da lua (L'histoire du chat et la lune) (Portugal, Pedro Serrazina), There is More Than One Way to Kill a Cat (Royaume-Uni, David Westland), Barflies by Greg Holfeld (Australie), Capriccio (Hollande, Ellen Meske), Bride of Resistor (USA, Mark Gustafson), Bernol's Family (Belgique, Luc Otter).

André Joassin est un journaliste basé a Bruxelles. Il ecrit pour Le Soir *and Canal +.*

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The Tail That Wags The Dog, and Other Tales From the 1997 American International Toy Fair

by Marcy Gardner

The 1997 American International Toy Fair is where an estimated 20,000 toy manufacturers, licensers and buyers came to wheel, deal, and play with toys. Exhibitors set up showrooms in the New York Toy District (23rd Street and Fifth Avenue) and the Jacob Javits Convention Center. After seeing so many men in business suits, I had to keep reminding myself that we were here to see toys! But if there was any question that the toy industry is big business, figures from the Toy Manufacturers of America estimate $20 billion in retail sales in 1996 alone.

So what happens at Toy Fair anyway? Buyers come to check out what toys they want to buy, licensers come to find licensing partners for their properties, toy manufacturers come to attract both potential licensers and buyers. Fortunately, there were things to remind us that Toy Fair was indeed about the business of play. And play is a serious business. On the scene, scoping out the latest in animation-related toys for AWM, I saw The Mask keychains, plush Scooby and Scrappy dolls, and even a board game you play while watching cartoons . . . all while speaking to some of the biggest names in animation-related merchandising.



Chuckie doll from Nickelodeon's *Rugrats*

The Tail Wagging the Ghost

Harvey Entertainment Company and Trendmasters co-hosted an industry reception to celebrate the launch of Harvey's new toy line and preview the up-coming Casper direct-to-video release. (Trendmasters is the master toy licensor for Harvey character franchises including Casper the Friendly Ghost, Richie Rich, Baby Huey, Hot Stuff, Little Audrey and Wendy the Good Little Witch.) At a reception to celebrate the partnership, I decided to talk to the most approachable-looking guy in the room wearing a Harvey name tag. This approachable-looking guy turned out to be Harvey President and CEO Jeffrey Montgomery.

Montgomery (now 32) took over the then-dormant Harvey at the ripe age of 24. His goal for the company is to reintroduce the Harvey stable of classic characters to a new generation of fans, Casper being the first. Following on the heels of the successful Casper feature and # 1 rated Fox animated series (co-produced by Universal Cartoon Studio), Harvey will release Casper, The Beginning, in September '97. A co-production of Harvey and Saban, Casper's nontheatrical release will allow delivery of product to the fans within a year's time, instead of two. Casper was first produced by Famous Studios as theatrical shorts. Harvey Entertainment bought the rights in 1958.

Montgomery believes that a

high-quality, animated show is humor based, not merchandise based and must operate on two different levels; "If it doesn't make me and my friends laugh; then it's not going to make children laugh either. *Casper* is not designed to be a half-hour commercial." With *Casper* scheduled for a fall 1997 release, Harvey Consumer Products Division is now gathering new licensees and preparing for heavy promotions with both major fast-food and beverage companies. Look for Casper on the most recent Cap'N Crunch Boxes featuring an offer for a Casper Squiggle Giggle Pen (a motorized pen that makes wiggly lines—one of which I am now proud owner.)

Sky Dancers Family Fun's "Toy of the Year"

Providing one of the season's major animation/licensing success stories is Abrams/Gentile Entertainment. The creators of *Sky Dancers* and *Dragon Flyz* were on hand at Toyfair to offer me the inside scoop about these successful properties. According to Jenny Gentile, senior vice president of licensing, *Sky Dancers* was actually a toy for one full year before it became an animated series. "We always look to develop a property as a complete package. An animated series was taken into account at the development stage with the backstory for the characters being developed at this time." The animated series (which debuted in the US this fall) is co-produced by Gaumont Multimedia, who has just completed production on 15 new episodes. New this season from master toy licensee Galoob are Pretty Scent Sky Dancers (bubble gum, strawberry and watermelon), Rainbow Ribbon Sky Dancers that have iridescent ribbons that shimmer as the doll takes "flight," Sparkle Dome Sky Dancers (personal fave) that has a little globe filled with glitter that swirls around when you launch the doll, and Sky Dancers that are characters from the show.

I would really like to see how kids play with these toys; like dolls, or like the semi-sporting goods that they are? Gentile feels the success of the show and its related toys is based on children's fantasies about flying. "When I was a little girl I always wanted to know what it was like to fly. I think these toys allow children to pretend that they too can fly."

Also in the works at AGE is a new part live-action, part computer animation series, *Vanpires,* about derelict cars that come to life after a giant meteor crashes into earth and tries to drain the planet of all the gasoline. Toyfair provided an initial forum for licensers to become familiar with this new property. The licensing show in June is where most of the licensing deals will be made for *Vanpires.* Already in the works is a Vanpire car from Galoob that drives *and* flys. Now this I gotta see!

Get Ready for the Next Baby Boom

So say the signs on New York buses and subway platforms, and they're not referring to a new movie starring Diane Keaton. Nickelodeon unveiled it's new *Rugrats* merchandising program at Toyfair, kicking it all off with a sort of inaugural ball. The party was a festive celebration (and ironically the only event all week where I saw any kids!) complete with larger-than-life Angelica and Tommy walkarounds, *Rugrats*-shaped Kraft Macaroni and Cheese and Klasky-Csupo animators on hand to draw guests their favorite Rugrat.

Already in the works is a Vanpire car from Galoob that drives *and* flys.

Nick's comprehensive new *Rugrats* merchandising program, with Mattel as master licensee, is the cable network's largest line of consumer products behind a single property to date. Although the



Aardman collectibles



***The Mask* action figures**

show has been airing in 1991 and is Nick's # 1 rated show, they have proceeded with caution in developing licensing connected to the show. Says Maureen Taxter, Vice President and General Manager of Licensing for Nickelodeon Consumer Products, "We have carefully managed to build this merchandising program with a long-term view—not a flash-in-the-pan effort often associated with licensing. It is our intent to see Rugrats grow into a classic licensed property." And it is a great looking line that really retains the style of the animation featuring: Rugrats animation cels, bubblebath, backpacks, pencil toppers, talking Tommy, Angelica and Chuckie dolls (a must have item), and fruit snacks.

"Ideally, kids would be able to play along with the toys like they would the show.

The party also helped to draw attention to it's #1 rated Nick Jr. preschool program, Blues Clues, an interactive play-along show for preschoolers combining a live-action host and computer-generated animated characters. A licensing deal for the one-year-old Clues is in the preliminary stages of development. I caught up with Traci Johnson, a Blues Clues producer and co-creator at the Nick party to get a creator's perspective on licensing.

"Ideally" says Johnson, "kids would be able to play along with the toys like they would the show. I want to produce real toys that preschool teachers would love to have in their classroom." Already, parents have expressed a demand for the merchandise connected to the show by downloading the image of Blue (the show's main character) from the Nickelodeon Web site and printing their own T-shirts.

Also in Nick Toyfair news . . . Nick President Herb Scannell announced an expanded partnership between Nickelodeon and Mattel giving the toy manufacturer exclusive licensing rights to the network's major properties, including its live-action and animated series. This greatly expands on the current Nickelodeon -branded activity toy line produced by Mattel which includes Gak, Floam, and Smud.

