



SOCIETY FOR ANIMATION STUDIES 2025 CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Version 1.1 (last updated 22 June 2025)

Contents

Main Schedule	3
Keynotes	8
Panel Lists	10
Panel Information	17

Main Schedule

Unless stated otherwise below, all events will take place at UAL London College of Communication, Elephant and Castle, London, SE1 6SB.

MONDAY JULY 7

8:30am-9:15am REGISTRATION / TEA & COFFEE		
9:15am INTRODUCTORY REMARKS Lecture Theatre A		
9:30am KEYNOTE + Q&A: MALCOLM COOK Lecture Theatre A		
10:45am BREAK / TEA & COFFEE		
11:15am PANEL 1A: BAD ANIMATION Lecture Theatre A	11:15am PANEL 1B: ANIMATED DOCUMENTARY 1 Lecture Theatre B	11:15am PANEL 1C: MOTION Lecture Theatre C
1:00pm LUNCH Canteen	1:00pm SIG MEETINGS See Below for Room Assignments	
2:00pm PANEL 2A: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE 1 Lecture Theatre A	2:00pm PANEL 2B: NATIONAL DISCOURSES 1 Lecture Theatre B	2:00pm PANEL 2C: TIME, METAPHOR, AND MEMORY Lecture Theatre C
3:45pm BREAK / TEA & COFFEE		
4:15pm PANEL 3A: PIONEERING WOMEN IN ANIMATION IN SPAIN Lecture Theatre A	4:15pm PANEL 3B: AESTHETICS Lecture Theatre B	4:15pm PANEL 3C: MICRO TALKS Lecture Theatre C
6:00pm-7:45pm EVENING ENTERTAINMENT: DRINKS RECEPTION		

THROUGHOUT THE DAY:

SAS ANIMATION FILMS

A rotating presentation of animated works submitted by SAS members. For formal screenings and more information about the included films, see Panels 5C and 12C.

Upper Gallery

BLOOMSBURY PUBLISHING

Presentation of titles from Bloomsbury's catalogue.

Location TBC

SIG MEETINGS: (Please feel free to bring lunch from the canteen to the meetings)

ANIME STUDIES

Location TBC

IMMERSIVE ANIMATION

Location TBC

DOCUMENTARY

Location TBC

EVENING ENTERTAINMENT:

All delegates are invited to a welcome reception to celebrate the beginning of the conference. Drinks and nibbles provided.

TUESDAY JULY 8

8:30am-9:00am TEA & COFFEE		
8:45am ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES		
9:00am PANEL 4A: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE 2 Lecture Theatre A	9:00am PANEL 4B: ANIMATION HISTORIES Lecture Theatre B	9:00am PANEL 4C: NATIONAL DISCOURSES 2 Lecture Theatre C
10:45am BREAK / TEA & COFFEE		
11:15am PANEL 5A: ANIMATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT 1 Lecture Theatre A	11:15am PANEL 5B: ANIMATED DOCUMENTARY 2 Lecture Theatre B	11:15am PANEL 5C: SAS ANIMATION SCREENING 1 Lecture Theatre C
1:00pm LUNCH Canteen	1:00pm SIG MEETINGS See Below for Room Assignments	
2:00pm KEYNOTE + Q&A: JOANNA QUINN Lecture Theatre A		
3:15pm BREAK / TEA & COFFEE		
3:45pm PANEL 6A: STOP-MOTION 1 Lecture Theatre A	3:45pm PANEL 6B: REPRESENTATION Lecture Theatre B	3:45pm PANEL 6C: ANIMATION AND CARE Lecture Theatre C
5:30pm-8:30pm EVENING ENTERTAINMENT: UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS LONDON SHOWCASE		

THROUGHOUT THE DAY:

SAS ANIMATION FILMS

A rotating presentation of animated works submitted by SAS members. For formal screenings and more information about the included films, see Panels 5C and 12C.

Upper Gallery

PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Presentation of titles from Palgrave Macmillan's catalogue, and opportunity for editorial meetings.

Location TBC

INTELLECT BOOKS

Presentation of titles from Intellect's catalogue, and opportunity for editorial meetings.

Location TBC

SIG MEETINGS: (Please feel free to bring lunch from the canteen to the meetings)

WOMEN IN/OF/AND ANIMATION

Location TBC

ANIMATION PRACTICE AS RESEARCH

Location TBC

SOUND AND MUSIC IN ANIMATION

Location TBC

EVENING ENTERTAINMENT:

All delegates are invited to a showcase of UAL student and staff artwork and research. There will also be opportunities to visit LCC Special Collections and the Stanley Kubrick Archive. Dinner and drinks provided.

WEDNESDAY JULY 9

8:30am-9:00am TEA & COFFEE		
8:45am ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES		
9:00am PANEL 7A: SUSTAINING MOVEMENT: ANIMATING ANTI-RACISM Lecture Theatre A	9:00am PANEL 7B: STOP-MOTION 2 Lecture Theatre B	9:00am PANEL 7C: ANIMATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT 2 Lecture Theatre C
10:45am BREAK / TEA & COFFEE		
11:15am PANEL 8A: POLITICAL ANIMATION Lecture Theatre A	11:15am PANEL 8B: THE BOUNDARIES OF REALISM Lecture Theatre B	11:15am PANEL 8C: CHINESE ANIMATION Lecture Theatre C
1:00pm LUNCH Canteen	1:00pm SIG MEETINGS See Below for Room Assignments	
2:00pm AGM		
3:00pm KEYNOTE + Q&A: MICHAEL DUDOK DE WIT Lecture Theatre A		
4:15pm BREAK / TEA & COFFEE		
4:45pm PANEL 9A: SUSTAINING POLISH ANIMATION: DATASETS, ARCHIVES AND MEMORIES Lecture Theatre A	4:45pm PANEL 9B: ANIMATION AND SOCIAL PURPOSE Lecture Theatre B	4:45pm PANEL 9C: EMBODIED AND DISEMBODIED ANIMATION Lecture Theatre C
6:30pm-9:30pm EVENING ENTERTAINMENT: ANIMATION PUB QUIZ The Rosy Hue Pub, 6 Ash Ave, Elephant and Castle, SE17 1GO		

THROUGHOUT THE DAY:

SAS ANIMATION FILMS

A rotating presentation of animated works submitted by SAS members. For formal screenings and more information about the included films, see Panels 5C and 12C.

Upper Gallery

INTELLECT BOOKS

Presentation of titles from Intellect's catalogue, and opportunity for editorial meetings.

Location TBC

SIG MEETINGS: (Please feel free to bring lunch from the canteen to the meetings)

ANIMATION AND EDUCATION

Location TBC

NON-HUMAN ANIMALS IN ANIMATION

Location TBC

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND ANIMATION

Location TBC

EVENING ENTERTAINMENT:

All delegates are invited to the Animation Pub Quiz, held at The Rosy Hue Pub, 6 Ash Ave, Elephant and Castle, SE17 1GQ (5 minutes' walk from LCC). Dinner and drinks will be able to purchase via a pre-order link (available soon) and throughout the quiz. Seating will begin from 6:30pm, and the quiz will start at 7:30pm. We have a selection of fantastic prizes kindly donated by Bloomsbury, Palgrave Macmillan, Intellect Books and more! Maximum 4 people per team.

THURSDAY JULY 10

8:30am-9:30am TEA & COFFEE		
9:15am ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES		
9:30am PANEL 10A: SUSTAINING ANIMATION: THE STATE OF PLAY IN A SMALL NATION Lecture Theatre A	9:30am PANEL 10B: TELEVISION AND ONLINE ANIMATION Lecture Theatre B	9:30am PANEL 10C: EXPERIMENTAL PRACTICE 1 Lecture Theatre C
11:15am BREAK / TEA & COFFEE		
11:45am PANEL 11A: (UN)EXPLAINABLE AI: CREATIVE TECH BETWEEN ARTISTIC AND AMATEUR PRACTICES Lecture Theatre A	11:45am PANEL 11B: ETHNOGRAPHIC AND AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ANIMATION Lecture Theatre B	11:45am PANEL 11C: SOUND/MUSIC Lecture Theatre C
1:30pm LUNCH Canteen	1:30pm SIG MEETINGS See Below for Room Assignments	
2:30pm PANEL 12A: ANIMATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY Lecture Theatre A	2:30pm PANEL 12B: EXPERIMENTAL PRACTICE 2 Lecture Theatre B	2:30pm PANEL 12C: SAS ANIMATION SCREENING 2 Lecture Theatre C
4:15pm BREAK / TEA & COFFEE		
4:45pm KEYNOTE + Q&A: DAVID SPROXTON Lecture Theatre A		
6:00pm CONCLUDING REMARKS Lecture Theatre A		

THROUGHOUT THE DAY:**SAS ANIMATION FILMS**

A rotating presentation of animated works submitted by SAS members. For formal screenings and more information about the included films, see Panels 5C and 12C.

Upper Gallery

INTELLECT BOOKS

Presentation of titles from Intellect's catalogue, and opportunity for editorial meetings.

Location TBC

SIG MEETINGS: (Please feel free to bring lunch from the canteen to the meetings)**ANIMATION AND AI**

Location TBC

LGBT/QUEER ANIMATION

Location TBC

FIGURATIVE MEANING AND METAMORPHOSIS IN ANIMATION

Location TBC

FRIDAY JULY 11

We are running an optional cultural event for those who will be remaining in London. No 'official' conference proceedings will be held on this day. **The Cinema Museum** (2 Dugard Way, Renfrew Rd, London SE11 4TH) is a short walk from London College of Communication, and is offering us a private guided tour of its collection. Based in a building once known as the Lambeth Workhouse, where Charlie Chaplin spent some time as a child, the Museum 'houses a unique collection of artefacts, memorabilia and equipment that preserves the history and grandeur of cinema from the 1890s to the present day.' For more information, see the Cinema Museum website: <http://www.cinemamuseum.org.uk/>.

The tour will start at 11am, and will last for approximately two hours. Delegates can make their own way to the Museum, or meet at the entrance of LCC at 10:30am and we will walk across together.

Information about booking tickets will be available soon.

Keynotes

Animating Oil, Changing the Planet: Useful Animation in the Petroleum Industries / Dr Malcolm Cook

To date, environmental animation studies have been concentrated on either ecocritical on-screen representation or the material impact of film production. This talk looks to a third emerging area: scientific, educational, and industrial 'useful animation' (Cook, Cowan and Curtis, 2023), especially as part of the infrastructure of petroleum industries. Oil, a primary contributor to climate change, is a product of culture as well as a material resource. Alongside other solutions, greater understanding of the cultural imagination of oil can contribute to achieving necessary climate action.

This talk will be structured around four different ways animation, throughout its history, has been entangled with oil extraction and exploitation. First, I will examine examples of celebrated animators and studios who have worked directly with the oil industry. Second, I will conversely look at the lesser-known production of animated oil films at specialist studios. Third, I will consider the ways animation has been shaped by its application within the oil industry, such as the incorporation of specialist forms of representation from expert disciplinary fields. Finally, I will consider the ways the oil industry has in turn been shaped by its use of animation. Animation played a role in the epistemological shift that recognised the planet as changing, allowing an understanding of how fossil fuels formed and how they could be transformed and exploited. Yet this equally means animation has shown the planet as changeable through human activity, and in turn opens a space for corrective action.

Malcolm Cook is Associate Professor of Film at the University of Southampton. He is the author of *Early British Animation: From Page and Stage to Cinema Screens* (2018) and co-editor (with Kirsten Moana Thompson) of the collection *Animation and Advertising* (2019). His current research focuses on useful animation, especially in relation to petroleum industries, with recent articles on this published in *Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal* (2023), *Media+Environment* (2024), and *Open Screens* (2024).

Digital vs Pencil: The importance of the Physicality of Drawing in Animation / Joanna Quinn

In my last film *Affairs of the Art*, I decided to challenge myself and animate the film digitally using 2D animation software. I wanted to create the whole film digitally but make it look so textured and organic that the audience would think it was all animated traditionally on paper. It would be a revelation!

I animated digitally for 6 months and over that time I descended into depression. I become increasingly frustrated with my animation which had lost its fluidity and energy, and I stopped enjoying the experience of animating – which has always been my greatest pleasure. My process had become technical rather than instinctive and physical, so I finally admitted defeat and went back to working on paper and the sparkle came back into my eyes...and into my animation!

The experience made me analyse what it was exactly we lose when working digitally. The benefits are all quite clear, but disadvantages are less talked about. In this presentation I will be examining my animation process and how important the physical and tactile element of the process is to me.

To illustrate my thoughts, I will do some live animating on paper and show clips of my films.

British animator Joanna Quinn discovered animation at Middlesex University in London while studying Graphic Design. Her graduation film *Girls Night Out*, kick-started Joanna's career by winning 3 awards at the Annecy Animation Festival in 1987. She is renowned internationally for her drawing skills, wonderful characterisations and her humour. Joanna's films have won many awards including 4 BAFTA's, 3 EMMY's and 3 OSCAR® nominations. Joanna is a committed educator throughout the world and has an Honorary Doctorate from 3 UK universities and is an Honorary Fellow at the Royal College of Art, London.

Animation and Ecological Awareness / Michael Dudok de Wit

In exploring the relationship between ecology and animation, I will cover three main perspectives. Firstly, I will address ecological awareness in film production, focusing on how to make the process environmentally friendly. Secondly, I will discuss ecology in terms of content, stories that convey clear or implied messages about the environment. Thirdly, I will discuss how art, particularly artistic animation, affects our ecological sensitivity. Although this third perspective is more subtle and elusive, I will explain that it is no less important than the other two perspectives, and I will devote most of my speaking time to this topic.

My focus will be primarily on creative animation, which includes short films, innovative feature films and innovative television series—temporarily setting aside animation made for specific purposes, such as advertising, education and propaganda. I propose that animation is an interplay between entertainment and art, emphasising the importance of entertainment in fostering ecological consciousness, as well as the profound impact of art on our environmental sensitivity.

With the help of a selection of images, I will demonstrate how filmmakers consciously use symbolic language to create a psychoactive effect on spectators, particularly influencing their subconscious awareness.

My talk will address the following questions: What is the role of animation, which largely depends on our imagination, in a world facing realistic problems? How can art, which operates on subtle levels, be of any use in a world with blatant environmental crises? How can I increase my ecological awareness?

Michael Dudok de Wit (1953) grew up in the Netherlands, studied animation in Farnham, and has lived in London since 1980, directing independent animated films and TV commercials. Specialising in hand-drawn animation, his shorts have received numerous international awards, including the Annecy Cristal, a BAFTA award, and an Oscar® in 2001 for *Father and Daughter*. His most recent project, the feature-length film *The Red Turtle*, was a Wild Bunch - Studio Ghibli co-production, made in France with Prima Linea Productions. This film won the Special Jury Prize, Un Certain Regard, at the Cannes Film Festival (2016), and it was nominated for an Academy Award in 2017.

In addition to his film work, Michael also illustrates books for both children and adults, and he gives talks on animation, creativity, and related subjects at universities in the UK and abroad.

David Sproxton in Conversation / David Sproxton with Dr Maliha Miriam

With over four decades within the British animation industry, David Sproxton (in conversation with LCC's Dr Maliha Miriam) will be exploring Aardman's enduring legacy, starting with David's formative experiences within animation, through his teenage partnership with Peter Lord, and the formation of Aardman. Of particular interest will be the early films, referred to by Van Norris (2014) as a foundational element of the second wave of British animation. We will discuss Aardman's identity as a studio concerned with social commentary, a distinctive national identity, and with traces of humour throughout. We will dive into David's particular skillset as a cinematographer and how changes in technology have influenced Aardman. We will then consider the influence of Channel 4, the films that still exist within its archive, and consider how these may be shared with a new audience. This leads us to sustainability and notions of longevity and security for both Aardman's former works and the studio itself.

David Sproxton is the co-founder of Aardman with co-founder Peter Lord. He has overseen the development of the company from a two-man partnership to one of the pre-eminent animation houses in the industry. Their first professional creation was the character 'Morph'. David Sproxton spent 3 years on the Board of the UK Film Council, many years on the board of the NFTS and is currently on the board of the Bristol Old Vic Theatre, We The Curious, Bristol's hands on science centre, and is also a director of the Bristol Bike Project Cooperative. In 2018 David oversaw the transition of Aardman into an Employee Owned company, stepping back from the role of MD in 2019. David is now a trustee of the Aardman Employee Ownership Trust.

Dr Maliha Miriam graduated with a PGDip in Animation from Central Saint Martins in 2011 and worked within the animation industry on Channel 4's *The Snowman and the Snowdog*, CBeebies *Hey Duggee!* and the Royal Opera House. She completed her PhD titled "A Study of the British Animation Industry's approach to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion 2000-2020" under the supervision of Professor Chris Pallant from Canterbury Christ Church in 2024. She joined UAL in 2022, and is currently the Diploma in Professional Studies Coordinator for Screen School UAL. Additionally, she has recently joined the Governing Body of the Global Academy.

Panel Lists

MONDAY JULY 7: 11:15am-1:00pm

PANEL 1A: BAD ANIMATION

Television Animation: The Bad Object of Animation Studies / Jacqueline Ristola, University of Bristol
‘I’m Not Bad, I’m Just Drawn That Way’: The Generative Failures of Animated Pornography / Aurélie Petit, Concordia University
Looking for Skin / Grace Han, Stanford University

PANEL 1B: ANIMATED DOCUMENTARY 1

The Establishment of a Cultural Space in Ethnic Minority Oral Literature-Themed Ethnographic Animation / Dr Yijing Wang, Beihang University
An Exploration of the Migration and Settlement of the African-Caribbean Communities in Thamesmead through Documentary and Animation / Mary Martins, University of Westminster
Threaded Narratives: Animated Documentaries as Tools for Preserving Minority Embroidery Traditions / Yunhuan Tan, Universiti Malaya
Short Stories, Big Impacts – Animated Documentary at AUT / Emily Ramsay, Auckland University of Technology

PANEL 1C: MOTION

The Primacy of Change: Building Animated Motion in the Films of Paul Bush and Javier Mrad / Alejandro R. González, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Universidad Nacional de Villa María, and Universidad Provincial de Córdoba
The Interpolated Frame; or Digital Precognition and the Replacement of Motion / Samuel Regan-Edwards, Independent Scholar
The Treachery of Moving Images / Shaw Fox, UWE Bristol
The Power of the Pause: How the Hold Shapes Motion and Meaning in Animation / Philippe Vaucher, Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue

MONDAY JULY 7: 2:00pm-3:45pm

PANEL 2A: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE 1

Feminist Pro-Sex Pornography in Animation: Integrating AI in Film Production and Representation / Marie-Josée Saint-Pierre, Université Laval
Policymaking Against the Machine? Regulating AI and the Future of Animated Labour in Brazil / Elena Altheman, Concordia University
Worlds Models and Simulated Physics: Generative AI and Animation / Joel McKim, Birkbeck, University of London
Sustaining Animation (Studies) in the Age of AI / Mihaela Mihailova, San Francisco State University

PANEL 2B: NATIONAL DISCOURSES 1

Depicting Animals and Ecology to Make Irish History and Folklore More Contemporary. On Cartoon Saloon’s Irish Folklore Trilogy / Marta Maciejewska, University of Gdańsk
Circular Cinema Carpet: A Neoclassical Approach to the Traditions of Persian Arts and Moving Images / Dr. Leila Honari, Griffith Film School
The Current State and Future of Digital Animation in North Korea / Joo Ok Hong, Chung-Ang University
Reanimating Resistance: Intermedial Political Aesthetics in *The Ballad of Crowfoot* (1968) / Scott Birdwise, OCAD University

PANEL 2C: TIME, METAPHOR, AND MEMORY

“Time Sure Does Fly, Doesn’t It?”: Technological Innovation and Aesthetic and Temporal Discordance in the Films of Robert Zemeckis / Dr Matt Nicholls, Arts University Bournemouth

Dead or Alive: How Animation Sustains Metaphor / Carmen Hannibal, Royal College of Art London and Belfast School of Art

Structures of Memory and Witnessing in Yuri Norstein’s *Tale of Tales* / Cailin Flannery Roles, Northeastern University

MONDAY JULY 7: 4:15pm-6:00pm**PANEL 3A: PIONEERING WOMEN IN ANIMATION IN SPAIN**

1940s-1950s: Studios of Carlos Rigalt, Patricio Payá and Joaquín Pérez Arroyo / Sara Álvarez Sarrat, Universitat Politècnica de València

1940s-1950s: Dibujos Animados Chamartín, Balet y Blay, Estela Films / Maria Pagès, CITM, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya

1950s-1980s: Estudios Moro, Estudios Cruz Delgado, Story Film / Pilar Yébenes, Universidad Europea de Madrid; and Mercedes Álvarez San Román, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid

1980s-2010s: Jaizkibel, Episa, Lotura Films, Dibulitoon, Baleuko / Maitane Junguitu Dronda, University of the Basque Country, UPV/EHU

PANEL 3B: AESTHETICS

Poetics of Limited Animation / Dr. Paul Taberham, Arts University Bournemouth

Are Some Cycles More Lively Than Others? Animated Cycles Sustaining the Illusion of Life / Claire O’Brien, Teesside University

A Study on the Impact of 2D Animation Style in Roguelike Games on World-Building: A Case Study of *Don’t Starve* / Su Yue, Beihang University

Paul Julian’s House & Hand: The Hauntological Structure(s) of Animation Background Paintings / Felix Davidson, Independent Scholar

PANEL 3C: MICRO TALKS

Empowering Students through Hyperreal CG Animation Collaboration to Build AI Virtual Companions for People Living with Dementia / Melody Li, University of New South Wales

Animated Environmental Rituals: Sustaining Animation Through Nature and Ritual / Kim Noce, University of the Arts London and NFTS

Bubble and Soul: Screening Event at a Japanese Sento - Exploring the Connection Between Water and Animation / Çağıl Harmandar, Tokyo University of the Arts

Sustainability of a Small Animation Studio / Terry Wragg, Leeds Animation Workshop

Animating *Hunger by the Sea* / Xue Han, Arts University Bournemouth and Bournemouth University

Who is King Tampon? He is a Medical Guy! / Dr. Caroline Childs, Independent Scholar

Revisiting 3D Character Modelling Teaching via the Vitruvian Module / Dr Ao Chen, UCL

Reanimating the Multiplane / Aaron Holmes, Biola University

The 100 Windows: Live Mixing Experimental Animation to Choral Music / Christine Banna, Rochester Institute of Technology

TUESDAY JULY 8: 9:00am-10:45am**PANEL 4A: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE 2**

From the Omniverse to the Metaverse: The Emergence and Impact of Real-time, AI-driven, and XR-compatible Animation Technologies and Practices / M Javad Khajavi, Volda University College

Integrating AI into Traditional Animation Pipelines: Disruption, Creativity, and Uncanny Collaboration in Short Film Production / Dr Ari Chand, University of South Australia; and Dr James Calvert, University of South Australia

Towards Ethical Applications of Generative AI in Animation: A Practice-Based Case Study / Hannes Rall, Nanyang Technological University

Can You Sign Your Name with Bifrost?: Advanced Automation and the Artist's Mark in CG / Chaz Evans, University of South Carolina

