

ANIMATION

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Table of Contents

APRIL 2001

Vol. 6 No. 1

APRIL 2001

4 Publisher's Notebook
History shows that the Phoenix always rises...

8 Letters: editor@awn.com

PRODUCING ANIMATION

10 Producing Animation: An Introduction
Welcome to *Producing Animation*, Catherine Winder and Zahra Dowlatabadi's new book, which discusses the nuts and bolts and beyond, of the mysterious art of producing.

15 Co-Developing and Co-Producing in Europe — An Art Form In Itself
Have you tried to dress an elephant lately? Jan Sawkins does every day! Read on as she outlines the lay of the land as it applies to co-producing animated television series in Europe.

19 Tradigital Television: Digital Tools and Saturday Morning
Animating for television series has evolved a great deal over the past twenty-five years and the incorporation of digital equipment and procedures is a huge part of this evolution. Here Sylvia Edwards details the production process and how digital tools are impacting the traditional model.

28 Financing Animated Feature Films in Europe
Through his experienced eyes, Steven Walsh takes a look at the future of feature films in Europe. Will Cartoon Movie prove to be as successful as the Cartoon Forum? What's at stake and play...

32 Flash's Strong Suits: Quick, Cheap and Easy Production
New to Flash and don't have a clue? James Dalby outlines Flash's strong points from utilization to staffing. If you have a story to tell in five minutes or less, Flash may be just the thing you need.

34 Why Does It Take Ten Years!?!
Okay, so maybe ten years is an exaggeration, but why do the majors' feature films take so long to make? Evan Backes investigates.

38 Gaming: A Similar Process For A Different End Result
While they are two very different mediums, with different demands and dollars, the development of a video game compares with the production of a movie — and so do their audiences. Jacquie Kubin explains.

SURVEY

41 The Funding of Independents
Heather Kenyon finds out how some of the past year's leading independent films were funded. From *Flying Nansen*, to *On the Possibility of Love*, to *Rejected*, to *Clandestino* and more, we find out how these clever filmmakers positioned themselves in the money.

ADDITIONAL FEATURES

44 Walking to Toontown, Part One
How have we all ended up in this animated world? Martin "Dr. Toon" Goodman relates his journey into animation fandom. Does it resemble your own?

48 The Animation Pimp
This month the Animation Pimp, Chris Robinson, takes on the Academy of Arts and Sciences. Three films? Three films represent all the international animation arena has to offer?!

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Table of Contents

APRIL 2001

Vol. 6 No. 1

STUDIO PROFILE

50 **Xilam: A New Convergence Studio With A Tried and True Business Sense**

Marie Beardmore sits down with Marc du Pontavice to learn about the many facets of Xilam as it takes to television, gaming, the Web, features and more.

STUDENT CORNER

53 **Sketching on Location: Pencil Technique**

Renowned drawing instructor Glenn Vilppu continues with his sixth sketching on location teaching installment. This month he is discussing the artists most basic of tools and how it should be properly used: the pencil!

EVENTS

55 **My Trip To Tehran**

The Tehran International Animation Festival ran February 19 - 22, 2001. Nag Vladermersky was lucky enough to attend and relates his experiences animated and otherwise.

58 **Brussels Turns 20!**

The Brussels Cartoon and Animated Film Festival celebrated its 20th anniversary. Join us for a special photo gallery of twenty years.

FILMS/VIDEOS

60 **Anime Reviews**

Fred Patten reviews the latest anime releases including: *Trigun*, *Shamanic Princess*, *Blue Seed*, *Silent Service* and *Maze*.

BOOKS

65 **Acting For Animators**

Veteran animation director Paul Brizzi reviews Ed Hooks' book, which combines his years of theater and teaching experience to reveal principles Brizzi says ring true.

NEWS

67 **Animation World News**

BAFTA Prize Goes To *Father & Daughter*, Academy Of Interactive Arts Announces Nominations, Oniria Starts Production On 2nd CGI Feature, WB Dumps Manex For Matrix F/X, *VeggieTales* Theatrical Feature Starts Production and much more!

70 **Next Issue's Highlights**

7 **This Month's Contributors**

Cover: Now available Catherine Winder and Zahra Dowlatabadi's *Producing Animation* will soon become one of the must have bibles of the animation industry. Cover art by Wilbert Plijnaar.

APRIL 2001

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Publisher's Notebook

by Dan Sarto

History shows that the Phoenix always rises...

An entire year has gone by since my last Publisher's Notebook. In many ways, the promise and potential of the past year has been overshadowed by some of the more grim realities of the global economic climate. The first Internet Entertainment Revolution shook its fist at the world, quickly got a face full of pepper spray and ran back to the hills. Major studios merged, purged and coughed up large amounts of their staff and stock value. The technology companies that fuel much of the digital media world harangued us with another healthy dose of product point releases, but nothing really worth cleaning out your aging grandmother's bank account to go buy. Sometimes, in the rush to embrace progress and the "cutting edge," we no longer have quite the chokehold on our goals and dreams that we'd like to think we have. And even in the midst of tremendous strides being made with all sorts of cool computer animation techniques and technologies, some of the year's best animation was still done by lonely artists working late into the night with an animation disk, or an armful of puppets, or an old Mac 8500. If you turn down the volume on your "life," you can actually even hear them working away. Quietly. Patiently. Beautifully.

Golly, that was maudlin. I sound like my dad. The point I'm trying to make is that as we hurdle at breakneck speed toward our future, we would be well advised to learn from the hard fought lessons of our past. If we are to more fully embrace and profit from the opportunities of the coming years (and there will be many), we should not jettison the old just to make room for the new. There is ample room for both. Except for Thai food. Once it's been in the fridge for a couple days, toss it.

The animation industry is going through some difficult times right now. Our problems mirror the problems of the global economy at large. But history shows that the Phoenix always rises from the ashes, that progress may sometimes get mired, but never derailed. I'm confident things are bound to improve during the next year. At least that's what I've been telling my landlord, and that's what I'm telling you.

Which leads me to the real point of this year's Publisher's Notebook. I've often felt the best judge of a person's character is how they handle adversity. You can really see someone's true nature by the way they make the tough decisions. Think about it — it's been a tough year, but the hard part is really over. You've told your wife you can get at least another thousand miles on that mini-spare tire, you've told your five-year-old daughter that because E-Toys

went from \$200 to zippo she'll soon have to start sharing a room with grandma, and you've told your therapist you've got the shaking well under control. It's all downhill from here.

In that spirit, this year's Publisher's Notebook, celebrating AWN's 5th Anniversary, concludes by trying to help pave the way for success in the future by poking a little fun at some of the things from the past. If we can't laugh at ourselves, we are destined to repeat our mistakes, and miss out on some of the opportunities that the future has in store for us. Plus, if we can't laugh at other people, then for the most part, there wouldn't be many things that are funny. As my father always said, "If you can't kick a friend when they're down, then what good are they as a friend?"

Join me for a quick glimpse at some of the Animation Headline News that didn't make it into any of AWN's publications, or any other publications for that matter. I'm sure our Editor In Chief Heather Kenyon will argue that they shouldn't have even made it into this publication, but I get my way once, and only once, each year. And this is it. Thanks to everyone at AWN and creativePLANET that have made the past year online so profoundly rewarding, challenging, and most of all, amusing.

So without further ado, in honor of our 5th anniversary (and April Fool's Day), the news that never was, but should have been.

AWN HEADLINE NEWS

Business

Nick Studios to train ants to run digital ink and paint systems — Union quickly steps in to demand maximum 22-hour workday.

Sears suspends sales of *Cow & Chicken* convection oven in Asia — retailing giant bows to PETA pressure over accompanying cookbook that includes several recipes for roast dog.

Entire library of *Ren & Stimpy* videos reported missing from Los Alamos Labs — FBI to investigate latest breach in security at country's most top-secret nuclear laboratory.

Interpol and FBI smash ring of international video pirates — gang caught smuggling bootleg copies of *Cats Don't Dance* into Honduras.

DNA tests reveal FOX Studios had nothing to do with the mismarketing of *Titan A.E.* — company executives deny involvement, claim they were at home watching television during animated feature's theatrical run.

Cal Arts rocked by hazing tragedy — foreign student who had never seen *Luxo Jr.* forced by fellow students to do pencil tests on old Amiga.

Warner Feature Animation restructures again — new division to be called Disney Feature Animation.

Parts shortages plague Sony Playstation 2 launch — company spokesman says that only a power cord and one controller will ship on schedule.

Jeff Goldblum signs on as

spokesman for SGI — new ad campaign to promote company's next generation home render farms.

Disney buys entire Internet — plans to eliminate all domains except dotbuydisneystuff.

Top animation studio brass warns of impending talent crunch — key execs predict looming shortage of qualified movers, auctioneers, locksmiths and packing clerks.

Special Cinar News Compendium

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police filed their first documents in the CINAR Corp. tax fraud case — Constable Dooright claims *The Country Mouse and The City Mouse* actually penned by Inspector Fenwick's daughter Nell.

Cinar releases restated financial reports — claims \$120 million spent on French versions of Microsoft Office.

Cinar founders resign — refuse to continue working for company that can't take a joke.

Cinar explains delay in providing financial statements — they were late because auditors had tickets for a Maple Leaf's game.

Cinar employees barred from trading — Canadian securities watchdog, the Ontario Securities Commission (OSC), has barred officers, directors and insiders of Cinar Corp. from any further misappropriation of \$120 million.

Internet and Interactive

Merrill Lynch and other top analysts predict Flash animation portals to be profitable by 2108 — experts predict dot.com turbulence should begin to subside by 2095, with the

strongest companies moving out of the red by Q1 2108.

Horf.com announces new round of financing — founder's dad gives fledgling Web entertainment portal \$2,850 so son can pay Amex bill and buy new copy of Photoshop.

South Park creators ink deal with Cedars Sinai Hospital — wacky, irreverent humor of Cartman, Kyle and the gang to be featured on "colostomy care" instructional software and video.

Noclue.com decides to delay IPO — citing troubling market conditions, Net stock slump and lack of artistic talent, struggling group of five Flash animation students from Ohio put their plans to go public on hold for fifth time in last 7 months.

20 top Webtoon producers agree to historic merger — new company claims to have burned through more venture capital, in less time, with less revenue, than any company in U.S. history.

Major development breakthrough announced — New York animation studio successfully trims Webisode loading "intro" from 30 to 20 seconds.

DEN closes doors for good — laid off employees given pop.com stock as severance.

Pop.com closes doors for good — laid off employees given icebox.com stock as severance.

Icebox.com closes doors for good — laid off employees given Entertaindom stock as severance.

Entertaindom closes doors for

good — laid off employees given *Iron Giant* DVD.

Commercials

ILM finishes spot for Mazda MPV — all CGI spot shows newest SUV stylishly motoring past a Ford Explorer that has overturned and exploded on the side of the highway.

A.Film Copenhagen finishes a 30-second animated spot as part of a series of ads for PDFA, the Partnership for a Drug Free America — spot shows buxom, tattooed blonde touting safe, cheap and hassle free drug use in Denmark.

Paris-based Mac Guff Ligne has created seven new Pillsbury Doughboy spots — series depicts the baked-goods spokesman as a pencil mustached, schmeiser totting, beret topped resistance fighter smuggling tapenade and pate from a well-guarded kitchen pantry.

TOPIX/Mad Dog wraps new commercial for Kellogg's Canada — company provides the 3D animation and design elements for new 30-second spot for Cholesterol Burstin' Sugar Frosted Fatty Bacon O's.

Technology

Intel in talks with Ohio Art to bring unparalleled 3D graphics to the Etch-A-Sketch — special high-res chipset based on breakthrough "weird silver powder inside" technology.

Japanese man crawls out of Philippine jungle — has been installing Maya on NT since 1944.

Burmese Minister of Digital Media implores Western leaders to send floppy disks — official tells UN del-

egation "an entire generation of anime porn is being lost forever."

Adobe releases latest After Effects plugin — revolutionary StoryMaster XLT technology lets animators quickly integrate an actual story into their work.

Television

New Government report released — cartoons like *South Park* help kids build valuable "anti-social" skills, which can prove useful for future government employment.

MTV signs historic partnership agreement with NASA and JPL — development execs enlist next generation of space probes to help search for "hip, edgy" animated series ideas.

Studios feel the pinch of the slumping economy — *Powerpuffs* Bubbles and Thelma from *Scooby Doo* given pink slips.

French animators go on strike — vow not to return until government agrees to 17-hour workweek.

Turkish Premier orders network shut down as punishment for airing episode of *Pokemon* — country's leader reportedly furious that show was broadcast before he had chance to set his VCR.

Forrester Research releases results of latest industry study — wealthiest 1 percent of Americans responsible for 97% of all *Hey Arnold!* video sales.

Films

Disney to release special version of *The Emperor's New Groove* dubbed into broken English. E.U. Ministers upset, decry, "How you

say, teepikul you-es arrogance, no!"

Fox Animation to auction off surplus feature film scripts on Ebay — unnamed company spokesman disputes report, claims "most of the good stuff has already been used."

Thomas and the Magic Railroad bolts to #1 in Antarctic Box Office — penguins flocking to new animated feature in record numbers.

Aardman and KFC sign *Chicken Run* licensing deal — will soon unveil line of zesty chicken pita wraps named after Rocky, Ginger and other "tasty" characters from the hit movie.

Author of Federal study on violence in animated children's programming accosted on steps of Capitol Building — DC police take Ed, Edd n Eddy into custody.

Philippines bans dozens of new anime video features — Minister of Culture claims new films are "exploitative, derogatory and portray Asian women's breasts as way too big."

FBI director Luis Freeh concedes alleged spy Robert Hanssen may have provided Russian handlers with several unreleased episodes of Spumco's *Weekend Pussy Hunt* — government wiretaps show the veteran counter-intelligence expert was set to reveal secret codes that made neighbor's bikini disappear and a dog poop spring to life.

People

Senior Disney executive fired for having *Care Bear* fan page — successfully hid its existence from family, friends and co-workers for over 3 years.

AOL Time Warner Cuts Colin Powell & 5 Others From Board — Secretary of State retaliates by having Delta Force Commandos plant land mines throughout Ted Turner's Montana ranch.

Icebox.com hires new VP of Strategic Development — exec vows to refocus company's efforts toward development of "offbeat and zany" content for the burgeoning, expanding and untapped frontier of network television.

Three new execs join Cartoon Network Italy — trio vows to expand programming lineup right after they finish their tiramisu and double espresso.

Events

The 17th annual Baltic, Latvian and Estonian Animation Konvention (BLEAK 2001) kicks off this February 16th in Kippersrungenbjorkenhorfen, Finland — unique program to include retrospective on 50 years of humorous Estonian animation.

ASIFA Belize to host 4th annual Careers in Animation Expo — annual event helps aspiring animators learn the ins and outs of the fast food industry.

Jerry Beck to present a Pop.com retrospective at ASIFA Hollywood — program to focus on clips that were never aired from shows that were never created.

Bangkok Effects and Animation Expo attracts major industry players from around the world — extremely limber 14 year-old go-go dancers will show visiting American, Canadian and European animation executives the latest advances in the Thai

entertainment industry.

Ottawa Animation Festival announces retrospective of animated shorts from the former Soviet Bloc — Come watch famous Russian animators share a large bottle of vodka and smoke cigarettes!

Glendale set to play center stage — Upcoming 2001 World Animation Celebration to focus on companies that buy booths.

Traveling exhibit of Kentucky animation postponed until next spring — axle breaks on curator's pickup truck.

Don't miss "You Silly, Stupid Americans" — School of Visual Arts to host a night of French animated films.

Gaze into the future at some of tomorrow's most unpromising artists — join us for Yet Another Horrible Web Animation Festival 2001.

Dan Sarto is an accomplished "hack" technologist and co-publisher of Animation World Network.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an e-mail to editor@awn.com.



ANIMATION WORLD NETWORK

5700 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 600
Los Angeles, CA 90036
Phone: 323.634.3400
Fax: 323.634.3350
Email: info@awn.com

ANIMATION WORLD

• MAGAZINE •

editor@awn.com

PUBLISHERS

Ron Diamond, President
Dan Sarto, Chief Operating Officer

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Heather Kenyon

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Rick DeMott

EDITORIAL ADMINISTRATOR

Joan H. Kim

CONTRIBUTORS

Evan Backes
Marie Beardmore
Paul Brizzi
James Dalby
Rick DeMott
Zahra Dowlatabadi
Sylvia Edwards
Martin "Dr. Toon" Goodman
Heikki Jokinen
Heather Kenyon
Joan Kim
Jacquie Kubin
Fred Patten
Chris Robinson
Dan Sarto
Jan Sawkins
Glenn Vilppu
Nag Vladermersky
Steve Walsh
Catherine Winder
Paul Younghusband

OPERATIONS

Annick Teninge, General Manager

DESIGN/LAYOUT

Alex Binotapa
Jeremy Keller

WEBMASTERS

Jeremy Keller
Alex Binotapa

ADVERTISING SALES

Jay Stokes

editor@awn.com

Ooh! Dat Pimp!

After reading Chris Robinson's droll column "The Animation Pimp: U.S. Jobs and Canada" (Robinson, 5.12). I find myself deeply disappointed that this person is speaking on the behalf of Canadian animators. This is the same person who ran *FPS* magazine into the ground and ruined the Ottawa Animation Festival with his poison attitude. Please do not let this person speak on the behalf of actual working artists. He is not an artist and therefore should have no comment whatsoever on the state of U.S./Canadian animation relations. Chris should get out of actual working animation artists' business and write for some other industry where his idiot-rantings are appreciated.

Please read the thread at <http://www.animation.com/ubb/Forum1/HTML/000763.html> discussing the subject, and you will find comments from REAL animation artists.



I didn't whore my culture off on Canadians. The Canadian music artists you mentioned stayed for a time in America and had some success, but I believe they are Canadian through and through and are proud of their culture and country. I've no control over who chooses to come to my country to further their artistic ambitions. PBS is totally out of control. They've sent US\$40 million to a Canadian company. This is

American tax dollars and donations supporting foreign interests! It's wrong — dead wrong — in my humble opinion.

Thanks for your time,
TSB

Peter Chung on Comics

To Peter Chung,

Overall "The State of Visual Narrative In Film And Comics" (Chung, 3.4) was a nice article, especially the debunking of the notion that film is a "passive" and literature a less passive art form. Nice argument. I wish you could have used more examples to explain your opinions, although you do offer us a list of favorites at the end. Some glaring omissions: Frank Miller's *Dark Knight* (I know it's a perennial darling among geeks, but a fine book nevertheless), *Maus* (excellent by any standards) and *Hellboy* (you can't accuse Mike Mignola of leaving out a sense of environment). How about Gilbert Hernandez's early Palomar stories (before his obsession with decadence got in the way of his storytelling)? Also, are you familiar with Scott Morse? (I like his lighter touch.) Maybe some of these examples get too much attention already, but certainly so does *Hard Boiled*. Just wondering if these were overlooked on purpose, or do you have a criteria that excludes them? Also where do children's picture books fall? Visual? Literary? How about books by Edward Gorey?

Sincerely,

Chuck Rekow

Full-time animation fan; part-time comic fan



Charles,

Thanks for your interest in the article in *AWN* on comics and visual narrative. It's been a long time since I wrote that piece, so I'll try my best to answer your questions while remembering my mindset at the time I wrote it.

Yes, most of the comics titles you mention are deliberate omissions because they fail, in my opinion, to use the medium to best advantage. I understand that others may use differing criteria to judge, so I have no quarrel with readers who find value in the works you mention.

Miller's *Dark Knight*, to me, falls into the trap of relying too much on the running interior monologue of the character, which comments on the action as it occurs. This is a prime example of the tendency, which I find so antithetical to good visual narrative. I wish Miller would simply allow the action to proceed without having to interject how we should be feeling about it. Especially annoying to me is his habit of scattering countless small text balloons, some containing a single word, all over his layouts. It's as if he wants to control the pace at which his words are read. This was equally a problem in his *Elektra Assassin* series. Also, it suffers too much from being a comic about other comics. I doubt that any reader who has not read a lot

of *Batman* comics would find much of interest in it, since it's mostly a deconstruction of the Batman myth. Since I never bought into that myth, personally, I found *Dark Knight* unreadable. However, I did enjoy the first volumes of *Sin City* quite a bit more because of their self-sufficiency.

Hard Boiled, to me, is brilliantly realized precisely due to the absence of commentary. With images so rich in information and atmosphere, the reader is free to feel the story's intent for himself, which remains ambiguously open to interpretation. Also, Miller's witty and precise dialogue gains in power for being used so sparingly.

Maus was a big disappointment for someone who used to enjoy Art Spiegelman's underground work, such as I remember from *Arcade* magazine. The central symbolism was pretty simplistic, really on the level of Don Bluth's *An American Tail*. I found the lack of character definition and expressiveness to make it a frustrating read. Way too many scenes of talking heads. I'm sure it was a genuinely heartfelt effort on Spiegelman's part, but good intentions do not make good art.

Mignola is certainly a brilliant designer and technician, but I find his storytelling (*Hellboy* included) does not involve me emotionally. It seems he keeps a constant distance between his characters and the reader. He renders his people as if they were props, or elements of the background. They never seem to be breathing, living flesh. I'm somehow too aware of his need to show off his technique, which, granted, deserves showing off. But I've bought his books mostly to look at the nice pictures. They're actually better left not read; there's

less there than meets the eye. Looking at his adaptation of *Dracula* (the Coppola film) revealed a great deal to me about the shortcomings of his work, and of comics in general.

I haven't read Hernandez or Scott Morse, but I've only so much time and money to spend on comics. The last good comic I've read is the first two volumes of Jodorowsky and Janjetov's *Les Technoperes* (I read French). Currently it is not available in English, much to the shame of the U.S. publishers. For a truly amazing comics experience, try *The Tower* by the Schuiten Brothers, which was put out by Dark Horse some years ago. And for plain good old comics storytelling by a true master craftsman, read some of the *Lieutenant Blueberry* albums by Jean "Moebius" Giraud. Doesn't matter if you don't care for Westerns — personally, I hate cowboy stories. But once you start looking at the pictures, you'll be sucked into wanting to know what's going on. And that's as good a test of a comic's quality as any.

Peter Chung



Peter,

Thank you for your generous reply on the comic art form. I agree with most of your comments, although the defects you point out never kept me from enjoying the comics you discuss. I have to take issue with the *Maus/American Tail* comment. After being exposed to so many treatments of the Holocaust in literature and film, my brain had become desensitized. Spiegelman's flashback treatment

helps ground the story in reality once again, and serves as a reminder that this didn't happen so long ago. There may have been other ways to pull this off, but I feel it earned its Pulitzer. (Yes, martyrdom is the quickest path to sainthood.)

I will look for more of your commentaries in the future.

Good luck and thanks!
Chuck Rekow

Thanks for Voice Over Info

This is a message for Kath Soucie, who wrote that great article "And I Get Paid!?: The Life of a Voice Actor" (Soucie, 2.12) about voice-over work. I wanted to thank her and *Animation World Magazine* for putting together such an interesting story. I had been wondering what a job like this would be like, so I found your Website at a perfect time.

Much appreciated,
Josie Say



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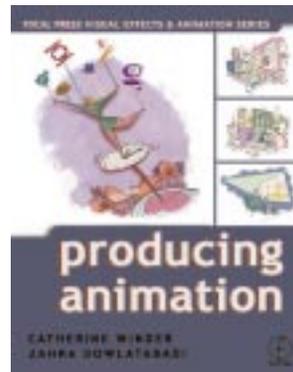
Producing Animation: An Introduction

by Catherine Winder and Zahra Dowlatabadi

Editor's Note: Animation World Network is proud to host the Website for Catherine Winder and Zahra Dowlatabadi's long awaited, and much needed, book, Producing Animation. We feel this book will soon become one of the must have bibles of the animation industry. Over the course of the next year, Animation World Magazine will feature selected excerpts. The following is the introduction to the book and also to our special issue, which highlights producing animation.

What exactly does an animation producer do? What is a creative executive? How much does it cost to produce one minute of animation? How do you put a production plan together for animation? Are there significant differences between producing a feature, d-t-v (direct to video) and television series?

This is just a tiny sampling of the many questions that we are asked as soon as we reveal our profession as animation producers. We tried looking for books to recommend to people interested in the topic, but realized there wasn't a suitable title out there. Although there are many well-written and useful books that discuss the technical process and art of animation, there is nothing available that outlines the actual nuts and bolts of producing for major animation studios and distributors. Since this is a significant missing piece of the picture, we decided to use our combined knowledge



Cover design by Wilbert Plienaar.

and experience and take on the challenge.

Producing animation is based on the ability to think logically, proactively and creatively. It is a cerebral act that combines a technical knowledge of the animation process with individual style, experience and gut instinct. Part of the problem of defining what an animation producer does is that the job function is truly amorphous. Throughout the animation industry, there is no single definition of what a producer does. And the role animation producers play on each project changes constant-

ly. A producer's domain varies from production to production, as well as from studio to studio. The positive side of this variability is that producers are often able to shape the production to fit their own experience and expertise. On the flip side, it can lead to untested modes of production that can result in costly overages and frustrations for all involved.

In our opinion, the producer is the one person with the full overview and responsibility for a project from a creative, financial and scheduling perspective. Based on the creative expectations and fiscal parameters of the project, the producer pulls together an animation team. The producer sets up and manages both a production schedule and a budget, aiming to deliver the product at the agreed-upon level of quality. The producer is also in charge of keeping both the executives (or buyers) and the production team enthused and motivated. As this role is all encompassing, the



Catherine Winder.