Wallace and Gromit Take Manhattan

Irwin Toys debuted their new line of Wallace and Gromit merchandise based on the characters from the Academy Award-winning shorts from Aardman Animations. Paul Waxman, product manager for the Toronto-based toy company, says "The Wallace and Gromit series have had five years of longevity in England and it's success is only speeding up." The video series did very well in the US this past Christmas, ranking fourth in Children's video sales and tenth overall. Waxman feels the series is able to cover this multiple demographic "due to it's tongue-in-cheek British humor and wonderful claymation style."

Irwin's Wallace and Gromit line features vinyl figurines and plush geared towards children, and cold-cast resin figures aimed at adults. The vinyl figures come four to a pack and will retail for around $3.99. Look for them at both specialty shops and larger retail outlets. The more substantial resins will sell for around $10.99 and can be found mainly at specialty shops. Collectors will enjoy this line, as both vinyl and cold-casts figures retain the same feel and texture as the animated clay characters.

Spumco's Latest Idiot

Well if you think Ren &Stimpy creator John Kricfalusi has been resting on his laurels (or on The Log), think again. He has been hard at work developing and merchandis-



Sky Dancers' "Pretty Scent" figure

ing his latest character, err . . . shall I say characters: Jimmy of the Future and Jimmy the Idiot Boy. I persuaded Spumco Vice President Kevin Kolde to try to set the record straight. Who is Jimmy anyway? "The closest thing I've ever heard to the origin of Jimmy is actually from another show called *The Ripping Friends* who are these really manly superheroes. There is a genetic engineer named Dr. Jean Poole who decides to create the perfect human, the result is Jimmy the Idiot Boy. In *Jimmy of the Future* he's a "freelance space idiot" who works for the smartest man in the world, Professor Longbrain, testing all of his inventions. *Jimmy of the Future* is about to become an animated children's series produced by Media Lab, a division of Canal+. "This is the toned-down Saturday morning Jimmy", says Kolde. Look for *Jimmy of the Future,* the computer animated series in about 12 months.

Also in development is an original interactive Web comic on the Microsoft Network featuring Idiot Jimmy, George Liquor, Cigarettes the Cat, and Dirty Dog. The webzine will be online in about three months and can be found within the MSN site called Spoken Word.

Whoever Jimmy is, he is available for purchase. The Jimmy of the Future and Jimmy the Idiot dolls retail for about $40 and can be found at Spencer gifts, through Spumco's Web site and at Musicland. "John is a huge toy fan and a collector." This is apparent in his new Three Stooges doll line, where careful attention to detail has been paid. Says Kolde, "John spent weeks just getting the fabric on the dresses right (the dolls are in drag). He tortured the sculptors until every detail was exact, down to the scar on Curly."

There is a genetic engineer named Dr. Jean Poole who decides to create the perfect human, the result is Jimmy the Idiot Boy.

Cyber Barney

If you ever suspected Barney was like the Wizard controlling your children's thoughts and ideas, you weren't far off from what Microsoft had in mind. With the new Actimates Early Learning System, featuring the Microsoft Realmation Animation Technology, Microsoft combines children's love for the purple dino with the absolute latest in software technology. (Oh ,and just to say I warned you, production of a Barney movie will begin this summer, with a spring '98 release from Polygram Filmed Entertainment.) But first, imagine this: a stuffed animal that interacts with you as you play a game at your computer. It tells you when you get something wrong. It can even take a turn too. Here's how it works (to the best of my IQ): There is a transmitter that plugs into the gameport on a PC that transmits a wireless RF signal to a receiver in Barney's head. This allows the plush to interact with the software. The transmitter sends digitally encoded signals to tell the doll when and how to react to what is going on onscreen. Barney has a 14,000 word vocabulary. Be afraid, be very afraid and look for this at Toys R' Us this fall. The elements are all sold separately with the Interactive Barney retailing for $109.95, the PC transmitter for $64.95 and the software titles for around $34.95.

The Interactive Barney also works as a stand alone toy—touch various parts of his body and he'll sing one of his14 classic hits, play peek-a-boo, or give you his signature chuckle. At the showroom they said that in tests Interactive Barney survived repeatedly being dropped on his head from 7 feet and tumbling for 14 hours in the dryer. Now there's something I'd like to see!



Annie, a new show in development by AGE, currently looking for licensing opportunities

Mr. Men Makes US Debut

Leisure Concepts, Inc. (LCI), a division of 4Kids Entertainment, is currently developing licensing programs for two animated children's series: *Oscar's Orchestra* and *Mr. Men,* based upon the award-winning book series by illustrator Roger Hargraves. I spoke with Al Kahn, LCI's Chairman and CEO, about the challenges of predicting what properties will be lucrative licenses. He noted that a successful property may not be a successful license. "There are certain things," Kahn says, "that kids will watch that they



Vanpires

don't necessarily want to live. The key to make a license really work is when the kids want to become one with the characters and have their existence peppered with them. Kids need to be immersable into the character group."

Mr. Men is a classic property that has been in France for 25 years. Kahn plans on using toys to introduce a new generation to the *Mr. Men* characters. A comprehensive back-to-school program and the rerelease of the books by Price, Stern and Sloan will coincide with the show's fall debut in the US. "Any exposure of these characters (television or merchandising) will help the character get seated." Kahn feels that both the series and the licenses have a strong chance of doing well.

"The storyline is very important to kids getting involved with the characters," Kahn points out. "In this property, the characters are the storyline. When I say Mr. Happy you know exactly what I'm talking about. These characters are basically the personifications of those emotions. Kids see them and know who they are. That will drive recognition and kids to get involved with the characters and collect them (there's about 80 of them).

Kahn spoke about the risks involved in bringing a European property into the US market (*Mr. Men* is a long-established series in France). There is the perception, he senses, that European properties are "softer." In the United States, "soft properties" aren't as successful. Kahn says that, "You have to be either very male-skewed (action/adventure) or very female-skewed; if it's neuter, it's too young and no one watches it. *Mr. Men,* although it's soft, both boys and girls can relate to a character."

LCI's other animated series, *Oscar's Orchestra,* teaches children about music. Starring Dudley Moore as the voice of the show's hero, Oscar the Grand Piano, who along with his musical friends battle the evil dictator Thadius Vent, who is on a mission to rid the world of music. *Oscar's* debuted to in the US last fall, but with stronger promotion and 13 new episodes this season, the award-winning British series is looking for a stronger season. Toyfair presented an opportunity to meet with potential licensees. "What's good about *Oscar's* is if you look at everybody's toy lines, there's always musical instruments in those lines—generic instruments. With *Oscar's,* we give them an opportunity to put a real handle on a generic category.

So the big question is, How do you predict the next Tickle Me Elmo? I mean, who knew that a convulsing, hysterical red monster would cause such an uproar? Maybe I'm not a kid anymore, maybe it was all those men in suits, but the toys I liked the best were the well-made ones that looked like they might last. Give or take the occasional Cabbage Patch Snacktime Kid, most of the animation-related toys I saw were well designed and well crafted. The fact that there is a well-thought out story behind the merchandise makes it no wonder that toy manufacturers flock to these properties. I admit I want the Johnny Quest action figures by Galoob, just because they are so well made, maybe even a Sky Dancer or two. There is something very interesting about this period in animation, merchandising and marketing, and the fact that they cannot be divorced from each other. Will this trend continue? Despite the naysayers, the licensers that make their fortune from the next big property are willing to bet it will.

Well, even God was rewarded on the seventh day . . . At the end of my week of investigative reporting, I finally got to go to the showroom floor and saw all the toys. Row after delicious row of babies, frisbees, stickers, stampers, squiggly, glow-in-the dark, scare the pants off you TOYS! And I didn't even have to share.