PANEL 4B: ANIMATION HISTORIES

Cartoon Film Theory's Hidden Puppets: On the Transmedial Origins of 'Animating' in Japan / Christopher Taylor, Johns Hopkins University

Marie Seton and Animation Culture in the 1930s / Kristian Moen, University of Bristol

The Royal College of Art's Animation Collection: Challenges and Opportunities of Archiving 40 Years of Student Animation / Carla MacKinnon, Royal College of Art

The Gamma Film Archive and Practices of Valorization of Animated Heritage / Martina Vita, University of Roma Tre

PANEL 4C: NATIONAL DISCOURSES 2

Syncretism of Malay Folklore and Islamic Teachings in Animated Media: A Study of *Upin & Ipin: Keris Siamang Tunggal (The Lone Gibbon Kris)* / Dr. Norizzati Saifuddin, Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology

Enzo D'Alò's *A Greyhound of a Girl* (2023): From Irish children's novel to Italian animated adaptation to European co-production / Sophie Quin, European University of Film and Media Arts

Water as a Cultural Symbol in Malaysian Animation *Upin & Ipin: Keris Siamang Tunggal* (2019) / Juaina Ahmad Fadzil, Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology

TUESDAY JULY 8: 11:15am-1:00pm

PANEL 5A: ANIMATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT 1

Augmentation, Acceleration, Replacement: Green Storytelling Strategies in Eastern European Animation / Jana Rogoff, Charles University

Studio Ghibli and Environmental Sustainability / Rayna Denison, University of Bristol

Animism, Animation and Advocacy / Christie Widiarto, University of Melbourne

PANEL 5B: ANIMATED DOCUMENTARY 2

Tearing up the 'Scripts': The Influence of Women's Self-Reflexive Animation on the Development of Contemporary Animated Documentary Practice / Sally Pearce, Independent Scholar

Malarial Mayhem: Animating the Fight Against Malaria (1940 – 1960) / Anitha Balachandran, Arts University Bournemouth

Reducing Ethical Risks when Representing Neurodiversity in Animated Documentary Practice: The Collaborative Reflexive Cycle / Dr Alex Widdowson, Independent Scholar

Never Like the First Time? The 3 Affinities of Animation / Gunnar Strøm, Volda University College

PANEL 5C: SAS ANIMATION SCREENING 1

Visible Mending / Samantha Moore, RCA London

No. 28 / Zahra Salarnia, Auckland University of Technology

Cyclic / Dr Calum Main, University of Edinburgh

Hunger by the Sea / Xue Han, Bournemouth University

I Hav'nt Told My Garden Yet / Diek Grobler, Independent Artist

The Land of the 3-Drink Minimum / Jeremy Speed Schwartz, Kennesaw State University

Glitch Colorspace / Shilei Wei, Beihang University

Potter's Mirror / Katherine O'Connor, Teesside University

futile/gestures / Aaron Holmes, Biola University

Pink Pottery / Christine Banna, Rochester Institute of Technology
WAVES / Katerina Athanasopoulou, Royal College of Art, London
Shakespeare for All Ages / Hannes Rall, Nanyang Technological University Singapore

TUESDAY JULY 8: 3:45pm-5:30pm

PANEL 6A: STOP-MOTION 1

Carving Out a Niche: *Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio*, Stop-Motion's Imperfection, and the Uncertainty of the Medium / Markus Beeken, King's College, London
Speaking in Tongues: LAIKA, Sensational Bodies, and the Language of Stop-Motion / Nicholas Andrew Miller, Loyola University
Why I Make Analogue Films in a Digital Age: Hidden Depths of Material Meaning / Katherine O'Connor, Teesside University

PANEL 6B: REPRESENTATION

Animation and Representation: Diversity On and Off Screen in BAFTA winning British Pre-School Animation 2000-2020 / Dr Maliha Miriam, University of the Arts London
Animating A Different Type Of Guy: Racial Stereotypes In Practice Based Research / Omeiza 'O' Haruna, Loughborough University
Death-Driven Lives: Animation, Queerness and the Question of Vitality / Ferdinando Cocco, University of Cambridge
Paul Kim and Queerdom: For Love and Advertising / Jeremy Speed Schwartz, Kennesaw State University

PANEL 6C: ANIMATION AND CARE

The Politics of Care: Enhanced Audio Description and accessibility in *Visible Mending (2023)* / Samantha Moore, RCA London
Indexing Care: Animation Pedagogy and Intermedia Dependence in the work of Jules Engel / Tim Ridlen, University of Tampa
Maintaining the Future of Animation: Countering Disruption with Acts of Care and Repair / Kara Lynn Andersen, University of North Carolina School of the Arts
A Role for Animation: Enhancing Well-being in Paediatric Healthcare Environments / Dr. Pedro Serrazina, Universidade Lusófona; Dr. Lea Vidakovic, Universidade Lusófona; and Dr. Natalie Woolf, Universidade Lusófona

WEDNESDAY JULY 9: 9:00am-10:45am

PANEL 7A: SUSTAINING MOVEMENT: ANIMATING ANTI-RACISM

Monumental Unrest: On building Unease in the Animations of Sabine Gruffat / Melissa Friedling PhD, The New School
The Urgency of Nonsense in the Palestinian Context / Nerian Keywan MA, Kingston School of Art
Transcontinental Studio Collaboration in the Production of Disney's African Anthology: *Kizazi Moto* / Jane Cheadle MA, Kingston School of Art
From Harlem to Hollywood: New York's Early Black Animators / Robby Gilbert, Rowan University

PANEL 7B: STOP-MOTION 2

The Workmanship of Risk: Mediating Stop-Motion Animation through AI / Simon von Wolkenstein, JMC College
Miniature Realities: Scale, Time, and Materiality in Stop Motion Animation / Jack McGrath, University of Newcastle, Australia
Hybrid Stop-Motion: An Attempt to Integrate the Latest Bells and Whistles / Dr Miriam Harris, Auckland University of Technology

PANEL 7C: ANIMATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT 2

Tracing the Green Aesthetics of Animation Movement / Virág Vécsey, Eötvös Loránd University

Experimental Animation for the Environment / Sara Gevurtz, Auburn University

Narrating Non-anthropocentric Worlds: The Magical and Technological in Children's Animated Series / Stephanie Rincon, University of the Balearic Islands

WEDNESDAY JULY 9: 11:15am-1:00pm

PANEL 8A: POLITICAL ANIMATION

Animation as Resistance?: The 'Woman, Life, Freedom' Movement and Creative Expression in Iran / Reza Yousefzadeh Tabasi, Bournemouth University

(Inter)(in)animation, Diaspora, and Un-War Making: A Conversation with Maryam Mohajer / Karen Redrobe, University of Pennsylvania

The Evolution of Mr. Prokoup: From Propaganda Tool to Animation Icon / Mgr. Tereza Bochinová, Masaryk University

PANEL 8B: THE BOUNDARIES OF REALISM

Sustaining the Value of Realism in Animation in Isao Takahata's 'Pom Poko' / Idris Kellermann Williams, University of Adelaide

Exploring Connections between Animation and Phenomenology through Practice Based Research / Owen Stickler, Cardiff Metropolitan University

Collectivized Cine-Trance in the More-Than-Human Moving Image / Chris de Selincourt, University of the Arts London

PANEL 8C: CHINESE ANIMATION

The Revival of Chinese Animation: International Distribution and Exhibition through Film Festivals / Yuexi Yu, Queen's University Belfast

Research on Content Innovation and Challenges of Chinese Animated Mini Series Powered by Artificial Intelligence / XU, Wen-xue, Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications

Social Concern, Government Regulation, and Industry Self-Regulation: A Comparison of Media Violence in *Boonie Bears* TV and Cinematic Creations / Dr Shaopeng Chen, Southeast University

WEDNESDAY JULY 9: 4:45pm-6:30pm

PANEL 9A: SUSTAINING POLISH ANIMATION: DATASETS, ARCHIVES AND MEMORIES

Methodological Reflections on Studying Central-European Animation Studios: Challenges, Approaches, and Insights / Ewa Ciszewska, University of Łódź

Sustaining Memory: An Oral History of The Puppet Film Studio in Tuszyn-Las / Joanna Kosińska-Wajcht, University of Łódź

Expanding and Sustaining Animation History: Polish Animation in the 1950s and 1960s / Jennifer Lynde Barker, Bellarmine University

Seeing-Thinking-Animating. Creative Practice of Wojciech Zamecznik (1923-1967) / Grażyna Świątochowska, University of Gdansk

PANEL 9B: ANIMATION AND SOCIAL PURPOSE

Astro-Animation: Engaging Public Audiences in Astronomy Through Animation / Laurence Arcadias, Maryland Institute College of Art; and Robin Corbet, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Constellations of Aesthetics, Developing Aesthetic Visual Scenes with Retinal Prosthesis Patients / Mark Collington, Art University Bournemouth

Animation as Tool for Change: Breaking the Silence / Dr Nadia Aghtaie, University of Bristol; Dr Ladan Hashemi, City St George's University; Professor Birgitta Hosea, UCA Farnham; and Dr Fatemeh Housseini-Shakib, University of Art, Tehran

Teaching Computer Science and Animation in the App Age / Angela Hernandez-Scoggins, Independent Scholar

PANEL 9C: EMBODIED AND DISEMBODIED ANIMATION

Expanded Animation Practice as an Embodied Sensory Experience / Yanqi Liang, Kingston School of Art
Sustaining Animation through the Animator's Body / Dr Katerina Athanasopoulou, Royal College of Art
Animating Human Dolls: An Animation Acting Method Using the 12 Principles of Animation, Shadow Puppet Tradition and Lecoq's / Giorgos Nikopoulos, IMAGINE MoCap

THURSDAY JULY 10: 9:30am-11:15am

PANEL 10A: SUSTAINING ANIMATION: THE STATE OF PLAY IN A SMALL NATION

Labours of Love? Women as Caregivers in Animation and Games / Dr Nichola Dobson, Edinburgh College of Art

Tim'rous Beasties? Unpicking the impact of Scotland on Women's experiences of working in the Games and Animation Industry / Dr Lynn Love, Abertay University

Mapping Scottish Animation: Training Environments and Individual Growth / Dr Calum Main, University of Edinburgh

Re: frames - A manifesto for Playfulness in Contemporary Animation Education / Dan Castro, University of Edinburgh

PANEL 10B: TELEVISION AND ONLINE ANIMATION

Corporate Cartoon Counter-Cultures: Remixing Hanna-Barbera on Cartoon Network UK / Sam Summers, Middlesex University

Sustained Series: Interrogating *The Magic School Bus's* Brand Identity, Sustainability, and Legacy / Michael J. Meindl, Radford University; and Matthew Wisnioski, Virginia Tech

Well, it's Virtual... Dimensionality, Deleuze and *The Amazing Digital Circus* / Aaron Borok, Trent University

PANEL 10C: EXPERIMENTAL PRACTICE 1

What we Do with the Shadows: An Auto-Ethnographic Exploration of the Practice of Pinscreen Animation / Diek Grobler, Independent Scholar

Grounding Full-dome Animation: Tensions Across Material and Virtual Space / Dr. Timothy Jones, Robert Morris University

About Animation as a Medium of Absence / Katarzyna Żmuda, SWPS University of the Humanities and Social Sciences

The Endless Mile / Johannes DeYoung, Carnegie Mellon University

THURSDAY JULY 10: 11:45am-1:30pm

PANEL 11A: (UN)EXPLAINABLE AI: CREATIVE TECH BETWEEN ARTISTIC AND AMATEUR PRACTICES

Artistic Practices as AI Research: Animation, AI, and the Aesthetics of Seriality / Dr. Nea Ehrlich, BGU and UPC, Spain

AI Animation as Anyanimation: Amateur Aesthetics and Tech Demo(cracy) / Jun. Prof. Dr. Julia Eckel, Paderborn University

Explainable AI in Archival Research / Dr. Erwin Feyersinger, University of Tübingen

Abstract Animation with Generative AI in Higher Education / Max Hattler, City University of Hong Kong

PANEL 11B: ETHNOGRAPHIC AND AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ANIMATION

- Drawing the Riots: Animation Practice as Self-Expression and Social/Political critique** / Susan Young, Independent Scholar
- Crafting Socio-Political Discourse: The Material Power of Stop-Motion Animation in Alain Ughetto's Autobiographical Film *Manodopera*** / Vincenzo Maselli, Sapienza University of Rome
- Self-Representation and Feminist Aesthetics in Animated Short Films Made by Women in Brazil: "O Projeto do Meu Pai" and "Guaxuma"** / Laryssa Moreira Prado, Institute of Arts of the State University of Campinas
- The Handmade and the Analogue in Animated Autobiographies: More than an Aesthetic Question** / Agathe Pias, Universitat Politècnica de València

PANEL 11C: SOUND/MUSIC

- The 90-Second Spectacle: Music-Driven Formula and Paratextuality in Contemporary Japanese Anime Title Sequences** / Sirou Yan, Independent Scholar
- Synchronizing Sound and Vision: The Dynamic Relationship Between Animation and Electronic Dance Music** / Peter Chanthanakone, Zayed University in Dubai
- Imperfect Fathers and Imperfect Sons in the Music of *Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio*** / Lisa Scoggin, Independent Scholar

THURSDAY JULY 10: 2:30pm-4:15pm

PANEL 12A: ANIMATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Pragmatic Green Storytelling in Animation: Bridging Sustainable Production, Storytelling, and Aesthetics** / Maike Sarah Reinerth, Independent Scholar
- When Believability and Realism Become Primary Causes of Digital Animated Worlds' Environmental Footprint** / Cristina Formenti, University of Groningen
- Towards Sustainability in Stop-Motion Animation: From Production to Preservation** / Olive M. Gingrich, University of Greenwich; Min Young Oh, University of Greenwich; and Chris Pallant, University of Greenwich
- Stop Motion Set Construction with Bio-based, Biodegradable Materials** / Clara Schulze, Independent Scholar

PANEL 12B: EXPERIMENTAL PRACTICE 2

- Awakening a Sleeping Lantern Slide: Animation Practice for Research and Reinvigoration** / Joe Evans, Manchester Metropolitan University
- Picturing Security: Drawing Out Agency** / Jill Gibbon, Independent Scholar; and Benjamin Hall, Leeds Beckett University, and the Open College of the Arts
- Previsualisation, Animation & Divisive Futures** / Keanu Hoi, University of Technology Sydney

PANEL 12C: SAS ANIMATION SCREENING 2

- Hello UK, Goodbye Hong Kong** / Tim Pattinson (legal name); Timothy Walklate (artist name), HKBU Academy of Visual Arts
- Bergamot** / Yanqi Liang, Kingston School of Art
- After the Flood** / Owen Stickler, Cardiff Metropolitan University School of Art and Design
- Red Dress. No Straps** / Maryam Mohajer, Kingston University
- 2030** / Angela Hernandez-Scoggins, Austin Peay State University
- Dancing on the Flying Carpet** / Leila Honari, Griffith Film School
- Awkward** / O Haruna, Loughborough University
- Woody's Last Laugh: Gone for All Seasons** / Sara Gevurtz, Auburn University
- The Endless Mile** / Johannes DeYoung, Carnegie Mellon University
- Pripyat Horse** / Sally Pearce, Independent Artist
- Vision** / Çağıl Harmandar, Tokyo University of the Arts
- inPlants** / Yun Lu, Edinburgh College of Art

Panel Information

MONDAY JULY 7: 11:15am-1:00pm

PANEL 1A: BAD ANIMATION

Papers:

Television Animation: The Bad Object of Animation Studies / Jacqueline Ristola, University of Bristol

‘I’m Not Bad, I’m Just Drawn That Way’: The Generative Failures of Animated Pornography / Aurélie Petit, Concordia University

Looking for Skin / Grace Han, Stanford University

Television Animation: The Bad Object of Animation Studies / Jacqueline Ristola

This paper examines the badness of television animation, examining its role in animation studies as a field and how its formal features are generative, yet often undervalued in current animation studies scholarship. This paper begins by situating how television animation has often been positioned as the bad object of animation studies. The very formal features prioritized to describe animation as an art form, its illusion of life, tends to exclude television animation, also known as limited animation for more stylized, less realistic movement. Limited animation is thus framed as the lesser form of animation as an art, typified by comments such as film critic Leonard Maltin calling television animation “the Muzak of animation” (1975, 76). Thus, there is a binary hierarchy of distinction that is foundational to much of animation studies as a field. This evaluative binary fails to perceive the generative value of limited animation, which I demonstrate in my case study of *Space Ghost: Coast to Coast* (1994-2008). The paper pivots to an analysis of this animated television series to examine how it mobilizes ‘badness’ to produce both humour and self-reflexive corporate commentary. The perceived ‘bad’ qualities of television animation, such as its limited, staccato-like movements, are instead highlighted and demonstrate their productive capabilities. Through an aesthetics of failure, the series produces moments of rupture that enable the series creators’ to suffuse their own reflections on their own televisual labour and disclose elements of the series’ own production. In other words, *Space Ghost: Coast to Coast*’s material limitations are transformed into generative material that provides insights into the production of television animation.

Jacqueline Ristola is a Lecturer in Animation (Digital) in the Department of Film and Television at the University of Bristol, and the co-chair for SCMS’s Animated Media SIG. She received her PhD in Film and Moving Image Studies from Concordia University, Montréal. Her research areas include animation/anime studies, media industry studies, and queer representation. Her current book project examines how animation evinces the effects of media conglomeration from cable to streaming television.

‘I’m Not Bad, I’m Just Drawn That Way’: The Generative Failures of Animated Pornography / Aurélie Petit

This paper explores an overlooked area in animation history: pornography. While hentai anime from Japan has received some scholarly attention (Petit, 2019, 2024a; Freibert, 2020; Galbraith, 2023), non-Japanese animated pornography remains largely unexamined. This omission leaves a significant portion of animation marginalized, despite its economic and cultural relevance (Saunders, 2019).

Pornographic animation is often dismissed as “bad animation,” a perception tied to its low budgets, mass production, and limited aesthetic ambitions. From early works like *Eveready Harton in Buried Treasure* and *Out of Order* (1930s), to the German sexploitation cartoons of the 1970s, and contemporary content on pornographic platforms, the history of animated pornography is one of aesthetic, commercial, and technical “failures.” These perceived shortcomings have contributed to its neglect within animation studies, even as projects such as the Queer Animation database and The Bruno Edera Collection (Petit, 2024b) begin to reclaim its significance.

This paper argues that these failures should not serve as justification for sidelining pornographic animation but as opportunities to construct a critical timeline of its development. Drawing on key historical milestones—including *Xanadu City* (1992), *Des Blood* (1997), *Le Parfum de l’invisible* (Francis Nielsen, 1997), and *2 Funky 4 You* (Michael Ninn, 2002)—the paper demonstrates how the “badness” of pornographic animation can be seen as a productive lens for understanding its cultural and aesthetic impact.

Aur lie Petit is a PhD Candidate in the Film Studies department at Concordia University, Montr al. She specializes in the intersection of technology and animation, with a focus on gender and sexuality. As a visual and social researcher, her practice focuses on interrogating the role of non-realistic sex media in internet governance. During 2023-2024, she was a Doctoral Fellow in AI and Inclusion at the AI + Society Initiative (University of Ottawa) collaborating with Professor Jason Millar and the CRAiEDL on the ethics of non-realistic porn.

Looking for Skin / Grace Han

Where do boundaries begin and end in noisy images? How does the median become mediocre in mass aggregates of data? How do Western ideals of form translate into and contrast with the organic notions of Simondonian metastability? Through these questions, this paper conducts a philosophical inquiry of AI-animated representations of the body, wherein form is “found” in an approximate aggregation of data rather than “designed” by the human-determined *ligne claire*. In doing so, this paper resituates the phenomenological “spectatorship” or “viewership” endemic to the work of the likes of Vivian Sobchack, Laura U. Marks, and Shane Denson, and lays out the terms of how computationally-generated animated media fundamentally transform the human-object “encounter.”

Grace Han is a PhD candidate in Art History at Stanford University, where she thinks about animation aesthetics. Prior to coming to Stanford, she received the SAS Maureen Furniss Award for Best Student Paper on Animated Media (2019) for an essay on anime melodrama. She is currently working on a dissertation tentatively titled, “Encounters with the Generative Archive.”

MONDAY JULY 7: 11:15am-1:00pm
PANEL 1B: ANIMATED DOCUMENTARY 1

Papers:

The Establishment of a Cultural Space in Ethnic Minority Oral Literature-Themed Ethnographic Animation
 / Dr Yijing Wang, Beihang University

An Exploration of the Migration and Settlement of the African-Caribbean Communities in Thamesmead through Documentary and Animation / Mary Martins, University of Westminster

Threaded Narratives: Animated Documentaries as Tools for Preserving Minority Embroidery Traditions / Yunhuan Tan, Universiti Malaya

Short Stories, Big Impacts – Animated Documentary at AUT / Emily Ramsay, Auckland University of Technology

The Establishment of a Cultural Space in Ethnic Minority Oral Literature-Themed Ethnographic Animation
/ Dr Yijing Wang

The use of animation has served as a compensatory mechanism for the limited conveyance and promotion of information in traditional media. Animated documentaries have a unique advantage in presenting factual information in combination with the interpretation of non-literal materials and the dissemination of cultural experiences. Oral literature is a pivotal vessel for preserving an ethnic minority's cultural heritage, and serves as a unique representation of their culture. This study is rooted in the principles of visual anthropology and the concept of cultural space, and uses the oral literature of the Yi people as a case study to explore how animation can record and represent the oral traditions of ethnic minorities. The following are the main contents of this paper.

1. The unique qualities of ethnic oral literature and the creative ideas of animation

This paper analyzes the dissemination and preservation of oral literature, and the current challenges ethnic minorities are facing in this regard. Based on the author's investigation of oral literature and ethnic minority-themed animation case studies, this paper examines the potential of animation as a medium capable of both documenting and propagating culture.

2. The formation of cultural space in ethnic minority oral literature

Kai Tian Pi Di ('the origin of heaven and earth') is a chapter in Meige, a piece of Yi oral literature: a vocal performance of Kai Tian Pi Di forms an important part of traditional Yi wedding ceremonies. This study attempts to utilize the constituent components of cultural space (time, place and cultural occurrences) as the framework of an animation for organizing the Yi wedding rituals and the singing of Meige during these ceremonies, clarifying the connection between the song and the inherent cultural phenomena.

3. Reconstruction of cultural space elements in animation

"Acting" is a common device in anthropological documentaries. This study continues the concept of "acting" while incorporating the third space theory, exploring ways to reproduce (reconstruct) cultural spaces through animation, while also making it conform to the perspectives and visual aesthetics of community members.

Dr Yijing Wang is an associate professor in the School of New Media Art and Design, at Beihang University, China. She received her Ph.D. from Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London (2020). For many years, she has been dedicated to the research of ethnographic animation and intangible cultural heritage-themed animation, exploring how animation can be used as a vivid and more inclusive display medium to promote the dissemination of minority cultures and intangible cultural heritage. Her ethnographic animation *Longhorn Miao's Love Songs* was selected as the exceptional programme of the 2022 Society for Visual Anthropology Film and Media Festival held by the American Anthropological Association.