Zahra Dowlatabadi.

knowledge base required to become a producer is quite extensive.

Our combined experience in the animation industry has been quite varied. Both of us progressed up through the ranks, and between the two of us, we have worked in almost all production capacities. Our job titles have included coordinator, production manager, overseas production manager, associate producer, line producer, co-producer, producer, executive producer, production executive and vice president, production. Zahra got her start in television production, but her career has been primarily focused on feature film and direct-to-video projects. Zahra's experience has been very hands on, working directly on the production lines. Catherine has worked in the areas of production and development for both television and feature films. Although she has rolled up her sleeves and produced several television series, the majority of her experience has been as an executive. She has overseen production facilities and projects in all formats, both domestically and internationally. She has also set up and run a studio from scratch. Combined, we have been involved in many different kinds of projects, including feature films, direct-to-video releases, television series, television specials and short films.

First Hand Experience

We first met each other on an ill-fated production in 1991. We were both hired as troubleshooters in the last 10 months of production for an animated feature film. In a short time, we discovered that there was actually closer to 20 months of work remaining to be done. With the story still in devel-

opment, much of the production money was already spent. A completion bond company had moved into the production offices. The company was there to make sure that all production deadlines were met without failure so there would be no additional costs incurred. Their presence was a source of constant irritation for the producing team in Los Angeles.



Image by Wilbert Plienaar.

The project was structured such that the pre-production and some of the production was completed in the L.A. studio. Due to the lack of available talent and budgetary and time restrictions, the work was then divided up and subcontracted to studios all over the world. Sections of the film were sent to Canada, Denmark, Spain, Australia and Argentina. Every scene ultimately ended up going through a studio in Asia for cleanup and ink and paint. Because each studio's availability and capabilities differed, the scenes had progressed to different stages of animation. Once scenes were finished in cleanup, they were sent to L.A. for key effects and then back to Asia. The Asians were the "catch-all" studio, completing any artwork that was not finished.

Because the project was being outsourced to so many different studios, it was unclear

where the approximately 1,350 scenes had been shipped, and how far along the production pipeline they had progressed. To top it off, the anemic tracking system in place proved to be completely out of date. It was our job to figure it all out and get the film completed by the fixed delivery date. Zahra was based in L.A. while Catherine was at a subcontracting studio in Asia.

Once we got started, we quickly discovered that the project had been prematurely greenlit for production. (We should add that this is unfortunately a very common problem with animated projects.) None of the many changes taking place seemed to be able to fix its inherent story problems and only confused and complicated the production. At the home-base studio in L.A., the script was continuously changing. Character and location designs were being completely re-done. Scenes were being added and taken out as fast as they were being completed. The final deadline, however, remained firmly intact. It was impossible to feel like we were making any headway. As a result, the production crew was quickly losing their enthusiasm for the project.

Given the number of studios working on the project, the cultural challenges were enormous. Receiving work from numerous animation studios, all communicating in different languages, made it extremely difficult for the American and Asian crews. Many of the artistic revisions had not made it all the way down the lines of communication to each studio around the world. Consequently, scenes that had already been fully animated had to be redrawn. Since it was often dif-

difficult to pinpoint exactly whose responsibility it was to make these changes, the burden rested on the Asian team to handle this additional work.

Naturally, the L.A. studio had the highest expectations and made demands that were impossible to fulfill under the circumstances. Working six to seven days a week to try and catch up left the Asian crew feeling unappreciated and unable to put their best efforts forward. As time was short and they were being pressured, they had to make artistic compromises in order to get the scenes completed. Unfortunately, these creative shortcuts led to further frustrations by the L.A. team and resulted in even more revisions. The Asian crew was expected to produce top-rate animation, but there was no time for this in the schedule, so both teams often locked horns. Part of the problem was that the subcontractors were producing a feature film thousands of miles away from the creative decision-makers. The quality control checkpoints were impossible to implement without some artistic compromise. In short, we had our work cut out for us with the two main crews feeling frustrated, unhappy and burned out.

An important consideration that should always be taken into account when running an international production is cultural traditions and holidays, both in the U.S. and abroad. With the clock ticking away, no one had planned for the Chinese New Year, which stopped production in the Asian studio for an entire week. At the same time, the L.A. crew had to contend with their own unexpected problem: the L.A. riots. It was not safe to be out on the streets, and the crew rightfully feared trav-

eling to and from work. An angry driver had actually chased the head of the background department along the pavement of an L.A. street. In addition, all artwork shipments to and from the subcontracting studios were halted since the L.A. airport was very close to the hotbed of the riots.



Image by Wilbert Plienaar.

As this was before the days of e-mail, we averaged 20 to 30 faxes a day to each other, trying to get a handle on the project. Fighting off packs of diseased dogs on the way to work helped Catherine limber up for the physical work ahead. As the entire studio took a daily nap, she would often have to climb up on the artists' desks to the shelves above in order to find missing scenes. (At some overseas studios, it is customary to sleep under the desk or on a cot since the crew literally works around the clock to get the work completed on time.) Meanwhile, back in L.A., the artistic supervisor wanted to keep tweaking key elements even after they were approved. As production in certain countries was on hold until they could get the materials, Zahra had to do evening reconnaissance missions to keep the show moving. Staying until everyone had left, she would search and find the artwork. The next day she would get the director's approval and coax the artistic

supervisor into relinquishing the scenes in order to ship them out.

Somehow, through all the chaos, we managed to revise the schedule so that it was manageable. We put a tracking system in place and got scenes completed through production. Most importantly, we were able to motivate our team and finish the picture on time. It took a lot of emotional fortitude and diplomacy, as we were in the middle of a war zone with very high stakes and fiery tempers. At the end of it all, we both naively assumed that there had to be an easier way to produce a film. Over the years however, we have discovered that the complexity of the medium almost prohibits the possibility of a stress-free and orderly production. Many of the obstacles encountered are the direct result of the creative process itself and should be expected. However, many of the production snags are unnecessary and can be avoided with good planning and foresight.

Bridging Divides

Beyond committing to paper the nuts and bolts of producing animation, a primary purpose of this book is to help less experienced decision-makers (those new to the animation business, such as corporate executives and creators) to make smart, production-savvy decisions. Producing animation can be a highly rewarding experience. When developing a new project, there are no boundaries for creators, writers and artists, as the characters and their world can be created from scratch on a blank piece of paper. The rules of the physical world do not apply. As a result of this freedom, the possibilities are limitless. Achieving the appropriate balance between the creative

goals and fiscal limitations of a project is the inherent challenge of every production. Despite having infinite potential paths to take, there inevitably comes a point in every production where choices have to be made and finalized. Having worked with many talented professionals, we have witnessed — and also experienced — the struggle to commit to creative decisions. Because this is so difficult, we have both wished we could refer these professionals to a source that explains the animation process and the implications of decisions made to the overall project.

Many of the obstacles encountered are the direct result of the creative process itself and should be expected.

On a project that I (Zahra) worked on as an associate producer, the development executive had an impressive live-action background, but no experience in animation. With the best of intentions to improve the film, this development executive took it upon himself to rewrite the dialogue for scenes, many of which had already been animated not just once, but multiple times. With the project rapidly falling behind schedule and going over budget, my job was to figure out which scenes could be safely worked on. Doing this would allow the project to meet production objectives and maintain momentum, as sufficient inventory would become available for each department. However, it was no easy task, as it seemed that no matter how I reworked the

schedule and each department's weekly workload (also known as quotas), we were unable to move the project forward at a pace in keeping with the schedule. My top priority was to find a way to avoid the backward step of changing dialogue once a scene was animated. I had to devise a system that would allow us to catch scenes that required changes and stop them from entering production.

In order to get the work flowing through the animation department, I realized that I had to get on the same page as the executive. As an initial step, I invited him to attend dailies so he could get a sense of the process involved in animating a scene. (During dailies, scenes that have been completed through rough animation, cleanup animation, effect or color are viewed by the producer and director for approval.) While looking at the footage, the development executive was clearly impressed by the artistry that went into drawing each scene. My next step was to show the large stacks of drawings that made up the scenes we had just viewed. By his reaction, it was evident that the executive had not been aware of the staggering amount of work that went into getting the scenes animated.

I was very lucky because the executive was extremely smart and the brief introduction made him eager to learn more about animation. The first thing we had to establish was an understanding of the schedule. The timeline in animation can be deceptive for someone who is not familiar with the process. Even though we had close to two years of production time remaining, every day was already accounted for and there was little room for revisions.

Together we explored the quota system — that is, how a production relies on getting a certain number of feet or seconds completed through each department every week. Unless footage quotas are met in each category, there will not be enough work for the artists in the subsequent department to do. A domino effect ensues, causing the project to fall behind schedule. This offset travels all the way through the various departments to the end of the production line. While artists at the end of the production line have nothing to do, artists at the beginning of the production line are asked to undertake or work on the same scenes again and again. As revisions continue, these artists are caught in a vicious circle of not meeting their quotas. In the meantime, the time lag results in an escalation of department quotas in order to hit the film deadline, and the artists are pushed to produce more drawings every week. These circumstances create a self-defeating scenario in which the artists become demoralized, the production quality drops and the project falls behind schedule and runs over budget.

Achieving the appropriate balance between the creative goals and fiscal limitations of a project is the inherent challenge of every production.

My attempt to bridge the gap between development and

production gave the executive a better understanding of the consequences of his rewrites and the various challenges I was up against. It also gave me an opportunity to get to know him better and understand why he felt the changes were so critical to the project. Together, we figured out how to solve the problems we were facing. We established an "on-hold" category so that scenes he believed could potentially change were held back from production, thereby avoiding the waste of talent, time and money. He also requested to be copied on the production report in order to be more in sync with the project. Through our close collaboration, we were finally able to push the project forward and establish a mutually beneficial relationship between development and production.

Fundamental Strategies

Keeping in mind that each situation is unique, in this book we have attempted to define and clarify the process and procedures of producing animated projects with the focus on large-scale television, direct-to-video and feature production using 2D or traditional animation and 3D Computer Generated Imagery a.k.a. 3D CGI. The intended audience for *Producing Animation* is broad, ranging from film students to industry professionals. Our primary goal is to create a basis from which a producer can springboard and structure a production based on its individual needs. This book will take the reader through all the steps necessary to set up a project, including selling an idea, developing and preparing an idea for production, as well as the actual production process. For the entrepreneur producer who is trying to sell his or



Image by Wilbert Plienaar.

her project, this book will describe the role of and identify the industry professionals to contact. *Producing Animation* outlines the various stages a property goes through before production starts. For the student or line producer who may be strictly interested in the production phase, we offer detailed information on how to budget, schedule and track a project, as well as actual charts that can be used for such tasks. For professionals needing a basic knowledge of the animation business, this book provides answers to commonly asked questions, along with an overview of animation methodologies.

Unlike other forms of art, animation is a medium that is always changing. During the writing of this book, the industry has undergone phenomenal changes through technology and the Internet, making it almost impossible to keep up with all of its innovations. Many of the lessons we have learned, however, are fundamental to the business, no matter what the format or methodology. We hope that by sharing our own experiences we may help pave an easier path for future animation producers. Additionally, it is our sincere hope that the information in this book will entice new producers to enter the industry, and along with professionals already in the business, continue to push the

frontiers of animation to more exciting and unforeseen territories.

Welcome to the wacky world of animation. We hope you enjoy its challenges, as there is nothing more satisfying than seeing the results of your hard work moving on the screen and the audience responding to it.

Catherine Winder has worked as both an executive producer in television and feature animation. Her background in development, as well as production with studios from around the world has given her a rare global expertise in the field of animation. In her present position as vice president production for Fox Feature Animation, she is overseeing production of the studio's 2D traditional and 3D CGI animated movies. She has co-written Producing Animation with Zahra Dowlatabadi.

Zahra Dowlatabadi, an award-winning producer, started her animation career in 1986. Since then, Dowlatabadi has worked in almost every major studio in Los Angeles along with many internationally acclaimed animation studios and talent. Dowlatabadi is the founder of an organization entitled Animation Team, which assists studios with production staffing needs ranging from qualified line producers to experienced production assistants. She also has co-written a book entitled Producing Animation with Catherine Winder for Focal Press.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an e-mail to editor@awn.com.

Co-Developing and Co-Producing in Europe

— An Art Form In Itself

by Jan Sawkins

On a recent trip to the U.S., it became clear that many of our friends and associates in that country, whether broadcasters, major studios or independent production companies were more keen than ever to discuss how we put co-development and co-production deals together. With the recent further spate of mergers and consolidations in the U.S., it has become an even tougher and riskier market place for both development and fully-fledged production. Indigenous producers are now looking more intensely at Europe as the model both for creative partners and financial ideas and collaboration.

It was rather a novel sensation to feel envied for being European for other than artistic reasons, even more so to be told by one top studio executive that, "Right now the European animation market place is more buoyant and varied with a lot more going on than in the U.S. We know it's still a tough market there, but you Europeans are used to having to pull the financing from so many different sources – for us it's a newer experience..."

This individual was right on a number of counts: yes, we Europeans are used to it; yes, we are good at pulling deals together; and yes, it's tough. In fact, one might say that putting a co-pro-



Jan Sawkins.

duction deal together is an art form in itself, presenting endless challenges. But boy, what a great feeling if you can pull it off both financially and creatively. Add to this the fact that we are also used to getting series initially financed for the European market with (hopefully) a U.S. sale usually occurring once the series is made. Suddenly this is making co-production with European partners an attractive option in the U.S.



Oil! Get Off Our Train! is just one of the many co-productions in which Varga Holdings is currently involved. © BBC, Miramax, ZDF and Varga Budapest.

No Set Model Or Formula

One clear fact about European co-development and co-production deals is that every deal is different, every new alliance calls up new issues to be addressed and overcome — from allocation of production work, compliance criteria to trigger tax breaks or subsidies or grants to allocation of rights (which themselves may affect or be affected by those very same tax breaks, subsidies or rights). This is before we even get into the deficit finance obligations of each partner or apportionment of distributors' advances or pre-sale monies...

Let us be clear though, there are a substantial number of European co-productions which do not involve the use of grants, subsidies or tax breaks at all, just straightforward "financial engineering" or the piecing together of a deal using a combination of any of or sometimes all of the following: pre-sale; distribution advance; deficit finance; license fees; insurance backed schemes and contract discounting.

In short, a process which I call "getting a mini-skirt to fit an elephant!"

Government sponsored grant and subsidy schemes are not available in all countries in Europe. The biggest scheme operates in France with a big role played by French broadcasters. Germany

has largely regional schemes, although the establishment of dedicated Animation Investment Funds in Germany, such as the Berlin Animation Fund and the Victory Media Management Fund, has combined regional and commercial funding into a powerful investment resource.

Under the auspices of the E.U., the Media programme provides support for the development of certain projects in the form of loans for up to 50% of the development cost, which are repayable once a project goes into production. In the U.K. there are certain tax advantages for private investors in production.

All of the above entail compliance with various rules and conditions. In particular, the French schemes and, to a lesser degree, the German and U.K. schemes require that various percentages of the total work required to complete the production are undertaken in the country originating the scheme by an indigenous production company.

As a recent in-depth worldwide survey of the animation industry suggested, co-producers from other countries may find under these schemes that they have to sacrifice a disproportionate share of work and sometimes of revenues. Our view is that if it can be made to work, for the right production, that's great — there is, after all, no such thing as a free lunch, but very often it's a case of making that "mini-skirt" from other sources, be they broadcasters, distributors, banks or other production companies.

Daunted? If you're European, you can't be. It comes with the territory (or should I say territories?!). If you're non-European, stick with us kid! Your



As Preston is about to find out, choosing the wrong production partner can turn green pastures into perilous situations! Preston Pig. © ITV, Link and Varga Budapest.

European partner will, of necessity, work it out.

First Things First

There are three basic tenets to co-development and co-production (whether in Europe or internationally):

I. Find the right partners

This may appear self-evident, but for us at Varga this is key. In our view, too many projects in Europe have ended up being made with the wrong partners purely because they could bring in a certain subsidy or access to finance with the result that it shows on the screen — the infamous "euro-pudding" applied to animation.

A. Mutually creative vision and goals

Developing relationships is key. The many conventions and conferences held under the auspices of CARTOON and the commercial TV and dedicated animation markets held in Europe help in this respect, but of course personal day-to-day development of relationships is what really counts.

Similarity in artistic vision and standards of quality are crucial in a co-development or co-production, as is the need for the management of the respective companies (on the macro-level) and the



managers of the project (on the micro-level) to get on with and understand one another.

Even though there is often one 'lead' partner (usually where the project originated), we are dealing with production where elements will be undertaken in two or more locations by a multicultural crew, overseen by directors and senior managers from two or more countries. Whilst modern technology and ISDN lines help enormously, it's still about people and creative people at that.

B. Flexible and collaborative approach to financing

A flexible and collaborative approach to financing is also crucial. What do each of you need to make it work?

- In your respective countries (with regard to any grants, soft loans and subsidies)?
- For your respective companies from a business perspective?
- What is each partner prepared to contribute in terms of deficit finance?
- What will be the initial split of rights before you both go out to raise additional finance and what are you prepared to both concede in terms of dilution of equity if a third party is needed to close the gap?
- Are you all agreed on the most

appropriate distributor?

- If either can make a direct pre-sale in a major territory (U.K., Germany or France), are the terms acceptable to you both? What percentage of pre-sale in relation to the budget triggers the rest of the finance?
- Which territorial rights will you wish to keep for yourselves — if any?
- Are you being realistic in terms of what you wish to retain as rights, given the level of third party finance you might require?

2. Find the right project

Make sure that you both “get it” — i.e. the humour, the pacing, the direction, the target audience, the market you are aiming for. The best projects are those where all the partners are clear on the above and where the characters or concept transcends specific cultural “quirks” and will hopefully touch an international nerve or funny bone.

3. Communicate with one another

There can be no hidden agendas or objectives. It's like a marriage — if there are problems, they need talking out and resolving; if something the other partner or partners is doing is irritating or unacceptable, it should not be allowed to fester. Be clear about respective roles.

Co-Development and Co-Production — A Growing Trend

Having read this far, one might wonder that any co-production ever happens! Yet they do in increasing numbers, driven by economic necessity, the need to spread risk and also to increase access to good ideas and material.

It helps that certain broad-

casters across Europe are prepared for the right projects, on an albeit limited basis, to invest as co-producers (BBC, ITV, ZDF, Nickelodeon U.K., Disney Channel France, Fox Kids in Europe, Cartoon Network Europe...). However, the burden of raising finance rests more and more on financial producers and distributors and the production companies themselves.



Varga's flexibility and versatility help make them a successful co-production partner. Lisa. © Happy Life, Varga Budapest and RTL Klub.

In today's market place, a European animation production company, unless it only wishes to operate on a “work for hire basis,” must have financial muscle to develop and co-produce and retain rights, without this it is very vulnerable. The studios which are capable of this have either (i) raised equity investment into their companies from financial investors (ii) are subsidiaries of larger corporations which have financial firepower (iii) have access to the bespoke animation equity investment funds and/or (iv) can access significant subsidy finance.

The European animation industry is tough, but vibrant and growing. In 1999, c. 840 hours of animation was produced in Europe with about 40% produced in France and c. 12% in Germany. This leaves nearly 400 hours being produced elsewhere in Europe. Much of the above 840 hours was produced in co-production of

some kind or another and this trend is continuing.

As stated earlier, there is no set formula or template to offer up. I only wish there was, simply because it would make all of our lives and even the writing of this article a lot easier! The numerous co-productions on which we have worked, for example, *Oil! Get Off Our Train!* (ZDF, BBC, Miramax), *Preston Pig* (Varga/Link/ITV) and *Lisa* (Happy Life/Varga/RTL Klub), were all different in structure.

We are currently involved in three more European co-productions, all at varying stages. Of the three, one is based on an original idea developed by us, one is based on an original idea by our co-production partner and one is based on an idea jointly co-developed with another partner. In addition, we are in discussions on two further co-productions (one a European/U.S. collaboration) and in co-development on another two. It is highly probable that there will be little or no substantial grant or subsidy money involved in the final financing of any of these.

It is certain that we and our partners will provide deficit finance in some degree; that we will retain rights in return for this; that we will share net receipts from distribution in the “rest of world” and retain certain territories directly, dependent always, of course, on the deal we strike with a given distributor. If there is a U.K. terrestrial commission we will discount the contract with a bank or consider sale and leaseback if there is no direct cash flowing for production; if a French or German partner is involved we will benefit from subsidies. If not, we will allocate the production work according to who is best suited or has the

capacity at the time. Somehow, it will come together and it will work both from a business and a creative viewpoint.

In other words, like most of our colleagues, associates and peers in Europe, we are currently working on, and will continue to work on, making a lot of patchwork “mini-skirts!”

Jan Sawkins, Varga Holdings' Group Managing Director, is a respected international financial and investment executive. Sawkins has an extensive career in international media and finance. Whilst serving with Robert Fleming, the London Merchant Bank, she helped launch TEAM plc, an innovative group of independent production and distribution companies. She later joined TEAM as Joint Managing Director, before forming her own successful consultancy firm. As Group Managing Director for Varga Holdings, Sawkins is responsible for the overall management of the Group, as well as collaborating with CEO Andras Erkel in the areas of strategic planning, contractual negotiations and investor relations.

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The Flash is the best newsletter in the cartoon business. It treats the news of animation with the respect it deserves. I look forward to getting it every week. ”

Fred Seibert
Executive Producer/Creator of "Oh Yeah! Cartoons!"
Nickelodeon

It has really proved itself as a one-stop resource for international animation news, information and commentary. ”

Jerry Beck
Animation Historian

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CG or not CG...that is the question. Or is it? What is the place of traditional animation in a world where the rapid and ever continuing upgrades to digital mediums make equipment for animating in a 3D format more and more user friendly? The late Shamus Culhane was once taken to task by a fellow director for the following statement, "Computerized animation is going to give us films of such complexity and beauty that cel animation will become a thing of the past." He made this statement back in the '80s after visiting a digital facility and seeing the possibilities of what CG could do. Shamus Culhane was a man with prophetic abilities. A little over ten years later, his statement rings even truer today. Animating for television series has evolved a great deal over the past twenty-five years and the incorporation of digital equipment and procedures is a huge part of that evolution. The number of animation stages that fall into the digital realm continues to grow.

In the not so distant past, traditional animation meant that the pre-production and production elements were drawn and registered on animation paper, transferred to cels and colored by hand with liquid paint. The material was shot, frame by frame, with an animation camera onto 35mm film. The animation process today is impacted by the digital world in such a way that one feels that a new definition is required of what "traditional" animation is. This article will provide a brief overview of traditional animation for series television as it was, as it is currently produced and for CGI series production.

The animation production process at a traditional or a CGI

Tradigital Television: Digital Tools and Saturday Morning

by Sylvia Edwards

animation studio covers some stages that are exactly the same, some that are similar and some that differ a great deal. While the stages to be discussed are distinct steps in the animation process, a number of them overlap each other. These stages fall under the overall categories of: pre-production, production and post production. The folks interviewed came from traditional and "CG only" backgrounds. All had experience working on high end, high quality animated series. Creative Capers was founded in 1988 as a traditional facility and 7 years ago moved into the CG realm. They've produced several interactive games for Disney and other clients. Currently, they're producing *Sitting Ducks*, a CG series for Universal. Mainframe Entertainment was set up as a CG studio and has been in the business for 8 years. They've produced several CG series including *Reboot*, *War Planets* and *Weirdos*. They're currently producing *Action Man* for Fox and two videos for the Cartoon Network. Nickelodeon Animation currently produces several traditionally animated series, among them *Dora the Explorer* and *Oswald the Octopus* for Nick Jr. in New York. They're also producing a CG pilot called *Jimmy Neutron*, which will support a theatrical release. Sony Animation produces traditional shows such as *Jackie Chan Adventures* and *Men In Black: The Series* and CG

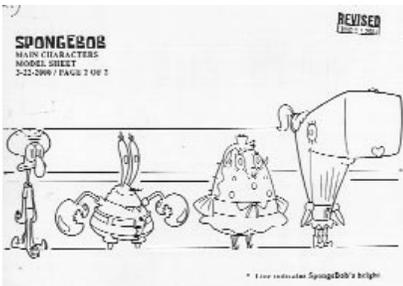
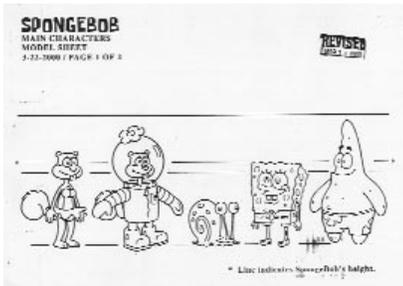
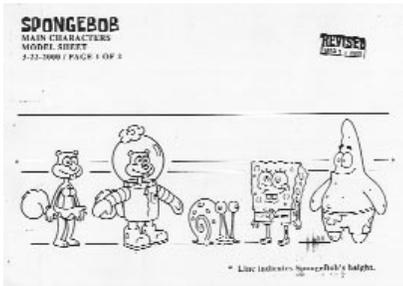
shows such as *Max Steel* and *Roughnecks: Starship Troopers Chronicles*.

Pre-production

Pre-production originally involved the generation of all the material needed to create a blueprint of the episode that various departments within the studio would use in completing the various stages of the process. This included all designs and key color material for the episode, voice recording of the dialogue, creating a storyboard and drawing the production layouts of each scene. The director met with the layout supervisor and crew. Once layouts were complete, the director prepared the exposure sheets for the animators, working out all timing of the episode so that once production started, time wasn't wasted working on scenes that had been cut from the picture. Pre-production covered everything up through the start of animation. These days, in traditional animation, pre-production serves the same purpose. Only now, the blueprint is created for the overseas studio to reference. A typical schedule for pre-production is 12 weeks.