Marcy Gardner currently works in the Children's Programming Department at WGBH, Boston where she answers Arthur's fanmail and is compiling a library of kid's ideas, art, films/videos, and projects for the new ZOOM show. Previously, she worked on Sesame Street. Marcy would love to hear from anyone interested in ZOOM and can be reached at: cruelladeville@msn.com.

The Oscars Are Coming!

by Wendy Jackson

On March 24, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences will put on its annual Academy Awards presentation. If you're like me, you'll be watching long-winded speeches and expensive commercials all night, just waiting for that fleeting moment of glory when the Oscar for Best Animated Short Film is presented. For that brief couple of minutes, millions of people catch a glimpse of what you and I already know is one of the greatest art forms; animation. With three of this year's nominees done in stop-motion, and one with computer, this year's slate is proof positive that the art form is alive, well, and being used in very creative ways by independents around the world. Here's a look at this year's nominees; read the synopsis' and director's statements, download the movie clips, then express yourself by voting for your favorite film in the first ever "Animation World Magazine's Un-Official Oscar Race"!

Canhead by Timothy Hittle

"Canhead took nearly three years to see completion, and all along the way it was a labor of love. A small dedicated crew gave their time and talents to the project, wanting to make something beautiful. What is great about stop-motion filmmaking is pulling all the parts together: the movement, the sound, the music and every last thing. We build the world from the ground up. And in these days, when so much is going digital, it is a sweet pleasure to have Canhead stomping around out there, all wood and metal and clay. I am lucky to have been able to work together with people who love their craft the way that I do. It is glorious to have this film be nominated for an Oscar. I get the feeling that anything is possible."

—Timothy Hittle



Timothy Hittle

First introduced in Hittle's 1991 short The Potato Hunter, main characters Jay Clay and Blue the dog are back again in Canhead, another clay animated film by the San Francisco-based animator. The film takes place on a seemingly endless table top, where Jay and Blue are stranded without food. When the two become separated, fear and worry bring about Canhead, a ferocious metal giant set for destruction. Jay faces his foe in a battle, and turns the situation around to reunite him with his lost dog, Blue.

Tim Hittle is currently working at Pixar.

La Salla by Richard Condie

"I found out about the nomination on the Internet. I woke up at exactly 8:30 and logged on to www.oscar.com . . .with a shaking hand on the mouse, I scrolled down the page. Then the phone just started ringing and ringing, and it didn't stop until 11:30 at night."

—Richard Condie



Richard Condie

La Salla is Richard Condie's first film produced in 3-D computer animation, and his second Oscar nomination in this category (the first was for *The Big Snit* in 1986). Produced by Condie and Ches Yetman for the National Film Board of Canada, it is an eight minute comic opera, examining what happens when we try to become masters of our own destiny. Softimage developed the software used to create this film.

Quest by Tyron Montgomery

"I heard about the nomination via a radio station on Tuesday night while I was working at Kassel University. After all the long and hard work on the film, this was a recognition that broke the tension, and which may change my life from one moment to the other. There was suddenly a great rush by the media. Images of the future are going through my head. Nervousness, even panic and fear followed. How will life go on? Will the next steps be the right ones? For the German public and media, the Academy Awards have become more and more important. There is much more interest in the nomination of Quest than there was seven years ago when the German Oscar winner, Balance was in the competition. Many people in Germany look forward to the ceremony on March 24. There is a lot of tension. Until then, I am trying to work on my diploma film which will be a cel animation."

—Thomas Stellmach, producer

Co-created by Thomas Stellmach, and an animator who goes by the name of Tyron Montgomery, Quest is a mixed-media, stop motion film which uses materials not commonly used in animation. In a quest for water, a sand puppet leaves the sand world in which it lives. It wanders through other worlds made of paper, stone and iron, following the sound of dripping water. In the end, the sand puppet manages to reach the water . . . in a very tragic way.

Wat's Pig by Peter Lord

Produced for Channel Four by Aardman Animations, the British studio that took home this award last year, and two years before that, and two years before that, Wat's Pig marks the company's sixth Oscar nomination in this category. Shot in clay animation, using a split-screen technique, the film gives new meaning to the term "parallel editing," by literally presenting both sides of the story at the same time.

The film tells the tale of two brothers separated at birth, who live as neighbors, never knowing of each other's existence. In a castle on the hill, one lives as a powerful and wealthy earl. Meanwhile, his brother Wat, who has been raised since childhood by a friendly pig, scrapes together a living in his humble hovel. When a nearby baron threatens the earl with war, fate unexpectedly brings these two lives together again.

The author would like to thank everyone who made this report possible.



Timothy Hittle's *Canhead*



Tyron Montgomery and Thomas Stellmach's *Quest*



Peter Lord's *Wat's Pig*



Richard Condie's *La Salla*

NEWS

MTV Signs Fred Seibert to Exclusive Independent Production Deal. *Former Hanna-Barbera president Fred Seibert has entered an exclusive independent production deal with MTV Networks, a division of Viacom. MTV, Nickelodeon and VH1 will have exclusive rights to all animated and live-action projects he develops for television. Seibert will also consult on aspects of programming and promotion for the networks. This is actually Seibert's return to MTV, as he points out in commenting, "I started working with MTV Networks in 1980, and after five years away, it is thrilling to be accepted into their generous amnesty program." At that time, Seibert was involved in the launch of MTV, and played an integral role in the development of the animated MTV and Nickelodeon logos. "Fred has had tremendous experience and success in the worlds of animation and brand-building, two cornerstones of our company," said MTV Networks chairman and CEO Tom Freston. "As we now accelerate our investment in animation, we are tapping a huge talent with Fred." Seibert will remain in Los Angeles, with his office based at Nickelodeon Animation Studios.*

Saban and Fox: Another Big Deal. *Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment has just inked a seven figure deal to market, sell and distribute Saban Entertainment's huge library of titles. The two companies have also started a joint production agreement to create and distribute a branded home video line, banking on Fox's power in marketing and Saban's expertise in licensing and merchandising. Bob DeLellis, president of Fox Home Video North America, was quoted in Daily Variety as having said, "Our goal is to build a larger presence in the kids marketplace, and there is no better partner or proven leader in that arena than Saban. This is a huge opportunity to build a brand that has significant long term potential."*



Meanwhile, Saban has cleared sale of its 3 new kids shows in 75% of the US, including all of the top 5 markets. X-Men has been sold to 61 stations reaching 75% of the US. Marvel Super Heroes has been sold to 64 stations. The All New Captain Kangaroo has been sold to 74 stations. Oliver Twist was renewed for its second season with clearance from 57 stations.

Disney Gets Savage. *Walt Disney Television has signed a multi-year development deal with writer/producer Savage Steve Holland, whose credits include animated kids shows Eek! The Cat, The Terrible Thunder Lizards and Klutter. He will develop both animated and live-action projects for Disney, on an exclusive basis.*

Animated Documentary in Africa. *EntreActe Productions in France is completing production on Archipel, an animated documentary made in collaboration with children from the Ivory Coast in Africa. The film is a portrait of Abidjan society, through the eyes and imagination of Abidjan children ages 8 to 15. The 52 minute live-action/animation documentary film will be released in June, together with an exhibition of the film artwork and a musical CD.*



DESIGNefx's *Alice In Wonderland* spot.