An Exploration of the Migration and Settlement of the African-Caribbean Communities in Thamesmead through Documentary and Animation / Mary Martins

Often through animated documentary, we are trying to discern who we are and where we belong, all of which are dependent on the stories we tell and how we tell them. Animation practitioners often construct through moving image making the changes we want to see in the world. This is also being embodied within more recent scholarship around animation theory.

Animation theorist Paula Callus and cultural media theorist, Andrea Medrado have identified the use of animation to represent the voices of the marginalised groups using participatory forms of animation to amplify voices and stories. In response to this, two participatory animations were produced with the support of

animator, Ng'endo Muki. *A Portrait of Marielle Franco* (2018) was produced by members from the local community in Rio de Janeiro as they reflect over the racially motivated assassination of feminist and activist Marielle Franco in 2018.

Made in Thamesmead (2024) addresses issues around racial tensions and resistance between the 1980s and 1990s in South East London. In relation to the movement and presence of African and Caribbean communities and in particular the death of Stephen Lawrence. With a focus on migration and belonging, the animated documentary explores the evolving cultural landscapes and architectural history in Thamesmead, combining animation with moving image and archive material.

In producing the film, I have drawn on a range of documentary techniques from my own animation practice to allow for new forms of interactions between local communities and the intended audience. This paper explores how the medium of animation can be used to create change, to produce a living archive that connects the past with the present, amplifying the voices of those who continue to be marginalised and resist social injustice. The final outcomes revealed that animation is a provocative tool that can represent complex topics, untold stories, using the past to show how evolving cultural landscapes are evidence of a shift towards a more inclusive society. Therefore, collaborative documentary methods of engagement can inform new ideas and approaches that explore the concepts of decolonisation, anti-racism and inclusivity. This study addresses the wider discourse around these themes.

Mary Martins is a British-Nigerian documentary animation director, lecturer in design and animation practice and a PhD student at the University of Westminster. She uses animation practice to inform new models of creative delivery development that will feed into local, national and global conversations, producing multi-layered and abstract documentaries which focus on socially engaged themes that represent the experiences and stories of marginalised groups. Her doctoral research explores the oral history and cultural landscape between Nigeria and Brazil, experimenting with animation as an interdisciplinary tool to explore the rich history of where these two countries converge.

Threaded Narratives: Animated Documentaries as Tools for Preserving Minority Embroidery Traditions / Yunhuan Tan

The Tibetan-Yi Corridor is a region rich in cultural and geographical diversity, known for its vibrant minority embroidery traditions. These traditions hold deep cultural value, carrying stories, rituals, and shared memories. However, globalization, social changes, and generational differences are putting these practices at risk of fading away. This paper explores how animated documentaries can be a creative and effective way to preserve and bring new life to these endangered cultural practices.

Using insights from visual anthropology (MacDougall, 1998), art anthropology (Morphy & Perkins, 2006), and animation studies, this research examines how participatory methods can help tell the stories behind embroidery patterns. Unlike traditional approaches, animation combines creativity with cultural storytelling, making it easier to show the meanings and histories embedded in these designs (Banks & Morphy, 1997). The paper focuses on case studies from the Tibetan-Yi Corridor, showcasing collaborative projects where local communities helped create animated documentaries. These films highlight the cultural importance of embroidery patterns, creating a bridge between generations and cultures (Pink 2013, Sun and Change 2024). By involving local communities, the animated documentaries ensure that the representation of their traditions remains genuine and meaningful, while also connecting with modern audiences.

This study suggests that digital tools like animation can play a vital role in preserving cultural heritage. By blending traditional knowledge with modern storytelling methods, animated documentaries not only document these practices but also keep them alive and relevant in today's globalized world.

Yunhuan Tan, a PhD candidate of Universiti Malaya, his research interest is cultural heritage, animation, art anthropology, and graphic design.

Short Stories, Big Impacts – Animated Documentary at AUT / Emily Ramsay

This presentation explores the 12-week Animated Documentary course within the Animation pathway at Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand. The course aims to enhance students' technical skills, foster creativity, and encourage critical thinking, with a focus on research, storytelling, and communication. It also provides a platform to explore topics such as climate change, social justice, racial equity, diversity, and inclusion.

What distinguishes this course is its unique approach to storytelling. Students capture 40-second audio stories from a diverse range of individuals and use their chosen animation techniques to bring these stories to life.

They are encouraged to seek interviewees beyond their immediate cohort, uncovering unexpected narratives. The goal is to uncover small, seemingly mundane stories that contain hidden gems (Wells, 1998). This paper was led with a 'yes - and' mentality. The only constraint was the 40-second duration; the style and animation method were left to the student's discretion. They also created a workbook documenting their research, critical reflections, and the making-of video alongside their final animated documentary. Group discussions, pitch sessions, and constructive feedback were integral to the process, helping students refine their projects and go beyond dealing in abstracts, allowing deeper connections to be drawn (Ings, 2017). This course emphasises creative experimentation, encouraging students to explore personal interests and experiment with different animation techniques within the framework of industry-standard technical pipelines. Students gain valuable insights into storytelling through animation, honing narrative strategies, achieving thematic coherence, and addressing ethical considerations (Honess Roe, 2013). The results demonstrate the students' enthusiasm and creativity as they tackled sensitive topics with care, engaged critically with theory, and produced highly polished animated documentaries. This methodology nurtures both technical expertise and meaningful storytelling in the context of animated documentary filmmaking, while highlighting the richness of ordinary experiences.

Emily Ramsay is an Animator, Researcher and Lecturer of Animation at Auckland University of Technology; they hold a Master of Design titled "Many a Mile." Specialising in autoethnography and animated world-building, Ramsay draws upon a robust design background. Their exploration of animated documentaries uniquely probes the intricacies of their Romanichal Romany ethnicity. Ramsay also engages in animation, motion capture, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), storytelling, pedagogy, decolonisation of curricula, world-building, 3D modelling, and the subjective nature of art interpretation. Ramsay's academic journey illustrates a multidisciplinary approach, embracing having ADHD and dyslexia while looking to expand creative exploration.

MONDAY JULY 7: 11:15am-1:00pm
PANEL 1C: MOTION

Papers:

The Primacy of Change: Building Animated Motion in the Films of Paul Bush and Javier Mrad / Alejandro R. González, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Universidad Nacional de Villa María, and Universidad Provincial de Córdoba

The Interpolated Frame; or Digital Precognition and the Replacement of Motion / Samuel Regan-Edwards, Independent Scholar

The Treachery of Moving Images / Shaw Fox, UWE Bristol

The Power of the Pause: How the Hold Shapes Motion and Meaning in Animation / Philippe Vaucher, Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue

The Primacy of Change: Building Animated Motion in the Films of Paul Bush and Javier Mrad / Alejandro R. González

In the context of animation, life and movement have been commonly associated: the very name of our discipline, animation, includes the Latin root *anima*, which refers to the soul or spirit. This connection is quite coherent, as movement has often been linked to life, possessing a soul or spirit... an animated being. Animation, which we consider an audiovisual form (González, 2013), regards movement as an organizing axis. Norman McLaren (in Sifianos, 1995) proposes thinking of animation as the art of movements that are drawn (or photographed, in the case of techniques other than traditional cartoon animation), as opposed to an art of drawings that move. Thus, giving materiality to movement becomes the primary focus of animation. However, all animated movements are an illusion, and movement is a consequence of change. This concept is also addressed by McLaren: the difference between successive frames is more important than the image of each individual frame. Change is that small difference perceived in the forms that manifest themselves on a screen—the very element the animator manipulates—whereas movement is merely the interpretation formed by our flawed perceptual mechanism, an optical illusion explained through the ϕ and β effects. Deleuze (1984), when coining the concept of the movement-image, also focuses on the importance of the difference among frames—the intermediate image—where movement resides. Therefore, in this presentation, we will address change as the foundational component of animated motion. To do so, we will focus on selected films by two auteur animators who have creatively explored the dynamics of change throughout their work: the late Paul Bush (UK) and Javier Mrad (Argentina). We will describe the films' formal qualities and reflect on the modalities through which change helps create the illusion of movement.

Alejandro R. González (Rosario, Argentina, 1973) is an animator, tenured professor, and researcher specializing in animation. He teaches at the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba (UNC), the Universidad Nacional de Villa María (UNVM), and the Universidad Provincial de Córdoba (UPC), all in Argentina. Alejandro is the Artistic Director of ANIMA – Córdoba International Animation Festival, which he founded in 2001, and Coordinator of the Centro Experimental de Animación (CEAn) at the UNC. His research focuses on the history and aesthetics of Argentine and Latin American animation. He has participated in festivals, exhibitions, and conferences in various countries. Instagram: @elalenator

The Interpolated Frame; or Digital Precognition and the Replacement of Motion/ Samuel Regan-Edwards

Relevant to all spectators (including theorists) of contemporary television animation, and animators whose work may be presented on modern televisions, this paper engages with “TruMotion”, “Auto Motion”, “Action smoothing”, and “Motion Enhancement”; the terms for motion compensated frame interpolation as included (and turned on by default) in modern television sets. Whitson Gordon describes this as a feature that increases the framerate of videos by creating 'artificial' frames 'between' the 'real' ones, with the intent of making the film animation viewing experience on LED and LCD screens more comfortable and accessible.

Following from Cholodenko, Baudrillard and my previous paper 'The Medium has Metamorphosed' published in *animationstudies2.0*, I suggest this is a misunderstanding of the technology. Rather, motion compensated frame interpolation stands as a prime figure in the accelerationist process by which digital media comes to represent only itself - sustaining animation by 'keeping' it contemporary and in its hyper form. Where there were once black 'frames' (an entry point for the spectator to play with the illusion of motion) now the interpolated frame stands, having spectated, interpreted, and replaced over half of everything seen on TV. In this way,

motion compensated frame interpolation reduces the relevance of the human by becoming, not only animator, but spectator, too.

Samuel Regan-Edwards is a graduate from Falmouth University's Animation BA(Hons) course, interested in the delirious 'logic' of digital, virtual, hyperreality. His most recent publication is 'The Medium as Metamorphosed', in *animationstudies 2.0*.

The Treachery of Moving Images / Shaw Fox

René Magritte's surrealist painting 'The Treachery of Images' depicts a pipe above the text translating to 'This is not a pipe.' It is a painting: it's not a pipe, it just looks like a pipe. In a similar way: animation is not movement, it just looks like movement.

I investigate the idea of the treachery of images in the context of animation and moving image- in terms of both the characteristics of the medium and of the globally pervasive industry that supports & controls the creation, reproduction, and distribution of moving image.

Expanding upon the work of Magritte and his contemporaries like Paul Valéry and Walter Benjamin, as well as the more recent work of Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, I identify how the medium itself- the 'mediatory layer'- becomes invisible through 3 processes: omnipresence, elegance, and design.

I then synthesize this into an exploration of the modern 'currency' of images and the broader social & practical implications for consumers and educators and then for the mechanics of the medium itself. Modern animation's technical developments and the infrastructure of its global industry demand attention in discussion of education, but also of miseducation and addiction. Sometimes the more there is of something the less we see it. The pervasiveness of animation in our lives makes it harder to see therefore harder to use wisely, and assumptions are made. What appears to be movement is not always movement, just as what appears to be a pipe is not always a pipe.

I'm a 23 year old Animation BA graduate of 2024. My current writing discusses the philosophical underpinnings and implications of animation and how they relate practically to those involved in its production and consumption. I have a particular interest in inter-medium analyses and as such have broad adjacent interests in puppetry, performance, economics, textiles, and political history.

My primary focus as a practitioner is on the fundamentals of storytelling, analysing existing stories and synthesizing best practises for story creation and pedagogy.

The Power of the Pause: How the Hold Shapes Motion and Meaning in Animation / Philippe Vaucher

As technological advancements accelerate, the pace of media has kept stride, with films becoming quicker (Cutting et al., 2011) and audiences processing visual information faster (Smith et al., 2023). However, this relentless acceleration may prove unsustainable as the perceptual system reaches the limits set by selective attention and the "switch cost" (Monsell, 2003)—the time required to shift focus between stimuli. Amid this ever-quickening pace, animation students raised on the rapid editing of social media neglect an essential tool in their toolbox: the hold. Just as music relies on silence, animated motion must be punctuated by strategic pauses to breathe, for scenes to resonate, and for storytelling to remain comprehensible.

This paper investigates the fundamental role of the hold in animation. We begin by examining how pauses, through their use in the principles of anticipation and staging, enable audiences to segment and process scenes effectively. This process, known as event segmentation theory, illustrates how the brain organizes sensory input into discrete events marked by perceptual boundaries, underscoring the necessity of well-timed holds (Zacks & Swallow, 2007). Not only do anticipatory pauses create memorable and salient events, but they also retain, focus, and guide the viewer's attention, reinforcing the principle of staging and enhancing the clarity of the narrative.

While stillness is integral to motion, static freeze frames often feel lifeless. To explain this paradox, we describe Brownian motion—the microscopic and random movement that animates all particles (Feynman et al., 2015 [1963]).

We conclude by broadening the discussion to a larger context, noting that the relentless acceleration of media and technology has brought little benefit to our well-being or the planet's health. Slowing down may be the key to regaining perspective and addressing the challenges of the 21st century with meaningful and sustainable solutions.

Philippe Vaucher is a Montréal-based animator, filmmaker and professor. By uncovering the cognitive roots of Disney animators Ollie Johnston and Frank Thomas' twelve principles of animation, he hopes to better

understand the art form he loves. Throughout his film career, he has experimented with various animation techniques and has sought to combine traditional media with digital practices. His independent creations include short films and music videos. His last film, *The Well* (2013), has won two international awards. He currently teaches animation, cinema and storyboarding at the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue's Montréal campus.

MONDAY JULY 7: 2:00pm-3:45pm
PANEL 2A: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE 1

Papers:

Feminist Pro-Sex Pornography in Animation: Integrating AI in Film Production and Representation / Marie-Josée Saint-Pierre, Université Laval

Policymaking Against the Machine? Regulating AI and the Future of Animated Labour in Brazil / Elena Altheman, Concordia University

Worlds Models and Simulated Physics: Generative AI and Animation / Joel McKim, Birkbeck, University of London

Sustaining Animation (Studies) in the Age of AI / Mihaela Mihailova, San Francisco State University

Feminist Pro-Sex Pornography in Animation: Integrating AI in Film Production and Representation / Marie-Josée Saint-Pierre

This research-creation project combines feminist theory and innovative animation techniques to address the underexplored topic of pro-sex feminist pornography. The project's dual objectives are: (1) the production of a unique animated short film that reclaims women's agency and representation in the context of sexual imagery and (2) the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) tools to enhance the production pipeline. These efforts aim to challenge traditional paradigms of sexuality depicted in mass media by creating alternative narratives designed by and for women. Historically, feminist perspectives on pornography have been polarized, with radical feminists critiquing its role in perpetuating misogyny, while pro-sex feminists advocate for positive portrayals of female sexuality. This project aligns with the latter, leveraging animation as a medium to visually reimagine women's sexual agency, providing a constructive counter-narrative to stereotypical and dehumanizing depictions. The research also evaluates the technological and creative limits of AI in the animation process, contributing to broader discussions on its implications for the industry. By leveraging AI tools to streamline production and fostering alternative portrayals of women's sexuality, the project contributes to discussions on sustaining inclusive animation practices and expanding the medium's cultural, social, and technological impact. This film also represents a pioneering step in feminist animation studies, merging academic insights with artistic practice to expand the possibilities of animated storytelling. By reframing representations of women's sexuality, the project fosters dialogue on autonomy, equality, and creativity. The presentation will showcase the groundbreaking results of this research-creation process, offering new perspectives on feminist animation and AI's transformative potential for the medium.

Marie-Josée Saint-Pierre is an internationally acclaimed animation filmmaker and associate professor at Université Laval, specializing in feminist animation and documentary practices. With over 50 international awards, her films have screened at 150+ festivals, including Annecy and Director's Fortnight at Cannes. Saint-Pierre's work explores themes of maternity, gender representation, and artistic creation, often blending fiction and documentary. She is the author of *Women and Film Animation: A Feminist Corpus at the National Film Board of Canada* (2024). She promotes feminist animated films and mentors emerging artists in animation studies and creative research practices.

Policymaking Against the Machine? Regulating AI and the Future of Animated Labour in Brazil / Elena Altheman

In December 2024, the Brazilian Federal Senate approved a bill (PL 2.338/2023) that regulates the use of AI systems in the country after much pressure from cultural institutions, several public consultations, and more than a year and a half of heated debates, amendments and drafts. The bill, which still has to be voted and approved by Brazil's Chamber of Deputies before being made official, was modelled after the European Union's AI ACT implemented in June 2024. Brazil's AI Law includes provisions on copyright protection and cultural ownership rights, one of its main points of contention between opposing political parties, with right-wing senators strongly lobbying against artists and cultural workers' rights. In this paper I investigate and analyse, with the institutional support of the Brazilian Association of Animated Film (ABCA), the current degree of AI adoption within animation studios in Brazil, focusing on these technologies' impact on the country's animated workforce. Through an approach of listening to labour and a framework that draws from the United States Animation Guild (IATSE Local 839) reports "Future Unscripted: The Impact of Generative AI on Entertainment Industry Jobs" and "Critical Crossroads: The Impact of Generative AI and the Importance of Protecting the Animation Workforce", I focus my investigation on scriptwriters, voice actors, and concept artists, three distinct

but equally vulnerable groups within the animation production pipeline, prone to job displacement. This paper examines the strengths and shortcomings of this possible new law vis-a-vis the current state of the industry's usage of AI, and its repercussions within the Brazilian animation industry and its workers, in a precarious state and still recovering from the pandemic and the far-right Bolsonaro administration's attacks on culture. My objective is to address and discuss wider transformations in the future - and present - of animated labour, jeopardized by AI's encroachment.

Elena Altheman is a PhD candidate at Concordia University, Montréal. Her research examines the history of labour and public policies in the Brazilian animation industry. Her most recent work has been published in "Media Industries in Crisis: What Covid Unmasked", edited by Vicki Mayer, Noa Lavie, and Miranda Banks. Elena is also a scriptwriter, nominated three times for the International Emmy Awards with the Brazilian animated series "Irmão do Jorel", "Wake Up Carlo!", and "Nutty Boy". She co-wrote the feature film "Chico Bento e a Goiabeira Maraviosa", part of the "Turma da Mônica" (created by Maurício de Sousa) transmedia universe.

Worlds Models and Simulated Physics: Generative AI and Animation / Joel McKim

This paper considers recent developments in generative AI, particularly advances in text to moving image models, such as Open AI's Sora. These innovations have triggered debates within technology circles regarding AI's ability to model environments, develop spatial understanding and accurately replicate complex physical processes. Open AI goes so far as to claim that continued scaling of generative video models like Sora is a path towards the development of accurate world simulators. Others maintain that current AI models are merely "faking physics" through their recognition and replication of pixel patterns and continue to have limited actual understanding of the physical world.

These rapid developments in moving image AI are already having a significant impact on digital animation labour, production, and aesthetics. This paper will consider the implications of these technologies for animation theory and practice, while also questioning the role they play in the AI industry's current obsession with producing "large word models" (LWM's). What happens to digital image production if AI is able to generate the kinds of 3D spatial worlds that form the basis of digital animation, game design, and immersive media? What larger objectives do AI developers have in prioritizing forms of "spatial intelligence" and world models? Drawing on recent discussions on the possible "umwelt" or "life world" of AI, embodied computation, and the limitations of digital simulation by scholars such as Katherine Hayles, Aylish Wood, Louise Amoore and Wendy Chun, the paper challenges the overclaiming of the AI industry and questions the political implications of reductive projects of world modelling.

Joel McKim is Reader in Digital Media and Culture and Director of the Vasari Research Centre for Art and Technology at Birkbeck, University of London. His work considers the politics and aesthetics of digital image production, from digital animation to AI. He is co-editor, with Esther Leslie, of the 2017 issue of the journal *Animation* entitled *Life Remade: Critical Animation in the Digital Age*. He is co-editor of the SubStack publication *After AI*, which questions how to think, make and teach critical media in the aftermath of generative AI.

Sustaining Animation (Studies) in the Age of AI / Mihaela Mihailova

Since the initial release of the DALL-E text-to-image model in 2021, generative AI tools have permeated every stage of digital animation production, from concept art and previsualization to editing and post-production work. My talk examines AI's formal and ideological impact on the production, consumption, and study of animated media. It provides an overview of generative AI's role in contemporary animation workflows and digital production pipelines and analyzes the emergent aesthetics of algorithmic animation through a close reading of AI-assisted films, music videos, and advertisements and their reception. At the same time, the paper considers generative AI's role in both provoking and voicing, through narrative and visual means, anxieties surrounding the potential loss of human creative agency and the increasing opacity of creative toolkits in animation production. It asks what is at stake—formally and ideologically—in emerging animation practices for which AI is not only a means of production but also a self-reflexive mode of critical engagement with the outcomes and implications of moving image cultures' algorithmic turn.

My talk argues that AI tools can be generative for animation artists and animation scholars through the questions they raise about intentionality, creative control, labor automation, and the value of craft in the algorithmic age. It proposes a critical framework for thinking through the challenges that AI-generated content poses to existing theories of animated performance, embodiment, and liveness and demonstrates AI's potential to (re)generate longstanding animation studies debates on authorship, labor rights, and the role of

technology in the creative process. While espousing a critical, rather than a techno-optimistic, view of AI's ongoing transformation of the various landscapes of our discipline, this presentation advocates for a nuanced evaluation of the artistic and theoretical significance of AI's incorporation into animation filmmaking.

Mihaela Mihailova is an Assistant Professor at San Francisco State University. She is the editor of *Coraline: A Closer Look at Studio LAIKA's Stop-Motion Witchcraft* (2021). She has published in *Journal of Cinema and Media Studies*, *The Velvet Light Trap*, *Journal of Japanese and Korean Cinema*, *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, *Feminist Media Studies*, *animation: an interdisciplinary journal*, and *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema*. She has contributed to *Animating Film Theory* (with John MacKay), *Animated Landscapes: History, Form, and Function*, *The Animation Studies Reader*, and *Drawn from Life: Issues and Themes in Animated Documentary Cinema*.