Initial Designs and Storyboarding

Once the outline and/or script is final and approved, the pre-production process begins. The outline or script is distributed to the designers, storyboard



Examples of a main model pack. These designs will be referenced by teams of artists in order to put together the final show. Courtesy and © Nickelodeon.

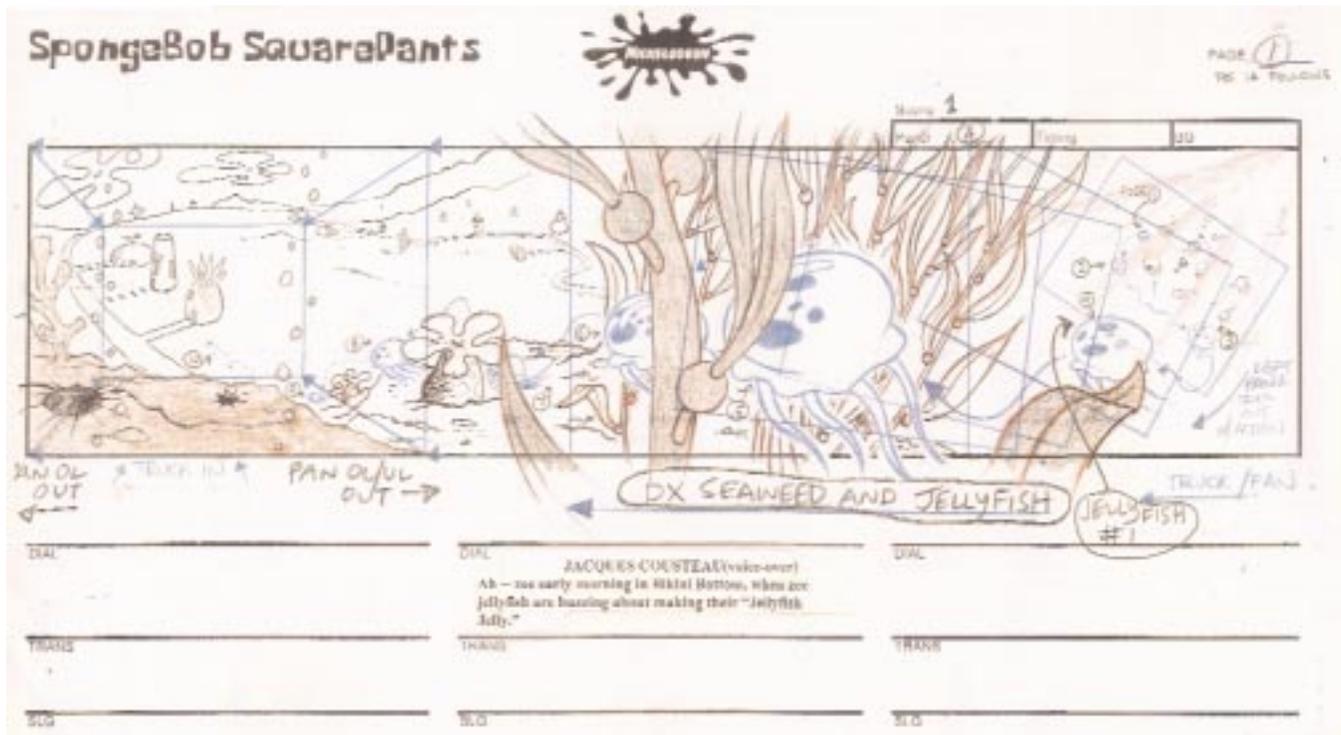
artists, director and support staff. The director meets with the producer and the artistic staff in order to determine which designs will require rough designs immediately for the storyboard artist to use. These designs would include any new characters, specialized props, new background layouts and main or recurring characters if they are in new costumes or have a different “look” than they usually do (examples would be the main characters dressed as astronauts, or the main characters in flashback to when they were babies). The same is true of any main background designs that have a different look than usual (an example of this would be the main character’s bedroom done in Salvador Dali’s style). While a main model pack

has already been distributed, any important new designs are given to the storyboard artist as early as possible, in order to facilitate completion of the storyboard with appropriate artwork. Designs for the episode will continue to be worked on while the storyboard is in progress, with final designs completed after the storyboard has been completed, approved and rough timing done (so that final design work is focused on scenes that remain in the picture, not those that have been cut). Using the script and later the storyboard, the production assistant or coordinator generates a list of characters, props, efx and backgrounds that are included in the episode. They also track the completion and approval of the designs for each episode and collect all artwork to prepare for overseas shipment. A schedule for completing a storyboard varies according to the length of the episode. A short (7-11 minutes) is typically done in 5 weeks (3 weeks rough storyboard, notes received on storyboard pitch, 2 week for revisions and clean-up). For a longer format, the storyboard duties will be shared by 2 or 3 artists. The schedule is typically 6 weeks, rough to clean-up.

Voice Recording

Voice recording for the episodes can occur at different points, depending upon how the production is set up. If the show is “dialogue” driven, the voice recording will probably be done from the script. The result of the recording session is more or less a radio play of the voice actors’ performances for the storyboard artist to use along with the script as reference. If a show is driven more by visual gags, or if the creative pro-

ducer prefers recording from the storyboard, the voice recording sessions will occur once the storyboard is complete (with dialogue indicated on the storyboard) and approved. In this case, the storyboard artist completes the storyboard based on the outline or script. The voice director uses the storyboard as reference in guiding the actors’ performances. Both scenarios require that a “recording script” be typed up that includes only the dialogue of the actors. Each line of dialogue should be line numbered on the script for the dialogue editor’s reference later. During the recording session, all the takes of dialogue by each actor are tracked and the preferred takes are circled. These preferred takes are then assembled and dubbed onto DAT and 1/4” audio cassettes as the Edited Master Recording (EMR). If an 8 frame “pause” has been added between each line of dialogue, it is sometimes called a Normal Pause (NP) tape. Both the EMR and the NP tape serve the same functions: for shows recorded from scripts, the tape is a reference for the storyboard artist. This tape is also used by the episode’s director to do the initial timing (slugging or animatic) of the show. The same editor who assembles the EMR or NP tape, also generates a line-lengths version of the recording script. Using a copy of the “circled takes” script from the recording session, the editor indicates the length of the selected dialogue in feet and frames. The line-lengths script along with the EMR or NP tape will be used by the director to time the show and prepare it for track reading. The schedule for voice recording is generally 2 weeks. Week one is for casting auditions (non-recurring roles) and the following



A final storyboard is in itself a work of art and a detailed blueprint for an episode. Courtesy and © Nickelodeon.

week for the actual recording session.

Timing

Once the episode has been voice recorded and the storyboard completed, the process of timing the show begins. Using the EMR or NP tape, the line-lengths script and the as-recorded storyboard, the episode's director chooses one of two pathways. In the traditional method the director will "slug" the storyboard using the EMR/NP tape and the information on the line-lengths script regarding the length of the dialogue. Veteran producer Larry Huber states, "To slug a storyboard is to indicate time 'place holders' or pauses between the lines of dialogue. This leaves space for character action. The director will also cut or add scenes to the storyboard. The slugged storyboard will include timing notes for all action and dialogue written on the bottom of the storyboard." This information is transferred later to the exposure sheets. The sec-

ond method for the director to produce this timing element is to produce an animatic of the storyboard. The storyboard panels are scanned into a computer and digitally assembled into a rough version of the episode. Using the line-lengths script information, the episode's director works with the animatic operator to edit the show to length. Once the animatic is final and approved, the animatic operator outputs an Edited Dialogue List (EDL) and a DAT of the new edited dialogue (now referred to as Animatic Dialogue) is created. This version of the dialogue track will be used for track reading. Both methods prepare the episode for track reading and sheet timing, the next step in the process of timing the picture. Traditional slugging of the storyboard typically takes about one week. The animatic process takes a week and a half to two weeks.

Now that the picture has been cut to length, the director moves on to finalizing the timing

information for the overseas studio. The line lengths script, conformed storyboard, dialogue track and blank exposure sheets are forwarded for track reading. The track reader receives either the slugged storyboard or a storyboard that has been conformed to the animatic dialogue track. If slugging was done, the EMR is still the main source of dialogue and the track reader will first need to edit this dialogue to the slugged storyboard instructions. The DAT of the EMR is transferred to 35mm magnetic tape (MAG), then "slugs" of 35mm film are edited into the MAG track where there is no dialogue. The result of this process will be an audio track that is edited to length. If an animatic was done, the new Animatic Dialogue tape outputted by the animatic operator is transferred directly to 35mm MAG. No film slugs need to be edited into the MAG because during the animatic process, the audio has already been edited to length. Once this process is com-



This *SpongeBob* background key is a color representation of one episode's unique "neighborhood." Courtesy and © Nickelodeon.

pleted, the track reader listens to the audio track and transcribes the dialogue onto the exposure sheets, leaving appropriate space where there is no dialogue. Exposure sheets are 11" X 17" sheets of paper that are pre-printed with a grid and masthead. The masthead usually denotes the name of the overall series and has blank spaces to include information such as production number, scene number and footage count per page. Each horizontal line on the grid of the exposure sheet represents one frame of film. The vertical lines create divisions to be used for dialogue, camera directions, cel levels of animation and other information that the overseas production crew will need. When the track reader returns the sheets, the director writes directions for the animators. These instructions describe the type, rate and speed of character actions and mouth shapes for dialogue, movement of props and special effects and all camera instructions scene by scene. Once the sheets are completed, a pre-production checker and the director have a final review of the sheets and storyboard of the episode to catch any footage errors, lip-assignment omissions, etc. on the sheets. Any adjustments needed are made and the checker creates lead sheets (a list, scene by scene,

briefly describing the action and indicating a footage count of the episode). The show is shipped overseas for layout, animation, color and camera. Transfer and track reading takes approximately 2 days. Sheet timing is usually scheduled for two weeks. Pre-production checking typically takes one week for a half-hour show.

Final Designs and Color

While the episode is going through the timing process, final designs and keying for color are being completed by other departments. The slugged storyboard or final animatic board is reviewed by the design artists and the director and final designs are determined. The final character, props, effects and key background layout references are collected, logged and labeled. A list of all designs is generated for each episode. This list is included when the material for the show is shipped overseas. Background layouts typically take one to one and a half weeks, depending on the number of layouts required for the episode. 10 to 15 background layouts is a typical amount. Character, prop and efx designs are typically scheduled for one week. Again, the nature of the episode determines how much time is actually needed. Shows in a series that are background or design heavy can take

up to two weeks to complete.

Once the background layouts for the episode are completed, the director goes through them and chooses the ones that need to be painted as key color reference for the overseas studio. Six to 12 keys will typically require painting. These backgrounds may be painted traditionally or digitally. Key backgrounds become color reference, too for the color key artist to use in color styling the characters, props and efx. For color key, the final model pack drawings are copied, cleaned-up and pasted onto masthead sheets either by hand or by scanning in the drawings and pasting them up digitally. The color stylist works with the director to determine which models require keying. Any new characters, props or fx need to be keyed, as well as any changes to stock designs that effect color, such as the main characters in a night palette. The color stylist also completes color lead sheets (a scene by scene description of color elements in each scene) for overseas reference. Completed color material is copied before shipment overseas. A few copies are kept on file for home studio reference. The original material and several copies are shipped to the overseas studio to use as color reference in the background and ink and paint depart-

ments as well as layout and animation departments. Background painting is typically scheduled for two weeks. Color Key is typically scheduled for one week. Background painting and Color Key can require more time if the episode has a large number of designs to key, or if the episode requires several color palettes for the same designs.

Nickelodeon Animation had several series that started out as traditional ink and paint for color key and production. "Hey Arnold!, Cat Dog, Angry Beavers and SpongeBob all made second or third season changes into digital ink and paint," says VP and general manager, Mark Taylor. "This made an impact on the post costs later." Former *SpongeBob* line producer Donna Castricone concurs, "The shift to digital ink and paint allowed us to reduce the amount of time spent in telecine sessions in post, so the costs were impacted significantly."

Copies are also made of all black and white pre-production material being shipped overseas. This is for reference should questions arise, but also as a precaution against anything unforeseen happening to the material during ship-

ment or if it gets lost at the receiving studio.

Pre-production for CGI

"Currently, CGI is like the wild west days of animation. There are so many trying to get involved and so many options to choose from," says Sue Shakespeare, president of Creative Capers Entertainment. CGI is in a constant state of growth and change as hardware and software becomes more and more animation friendly.

CGI Designs and Storyboards

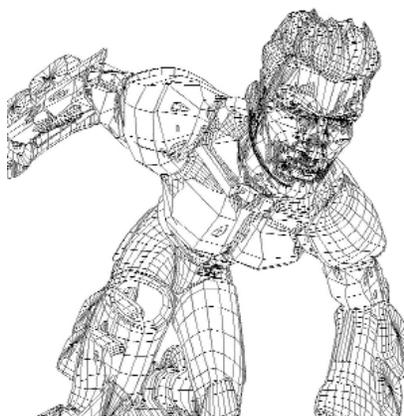
3D CGI pre-production follows a similar pattern as traditional animation in creating a blueprint for all other departments within the studio to use as reference. Once an approved script is final, the design process begins. CGI differs in that the models for the show are constructed in the computer as skeletons or wire frame forms. Designers may use model sheets (animating elements drawn on paper, showing turns and expressions) as their reference material or a clay sculpture may be designed and used as reference. The model's wire frame is perceived as a 3D object. The model is tested by the designer to make

sure it moves as desired. Once the model is approved by the director, it moves into the next stage of adding a surface texture to the wire frame. Texture includes skin, hair, clothing, chrome, wood-grain, etc., whatever covering is desired.



Using gray scale helps perfect the lighting of a character. Courtesy and © Mainframe Entertainment.

Some CGI facilities generate traditional storyboards while others go into semi-production mode and create storyboards digitally using stock set-ups. George Maistri, who set up the CG series *South Park* and is now producing *Karen & Kirby* for Kid's WB! states, "As the storyboards are completed and the animatic created, we set up the characters in the scene and take a still. This gives a layout of the scene to begin animating from." Mainframe Entertainment, for 8 years has produced several CG television series, including *Reboot*, *War Planets* and more recently, *Action Man* for Fox. They're also producing two videos for Cartoon Network. Kim Dent-Wilder, Mainframe's director of animation, says that they regularly use digital set-ups rather than complete storyboarding: "It really depends on the needs of the particular episode. Every show is different. We'll sometimes do set-ups



Rough concept sketches of the Action Man character are turned into a detailed wireframe model once the character's design is final. Courtesy and © Mainframe Entertainment.

on the AVID using a combination of elements pulled from the show's library and adding digital storyboard set-ups only for those scenes that require them. If needed, we also do any shooting of motion capture during this time."

While the process of setting up the cast, props and efx for a new series takes a long time (4 to 6 months) the payoff is worth it. Sue Shakespeare of Creative Capers stresses that this step is critical, "Slowing down here and getting it right will expedite the entire process." Once the characters, props and efx are established, 3D CGI pre-production can take as little as 5 to 6 weeks per episode. However, if this stage is rushed, the entire schedule is sorely impacted by delays caused by problems arising out of design flaws that surface once animation begins.

Production

The production stage in traditional animation took the shows from animation, assist, color and through camera. Larry Huber, television animation producer, states, "The biggest advantage was having everyone you needed to communicate with right at hand. If you were a layout artist with a question regarding a character's start and end poses, or you were an animator and had an idea that differed from the storyboard, but you thought would be funnier, your director was right there on the premises." The show was handed out (the pre-production elements given to the various departments that needed them for reference.) The director had handout meetings with the animation supervisor and the crew. Animators completed their assigned sequences and made notes on the exposure

sheets. Animation assistants followed up on the animated scenes as they were approved. The cleaned-up animation went to the color department where each scene's cels were painted. Once through final checking, scenes were forwarded to the camera department.

For most traditionally animated television series today, the actual animation production takes place at an overseas studio. The production category for "traditional" animation covers the pre-production stage of layout (sometimes called character layout or production layout.) The production stages covered are animation, animation assist or in-betweening, background paint, ink and paint (usually digital these days) and camera (or rendering and compositing with digitally painted shows.)

Once overseas, the storyboard and lead sheets are sent out for translation into the language of the overseas studio's country. The pre-production package material is reviewed by the episode's animation director and various department heads at a hand out meeting for the episode. The animation director for the episode goes through the storyboard with the animators and assigns sequences for layout. Layouts are completed for each scene. During layout, the action for each scene is broken down into its basic components. All characters, background elements and any props or efx in the scene are included. The animator draws the rough key poses and the rough background on animation paper. All elements within the scene are registered to the background. As the layouts are complete, and the final background designs are added, the



The hardware render of the same character. Courtesy and © Mainframe Entertainment.

director goes through the scenes and approves the animator's work moving forward with animation. The animator then animates the scenes using the exposure sheets as reference for timing. The animator also adds any pertinent animation notes to the sheets for color and shooting reference down the line. Once scenes of the rough animation are approved, animation assistants finalize animation before it moves on for color.

If a traditional show still uses a film format, the painted backgrounds and the painted animation cels are shot onto 35mm film. The positive and the negative film elements are shipped to the home studio for retakes. Retakes and show assembly during the post process will be handled with this format in mind. Today, the vast majority of traditional shows have the final color done with a 2D digital system. After final rendering and compositing, the show is outputted to a video format (Digi Beta for example) and shipped to the home studio for retakes. A typical overseas schedule is thirteen weeks. This schedule can be longer if the show is design or action heavy.

CG Production

3D television animation

varies in execution. Creative Capers' directors, Terry Shakespeare and David Molina go over the wire frame mesh created by the modelers to give the characters greater refinement. Sue Shakespeare comments, "It is the care taken with these subtleties that produces the highest quality animation. We want to be known for great, great character animation...the best character animation in 3D." She also says that CG tends to be more compartmentalized as far as learning to use the tools. "Creative Capers' animators (who come from a traditional animation background) specialize in using the animation tools on the computer, the designers specialize in the tools for design. The programs are so complex and this seems to work best." Creative Capers' directors meet regularly with the animators and use exposure sheets as reference tools for animation.

Mainframe does not use exposure sheets, but close communication between the director and the animators is key. Once the show has the digital, animatic storyboard completed on the AVID, and all modeling and lighting are established, the animation can begin, using the digital storyboard as a reference. Asked if motion capture was a primary element in the animation for the show, Dent-Wilder explained, "Motion capture is used at the director's discretion. When mo-cap is chosen, it's usually for a humanoid character and for actions like fight sequences that would take longer for the animator to do. In some cases the client may request motion capture." Throughout the process, the animators are in frequent contact with the directors as they work.

CG production schedules ranged from 8-10 weeks to 16

weeks, depending on the complexity of the show. "South Park," says Maistri, "was greenlit in July of '99 and began airing in September of '99. Once the models were built and approved, we could turn around shows in about 4 weeks, storyboard to final tape." The reuse factor played a part in this. "We also had about 200 various expressions to pull from in the show library. With *Karen & Kirby*, we're completing about 3 minutes per week with 4 animators, much faster than with traditional animation."



The final render of Action Man, pulling lighting and all the other elements together. Courtesy and © Mainframe Entertainment.

Post Production

A show that uses 35mm film format requires equipment, processing and personnel that is experienced with elements not used by most "traditional shows" these days. Equipment would include a flatbed or a moviola, and a film splicer for negative cutting. Processes would include negative processing, best light transfers and color correction. Personnel, an editor trained to work with these elements.

Today, after animation is complete, most "traditional shows" are processed digitally by the overseas studio. The overseas studio

delivers a Take 1 and all retakes on a video format that can be transferred and fed directly into the digital editing system. Generally, all off-line assembly, audio synching and editing in of retakes is all done on an AVID editing system with an editor.

On receipt of the Take 1, Take 2 retakes are called. The overseas studio is given 2 weeks to complete and return the retakes. On receipt of Take 2, Take 3 retakes are called. These are given a one week turn around time, as are any other subsequent retakes.

The episode is cut to length (broadcast length) usually no later than the receipt of Take 3 retakes. Music is spotted once the show is cut to length. The director and the composer review the show and discuss the musical needs of the episode. Sfx are spotted only once all animation-related retakes are approved and dropped into the show. A music preview is held approximately one week before the audio mix. Sfx are previewed a day or two before the audio mix. At the audio mix (dubbing) session, the dialogue, music and sfx levels are adjusted and finalized and a final audio track created.

The picture for the episode is edited with sub-main (episode) titles and assembled at a video post house for final picture approval. The final picture is then "married to" the final audio track. Once approved by the director and the "powers that be," the episode is assembled, the series main title, end credits, bumpers and/or interstitials and blacks for station breaks for the half hour are laid in. Dubs of the half-hour are created and forwarded for broadcast.

A typical post production schedule is six weeks, starting with

the arrival of the Take 1 through completion of the individual episode's final onlining. With shows that contain more than one episode in the half-hour, the actual delivery will depend upon the completion of the other shows to be included in the broadcast half-hour.

CG Post Production

Post at Mainframe is handled in a fashion reminiscent of the Leica reels used for feature animation. Dent-Wilder explains, "We edit as we go through production. We start with the animatic and scenes are replaced as production proceeds. Once the picture is locked, we spend approximately 3 weeks on music and sfx."

Creative Capers completes post on its series about every other week. Sue Shakespeare states, "Using CG we have a lot less retakes. Once your models are established in the system, you're always on-model." They only use animatics for primetime shows. Once the shows are locked post is completed in about 3-4 weeks.

Comparisons of Traditional Series Production and CG

In total the production schedule for a typical, Saturday morning, traditionally animated show is approximately twelve weeks for pre-production, thirteen for overseas production and six weeks for post production. This schedule also is effected by how much "library" material the series has. A first season show has very few "library" elements to pull from and therefore in pre-production, artwork may require more time. In post, music and sfx may require more time until a small library of audio material is built up for the show. A series' ability to meet a

schedule also depends on other factors. Artists, directors and other staffers get sick or injured. Equipment fails both domestically and overseas.

For a CG series the total time for pre-production through post can be very similar to traditional schedules. They can be significantly less and considerably more. Andre Clavel is a director familiar with both traditional and CG production processes: "It helps tremendously if the animators on CG projects have training in traditional animation. It streamlines communication between the director and the animator." The deciding factors would appear to include the type of animation involved and the amount of planning done at the front end. Sue Shakespeare comments, "Planning is the key to this. You can jump in, then once into it find that it's fraught with complexities way beyond what you had in mind. But plan it and the benefits are worth it. What's great about CG is that it lets us do things that we never thought feasible in 2D, traditional animation. It's so creatively stimulating."

The number of programs available is mind boggling. 3D Studio Max, Alias Wavefront, Maya, Discreet, Softimage and Aftereffects were the programs that have wide usage, with most CG studios using more than one. What was striking to me in researching CGI for this article is the number of approaches to getting a show made as compared to traditional animation, where basically studio to studio, very similar procedures for television production are the norm. The question arises as to why so many CG studios seem to use primarily 3D software, even for 2D projects. The

answer seems to be related to the more aggressive advances made in 3D applications used so heavily in the advertising and logo world. Buying computer equipment and programs comes at a dear cost and choices have to be made. However, 2D programs are closing the gap quickly and the faster rendering time is a definite plus.

Schedules and Budgets

An animation production schedule and budget is always a rather organic thing, each stage choreographed with the others in mind. It's always in a state of flux whether done "traditionally" or as a total CGI creation. Budgets for animated shows cover a tremendous range, varying according to the style of animation required and the complexity of the action. A series with very simple animation can cost as little as \$250K per half-hour to produce. The costs go up from there to \$500K and above. Asked to comment on the overall cost of animated productions, Larry Huber replied, "The primary factor in the cost per half-hour is the total number of episodes ordered for the season. Smaller orders are more expensive. When the cost of producing a show can be amortized over 26 half-hours, or even 13 half-hours, the costs are significantly reduced."

Differences between traditional and CGI were not in the amounts, but in the time spent in the various areas of production. CG spends a large portion of time in pre-production and animation production. However, the time spent developing the models and getting any bugs out of the animation before starting production is time and money well spent to get the results you desire. David

Palmer, VP of marketing for Sony Pictures says, "Our traditional shows and our CG shows are very close in cost to produce. The show schedules are also about the same."

The traditional animation folks felt that production was their heaviest hit, followed closely by post. Pre-production cost least.

The Future

Is CG animation the future for TV series? Are traditional TV animation systems doomed to go the way of the dinosaur? Both extremes of thought ignore the creative core of animated filmmaking. Nickelodeon's Taylor says,

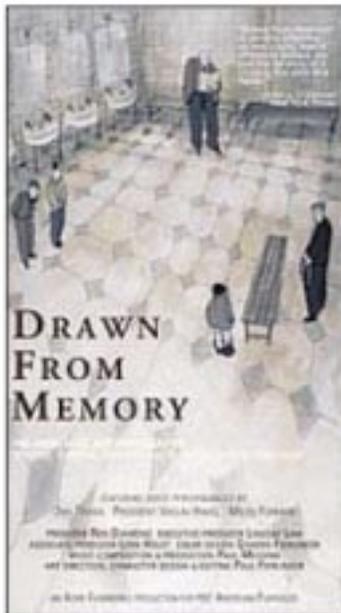
"Animation will never go away. It may be refined as digital applications impact it." He goes on, "CGI presents an exciting and different look. Still, the artists and their creativity are the main ingredients of animation production. Whether it's traditional or CGI, the tools used should match the creative spirit of the show."