Designfx Animates Chesire Cat. *Atlanta-based commercial production company, DESIGNfx, recently created a 30 second spot for the Atlanta Ballet's production of Alice in Wonderland. The fully animated commercial features the Chesire Cat character. Spot director Jai Husband used Toon Boom software to create the animation, and the Harry system to synchronize it with the spo-*

ken track.

The Universal Miss Spider. *David Kirk, author of the popular children's storybooks Miss Spider's storybooks, has sold rights to the character and property to Universal Pictures, who plans to develop a feature film, a home video line, CD-ROMs, music and theme park attractions based on the character. In the last two years, Kirk's Miss Spider books have sold more than one million copies in the US. The books are published by Kirk's partner, publisher Nick Callaway. Together, they founded Callaway & Kirk, described as "a family entertainment company." Callaway said, "Universal is the perfect partner for us because they share our imagination, energy and vision for the incredible growth potential of our character."*

Olive Jar Gets Fruity. *Olive Jar Animation, the Boston-based studio known for its innovative stop-motion style, has created a new spot for General Mills Fruit by the Foot product. Entitled Beary Scary, the commercial features clay-animated characters telling ghost stories around a campfire, who are attacked by a grizzly bear hungry for their snacks. The spot was animated and directed by is directed by Tom Gasek.*

Electronic Arts Invests in Stormfront. *The huge interactive software company has just increased its capacity by placing an investment in Stormfront Studios, a software development company based in San Rafael, California.*

Game News

Brøderbund's *Imagimaker Series has a new interactive art game for children called Orly's Draw a Story. The game enables the player to create characters which are then animated into a story. . .* **Humongous Entertainment,** *a division of GT Interactive, has released two new educational animated children's games, Freddi Fish and Luther's Water*



Humongous Entertainment's character, Luther.

Worries and Freddi Fish and Luther's Maze Madness. . . **Activision** *is in production on Zork, Grand Inquisitor as the latest in the Hallmark Zork franchise, a series of interactive games involving magic and myth. Zork Grand Inquisitor is scheduled to be released in Fall '97.*

The Following News items are reprinted from the February 21 edition of the AWN Animation Flash email newsletter.

Oslo Animation Festival, *the only animation festival for the Nordic countries, is planned for April 24-27. This is an annual competitive festival, which is a nonprofit organization supported by ASIFA Nordic. 170 films have been chosen by the preselection committee, which includes Per Tönnes Nilson, Kjersti Alver, Barbro Björkfelt, Phil Mulloy, Pritt Pärn, Georges Lacroix, Michaela Pavlatová, and Paul and Menno DeNoojier.*

Zlín Animation Festival *will take place in the Czech Republic May 19-23. The noncompetitive, international festival will feature animated films for children, presentations of Czech and Slovak student films and a separate competition of animated feature films.*

Visual Effects Society Formed. *In response to the increasing expansion in the field of special effects, a group of leaders in the industry has banded together to form a new professional nonprofit organization called the Visual Effects Society(VES). Dedicated to the "advancement and promotion of the art and science of visual effects," there is speculation that VES could be an answer to the current overcrowding of recognition for the craft in the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences. The society's mandate focuses on three primary areas: information, education and recognition. Jim Morris, elected VES chairperson and president of Lucas Digital said, "The formation of the VES is a culmination of the significant evolution that has occurred in the effects industry. The creative artists and the technology of the effects world have become a key force shaping film, television and*

interactive media."

Serving as paid executive director is Tom Atkin, an independent marketing consultant for over 25 years, who has worked on ad and marketing campaigns for Paramount, Universal and Sony. To date, there have been 28 people named to the board of directors, representing the leading VFX companies, including Cinesite, Dream Quest Images, Digital Domain, Industrial Light & Magic, Pacific Data Images, Sony Pictures Imageworks and Will Vinton. For more information on VES, contact 818.789.7083.

Real-Time Animation Association Formed. *The Performance Animation Society (PAS) is a new organization for professionals working in the realm of real-time and motion-capture animation. Founded by Richard Cray and co-directed by Gregory Peter Panos, the association is open to all types of professionals in this rapidly-evolving craft, from computer animators and composers to actors, dancers and puppeteers, as well as game developers and real-time system engineers and designers. With the recent opening of Medialab's Los Angeles studio, and the expansion of local companies such as Modern Cartoons and House of Moves, the organizers felt that time was right for a professional group in this area. The first PAS meeting was held in February in Santa Monica. For more information, visit the PAS web site: http://members.aol.com/PAsociety*

MSIA Goes Digital. *The Manitoba Society of Independent Animators (MSIA) has invested in a PC system to run 2D and 3D computer animation programs AXA, Autodesk and 3D StudioMax. MSIA technical committee members plan to spend the next few months learning the technology before offering classes to members and the general public. Bill Stewart, who coordinated the acquisition, said, "We will be approaching agencies to fund us in order that we can buy more workstations. We can't really offer courses with only one PC." MSIA is a nonprofit organization established in 1987; members include Oscar nominees Cordell Barker and Richard Condie.*

Buzz Goes Pop. *Pacific Ocean Post, a post-production company based in Santa Monica, has has acquired Buzz F/X, a computer-generated imaging facility formerly operated by Buzz Image Group in Montreal. The new studio will be called POP Animation, and will double its staff of 10 computer graphics artists and animators already employed at the Santa Monica facility.*

Duck Soup Makes Alphabet Soup. *Duck Soup Producktions and their independent new media/live-action production arm, The Front, have animated a new series of commercials for the US West Yellow Pages Directory. The first spot, The Big Sweep uses computer animation to portray a janitor sweeping letters off the cover of the book, while the second spot, Doodling Around, features the book being flipped like a huge flipbook to form the campaign logo. Other recently completed spots by the Los Angeles-based production company include Wizard, Personal Trainer and Barber, three in a series of animated duck (how appropriate) spots for the Cadillac Catera campaign; a "stick-figure style" animated spot for Texas Scottish Rite Hospital, as well as the live-action and animation combo spot, Genie for Alpha-Bits Cereal.*

AMPnyc Creates Cartoon Network Spots. *One-year old New York-based AMPnyc, a new independent animation studio, recently completed two major projects for the Cartoon Network. Big Wednesday is a series of 23 interstitials promoting the network's new Wednesday night lineup, which showcases a "cutting-edge style" using multimedia animation technique spots, and the new "O Canada" series of National Film Board of Canada shorts.*

The company's second project is a series of four one-minute shorts called Cartoons That Never Made It, which parody various styles and concepts. The shorts—Rupert the Grouper, Frothy Dawg, Heidi and the Yodelers and Salt and Slug—will all be airing by mid-March, and will also be showcased at various animation festivals, including the upcoming World Animation Celebration in Pasadena. AMPnyc was founded in April 1996 by Michael Adams, whose partners are Ted Minoff and Greg Pair.