MONDAY JULY 7: 2:00pm-3:45pm
PANEL 2B: NATIONAL DISCOURSES 1

Papers:

Depicting Animals and Ecology to Make Irish History and Folklore More Contemporary. On Cartoon Saloon's Irish Folklore Trilogy / Marta Maciejewska, University of Gdańsk

Circular Cinema Carpet: A Neoclassical Approach to the Traditions of Persian Arts and Moving Images / Dr. Leila Honari, Griffith Film School

The Current State and Future of Digital Animation in North Korea / Joo Ok Hong, Chung-Ang University

Reanimating Resistance: Intermedial Political Aesthetics in *The Ballad of Crowfoot* (1968) / Scott Birdwise, OCAD University

Depicting Animals and Ecology to Make Irish History and Folklore More Contemporary. On Cartoon Saloon's Irish Folklore Trilogy / Marta Maciejewska

The subject of this paper will be the way Irish history and folklore are presented in the Irish Folklore Trilogy animation series produced by Cartoon Saloon studio, which includes *The Secret of Kells* (2009), *Song of the Sea* (2014), and *The Wolfwalkers* (2020). Some scholars (e.g., Luke Malone) point out that the apparent trend in these films is to make the folklore and history of Ireland more contemporary by linking them to issues that many contemporary viewers could identify with. This is also emphasized by the main filmmaker of the trilogy, Tomm Moore, noting that animal rights and ecology are important aspects of these films. In *The Secret of Kells*, we see the story of the creation of the title manuscript, weaving in an ecological context (its creation would have been impossible without raw materials from the forest and the help of a magical cat, whose name Pangur Bán refers to an old Irish poem). In *Song of the Sea*, one of the characters is a selkie (a shape-shifting girl who changes into a seal), the main antagonists are owls led by the goddess Macha, and the human family is aided by a herd of seals – folkloric non-anthropocentric elements thus shape the present day in which the action takes place. In *The Wolfwalkers*, on the other hand, the 17th-century British domination in Ireland in the town of Kilkenny is presented as a conflict between humans and a wolf pack. In the presentation, I will try to prove – following Malone – that, adopting a non-anthropocentric perspective, Cartoon Saloon's trilogy, "through the revitalisation of mythical characters and imagery, was an attempt to promote Ireland's past as a source of guidance in the present, to embolden appreciation for nature, and to provide answers to an audience seeking meaning in a rapidly changing world" (122).

Marta Maciejewska works as the Head of Film & Media Division at the University of Gdańsk, Poland. She co-organized several international conferences, including NECS (2019, Gdańsk, Poland) and Fast, Slow & Reverse (2017, Gdańsk and Kraków, Poland). She is a co-editor of three academic books: *Orson Welles. Twórczość – recepcja – dziedzictwo* (*Orson Welles. Work – Reception – Heritage*, 2016), *Racism and Trauma* (2018), and *Censorship, Politics and Oppression* (2018). In 2023, her book on Jan Švankmajer's feature films was published. She is interested in Czech, Irish, and Polish animation (both for children and experimental), as well as film animal studies.

Circular Cinema Carpet: A Neoclassical Approach to the Traditions of Persian Arts and Moving Images / Dr. Leila Honari

This paper examines the circular heritage of cinema and animation through a neo-classical lens, focusing on the aesthetic connections between proto-animation techniques and Persian traditional arts. It highlights the cyclic structures in animation history, drawing parallels with the cycles and circular motifs foundational to Persian carpet design. This inquiry culminated in the creation of the large-scale public art installation "Flying Carpet in the Gardens" (2022), which reimagines traditional Persian carpets as immersive moving-image artworks.

"Flying Carpet" draws inspiration from the twelfth-century philosopher Attar's "Conference of the Birds" (1177), referencing the mandalic structures of Persian mystical storytelling. Its non-linear narrative explores themes such as transition, cultural transformation, the unity of existence, and Nietzsche's concept of Eternal Return, juxtaposed with nineteenth-century optical devices like the Zoetrope (wheel of life/devil) and Phenakistoscope (spindle viewer). These devices inform the project's cyclic structural techniques, while allegorical imagery of migratory seabirds symbolises migrants, refugees, the exiled, and those caught in cycles of endless repetition. The analysis incorporates Julia Kristeva's philosophies on migrant artists and Laura U. Marks' concept of "Thinking like a carpet." Marks' exploration of carpets as algorithmic media informs the project's framing of

"Flying Carpet" as a form of contemporary migrant art. By aligning traditional Persian aesthetics and algorithmic structures with modern animation technologies, the installation demonstrates how artistic traditions can be revitalised to ensure cultural sustainability.

This presentation features video documentation of Flying Carpet's installation at the Botanica Festival 2022 and its live music-accompanied screening at FilmHarmonic 2022 in Brisbane, Australia. The paper ultimately argues that cinema and animation could have evolved along alternate pathways, offering a deeper understanding of non-linear and cyclic storytelling traditions that sustain and innovate the art of animation.

Dr. Leila Honari is the Program Director for the Bachelor of Cinematic Arts (Honours) and leads the Art Direction major in Griffith Film School's Animation program. An animator of Persian heritage and a former traditional carpet designer, her research focuses on cultural and historical animation, exploring motif and metaphor in animated storytelling through hand-drawn and painterly techniques. Her award-winning animated film "Flying Carpet" (2022) reflects her cultural roots and has been screened internationally. Leila's practice-based research also examines women's studies and migrant arts, integrating themes of social, cultural, and historical significance into animation, illustration, and performing arts.

The Current State and Future of Digital Animation in North Korea / Joo Ok Hong

North Korea remains one of the few socialist states following the Soviet Union's collapse and the end of the Cold War. Its economy and culture are tightly controlled by the Kim Il-sung family. Since the regime's inception, animation has been a key propaganda tool. The first animated films were produced in 1960, with traditional techniques like cel and puppet animation continuing until the 1990s. Digitization began in the late 1990s with partial use of computer graphics. By 2003, North Korea produced its first entirely 2D computer-animated film, followed by its first 3D computer-animated film in 2004. Early 3D animation depicted insect and toy characters, but by 2012, productions featuring human characters appeared. Under Kim Jong-un, traditional methods were replaced by digital techniques, with 70% of animations focusing on historical themes, especially Goguryeo, a kingdom in what existed now North Korea. These works, categorized as "historical animation," emerged during Kim Jong-un's era, using advanced 3D techniques to portray historical figures while glorifying the ruling family and framing Goguryeo as a foundation of North Korea's identity. Additionally, digital animations from Kim Jong-un's era include series initiated under Kim Jong-il, educational shorts, and animations based on fairy tales narrated by Kim Il-sung's wife. North Korean animation has consistently followed the aesthetic of socialist realism, evident even in its 3D digital productions. Without reforms or openness under Kim Jong-un, digital animations rooted in socialist realism and historical themes will likely continue.

Joo Ok Hong, born in Korea, is a research professor at Chung-Ang University's Graduate School of Advanced Imaging Science, Multimedia & Film. She earned her bachelor's in Industrial Design from Seoul National University in 1999, a master's in Applied Arts from Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne University in 2003, and a PhD in Animation Theory from Chung-Ang University in 2018. Her doctoral thesis focused on North Korean animation in the 1960s and 1970s. In 2020, she published 'An Early History of North Korean Animation (1955–1980)', contributing significantly to the academic study of North Korean animation history.

Reanimating Resistance: Intermedial Political Aesthetics in *The Ballad of Crowfoot* (1968) / Scott Birdwise

This paper explores connections between Indigenous resistance in Canada and animated processes that have been employed in film to critically reframe how photographic documents produce and sustain historical and political meaning. My example in this paper is *The Ballad of Crowfoot*, a 10-minute documentary directed by the Indigenous folk singer Willie Dunn for the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) in 1968. Often referred as Canada's first music video, *Ballad* brings together Dunn's song about the eponymous late 19th-century chief of the Blackfoot people with an animated remediation of photographic documents from the Canadian settler colonial archive. Dunn's critical redeployment of the NFB's institutional aesthetic of kinestasis resists the closure of what can be understood as its project of social and aesthetic reconciliation between contesting political actors in the Canadian national imaginary.

It is in the context of Indigenous resistance inside Canada, alongside international solidarity with other Third and emerging Fourth World struggles in a global context, that *Ballad* develops its twofold procedure of past-looking memorialization and present- and future-oriented mobilization and struggle. I aim to show, then, how on the one hand Dunn conjugates his music with the evidentiary value of photographs to demonstrate the ongoing betrayals and tragedies suffered by chief Crowfoot's people. On the other hand, *Ballad*'s formal operations revolve less around documentation per se but rather the reanimation of images of the past to

sustain an ongoing dispute regarding the meaning of archival and historical documents in and for the struggles of the present and the future.

I will conclude by suggesting that Ballard's intermedial political aesthetics from the 1960s anticipates concerns explored in more recent films made by contemporary Indigenous filmmakers based around reanimating the archive and using principles of collage and montage in another moment of political ferment.

Scott Birdwise is an instructor at OCAD University. He completed his doctorate at York University with a dissertation on the poetics of emergency and everyday life in the films and poetry of Humphrey Jennings. He is the editor of *No Man Can Define Me: The Films of Winston Washington Moxam* (2013) and *Splitting the Choir: The Moving Images of Donigan Cumming* (2011), and is currently working on a monograph based on his dissertation. He has published articles in a variety of venues, including *Animation Studies 2.0*, and he recently published articles on Jennings's wartime documentaries and the music videos of Inuit artist Tanya Tagaq.

MONDAY JULY 7: 2:00pm-3:45pm

PANEL 2C: TIME, METAPHOR, AND MEMORY

Papers:

“Time Sure Does Fly, Doesn’t It?”: Technological Innovation and Aesthetic and Temporal Discordance in the Films of Robert Zemeckis / Dr Matt Nicholls, Arts University Bournemouth

Dead or Alive: How Animation Sustains Metaphor / Carmen Hannibal, Royal College of Art London and Belfast School of Art

Structures of Memory and Witnessing in Yuri Norstein’s *Tale of Tales* / Cailin Flannery Roles, Northeastern University

“Time Sure Does Fly, Doesn’t It?”: Technological Innovation and Aesthetic and Temporal Discordance in the Films of Robert Zemeckis / Dr Matt Nicholls

Robert Zemeckis’s 2024 film *Here* epitomises arguably the two biggest themes of his work: technology and time. Based on the comic by Richard McGuire, the film documents the events that take place in the same location over a huge period of time, from the prehistoric era through to modern times. The action, always taking place within the same locked shot, features CG animation to recreate the prehistoric sequences, while generative AI technology is used to age and de-age its stars Tom Hanks and Robin Wright.

These themes of technology and time are apparent across almost all of Zemeckis’s filmography; *Back to the Future* (1985), *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988) and *Forrest Gump* (1995) all famously used pioneering visual effects to present fantastical alternative histories. His mocap trilogy – *The Polar Express* (2004), *Beowulf* (2007) and *A Christmas Carol* (2009) – provides hyperreal depictions of famous stories and bygone eras, while *Welcome to Marwen* (2018) mixes scenes of CG fantasy with an ambiguous, atemporal ‘real life’ setting that exists somewhere between the 1950s and 2000s. Rather than being nostalgic, these films use technology to create an uncanny, somewhat alien and elusive sense of time and space.

This paper examines this relationship between technology and time, focusing primarily on *Here* but also touching on Zemeckis’s past work. I argue that Zemeckis’s work is defined by a fluid set of ambiguities (past/present/future; realism/fantasy; ‘live action’/‘animation’) that helps to foster an aesthetic of ‘discordance.’ While sometimes not achieving the same scholarly attention as other ‘technological auteurs’ such as James Cameron and Peter Jackson, the unorthodox realisations of time, space and character in Zemeckis’s work makes him an important figure in the field of Film and Animation Studies.

Dr Matt Nicholls is Senior Lecturer on the BA (Hons) Animation Production course at Arts University Bournemouth. His teaching and research interests centre on crossovers between live action cinema and animation, and on the prevalence of digital visual effects in contemporary media. He has presented conference papers on the uses of imperceptible visual effects in US indie cinema, the use of animated effects and digital imaging in live music concerts, and CG augmentations of screen performance.

Dead or Alive: How Animation Sustains Metaphor / Carmen Hannibal

This theoretical discussion of metaphor focuses on the animated image to suggest the inclusion of interpretative methods for analyzing metaphorical meaning, using as one example Estonian film director and animator Sander Joon’s wordless 3D animation *Sierra* (2022) as a possible metaphor for a boy’s initial experience leaving childhood.

Scholars like Whittock (1990), Carroll (1996), Wells (1998), Rohdin (2003), Forceville and UriosAparisi (2009), Buchan (2011), Honess Roe (2013), Fahlenbrach (2016), and Müller and Kappelhoff (2018) join in the conversation on how metaphor facilitates meaning in film and animation. They offer theoretical and methodological variety, yet with a few exceptions, they also tend to rely on a cognitive approach to metaphor as the basis for analysis. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) popularised the principles of metaphorical concepts with their Conceptual Metaphor Theory, whereby metaphor is foremost fundamental to human thought and subsequently language. The refreshing proposition, and its accessibility for application in non-linguistic fields, appeal to both film and animation scholars investigating knowledge and emergent meaning made possible from filmic properties. The metaphor literature (e.g. Cazeaux 2011) refers to the enabling of both established and new meanings via metaphor in the distinction between ‘dead’ and ‘living’ metaphors, and in Lakoff and Turner’s (1989) cognitive approach the creation of new meaning occurs because metaphors in artistic texts basically draw on conceptual metaphor from everyday language. However, Forceville (2006) contests this claim in cases of visual images like feature films. Therefore, theorising how animated images sustain metaphor

requires articulation of the full range from prevalent dead everyday conceptual metaphors to uniquely living imaginative unprecedented metaphors.

Encouraged by Rohdin's (2003) analysis of metaphor in early film theory and grounded in Ricoeur's (2003 [1975]) hermeneutics of metaphor, I exemplify with *Sierra* (2022) what it means to the analysis of metaphorical meaning creation in animated works if we turn to Ricoeur's philosophical argument that even though metaphor encompasses both its 'living' and 'dead' stage, these stages of the process cannot be conflated nor reversed.

Carmen Hannibal is a PhD Candidate in animation at Royal College of Art in London and is currently working as a Lecturer in animation history and theory at Belfast School of Art in Northern Ireland. Her doctoral research takes a philosophical approach to examine theoretical conceptions of metaphor in animated works to develop an interpretive methodology for metaphor in animation analysis. Her peer-reviewed publications are included in *mediaesthetics* and *Animation Studies*, she co-organized the 2022 international research symposium TIMES OF METAPHOR, and in the summer of 2023, she undertook the role of Lead co-editor for the SAS-affiliated blog *Animation Studies 2.0*.

Structures of Memory and Witnessing in Yuri Norstein's *Tale of Tales* / Cailin Flannery Roles

Produced in 1979 by the Moscow-based studio Soyuzmultfilm, Yuri Norstein's *Tale of Tales* has often been described as one of the greatest animated films of all time. It is a meditation on post-war memory and loneliness in the Soviet Union, a phantasmagoria of loss that begins with the image of a nursing infant pulling away from its mother's breast to lock eyes with a wolf. Previous scholarship addressing *Tale of Tales* has often sought to provide a cultural history of Soviet-era Russia by interpreting Norstein's references to Russian folklore and his own childhood, with Clare Kitson describing the film as "a poetic amalgam of Norstein's memories." More recently, Mary Slowik has compellingly argued that *Tale of Tales* weaves together historical memory and moral tales to depict the narrator's journey toward an ethical and self-reflexive mode of story-telling. However, less attention has been paid to the film's formal qualities and techniques. Building upon Slowik's analysis of the film's narrative structure, I argue that Norstein's use of the multiplanar camera and the repetitious cycling of cels allows him to reproduce and interrogate post-war structures of memory and recall. The world of *Tale of Tales* is layered with images that coexist on the screen but are unable to cohere into a single reality, producing a visual and emotional disjointedness. In doing so, Norstein attests to the precarity of survival, reminding us that one must not only survive the war but also endure the knowledge that they survived. If the twentieth century is, as Annette Wieviorka describes it, "the era of the witness," *Tale of Tales* demonstrates the power of animation as visual testimony when words alone cannot suffice.

Cailin Flannery Roles is a PhD candidate in the English department at Northeastern University. Her fields of study include animated film, graphic narratives, cultural studies, and labor. She is currently working on a dissertation that explores representations of the animated body as machine, as well as the relationship between animation labor and the construction of race in modernity. Her writing can be read in *Animation Studies 2.0*, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, and *Digital Humanities Quarterly*.

MONDAY JULY 7: 4:15pm-6:00pm

PANEL 3A: PIONEERING WOMEN IN ANIMATION IN SPAIN

Papers:

1940s-1950s: Studios of Carlos Rigalt, Patricio Payá and Joaquín Pérez Arroyo / Sara Álvarez Sarrat,
Universitat Politècnica de València

1940s-1950s: Dibujos Animados Chamartín, Balet y Blay, Estela Films / Maria Pagès, CITM, Universitat
Politècnica de Catalunya

1950s-1980s: Estudios Moro, Estudios Cruz Delgado, Story Film / Pilar Yébenes, Universidad Europea de
Madrid; and Mercedes Álvarez San Román, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid

1980s-2010s: Jaizkibel, Episa, Lotura Films, Dibulitoon, Baleuko / Maitane Junguitu Dronda, University of the
Basque Country, UPV/EHU

1940s-1950s: Studios of Carlos Rigalt, Patricio Payá and Joaquín Pérez Arroyo / Sara Álvarez Sarrat

Between the 40s and 50s, in a territory devastated by the Civil War, economically, socially and culturally impoverished, new animation studios emerged in Spain. Their presence is uneven throughout the territory. While a nascent industry was emerging in Catalonia, in the Valencian Community three visionaries launched themselves into animation in a self-taught way. The pioneers Carlos Rigalt, Patricio Payá and Pérez Arroyo opted for domestic animation film, for toys and advertising. These authors overcame the difficulties with ingenuity, set up their studios in their own homes and involved their respective families in the productions. Domestic cinema at its finest.

The history of these Valencian pioneers has been rescued by researcher Raúl González Monaj, from Universitat Politècnica de València, in an extensive investigation that, in collaboration with La Filmoteca, allowed the recovery and restoration of 70 titles of the 120 produced by the Pérez Arroyo studio. In the credits of these works only the main roles are reflected, the director or producer, and also the company in charge of the production. But the photos of the studios show that women also worked in these teams, two in Carlos Rigalt's studio and three in Pérez Arroyo's. The women appear in group photos, as part of the teams or working in the studio, often without names. It seems revealing that in one of the photos in which a woman appears working in Rigalt's studio, one can read at the bottom: "backfilling section." A metaphor for the role and consideration that professional women had at the time.

In this paper we focus on the women who worked in the pioneering studios of Valencian animation, highlighting their involvement in the projects and with the intention of contributing to making the work of the pioneers of Valencian animation visible.

PhD in Animation by Universitat Politècnica de València, Sara Álvarez heads the Animation research group at UPV. She directed Prime the Animation! New Talent International Festival for 11 years (2013-2023). She participated in several congresses and curated exhibitions focused on animation. She coordinated the MIA Report 2001 and 2002, a project about women in Spanish animation industry, developed together with a team of researchers from different universities, which received a Grant from the Spanish Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. She coordinated ANIMALETA project (2021-24), a didactic resource that explores the possibilities of animation as a tool for inclusive learning.

1940s-1950s: Dibujos Animados Chamartín, Balet y Blay, Estela Films / Maria Pagès

Although women have always been an important part of the animation industry in Spain, their work and inputs do not appear in the available bibliography. Several manuals were published after the 1990s (Candel, De la Rosa and Vivar, Rotellar), and there we can find men's professional careers, but very few is said about the women workers of the team. Every ink-and-paint department was full of women, whose names scarcely appear on the credits of the films. To balance the silence that surrounds women pioneers on animation in Catalonia, this proposal will try to make an inventory of those who participated in traditional animation based on materials from the three main studios of the 1940s and 1950s in Barcelona: Dibujos Animados Chamartín, Balet y Blay and Estela Films.

In a chapter of Garabatos series (1942-1945), some fragments of live-action footage of the studio are introduced before the animation begins. It shows the day-to-day work of paint and ink women working in Dibujos Animados Chamartín. A voice overstates their work without mentioning their names, before introducing the first animated sketch. A promotional photo of the team from 1942 documents sixteen women among the thirty members. We can certify the names of those who were married to other men in the studio.

Those who were not linked to men figures are more difficult to find out, but they will guide the empirical part of this project's data gathering with interviews to the descendants, media research and analysis of archive material to bring light to forgotten individuals and to place those women who worked in traditional animation as a reference for nowadays animators' careers.

PhD in Animation by Universitat de Vic- UCC, Maria Pagès has specialized on Spanish animation of the 1940s and 1950s. She organized two Forums on Spanish animation pioneers (2016) and on Women in animation (2017). She participated in several congresses about the concurrence of animation and gender perspective. She received a grant to develop a documentary about Spanish pioneer woman animator Pepita Pardell (ICEC, 2023). She teaches 2D Animation in Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya and she is a member of the Research Group Dicode. She has published *Animation in Spain: Magic Tricks, Drawings on Cels, and CGI* with Routledge (2025).

1950s-1980s: Estudios Moro, Estudios Cruz Delgado, Story Film / Pilar Yébenes and Mercedes Álvarez San Román

In 1955 Santiago and José Luis Moro founded Estudios Moro in Madrid, a studio specialized in advertising and television. The international prizes that some of their commercials won, such as the two Venice Cups and the three Palmes d'Or at Cannes, made the national animation industry visible and encouraged contracts with foreign customers. Their staff consisted of 300 permanent employees and 300 collaborators. In this paper we will explore the role of women in what some scholars have called the second golden age of Spanish animation. In the Moro studios were trained two other masters and representatives of the animation industry in Madrid: Cruz Delgado and Pablo Núñez (founder of Story Film).

On the occasion of the publication in 2008 of the book *Don Quijote animado. El cine de animación de Cruz Delgado*, Carmen Sánchez "Chenza" stated that when she arrived at the Cruz Delgado Studio at 12 Valenzuela street she thought it was a very bad studio, because she was given a pair of broken gloves to make a test and trace in India ink with a nib pen a character called "Mago Viento" on an acetate. At that moment, her professional career began, despite the fact that she overturned Delgado's black inkwell on the studio's stage. Although it is true that men made up the majority of the staff at Estudios Delgado, the women who worked in animation in Madrid with him have been absolutely essential for the TV series *Don Quijote de La Mancha* (1979), *Gulliver's Travels* (1983) or *Los Trotamúsicos* (1989) to be today masterpieces of animation in Spain. The history of Spanish animation is signed by the pioneers Carmen Sánchez, Ángeles Ares, Milagros Bañares, Carmen G. Sangrador, Marta de la Rosa, Isabel Cobo, María Dolores Gonzalo, Beatriz Sánchez... each one with a particular story to be told.

Pilar Yébenes is Professor of Animation, Film Analysis, Film History and Animation at Universidad Europea. She has been Director of the Master's degree in 3D, and Director of the Content Department. Coordinator of the Communication Degree and Director of the Master's Degree in Creative Production. Publications: *Cine de Animación en España*, *Cruz Delgado*, *Estudio de la animación japonesa*, *La Democratización de la animación: Generación Pixar*, *Coco y ¡Canta!*, *Don Quijote animado*, *100 años de animación*, *Metrópolis de Rintarô* or *La igualdad de género en el cine de animación*. She has collaborated for different festivals such as Animadrid, Animacor, Cinanima and Malaga Film Festival. MBA Business Management. Member: Academy of Cinematographic Arts.

Mercedes Álvarez San Román is a lecturer at Universidad Carlos III de Madrid and the principal investigator (PI) of the project "Pioneering Women in Animation in Spain", funded by Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. She received a doctorate from Sorbonne Université and from the University of Oviedo and has been a visiting scholar at Columbia University and University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). Álvarez San Román is the author of the book *Los personajes femeninos en el cine español de animación contemporáneo* (Peter Lang, 2024). The results of her research have been published in journals such as *Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, *Con A de Animación*, *Feminist Media Histories*, *Feminist Media Studies*, and *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*.