Sylvia Edwards is a former school teacher who made a career leap into animation eight years ago.

She has worked at Hanna-Barbera Cartoons, HBO Animation and Nickelodeon. Edwards has served as a production manager on a number of animated TV series, including: What a Cartoon!, Dexter's Laboratory, Cow & Chicken, Oh Yeah! Cartoons, ChalkZone and Dora the Explorer.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an e-mail to editor@awn.com.

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Financing Animated Feature Films in Europe

by Steven Walsh



The atrium in the fx. Center in Potsdam-Babelsberg, Germany, site of the third annual Cartoon Movie. Photo courtesy of Cartoon.

For three days in the middle of March hundreds of would-be feature producers from all over Europe gathered in Potsdam, Germany to pitch their projects to a motley collection of theatrical distributors, TV executives, bankers, investors and sales agents from across Europe.

Cartoon's Very Real Impact

The third annual Cartoon Movie forum is the brainchild of Corinne Jenart and Marc Vandeweyer, who have been running the European Media pro-



Cut outs exhibiting the animation features at the fx. Center. Photo courtesy of Cartoon.

gramme's animation outfit, Cartoon, for the last 12 years. It is based on the Cartoon Forum, a get-together of animation TV producers, which has been held every year with increasing success since 1990.

When the original Cartoon Forum was set up, many in the industry thought it was a waste of time. 'None of the important buyers would attend, even if their expenses were paid, so why bother?' they said. Well, the doubters were proved wrong — a thousand times wrong — and today the Cartoon Forum, held every September, is an event that anyone who's anyone in the European TV animation industry *cannot* possibly afford to miss.



Attendees view films in the screening lounges set up inside the atrium area. Photo courtesy of Cartoon.

Largely as a result of Cartoon's efforts, there is today a flourishing animation production industry in Europe, but until very recently that production was almost exclusively made up of TV series and the odd commercial. Feature films were the exclusive

preserve of Disney and, in the last few years, the other U.S. majors.

That is no doubt still the view of the situation from sunny Hollywood, because with the exception of the special case *Chicken Run* from Aardman Animations, European-made animated features simply don't make it in the U.S. market. The fact that several "Made in Europe" movies have made big money in Europe hasn't yet figured on American radar-screens.



Cartoon Movie gives European production firms the chance to meet and exchange ideas. Photo courtesy of Cartoon.

The root cause of the problem is that the animated features that get made in Europe have tiny production budgets and get virtually no promotion. Production budgets rarely exceed US\$10,000,000 and are often less than \$5,000,000; promotional budgets are usually ZERO. So when they do get made, usually after years of struggle to get together a barely adequate budget, they often fail to get an audience in the English-speaking world, even if a few of them do really well in their home market.

A Thousand Doors

The get-together in Potsdam is an attempt to do something about this by bringing together producers and potential distributors. The three-day event



Central to the event is the daily project presentations introducing trailers of the films to all participants to encourage them to take part in the producer's business sessions. Photo courtesy of Cartoon.

consists of pitch sessions for pre-selected projects, a chance to hold further discussions about projects pitched last year and a whole slew of one on one meetings.

For U.S. producers to get an animated feature off the ground, there are a few doors to knock on, all of them well known and most of them in the business of distributing theatrical movies. For European producers, as the motley collection of so called financiers attending the Cartoon Movie Forum shows, there are hundreds of doors to knock on. Europe remains a very fragmented market. There is no such thing as a pan-European deal and, yet, to finance a feature, a producer needs to access funds from several territories.

Animated features made in Europe are a fairly recent commodity and theatrical distributors are only just beginning to cotton on to this. Those who have, tend to be small, not-very-well-financed companies that aren't in a position to commit several years in advance to substantial m.g.'s (minimum guarantees).

Where then can a European producer turn to get his

animated feature financed? From a range of sources including video distributors, TV stations, public funding bodies and investment funds. The money's there, but getting it is far from simple, and getting enough of it by American standards is well-nigh impossible.

Of the 61 projects due to be presented in Potsdam, maybe five will actually get made, and of those, two or three may get proper releases outside their home territory. If you think that's depressing, think that the situation today is a whole lot brighter than it's ever been before!



Recipients of the first Cartoon Movie Tributes, which acknowledge individuals, partners or companies promoting the economic development of feature length animated films. Photo courtesy of Cartoon.

Different Answers to Funding

The European Union may

wish it otherwise, but the sad fact is that there is no such thing as a European producer. When it comes to financing films in Europe, your nationality, and the country you work in, is what counts. So there are in fact 15 different answers — as many answers as there are countries in the Union — to the question, 'How does a producer from the European Union get his or her movie financed?'

In Holland, Luxembourg and Ireland there are tax breaks; in Austria, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Denmark, Sweden and Finland there are various kinds of public funding. It would be very boring if I attempted to run through the complete list, but you will see just how varied the picture is if you read where a producer can find funding in the big three territories — Germany, France and the U.K.

If you're a German producer you probably have the best chance of financing your animated feature, provided it's based on a well-known German property like *Werner* or *Little Asshole* (both of which made a lot of money at the German box office but were never sold abroad). The success of such movies means that distributors like Neue Constantin and Kinowelt will back other such projects, as will German broadcasters, regional subsidy funds and even private investors. If the project isn't based on a classic German property, then it's a whole lot more difficult to get a commitment from a theatrical distributor, and therefore to get any kind of backing. For the right project it's probably possible to raise between \$4 and \$8 million out of Germany alone, but only if you're a German producer.

In France, most of the

money's always going to come from television, because French broadcasters, whether state-owned or private, have to devote a certain percentage of their annual budgets to French productions, and in particular to backing French films. The enormous success of Michel Ocelot's *Kirikou* two years ago has made a few French distributors much keener on animated features than they used to be, and there are several who are prepared to back a feature with a financial commitment even if they can't pre-buy all rights. TF 1 Video, now the country's leading sell-through label, will also back movies. Finally, of course, French producers can get various forms of subsidy from the Centre National du Cinéma (CNC), all of which helps. But unless a movie has a really small budget (\$3.5 million maximum) French producers need to look abroad for some of their money.

In the U.K. where there is no subsidy system and the theatrical market is considered to be really difficult, money for features is very tough to find. In the last couple of years Pathé, Icon and Miracle Communications have released animated movies, but



La Gabbianella, an Italian production directed by Enzo D'Alò, cost approximately \$5,000,000. © Lanterna Magica.



TEVA pitching their current project. Photo courtesy of Cartoon.



Werner, a character who originated in comic books by Brösel (Rötger Feldmann), succeeds on the big screen with three animated features already under his belt. © Brösel/Achterbahn AG.

with the exception of Pathé's *Chicken Run*, not much money has changed hands.

U.K. producers therefore have to rely on the Film Council, the National Lottery and, if they're lucky, a TV pre-buy. There is still a certain prejudice about animated films, just as there is about animated series. 'Oh, they're for children, so we don't have a proper budget for them,' is what you'll hear people say. Until a few European animated films make money at the box office, that's going to be the story. In the meantime Disney and

DreamWorks reign supreme.

The "C" Word

Supposing, then, that a producer has a project, which is going to cost \$15 million. Even if he's German he'll be hard put to raise as much as half of that. If he's British or French, he may be able to scrape together a quarter from his home territory.

How then can a deficit be funded? Well, the name of the game is co-production. By sharing the production between studios in several European countries, funds



A. Film's *Help! I'm a Fish* opened in its home country at the end of September holding the top spot for two weeks and continues to do well with recent releases in France and Germany. Courtesy of Terraglyph Productions. © 2000 Help! I'm a Fish.™

can be accessed from several territories because in each one the production will be considered 'national.' This means that even if only 20% of the work is done in the U.K., as long as the production is an official co-production with the U.K., it will be considered 100% British. It will therefore qualify for a tax break as well as, perhaps, attracting funds from the Film Council or a TV station provided enough work is done in the U.K. to satisfy the requirements of the authorities.

Co-productions are necessarily more complicated, and often more expensive than straight, national productions, but for the moment European producers don't really have much choice. They can either settle for tiny budgets and produce in their own countries, or they can be more ambitious and share the work with one or more producers from different countries. A few may be able to sell their proj-

ect to a U.S. major like Aardman Animations did with *Chicken Run*, but I would always advise against counting on such a sale.

To date the most successful European animated movies are those which are done on very small budgets. *Kirikou* in France, *La Gabbianella* in Italy and *Werner* in Germany all had tiny budgets by U.S. standards, but all made a lot of money at their national box offices. That doesn't mean that European producers have to settle for doing low budget productions, but it does mean that, until a pan-European source of funding comes along, it's going to be a lot easier for them to set their sights low and believe that, 'Small is beautiful.'

Making animated features in Europe is still an embryonic industry and will take a bit of time, a few years at most, before all of this changes. In the meantime look out for movies like A-Film's

Help! I'm a Fish and Illuminated's *Christmas Carol*. They may not cost \$60 million to make and their distributors may not spend huge sums on promoting them, but they will be every bit as good as many of the movies produced in North America.

Steve Walsh has produced animated and live-action television and feature films. He began in TV journalism, then started making documentary and factual programming, producing a number of award-winning documentaries. From there he joined Goldcrest Films and Television as head of co-production and marketing. Two years later he became head of production at London-based Consolidated Productions. In 1986 he set up Steve Walsh Productions to develop, finance and produce for himself. Successful productions include animated feature The Princess and Goblin and a collection of four TV movies for France's Canal+ and Canada's Astral based on works by Mary Higgins Clark. In 1991 Walsh set up and ran EVA Entertainment, the financing and distribution arm of the first CARTOON-sponsored studio grouping, as well as producing and co-producing some 15 productions. His most ambitious animated project to date, the feature film A Monkey's Tale, was completed in 1999. Walsh was also executive producer of David Bailey's first theatrical feature The Intruder, completed in late 1999. He is currently producing three animated series.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an e-mail to editor@awn.com.

Flash's Strong Suits: Quick, Cheap and Easy Production

by James Dalby



Adobe Illustrator and Macromedia Freehand, two of the leading vector graphics creation software for print and the Web. © Adobe Systems and © Macromedia.

Go to any Web online forum and ask how much it would cost to create a piece of online, Flash animated content and you'll receive a barrage of different answers. You may get a high priced quote; probably from an expert Flash designer whose intent is to keep his pool of clients lucrative. You may receive a low quote; most likely from an inexperienced Flash artist who's willing to do anything to pay the rent. Should you trust either? With what current options do you have to compare?

What Has Animation Cost Before?

So far, traditionally animated productions have been fooling producers and studios into thinking that any animated project will cost an arm and a leg and have to undergo years of development. A studio that develops traditionally animated productions usually has a wide variety of artists on staff; each artist is a part of a separate team of character designers, layout designers, in-between animators, clean-up crews, painters and background artists to name just a

few categories.

How much would it cost to house these artists under a single studio? How many artists do you have? How much is each paid? How much money do you spend on supplies, animation equipment and lost time? The bills add up and a budget can be most unforgiving.

How Does Flash Keep Costs So Low?

Flash animation offers its own way of cutting out the middlemen, saving you a ton of money and shortening production time to a fraction of its original length.

Due to the program's built-in vector design tools, artwork can be drawn directly into the project file or imported from many popular design applications (i.e. Adobe Illustrator, Macromedia Freehand). The artwork is then placed as a symbol into an indexed library, waiting to be re-used again and again to minimize file size. In turn, the tasks of line testing, cleanup, tracing and painting are quickly condensed into the work of a single artist.

Hours of cumbersome lip-syncing and animated loops are easily conquered using a feature in Flash known as "movieclips." Movieclips treat dialogue-driven animation and redundant movement as collective pieces of artwork, which can be edited and assembled with any other symbol in the project's library.

Using an immense library of

body parts, props, lighting effects and background artwork, a professional Flash artist can produce animation at breakneck speed. By either using the computer's own processor to "tween" the animation, or by assembling each frame on its own, a 10 second chunk of completed work could theoretically be done in a day. Keep in mind that this is the work of one Flash animator, not a team of expensive, traditional artists.

What Sort of Animation Is Flash Best Suited For?

Flash animation is generally geared toward an audience of Internet users, meaning that each animated episode should be limited to a length of 5 minutes or less as well as restricting the complexity of the animation itself. The popularity of Flash animation stems from its ability to give engaging animated storytelling at such small file sizes.

If longer, larger-scaled productions are what you hope to accomplish, Flash also has the ability to export its animation into a digital video format (i.e. QuickTime MOV, Windows AVI). This format can then be used with video editing software such as Adobe Premiere, Adobe After Effects, AVID and iMovie. Since Flash artwork is vector based, you can resize your animation without losing any quality whatsoever.

Flash can incorporate interactivity into your animation, giving developers the ability to design engaging Websites, online games and online presentations.

Reality Check

Bear in mind that Flash is intended for good ol' fashioned cel animation. Its main purpose is to create animation more specifi-

cally for the Web. In some aspects, Flash could be used to create independent or feature length animation, but its limited features make it pale in comparison to more traditional video production programs such as Adobe Premiere and AfterEffects.

Incorporating 3D art or CGI animation into Flash is frustrating, if not nearly impossible. Flash is incapable of producing visual effects such as motion, gaussian and radial blurs, as well as the other effects more traditional programs have built the industry on.

How Much Does It Cost To Create A Flash Animated Production?

High-quality Flash content will usually take 3 weeks of hard work and criticism until a final draft is reached. The length of time can be shortened immensely with strong team infrastructure and determination. Should the animation be divided into a series of short Flash episodes, production time would drop even more.

A Flash production team should consist of the following people:



Production Manager

The production manager has the responsibility of managing the team, directing the animation and tending to the needs of the other team members. Production manager may also have to double as the Human Resources and/or Public Relations manager. Average Salary: \$35,000/yr - \$+50,000/yr. Negotiable, depending upon their previous experience in management.

Flash Artists/ Animators

Two artists are recommended for each online production, both specializing in animation, artwork and background design. Both would be wise to have experience in layout design and storyboarding. Average Salary: \$35,000/yr - \$+60,000/yr. Extremely negotiable, depending upon their portfolio, artistic talent, flexibility with other design programs (i.e. Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, Macromedia Freehand), overall efficiency, familiarity with the Web, 3D design skills, knowledge of Flash ActionScript programming and traditional animation. Bear in mind that most Flash artists are willing to work as freelance employees.



Audio Specialist

The audio specialist focuses their effort in recording dialogue, acquiring or manufacturing sound effects and music production. It is wise for the audio specialist to have a working knowledge of Macromedia Flash. Average Salary: \$35,000 - \$+50,000/yr. Negotiable, depending on their musical talent, knowledge of audio editing software (i.e. Pro Tools, Sound Forge) and audio sequencing software (i.e. Cakewalk, Cubase), personal efficiency, flexibility with different styles of music, and the technical limitations of their studio.

Web Master/Web Designer

The Web master focuses on designing and maintaining the Website that hosts the Flash

animated production(s). The Web master should also have a working knowledge of network administration to support the company's intranet and internal server operation. Average Salary: \$+40,000/yr - \$+80,000/yr. Negotiable, depending on their knowledge in Web design, HTML, JavaScript, CGI scripting, ASP, PHP, ASL, XML, Macro-media Generator, DHTML and database programming.



Before becoming a senior animator at AtomFilms, James Dalby spent a year-and-a-half as the graphics manager for The Highlander, a student newspaper at the University of California, Riverside. He attended two years of study at the University of California, Riverside but gave it up to focus his attention on work. Soon after, James spent most of his time as a freelance Flash animator for various Websites, as well as a full-time animator at Pixelwave Corporation.

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Why Does It Take Ten Years!?!?

by Evan Backes

Act I | Scene I

Brilliant animated feature film idea composed. The studio's buzzing, the chairman wants to see some designs, and the top, top talent is hired at great expense.

Act I | Scene II

Concept drawings are finished. The studio decides what type of animation will be both profitable at the box office and what will ultimately cut costs in the long run. Voice actors – and mega stars — are called up.

Act II | Scene I

The chairman sees the rough work and decides it's rubbish, asks the production team to come up with a "better solution."

Act II | Scene II

The lead creative talent becomes frustrated and leaves for a different project. Production is shut down for 5 months. The studio eventually decides to reassess their options according to the financial outlook.

Act II | Scene III

A new team with a "fresh attitude" is located and hired. The title of the picture is changed. The overall aesthetic of the film is thrown out for a new look, feel and sensibility. One that should have been taken all along...

Act II | Scene IV

A marketing strategy is launched to cover-up the years of mistakes.

Act III | Scene I

The film is released to mixed reviews, lackluster box office results and happy children.

Act III | Scene II

The studio plunges into pre-production on their next film. Should it be a sequel? A re-hash of an "evergreen" property?

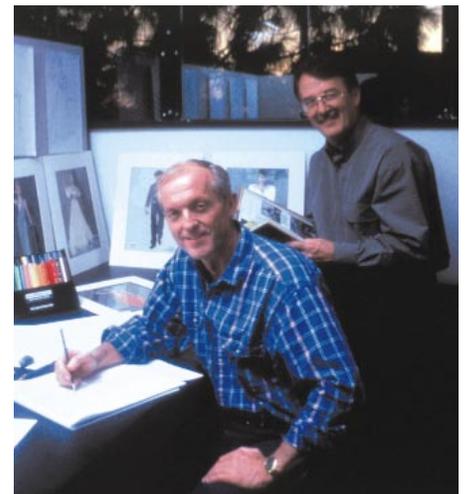
Act III | Scene III

All of us enthusiasts sit back and keep shaking our heads.

The year was 1997. *Anastasia* was about to be released and every studio big and small wanted to produce an animated film. Executives had found that animated features could be as profitable as live-action films back when *The Little Mermaid* and *The Lion King* were released, but it wasn't until the mid to late Nineties that any of these new studios stood up to the plate. On the surface it would appear that animation had finally broken the mold, a new day was born where animators could look forward to working in a prosperous environment. However, in the rush to the starting gate there have been many false starts and stops that have put a damper on the entire industry.



An 18 year-old peasant girl named Anya does not realize she is standing in front of her own portrait at the former Romanov palace. © 1997 Twentieth Century Fox. All rights reserved.



Don Bluth (seated) and Gary Goldman produced and directed *Anastasia* and later *Titan A.E.* © 1997 Twentieth Century Fox. All rights reserved.

If one were to follow the production of any animated film, the results would surprisingly act out much like a dramatic play. Why is it taking a studio five years to produce a film that could have been completed in two and a half max? Other films are being rushed to the screen like a rabbit on speed. Why does story take years – and sometimes months of production – before being re-worked and nailed down? Why are these films greenlit before this has happened? Why is animation *completed* before this happens? Can we only rely on John Lasseter, Brad Bird and Nick Park for brilliant films these days? And even if they do their best, they are at the mercy of the studio that puts together the final marketing and advertising plan. Animation has the wonderful capability to do just about anything the mind can fathom. However, when there isn't a capable script, a talented (and unfettered) crew and the studio punch behind the product, the final box office figures will show justly.

This new world of animated features has raised the stakes for studios, and along with the possibility of big wins, and losses, comes second guessing and constant tweaking. Let's uncover the history of a few animated projects. We've all seen the final results. Now, what did it take to get there?

The Emperor's New Groove

Early 1997: A new Disney feature slated for a 1999 release entitled, *Kingdom of the Sun* is in the pre-production stages. It's supposedly a sweeping South American tale based on the old fable of *The Prince and the Pauper*.

Fall 1997: The project has been greenlit. Roger Allers (co-director



The Emperor's New Groove went from a drama to a wacky, light-on-its-feet comedy.
© Disney Enterprises, Inc. All rights reserved.

of *The Lion King*) and Mark Dindal (director of *Cat's Don't Dance*) are chosen to direct the film. Brilliant animator Andreas Deja is also put on the team.

Fall 1998: After a year into the project and almost a third of the picture completed, the production studio becomes a minefield. The suits take a gander at the story reel and discover this is the worst Disney film in decades, despite the fact that it had been accepted months ago. The production is put back into development and Roger Allers leaves the project due to problems with his co-director, taking Andreas Deja with him.

February 1999: For months now the production on *Kingdom of the Sun* has been put almost to an utter halt. Disney threatens to close down production due to high costs.

Summer 1999: An entirely new script is written. Dindal is working on this project solo now. Production slowly creeps out of the woodworks, however, the executives keep the budget extremely tight. Voice actors Owen Wilson, Harvey Fierstein and Trudie Styler are thrown to the wayside; David Spade, John

Goodman and Patrick Warburton get ready for rehearsals. The new film is slated for a Fall 2000 release.

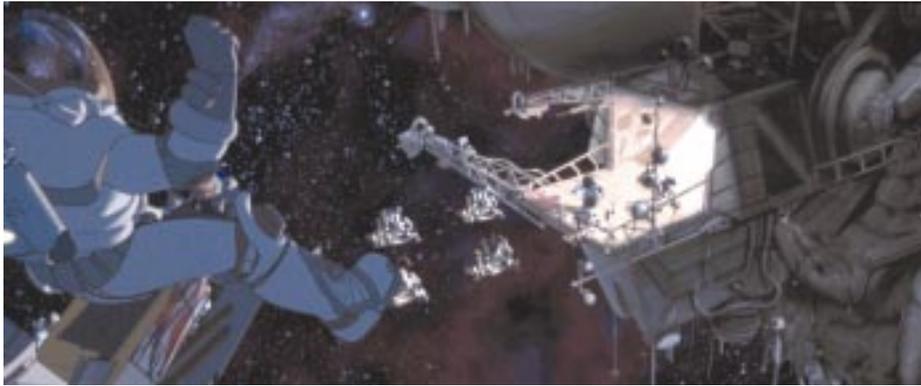
February 2000: The film's title has been changed to *The Emperor's New Groove*. Everyone gawks at the change.



Despite ominous pre-release rumors, Kuzco and Pacha's antics carried Disney's latest quite well at the box office.
© Disney Enterprises, Inc. All rights reserved.

July 2000: The trailer is released and anybody who followed the production of the film is strangely surprised. No more sweeping landscapes, no more Aztec culture, just one slapstick joke after another. The huge marketing campaign begins.

December 15, 2000: *The Emperor's New Groove* is released into theatres with a generally positive showing. With a total budget of \$100 million, the film, as of the



Fox Phoenix's swan song, *Titan A.E.* © 2000 Twentieth Century Fox. All rights reserved.

end of March, has just under \$90 million in domestic box office. Most films don't make \$90 million! This should be regarded as a hit, but strangely it isn't. The film had some great moments, but I couldn't help wonder how quickly and cost effectively Disney could have pulled this off if only they had decided on this script back in 1997.

Titan A.E.

Spring 1997: Fox's second animated film originally titled, *Planet Ice* is greenlit. Art Vitello is brought on to direct the film. All reports are that the film will contain cutting edge CGI imagery.

February 1998: Art Vitello leaves the project.

May 1998: Ten development personnel and artists involved in pre-production are given lay-off notices. Division president Chris Meledandri explains, "The film was never in production. It is still in pre-production." He adds that the studio "currently has a very small crew on the film," which is in the process of "finding out exactly how they are going to make it." Later in the month, the film, the majority of which is still being done in computer animation, is now being directed by Blue Sky|VIFX staffers Henry Anderson and Chris Wedge.

Fall 1998: Veterans Don Bluth and Gary Goldman (*An American Tail* and *Anastasia*) take over the production. The film takes a new aesthetic direction and is now being made digitally with a mix of traditional animation as opposed to CGI animation. Transferring the production from Blue Sky|VIFX to Fox's state-of-the-art Phoenix studio, most of Blue Sky's work is cut. Artists are imported to Phoenix from as far away as Ireland and the Philippines. Bluth and Goldman are given a ridiculously short nineteen-month deadline and a budget of \$55 million.

Spring 1999: Title is changed from *Planet Ice* to *Titan A.E.*

February 2000: After a little more than a year's work on the film, more than 300 of the animators who were relocated to the Arizona studios are laid off. The remaining 66 workers are later terminated when production ceases on the film. Shortly after the Arizona studio is shut down.

June 16, 2000: After meeting the grueling schedule, *Titan A.E.* is released to theatres to come in fifth place at the box office during its first weekend. Fox executives shrugged their shoulders when it came time to marketing the film. The film barely made over \$20 mil-

lion in the United States.

Shrek

Late 1996: *Shrek* is greenlit and is sent into pre-production. Kelly Ashbury and Andrew Adamson are slated to direct.

Spring 1997: A 30-second demo reel is produced by an unknown motion-capture production house and is shown to Jeffrey Katzenberg. "Disappointing" was the word he used. A skeleton crew is left to produce another demo reel and dozens of animation houses are scouted for the next six months.



All eyes will definitely be on this trio May 18, 2001 when *Shrek* opens across the U.S.™ and © 2001 PDI/DreamWorks.

Fall 1997: Katzenberg ultimately decides to switch production over to Pacific Data Images, which is in the midst of working on *Antz*.

Winter 1997: The film seems to hit rock bottom when Chris Farley — the voice actor for the main character — suddenly dies at the age of 33. Mike Myers is later cast to fill in for Farley.

Spring 1998: Most of the script is retooled and for the most part, production is back in the storyboard phase. Janeane Garafolo is replaced by Cameron Diaz as the leading voice actress. John Garbett steps down as the film's producer to be replaced by Aron

Warner (Antz). A summer 2000 release is scheduled.