Renegade Relocation. *Burbank-based Renegade Animation has moved their office again, this time just a mile down the road. The move was necessary to accomodate their growing staff. With 8 rooms and an artist's bullpen area capable of housing up to 12 people, the larger facility will lend room for new Renegade personnel include animators Ken McDonald, David Vamos and Ashby Manson, animation checker Dora Yakutis, and production coordinator Laura Velkei. "Now we can do more work in-house and keep tighter control over costs and the creatuive aspects of each project,." said Darrel Van Citters, Renegade president and director.*

***Space Jam* Now in Europe, Soon in UK.** *Warner Bros.' Space Jam has hit the screens in Europe, grossing a total of $8.7 million in opening weekend alone (Feb 7-9). Box offices raked in the following grosses: $2.7 million in Germany, $2.4 million s in France, $1.7 million n Spain; the film is also playing in Switzerland, Austria, Denmark and Portugal. The Museum of the Moving Image in London will present an exhibit on the making of Space Jam," featuring animation artwork from the film. The exhibit, running March 14-June 1, opens with the premiere of the film in the UK.*

David & Alison to Make "Bob & Margaret"?? *British animators Alison Snowden and David Fine are currently optioning the rights to develop their Oscar-winning animated short Bob's Birthday into a half-hour TV series. Canada's Nelvana is looking into developing the Bob and Margaret Show based on the middle-aged couple in Bob's Birthday. If the project moves forward, it will be a Canadian-UK co-production ,with the participation of Channel 4 in England. "We are really excited.," Fine told AWN.*

***Too Much Coffee Man* Will Be "Schoolhouse Rocked."** *Bob Dorough, composer, lyricist and vocalist of the pop culture classic ABC short series Schoolhouse Rocks, will lend his talents to the new Too Much Coffee Man animated series, by writing and recording the theme song. Currently in development by InVision Entertainment, Coffee Man is an "edgy" animated series for adults, based on the underground comic by Shannon Wheeler, hoping to be on air by mid-1998. InVision Entertainment executive vice president Michael Hack describes Coffee Man as a cross between Seinfeld and Comedy Central's Dr. Katz, and said" the fact that our target audience is the older teen and young adult audiences (18-35) cinches this deal. Bob Dorough's style is exactly what we are looking for." InVision has just completed production on Streetfighter for the USA Network.*

Cinar Partners With Readers Digest. *The animation producer and the publisher have signed an agreement to jointly produce and distribute animated programming for children around the world. The first project, an adaptation of the children's story, The Country Mouse and the City Mouse Adventures will be a Cinar co-venture with France Animation, in association with Ravensburger of Germany and Reader's Digest. All 26 episodes will feature the Reader's Digest brand name, as will any home videos based on the series. "The partnership brings us together with a global leader who shares our vision of responsible and entertaining children's programming," said Cinar president Ronald A. Weinberg.*

Saban Restructures Licensing & Merchandising Division. *Mega-entertainment company Saban Entertainment announced a new "category management partnership program" which puts the process of licensing, developing and merchandising a property under the management of one person or team, rather than having the various stages of responsibility divided among different departments. "After meeting one-on-one with many of our licensees and retail partners, we redesigned our infrastructure to better enable us to focus all of our licensing resources on a particular category. Now, in lieu of dictating to our licensees, we work strategically in conjunction with our licensees and retailers, to design the big picture together as partners and think about eachother in a very comprehensive way." said Susanne Lee, senior vice president of Licensing and Merchandising for Saban. Bandai America, Mattel, Toy Biz, Disguise, S. Goldberg, and Gordy are among Saban's licensing partners.*

Four Media Co., *which recently partnered with French company Medialab, sold about 5 million shares of common stock, bringing in about $28 million in their initial public offering.*

DreamWorks Signs First-Look With Weitz and Weitz. *Paul and Chris Weitz, the screenwriters of Ants (the DreamWorks/PDI computer-animated feature currently in production), have signed a one-year, non-exclusive first-look deal with DreamWorks SKG. The development deal will include both animation and live-action scripts. DreamWorks Pictures co-head Laurie MacDonald said, "These guys have style, substance and a truly original voice . . .we're thrilled that they've decided to make DreamWorks their home."*

Hollywood Shuffle.

Kathleen Helppie-Shipley *has been promoted from vice president to senior vice president at* **Warner Bros. Classic Animation**, *where she will executive produce and oversee production of classic character animation sequences for theatrical shorts, TV specials and promotional spots. Kathleen has been working in animation at Warner Bros. since 1980. . .* **Marjorie Randolph** *has joined* **Walt Disney Feature Animation** *as vice president of human resources, where she will*

oversee all aspects of recruiting, contract negotiations and employee relations. And over at one of Disney's acquired companies, **Pamela Thompson** *has started recruiting full-time for* **Dreamquest Images.**

Cori Stern *has been promoted from the position of manager to director of program development at* **Saban Entertainment**, *where she will continue to oversee development of new animated and live action programming, reporting to senior vp of development Joel Andryc. How did Stern get into such a great position? Take a look back at her tips on the trade column, entitled "So You Wanna Be An Animation Executive?, published in Animation World Magazine's September '96 issue. Saban has also added two more development executives to the department;* **Kim Christiansen**, *who moved over from Walt Disney TV Animation programming, and* **John Luiso**, *who moved over from MCA/Universal merchandising.*

David L. Simon *has taken on the role of heading up operations for* **DreamWorks TV Animation**. *Simon migrated from Walt Disney TV, as did DreamWorks TV Animation division head Gary Krisel, who will supervise Simon in his new role.* **DreamWorks Interactive** *has named* **Craig Relyea** *head of marketing and* **Jeff Nuzzi** *as lead marketing manager (he was former Disney Interactive marketing manager). Meanwhile,* **Dan Kaufman**, *former DreamWorks Interactive head of business development, has left the company to pursue other interests.*

Eddie Dombrower *has been promoted from director to vice president of* **Jim Henson Interactive** *in Los Angeles. Part of his responsibilities will be to oversee a joint project with Microsoft to develop original online programming. . . .* **Nickelodeon Latin America** *has named* **Stephen Grieder** *vp and creative director, and* **Tony Fadel** *program director for the network.*

Meta Tools to Acquire Fractal. *Visual design software companies Meta Tools Inc. and Fractal Design Corp. will soon merge when Meta Tools acquires Fractal for $145 million in stock. The as yet to be renamed combined company will account for about 270 employees, and will bring together a large collection of professional computer graphics, animation, video, photography and digital imaging software.*

Digital Domain Gets Top Line Feature Credit. *TV advertisements for the new effects-laden Universal Pictures feature film Dante's Peak includes prominent top-line credits for Digital Domain, the Venice, California-based studio which created most of the special effects on the film. While this may not sound like a big deal, these days getting due credit is an increasingly hot topic with effects studios negotiating contracts for feature film work. The Los Angeles' SIGGRAPH chapter recently held a panel discussion called "How to Get A Credit," which featured speakers from Rhythm & Hues, Novocom, and Hammerhead Productions, as well as a founding member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Visual Effects branch.*



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Home Video Releases. **Walt Disney Home Video** *released an all-new line of Winnie the Pooh home videos Pooh Friendship, in celebration of what the Disney marketing folks have named "the year of friendship". The titles, Pooh Wishes, Tigger-ific Tales and Clever Little Piglet are priced at $12.99 each. Promotional tie-ins include a mail-in rebate for free Pooh lithographs.*

Disney will also release its 34th animated feature, The Hunchback of Notre Dame, on video March 4, priced at US$26.99. Promotional tie-ins include licensing and merchandise rebates with General Mills, Nestle and Hasbro. Hunchback is nominated for an Academy Award in the Original Musical Score Category.

Central Park Media *will release three anime titles on home video in April. Battle Arena Toshinden, available April 15, is based on the PlayStation and Sega Saturn video games of the same name. Big Wars, available April 8, is a science-fiction outer space adventure. Venus 5: The Inma Ball, available April 8, is a "dark erotic horror film."*

The Following News items are reprinted from the February 7

edition of the AWN Animation Flash email newsletter.