1980s-2010s: Jaizkibel, Episa, Lotura Films, Dibulitoon, Baleuko / Maitane Junguitu Dronda

This presentation explores the underrepresented contributions of women to commercial animation made in the Basque Country between 1980 and 2010. Previous research, including my PhD dissertation, has highlighted the limited presence of women in this sector with a few prominent figures, such as Maite Ruiz de Austri in film and Myriam Ballesteros in television. However, the aim of this study is to move beyond these well-documented names and identify other female professionals who played significant roles in shaping the commercial

animation industry during this period.

The analysis focuses on key Basque production companies of the period—Jaizkibel, Episa, Dibulitoon, and Baleuko—which played a pivotal role in the development of local animation cinema. By examining the credits of the long feature films released during these decades, the research aims to uncover the specific roles women held, such as directors, animators, screenwriters, or producers, and evaluate their contributions to the creative and technical processes of animation filmmaking.

This work forms part of the larger research initiative “Pioneering Women in Animation in Spain”, which seeks to document and analyze the contributions of women to both commercial and experimental animation. While this presentation centers on the commercial animation sector, it sets the groundwork for future studies of experimental animation, which often provides a more flexible space for creative expression.

Through this investigation, we aim to shed light on the hidden history of women in Basque commercial animation, acknowledging their professional achievements and situating them within the broader context of animation history. This work not only fills a gap in academic discourse but also contributes to a more inclusive understanding of the animation industry in Spain.

Doctor Maitane Junguitu Dronda is a researcher specialized in commercial animated cinema from the Basque Country (Europe). She works as a lecturer in the department of Journalism at the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU). Her PhD dissertation focuses on the features by Juanba Berasategi, including the narrative, formal, aesthetic and thematic approach to the films. She is also interested in women and game studies. She researches women’s depiction in Media, the Basque video game industry and Basque culture depiction in video games. She completed several research stays at University of Nevada, Reno (USA) and at University of Stirling (Scotland).

MONDAY JULY 7: 4:15pm-6:00pm
PANEL 3B: AESTHETICS

Papers:

Poetics of Limited Animation / Dr. Paul Taberham, Arts University Bournemouth

Are Some Cycles More Lively Than Others? Animated Cycles Sustaining the Illusion of Life / Claire O'Brien, Teesside University

A Study on the Impact of 2D Animation Style in Roguelike Games on World-Building: A Case Study of *Don't Starve* / Su Yue, Beihang University

Paul Julian's House & Hand: The Hauntological Structure(s) of Animation Background Paintings / Felix Davidson, Independent Scholar

Poetics of Limited Animation / Dr. Paul Taberham

The distinction between full and limited animation has traditionally been framed as a dichotomy, with full animation often heralded as the gold standard due to its fluidity, dynamism, and adherence to the Twelve Principles of Animation. Limited animation, by contrast, has frequently been considered an economised, stylistically inferior alternative. This paper challenges such hierarchies by exploring the unique aesthetic, narrative, and comedic possibilities inherent in limited animation practices.

Drawing from historical examples such as *The Dover Boys at Pimento University* (1942) and the works of UPA and Zagreb Film, as well as contemporary productions like *The Simpsons* and *Bojack Horseman*, this paper argues that limited animation constitutes a distinct poetics, one shaped as much by creative intent as by economic necessity. Techniques such as animating on threes or above, reusing cycles, and sectioning, while ostensibly cost-saving, enable highly stylised and effective modes of storytelling that marry form and function. The presentation will highlight how limited animation emphasises goal-oriented and gestural movements over the sentence-focused subtleties of full animation, resulting in performances that often rely more heavily on dialogue and staging. This economisation of movement has fostered innovations in comic timing, exaggerated poses, and audience engagement with minimalist design. Moreover, by embracing limitations, animators have pushed the boundaries of visual storytelling, creating works that thrive on abstraction and suggestion rather than realism.

Through exploring key examples, this paper will demonstrate that limited animation is not a lesser form but a deliberate aesthetic choice, one capable of achieving profound expressive and narrative depth. In doing so, it invites a reevaluation of animation's diverse modalities, advocating for a broader understanding of its artistic potential beyond traditional paradigms.

Dr. Paul Taberham is an Associate Professor at Arts University Bournemouth, where he has taught animation theory and history on the Animation Production course since 2014. He is the author of *Lessons in Perception: The Avant-Garde Filmmaker as Practical Psychologist* and the forthcoming *Poetics of Animation*. Dr. Taberham is the coeditor of *Cognitive Media Theory, Experimental Animation: From Analogue to Digital*, and *Introduction to Screen Narrative*. He is also coediting *The Routledge Companion to Animation Studies*. Research interests include animation, narratology, experimental aesthetics, and analytic philosophy.

Are Some Cycles More Lively Than Others? Animated Cycles Sustaining the Illusion of Life / Claire O'Brien

Alan Cholodenko, (1991) defines the illusion of life as to endow with movement and endow with life. Can it be argued that animated cycles are the most sustaining of the illusion of life in animation? They don't atrophy or change, they are infinite unless their apparatus ceases to function or we choose to stop their display.

Animated cycles can be very compelling in the form of a satisfying social media gif or repetitively jarring when spotted within an animated film. Dan Torre, (2019) hails the animated cycle as one of the most significant structures within the animated form but in the past, animated cycles were often seen as an economic technique in TV and Film animation production (Noake, 1988). How can they be this compelling and repetitively jarring? Why do we watch when we know the outcome?

Animated cycles appear deceptively simple to create, but their granularity is fascinating being made up of a finite, linear sequence of frames, but when repeated they are seamlessly circular in form and hark back to the proto-cinematic zoetrope. In taking up Lev Manovich's (2001) provocation "to undertake systematic, laboratory-like research into its elements, and basic compositional, expressive and generative strategies" I analyse what Torre terms the 'process document' and examine the animated cycle, and ask why are some animated cycles

more lively than others? Torre's definition of four different structural archetypes of the animated cycle; Looping, Oscillating, Random and Stationary cycles informs this research alongside case study process documents and textual analysis. I also refer to the work of Will Luers, (2018) while not pertaining specifically to animation it offers pertinent cycles theory.

Claire is course leader for MA Animation at Teesside University and lectures on both the MA and BA. Claire is also the Coordinator for Animex Screen, the international student film festival that is part of the annual Animex animation and games festival. She regularly publishes and presents her animation studies research papers in journals and conferences such as *AnimationStudies 2.0*, the Animation (In) Flux Symposium, Edinburgh College of Art and Screens, 2024 and the Animex International Research Conference 2024. She is currently Project Investigator on two live, funded projects with Innovate UK Feasibility studies for AI solutions and XR Network+.

A Study on the Impact of 2D Animation Style in Roguelike Games on World-Building: A Case Study of *Don't Starve* / Su Yue

With the rapid advancement of technology, 3D games have become the dominant force in the gaming market. However, some 2D games have achieved remarkable success amid the plethora of 3D titles. Therefore, a thorough analysis of the reasons behind the success of these 2D games holds significant academic value and provides useful insights for the design and development of future games. This paper focuses on the application of 2D animation styles in Roguelike games, exploring their role in world-building and conducting a detailed study from three perspectives: game development, game visuals, and player experience.

Through an analysis of the typical case of *Don't Starve*, this paper reveals the unique advantages of 2D animation styles in complex procedurally generated systems. Roguelike games are known for their characteristics such as randomness, irreversibility, and system complexity. This paper examines how the 2D animation style ensures accuracy and fluidity in world-building from a technical perspective.

In terms of visuals, the paper analyzes the distinctive aesthetic features of 2D animation styles in games. The 2D animation style provides a broader range of choices and creative space for games. In contrast to the homogenization seen in 3D games due to their pursuit of realism, 2D games can adopt a variety of artistic styles and visual elements to create more diverse and interesting game worlds.

Additionally, the paper emphasizes the importance of player involvement in world-building and specifically analyzes how the 2D animation style offers players greater flexibility in creativity and participation.

In summary, this paper explores the close connection between 2D animation styles and world-building from multiple perspectives, offering valuable insights for the creation of animation and games.

Su Yue, residing in Beijing, China, is currently a graduate student in the Animation program at Beihang University, with a research focus on 2D animation. Her academic interests encompass the creation and expression of 2D animation, with a dedication to exploring the application and development of 2D styles in fields such as gaming, film, and digital art.

Paul Julian's House & Hand: The Hauntological Structure(s) of Animation Background Paintings / Felix Davidson

In the traditional cel process, painted backgrounds act in unison with animated foreground layers to create a stylised visual 'world.' When scene layouts are planned, the position and movement of the character is prioritised, and empty spaces are purposefully placed into the compositions in order to facilitate this. The expected presence of the characters therefore shapes the visual form of the landscapes, resulting in a definitively hauntological sense of loss when the backgrounds are viewed alone, as they were originally painted.

My research practice is grounded in the hauntological — essentially, that which is paradoxically present through the fact of its absence. Drawing primarily on the writings of Derrida, Barthes and Bachelard, as well as the late animation scholar Hannah Frank, I have been working to develop a hauntological methodology through which animation history and practice can be explored anew via deliberate prioritisation of emptiness and an open engagement with gaps, holes, and loss. Absence, in all its forms, provides an entryway into new knowledge, and objects and histories are defined by what they lack, as opposed to what they contain.

In line with Hannah Frank's historicisation of cartoon production through frame-by-frame analysis – which she describes as an act of 'entering into' the cartoon image – this paper proposes that a hauntological method of engagement can open up these spaces of compositional emptiness, frame their landscapes as sites for exploration, and reveal new kinds of knowledge about their historical context and production. These ideas form

the basis of my ongoing research project into the life and work of Paul Julian, a background artist for Warner Brothers during the '40s and '50s. His artistic work outside of the mostly anonymous world of Hollywood animation production is juxtaposed, in both this paper and in my adjoining film work, against his painted backgrounds from the 1948 Looney Tunes cartoon *Bugs Bunny Rides Again*.

Felix Davidson is a researcher, filmmaker and animator working cross-disciplinarily to investigate the potential use of hauntology in synthesising new approaches to animation studies. He presented his paper 'Ghosts Adjoining Frames: Animation Practice as Hauntological Investigation' during the 2022 Society for Animation Studies annual conference, and has since completed an MRes degree in Moving Image Studies at UAL Central Saint Martins, graduating with a distinction for his work on Hollywood cartoon background artist Paul Julian. His currently proposed PhD project will utilise firsthand archival research to contextualise the position of late animator and filmmaker Paul Bush alongside the development of hauntological theory in the UK and within the wider scope of British artists' moving image.

MONDAY JULY 7: 4:15pm-6:00pm
PANEL 3C: MICRO TALKS

Papers:

Empowering Students through Hyperreal CG Animation Collaboration to Build AI Virtual Companions for People Living with Dementia / Melody Li, University of New South Wales

Animated Environmental Rituals: Sustaining Animation Through Nature and Ritual / Kim Noce, University of the Arts London and NFTS

Bubble and Soul: Screening Event at a Japanese Sento - Exploring the Connection Between Water and Animation / Çağıl Harmandar, Tokyo University of the Arts

Sustainability of a Small Animation Studio / Terry Wragg, Leeds Animation Workshop

Animating *Hunger by the Sea* / Xue Han, Arts University Bournemouth and Bournemouth University

Who is King Tampon? He is a Medical Guy! / Dr. Caroline Childs, Independent Scholar

Revisiting 3D Character Modelling Teaching via the Vitruvian Module / Dr Ao Chen, UCL

Reanimating the Multiplane / Aaron Holmes, Biola University

The 100 Windows: Live Mixing Experimental Animation to Choral Music / Christine Banna, Rochester Institute of Technology

Empowering Students through Hyperreal CG Animation Collaboration to Build AI Virtual Companions for People Living with Dementia / Melody Li

In 2024, a group of four students from UNSW Bachelor of Fine Arts in Animation and Moving Image and myself in the role of educator joined the research team of UNSW felt Experience & Empathy Lab to work on building a CG character animation library for “AI Viv and Friends” which is a virtual companionship project for people living with dementia utilising artificial intelligence to engage in meaningful conversations and connections with the life-size virtual characters. This case study explores work-integrated learning (WIL) approaches in animation education via a research project where students, educators, and researchers work together to experiment and innovate animation approaches for humanity. Through the collaboration of this project, students gained knowledge beyond the classroom, animated virtual characters with design thinking methodology (Dam, 2024), experimented with hyperreal CG animation techniques, and developed teamwork skills. The outcome of the project suggests that experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) in animation education through interdisciplinary collaboration between education and research is a powerful way for students to build real-world positive impact with animation skills.

Melody Li is a lecturer in Animation at the University of New South Wales, Sydney. Her animation projects span across film, music video, light projection, hologram, virtual reality, and augmented reality. She collaborated with film directors, artists, and musicians on projects exhibited at the Japanese Film Festival, Sydney Film Festival, MCA Sydney, ACMI Melbourne, In Between Time UK, etc. Melody is enthusiastic about contributing to the community and helping students to achieve their dreams. She explores work-integrated learning for students to partner with professionals from various fields to work toward the world's sustainability goals. Through collaboration and research, Melody explores and experiments with digital innovations in relation to communicating our perception, memory, and feelings through the art and craft of animation.

Animated Environmental Rituals: Sustaining Animation Through Nature and Ritual / Kim Noce

This micro talk explores Animated Environmental Rituals and reclaims animation as a sustainable filmmaking practice by integrating nature as a medium and muse. Drawing on techniques such as “En-Plein-Air” animation, papermaking, and environmentally conscious storytelling, as well as new role character role models, it emphasises ecological awareness and collaborative rituals to reconnect art-making with the natural world. Using examples from residencies at Quinta das Relvas inspired by permaculture principles and diaristic animation approaches, the talk highlights the transformative potential of blending speculative fabulation with sustainable practices. It examines how engaging with natural materials, exploring permaculture-inspired systems, and adopting community-driven and self-reflective approaches can reshape animation practice and education.

Animated Environmental Rituals challenges traditional animation methods by fostering mindfulness, material resourcefulness, and immersive engagement with natural spaces. This approach addresses pressing environmental and social justice concerns while expanding animation’s potential as a medium for personal growth, ecological awareness, and social transformation.

Kim Noce is an award-winning artist, filmmaker, and lecturer for MA Animation at UAL and the NFTS, actively engaging in research integrating multimedia work with participation, performance, education, sustainability, and inclusivity. Her work has been showcased at over 500 international film festivals, on TV channels, and featured on streaming platforms like Netflix. She has directed and animated numerous films and commissions for organisations such as the BBC, Channel 4, Barbican, Arts Council England, and the British Film Institute. Her recent projects include immersive installations and multimedia performances exhibited at venues like the ICA, Tate, and the Barbican.

Bubble and Soul: Screening Event at a Japanese Sento - Exploring the Connection Between Water and Animation / Çağıl Harmandar

In October 2024, we organized a one-week exhibition and a one-day animation screening at Nakanoyu, a traditional public bath (sentō) in Yokohama. The screening featured two sections with the themes of Water and The Body. We used the bathing space, where people bathe fully naked, as an alternative space for viewing animation films.

Water and animation share a bond. Historically in cinema, film imperfections like scratches were nicknamed “rain” and “snow,” distorting the camera’s realism. Today, water continues to inspire animation through its movement and deformation, as 2D animators “boil” their lines, and 3D animations like *Elemental* are being made.

In the sentō pool outside, rising steam blurs vision and the background, revealing new shapes with its swirling motion. This presentation gives a brief report on the public event Bubble and Soul and reflects on the connection between water and animation.

Çağıl Harmandar (b.1992) is a Turkish animation artist and experimental filmmaker. She grew up in İstanbul and studied Studio Art at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University from 2011 to 2016. In 2017, she received the MEXT scholarship to study animation at Tokyo University of the Arts, where she completed her Master’s Degree. Her graduation project, *Vision*, a 7-minute animation about the eye and seeing, has won 10 awards and screened at over 35 film festivals worldwide. She is currently a practice-based PhD candidate at the same institution, living and working in Tokyo.

Sustainability of a Small Animation Studio / Terry Wragg

Is our studio sustainable? – can it last?

Not likely!

When our collective began, in 1978, it was the only animation studio in this region. Now there are dozens: smart, energetic, successful.

Our workshop is in a deprived and shabby neighbourhood; our wages are low. Most of our members are young, inexperienced and hard-up, some of the older ones are tired.

We do what we can, environmentally: working with old stuff, mostly on paper: reusing, recycling, sustaining.

We’ve been making short animated documentaries, and distributing them, for almost half a century now.

Our films deal with environmental issues, equality, justice, global awareness. Some are about climate change. Clearly they’ve failed to change the world.

However - most of our seven active team members are under 30, full of enthusiasm. Our films still get shown, locally and internationally; and we’re producing new ones.

- Could this studio be sustainable after all?

Terry Wragg is a film-maker who helped to found Leeds Animation Workshop in the 1970s. Since then she has been a collective member and co-director, participating in all the tasks involved in film production, distribution, education and exhibition.

The Workshop remains an independent, not-for-profit, women’s collective. It has produced almost 50 short animated documentaries, on subjects including equality, the environment, workplace and social issues. Most of these are in distribution throughout the UK and around the world.

Recently she assisted with the transfer of many of the Workshop’s collected materials and documents to the University of Leeds Archive.

Animating *Hunger by the Sea* / Xue Han

As the solo animator of *Hunger by the Sea*, I experienced a distinctive creative journey that contrasted sharply with my prior work in commercial filmmaking. This presentation reflects on the transition from industry to academia, focusing on the challenges and rewards of collaborating remotely with researchers and rethinking

the purpose and meaning of animation in my career. I will explore the unique techniques applied during the film's production, highlighting how they were adapted to meet the demands of an academic project. Additionally, I will discuss how this process reshaped my understanding of animation, not merely as a medium of storytelling but as a powerful tool for conveying social realities. I submitted a screening proposal in addition to this talk.

Xue Han is a senior lecturer at Arts University Bournemouth and a PhD candidate at Bournemouth University, specialising in the interdisciplinary study of animation and psychosocial research. She animated *Hunger by the Sea* during her Master's studies, a project that inspired her transition from a commercial career to academia. With prior experience in the animation industry, Xue is passionate about bridging professional techniques with in-depth academic narrative exploration.

Who is King Tampon? He is a Medical Guy! / Dr. Caroline Childs

I make animated pieces using found computer generated models and real time digital puppetry. For me, sustaining animation means the recycling of materials, working offline, in real time and without expensive rendering. It also refers to the circular artistic career path I have undergone from 3D analogue puppeteer to 3D analogue puppet animator to 3D digital animator to 3D digital puppeteer. This talk looks at how I convert models built for other purposes into digital puppets some of the ways I impose my artistic will on their design and motion aesthetics and how this relates to the idea of animated world creation where everything is purpose built. I look at the freedoms and limitations of this method and how its creative advantages in terms of spontaneity and collaboration with code-based entities can be exploited.

I am an independent artist making pieces for live performance and projection in underground venues and galleries. I worked for two decades as an academic including the National Centre for Computer Animation at Bournemouth University where I received my doctorate in digital puppetry. I now use the methodology devised for this PhD for activist and personal non-commercial work. These include:

2023 October. 'Slippery Slope' made for the exhibition - Sguardi: artisti di frenti ai diritti negate. Supported by Amnesty International, Italy.

2024 November. 'When we started to climb' made for the exhibition - Terra Madre: artisti di fronte alla fragilità del nostro pianeta. Supported by Greenpeace, Italy.

Revisiting 3D Character Modelling Teaching via the Vitruvian Module / Dr Ao Chen

In this presentation, I explore the application of the Vitruvian module, an architectural and proportional concept, to teach BA Media students 3D character modelling using Blender at UCL. The rationale for this pedagogical methodology is to complement UCL's previous teaching materials by analysing aesthetic and technical issues of character modelling within the logical context of proportion and anatomy. The topic consists of two primary aspects: first, using the head as a unitary reference point and employing horizontal, vertical and sloping lines to establish proportional measurements for the entire body; and second, utilising the basics of skeletal and muscular anatomy to support character modelling. Combining intuitively visual perception with the logical structure of the Vitruvian module, the aim of this approach is to help students gain a deeper understanding of aesthetic and technical aspects of character design.

Dr Ao Chen is a Lecturer in 3D Design in the Department of Culture, Communication and Media at UCL. His research interests include animation, game art and film philosophy. He was invited to present at the 30th International Screen Studies Conference in 2021, delivering a presentation entitled "Nominal Film Frame: The Ending of Blow-up". His animation *White* (2022) was officially selected for the 26th Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival – PÖFF Shorts in Estonia and the 47th Annecy International Animation Film Festival in France, with his films *Red* (2019) and *Black* (2020) officially selected for the 43rd and 44th Annecy Festival.

Reanimating the Multiplane / Aaron Holmes

The multiplane camera system was a primary technology used by animation studios for seven decades. While the multiplane perhaps reached its industrial peak with the system designed for creating elaborate establishing shots in Disney features, the fundamental enchantment of multiplane animation existed in Lotte Reiniger's early experiments, the Fleischers' horizontal approach, and in work being made today by independent animators who cobble together DIY multiplane rigs.

This micro-talk posits that the multiplane should not be regarded as an obsolete technology nor merely as an *arrière-garde* contrivance. Rather, the multiplane is a flexible tool for teaching animation in the 21st century

and a powerful instrument for artists yearning to transfer more aspects of their animation process from algorithms back into their own hands.

I recently commissioned Zach Tolchinsky to design and build a multiplane camera system for Biola University's animation program. Zach documented his process, as covered by Cartoon Brew:

<https://tinyurl.com/cartoonbrew-multiplane>.

Aaron Holmes is an animator, filmmaker and educator originally from Lincoln, Nebraska. His filmmaking practice focuses on the climate crisis, political polarization and raising children in an unstable world. Holmes expresses these concerns metaphorically through stop motion and other analog animation techniques. His animated shorts have screened at leading film festivals including Animac and Cineautopsia (Bogotá). Holmes has taught animation courses at Cal State Long Beach and CalArts, and currently he's an Assistant Professor at Biola University. Prior to joining Biola's art department, he worked on TV series at the stop motion studios Stoopid Buddy and Open The Portal.

The 100 Windows: Live Mixing Experimental Animation to Choral Music / Christine Banna

The 100 Windows is a multidisciplinary performance that blends diverse choral, instrumental, and digital soundscapes with live, animated visuals. The performance explores the concept of *umwelt*, where individuals/organisms have their unique sensory worlds that can intersect and collide. These individualized fragmented sensory experiences are analogous to living in one's own house and observing others from our windows who are doing the same.

The animated projections draw inspiration from the tradition of "absolute film" and early 20th-century visual music combined with the role of a VJ (Video DJ). The visuals reflect abstract representations of sound, responding dynamically to changes in mood, tempo, and style through live mixing. A collaboration between Christine Banna and the Mount Hope World Singers, we look forward to sharing documentation of the performance with the larger animation community.