Fall 1998: Co-director Kelly Ashbury is transferred to direct DreamWorks' follow-up animated film *Spirit*, and is replaced by Victoria Jensen (*Ferngully: The Last Rainforest*).

Fall 2000: After almost three years, the first trailer is presented to the public. It is now obvious that the production team wouldn't be hitting their mid-2000 deadline.

Spring 2001: Now we're all waiting for the big May 2001 release date and there's been no sign of any marketing campaigns beyond the occasional trailer and movie poster...time will tell...

Hopefully, the industry's commitment to animated features will survive these growing pains, and from these setbacks and victories, the process of animation will survive the fact that it became



Many in the animation community hope *Shrek's* love story of an ogre and a princess can re-ignite the ailing animated feature film market. ™ and © 2001 PDI/DreamWorks.

Hollywood's latest craze. The above films, I suppose, should consider themselves lucky as they have managed to see the light of day, unlike Warner Bros.' *The Incredible Mr. Limpet* and Universal/ILM's *The Animated Frankenstein Project*. The last few years have been an incredible learning experience, not necessarily for the artists creating the films, but everyone else surrounding the process. Apparently, our party isn't

one that is easy to join.

Evan Backes, the creator of the late Stay Tooned (www.stay-tooned.com), is now pursuing an interest with graphic design at Avant Guardian (www.avant-guardian.com).

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an e-mail to editor@awn.com.

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Glenn Vilppu's drawing techniques manual and video tapes, used worldwide as course material for animation students.



Gaming: A Similar Process For A Different End Result

by Jacquie Kubin

The video game industry is very different from Hollywood. Yet in many ways, while they are two very different mediums, with different demands and dollars, the development of a video game compares with the production of a movie. From the consumer viewpoint, video games provide interactive entertainment, while the theatrical or television movie attracts a passive viewer. While movie watchers accept the latest horror or love genre release, video gamers are always anticipating the next big thing — be it the newest console or game. However, while each medium attracts a different viewer, the video game player and home movie watcher are often one and the same. Plus, individuals who stay home on Saturday night, instead of heading for the



Steve Ackrich, vice president of development for Infogrames.

arcade or the movie theater, will most likely play a game or two and watch a feature film.

**“Gaming is at an explosion point in three areas — animation, artificial intelligence and physics.”
— Steve Ackrich**

New Challenges for Video Game Developers

As the line separating video game players and movie watchers erodes, so does the gamers as “adolescent males” stereotype. Today’s gamers include families, individuals of all ages, males and females. This widening group demands more than just first person shooter action, such as was found in *Doom*. They want to have interactive stories or movies, if you will, told in a three-dimensional environment that are realistic to this world.

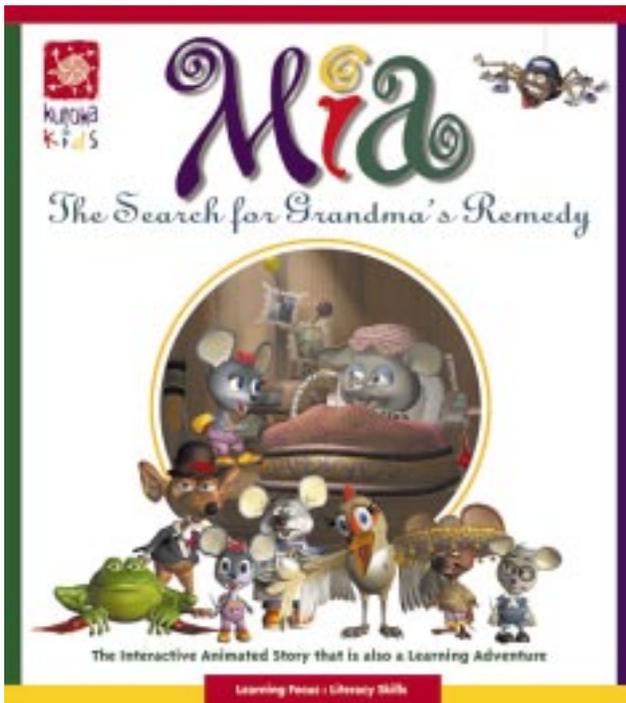
“Gaming is at an explosion point in three areas — animation, artificial intelligence and physics,” says Steve Ackrich, VP of development for Infogrames Entertainment, Inc. “Games are requiring a lot more movie-like animation, which means that in a production team of 20-25 people, creating a two to three million dollar prod-

uct, we may need up to four traditional animators to create sequences that take a character from a standing stance, to a roll, to a unique crouch that appears only when they are landing on the edge of a stair or cliff. Artificial intelligence relates to the story and the characters’ reactions. Physics becomes important because when you drop something into the environment, say a rock into water, the player demands that the game responds properly.”

“There is an important difference between making movies and making games,” explains Richard Vincent, founder and president of Kutoka Interactive from his Montreal studio. “With games, each year the technology changes and so what you can do with the game has changed. You now have more power and can include more polygons, and that means more money. The more sophisticated the game, the more money. The customer wants the game to have more features, and so to be competitive it is a ‘must.’ So unlike the film and TV business we cannot rest on our laurels. We are only as good as our newest game, which has to be better than any-



Richard Vincent, founder and president of Kutoka Interactive, with gaming star, Mia.



Kutoka Kids is no stranger to quality children's fare. Their first CGI PC titles feature the character Mia, who is coming to TV.
© Kutoka Interactive.

thing we, or anyone else, has done before. This is incredibly challenging...but I love it."

Expanding the Production Arena

Kutoka began game development life as a third party developer working with partners such as Fisher Price, Corel Corporation and Hoffman & Associates in 1995. A desire to make an original impact on the edutainment software market for children, the company launched its first CGI PC title, *Mia: The Search for Grandma's Remedy* in 1999, following up in 2000 with *Mia 2: Romaine's New Hat*. In order to keep up with present entertainment demands the company has begun to build an in-house animation studio that is working on the development of a 46-minute television special based on the character. The group, which is pursuing a U.S. broadcaster, already has Christmas 2002 distribution agreements with broadcasters in France, Korea and Canada. "For us, the cost to devel-

op the 46-minute television special is equal to creating the game," explains Vincent. "Comparatively, episodic television is much more expensive [than a feature] in that it has larger creative teams and overhead as opposed to a smaller team over a longer period. Although it will not bring in as much in terms of profit, we think this is a better recipe for quality."

Headquartered in Lyon, France and New York, NY, worldwide interactive entertainment publisher, Infogrames Entertainment, Inc. has taken its place as one of the top video game developers acting as third party publishers for the Warner Bros. license including Looney Toons, Nickelodeon's *Blues Clues*, AM General Hummer, Harley-Davidson, Major League Baseball and National Football League. The company has also published franchise properties such as *Alone in the Dark*, *Test Drive*, *Driver*, *Deer Hunter*, *Oddworld*, *Unreal* and *V-Rally*, for a line of children entertainment software under the

Humongous Entertainment banner and as the leading publisher of Macintosh entertainment software. "With all the acquisitions over the last couple of years, we have a broad range of games that we are offering right now," Ackrich says. "Now we are creating products for the next generation machines — Dreamcast, X-Box and Playstation 2 all of which we are attacking in a similar fashion. For the Game Cube, we are looking to develop games for that specific consumer, a category that responds to the *Mario* games Nintendo always includes at launch."

As the movie industry began with Beta, before adopting VHS as a standard, expanding to include laser disc before DVD took hold, Infogrames is looking toward the future of gaming. "We are going after interactive gaming on hand helds, even cell phones," says Ackrich. "We are watching the X-Box for on-line, mass interactive appeal. And then, before you know it we will have to begin

thinking about what ever comes next." In addition to keeping their eyes wide open for console trends, Infogrames is also looking for the next movie that will transform into a game license. In fact the group recently announced that it will release *La Femme Nikita* for next generation console and PC play in the fall (2001). "It now costs us upward of three to four million dollars to create a next generation console game, so we have to be very selective of the risks, being aware that a game must sell between 500,000 and one million units," states Ackrich. "When planning the game, we try to see the interactive experience as it will be seen by the consumer. What we want is the awareness and the ability to take full advantage of the depth of a license when creating a game."

Basic Steps Remain

Creating games mimics the production steps of theatrical and television movie creation. From concept to character, a script must be written, sketches must be drawn, storyboards created, sound tracks developed, the animation process — hand, CGI and/or stop-motion — created and pieced together.

In the end, the production schedule, from blank paper to silver, television or monitor screen, is much the same. And while aggregate revenues are similar, the individual products' production costs, from two to three, or twenty to thirty, million greatly differ, it is the same home audience member that brings home their leading men, be they James Bond or Tarzan, on both DVD movie and gaming formats. "There is definitely a cross over thought process for both the developer and the con-



Oddworld's properties have always been outstanding when it comes to character development and rendering. © Oddworld.

sumer," says Ackrich. "The quality on the next generation systems is so close to reality, and the developers' production values are so high as to mirror those found in Hollywood, that you can see the translations from film to video game, or video game to film, very easily."

Creating games mimics the production steps of theatrical and television movie creation.

Over the next two months, Jacquie Kubin will be looking deeper into both the corporate and creative sides of Infogrames Entertainment, Inc. (May) and Kutoka Interactive (June). If you have any questions that you would like asked, and answered, about the role of animators in game development or any other aspect of the growing industry, please forward them to Jacquie at popart@ricochet.net. Individuals interested in finding more infor-

mation on either company should visit their Websites: www.info-grames.com and www.kutoka.com. Persons interested in openings within Kutoka Interactive should contact rvincent@kutoka.com.

Jacquie Kubin, a Washington, DC-based freelance journalist, enjoys writing about the electronic entertainment and edutainment mediums, including the Internet. She is a frequent contributor to the Washington Times and Krause Publication magazines. She has won the 1998 Certificate of Award granted by the Metropolitan Area Mass Media Committee of the American Association of University Women.

Note: Readers may contact any Animation World Magazine contributor by sending an e-mail to editor@awn.com.

The Funding of Independents

survey by Heather Kenyon

Finding funding for a short, artistic animated film is hard. In fact, it is a wonder that they ever get made at all. Luckily, they do. *Animation World* decided to survey a number of leading independent filmmakers and ask them how they have obtained their funding, and how the nature of this funding impacted their production schedule.

Igor Kovalyov, Director

My last short film, *Flying Nansen*, was funded by Klasky Csupo, Inc. I work for the studio as a director on the big ticket box projects that make money for the studio. Klasky Csupo's owners, Gabor Csupo and Arlene Klasky, and CEO Terry Thoren give me the opportunity, time and money to produce my shorts when I'm in between projects. I am not sure that this makes them happy, but I'm incredibly lucky to have their support. I don't think that I could live without them. The production schedule of ticket box shows influences the funding, so usually I have to hurry up and finish my short by the time I have to start one of studio's big projects.



Stephen X. Arthur, Filmmaker

Vision Point was funded by a Creative Development Grant to an Individual Artist in Media Arts (Film) from the Canada Council for



Vision Point. © Stephen X. Arthur.

the Arts — a new type of development grant that most recipients use for writing screenplays. I invested a month writing a ten-page proposal for a cluster of five quite different "test films," which went to a committee of peers. That proposal, with the results, is posted on my Website. I was awarded the full amount of \$20,000, which covered \$2,000/month "subsistence" for my estimated time, plus collaborators' fees and expenses. *Vision Point* resulted from Part One, which was intended to take two months. Since time was not as predictable as an industry production, those two months became five months, because I chose to remake it and push it further, becoming in the end more of an art film than a prototype for a sponsored production. The money was in one lump with no deadlines, just a motivation to not end up deep in debt at the end, and in time to get back to my other development contract with the National Film Board of Canada, which had

materialized at exactly the same time (feast or famine!).



Janno Põldma, Director, *On the Possibility of Love*, Eesti Joonisfilm

The foundation of animation films in Estonia is arranged like this: The one, who wants to make a noncommercial animation film, will have to turn to the Estonian Film Foundation, in order to get financial support. In case of a positive decision, it is possible to get up to 60-70% of the budget. The rest of the budget (30-40%) has to be found on one's own. The studio, where I work and where my film was also made, EESTI JoonisFilm, earns the rest mostly by making commercials and selling children's animation serials. It is possible to get 5-10% of the budget from the Estonian Culture Kapital Foundation as well.



On the Possibility of Love.
© EESTI JoonisFilm.



Abi Feijó, Director and Producer, *Filmógrafo - Oporto Animation Studio*

My film *Clandestino* (*Stowaway*) was first funded by the Portuguese Institute of Cinema, Audiovisuals and

Multimedia (ICAM). I had to submit a "dossier" and enter it in an annual contest for animation funding. When the film was accepted I then had the possibility of entering into a co-production with the Portuguese State Television, Radiotelevisão Portuguesa, which had an agreement with the Portuguese Ministry of Culture to support all the films funded by the ICAM. Thirdly, as my studio is based in Oporto and we are the most active studio here, the Oporto Town Hall also helped us with some money. Finally I was able to establish another co-production with the French Animation Studio of the National Film Board of Canada. I must say that I was lucky to have trained there 16 years ago, when I made my first film (*Oh Que Calma*) and worked with Pierre Hébert. When I was starting the production of this film Pierre Hébert became the head of the studio and as he wanted to open their policy of co-productions he proposed it to me. It was a great honor for me to come back to the NFB 15 years later with a film of my own. This film was produced inside my own studio — Filmógrafo — and this gave me the advantage of dealing with the overall budget of the studio, which allowed me to not depend too much on a tough schedule for the production of the



Abi Feijó.

film. Unfortunately it went on much longer than it should have mostly because of the disadvantages of being in charge of the studio; always having to interrupt my work to solve all kinds of problems. I was happy when I had two hours a day to work on my animation. This made me overrun my deadline; and this always has an effect on your tranquility and the decisions you have to make. The stress of knowing you are out of the limits imposes a different attitude toward the work you are doing and you must hurry and simplify your choices. The film should have been done in two years, but it took me one more year to complete.



Adam Elliot.

Adam Elliot, Director/Producer, Adam Elliot Pictures

The trilogy was funded in various ways: *Uncle* was my student film and was funded by myself, the VCA (Victorian College of Arts) film school and a post-production grant from the AFC (Australian Film Commission). *Cousin* was my first professional film and was financed by the AFC, SBS Independent (an Australian free to air broadcaster) and Film Victoria (a state film funding body). *Brother* was financed by

the AFC and SBS Independent. Funding was obtained by written application to these funding bodies with a full budget and final draft script. The trilogy was produced by myself under the umbrella of my production company, Adam Elliot Pictures. All three films were fully financed and I was paid a standard fee for *Cousin* and *Brother* to direct, animate and produce. Luckily, for all three films I was given about a full year to make each one, which was tight but adequate and in no way infringed upon their quality.



The trilogy: *Uncle, Cousin and Brother.*
© Adam Elliot.



Don Hertzfeldt, Director, Bitter Films

Rejected and all of our prior short films were financed completely independently as each of our short films have been successful enough to finance the next one, and eventually financed our



Clandestino (Stowaway).

© November 2000. A co-production of Filmógrafo, the National Film Board of Canada and Radiotelevisão Portuguesa.



Rejected. © Bitter Films.

current little 35 mm studio. Although our budgets are out of necessity extremely low, we have been able to pull off some wonderful things with next to no money. I've learned over the years that a lower budget is often more beneficial to the growth of a film than a higher budget. Simply because we don't have the cash, we often have to think through our problems creatively in order to solve them rather than just throw money at them. So I'm really one of the lucky few who's able to make a living and make the films I want to make, independent of corporate financial and creative control. I'm not exactly rolling in gold as a result, but if I was solely interested in money I'd have gone

to business school.



Frank Mouris, Director

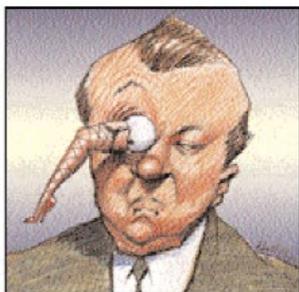
Caroline got an American Film Institute independent filmmakers grant to do *Frankly Caroline*. As we were still struggling in L.A. just to stay afloat (I was in the directing program at A.F.I.), we were not able to meet their (then) recently introduced set of deadlines, and AFI ended up keeping most of the grant. We gave them credit in the final film for their 'seed funding' though. During the many years it took us to write, fund, produce, blow up to 35mm, and find a distributor for our dramatic feature film, *Beginner's Luck*, we continued to work on *Frankly Caroline* whenever we could. We moved back east and among other part-time jobs, I taught animation in various New York City public schools for LEAP (Learning through an Expanded Arts Program). The director of that program finally said, "Why don't you apply for finishing funds via LEAP from the New York Foundation for the Arts?" So, we

did. And that's how we finally could afford to finish the film, although it took a few more years of actual labor to do so. I also traded free lecture/screenings on animation at my alma mater in exchange for free use of their Oxberry, the same one I'd shot *Frank Film* on. That's the whole sordid story. A mere 17 years, start to finish. Although admittedly there were years where very little got done. We've already begun planning *Franker Film*, and I'm determined to do the actual artwork quickly. We shall see.

Heather Kenyon is editor-in-chief of Animation World Network. After receiving her B.F.A. with honors in Filmic Writing from USC's School of Cinema-Television, she went to work for Hanna-Barbera Cartoons. Currently, she is an International Board Member of Women In Animation and on the Board of Trustees of Trees for Life.

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WALKING TO TOONTOWN,

Part One

by Martin “Dr. Toon” Goodman

Contrary to a popular adage, life is not a journey; it is rather a series of them. Some may be concurrent, some may overlap and still others are entirely disparate from one another. Destinations may be pre-planned or accidental, reached or abandoned. These sojourns have one thread in common, however: they serve to explain who we are, how we grow and what moves us through the course of our lives. This month’s column begins the story of one journey among many in my life, and I tell it because I suspect that most of you have kept me company on this same path — one that we tread to this day. We begin in Boston, Massachusetts.



Walt Disney, the original voice of Mickey Mouse. ©Walt Disney. All rights reserved.

A Meager Beginning

The state of American animation in 1956: Walt Disney was the undisputed king of the medium, the only figure in the field



Mickey and Pluto find a surprise guest in Disney’s classic cartoon, *Mickey and the Seal*. ©Walt Disney. All rights reserved.

worthy of attention or scrutiny; his cartoons and films were incomparable in the eyes of critics and the public alike. No one then sought to interview Charles M. Jones, Fred Avery, Robert Clampett or Isadore Freling, and few outside the industry knew them by their now-familiar nicknames. A production company known as UPA had created somewhat of a sensation, but mostly among art critics and graphic designers. Independent animation in America was virtually nonexistent, and most of its potential proponents animated singing beer cans and cereal-munching critters at the behest of advertising agencies. The theatrical short lay supine on its Technicolor deathbed. Television had little to offer save cartoons recycled from decades past; they floated across the tiny screen like scratchy, black-and-gray ghosts — and so they

were. Those that did not feature Popeye were often incomprehensibly strange, as if they were alien relics discovered within a cathode tomb. This was the world I was born into and it held little promise as a starting point for my journey. Still, what was seemingly fated would come to pass.

The first cartoon I can reliably remember seeing was Fleischer’s 1935 Color Classic *Song of the Birds*, broadcast on some long-forgotten local kiddie show. With my four year-old sensibility, I was drawn deeply into this maudlin tale of a boy who shoots down a baby bird as it first takes wing. The event is witnessed by the avian community, that conduct a melancholy funeral while the boy breaks down in remorse. It is needless to add that the baby bird, merely stunned, chirps back to life at cartoon’s end; I had already dissolved into tears and had to be consoled by my mother. She reminded me of the happy ending and gently reassured me that, “It was only a cartoon.” *It was only a cartoon*. Those words, spoken to me for the first time that day, never took hold and never would. These little films, so different from the westerns, game shows and early sitcoms I also saw on TV, seemed to resonate and merge with some emerging component of my nascent personality. For the rest of my life I would respond to animation with deep, visceral feelings that live-action movies, theatre or television could not summon.

Now We’re Getting Somewhere

I sought out cartoons at every chance. I crawled out of bed in the early morning hours to switch on the TV set since cartoons were typically the first things



Walt Disney's 17th animated classic, *101 Dalmatians*. © Walt Disney. All rights reserved.

broadcast once the test pattern and national anthem had left the screen. I acquired friends: Pow Wow the Indian Boy, Spunky and Tadpole, Tom Terrific and Felix the (wonderful, wonderful!) Cat. Early Saturday mornings brought Bugs, Daffy, Porky...and at that time, even Coal Black. My parents took note and began to supply me with brightly colored comic books featuring many of these friends, and when I saw the characters on those pages, I believed that some artist at a "comic book factory" had arbitrarily colored them that way. Not until my first trip to a drive-in theater did I realize that most cartoons were *made* in color. My cartoon universe expanded: Hanna-Barbera spilled dozens of new characters into my living room and I delightedly watched them tear around a circus ring with the Kellogg's rooster in tow. I was awestruck upon seeing my first episode of the Fleischer *Superman* series: *The Mummy Strikes*. I cowered under the bedcovers that night at the memory of the giant mummy slowly coming to life,

scowling at Superman through baleful blank orbs. I had never seen a cartoon with such vivid styling or primordial power, and the images stayed with me for days thereafter.



Hanna-Barbera's 1961 classic *Yogi Bear*. © Cartoon Network. All rights reserved.

Cartoons even appeared during the evening hours, where I made the acquaintance of Alvin and his brothers. Shortly after that, Bugs Bunny got his own show — *his own show!* — after dinnertime. I can recall my parents telling me that a new cartoon was coming at night, and that I would be allowed to stay up and see it. That evening, we all tripped upstairs to the apartment occupied by my aunt and uncle where we watched the first episode of *The Flintstones*. On that early fall evening I had a dish of strawberry ice cream in my lap, a brand-new cartoon to enjoy and the happiness of knowing that cartoons were seemingly on television every time I wanted to see one. Somewhere around this time, I was treated to my first Walt Disney theatrical feature — *One Hundred and One Dalmatians*. It was the

most awesome cartoon I had ever seen, and by far the coolest adventure. This, dear readers, was the best of all possible worlds.

In my room filled with Huckleberry Hound jigsaw puzzles and Popeye Ring Toss games, I would fantasize about *becoming* a cartoon: wearing the same clothes each day, speaking in a funny voice, hamming it up through adventures like Yogi Bear did. I imagined myself as the fourth chipmunk brother, instantly accepted by David Seville as one of his own. I battered pillows across the room, pumped up on "me spinach"...which I begged my bemused mother to buy. My most beloved Chanukah gift? A cherry-red Give-A-Show Projector; I could actually present my own cartoon show (at least for the life of the batteries) and control its content. I sat before our battered old Philco for the first episodes of *Top Cat* (which I didn't "get") and *The Jetsons* (which I loved). I will admit, some shows did not connect with me. I never enjoyed *Rocky and Bullwinkle* as a child. I liked the characters but did not have the patience to follow episodic narrative, nor the sophistication to comprehend satire. One strange prime-time offering, *Calvin and the Colonel*, was simply beyond all understanding: it wasn't even funny. What kind of cartoon was *this*?

A-ha!

Then, an epiphany: the winter of my sixth year, 1962. I would like to imagine that my deepening appreciation for cartoons, a growing ability to discriminate among them and an increasing grasp of the language and style of animation allowed me to appreciate this experience beyond

all previous measures — but the truth is more prosaic. I met up with Bob Clampett's *Beany and Cecil* and the sheer excellence of this series validated everything I loved most about cartoons. Upon the decks of the "Leakin' Lena" I sailed the ink-and-paint seas of adventure. I was "Beany Boy" and reveled in my odyssey among the myriad of offbeat, endearing creatures that sprang from Clampett's imagination, a whirlwind taxonomy of cartoon oddities: Beepin' Tom; Little Ace; Thunderbolt the Wonder Colt; Tear-A-Long the Dotted Lion; and Davy Cricket. Faithful Cecil, the most beloved of all my cartoon friends, towered alongside me like a goofy, pea-green totem pole, always ready with a song, a slurp or a rescue. The *Beany and Cecil* show constructed an animated alternate universe — and I wanted to live in it.



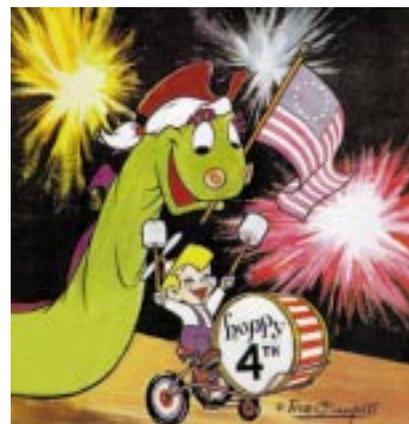
Bob Clampett and Beany.
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In a way, I did. I named my stuffed animals after characters on the show and pleaded for the panoply of (now priceless) products that bore the likenesses of my

heroes. I was given, and duly wore, my own Mattel Beanycopter. Diligent practice of "Nya Ha Ha!" readied me for my encounters with Dishonest John, the coolest, snappiest bad guy in cartoons. Best of all were the times my father and I vied mightily to join Cecil as he belted: "A Bob Clam-pett CartOOOOOON!" both of us bursting into laughter before getting to within three octaves of that daunting final note. Somehow, those cartoons were brighter, funnier and more engaging than the suddenly unexciting fare coming from Hanna-Barbera. A musketeer turtle? An alligator with the same silly voice shared by thirty other characters? Humph! Clampett's klutzy Hopalong Catskill — one of his *bit* players — had more personality than any of them, and his gags were funnier. *Beany and Cecil* left me with two priceless gifts: the psychological cement that bonded me to animated cartoons for life and the first inkling that some cartoons were undeniably better than others.