Voice of Snow White Now Silent. *Adriana Caselotti, the legendary voice of the heroine in Walt Disney's first feature-length animated film Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, passed away in her home on January 19th at the age of 80. "This is certainly the end of an era for all of us at the studio and for Disney animation lovers the world over. We really feel as if we've lost a member of the family." commented Roy E. Disney, current chairman of the Walt Disney Company.*

Warner Bros. Pushes *Quest* Release Back. *Warner Bros. Feature Animation has pushed back the release date of their first fully animated feature film, The Quest for Camelot, from November 1997 to the summer of 1998. Although this change throws a wrench in the works of merchandising and promotional plans tied to the film, it was necessary to give the production team more time to complete the animation on Quest, after many key animators were pulled away to frantically finish Space Jam last fall. The new release date means that Quest will be competing for audiences against Disney's Mulan, also scheduled for summer '98 release, rather than Fox's first animated feature Anastasia, which is sticking with its '97 holiday season release.*

Nickelodeon Goes Nordic. *This month, the Nickelodeon cable network has finally launched their broadcast in the Nordic territories with a commercial-free channel airing six hours of kids programming per day. Currrently the programming is available in both Swedish and English in Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland through the ViaSat+ DBS cable package. Plans to dub Nick programming into Norwegian, Finnish and Danish languages are in the works.*

Cartoon Network Nears 40 Million Subscribers. *Cartoon Network is approaching the 40 million mark in the US, with a recent acquisition of 8 million subscribers—85% of which came from from Tele-Communications Inc. (TCI) cable systems, which owns a 9% stake in Time Warner (the parent company of Cartoon Network). In order to make room for the channel, TCI has eliminated several other channels, including E! Entertainment Television and Comedy Central. The new broadcast area for Cartoon Network includes Los Angeles, Tuscon, San Francisco, San Jose, Denver, Baltimore and Boise.*

***King Of The Hill* to Rule For Another Season.** *The Fox Broadcasting Co. has ordered a full season of 22 episodes of King of the Hill, Mike Judge's new animated series which is being paired with The Simpsons in the Sunday evening lineup. The decision had to be made after the show had been on the air only a few weeks, and ratings were available from just two episodes; but the network is confident that they have finally found the perfect show to fill the slot between The Simpsons and Married . . . With Children.*

Networks Announce Program Schedules. *This is the time of year when the TV networks present their schedules to advertisers, in preparation for pre-selling ad space in their program blocks. Saturday morning and afternoon kids blocks are generally presented to ad buyers from cereal, toy, and fast food companies. Here's some highlights of who will be showing what in the way of animation:*

Fox Broadcasting's *Saturday morning lineup will become effective in parts starting in fall of 1997. It will include four new animated programs*

- *Steven Spielberg's Igor, a takeoff on the classic story of Frankenstein which will be the first cartoon TV series produced by DreamWorks Television;*
- *Home To Rent, a co-production effort of ProSieben, Gaumont Multimedia, France 3 and Britain's Channel 4:*
- *The Adventures of Sam & Max: Freelance Police, Nelvana's comic book-based show about animal detectives; and*
- *Silver Surfer (replacing X-Men), the first new series in a production/distribution deal between Marvel and Fox partner Saban.*

"We recognize that as our hits age, we need to infuse new and fresh programming into our schedule." commented Margaret Loesch, president of Fox Kids Network, which has recently been aggressively promoting itself in the industry as "the number one" kids network. Fox is still in active pursuit of a cable opportunity to air their kids programming 12 hours a day, seven days a week.

Kids WB *president Jean MacCurdy announced two new animated shows that will air on the network in 1997-98, as part of their overall increase in daily kids programming hours up from 9 to 19. The 10 additional hours will include Umptee-3 TV is an educational series about a pirate TV station for kids, produced by Norman Lear and former Disney animator Jim George. Calamity Jane is an action/adventure series set in the wild west, and The Bugs and Daffy Show is hoping to bank on the success of*

Warner Bros.' Space Jam released last year. Kids WB Network will continue to air Animaniacs, Pinky & the Brain, Batman, Superman and The Sylvester and Tweety Mysteries.

The American Broadcasting Company (ABC) *will add at least three new animated series to its Saturday morning lineup, The subject matter covers its bases in terms of age groups, with Pepper Ann, a show about a spunky red-headed pre-teen and Recess, which is about a fifth grade student. The new 101 Dalmatians series being produced by Disney-owned Jumbo Pictures will also premiere in the fall, and will undoubtedly ride on the wave of success of the live-action feature film remake released this year.*

Children's Television Workshop (CTW) *is expanding its development effort with two new animated programs in development for CBS' Saturday morning slots and other outlets. Problem # 13, written by Nick Hollander (Tiny Toons, Animaniacs) and developed from a concept by Eric Weiner, will be a half-hour comedy adventure series with an educational focus on teaching everyday mathematics. Dragon Tales is a pre-schooler series for CBS which is currently in development with Columbia TriStar, for debut in the 1998-99 season. CTW is also developing a show with Flying Rhinosceros, Inc. (a company recently founded by co-creators of the California Raisins) on a series that will teach children to draw cartoons. Dolores Morris, Vice President of Program Development at CTW said "We are reaching out more to Hollywood's creative community as CTW begins to undertake more ambitious projects…We are developing cutting edge and breakthrough programs, projects that the company has not traditionally been known for."*

The Money-Go-Round

This is also the time of year when publicly-traded companies release their earnings reports for the past year. Here is a rundown of where the money is. Fourth-quarter earnings for **Pixar** *have exceeded the expectations of analysts, with an annual net income of $25.3 million (54 cents per share), a huge increase over 1995, during which Pixar's net income was only $1.6 million (4 cents per share). Not bad for a company which only went public a little over a year ago. The majority of Pixar's '96 profits can be attributed to sales of the Toy Story CD-ROM, not from the Toy Story video, as one might assume, because much of the revenue from the October home video release won't even get to Pixar until the first half of 1997 has passed.*

Canadian animation producer **Cinar Films Inc***. announced a 1996 revenue of $57.9 million, a 38% increase over the previous year. Gross profit increased 48% to $15.5 million. Cinar also recently donated an estimated $8.1 million of animation artwork to the Cinémathèque Québecoise, with the resulting tax deduction bringing earnings share up 45% to 32 cents per share. Cinar president Ronald Weinberg attributes the revenue to the increased production activities of the company, which produced 171 half-hours of programming in 1996.*

The Big "D" Takes On E! to Start ABZ?? *The Walt Disney Company has purchased Time Warner's 58% majority interest in E! Entertainment Television for $320 million. There has been some speculation that Disney would change the entertainment news channel into a childrens channel, after Disney/ABC's recent announcement of their plan to launch ABZ, a cable network to complement the Disney Channel. Although Disney's stake will undoubtedly have influence on E!'s programming, sources say that the entertainment news format will remain, since the network has only recently become profitable.*

Paragon & Lacewood Deal Nears Closing. *Toronto-based Paragon Entertainment has finally signed its agreement to acquire a 75% stake in Ottawa-based animation production company, Lacewood Productions. Lacewood, which until now has been controlled by its founder, Sheldon Wiseman, plans to use the extra financing to develop more proprietary productions. Wiseman decided to maintain his 25% interest so as to participate in the company's growth.*

The Hollywood Shuffle.



Mary Harrington.

Nickelodeon *has signed* **Mary Harrington** *to an exclusive production deal to identify, develop and produce animated properties for the network. The former vice president/executive producer of pro-*

duction and development for Nicktoons will offer first look rights to television and feature projects, both animated and live action. Harrington will continue to act as Executive Producer on *Hey, Arnold!* and the upcoming series *Angry Beavers,* which she developed. "Nicktoons is my baby, [but] they're getting the best out of me and now I'm doing more of what I like to do." said Harrington. Albie Hecht will serve as acting head of Nicktoons while Nickelodeon searches out her replacement.