Christine Banna is an Assistant Professor of Film and Animation at the Rochester Institute of Technology. She received her Master of Fine Arts from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts (SMFA) at Tufts University. Banna works in both contemporary and traditional processes with a focus on experimental animation and projection design for live performance.

Her recent film, *Pink Pottery* (2022), has screened globally and won several awards including, most recently, from the European Cultural Council (ECC) in Venice, Italy. It also screened at the Archaeology Channel conference and streaming through their broadcast series, *Strata: Portraits of Humanity*.

TUESDAY JULY 8: 9:00am-10:45am
PANEL 4A: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE 2

Papers:

- From the Omniverse to the Metaverse: The Emergence and Impact of Real-time, AI-driven, and XR-compatible Animation Technologies and Practices** / M Javad Khajavi, Volda University College
- Integrating AI into Traditional Animation Pipelines: Disruption, Creativity, and Uncanny Collaboration in Short Film Production** / Dr Ari Chand, University of South Australia; and Dr James Calvert, University of South Australia
- Towards Ethical Applications of Generative AI in Animation: A Practice-Based Case Study** / Hannes Rall, Nanyang Technological University
- Can You Sign Your Name with Bifrost?: Advanced Automation and the Artist's Mark in CG** / Chaz Evans, University of South Carolina

From the Omniverse to the Metaverse: The Emergence and Impact of Real-time, AI-driven, and XR-compatible Animation Technologies and Practices / M Javad Khajavi

Based on a forthcoming book project, this paper delves into the evolutionary journey of animation technologies, drawing parallels with Thomas Kuhn's influential theory from "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions." Kuhn's framework, which highlights paradigm shifts in scientific thought, serves as a lens to examine the transformative epochs in animation history. The study categorizes the development of animation into five distinct eras: pre-cinematic, analog, digital, real-time, and metaverse-driven. The core of the paper is an in-depth analysis of the two latest and most groundbreaking periods: real-time and metaverse-driven animation. It explores how these eras, marked by rapid technological advancements, redefine the boundaries of animation. The paper emphasizes the role of spatial computing and artificial intelligence in shaping these new frontiers, offering insights into their integration in animation production. Furthermore, the study scrutinizes the implications of these technological advancements on the animation industry. It discusses how the emergence of real-time and metaverse-driven technologies is not just altering production techniques, but also reshaping content creation, distribution, and consumption in the animation sector. In addition to industry impacts, the paper also explores the educational aspects. It examines how the advent of these technologies necessitates a reevaluation of curricula and teaching methodologies in animation education. The need to equip future animators with skills relevant to these new technological paradigms is highlighted, emphasizing the importance of adapting to the evolving landscape of animation. This study not only examines the historical trajectory of animation technologies but also offers a foresight into its future, contributing to both academic research and industry practices in the field of animation.

I am an award-winning multi-disciplinary designer, animator, developer, and researcher who works at the intersection of art, design, and technology. I made my first animation by writing computer code in 1995 at the age of ten and have been interested in the intersection of art and tech since then. I am a tech-savvy whose work spans several disciplines including 2D and 3D animation, game technology, and virtual reality. Currently I teach and research as an Associate Professor at Volda University College in Norway. Previously I was an Assistant Professor at the National University of Ireland Maynooth. I graduated from Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore with a PhD in Media Arts + Design in 2017. I am deeply invested in interdisciplinary research approaches that are informed by practice-oriented research, design thinking, and analytical methods and tools in Engineering.

Integrating AI into Traditional Animation Pipelines: Disruption, Creativity, and Uncanny Collaboration in Short Film Production / Dr Ari Chand and Dr James Calvert

This paper explores the development of a short, animated film, Run Koala Run, integrating Generative Artificial Intelligence into a traditional production pipeline, and examining the creative disruptions that arise from collaboration. Artificial Intelligence is significantly disrupting creative industries globally (Anantrasirichai 2022). The research situates AI as an active collaborator, challenging our conventional roles as Director and Art Director and workflows within animation as an intertextual hyper-reality (Cholodenko 2020, Lindvall 1997). We have reflexively evaluated the effectiveness and usefulness of AI in authentic use as a collaborative approach to animation practice. There is a testing of the limitations and advantages of AI tools within practice-based approaches to research. Examines the cyclical nature of theory and practice as praxis evolves within an animation production and exchange with AI systems.

These interventions expand the creative possibilities while requiring the team to navigate ethical considerations, aesthetic negotiations, and the recalibration of human roles in production. This case study contributes to ongoing discourse in animation studies by presenting a nuanced perspective on AI's capacity to augment and complicate creative practices. Through reflective analysis of production challenges and outcomes, it reveals how disruptions can foster innovation, rethinking traditional frameworks considering technological advancements. The first section analyses the impact of AI on animation, situating the discussion within broader debates about productivity, stability, and disruption of creative process. Next investigating character creation, examining how AI-driven generative tools mediate the design and animation of characters. While AI facilitates iterative experimentation and accelerates the development of visual styles, this highlights potential homogenisation of aesthetics and the diminishing role of individual artistic expression (Roxburgh 2013). The final section explores AI's role in world-building, emphasising its capacity to generate complex environments. The paper critically examines the implications of this automation for visual storytelling. It offers a critical perspective on its impact aesthetic practices, and narrative construction. A case study for understanding the transformative potential of AI in reshaping animation's creative landscapes.

Dr Ari Chand is a Designer/Illustrator and practice-based researcher, Lecturer in Illustration and Animation at UniSA Creative at the University of South Australia, Australia. Primarily teaching Illustration and Animation theory and practice. With a focus on how visual communication and illustration can help transform and communicate across biodiversity and science, education, histories and heritage, social work and health. His illustration work is mainly comprised of traditional and digital drawing, watercolour, ink, acrylic or hybridised digital illustration.

Dr James Calvert is an educator, researcher and internationally recognised VR director, animated film maker and game designer. With over 20 years' experience creating engaging content for all screen types, he has an enduring passion for immersive storytelling. James is currently a senior lecturer in animation at the University of South Australia. Prior to joining academia, he was a founder and director at the People's Republic of Animation, where he directed short films and projects for international clients. James is also a video game designer with two successful mobile games released on the app market.

Towards Ethical Applications of Generative AI in Animation: A Practice-Based Case Study / Hannes Rall

The use of Generative AI for the arts in general, and animation in particular, is one of the most hotly debated and investigated research topics in current discussion. With the publication of SORA on December 9, 2024 – this discussion has taken on a new urgency.

The academic, industry, and public discussion is generally angled by two polar-opposites, which Mihailova (2023) aptly describes as ranging “from knee-jerk technophobic panic to premature enthusiasm about this tech's potential to, in the preferred parlance of its PR machine, “democratize art.” While the scholarly discussion rightfully addresses concerns and challenges about IP protection and economic disruption, concrete proposals towards potential solutions remain scarce. Is there a way to reconcile technological innovation with ethical application?

In close collaboration with the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-upon-Avon, we investigate the humane dimension: The main goal of our project is to create an innovative visual adaptation of Shakespeare, using the emerging animated short-film as a testbed and case-study for responsible uses of AI.

Therefore, our research explores and refines methods that enable an ethically sound use of AI – e.g., by drawing exclusively from public domain sources instead of copyrighted materials. By doing so, we hope to achieve an approach that remains similar to traditional methods of visual development: Merely integrating influences from other artists but ultimately achieving a unique artistic outcome – ideated by human, not machine. The case-study will further demonstrate how much successful artistic creation still relies on the input of sentient beings - particularly in its ability to understand complex creative directions and refine visual outputs through a process of iterative feedback. In summary, we hope to provide guidance towards responsible uses of AI in animation production and contribute ideas for an ethical framework.

Hannes Rall is President's Chair Professor in Animation Studies and Associate Chair Research at Nanyang Technological University Singapore. He is also a successful director of animated short films. They have been shown at over 900 film festivals worldwide and have received 104 international awards. 16,000 of his film drawings and illustrations have been added to the Filmmuseum Düsseldorf's collection. His conference presentations include FMX, ACM SIGGRAPH, ARS Electronica, the Annual Conferences of the Society for Animation Studies (SAS) and Keynotes at IEEE VR (Osaka 2019) and CONFIA (Esposende 2018). In 2016 he was the Chair of the 28th Annual Conference of the Society for Animation Studies The Cosmos of Animation in

Singapore. His successful books “Animation: From Concept to Production” and “Adaptation for Animation Transforming Literature Frame by Frame” (CRC Press) can be found in over 160 important university libraries, including Stanford, Yale, Cornell, UCLA and Columbia.

Can You Sign Your Name with Bifrost?: Advanced Automation and the Artist’s Mark in CG / Chaz Evans

Animated computer graphics (CG) paradoxically mix the automation of aesthetic production with many elements that would be considered craft, bespoke, and “made by hand.” Likewise Maya, as a platform, belies a tension between digital handicraft and generative tools. It possesses both and requires a certain amount of knowledge of both approaches from its operators. Does Maya represent a digital artisanal practice, the automation of creative labor, or a complicated mishmash of both? In what production contexts does it skew towards handicraft and where does it skew toward mass-copying? Which approach is more valued by CG-viewing publics? Looking deeply into these questions can help sort out the many confusions, anxieties, and moral panics pointed at machine learning in the present moment. This presentation makes a case for breaking the popular conversations on algorithmically generated, and au courant AI-based, aesthetics down into specific fields and contexts.

This project provides a lexicon for comparing the meticulous moments of operating Maya (such as individually moving hundreds of vertices) with the very automated technique of using a sophisticated physics simulation package like Bifrost. Further challenging the handcrafted quality Maya users demonstrate are a string of lesser-known 3D model and animation generative AI tools such as Rodin Diffusion, Meshcapade, and Luma AI. These tools appear as labor-stealing boogeymen that create anxiety for the 3D animation professionals and students alike. But, without cosigning the notion that AI will be the sole provider of visual culture, there may be alternative proposals for the application of AI that centers on difference rather than trends or averages. This approach is manifested by the artwork of Kristin McWharter and Ian Cheng. These animated simulations offer a way to circumnavigate the projected dystopian position that artists will be replaced by generative AI tools wholesale.

Chaz Evans is Assistant Professor of Media Art at the University of South Carolina and Co-Founder of VGA Gallery. His work deals with the aesthetics and history of 3D animation and video game art. He holds an MA in Art History and an MFA in New Media Art from the University of Illinois at Chicago. His artwork has been exhibited at UnionDocs NY, Chicago Artist Coalition, and Antenna Space Shanghai. His writing has been published through *Leonardo*, *transcript*, Routledge, and *Journal of Games Criticism*. His curatorial work has been presented at Ars Electronica, Mana Contemporary, and Christian Petersen Art Museum.

TUESDAY JULY 8: 9:00am-10:45am
PANEL 4B: ANIMATION HISTORIES

Papers:

Cartoon Film Theory's Hidden Puppets: On the Transmedial Origins of 'Animating' in Japan / Christopher Taylor, Johns Hopkins University

Marie Seton and Animation Culture in the 1930s / Kristian Moen, University of Bristol

The Royal College of Art's Animation Collection: Challenges and Opportunities of Archiving 40 Years of Student Animation / Carla MacKinnon, Royal College of Art

The Gamma Film Archive and Practices of Valorization of Animated Heritage / Martina Vita, University of Roma Tre

Cartoon Film Theory's Hidden Puppets: On the Transmedial Origins of 'Animating' in Japan / Christopher Taylor

A series of critical transitions mark the history of Japanese animation between the late 1920s and the early 1940s: from silent cinema to “talkies,” from cut paper film to cel-based cartoon film, from artisanal to increasingly industrialized production methods, from surrealist slapstick to naturalistic aesthetics, and from conventional illustration to machine-assisted drawing.

Animation historiography has conventionally narrated these transitions in terms of the hegemonic influence of American cel animation as represented by Walt Disney and Fleischer Studios and the influx of new techniques and technologies like rotoscoping and the multiplane camera that afforded greater realism in the depiction of movement and volumetric depth. Recent work (Du 2019; Hori 2018) has shown the mediating influence of early Chinese cel animation on the Japanese reception of Disney aesthetics; however, the pivotal intermedial influence of European silhouette and puppet animation on early Japanese animation theory and practice remains understudied.

This presentation focuses on the shifting Japanese reception of Lotte Reiniger's *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* (1926) and Ladislav Starevich's *The Magic Clock* (1928) in the film magazines *Kinema Junpō*, *Eiga Shūdan*, and *Eiga Hyōron*, as well as in the film theorist Imamura Taihei's 1941 monograph *Manga eigaron* (*Cartoon Film Theory*). Extensive engagement with non-cel animation led Japanese film critics to recognize the photographic dimension of screen-based animated media generally rather than the graphic dimension specific to cel animation that preoccupied their Disney-focused contemporaries like Sergei Eisenstein. By the late 1930s, film theorists like Imamura Taihei began relegating these 2D and 3D puppets to the prehistory of cartoon film, understood as the culmination of a transmedial quest to manufacture (mechanical) life; however, the figure of the puppet reemerged within cartoon film theory itself via Japanese bunraku puppetry, reimagined as a domestic prototype for intentional movement and synchronized sound in the animated sound film.

Christopher Taylor is a postdoctoral fellow in Johns Hopkins University's Department of Comparative Thought and Literature and co-chair of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies Animated Media SIG. He is a scholar of aesthetics, animated media, film theory, philosophies of technology, and modern Japanese visual culture. His current research project investigates concepts of artificial humanity and animacy in 20th-century Japanese media cultures. He completed his Ph.D. in Comparative Thought and Literature at Johns Hopkins University.

Marie Seton and Animation Culture in the 1930s / Kristian Moen

While Marie Seton is perhaps best known for her work related to Indian cinema, alongside her trailblazing books on Sergei Eisenstein and Paul Robeson, she also played a significant role in London's developing animation culture of the late 1930s. Writing several articles in film magazines and newspapers on animators including Lotte Reiniger and Berthold Bartosch, Seton made an important contribution to a wider critical understanding of animated film. This culminated in her co-production of an innovative documentary on the history of animated film, *Drawings That Walk and Talk* (Seton and Frank, 1938), made in conjunction with the recently established National Film Library. Produced at the same time that animation was becoming embedded within newly emerging film archives, including the Cinémathèque Française and the Museum of Modern Art, the documentary offered an important encapsulation of animation history and its cultural value. This paper traces the ideas of animation that Seton articulated within this work and within her writing, particularly as they relate to the aesthetic and social value of animated film. At the same time, the paper situates these ideas within the context of Seton's wider critical and social concerns, the London animation

culture of the 1930s, and international efforts to situate animation as an object of historical value seen to be worthy of collecting in the archive.

I am an Associate Professor in the Department of Film and Television at the University of Bristol. After exploring the deep relationships between fairy tales, spectacle and cinema during its first decades in my first book, *Film and Fairy Tales: The Birth of Modern Fantasy* (I. B. Tauris, 2013), my research has turned to focus on animation history and theory, intermediality, and the relationship between animation and modernity. This research has been shared in papers and articles, as well as my second monograph, *New York's Animation Culture: Advertising, Art, Design and Film, 1939-1940* (Palgrave, 2019).

The Royal College of Art's Animation Collection: Challenges and Opportunities of Archiving 40 Years of Student Animation / Carla MacKinnon

Preservation of student animation has multiple benefits. In an art school context, digital archiving can perform the function of 'linking social practice, pedagogy, history and artefact in a performative dialogue that can bring the story of an institution [...] to life' (Knifton, 2015). As well as conservation of the past, the act of archiving, preserving, and creating access to animation can be seen as 'activist work to pave new paths toward future knowledge and to challenge older canons' (Greenberg, 2020).

As student numbers in higher education expand, archiving becomes increasingly complex. In response to these challenges, The RCA's Animation Programme is conducting research into the consolidation, preservation, and analysis of our student film collection, spanning 40 years, as well as establishment of a system through which new work can be collected, preserved and made available to researchers.

Student participation in the creation and maintenance of archives holds pedagogical and practical benefits (Hagler et al., 2023). We are investigating ways in which students, alumni, and technical and academic staff can work together to build and maintain a collection and – through this – strengthen and develop cross-cohort communities of practice.

This paper reflects on the first stages of the project, including key moments from the RCA's 2024 Archives & Alumni symposium, which brought together past and present RCA researchers, alumni, students, and archivists, to discuss the challenges and opportunities of archiving animation at the RCA.

Key questions raised included: Where do archiving responsibilities lie? Which production materials should be archived, and which discarded? What are the ethical and practical concerns around AI-enhancing work? What paratextual materials can be maintained alongside films? What are the risks of archiving? Should we allow some work to be forgotten?

Through sharing our process and questions with other researchers, animators, and educators, we hope to open a wider conversation around best practice in preserving animation in the contemporary art school.

Carla MacKinnon is a Tutor (research) in animation at Royal College of Art. Her career has included work across animation and live action film (as a director, producer, and animator), as well as producing festivals and interdisciplinary events. Her award-winning moving image work has screened widely at festivals, galleries and conferences and been distributed and broadcast internationally. She graduated from the RCA Animation MA in 2013, and in 2021 completed her PhD, which looked at contexts of production of animated documentary in the UK.

The Gamma Film Archive and Practices of Valorization of Animated Heritage / Martina Vita

Gamma Film is considered one of the most important Italian animation studios, known nationally – and internationally, considering the numerous foreign co-productions – for the creativity and the experimentation that characterized its long and prolific production. Founded in 1949 by brothers Gino and Roberto Gavioli in the basement of the family home, its story ended in 1999 in one of Milan's largest production facilities, Cinelandia, now the main headquarters of the Mediaset-Fininvest group.

The studio redefined the stylistic and aesthetic standards of animated productions, especially during the golden age of Italian animation. This period coincided with the era of Carosello, an advertising program that aired on the Italian television national network between 1957 and 1977, which became a space for experimentation and stylistic evolution in Italian animation.

The Gamma Film archive, now housed at the Micheletti Foundation and the Musil Museum in Brescia, is an important resource for the rediscovery and study of materials and documents that vividly describe the evolution of Italian animation from its origins to the present day. The studio was a pioneer in using new production techniques, inspired in part by collaborations with international studios like Disney. Gavioli brothers experimented with production machines and innovative technologies to speed up production times. These

techniques were later adopted by major European animation production companies.

This presentation aims to introduce the Gamma Film archive, some valuable and still unpublished rediscovered documents, and the preservation and enhancement practices that will be implemented.

Martina Vita is a PhD student at the University of Roma Tre. She is the author of essays in industry journals and collective volumes, and has participated in national and international conferences. Her research interests focus on animated cinema, and its interrelations with digital and pre-cinema forms.

TUESDAY JULY 8: 9:00am-10:45am
PANEL 4C: NATIONAL DISCOURSES 2

Papers:

Syncretism of Malay Folklore and Islamic Teachings in Animated Media: A Study of *Upin & Ipin: Keris Siamang Tunggal (The Lone Gibbon Kris)* / Dr. Norizzati Saifuddin, Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology

Enzo D'Alò's *A Greyhound of a Girl* (2023): From Irish children's novel to Italian animated adaptation to European co-production / Sophie Quin, European University of Film and Media Arts

Water as a Cultural Symbol in Malaysian Animation *Upin & Ipin: Keris Siamang Tunggal* (2019) / Juaina Ahmad Fadzil, Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology

Syncretism of Malay Folklore and Islamic Teachings in Animated Media: A Study of *Upin & Ipin: Keris Siamang Tunggal (The Lone Gibbon Kris)* / Dr. Norizzati Saifuddin

This study explores the syncretism of Malay folklore and Islamic teachings in animated media through a textual analysis of *Upin & Ipin: Keris Siamang Tunggal (The Lone Gibbon Kris)*. As a prominent Malaysian animated film, it serves as a cultural artifact that intricately blends traditional narratives with Islamic values to create a cohesive and educational story. Grounded in Media Syncretism Theory, this research examines how the film blends the cultural and religious narratives in the media by representing Malay folklore and Islamic teaching through visual storytelling and symbolic motifs. In this paper, I argue that the film harmonises Malay folklore and Islamic teachings by reframing mythical elements within an Islamic ethical framework, to create a syncretic narrative that reflects Malaysia's identity. The story balances the fantastical nature of folklore with the grounded moral teachings of Islam through Islamic principles and avoids contradictions between the two traditions which reflect the syncretism in the narratives. The film resolves potential tensions achieving a harmonious syncretic narrative. By highlighting the interplay of folklore and religion, this research demonstrates the role of animated media in fostering cultural and religious cohesion in a country like Malaysia.

Dr. Norizzati Saifuddin is an academic specializing in journalism, broadcasting, media studies, and mass communication. With a robust background in communication and broadcasting, Dr. Norizzati Saifuddin has been serving as an Assistant Professor at Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology since 2023. Her research interests include media content, media agenda-setting, and the interplay between social media and interpersonal violence portrayal in online news. Dr. Norizzati Saifuddin's work has been published in various SCOPUS-indexed journals, including *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication* and *European Journal of Molecular & Clinical Medicine*. She has also presented her findings at prestigious international conferences.

Enzo D'Alò's *A Greyhound of a Girl* (2023): From Irish children's novel to Italian animated adaptation to European co-production / Sophie Quin

This paper aims to discuss Enzo D'Alò's *A Greyhound of A Girl* (2023) as an example of European transnational animated cinema in the 21st century. As an international co-production involving seven European countries and led by well-known Italian director, Enzo D'Alò, *A Greyhound of A Girl* (AGAG) conforms to the production trends of contemporary European feature film animation. However, it is an adaptation of Dublin author Roddy Doyle's 2011 children's novel and, consequently, the animation focuses on recreating an Irish setting as the basis for a family drama in which a young girl, Mary, encounters the ghost of her great-grandmother, Tansy, who helps Mary to deal with her beloved grandmother's impending death.

Aside from a necessity of co-production's financially sustaining animated filmmaking, AGAG can be used to consider the recent recognition of 'Irishness' as a thematic product that has been made acceptable to a European and global audience through the popularity of Cartoon Saloon's feature films. Consideration will also be given to the film as an adaptation and discuss how animation has transformed a challenging narrative into a family-friendly film dealing with complex themes such as cynophobia, death, grief, love, and the intergenerational familial relationships of four women. Rather than viewing this film as a negative appropriation of Irish culture, instead consider the value and positivity of a trans-European adaptation of the text. "The implication is that "foreigners" may bring a perspective that allows them to see – and potentially re-present – a culture in ways unavailable to those constituted by it" (p. 193, Tracy & Flynn, 2017).

As the Irish animation industry and historical studies gain pace, this paper considers how innovative films such

as *A Greyhound of A Girl* (2023) sit within and without discourses of European, national, and family cinema, style, trends, and the evolving concept of European animation.

Sophie Quin is a research assistant for FilmEU (the European University of Film and Media Arts) at IADT, Dublin. Having completed a BA(Hons) in Animation, she pursued a Master of Arts by Research at IADT, collecting a critical history of Irish animation studio Quin Films. This was supported by the Irish Research Council's Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship Programme 2021. Since graduating in 2022, she presented at international conferences including Society for Animation Studies and BAFTASS. Her research interests include European and Irish animation history, animated animals, children's television, and the use of archives and personal collections in animation scholarship.