Life went on, and with it came school, friends, music, comic books. Still, I could never resist a furtive retreat into that secret realm I loved so well. In 1964 Hanna-Barbera won me back with *Jonny Quest*, the best action-adventure series this side of modern anime. I always looked in the Fall Preview issue of *TV Guide* to peruse the new Saturday Morning lineup; if any of the offerings piqued my interest, I would tune in. The new UHF channels appearing in the late Sixties introduced me to anime: *Speed Racer*, *Marine Boy*, and my guilty favorite, *Prince Planet*. It would not be an exaggeration to say I saw everything Saturday Morning had to offer from *Fat Albert* to *Milton the*

Monster, even though I was nearing the age where most males turned from cartoons and began stashing heavily-thumbed copies of *Playboy* beneath their mattresses. If it was animated, it spoke to me in some way and I had to check it out — even if it turned out to be the cartoon equivalent of Love Canal.



Beany and Cecil celebrate Independence Day. © 1999 Bob Clampett Productions LLC. All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce in any form.

Close Call...

I developed an active social life and participated in the same poignant rites of adolescence that my peers did...and that's where this journey nearly ended. By 1970 American TV animation had deteriorated into a stagnant pool of repetitive dross. Disney was moribund. Animation's voice was growing smaller in my soul, and there was no *Leakin' Lena* at the dock, no new Beany beckoning me to novel adventures, no steadfast Cecil playing Puff to my rapidly maturing Jackie Paper. The sound of animation dying within me was the whiny snicker of Muttley, goofing his way through another dreary concoction of thin slapstick and tinny music. The wondrous connection I once felt with this medium was muffled beneath the weight of too many wooden superheroes, too many

judicious, pro-social polemics in cartoon form, and too many spiritless pieces of hackwork that were far too much alike. Then a horny grey cat saved everything.

I was sixteen when Ralph Bakshi unleashed *Fritz The Cat* against a middle-class morality that was already reeling; by the time of the film's premiere in 1972, sex, coarse language and violence had become a staple of American cinema. What no one expected was that an animated feature would join the fray, earning the penultimate "X" rating. I had to see *this* — but I could barely pass for my own age. After hearing me rant, my sympathetic father offered to be my "accompanying adult" and off we went to the Avon drive-in (local theaters were refusing to book the flick). *Fritz* may not have been the finest animated feature I ever saw, but it was a milepost in my fandom. If this film was possible, then *anything* was possible; there had to be alternative voices in animation, and it was just a matter of finding out who they were and where their films were showing. If I succeeded, cartoons might live for me again. Alas, this quest sat on hold for the next several years while I dated, hung



Dick Dastardley, along with his faithful dog Muttley, formed a devilish duo on the *Wacky Races* animated series.
© Cartoon Network. All rights reserved.



The Jetsons, the first modern animated family. © Cartoon Network. All rights reserved.

around Cape Cod, attended college and did other things too incriminating to reveal here. Then, most unexpectedly, the final component clicked into place.

Recognition and Rejuvenation

For those of you who have never visited the Brattle St. Theater in Harvard Square, Cambridge, make the pilgrimage someday; it's worth the trip. On a spring day in 1977 I went to this venerable movie house with my then girlfriend and a buddy to catch a Fleischer retrospective. There were a few Betty Boop cartoons on the docket as well as the celebrated Popeye films that featured Max Fleischer's "3D" tabletop effects. Also present was a local film scholar (whose name I no longer recall), who wrote a pamphlet for the event and discussed the films afterward. There were few attendees at this particular showing and we had this knowledgeable gentleman virtually all to ourselves. As he regaled us with tales of the Fleischer studio and impressed us with his expertise, a humbling truth became clear to me: I had watched thousands of hours of cartoons and didn't know anything about them.

That's right. My knowledge of cartoons was limited to identification alone. I could remember

Bugs Bunny's actions in a specific cartoon or name the lineup of *The Wacky Races*. I could tell Roland from Rattfink, or even identify Swifty and Shorty if you showed me a picture. But as to where they came from and who made them, I had no clue at all. I had not even connected Bob Clampett, the Aesop of my youth, with his Warner Bros. cartoons even after I had seen his name in countless credits; it simply never registered. I could recall seeing episodes of Woody Woodpecker as a small child; between the cartoons, there were segments on how these films were made, but since they weren't animated, I became bored and tuned out until Woody himself returned. Technology, history, the studios and their personnel were beyond my rudimentary experience of animation. On that day in Harvard Square as I thrilled to that erudite scholar, the next phase of my journey was set.

Next month: Walking to Toontown, Part Two, the path from ignorance to bliss as this journey reaches the present day.

Martin "Dr. Toon" Goodman is a longtime student and fan of animation. He lives in Anderson, Indiana.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an e-mail to editor@awn.com.



Illustration by Andreas Hykade.
Courtesy of Chris Robinson.

Speaking of Bloated Asses...

by Chris Robinson

Normally I could give a bloated man's hairy arse about the Oscars and especially the animation category, but this year I can no longer contain my flatulent forces. Two things motivated this. First, three FUGGIN films?! You mean to tell me that not only is animation summed up by trois films, but these three pieces reflect the state of international animation?! Where are some of the best festival films from the last year: *Flying Nansen*, *The Hat*, *Crime and Punishment*, *Ring of Fire*? Oh, wait...yeah, that's right...I furgot...these are SERIOUS, PROVO-CATIVE, MATURE films that resemble ART. We wouldn't want ART getting involved here would we?

The second motivation actually occurred before the first. Canadian producer, Pascal Blais was REALLY pissed off because Ottawa rejected his production, *The Old Man and The Sea*. I wasn't really surprised. It's now a ritual in Ottawa. Every year, one of Blais' films is rejected and every year he calls up to tell everyone how great the work is. Actually, it doesn't really bother me. I'd be passionate about my creation too, but when you enter a film, you might not like the committee's decision, but ya

damn well better respect it. This year, Blais' call was a little different. I was asked how I could reject a film that had won both in Annecy and the OSCAR. Well, gee...it was easy really. I had my reasons and I think they were solid reasons. In addition, ya see, we don't look to other festivals to approve our selection. Films are judged for their technical and aesthetic merit not their resumes. T'ain't a job interview kids. Should festivals start accepting films simply because they won awards elsewhere? Some might say yes, but can you IMAGINE how fuggin' dull festivals would become?

So anyways it gets me thinking about the Oscar process (heh heh...like processed food...heh heh).

First off, I know all about the realities of the damn Oscars. I don't expect the latest Polish or Russian animation to pick up a nod. Nevertheless, we need to make clear just what is and is not going on when it comes time to consider the animation short nominees.

The Oscars have always PRETTY MUCH ignored the international community and that's fine, it is a celebration of Hollywood filmmaking. T'aint nothing wrong

with it. However since Hollywood dominates the screens of the world, markets the shit out of the event and generally has convinced everyone that THIS is THE ONE, we should take a closer look at this event especially from an animation perspective.

There's no denying that having animation shorts recognised by this mammoth event is excellent promotion for a very neglected art form. However, animation is also being defined to the mass audience by a few films that RARELY reflect the diverse work that is out there.

On one hand, I figure the entry procedure is quite baffling to many animators and unless they can set up a contact in L.A, they ain't gonna get considered. Many animators have limited time and limited funds and as such can't fulfill the requirements as easily as North American animators or animators coming from bigger studios (eg. the National Film Board of Canada has a staff that looks after the entries). I know Michael Dudok de Wit was scrambling like a maniac to get *Father and Daughter* considered. On the other hand, and I don't have the member list in front of me, I'm gonna guess that a majority of the voters are executives, studio employees and in general people whose concept of radical animation is a National Film Board of Canada film. So first of all we are relying on people whose very idea of animation is quite limited (consciously or unconsciously) and at the same time they are being exposed to very few films that reflect the true diversity (most are all from the Western world) of international animation.

What needs to be done is to open up voting to the interna-

tional scene. Animators, journalists, festival directors, students and various other international figures. Maybe the Academy can hook up with ASIFA. Let's say an ASIFA membership gets you a vote. Course, this might be unfair to animation festivals, but let's face it none of them can — nor should — compete with the Oscars. They are here to stay and we might as well embrace them...like the fat, ugly, blabbing Aunt that comes to the house. ('Course we could always kick the hairy bitch out.)

Now of course, you can say that these are the Star Spangled Banner awards. Fine, if that's the case, then 1.) stop inundating THE WORLD with a NATIONAL event; 2.) don't accept international animation; or 3.) simply create two categories (similar to the Best Film and Best Foreign Film...notice they don't say Best American Film! Then again at every Canadian video store American films are marketed as domestic product and never in the foreign section so it's not all Hollywood's fault!). It ain't rocket science, but wait...even if it were, this is the Academy of Art and Sciences...so surely there's a rocket scientist somewhere on Wilshire.

I don't even know if an Oscar nod means anything to animators. I mean Nick Park is the most obvious beneficiary but we all know his films were Hollywood orientated anyway so win or lose this guy was going BIG TIME. But where are Cordell Barker, Nicole Van Goethem, Jon Minnis, Jimmy Picker, Ferenc Rofuscz or Tyron Montgomery? Alexander Petrov has had 2 nominations, 1 win, but we all know Pascal Blais will REALLY be the fella who benefits from that trophy. Ryan Larkin got nominated in 1968 and now he lives

on the street (course that's a pretty extreme example and it's his fault not Oscars). Barker, Montgomery and Rofuscz, last I heard, were all hacking away on commercials. (Course I guess the same can be said for documentary and live-action short categories as well, but tuff do-do, I'm talking about animation.) I figure if there is anything to be gained, it's a chance to live a moment of decadence, and use the Oscar to fund your next film. No doubt, Michael Dudok de Wit was able to fund *Father and Daughter* thanks to *The Monk and The Fish's* nomination a few years back.

Most animators I know want, at best, the respect of their peers more than anything. This is something they get from animation festivals like Annecy, Hiroshima, Ottawa and Stuttgart (to name a few). Respect from other artists is something the Academy will always be short on.

Letters to The Pimp

Dear Pimp:

Am I losing it? I can't understand anything you're saying. It just seems like moron babble to me. Too much cheese and bacon has gone to your head.

Luna

Dear Luna,

Yes indeed, what you saw was in fact moron babble constructed following an overindulgence on bacon bits and cheese curds. The result was a lack of reliance on dictionaries and a not-so-subtle play on words, grammar and vernacular. Next time I promise to make things S-I-M-P-L-E F-O-R Y-O-U.

Dear Mr. Pimp,

You sounds like a bitter

man rambling a useless diatribe in hopes that someone will call you clever.

Twedzel

Dear Twedzel,

Thank you. I'm actually blushing. I haven't been called clever since I was last bitter.

Dear Maroon:

Not only was your argument silly, but it was some of the worst writing that passes for journalism I have ever read.

Paul D.

Dear Paul D.:

Tank u fer rittin. I tri lernin everi teem butt sumteems Reemembur I not a jurnallist

Hottie Animator o' da Month

Ok...first it was the crew at Animation Nation. Great bunch! Now...it's Miss Missy, who should be making moons.

This month's Animation Pimp is brought to you by the words *mother fucking* and *smar-tass* and dedicated to "MAP," "Tiger" and "Grace" for making the world safe for ignorance and knee jerks everywhere.

Next Month: How to heckle at Annecy Festival screenings.

Chris Robinson is a writer, festival director, programmer, junky and has been called the John Woo of diplomacy. His hobbies include horseback riding, pudpulling, canoeing and goat thumping.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an e-mail to editor@awn.com.

Xilam: A New Convergence Studio With A Tried and True Business Sense

by Marie Beardmore

All eyes were on Marc du Pontavice when he spun Xilam out of the former Gaumont Multimedia in 1998. But then having been the head of one of the most successful animation companies in France, he's used to the limelight. The company had enjoyed a successful run from 1985 to 1998 but troubled times for parent Gaumont wrote its obituary. Gaumont, the parent company, diverted funds from Gaumont Multimedia into its troubled French multiplex theatres and for this signaled the end of the growth of his division.



Marc du Pontavice.

It was time to move on. He left Gaumont in December 1998 as CEO, but remained at the studio as a freelance executive producer for the second season of *Oggy and the Cockroaches*. While doing so, he was developing his own shows (including *Lucky Luke*) for his new company, Xilam. He

says: "During the year 1999, from that position, I could clearly understand that Gaumont was no longer very committed to the development of the animation business. As a result of which my proposal to take over the studio and the library came for them as a relief. And we closed this take over deal in December 1999."

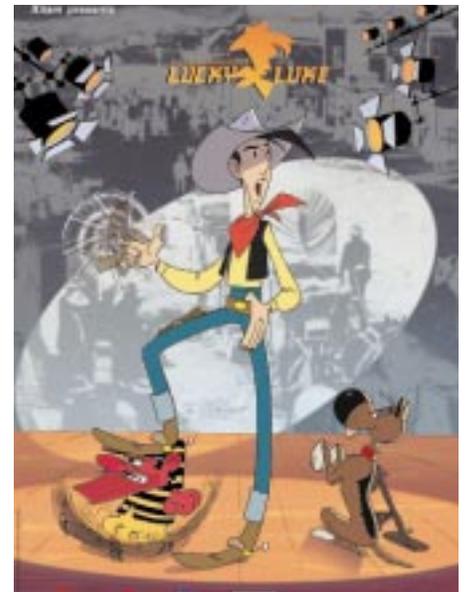


Oggy and the Cockroaches, the story of a trio of cockroaches who pester and drive Oggy to points of madness. © 2001 Xilam.

A Diversified Studio

Now firmly ensconced in his old studio, but at the helm of his own company, du Pontavice is putting into play a different form of economic model than that of most studios. He's looking beyond TV to film and games and expects to have a third of the business TV, a third games and a third films within two years. The TV distribution business is partnered by IGEL. It's a 50/50 deal for the catalogue but IGEL is not a shareholder in Xilam, or vice versa. It's a structure he's happy with now as it means he's free to develop and produce shows, which is what he likes to do.

The growth of the telly animation industry and particularly its rapid acceleration has been startling. He casts a weathered eye over the current state of play: "This business invested massive growth between 1993 and 1998. It was supposed to fall in 1999 but because of an increase in the stock market, continued to grow." After years of following the stock market, people are now becoming more real and realizing that the future is still in the business of buying and selling programs — the TV market, not the hyped and exaggerated business of the stock market. And so, he says, there's been a consolidation of the animation business: "less crazy, but definitely healthier. It's good for those committed to the market."



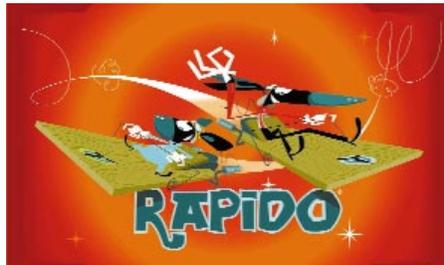
Xilam's *The New Adventures of Lucky Luke* series tells the story of the cult cowboy who can shoot faster than his shadow. © 2001 Xilam.

TV Strategies

One of the downsides of the European stock-fuelled boom is the library's full of product currently stagnating in companies throughout Europe, but notably Germany. "A lot of these companies have not had their costs amortized at all," he notes. Some of these shows have not been seen internationally. Playing the stock market card is a risky business and more suited to the film industry than TV, says du Pontavice. The upside can be huge, but so can the outlay, and the damage if it goes wrong. "Apart from being a gamble, it's also an inappropriate strategy for TV," he says. "You can't speculate on TV like you can in film. You can't dream of making a fortune out of one show. You can make a nice business, but not massive wealth." He advises caution to would be producers: "No one should start production without 75% of the market financing in place," meaning the key economic countries to bring in the funding.

At Xilam, he's concerned about delivering shows that are better than the ones before, but then he says he always has been. At the new place, he's embarked on a strategy of alternating a classic property with an original one. So far the former is *Lucky Luke* and the later is *Rapido*. He wanted to do *Rapido* because it smacked of the cartoony *Oggy and the Cockroaches*, but with talking. Meanwhile, another classic property is already lined up, though du Pontavice is coy to reveal it just yet. Gaumont Multimedia was known for its success in the U.S. so no surprise that du Pontavice is gearing up his shows to sell there. *Rapido* has been developed with the U.S. market in mind and with his track

record at Gaumont Multimedia, this is a man who knows all about how to do that. He elaborates on some key points: "There's a pacing issue in the story, which is a very important element." And unwritten censorship is a bugbear: "There's a very complex, non-written censorship system which has to be navigated."



The *Rapido* series showcases a rat, who performs impossible stunts on his super-sonic ratboard, and lives aboard an impounded ship containing smuggled cheese. © 2001 Xilam.

Closer to home, changes are expected (and eagerly) in the French domestic market. A law is about to change in favour of the producers and du Pontavice couldn't be happier. Although the precise details of the law have yet to be made known, the basis of it is a fairer deal for producers. It will mean the broadcaster has no share in a show, but rather will pay a license fee to independent producers. It will strengthen the position of producers by ending the unlimited runs and unlimited license periods that some French broadcasters have enjoyed at the producer's expense.

Asked about toy driven properties, du Pontavice says the days of the completely toy-driven programs are over. Merchandising is a law unto itself though. "I've learnt to understand that you can't predict merchandising. You should be ready for it when it happens. People should get organized to take advantage, but should not write it into the business plan."

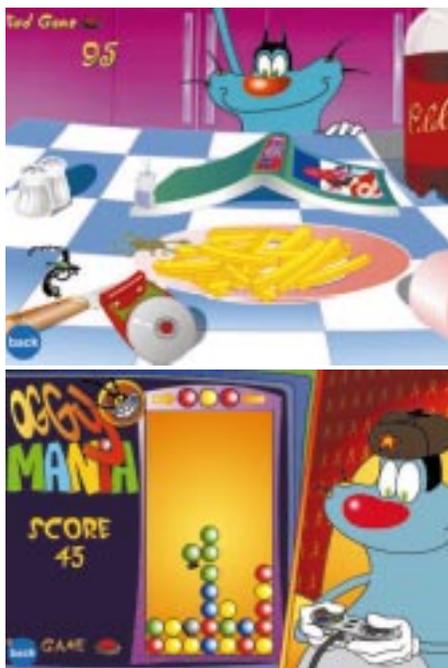
The Other Promising Avenues

He's going large on games, the second part of his strategy for the company. *Stupid Invaders* is Xilam's flagship game based on the wacky TV series *Home To Rent* or *Space Goofs*, depending on which side of the pond you live. The experience of transferring a successful TV show into a game format has been a learning curve for the Xilam team. It's a rich man's game. "The economic model for games is very different. You have to bear the burden of the development costs," he says. Investors won't commit to something on paper, so the producer has to bear those costs, which could be as much as \$500,000. Once the development is in place, the next stage is to find a distributor. It's an economic model that's much closer to the cinema business, explains du Pontavice. "A strong upside but also a chance of falling back." But he's bullish about Xilam's chances in the sector. *Stupid Invaders* has just had a U.S. release for PC. A Dreamcast version will be out in May and the Play Station 2 in October/November this year. The



***Stupid Invaders* is Xilam's flagship game based on the wacky TV series *Home To Rent* or *Space Goofs*. © 2001 Xilam.**

game has 75 minutes of full 3D cinematic footage and some new characters.



Oggymotchi is a game similar to Tamagotchi, but based on the character Oggy from *Oggy and the Cockroaches*. © 2001 Xilam.

Since you can't talk about animation these days without mentioning the "W" word, what are Xilam's plans for the Web?

Xilam now has 8 people working full out on Web activities. He hopes to have 25-30 different programs out by the end of the year. "They're not expensive to make, between \$10,000 - \$50,000 each, but they add up." Super RTL has already bought four Xilam Web games. du Pontavice is most proud of *Oggymotchi* — it's like a Tamagotchi but based on the character Oggy from *Oggy and the Cockroaches*.

Having got the TV business and the interactive business ticking along nicely, du Pontavice now has the third part of his strategy in his sights — the film industry. The time is right, he says. "There's definitely a growing demand for looking to non-American animated movies but few studios are able to deliver, and that's what's holding things back. Very few animation studios are ready to make that move." He continues: "It requires a very significant and complex move towards talent. Producing a feature film is a very different model than TV. We need to meet the



Cartouche, Prince of the Streets, another Xilam series distributed by IGEL Media. © 2001 Xilam.

demand. Otherwise the audience will be disappointed." So Xilam is forging ahead with its movie plans then? "Of course, yeah, big time," says du Pontavice.

Marie Beardmore is a U.K.-based freelance writer who specializes in writing and consulting in the animation industry. She has just written a report on the global animation business for Channel 21 magazine.

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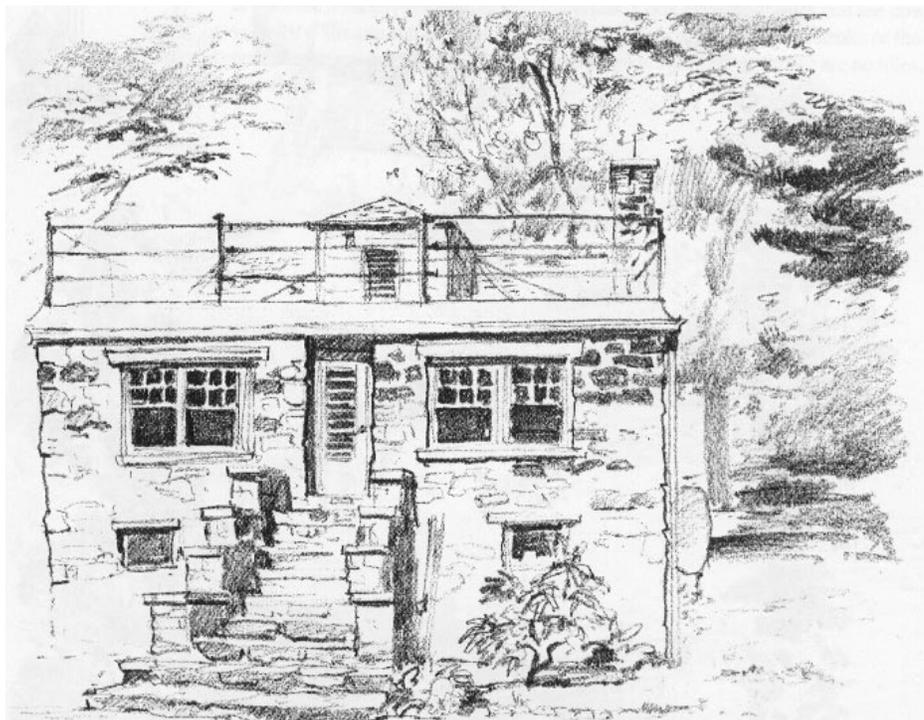


Let's Sketch on Location: Pencil Technique

by Glenn Vilppu

the possibilities of the pencil. The 2B pencil has a good general purpose range of values if you are just using one pencil. The HB and 6B pencils will give you a bit more flexibility, but for myself, having had for many years pockets full of pencils, I now carry just one, a 2B.

The next point is that you need to sharpen the pencil properly. By sharpening "properly," I mean that you need to be able to make both broad tones and thin lines with the pencil. Essentially,



All drawings in this article are by and © Glenn Vilppu.

This is the sixth in a new series of bi-monthly articles about sketching on location. The articles are based on my *Sketching on Location Manual*. The manual was developed as a series of lessons that I use on my guided sketching tours of Europe, and that I use as material in my regular drawing classes. As such the lessons can be part of a regular course or can be used by individual students as a practical learning guide. In the last chapter we worked on "Texture as Planes in Space." If you have not seen the previous lessons starting in the June 2000 issue of *Animation World Magazine*, it is recommended that you do. The lessons are

progressive and expand on basic ideas. It is suggested that you start from the beginning for a better understanding of my approach. If you really want to start at the beginning open with the lessons based on the *Vilppu Drawing Manual*.

Pencil Technique

One of the most useful tools for sketching is the soft broad lead pencil. A pencil and a sketchbook are the fundamental tools of an artist in the field. With a simple graphite pencil you can capture almost any subject, be it a cityscape or a careful portrait. All we have to do is to look at the drawings in pencil by Ingres, Degas, Sargent and Mentzel to see





Glenn Vilppu first wrote for *Animation World Magazine* in the June 1997 issue, "Never Underestimate the Power of Life Drawing." His drawing manuals and video tapes may be purchased in the Animation World Store.

Glenn Vilppu teaches figure drawing at the American Animation Institute, the Masters program of the UCLA Animation Dept., Walt Disney Feature Animation and Warner Bros. Feature Animation, and has been sent to teach artists at Disney TV studios in Japan, Canada and the Philippines. Vilppu has also worked in the animation industry for 18 years as a layout, storyboard and presentation artist. His drawing manual and video tapes are being used worldwide as course materials for animation students.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an e-mail to editor@awn.com.

this requires that you have a fair amount of lead showing and that you blunt the end at an angle so that you have the ability to use the side as well as the tip to make strokes. Look at the diagram to get an idea of the way the end of the pencil should look. I carry a pocket-knife for the sole purpose of sharpening my pencil when I am out in the field. To get the flat side, almost any rough surface, from the sidewalk, a stone, to an extra piece of paper will work. You will quickly see why this is referred to as the "broad pencil technique."