Atlanta-based animation and special effects studio **DESIGNefx** *has added two new animation talents to its staff; animation director* **Jai Anthony-Lewis Husband** *and CGI animator* **Rod Brunet**. *Both are experienced in the field; Husband's background includes animating for Disney and Turner Interactive while Brunet comes from the video game industry giant Electronic Arts/Origin Systems. . . .* **Walt Disney Motion Pictures Group** *has promoted former VP of business affairs* **Philip Muhl** *to senior vice president of business affairs for the division.*

With the staffing crunch facing the animation industry these days, even recruiters are being recruited away from rival companies. **Brad Reinke** *has taken over CG Technical recruiting for* **DreamWorks Animation**, *after a short stint as Recruiting Manager for effects house Digital Domain. Reinke previously headed up recruiting at Rhythm & Hues.*

Colossally Interactive. *San Francisco-based (Colossal) Pictures has announced the expansion of their Interactive Division with the appointment of Sam Register as creative director, who joins the company from Turner New Media, the division which is producing the Cartoon Network World web site. "In working with Sam I am most impressed by his grasp of branding and a universal backwards and forwards knowledge of cartoon animation characters." commented George Evelyn, senior creative director. Launching this week is Colossal Interactive's latest project, a collaboration with Broderbund Software entitled Koala Lumpur: Journey to the Edge. The studio's next project in development is an new web show for Microsoft Network (MSN).*

EAI To Make Interactive Products For IBM. *Iowa-based Engineering Animation has been contracted by IBM's Consumer Division to produce a series of four Crayola 3D interactive products, which will give children an opportunity to customize 3D scenes using Crayola art tools. "This agreement is another example of how "Highly realistic 3D technology is not currently available in children's multimedia creativity products, and this series will set the new visualization standard for the category." said EAI president and CEO Matt Rizai.*



EAI's *Crayola Magic 3D Coloring Book.*

Universal to Host Nickelodeon Theme Park Attraction. *Universal Studios Hollywood is partnering with Nickelodeon to create Totally Nickelodeon, a permanent attraction of interactive games based on their kids TV shows. Opening in March, the attraction will include a 1,200 seat "theatrical playground" and The Sliminator, which will dump hundreds of gallons of Nickelodeon's trademark green slime onto willing guests. This partnership with the Hollywood Universal Studios is an expansion of the Nickelodeon section of the Florida Universal Studios, which has hosted a Nickelodeon attraction since it opened in 1990.*

Gabor Csupo Opens L.A. Restaurant. *Animator Gabor Csupo, co-founder of Klasky Csupo Animation, has opened a combination bistro and art gallery in Hollywood. Lumpy Gravy, as the restaurant is named, after a Frank Zappa album, is a non-traditional venue featuring a gallery, performance space, stage, and restaurant. Current exhibitions include artwork by Igor Kovalyov and Mark Mothersbaugh among others. 7311 Beverly Blvd, Los Angeles. (213) 934-9400.*

Compiled by Wendy Jackson

Submissions of newswordhy idems may be sent to editor@awn.com



On a Desert Island With . . .

Three Kinder Folk and an Animator

Compiled by Wendy Jackson

This month we asked our inevitable question of, "If stranded on a desert island, which ten films (animated or otherwise) would you want to have with you?" of four people involved with children and animation: Nicolas Bellanger, director Alice, a short based on children's drawings and their voices; Arlene Sherman, film and animation producer for Children's Television Workshop's Sesame Street; Yvonne Andersen, animation teacher and founder of The Yellow Ball Workshop. We also queried Alex Williams, who is creating something that will be seen by millions of young eyes next year, as an animator on Warner Bros.' Quest for Camelot, and has been known to help out with his father's films.

As in any classroom, there will always be kids who want the same toys or have the same birthday. Thus, it is no surprise that several titles inevitably show up in more than one top ten list. This month, the luck of the draw favors The Wrong Trousers, Tale of Tales, Pinnochio, and the animated sequences from The Charge of the Light Brigade, which all got counted twice.

Alex Williams

1. *The Thief and The Cobbler* (original director's cut)
2. *The Wrong Trousers* by Aardman Animation
3. *A Christmas Carol* by Richard Williams, 197, featuring the voice talent of myself as Tiny Tim.
4. *Pinocchio* by Walt Disney
5. Title sequence from *The Return of The Pink Panther,* animated by Richard Williams
6. The animation interludes from *The Charge of The Light Brigade* (Tony Richardson, 1967) by Richard Williams
7. *The Jungle Book* by Walt Disney
8. *A Close Shave* by Nick Park
9. *Bambi* by Walt Disney
10. *What's Opera Doc?* by Chuck Jones.

Yvonne Anderson

"A list of 10 animated films to have with me on a desert island? This is hard. In 2 minutes, I had 30 essential films!"

1. *Hen, His Wife* by Igor Kovalyov
2. *A Black and White Movie* by Stanislav Sokolov
3. *Ubu* by Geoff Dunbar
4. *The Son* by Ryszard Czekela
5. *The Devils Ball* by Ladislaw Starewicz (an excerpt from *The Mascot*)
6. *Hunger* by Peter Foldes
7. *The Hedgehog in the Mist* from *The Tale of Tales* by Yuri Norstein
8. *The Owl Who Married a Goose* by Caroline Leaf
9. *Dreamland Express* by David Anderson
10. The animated sequences by Richard Williams in the live-action British feature *The Charge of the Light Brigade.*

Arlene Sherman

1. *Fantasia* by Walt Disney
2. *The Wrong Trousers* by Nick Park
3. *Frank Film* by Frank and Caroline Mouris
4. *Pinnochio* by Walt Disney

5-10. Betty Boop cartoons, or anything else by Max Fleischer.

Nicolas Bellanger

"When I was 5 or 6 years old, I was 'a child who drew.' Each of my drawings crystallized the essence of a story that an adult would title according to my explanations. These stories dealt with actions and thus could involve movements.

I had been thinking for long time about trying to animate a child's drawing. At the same time, Jérôme Coullet, the composer, wanted to create an opera using everyday noises and sounds. So, we decided to work together with Entracte, the animation studio, and plunged into the world of 2-3 years olds and a crèche. We captured some elements in the soundtrack and built the screenplay as if for a documentary: we wanted to remain close to the young children's concerns.

For the images, we worked with 5-6 children, who listened to the soundtrack and drew. I used the results to direct Alice, of which you can see an extract here.

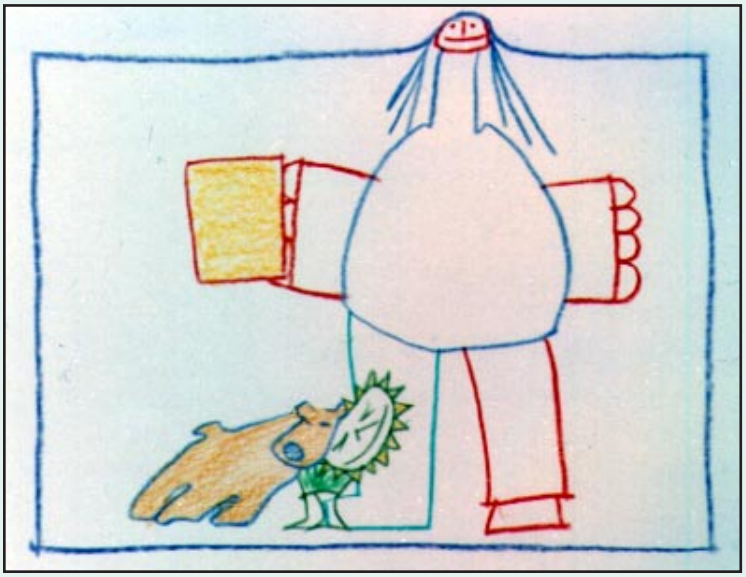
"I came up with this list but it was very hard to choose. If I had to do another one tomorrow, it would certainly be different."