Water as a Cultural Symbol in Malaysian Animation *Upin & Ipin: Keris Siamang Tunggal* (2019) / Juaina Ahmad Fadzil

This paper argues that the representation of water in Malaysia's animated film *Upin & Ipin: Keris Siamang Tunggal* (Lone Gibbon Kris) (2019) serves as a cultural and narrative strategy to assert and preserve Malay identity. Drawing on the Semiotic Theory of Barthesian *Mythologies* (1957), the study argues that water is not merely a recurring motif but a signifier of profound cultural meanings rooted in Malay traditions and mythology, asserting that the symbolic portrayal of water transcends its visual appeal, functioning as a transformative element integral to the film's narrative and thematic structure. This is supported by evidence from pivotal moments where water symbolises spiritual renewal and personal transformation, aligning closely with Malay cultural practices and beliefs. The study focuses on how the film deliberately intertwines traditional myths with modern animation to create a narrative that resonates with contemporary audiences while reinforcing cultural heritage. It further posits that water's symbolic role in the film is a strategic tool for promoting Malay cultural identity within the broader context of Malaysian animation. By positioning water as a medium of cultural storytelling, this paper challenges simplistic interpretations of animated films as purely entertainment-driven. Instead, it emphasizes the genre's potential to engage in cultural discourse and identity formation. Ultimately, the study argues that *Upin & Ipin: Keris Siamang Tunggal* exemplifies how animation can serve as a platform for preserving and promoting cultural values, with water functioning as a central symbol that bridges traditional narratives and modern storytelling techniques.

Juaina Ahmad Fadzil is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Communication and Creative Industries, Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology Malaysia. She has a PhD (2023) in Artistic and Creative Technology from Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia. Her research interests and publications lie in animation studies, specifically Malaysian animation spectatorship.

TUESDAY JULY 8: 11:15am-1:00pm

PANEL 5A: ANIMATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT 1

Papers:

Augmentation, Acceleration, Replacement: Green Storytelling Strategies in Eastern European Animation

/ Jana Rogoff, Charles University

Studio Ghibli and Environmental Sustainability / Rayna Denison, University of Bristol

Animism, Animation and Advocacy / Christie Widiarto, University of Melbourne

Augmentation, Acceleration, Replacement: Green Storytelling Strategies in Eastern European Animation
/ Jana Rogoff

This paper aims to reflect on some of the major shifts and changes in practices of green storytelling. Throughout the 20th century we find an abundance of examples drawing on animation's formal capabilities to depict imperceptible and indeterminate environments, and to visualize environmental transformation unfolding over long periods of time. Using several dominant practices, such as augmentation, acceleration, and replacement, animation constructs knowledge about ecological problems that affect us and communicates it in widely comprehensible ways. The agendas of what we may refer to as 'green storytelling' shift from revelatory alerts (first exposure to information) to depictions of changes in environment, and nature devastation, to apocalyptic visions and dystopian imagery, but also positive imaginaries of possible futures. With glimpses into the past of green storytelling in Czechoslovak, Polish, and Belarusian animation, the paper invites discussion about what shifts we may be experiencing currently and what further shifts may be significant for the future in animation as a critical tool of environmental communication.

Jana Rogoff is an assistant professor at the Department of Film Studies at the Charles University in Prague. She conducts research in history and theory of animation, Eastern European film, film sound, and ecocinema studies. Rogoff has published in international book collaborations and in peer-reviewed journals, such as *Animation Studies Journal*, *Apparatus*, *International Journal for Film and Media Art*, and *Illuminace*. She has been a member of the Society for Animation Studies since 2017; a member of the scientific network Animation and Contemporary Media Culture since 2020; and a member of the research group Environmental Humanities Prague since 2023.

Studio Ghibli and Environmental Sustainability / Rayna Denison

Studio Ghibli has a longstanding reputation for environmental animation, from its eco-fables *Princess Mononoke* (Hayao Miyazaki, 1997) and *Pom Poko* (Isao Takahata, 1994) to its directors' open protests against nuclear power in Japan (Grace 2012). As Pamela Gossin has argued, however, where Hayao Miyazaki's films have may have been widely interpreted as eco cinema, the director himself has balked at this environmentalist interpretation of his animation, finding himself "uncomfortably at the center of such inconvenient and unintended consequences, he now avoids making public statements about his environmental views" (2015, p.210). Miyazaki's discomfort reveals a tension running through this high-profile Japanese animation studio. Studio Ghibli has continued to make its animated films in traditional and environmentally expensive ways but has also supported and promoted environmental protection and sustainability projects throughout its history.

Following work by Paula Willoquet-Maricondi who called for "the application of ecocriticism to film studies" to "expand to include the study of the environmental impact of the production, distribution, and exhibition of films" (p.14) back in 2010, this paper seeks to go beyond the screen at Studio Ghibli to investigate its environmentalist stance and activities. To do so, I unpack some of the work the Studio and its filmmakers have undertaken to support Japanese environmentalist movements across thirty years of film production, merchandising, theme park and branding activities. This work reveals a complex web of eco critical filmmaking, support for high profile rewilding projects and further efforts that conflict and contradict these activities. Through these means, I aim to show how Studio Ghibli has walked a fine line between exploiting and protecting the environment in Japan, never losing sight of its commercial interests.

Rayna Denison is Professor of Film and Digital Arts at the University of Bristol where she does research and teaching around contemporary Japanese cinema and animation. She is the author of *Studio Ghibli: An Industrial History and Anime: A Critical Introduction* and has edited a wide range of volumes including *Princess Mononoke: Understanding Studio Ghibli's Monster Princess* and *Superheroes on World Screens*. Her research

can be found in high profile journals including the *Journal of Cinema and Media Studies*, *Japan Forum*, *Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal* and the *Velvet Light Trap*.

Animism, Animation and Advocacy / Christie Widiarto

According to local stories, when the town of Pontianak was first established in West Kalimantan, Indonesia, spirits and ghosts haunting the area were scared away with canon fire. One of these was the vampiric spirit, the Kuntilanak (Duile, 2020). This ghost is renowned for being vengeful towards those who took her life while pregnant, but there is less focus on the fact that she was evicted from her natural home. This research explores the tension between urban development and nature, through a short animation about the spirits of this jungle and the animist beliefs of the local Dayak Tribe which play a significant part in the Kuntilanak's story (Duile, 2020). Revisiting this folklore at this time coincides with the development of Nusantara, the new capital city of Indonesia in East Kalimantan.

This research builds on existing studies such as Lamarre's work on how new understandings of animism and animation can lead to new knowledge and ways of being (Lamarre, 2018). Yoneyama found that the critical animism within the works of Hayao Miyazaki demonstrated a way forward for the relationship between humans and the natural world in the Anthropocene (Yoneyama, 2021). Although this animation is still in the early stages of development, it offers opportunities to illuminate how animation can be used for environmental advocacy. Can bringing to life folklore and animist beliefs play a part in giving the Kalimantan jungles a sense of agency and advocate for its protection? How will the vengeful Kuntilanak spirit react to further destruction of its home for the development of the mega-city that will be Nusantara?

Christie Widiarto is an Australian/Indonesian animator, whose work explores themes of community, culture and the natural environment. Her work is often collaborative and she has created animation for theatre, film and projection art. Presently, she is the Course Coordinator of the Bachelor of Fine Arts (Animation) at the University of Melbourne. Her current research focuses on grief and animation. Part of this research involves reimagining the Indonesian horror folklore, the Kuntilanak, through a feminist lens.

TUESDAY JULY 8: 11:15am-1:00pm
PANEL 5B: ANIMATED DOCUMENTARY 2

Papers:

Tearing up the 'Scripts': The Influence of Women's Self-Reflexive Animation on the Development of Contemporary Animated Documentary Practice / Sally Pearce, Independent Scholar

Malarial Mayhem: Animating the Fight Against Malaria (1940 – 1960) / Anitha Balachandran, Arts University Bournemouth

Reducing Ethical Risks when Representing Neurodiversity in Animated Documentary Practice: The Collaborative Reflexive Cycle / Dr Alex Widdowson, Independent Scholar

Never Like the First Time? The 3 Affinities of Animation / Gunnar Strøm, Volda University College

Tearing up the 'Scripts': The Influence of Women's Self-Reflexive Animation on the Development of Contemporary Animated Documentary Practice / Sally Pearce

In this paper I argue that women's self-reflexive animation, through pioneering the use of animation to explore invisible intangible aspects of actuality such as memories and emotions, has played a significant, but largely unacknowledged, role in the historical development of contemporary Animated Documentary Practice. In the first half of the paper, I will expand on my use of the phrase: 'Tearing up the 'Scripts''. In my use of the word 'Scripts', I am referring to prescriptions in the ways people who experience othering (such as women) may represent themselves. 'Scripts' are externally sourced, with political, social, or familial roots, but are internalised to become part of the identity of the othered person – so that a 'Script' is both external and internal to the othered person. I have argued that there is a correlation between women's self-reflexive animation and subversion because to find an authentic voice in framing the self, women may first have to locate and subvert the 'Scripts' that affect them - a slow arduous journey of self-discovery that the process of animating facilitates. I use the concept of 'Scripts' to explain a correlation or affinity between independent female animators, self-reflexivity and subversion. In the second half of the paper I argue that this affinity has resulted in a body of work that has been influential in validating the use of animation to explore interiority as an aspect of actuality. I will illustrate my arguments with reference to a selection of women's self-reflexive films, for instance, Ashman's 'I don't Protest, I just Dance in My Own Shadow' (2017), Bauman's 'Rocks in my Pockets' (2014), Priestley's 'Voices' (1985) and Zhan's 'Reneepoptosis' (2018) in the first half of the paper, and Pitt's 'Crocus' (1971), Beam's 'Tub Film' (1971), Leaf and Soul's 'Interview' (1979) and Kugel's 'Audition' (1980), in the second part.

Sally Pearce completed a studentship supported PhD by Practice in the Animation Department at Wolverhampton University in November 2024. She graduated from the National Film and TV School, UK, with an MA in Animation Direction in 2008. Her NFTS graduation film, *Elephants* (2008) screened at over 100 Festivals for instance, Annecy, Uppsala, Chicago, St Louis, London and won the Bafta Cymraeg for short film, and many other awards. Later films, such as *Hally* (2011) and *Pripyat Horse* (2023) have also screened at multiple Festivals, winning awards and nominations. She has delivered multiple conference papers and three articles publications.

Malarial Mayhem: Animating the Fight Against Malaria (1940 – 1960) / Anitha Balachandran

In the years shaped by the crucible of World War II and its immediate aftermath, a significant body of animated films were commissioned by government agencies in Europe, America and Britain to address public health issues. Among these are several works that aimed to combat the spread of malaria, a serious tropical infection transmitted to humans by the bite of the female anopheles mosquito. Films about malaria were largely commissioned for military viewership at the outposts of Empire in territories where overseas/colonial troops were stationed, such as South America, Africa and Asia. In their modernist role as educational tools, these are works that encompass the rhetorical, the humorous, the weird and surreal, combining a poetic visual aesthetic with fictional narratives and documentary realism (Wells 2002). This paper looks at several fascinating instances of 'malarial movies' such as Disney's *The Winged Scourge* (1943) featuring the Seven Dwarfs, Chuck Jones' *Private Snafu* shorts, and films by the British War Office and colonial-era Information Films India (IFI) such as *The War That Never Ends* (1949). Beyond educating audiences about malaria, what do the films reveal about underlying beliefs, stereotypes, and national agendas at a time of tumultuous global upheaval? How did these films' absurdist tropes serve to address the fear and paranoia surrounding a deadly disease? And finally, how might this animated genre's fusion of laughter and unease extend our understanding of 'useful' animation (Cook, Cowan and Curtiss 2023) and its relationship to cinematic modernism?

Anitha Balachandran is an artist-filmmaker and researcher. Anitha graduated from India's National Institute of Design and completed her MA at the Royal College of Art. She is presently pursuing a PhD at the Arts University Bournemouth, researching identity and representation in the state-sponsored animated films of the Indian Films Division. She has contributed to journals such as *Animation Practice, Process & Production* and *Journal of Illustration* and is the co-editor of the upcoming volume, *Contemporary Indian Animation Culture*. Anitha is based in Bangalore, where she teaches at the Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design and Technology.

Reducing Ethical Risks when Representing Neurodiversity in Animated Documentary Practice: The Collaborative Reflexive Cycle / Dr Alex Widdowson

"Are you the right person to make this documentary?" This question can be reframed to reveal a sliding scale of ethical risks and practical disadvantages, proportional to the disparity between the participant's and filmmaker's positionality; i.e., those approaching a topic without relevant lived experience are taking on a high-risk activity that may result in the dissemination of problematic representations. Animated documentary offers different ethical risks to its live-action counterpart. Through practice-based research, developing films about autism and neurodiversity, Dr Alex Widdowson has developed the Collaborative Reflexive Cycle, an animated documentary method that attempts to expose and mitigate the risks associated with the representation of members of a marginalised community by an external filmmaker.

Dr Alex Widdowson is a Danish based, British, multi-award-winning animated documentary filmmaker, researcher, and festival programmer. He completed his PhD in 2024 at Queen Mary University of London, working on the Wellcome Trust Autism through Cinema project. In addition to running Factual Animation Film Festival, he is currently working on his first feature film, an animated documentary about the Neurodiversity Movement.

Never Like the First Time? The 3 Affinities of Animation / Gunnar Strøm

We all grew up with animation as a favorite cultural impulse and happy entertainment. The first animation experience I remember was *Snow White* in a cinema in 1960/61. TV came to Norway in 1960. There was *Flintstones*. Yabba dabba doo!

Kids today still grow up with animation as an/the audiovisual impact in early age.

Sustainability in animation can be understood as keeping the essential values, preventing the forces that want to modernize, while forgetting the solidness, history and the uniqueness of our beloved.

Today it is hard to define what animation is. When does AI stop the filmmaker to be an animator? Who is manipulating and controlling the gaps between the frames in 2025? Does it matter if a film is animated or not? I think it does.

In his classic study of the language of film, *Theory of Film. The Redemption of Physical Reality* (1960) Sigfried Kracauer writes about aspects which he calls affinities that are specific for the film medium. It has to do with movement, and it has to do with the ability to realistically reproduce the real world.

I believe that there are aspects of animation storytelling, especially when it comes to the animated documentary, that in a similar way are fundamental to animation. These affinities are Stylization, Distillation and Generalization.

Stylization simplifies, distillation focuses on the essence. Generalization makes it relevant for a wide audience thanks to the two other affinities.

In my paper I want to discuss these aspects of animation, I will use Jonas Odell's animated documentary *Aldrig som första gangen* (*Never like the First Time*, 2006) as the case study. In the film four very different persons talk about the first time they had sex.

Our personal experiences of having sex for the first time is as different as we are individuals. By using animation, Odell makes us all relate and remember the first time we had sex.

Gunnar Strøm was born 1955. Professor Emeritus Volda Norway. Member of SAS from the start. Head of arrangement SAS conference in Trondheim Norway. Founded the documentary study and the animation study at Volda University College. Founder of the Nordic/Baltic Fredrikstad Animation Festival. Board member of ASIFA 1988-2000. Secretary General 1991-1994. Vice President 1997-2000. Pensioner, writing a book on the history of Norwegian animation. Awarded the most prestigious Norwegian film prize Aamot-stauetten, and The Golden Gunnar Life Achievement Award.

TUESDAY JULY 8: 11:15am-1:00pm
PANEL 5C: SAS ANIMATION SCREENING 1

Please note: The list of films for this panel is not intended to change, but the running order has not yet been curated. This will be updated in a future update to the document.

These films will also be able to watch on rotation in the Upper Gallery throughout the conference period.

Films:

Visible Mending / Samantha Moore, RCA London
No. 28 / Zahra Salarnia, Auckland University of Technology
Cyclic / Dr Calum Main, University of Edinburgh
Hunger by the Sea / Xue Han, Bournemouth University
I Hav'nt Told My Garden Yet / Diek Grobler, Independent Artist
The Land of the 3-Drink Minimum / Jeremy Speed Schwartz, Kennesaw State University
Glitch Colorspace / Shilei Wei, Beihang University
Potter's Mirror / Katherine O'Connor, Teesside University
futile/gestures / Aaron Holmes, Biola University
Pink Pottery / Christine Banna, Rochester Institute of Technology
WAVES / Katerina Athanasopoulou, Royal College of Art, London
Shakespeare for All Ages / Hannes Rall, Nanyang Technological University Singapore

***Visible Mending* / Samantha Moore**

Visible Mending is a BAFTA nominated stop motion animated documentary made with knitted objects, exploring the effect that knitting has to help people to make sense of their lives; a software engineer who re-learned knitting to recover fine motor skills after a stroke, an occupational therapist who explains how knitting can help the brain as a therapeutic tool, an artist who uses her knitting as a medium to connect communities, a mother who knits to process anxiety about her injured son, and a terminal cancer patient who knits and crochets to give shape and meaning to her days.

This film was five years in the making, starting with animation director Samantha Moore getting some seed funding from a funded Celebrating Age Programme in Shropshire. It was part of Creative Conversations, the Shropshire wide partnership development initiated by MediaActive Projects and Arts Alive and funded by ACE, Baring Foundation and Shropshire Council.

Sam started by taking buses out to different parts of Shropshire and visiting crafting and knitting groups in libraries, church halls and community centres. Through this she met Kate Johnson who led The Merrymakers at Church Stretton and began to regularly visit them to chat to them about their crafts. In line with her collaborative methodology, she ran an animation workshop with The Merrymakers, so they could understand her craft too.

In 2021 Sam pitched the idea of *Visible Mending* and was awarded a commission from the BFI Short Form Animation Fund. She presented the idea based on her interviews with the Merrymakers and with the idea of talking to some other contributors too. She knew of Betsan Corkhill and Lorna Hamilton-Brown through links with the knitting community and was connected with Mike Donnelly through a friend.

Visible Mending was produced by Tilley Bancroft through MediaActive Projects. Executive producers are Sue Gainsborough (MediaActive Projects) and Abigail Addison (Animate Projects).

The film is made using stop motion animation at Second Home Studios in Birmingham. The interviewees are all represented by a knitted or crocheted object of their choice, and their collaboration in representation is a vital part of the film.

Samantha Moore's research and practice explore the ways that animation can document the invisible; particularly in scientific arenas. Sam work spans diverse subjects, from competitive sweet-pea growing, to archaeology, neuroscience, and her own experience of having twins.

Her work is internationally recognised as pioneering, having won two awards from the journal *Nature* (2010, 2016), the Directors Prize at Athens international Film + Video festival USA (2024), 'Best British Film' at the London International Animation Festival (2019), nominated for three British Animation Awards (2004, 2020, 2024), and nominated for a BAFTA (2024).

Sam is Head of MA Animation at the RCA, London.

No. 28 / Zahra Salarnia

No. 28 is a cinematic adaptation of a multichannel animation installation that I created during my postgraduate study. Theories of memory, time, drawing, animation, and multisensory perception, along with the artistic practices of William Kentridge, Yuri Norstein, and Emy Kravitz, guided the production of the multichannel hybrid installation, which was later adapted into the film. The aim was to create an animation installation/film that does not rely on traditional storytelling methods. Instead, it depicts the essence of personal memories and evokes sensory and kinaesthetic responses from viewers, inviting subjective interpretation.

The hand-drawn animations, formed from fading fragments of my memories and each possessing distinct temporal, spatial, and narrative qualities, suspend the chronological development of events and their immediate interpretation. In both the installation and the film, the construction of meaning depends on the physical movement of viewers' bodies and eyes between screens. By moving between projections or shifting their eyes among frames, viewers draw connections between different episodes of memory and develop their own interpretations based on their past experiences and imagination.

There are four scenes: The Snowy Alley, The Classroom, The Birthday, and The War, each depicting different memories from my childhood. Each scene contains multiple animations, showing a distinct aspect of the same memory. Both the installation and the film begin with The Snowy Alley, followed by The Classroom, which communicates an innocent childhood life in a peaceful environment. In contrast, The Birthday scene, depicting Khomeini and the people's hands, followed by images of soldiers, boots, and TV flashes in The War scene, provokes fear and uncertainty. Consequently, the calming atmosphere of the installation and film gradually transforms into a disturbing experience. The contrast between the imagery reveals the hidden concept behind the images: the collision of my harmonious domestic childhood environment with the epic political events of post-revolutionary Iran.

Zahra Salarnia is an artist and educator based in New Zealand. She holds a BA in Film and Animation and an MPhil in Art and Design. For over a decade, she has worked as a visual effects artist and educator. Her research practice focuses on expanded animation, exploring alternative and unconventional methods for creating and presenting animation. She is currently pursuing a PhD at AUT, where she examines how animation spaces provoke different modes of viewing and understanding. Her works combine both analogue and digital techniques, synthesizing her technical VFX experience with her passion for visual art. Website:

<https://zahrasalarnia.com>.

Cyclic / Dr Calum Main

'Cyclic' (2024) is a short, animated documentary that delves into the intricate relationship between educators and the animation industry. My doctoral research focused on identifying and addressing the tensions among Scottish animation stakeholders, aiming to propose future facing frameworks for improving relationships. The film, a practice-based component of my thesis, functions through the lens of an animated documentary and allowed me to engage with research and interviews between stakeholders within Scottish animation. 'Cyclic' integrates a variety of methods within the film, predominately stop-motion but through projections allows for charcoal and 3D digital animation to occupy the space.

The atmosphere in the film is created through the sound design, created by Nick Harbourne, integrated with the tactility created through choice of materials. There is never rest through the textural movements and sounds that consume the puppets occupying the space. The eeriness within the film highlights the fragmented relationship between stakeholders and acts as a provocation to the rest of my research to find solutions to improve this landscape. Technically, the variety of materials allowed me as a practitioner and educator to explore skill transfer and intersection across different mediums. This exploration underscores the universal aspects of animation as both an art form and a filmmaking technique. For example, there was a requirement for more focus on soft skills rather than technical to get through and complete the more challenging shots.

The stop-motion space created a conduit to bring separate stakeholder conversations to occupy the same physical space. Prominent figures in Scottish animation are not identified deliberately and the puppets act as similar models due to overlap and similarities between both education and industry sectors. The problem is the lack of consistent and cohesive collaboration and 'Cyclic' (2024) provokes this disconnect. Through screening at conferences and within an educational space, there is now future work to build on and use the film for critical reflection and as pedagogical tool.

Dr Calum Main is a Post doctorate Research Fellow in XR Technologies at the University of Edinburgh. He is a practice-based researcher and filmmaker currently working within the CoStar Realtime Lab, with interests in

how new immersive technologies impact more traditional methods of working. His doctorate focused on training environments and improving development pathways for individuals looking to transition from education into professional roles. He mainly works in 3D both physically and digitally. He is currently co-director of Animation Research Network Scotland and on the Education Committee of Animation Scotland. Website: www.calummain.com.

Hunger by the Sea / Xue Han

Hunger by the Sea is a four-minute animated documentary that brings to light the harrowing realities of food bank reliance in an English seaside town. Conceived and directed by Sue Sudbury, Principal Academic in Television and Film Production at Bournemouth University, the project emerged as a response to the shocking portrayal of food poverty in Ken Loach's film *I, Daniel Blake*. A specific scene in Loach's film, where a starving mother consumes a can of cold food in desperation, inspired Sudbury to investigate whether such scenarios were reflective of real-life experiences in modern Britain.