In lesson five we dealt with different textures. In this lesson we will continue to use different textures and also incorporate the use

of contrasting darks and lights in both defining planes and creating patterns. You will find it useful to practice creating different kinds of textures. In a rather short time, you will build a repertoire of useful kinds of strokes to indicate a variety of surfaces and materials. Look at the examples and see how varied the strokes can be. In doing the drawing, try to think of each stroke of the pencil as if you were putting down a brushstroke. Remember, "There are no rules, just tools."

Join us online at <http://www.awn.com/mag/issue6.01/6.01pages/6.01vilppu.php3> to view more examples now.



My Trip To Tehran

by Nag Vladermersky

For five days in February I was lucky enough to be in attendance at the second Tehran International Animation Festival, the bustling capital city of Iran. I was there in my role as co-programmer and director of the inaugural Melbourne International Animation Festival and I was especially keen to see some Iranian animation. I had no preconceived ideas about the country let alone the animation. The guidebooks I read on the 19-hour plane trip had left me feeling cautious but inquisitive. In the weeks prior to my trip I had been in email contact with Karimi Saremi the Tehran Festival director to inquire about the festival and he told me that there would be enough animation content to warrant the journey. This turned out to be a very special five days.



The entrance to the festival center.
All photos courtesy and
© Nag Vladermersky.

I got into Tehran at 2 in the afternoon and was whisked through customs. The festival had done a deal with the officials to get all of us foreign guests through quickly. There were ten of us from overseas. The jury consisted of Tiziana Loschi of the Annecy Festival, Sayoko Kinoshita from the Hiroshima Festival, Bretislav Pojar, master Czech animator and teacher at FAMU in Prague, Nelson Shin, President of ASIFA



Korea and founder of *Animatoon* magazine and Hamid Navim, an Iranian animator now making films in Sweden.

I had my own chaperone /taxi-driver for five days who spoke little English but happily pointed out Iranian landmarks on our daily drives to and from the apartment I was staying in and the festival centre. The festival was a big one — four days from 8:30 in the morning until midnight each night, about 200 films from 18 countries. Outside of the international and national competition screenings, there were retrospectives for Paul Driessen, Caroline Leaf and Co Headman, special sessions for kids, some features, Iranian student films, a world ASIFA retrospective and two sessions of master Iranian animators. Iran's first female animator Nafiseh Riyahi, who sadly passed away a few months before the festival commenced, was commemorated with a session of her films, and Nouredin Zarrinkelk, considered to be the most well known Iranian animator, was also

celebrated. Zarrinkelk's films use highly effective humour to portray his warped impressions of the world. This was best illustrated in *The Mad Mad World* where Sweden swallows Denmark, England eats Northern Ireland, Italy boots Sicily away, USSR and USA peck at each other and Latin America struggles like a fish in a bowl owned by the USA.



Iranian kids get ready to have a play on 'The Box' and make some simple animations.

The 650-seat auditorium was almost always packed with adults and kids of all ages, being very vocal and enthusiastic about what they were seeing. It was a totally different viewing experience to what I had ever been used to in the Western world...and I loved it because of that. The festival was held at the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, a fantastic setup where kids can come and play and try their hands at all sorts of artistic endeavours — even get a chance to make their own simple cut-out animations. One of the guests of the festival was Erling Ericsson from Sweden who set up a simple animation rostrum-camera, which he called 'The Box,' and held classes for a week with young kids and art teachers where they could see their simple animations come to life very quickly. These classes were a huge success and Erling and his lovely assistant Kamelia were besieged by extremely eager kids wanting to

play and make films. During the festival's closing ceremony some of the more successful attempts were put up on the big screen for the capacity audience to see.

Over the four days I saw some absolute gems of films and the biggest joy to me was the local content. This is what I had come to discover. I knew hardly anything about Iranian animation except that it was being produced in the film schools. After meeting some of the animators and seeing their films I am very enthusiastic about curating a session just of Iranian work for our own Melbourne International Animation Festival in June. Iranian animation is on the outset very simple and symbolic. The stories are very allegorical and can be read on many levels, and are enjoyed by adults and kids alike. Lots of myths and fairytales are all bound up in a sure grasp of technique. Often meandering, when you release yourself to the pace of these films you can literally get lost in them. I feel privileged to have been able to watch these films in the company of not only an Iranian audience but also the filmmakers themselves.

The closing ceremony was a very majestic affair. We were treated to speeches from the festival directors and president of the Centre and members of the National Jury. Then a man with an ear-splittingly powerful and moving voice sang a section from the Holy Koran before we got on to the prizes and awards. The Jury's best three films went to *Father and Daughter* by Michael Dudok de Wit, *The Periwig-Maker* by Steffen Schaeffer and the overall winner, the Golden Bird prize, went to *When the Day Breaks* by Wendy Tilby and Amanda Forbis. The Director's choice of best film went

to Alexander Petrov's *The Old Man and The Sea*, which was also a huge audience favourite. The best Iranian film and best kids film went to *Shangoul and Mangoul* by Merteza Ahadi and Farkondeh Torabi, a rich and luscious mythical tale entirely constructed by embroidery.



Left to right: Mansour Kadivar (IIDCYA director), Nouredin Zarrenkelk (animator), Kamelia Pebdani (Swedish filmmaker) and Jannike Ahlund (programmer of the Gothenburg Film Festival).



Sayoko Kinoshita, daughter of Nouredin Zarrenkelk and Mansour Kadivar (director of the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults).



Sayoko Kinoshita (Hiroshima festival director) and the lovely daughter of Nouredin Zarrenkelk (Iran's most famous animator) enjoy some dancing.

But the animation itself was just one small part of the whole amazing five days. The hosts treated all of us like royalty. They wouldn't let me pay for anything and they even took us all out for a trip to the mountains, and to the King's summerhouse/museum on

our final day. We had many fine meals at night in the restaurants and to cap it all they even gave us each a present of a stunning Persian carpet. I will especially cherish the memories of our night in a restaurant where we munched on delicious barbecued chicken and lamb and sang and danced along to the raucous local music. At one stage Nelson Shin, ever the joker, turned to me and said, "I've been drinking this non-alcoholic beer all night long and I feel drunk. This is great!"

For our part we were constantly besieged by curious journalists. I took part in a big press conference on the first night and was interviewed on national television. It was a curious experience seeing myself dubbed into the local language! Everyone wanted to know what was happening in the rest of the world animation-wise, what did we think about Iranian animation and how could they improve. I was also approached on three occasions by animators who wanted me to sponsor them so that they could come to Australia. It was a bit hard to explain to them that the immigration authorities in Oz might not look so kindly on this.

Iran right now is opening up to outsiders and it's a great time to go over and visit. I found it a fascinating mix between the traditional and the younger generation of kids who are beginning to question some of these age-old customs. Of course the women have to keep covered up from head to foot and some of the overseas guests found this hard to cope with. On one occasion I was walking through the polluted city centre with one of the female guests and her headscarf slipped as we were crossing a road. A car pulled

up, two men wound down windows and spat and swore at us. The city itself is way over populated; 12 million people and everyone drives because petrol is as cheap as bottled water! Navigating your way across the roads is a nightmare. It seems there are no road rules but we were told by one of the festival hosts that we would be okay because, "They won't run over foreigners, just us Iranians!" I met several very intelligent and open younger people and was told that there is now a park in Tehran where the youngsters go and secretly hold hands. It might seem laughable but it is extremely dangerous stuff that these kids are doing. On the other hand, on the day I arrived there was a mass 700 couple-strong wedding at the local university. The government will entice young couples under the age of 21 to get married with the promise of their own apart-



Nag Vladermersky (Melbourne International Animation Festival director) — centre - flanked by two of the tireless organisers of the Tehran Festival.

ments and allowances...to encourage the old traditions happening.

I left the city at 3 in the morning, a godawful time to leave, and with just a couple of hours sleep. As well as my Iranian friends I had met, I also had a great time with the Swedes and other overseas guests. Cards and addresses were exchanged and we all left with our fantastic memories. I left Tehran with a very warm feeling for the people I had come into contact with and who had been good enough to share

their culture with me. It feels like the least I can do is to screen some of these films to an Australian audience and give them some of the exposure they deserve outside of Iran.

Nag Vladermersky is one of the founding members of the Melbourne Animation Posse dedicated to organising animation events in Melbourne, Australia. The Posse have quickly established two festivals, the Melbourne International Student Animation Festival (MISAF) and the Melbourne International Animation Festival (MIAF). Details can be found at www.miaf.net. He is also an award-winning animator currently on annual leave while setting up MIAF.

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Brussels Turns 20!

with reporting by Heikki Jokinen

The 20th anniversary of the Brussels Cartoon and Animated Film Festival (Festival du dessin animé et du film d'animation) was celebrated February 21 — March 3, 2001. One of the longest festivals of the year Brussels is unique in the amount of programming it offers for both locals and professionals.

The official selection and retrospective screenings take place mostly in the evenings and the afternoon screenings are devoted to the local school kids who flock to the cinema in big groups. Although not competitive, the festival has an official selection for both feature and short animations. Out of the 575 entries for the short film section the festival chose 114. These films came from 20 countries, but are mostly from Belgium, France and the United Kingdom. Eight feature animations were presented during the festival as well. The most interesting was *Optimus Mundus*, a 60-minute Russian film made to celebrate Moscow's 850th anniversary. It includes 55 short pieces done by an international group of animators. It is a true fireworks display of styles, techniques and stories. The feature film program included: *The Emperor's New Groove* by Mark Dindal (USA); *Heavy Metal 2000* by Michaël Coldewey and Michel Lemire (Canada/Germany); *My Neighbours The Yamadas* by Isao Takahata (Japan); and *Otesanek* by Jan Svankmajer (Czech Republic).

In addition to the feature



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The 20th Anniversary Brussels Cartoon and Animated Film Festival 2001 catalogue.

program, the festival presented six international programs of short films, two international programs of student films and two programs of Belgian films. The broad variety of retrospectives included a tribute to New Zealand filmmaker Len Lye, a focus on Australian animation, Norwegian Inger Lise Hansen, masters of clay animation and animated memories from the

past 20 years of the festival. In addition, French studio Folimage was presented in an exhibition.

The “making of” section of the festival featured Nick Ranieri (Walt Disney), chief animator on Cuzco in *The Emperor's New Groove*; Philippe Glukman (PDI) on the upcoming *Shrek* and Neil Crepela (The Secret Lab), visual effects supervisor on *Dinosaur*.

The 20th Brussels Cartoon and Animated Film Festival also handed out its top European awards. There were prizes only for national films, because the international official selection is non-competitive. Because Brussels is the capital of Belgium, a country with two separate language-based communities, there are, of course, two national Grand Prix. The prize of the French-speaking community went to Stéphane Aubier and Vincent Patar for their film *Panique À La Cuisine* and the Dutch-speaking Flemish community prize went to Aljosja Roels for the film *Plasticrash*. Both prizes were 100,000 Belgian francs (US\$2,320). The Brussels Festival is also one of the partner festivals of Cartoon, the animation platform of the European Union. Cartoon's prestigious annual Cartoon d'Or prize is given to one of the European winners from the partner festivals each year. Because there is no international competi-

tion, the Brussels Festival names the candidates itself. The films named to compete for the next Cartoon d'Or in September are: *Chicken Kiev* by Thomas Stellmach (Germany), *Father And Daughter* by Michael Dudok de Wit (Britain), *Le Processus De Xavier* by l'Hermuzière and Philippe Grammaticopoulos (France), *Le Puits* by Jérôme Boulbès (France) and the two regional winners mentioned above.

To conclude the festival, for the second time, animation professionals met for three days for Anima, an event held March 1 – 3. This 4-day industry event featured various conferences, screenings and panel discussions. Topics included: Sound And Music In Animation, with lectures by Canadian composer Normand Roger; Animation Effects, with guest speaker Kim Keukeleire, an animator for Clayart, Will Vinton and on Aardman's *Chicken Run*; Writing For Animation - Authors'

Rights; and a round table featuring animators working abroad.

We are proud to feature courtesy of The Brussels Cartoon and Animated Film Festival, a gallery of photos from their twenty years of putting together amazing programs, conferences and lectures, and social events. Please visit us online at <http://www.awn.com/mag/issue6.01/6.01pages/brusselscrapbook.php3> to view the scrapbook. Congratulations Brussels!

Heikki Jokinen is a freelance critic and journalist based in Helsinki, Finland. He specializes in comics, short films and animation. He is chairman of the Finnish Art Critics' Association and the former president of ASIFA Nordic, the ASIFA regional body for the five Nordic and three Baltic countries.

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New from Japan: Anime Film Reviews

by Fred Patten

Around 1995, Japanese animation (anime) began pouring into North America, Europe and across the globe in video form. Most of these titles were unknown outside of Japan and never covered by animation journals. Whether a title is highly popular or very obscure, a high-quality theatrical feature or a cheap and unimaginative direct-to-video release, they all look the same on a store shelf. Therefore, *Animation World Magazine* will regularly review several new releases (including re-releases not previously covered) that have some merit and about which our readers should know.

Trigun. V.1, The \$60,000,000,000 Man. V.2, Lost Past. V.3, Wolfwood. V.4, Gung-Ho Guns. V.5, Angel Arms. V.6, Project Seeds. V.7, Puppet Master. V.8, High Noon.

TV series, 1998. Director: Satoshi Nishimura. V.1 & V.8, 100 mins.; V.2 - V.7, 75 mins. Price & format: video \$29.98 subtitled/\$24.98 dubbed; DVD \$29.98 bilingual. Distributor: Pioneer Entertainment.

Trigun is an excellent representation of anime TV series that are plotted as a cohesive story; in this case, 26 weekly episodes (April 2 - September 30, 1998). *Trigun* began with the look of an action-comedy combining parodies of science-fiction and Western movie stereotypes. A parched desert is populated with scattered small towns, usually centered around a

"Wild West" saloon. Hints that this is not Earth are the twin suns in the sky, cowboys riding ostrich-like birds rather than horses and the wreckage of futuristic technology scattered across the landscape. Everyone is frightened of a legendary outlaw, Vash the Stampede, reported to leave whole towns in rubble in his wake. Meryl Strife and Millie Thompson, two young insurance investigators, are ordered to find Vash and stop his destruction. Their search initially doesn't turn up anything but a clownish young drifter (think of the early Jerry Lewis) who continually stumbles

from Earth whose project failed 150 years earlier. He is also carrying on a bizarre secret war with a group of sadistic killers, the Gung-Ho Guns, who dress like Western villains but employ the latest deadly sci-fi technology and have been conducting the destruction and mass murders in Vash's name to discredit him. Most of the episodes could not be shown in any other order without sabotaging the carefully planned shift in atmosphere from light comedy to desperate drama. Yet there is some well-integrated humor throughout to keep the mood from becoming too despairing, and the dialogue is intelligent and gripping, especially the philosophical debates between Vash and gunman-turned-preacher (or is it the other way around?) Nicholas D. Wolfwood, which keeps hinting at secrets in both men's pasts.



The first three volumes of the sci-fi Western series *Trigun* distributed by Pioneer. © Pioneer Entertainment.

into the operations of outlaws and defeats them, apparently through sheer bumbling good luck. As the series evolves from slapstick comedy to serious drama, it is revealed that this buffoon is Vash and that the world is slowly dying due to the failure to terraform an alien planet. Vash has a personal mission that is somehow connected with the long-dead technicians

The production, by director Satoshi Nishimura (based on a popular comic book serial by Yasuhiro Nightow) at the Madhouse studio, takes advantage of the parodic Western setting to pace limited animation skillfully for lots of dramatic camera angles and slow pans, tense confrontations with no motion but shifting eyes, and then a sudden

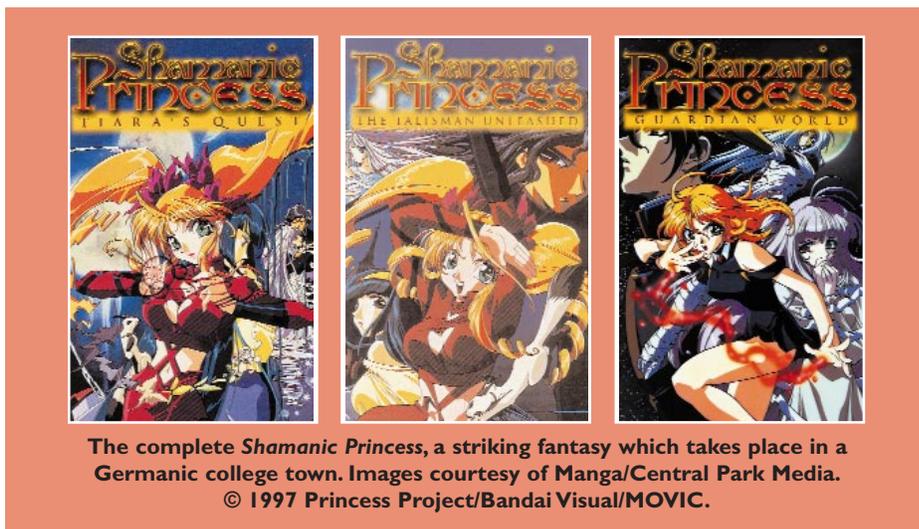
burst of action either too frantic to clearly show details or shown in a quick-cutting montage of motionless freeze-frames.

[Note: The two dollar signs in V.1 are deliberate. It means "sixty billion double-dollars."]

Shamanic Princess. Video Titles: V.1, Tiara's Quest. V.2, The Talisman Unleashed. V.3, Guardian World. DVD Title: The Complete Shamanic Princess.

OAV series (6 episodes), 1996-1998. Directors: Mitsuru Hongo, (episode 6) Hiroyuki Nishimura. 60 minutes each; DVD 180 minutes. Price & format: video \$24.99 subtitled/\$19.99 dubbed each; DVD \$29.99 bilingual. Distributor: U.S. Manga Corps/Central Park Media.

This is a strikingly unusual fantasy. The art style (by Atsuko Ishida, a member of the CLAMP art-group known in America for the *Cardcaptor Sakura* and *Rayearth* TV series and the *X* theatrical feature), the predominantly female teen cast and a heroine with a cute talking animal companion indicate an adventure designed for young girls. The non-linear story (the conclusion is in the fourth of the six episodes), the references to proto-Indo-European shamanism, the intensity of the drama (how do you fight a psychotically cruel god?) and the confusion of having to guess whether any character is really who he or she seems to be ("What is real and what is false? Can't you tell the difference?"), indicate an intellectual challenge for sophists with a predilection towards solipsism. The locale is a picturesque Germanic college town, but the main cast is a group of young — sorcerers? angels? — posing as students.



Cryptic dialogue gradually reveals that they are from a supernatural guardian world, where they are acolytes of the priestly upper class that worships an unseen deity manifest in the Throne of Yord. One of their group, Kagetsu, has stolen the Throne of Yord and fled to our world with it. Tiara, the protagonist (Kagetsu's former lover), is sent with Japolo, her talking ermine familiar, to find and recover the throne; an assignment which will presumably mean killing Kagetsu. Tiara is taken aback to find that Lena, a former friend, is also on Earth with Leon, her human familiar, claiming that she has been sent on the same assignment. Are Lena and Leon confederates of Kagetsu trying to save him; are they trying to usurp Tiara's mission for their own prestige; or are their elders pitting them against each other? Did Kagetsu have a good reason for stealing the throne? Is the god within the throne a myth, a passive observer or a manipulator of the events? The action increases equally in emotional tension, deadly violence and surrealistic mysticism as the setting shifts back and forth between the quiet Teutonic academic community, the Celtic-Central Asian appearance of the

guardian world and the god's domain within the Throne of Yord.

Shamanic Princess' erratic release in Japan (six half-hour videos between June 1996 and June 1998), with an increasing delay between each and a new director for the final one, combined with the enigmatic conclusion and the addition of subsequent flashback scenes (which answer some previous questions but raise new ones) in episodes #5 and #6, left the Japanese public wondering for some time if the series was really over. Tiara's appearance in sedate 19th Century European dress with her face and arms covered with vivid shamanistic tattoos, has inspired several costumes at fan conventions. (Production by Animate Film.)

Blue Seed. V.1, The Nightmare Begins. V.2, Descent Into Terror. V.3, Prelude to Sacrifice. V.4, Nightfall.

TV series, 1994-1995. Director: Jun Kamiya. V.1, 7 episodes, 175 minutes; V.2, 7 episodes, 180 minutes; V.3 & V.4, 6 episodes, 150 minutes. Price & format: \$29.98 bilingual DVD. Distributor: A. D. Vision Films.

A common anime formula

is an attack against humanity by monsters that are opposed by a small elite squad. The attackers may be space aliens or technobiological mutants or supernatural horrors, and the defense force may be police or scientists or occult ghost-busters. But the protagonists, if not the whole team, will be women. These are modern sci-fi variants of myths dating back to a culture that believed the world to be crowded with hostile spirits which only a cadre of virginal priestesses could keep at bay. This formula gets closest to its roots, literally, in *Yuzo Takada's Blue Seed* (the American title), a 26-episode TV serial (October 4, 1994 to March 29, 1995) adapted by the popular Takada from his manga novel. Momiji Fujimiya, a 15-year-old student, is just beginning to blossom into womanhood when she is attacked by a giant vegetable dragon, and rescued by a super-boy who seems part plant himself. She learns that she has an older twin sister who was separated from her at birth and that they are the last descendants of the legendary union of the god Susano-o (yes, that's the correct spelling) and human Princess Kushinada whom he rescued from the eight-headed dragon Orochi. The menace is rising again, and her sister who was being raised to combat it has apparently just been killed in the battle. Momiji is drafted into the newly formed Terrestrial Administration Center to combat it. The menace is not taken seriously by the government and the TAC is a dumping ground for science geeks, computer nerds and gung-ho commando wannabes. But they are all good-hearted and a camaraderie develops. The small team discovers origins tying the mythological monsters of all cul-

tures to a long-dormant vegetative intelligence, the Aragami, that is reawakening to challenge humanity for possession of the Earth. Early episodes are light-hearted. Momiji hopes to enjoy exciting adventures with her new friends and still keep up with her schoolwork. But the Aragami grow more deadly, Momiji is horrified to see people killed all around her, and Japan is swept by religious fundamentalism demanding a return to the old gods; a creed that believes the Aragami can be stopped only by the human sacrifice of the reborn Princess Kushinada. This brief synopsis omits several closely-woven important subplots.

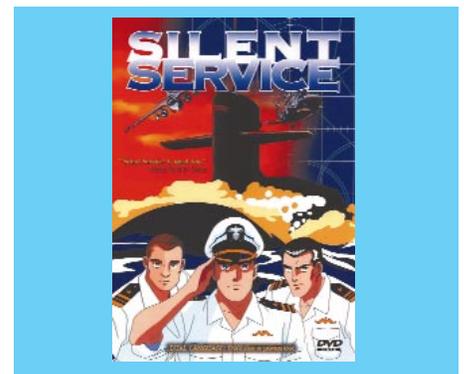
The TV serial (by two studios, Production IG and Ashi Production) has the usual shortcomings of animating a detailed, realistic art style on a limited TV budget. What made *Blue Seed* a success was the intriguing blend of modern technology and ancient mythology, the sympathetic and believable personalities of the cast, and the rich characterization of Momiji, who evolves from a shallow, boy-crazy girl to a young woman willing to accept her karmic destiny. A.D.V.'s separate dubbed and subtitled video releases in 1996 and 1997 (two episodes per volume) are still available, but the new DVD edition offers English, Japanese and Spanish dialogue tracks, English subtitles, many more episodes per volume and several extras.

Silent Service.

TV movie, 1996. Director: Ryosuke Takahashi. 100 minutes. Price & format: DVD \$29.99 bilingual. Distributor: U.S. Manga Corps/Central Park Media.

Kaiji Kawaguchi's *Silent*

Service, a military/political thriller in the vein of *Fail Safe* or *Advise and Consent*, set off immediate controversy when its serialization began in 1989. The saga of a daringly pacifistic Japanese submarine commander who seizes control of Japan's first nuclear submarine and uses it to bluff and finesse the world into accepting nuclear disarmament, dramatically humiliating the warmongering American and Russian military establishments along the way, was accused of both overly simplistic pacifism and encouraging a return to Japan's wartime nationalism. A best-seller throughout the early 1990s in bound collections of the comic-book serial, it was not animated until 1995 when the beginning of the story was made into a two-hour TV movie (March 3, 1996).



Silent Service, a military/political thriller centering on the efforts of a daring submarine commander whose mission is worldwide nuclear disarmament. Image courtesy of Manga/Central Park Media. © 1995 Kaiji Kawaguchi/Kodansha/Sunrise.

In "the near future," the U.S. Navy and Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force, closely allied since the end of World War II, share technology to build Japan's first nuclear submarine. It is officially a joint project, but the arrogant U.S. sailors act like they consider the "Japs" their servants. Captain Shiro Kaieda, commander of the new *Seabat* with an all-Japanese crew, disappears during a training

exercise with the U.S. 7th Fleet, radioing a message to the world that he and his men are now the world's first maritime mobile independent nation, the *Yamato*. The outraged American 7th Fleet declares him a pirate and starts firing torpedoes and missiles at him, while the saber-rattling U.S. President declares it an obvious plot of the Japanese government to steal American nuclear submarine technology and threatens an American reoccupation of Japan. What everyone wonders is whether Kaieda has nuclear missiles on his sub...