—Translated from the French by Annick Teninge



"Quand j'avais 5 ou 6 ans, j'étais un "enfant qui dessine". Les dessins étaient chacun la cristallisation d'une histoire qu'un adulte pouvait légender selon mes indications. Ces histoires comprenaient des actions et pouvaient donc impliquer des mouvements. Depuis longtemps, trotte dans ma tête l'idée de faire vivre un dessin d'enfant par l'animation. Parallèlement, Jérôme Coullet, le musicien, désirait créer un opéra consitué de bruits et sons du quotidien. Nous nous sommes donc associés avec la société de production Entracte et nous nous sommes baignés dans le monde des enfants de 2 et 3 ans, dans une crèche. Nous avons capté les éléments de la partie sonore en gardant comme trame scénaristique un axe documentaire : rester auprès des préoccupations des tout petits. Ensuite, pour l'image, nous avons sollicité des enfants de 5 et 6 ans. Ils ont écouté notre bande sonore et ont dessiné. Je me suis inspiré de cette production pour réaliser Alice, dont vous pouvez voir un extrait."

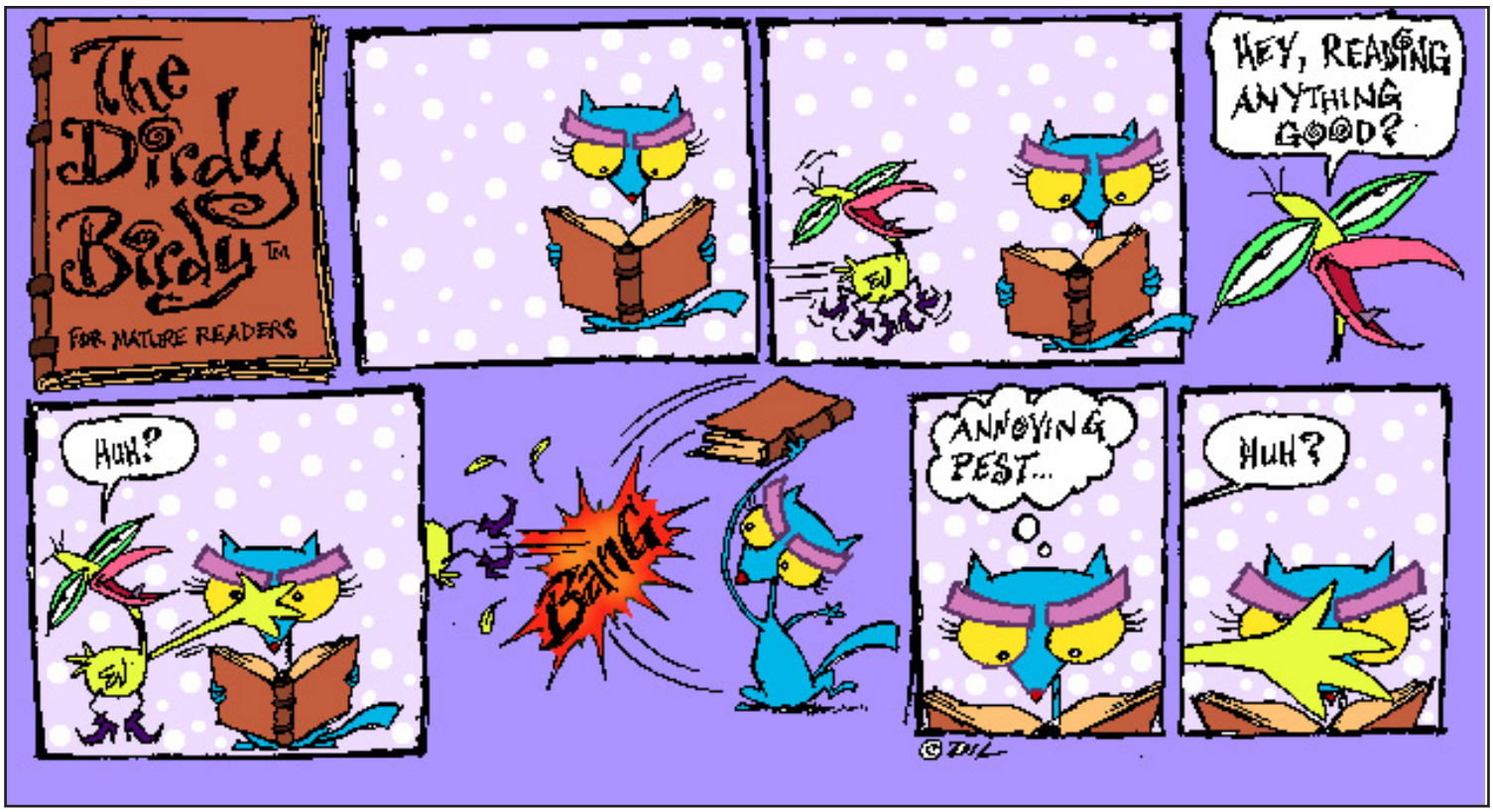
"J'ai écrit cette liste de films, mais il en manque plein. Il est très difficile de choisir. Si je recommencais une telle liste demain, elle serait sans doute différente."



Nicolas Bellanger's *Alice*.

1. *La Règle du Jeu* (*The Rules of the Game*) by Jean Renoir
2. *Le Roi et l'Oiseau* (*The King and Mr. Bird*) by Paul Grimault and Jacques Prévert
3. *Les Demoiselles de Rochefort* by Jacques Demy
4. *Les Temps Modernes* (*Modern Times*) by Charles Chaplin
5. *A Bout de souffle* (*Breathless*) by Jean-Luc Godard
6. *La Joie de vivre* by Hector Hoppin and Anthony Gross
7. *Meet John Doe* by Frank Capra
8. Felix the Cat films by Otto Messmer
9. *Le Herisson dans le Brouillard* (*The Hedgehog in the Mist,* from *The Tale of Tales*) by Yuri Norstein
10. *The Village* by Mark Baker

AWN Comics



The Dirdy Birdy by John R. Dilworth

Animation World Magazine 1997 Calendar

Next Issue's Highlights



For the April 1997 issue, Animation World Magazine celebrates its and AWN's first birthday. Being in the mood to sing "Happy Birthday," we will focus on Music and Animation, a topic that will also allow us to explore both sound design and voice acting. Articles will range from Andrea Martignoni's take on Pierre Hébert's latest movie La Plante Humaine, where he interacted with his musicians in entirely new ways, to an interview with voice actor (and Star Wars hero) Mark Hamill.



In other stories, John Lent will provide an interview with Thai animation pioneer Vayut Ngaokrachang, Nedd Willard will examine the current state of Swiss Animation, there will be a review of Turner Feature Animation's second and last film, Cats Don't Dance, and much, much more.

Music & Animation	*(April)*
Commecials	*(May)*
Education	*(June)*
Comic Books/Strips & Animation	*(July)*
Computer Animation	*(August)*
Television	*(September)*
Licensing & Merchandizing	*(October)*
Home Video	*(November)*