For a low-budget TV production, the Madhouse studio turned out a well-directed thriller. *Hunt for Red October*-type scenes of suspenseful underwater hide-and-seek alternate with scenes of political panic in Washington and Tokyo. These conveniently lend themselves to long moments of motionless "silent running" tension and close-ups of talking heads. To work well, really convincing voice acting is a must. The DVD allows viewers to compare the quality of the Japanese and American voice actors; generally they are about equal, though a couple of the American voices snarl and growl too melodramatically. Unfortunately, the "realistic" military scenario, despite excellently detailed uniforms and naval vessels, is about as plausible as that in the later *Die Hard* movies. The brilliant Kaieda can peacefully immobilize a pursuing American nuclear sub by sneaking behind it and firing a torpedo without a warhead to smash its propeller. Even with automated homing guidance, that is a trick on a par with Robin Hood's ability to split an enemy's arrow in mid-flight with his own. Plus, TV viewers felt cheated when

the movie ended with a cliffhanger, as a teaser to buy the direct-to-video sequel (which is not included here, either).

Maze.Video Titles:V.1, Ultimate Rage.V.2,Whirlwind Showdown.V.3, Evil Labyrinth.V.4, Time Traveling Playboy.V.5, Beating Heart.V.6, Shocking Transformation.V.7, Beautiful Stranger.V.8, Final Battle. DVD: No subtitle.

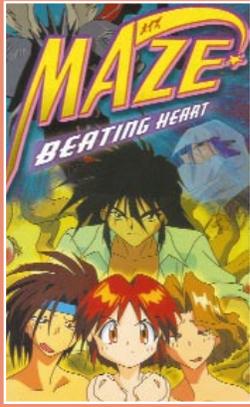
OAV series (2 episodes), 1996; TV series (25 episodes), 1997. Director: Iku Suzuki. Price & format: DVD, 85 minutes, \$29.99 bilingual; video \$19.99 each, V.1, 100 minutes dubbed or subtitled; V.2 – V.8, 75 minutes dubbed only. Distributor: Software Sculptors/Central Park Media.

Everyone is aware that the Japanese animation industry produces much erotic anime. This is not just pornography for the adult market. Japanese cultural standards about nudity and sexual awareness are more open than in the West. This often presents marketing problems. *Maze: Mega Burst Space* began as a two-video OAV (July and September 1996, produced by J. C. Staff) for teens.

It pokes fun at fantasy role-playing-game stereotypes, including their marketing, and adolescent burgeoning sexuality. A "high concept" comparison might be *Playboy* humor designed for a 13- to 16-year-old market. There is plenty of teen girl full-frontal nudity, and one boy about 6 to 8 years old is nude in several bathing scenes. Maze, the protagonist, is a demure girl who is thrown, like Dorothy into Oz, into a generic fantasy-gaming world where a demonic priesthood has just destroyed the Kingdom of Barton. She joins a group of questers escorting young Princess Mill to safety in a neighboring land. The questers include Solude, a young lesbian ninja warrior who makes passes at her. Maze inexplicably gains magic talents in this world; her "phantom light power" is handy to blast the enemy's battle robots, but a curse related to werewolfism turns Maze every night into a lecherous boy who goes girl-hunting. Nothing objectionable is shown, but innuendo makes it clear that he finds girls who do not say, "No" and they go all the way. A climatic "battle" against a dragon becomes a parody of TV quiz shows with the



Maze, the series, from Katsumi Hasegawa, screenwriter of *The Slayers!* *The Slayers Next* and *Record of Lodoss War: Chronicles of the Heroic Knight*. © 1997 Satoru Akahori, Eiji Suganuma/Kadokawashoten, JVC, J.C. Staff.



Every night the main character, Maze, transforms into a lecherous man who must rescue a princess from a warrior cult. Images courtesy of Manga/Central Park Media. © 1997 Satoru Akahori, Eiji Suganuma/Kadokawashoten, JVC, J.C. Staff.

Wildly popular in Japan, *Maze*, was created and marketed directly to the teen-age/adolescent market. Images courtesy of Manga/Central Park Media. © 1997 Satoru Akahori, Eiji Suganuma/Kadokawashoten, JVC, J.C. Staff.

questers challenged to prove their familiarity with the sponsor's games.

The *Maze* OAV was so popular that there were demands to put it on TV. Its high school level erotic humor (for both genders) was too strong for family TV even in Japan, so a 25-episode revision was produced (April 3 to September 25, 1997) that expands the fantasy-adventure action and plays down the erotic humor. But what is acceptable for family TV in Japan will still startle American family TV audiences. The American video release has an

advisory of "Suggested 13 and up - parental discretion advised." It comprises a DVD (both English dubbed and Japanese with English subtitles) containing both halves of the erotic OAV as a 60-minute feature plus the first half-hour TV episode, and eight videos (dubbed only) containing the 25 TV episodes. A DVD bilingual release of the whole TV series, available only as a boxed set, will be released in July 2001.

[Note: This release imitates the Japanese release regarding the

title. The decorative logo states *Maze* in English, followed by *Mega Burst Space* in untranslated Japanese. Therefore, above I haven't listed the full title as *Maze: Mega Burst Space*, in order to avoid causing confusion.]

Fred Patten has written on anime for fan and professional magazines since the late 1970s.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an e-mail to editor@awn.com.

**THE ANIMATION
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ACTING for ANIMATORS

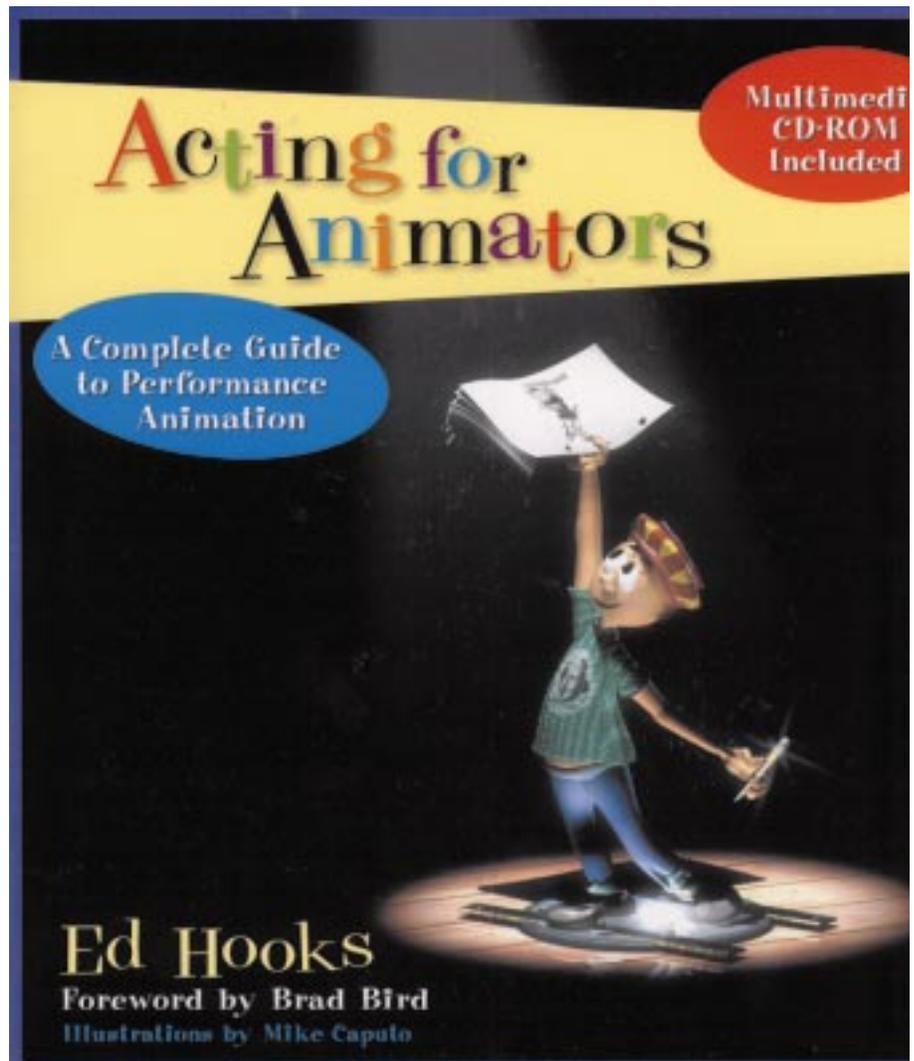
book review by Paul Brizzi

An animation movie is just like any other type of movie. It runs at 24 frames per second, there is a script, a director, a producer, an artistic team, technicians, editing, post-production, etc., except you don't have actors, right? Wrong! The actors are working in the shadows of small rooms and cubes. They are the animators who give life to their characters. To reach this goal, they will spend days and weeks to find the perfect attitude, behavior or facial expression just for one scene. There is no doubt that they will be interested in *Acting for Animators* by Ed Hooks. As it says on the cover, this book is a guide to performance animation. While I do not know if it is really complete (these skills take a lifetime to learn), it is definitely an attractive and very interesting book. It is written in a way that categorizes every aspect of acting, from concepts to techniques. It is easy to read because it talks to one in a simple and direct way, and when it comes to theory, Ed Hooks always brings concrete examples to demonstrate his points.

Two Essentials

I have been seduced by the two essential points that Hooks makes in the book, and constantly comes back to, for my entire professional animation career.

First point: it's all about emotion! Because the audience



will be watching the characters on the screen, they will only be interested in them, if they care for them. They want to know how the characters feel about things, and this brings me to the second point: empathy. Ed Hooks also insists on this concept, because the audience will be satisfied and moved if they can relate to the situation and emotions that the char-

acters have to go through. It is all about identification.

Animation: The Ultimate

The goal of the book is to create a bridge between live-action actors and animators. I would say that this virtual bridge already exists unconsciously as soon as one begins animating. The animator knows that when it

comes to emotion, the audience doesn't make a distinction between live and animated characters. Like Ed Hooks says, he noticed that screening live-action film clips to animators makes the greatest impact. In this regard, I regret that there is an aspect of animation, a point, that is not mentioned enough in the book. It is related to a skill that animators have, which gives them a certain superiority when one compares it with the talent of a live-action movie actor. This is the particular ability to exaggerate a simple attitude using body language, enhance a sensitive moment in the arc of a movement or at the peak of an emotion, thanks to the media of animation. You can call this expressionism, caricature or "milking the moment," but it is the fabulous power of drawing and the animation art form. This point was not brought up enough in my opinion, especially when one considers the amazing possibilities it gives the animator. When one ani-

THE GOAL OF THE BOOK IS TO CREATE A BRIDGE BETWEEN LIVE-ACTION ACTORS AND ANIMATORS.

mates, one is in total control to make each and every point, to create everything.

Nonetheless, this book will be very useful to animators. They will find it to be a very interesting resource with numerous references and a judicious acting analysis using examples of particularly successful scenes from *The Iron Giant*. There is also a CD that contains illustrated acting concepts. This is a library must have!

Acting for Animators: A Complete Guide to Performance Animation, by Ed Hooks. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann

Publishing, 2000. 125 pages. ISBN: 0-325-00229-0. (\$18.95).

Paul Brizzi is an animation director at Disney Feature Animation. He and his brother Gaëtan directed the last segment of Fantasia 2000 "The Firebird." Previously, they both were sequence directors on The Hunchback of Notre Dame. Born in Paris, they began their career in 1973 as animators and created their own animation company in 1982. They directed and produced shorts, commercials, TV series and directed a feature for Gaumont in 1985, Asterix versus Cesar. In 1989, they sold their studio, Brizzi Film, to Disney TV and in 1992 began working for Disney Feature Animation until coming to live in Los Angeles to work in the Burbank studios in 1996.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an e-mail to editor@awn.com.

Bonus HTML Features

Every on-line (HTML) issue of *Animation World Magazine* contains additional features not found in the download or print Acrobat version, such as QuickTime movies, links to Animation World Network sites, extended articles and special sections. Don't miss the following highlights that are showcased exclusively in this month's *Animation World Magazine* HTML version:

- **Brussels Turns 20!**

The Brussels Cartoon and Animated Film Festival celebrated its 20th anniversary. Join us for a special photo gallery of twenty years on line at: <http://www.awn.com/mag/issue6.01/6.01pages/brusselsscrapbook.php3>

- **Sketching on Location: Pencil Technique**

Renowned drawing instructor Glenn Vilppu continues with his sixth sketching on location teaching installment. This month he is discussing the artists most basic of tools and how it should be properly used: the pencil! Join us online at <http://www.awn.com/mag/issue6.01/6.01pages/6.01vilppu.php3> to view more examples.

Animation World News

Written and compiled by Rick DeMott

Technology news written and compiled by Paul Younghusband

Tampere news written by AWN's Scandinavian correspondent Heikki Jokinen

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Awards

- Clifford Leads All Toon Nods At Daytime Emmy
- Academy Of Interactive Arts Announces Nominations
- Brothers Quay Take Home Tampere Fest's Jury Prize
- Brussels Announces Winners & Cartoon d'Or Hopefuls
- BAFTA Prize Goes To Father & Daughter
- Toy Story II Takes Home Two Grammys
- Black Soul Wins Berlin Film Festival

▶ <http://www2.awn.com/mag/news.php3?item=Awards>

Business

- AtomShockwave Taps Another \$22.9 Million
- Greenlight Media To Launch \$100M Animation Fund
- Animation Stock Ticker For Tuesday, March 20, 2001
- Spain's Filmax Opens Ani Arm
- Former Disney Exec Blows Whistle With \$20M Lawsuit
- Animation Stock Ticker For Tuesday, March 13, 2001
- Disney's Go.com To Stay
- Czech Public Aghast Over Pokemon
- Harvey Sells All Of Its Classic Characters
- EM.TV Shareholders Demand \$9.5M
- SimEx Set To Acquire Iwerks
- AOL Time Warner Combines TV Groups
- Animation Stock Ticker For Tuesday, March 6, 2001
- Pentamedia Acquires Improvision
- UGO Networks Raises \$23 Million
- Disney Dishes Out \$350M For Winnie The Pooh
- Heavy.com Taps \$3M In Funds
- Animation Stock Ticker For Tuesday, February 27, 2001
- BKN Unionizes, DIC In Contract Talks
- Imax Lays Off 130 In Restructuring
- Animation Stock Ticker For Tuesday, February 20, 2001
- Appeals Court Upholds Copyright Extension
- Stan Lee Media Files For Bankruptcy

▶ <http://www2.awn.com/mag/news.php3?item=Business>

Call for Entries

- Students & Pros Wine Country Film Festival Calls For Toons
- Austria's Ars Electronica Wants The Art of Tomorrow Today!
- Festival Synthesis Puts Out Call For CG Toons
- Send Your Toons To The Melbourne Animation Fest!
- Telluride IndieFest Wants Your Toons!
- PlanetOut Is Looking For Gay Themed Shorts
- Students & Latin American Artists, Córdoba 2001 Wants Your Films
- Reel Film Festival Puts Out Call For Entries
- Showcase Your Toons At The IBM WIA Fundraiser Party
- Send Your Films To The Crested Butte Reel Fest
- Bradford Animation Festival Wants Your Animation Art!
- Send Your Toons To The Virgin Islands
- Send Your Toon To Krok & Let It Sail The River Dnieper
- Calgary Film Festival Puts Out Call For Entries
- Gemini Awards Showcases The Best In Canadian TV
- Your Film Could Tour With The WinFemme Film Festival
- International Emmys Want The Best From The World Of TV

▶ <http://www2.awn.com/mag/news.php3?item=Call%for%Entries>

Commercials

- iXL Throws Knives At Penn & Teller In Pizza Hut Spots
- Quiet Man Pals Around With Pandas For The World Wildlife Fund
- EyeballNYC Adds Color To Spirit 2001 Spots
- It's All In The Mix For Black Logic & Twix
- Ring Of Fire Burns Bright For TechTV IDs
- Wild Brain Produces "Fruitensity" For Jolly Rancher
- Black Logic Scratches For The New York Lottery
- iXL Brings i-Cybie Robot Dog To Life
- Motion Theory Races For Suzuki TV Campaign
- Bugshop Rams Home New Animal Planet Campaign
- Black Logic Takes Five For Nasdaq

▶ <http://www2.awn.com/mag/news.php3?item=Commercials>

Events

- NAB 2001 Converges The Worlds Of TV & The Net In Las Vegas
- Hal Willner's Harry Smith Project Features Beck & Elvis Costello!
- ASIFA-Hollywood Screens Rare Anime Flick, Jack And The Witch
- ASIFA-Hollywood Presents The First TV Cartoons!
- Newport Beach Film Fest To Screen Anime Feature Escaflowne
- Avant-Garde Animator Harry Smith Exhibit Comes To LA's Getty Center
- Final Cut Pro 2.0 Demo In Hollywood
- ASIFA-Hollywood Members, The March Meeting Is Coming!
- Enjoy Animation And Music At The Sprocket Ensemble CD Celebration
- Frames 2001 Convention Makes Its Debut In Mumbai, India!
- San Francisco Int. Film Festival Is The Oldest Festival In The Americas
- Sprockets Film Festival For Children Looks At All Forms Of Film For Kids!
- Larry Lauria Workshop In New Jersey
- Planet Comicon Is One Of The Fastest Growing Sci-Fi Conventions In The U.S.
- I-CON Sci-Fi/Fantasy Convention Invades The Northeast!
- Last Three Cities For Kinetica 2: A Centennial Tribute To Oskar Fischinger
- Larry Lauria Workshop In Orlando
- Check Out Emerging Talent At The Art Institute of Phoenix's Graduate Exhibition
- Check Out Cutting Edge Animation Art At The Project Exhibition
- The Art Institutes International's SUPERSTARS! Of Animation & Design
- Women In Animation Los Angeles General Meeting Coming Soon!
- The 14th Annual Images Festival Of Independent Film & Video Skates The Edge
- USC's Jacquelyn Ford Morie At The University of Washington
- Fantasm 2001 Is A Sci-Fi Convention To End All Sci-Fi Conventions
- ASIFA-Colorado Presents 3D Animator Zbigniew Dowgiello
- The 7th Annual Taos Talking Picture Festival
- Cartoons On The Bay Continues To Celebrate TV Toons!
- SKYY Short Film Awards Launch Films Sky High
- MIP TV Is The Place To Sell Your Toons Around The Globe
- KC Filmmakers Jubilee Brings Indie Spirit To The Midwest
- Michel Gagné Signs New Book, Insanely Twisted Rabbits
- Go To Cal Arts To Help With "The One Second Film"
- Entertainment Graphics Organization 2001 (EGO 2001)
- KC Filmmakers Jubilee Brings Indie Spirit To The Midwest
- Michel Gagné Signs New Book, Insanely Twisted Rabbits
- Go To Cal Arts To Help With "The One Second Film"
- Entertainment Graphics Organization 2001 (EGO 2001)
- The 14th Annual Dallas Video Festival To Honor Mike Judge
- FanimeCon 2001 Is The Anime Convention For Fans From Fans!
- TEAM X Awards Highlight Student Tobacco Awareness PSA
- Flashcore Presents An Online Entertainment Forum At InternetWorld!
- Upcoming Panel Discusses "Women On The Web"
▶ <http://www2.awn.com/mag/news.php3?item=Events>

Education

- Cornerstone Animates 48 Volumes Of Your Child
▶ <http://www2.awn.com/mag/news.php3?item=Education>

Films

- Threshold & Dimension Team On Duke Nukem Feature Film
- Hannibal Stays Tough With More Traffic At Int. BO
- Enemy At The Gates Crashes Into Second
- Oniria Starts Production On 2nd CGI Feature
- WB Dumps Manex For Matrix F/X
- Hong Kong's Golden Harvest To Make First Toon Feature
- Hannibal Claims More Countries Around The Globe
- See Spot Run Back Into Third
- VeggieTales Theatrical Feature Starts Production
- Peter Pan II Flies To The Big Screen
- Groove Grapples With Hannibal In Sweden & the UK
- Hannibal Slips To Second At US Box Office
- Adam Sandler's Feature Toon Gains New Name
- Hannibal Takes Teeth Hold At Int. BO, Groove Dances In Sweden
- Hey, Hey, Hey, It's A Fat Albert Feature
- Hannibal Takes Third Helping At The US Box Office
- Inkwell Images Uncovers Rare Sound Fleischer Toons
- Hannibal Takes A Slice Of The International Box Office
- Hannibal Claims U.S. Holiday Box Office
▶ <http://www2.awn.com/mag/news.php3?item=Films>

In Passing

- Voice Of Underdog's Polly Purebread Passes Away
- Warner Composer Richard Stone Passes Away
- Snuffy Smith Cartoonist Passes
▶ <http://www2.awn.com/mag/news.php3?item=In%Passing>

Internet and Interactive

- This Week's Web Animation Guide For Friday, March 16, 2001
- THQ Gains John K's Ripping Friends Gaming Rights
- This Week's Web Animation Guide For Friday, March 9, 2001
- This Week's Web Animation Guide For Friday, March 2, 2001
- This Week's Web Animation Guide For Friday, February 23, 2001
▶ <http://www2.awn.com/mag/news.php3?item=Internet%and%Interactive>

Licensing

- Mickey Mouse & Others To Hock Coca-Cola Drinks
▶ <http://www2.awn.com/mag/news.php3?item=Licensing>

People

- TV-Loonland Gains Head Of Development
 - EyeballNYC Grabs Armstrong As Designer
 - Cartoon Network Italy Appoints Director Of Content
 - Cinesite Names New Executive Producer Of Visual Effects
 - Nickelodeon Promotes Shapiro To Exec VP
 - The Flux Group Signs Director Simon Holden
 - ATTIK Names Monica Perez Creative Director
 - Viacom CFO Steps Down
 - Black Logic Gains Five New 3D Artists
 - Nicolas Gorse Joins Turner Broadcasting System France
 - Goodspeed & Associates Names Design Director
 - Terra Networks Losses COO, Gains President
 - AARGH! Animation Co-Founder Resigns
 - Disney's Hallett Promoted To Exec VP/CFO
 - Digital Pictures Gains New Marketing Director/Executive Producer
 - Kirch Exec Takes Over Sales Post At EM.TV, Others Removed
- ▶ <http://www2.awn.com/mag/news.php3?item=People>

Technology

- Criterion Announces RenderWare Platform
- NDL Announces NetImmerse 4.0
- pmG Launches New Website
- Ascension Previews ReActor At GDC
- ExpressionTools Releases English Version Of ETShade
- Alias|Wavefront Become Official Xbox Developer
- Giant Studios Make Fruits Of Labor Using BOXX
- BBC Science Cause Tremors For Nothing Real
- QEDSoft To Support Kaydara FBX Format
- Adobe Takes After Effects To Another Dimension With 5.0
- REALVIZ & Alias|Wavefront Offer ImageModeler For Maya
- Kelseus Announces CLOTH 1.0 For 3D MAX

- Web3D Consortium Announced Rich Media 3D Initiative
 - Sony Selects Vicon 8 Motion-Capture System
- ▶ <http://www2.awn.com/mag/news.php3?item=Technology>

Television

- U.S. Primetime TV Ratings For The Week Of March 12 - 18, 2001
 - BKN Summons New Spells Series
 - EM.TV Teams With Spain's Planeta 2010 On 9 Series
 - U.S. Primetime TV Ratings For The Week Of March 5 - 11, 2001
 - ABC Adds Olsen Twin Toon To Saturday Line-Up
 - Kids WB Announces 2001-02 Schedule
 - Disney Calls On Teamo Supremo For One Saturday Morning
 - U.S. Primetime TV Ratings For The Week Of February 26 - March 4, 2001
 - U.S. Primetime TV Ratings For The Week Of February 19 - 25, 2001
 - Cartoon Network Rolls Out 2001-2002 Schedule
 - U.S. Primetime TV Ratings For The Week Of February 12 - 18, 2001
- ▶ <http://www2.awn.com/mag/news.php3?item=Television>

Video

- Sword In The Stone & Bedknobs Arrive On DVD
 - Necronomicon Steams Up Home Video
 - Lady & The Tramp II Scores \$50M In First Week
 - Harlock Saga Sails Onto Home Video
 - Direct-To-Vid Sequel For Lady & The Tramp
 - Romantic Tales From The NFB Hits DVD
 - Two New Monster Rancher Titles Come To Video
 - Manga To Release Entire Street Fighter II Series On DVD
 - 8th Volume In Martian Successor Nadesico Hits Stores
 - Special Edition Of Pet Shop Of Horrors Hits DVD!
 - CGI Series Shadow Raiders Comes To Stores
 - War Breaks Loose On Video With Release Of A.D. Police
- ▶ <http://www2.awn.com/mag/news.php3?item=Video>

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Never before available!!
Original Production cels from the Oscar nominated film *The Big Snit* by director Richard Condie



Next Issue's Highlights

Recruiting and Jobs, May 2001

May will feature a look at what skills you need to remain competitive in our rapidly changing digital world. From television to CGI work, what tools should you have on your resume? Plus, what drawings should you have in your portfolio? We are also going to have a special focus on Australia. Written by Stephen Lynch, these three articles will review the recent Australian Effects and Animation Festival, *The Magic Pudding* a new traditionally animated feature film, and the special effects companies of Oz. We are also going to look at DreamWorks' new comedy *Shrek*. Brett Rogers will be profiling Cartoonnetwork.com and Fred Patten will be back with more anime reviews. Event reviews will include MIP TV, Cartoons on the Bay, MILIA and more. Maureen Furniss will have five new films from the festival circuit to discuss and Will Ryan will debut with his new column, "9 1/2 Questions." Martin "Dr. Toon" Goodman will also return with Part II of his "Walking to Toontown." Catherine Winder and Zahra Dowlatabadi will continue with another excerpt from their book *Producing Animation*. Plus as a special treat, we have an interview with Oscar winner Michaël Dudok de Wit.

Upcoming Editorial Calendar

Recruiting and Jobs	May 2001
Independent Animation	June 2001
Internet Animation	July 2001
Computer Animation	August 2001