This project began as a participatory documentary, with an initial plan to provide food bank users with cameras to document their own stories. However, through the efforts of student researcher Charlie Mott, who volunteered at local food banks, it became clear that participants were reluctant to appear on camera. Many felt a deep sense of shame, perceiving their reliance on food banks as a personal failure. To address these concerns, the project evolved into an animated documentary, ensuring contributors could share their experiences anonymously.

The animation incorporates the voices of food bank users and managers, illustrating the human stories behind staggering statistics. According to the Trussell Trust, the UK's largest food bank provider, over 1.3 million three-day emergency food parcels were distributed between April 2017 and March 2018, nearly half a million of which went to children. Participants in the documentary describe the physical and emotional toll of hunger, with some resorting to drinking water to stave off the emptiness. One contributor laments, "It's your pride that really feels it the most."

Working alongside co-researcher and animation student Xue Han, Sudbury and her team approached 14 different food banks before securing one willing to participate. The selected food bank's coastal location provided a poignant visual metaphor for the struggle of "keeping one's head above water." The film weaves these visuals with contributors' voices, creating a powerful narrative of resilience amidst economic inequality. By presenting these deeply personal stories, *Hunger by the Sea* seeks to amplify the voices of those often overshadowed by impersonal statistics. The film aims to challenge societal stigmas surrounding food poverty and influence policymakers to take action. It serves as both a testament to the struggles of individuals in coastal communities and a call to address the systemic issues exacerbating food insecurity. More about the film: <http://www.sequoiafilms.co.uk/hunger-by-sea>.

Xue Han is a senior lecturer at Arts University Bournemouth and a PhD candidate at Bournemouth University, specialising in the interdisciplinary study of animation and psychosocial research. She animated *Hunger by the Sea* during her Master's studies, a project that inspired her transition from a commercial career to academia. With prior experience in the animation industry, Xue is passionate about bridging professional techniques with in-depth academic narrative exploration.

I Hav'nt Told My Garden Yet / Diek Grobler

'I hav'nt told my garden yet' is an animated poetry-film of a poem by Emily Dickinson. The film was commissioned by Dutch harpist Anne Vanschothorst, and animated and directed by South African animator Diek Grobler. Vanschothorst's artistic practice is centred around improvisational performance in reaction to poetry. Grobler's praxis and research focusses largely on narrative strategies in animated poetry-film.

"In my depiction of the poem I wanted to focus on specific traits of Dickinson - her social isolation, her strong views about social roles, religion etc. I focussed on the titular garden, and her relationship with it to depict the existential statements she subtly makes in the poem. I am making the invisible visible in many ways - by imagining poetry, by using light and shadow - the essence of visibility - to create the imagery, and by visually articulating the things Dickinson leaves 'unsaid' between the lines." The film is lyrical, and was created using a largely improvisational production approach. The film was animated on a pinscreen constructed by Alexander Noyer.

'I hav'nt told my garden yet' won the Nederlands Poëziefilmprys (Netherlands Poetryfilm Award) award in 2024.

Diek Grobler is a multi-disciplinary artist and has been working with animation for 24 years. His films have travelled extensively on the international festival circuit since 2006. His films for children have received

numerous awards, amongst others at KROK (2009) and Hiroshima (2018). His personal work has focused on animated poetry-film for more than a decade. In 2021 he received a PhD in Art from the University of South Africa, thesis topic 'Narrative strategies in animated poetry-film'. Diek Grobler's animation is hand-crafted: His techniques include hand drawn animation, kinesthetic animation, cut-out and pinscreen animation. He lives and works in Pretoria, South Africa.

The Land of the 3-Drink Minimum / Jeremy Speed Schwartz

The attractive denizens of *The Land of the 3-Drink Minimum* desperately try to connect with each other, but are unable to see past their own desires or past their own alcohol-soaked heads. A personal reflection presented in two parts.

Jeremy Speed Schwartz is an animator, historian and interactive artist. As a founding member of the art collective 'The League of Imaginary Scientists', Jeremy has created animated and interactive work for the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, The Art Museum at the University of Memphis, and the Sundance Institute. Jeremy is the co-author of the upcoming edition of 'A New History of Animation' from Thames and Hudson. He lives in Atlanta, GA and teaches at Kennesaw State University.

Glitch Colorspace / Shilei Wei

Glitch Colorspace is a desktop film. When you reboot a computer from the past, go back to the windows 95 operating system interface of the last century. Opening a file is like opening a memory. The memories on those drives include: .gif/ .mov/ .jpeg and / .mp3, fragments of images created by digital video creator Shilei Wei over the past 15 years. The colorspace is a created virtual space, and reopening them is like a memory, and this memory of creation has irretrievably malfunctioned between the brain and the computer hard drive.

Shilei Wei is an animation filmmaker/graphic novels author/art researcher/Associate professor of Beihang University. He has made 8 films from 2006 to 2019, including animation films and videos. His films have been officially selected in many international animation festival including Stuttgart Animation Film Festival, Bulgarian Animation Film Festival, Catalonia Animation Film Festival, Holland Animation Film Festival, etc. He is one of the originator and academic director of Feinaki Animation Week, which is the most important animation film festival in China. He had one year residencies experience in the fine art school in Venice, and 1 month in Chinese factory in Dong Guan.

Potter's Mirror / Katherine O'Connor

Based on the themes of loss and grief through dementia, *Potter's Mirror* symbolically represents the internal structures of the mind. We follow the daily activities of the Watchman as he tends to his memories and nurtures new emerging ideas. All is well until a deterioration of the environment forces him to escape through the window.

The film explores Freudian symbolic structures of the mind, featuring a character that embodies the Freudian Watchman. The Watchman determines what can enter consciousness, as Freud describes: "We will compare the system of the unconscious to a large entrance hall... But on the threshold between the two rooms, there stands a watchman; he passes on the individual psychic impulses, censors them, and will not let them into the parlour if they do not meet with his approval" (Freud, 1917). The Watchman tends to the mind; he dusts the old memories, symbolised by the birds in bell jars at the back of the mind. He feeds and tends to the new ideas that hatch from the draws represented by chicks. These live in the Watchman's chair, and he feeds them pages from an old book, *The Other*. The curated space of the conscious mind is represented by the front of the cabinet. Here, there are Walter Potter inspired tableaux of birds in domestic settings, mechanically performing everyday functions.

Inspired by the works of Wladyslaw Starewicz, Jan Švankmajer, Tessa Farmer, and the Brothers Quay, the film uses two specific techniques to research through practice animations relationship to the uncanny, emphasizing the manipulation of time in animation as well as the life/death relationship within animations processes. This work aims to highlight aspects of animation's relationship to the uncanny through the use of taxidermy as puppets. These taxidermy objects—infused with life and burdened by cultural inheritance—transform into hybrid objects. The clash of punctums—Barthes' "that-has-been" of animal material and the "never-has-been" of animation (Jenkins, 2013)—highlights the intertwined nature of time and flow over their surface. However, their ruffling surfaces also highlight a secondary external subjectivity through the hand or the animator. This uncanny infection of life on the surface of the material of death draws into view the complex relationship that animation has with the uncanny, with life/death and the uncanny self. Not just the

uncanniness of an internal ‘otherness’ but through a heterochronemic space of anxiety, where the hidden labour behind animation becomes visible through timelapse techniques in the 2D sequences, highlighting fractured representations of time. The flickering surfaces of collage techniques uncover the multiple temporal flows at play.

Katherine O’Connor is a director, writer, and artist who works in animation and installation. Based in the North East of England, Katherine has written and directed short-form animated films that have been screened internationally, notably Stuttgart Trickfilm International Animated Film Festival, Hiroshima International Festival, BBC Three, Yorkshire Television, Channel 4 Rolling Stock Festival. Katherine’s Taxidermy installation works have been commissioned by galleries and museums within the Teesvalley area, whilst her writings have been published as part of edited collections, most recently the books *The Uncanny and the Afterlife of the Gothic*, edited by Manuela D’Amore.

***futile/gestures* / Aaron Holmes**

I’ve presented the *futile/gestures* project in three major iterations. In March 2022, we put on a performance with two dancers and two musicians, choreographed and composed to evoke conflict, deadlock, and deepening divides. The performance also featured 100 drawers sketching the dancers feverishly, producing roughly 2,000 drawings during the 30-minute dance. This dance/drawing performance was valuable in itself; it also generated raw material for my animation, which involved carefully analyzing, sequencing and photographing selected drawings to use as individual animation frames. The final result is “hand-drawn” animation that bears little resemblance to most hand-drawn films in its technique or its aesthetic of motion.

In April, we created a gallery installation with two large-scale projections juxtaposing my animation with a short live-action dance film directed by my primary collaborator and choreographer, Yolanda-Tianyi Shao (韶天怡). Along with those two projected pieces, five CRTs in the space showed various stages of choreography development, and we hung 250 drawings (out of about 2,000 drawings created during the performance) on monofilament in three stacked rows that bisected the space, forming a chaotic “wall” of randomized drawings. The hallways leading toward the gallery were hung with roughly another 250 drawings—but in contrast to the disorganized drawings inside the installation space, the drawings hung in the hallways were ordered into coherent sequences, giving people a sense of sequential imagery as they walked to or from the installation. On opening night, we played music from the show in the space and the dancers performed for an hour. The March performance and April installation comprised my MFA thesis project at CalArts.

The single-channel video featured on this page is a more carefully edited and coordinated version of the dual projection from the April 2022 installation, with a significant number of new animated sequences completed in late 2022. This final video iteration premiered in April 2023 at UNDER_the_RADAR, an experimental film and animation festival in Vienna, Austria. New performative iterations of *futile/gestures* were installed/performed as part of the Happenings show at the CalArts 50th Anniversary Celebration (April 2023) and as part of the annual Irrational Exhibits performance art exhibition in Los Angeles (May 2023).

Aaron Holmes is an animator, filmmaker and educator originally from Lincoln, Nebraska. His filmmaking practice focuses on the climate crisis, political polarization and raising children in an unstable world. Holmes expresses these concerns metaphorically through stop motion and other analog animation techniques. His animated shorts have screened at leading film festivals including Animac and Cineautopsia (Bogotá). Holmes has taught animation courses at Cal State Long Beach and CalArts, and currently he’s an Assistant Professor at Biola University. Prior to joining Biola’s art department, he worked on TV series at the stop motion studios Stoopid Buddy and Open The Portal.

***Pink Pottery* / Christine Banna**

Pink Pottery is an independent, experimental animation that juxtaposes vibrant imagery of the earliest art-making with modern destructive technology. Utilizing direct on 35 mm film, replacement animation, collage, 2D digital animation, and manipulated found footage *Pink Pottery* mirrors both analog and digital techniques with ancient art making and modern technology as a subject matter.

Christine A. Banna is an internationally showing, multidisciplinary animator and educator. She works in both modern and traditional methods with a focus on experimental animation and projection design. Born in Providence, RI, Banna grew up with a deep love of ancient history and science which has been a driving force for her since she was a young girl. This dichotomy between ancient and modern is reflected in both Banna’s subject matter and medium choices in her work. Christine A. Banna received her MFA from the School

of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. She received her BFA in Painting with a minor in Art History from Boston University's College of Fine Art. She is an Assistant Professor in the School of Film & Animation at Rochester Institute of Technology and currently lives and works out of Rochester, NY.

WAVES / Katerina Athanasopoulou

An alien woman responds to a half-forgotten message of interplanetary friendship. A film about communication, and the fingers that stir the digital.

In 1972, the space probe Pioneer 10 was launched from Cape Canaveral, heading to Jupiter as part of the first reconnaissance of the Solar System. A gold-anodised aluminium plate was attached to it, named 'Pioneer Plaque', with an engraving designed by Carl Sagan. It features a naked human couple: a woman stands next to a man raising his hand into a human greeting; next to them is a diagram showing Earth's position, a pulsar map that forms part of a precious space postcard. What if this 'wish you were here' message was indeed heard by Aliens? The film imagines an alien woman waving back, on her own Earth mission.

When thinking about the digital, much emphasis is put on code as an intangible power that occludes its manual origins: from 'digitus' which is Latin for 'finger', the digital has been from the start powered by human gestures - it measures, palpates, and stirs our instruments and our imaginations.

In times captured by AI utopias and dystopias, this film is made by (and for) human bodies; my keyboard and mouse are my Animator's tools that I manipulate with my own digits, and I play my computer like a musical instrument.

Katerina Athanasopoulou is an artist-researcher working for screen and gallery space. Her practice includes commissions by the Onassis Foundation, London College of Fashion and Animate Projects, and her short films have been funded by Wellcome Trust, Arts Council England and Channel 4. Her works have been presented within film festivals, art shows, online events, conferences and publications, including Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival, LIAF, Tampere Festival, Centre des Arts Actuels Skol, and Zebra Poetry Film Festival. Katerina teaches at the Royal College of Art, London, and is co-editor of AP3.

Shakespeare for All Ages / Hannes Rall

Shakespeare's works are timeless - this film proves it!

208 international festivals screenings so far (and counting), 21 awards. Awarded with the Seal of Approval "Highly Recommended", the highest distinction of the FBW, the German federal authority for evaluating and rating film and media: "How can you give the target and age group "smartphone" an overview of the work of this unique literary genius without getting bogged down in long-winded lectures on verse and drama theory? The filmmaker and artist Hannes Rall has turned this consideration into a very short and yet for that very reason so great animated film. (...) He succeeds in depicting the poet's most famous plays in an immediately recognisable way with individual images that flow dynamically into one another. A smart, entertaining and coherent Shakespeare homage in about 3 minutes."

Hannes Rall is President's Chair Professor in Animation Studies and Associate Chair Research at Nanyang Technological University Singapore. He is also a successful director of animated short films. They have been shown at over 900 film festivals worldwide and have received 95 international awards. 16,000 of his film drawings and illustrations have been added to the Filmmuseum Düsseldorf's collection. In 2016 he was the Chair of the 28th Annual Conference of the Society for Animation Studies The Cosmos of Animation in Singapore. His successful books "Animation: From Concept to Production" and "Adaptation for Animation Transforming Literature Frame by Frame" (CRC Press) can be found in over 160 important university libraries, including Stanford, Yale, Cornell, UCLA and Columbia.

TUESDAY JULY 8: 3:45pm-5:30pm
PANEL 6A: STOP-MOTION 1

Papers:

Carving Out a Niche: *Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio*, Stop-Motion's Imperfection, and the Uncertainty of the Medium / Markus Beeken, King's College, London

Speaking in Tongues: LAIKA, Sensational Bodies, and the Language of Stop-Motion / Nicholas Andrew Miller, Loyola University

Why I Make Analogue Films in a Digital Age: Hidden Depths of Material Meaning / Katherine O'Connor, Teesside University

Carving Out a Niche: *Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio*, Stop-Motion's Imperfection, and the Uncertainty of the Medium / Markus Beeken

When grieving father Geppetto drunkenly carves a puppet at the beginning of stop-motion feature *Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio* (2022), he passes out before finishing his creation. The result is an incomplete and jagged wooden stump of a puppet, missing an ear and with a gnarled, splintered torso. *Pinocchio* is irrefutably a hand-made alternative to the 'real boy' Carlo (Geppetto's deceased son), whose signature imperfections speak quite directly to stop-motion's longstanding cultural associations with craft and handmade aesthetics (Husbands, 2019). Such connotations are most evident in the tangible mistakes found in the puppets' jerky movements, flattened fur, and leftover fingerprints (Sobchack, 2009) that collectively code stop-motion as a form of "unruly animation." (Holliday, 2021). However, *Pinocchio* is part of a new wave of hybrid stop-motion films that mingles stop-motion animation together with CG technology whose digital form of production increases the smoothness and sophistication of the character movements, introduces greater special effects, and moves stop-motion from the margins to the mainstream of contemporary culture.

This paper argues that del Toro's film, as one that seeks out imperfections, elucidates a new way of conceptualising Contemporary Hollywood Stop-Motion, defining the particular aesthetic and experiential terms of a new kind of stop-motions film central to what has been acknowledged as a "stop-motion renaissance" (Mihailova, 2021) within and beyond Hollywood beginning with Henry Selick's *Coraline* (2009). Within this emergent hybrid stop-motion medium, *Pinocchio*'s imperfections can be read as deliberate and reflexive inclusions counteracting the medium's technical development in that they reinsert a necessary sense of uncertainty that I argue is essential for the experience of a stop-motion film. Beginning with a consideration of stop-motion's place within cultural discourses on technology and industrialisation, this paper uses *Pinocchio* and notions of craft, it then explores the stop-motion medium's broader relationship with uncertainty, frustrated expectations, and deliberate, exaggerated imperfections.

Markus Beeken is a third year PhD student at King's College, London with a particular interest in the intersection between animation and cultural philosophy. Before studying film, he studied English Literature at Brasenose College, Oxford. His research project began when he tried to figure out why *The Nightmare Before Christmas* unsettled him so much. The thesis focuses on defining contemporary stop-motion animation and how this converges with a growing uncertainty in mainstream Hollywood, particularly contemporary animation. It is from this interest that this paper arises. He has published multiple blogs on the topic on both *Fantasy/Animation* and *Animation 2.0*.

Speaking in Tongues: LAIKA, Sensational Bodies, and the Language of Stop-Motion / Nicholas Andrew Miller

Stop-motion animation is often associated with romanticized notions of craft and the hand-made. Indeed, since the release of its first film, *Coraline*, in 2009, the LAIKA studio has parlayed perceptions of the technique as a painstaking, artist-centered process into commercial success, deploying 3-D printing and other 21st-century technologies to achieve made-by-hand production at the scale of the feature film.

The proposed presentation argues that the power of LAIKA's visual story-telling is rooted in a history of stop-motion defined less by romanticized ideas about materiality and labor than by a neuro-sensory correspondence that has existed between spectators and moving objects from the very beginnings of animation. Drawing on the work of neurosurgeon Wilder Penfield, I show that the energy and vitality viewers perceive in stop-motion is consonant with the energy and vitality we experience in our own physical bodies. Using local anesthesia to perform brain surgery on patients while they remained awake, Penfield demonstrated in the 1930s that nerve fibers carrying somatosensory information from different parts of the body terminate in

particular areas of the parietal lobe in the cerebral cortex. Mapping the proportions of brain areas affected, Penfield developed a conceptual image of the body as it is “seen” by the brain: a distorted, sensorimotor “homunculus” with outsized hands, lips, tongue, and genitals, later made famous in remarkable 3-D renderings by the sculptor Sharon Price-James.

My talk explores the ways in which LAIKA’s presentation of stop-motion puppets as sensing, experiencing, and feeling beings stems not only from the skill and labor of artists, but also from the biological and neurological mechanisms through which we experience our own bodies. The language of stop-motion is in fact a language of kinesthetic empathy; the figures we perceive onscreen are sensational bodies, their vitality a function of the sensational bodies we ourselves possess.

Nicholas Andrew Miller is Professor of English and Director of Film Studies at Loyola University Maryland. He is the author of *Modernism, Ireland, and the Erotics of Memory* (2002), and has published in *James Joyce Quarterly*, *Eire-Ireland*, *Animation Studies 2.0*, and elsewhere. He has contributed to the collections *Hitchcock and Adaptation: On the Page and Screen* (2014), *Animation and Memory* (2020), *Aardman Animations: Beyond Stop Motion* (2020), and *Coraline: A Closer Look at Studio LAIKA's Stop-Motion Witchcraft* (2021). His current project is an interdisciplinary study of metaphor and metamorphosis in modernist visual culture.

Why I Make Analogue Films in a Digital Age: Hidden Depths of Material Meaning / Katherine O’Connor

Stop-motion animation can amplify the meaning of the everyday. It can transform everyday objects and materials into ‘living’ beings that possess “an existential status endowed with agency ... [and] emotional freight that cannot be dismissed” (Moxey, 2008:131) added to this emotional freight the material itself adds meaning and affect “The material of the clay points to the material body, but it is a body that remains partially cloaked in uncanny stillness.” (Batkin, 2017: 72) The materials used to create the puppets can also help find meaning through the material’s cultural associations and heritage. For example, “wax figures, which embody the blurring of boundaries characterising modernism and, even more so, postmodernism, namely those between self/other, subject/object, human being/inanimate form, living body/corpse, life death, male female, solid/liquid, dynamic static cinema photography, madness/sanity, fiction/history, authentic/fake original/copy interior/ exterior.” (Bloom, 2003 xi) Influenced by the works of Svankmajer and the Brothers Quay, my latest award-winning film, *Potter’s Mirror* (2024), explores through practice the cultural freight of the individual materials used, from re-animated bodies to the objects that decorate the set. Whilst the film predominantly investigates the relationship of the uncanny to animation, this presentation will focus on the other aspects of directorial decision-making. As a filmmaker, these objects and materials are chosen for their hidden layers of meaning. For example, the stones that, whilst ‘cold’ objects, carry a narrative of time and place with them, or the scientific objects that hold echoes of Enlightenment thought and colonial power. They may be hidden from themselves; however, they reveal to us through the presentation in film a weight of meaning for the viewer.

Katherine O’Connor is an award-winning director, artist, and academic specialising in animation and installation. With over 20 years at Teesside University, she has directed internationally screened short films, including her latest, *Potter’s Mirror* (2024), which has won multiple awards, such as Best Animated Short at the Silver Wave International Film Festival and the Jury Citation at the Toman Eddison International Film Festival and Best Experimental Film USA Film Festival. The film was also showcased in a site-specific exhibition at the Animex International Animation, Games and VFX Festival. Katherine has created taxidermy installations for local galleries and museums, and her academic writings are featured in recent publications, including *The Uncanny and the Afterlife of the Gothic*, and *Society and Technology: Promoting Well-Being in a Digital Age* edited by Dr Hannah Marston.

TUESDAY JULY 8: 3:45pm-5:30pm
PANEL 6B: REPRESENTATION

Papers:

Animation and Representation: Diversity On and Off Screen in BAFTA winning British Pre-School Animation 2000-2020 / Dr Maliha Miriam, University of the Arts London

Animating A Different Type Of Guy: Racial Stereotypes In Practice Based Research / Omeiza 'O' Haruna, Loughborough University

Death-Driven Lives: Animation, Queerness and the Question of Vitality / Ferdinando Cocco, University of Cambridge

Paul Kim and Queerdom: For Love and Advertising / Jeremy Speed Schwartz, Kennesaw State University

Animation and Representation: Diversity On and Off Screen in BAFTA winning British Pre-School Animation 2000-2020 / Dr Maliha Miriam

This paper seeks to share the findings from my PhD in which I investigated equality, diversity and inclusion in British preschool animation. This was examined through on-screen depictions and off-screen participation within the British Animation Industry. In order to do this, I conducted a semiotic content analysis and a narrative, thematic qualitative content analysis. These programmes were all examined against the protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. In addition, the names of creators, writers, directors and animators of these programmes were gathered using on-screen credits. This data was then compared to census data compiled by the UK Government to identify how the depictions of characters on-screen and participation within the industry compare with the British population. This methodology was grounded by two theories concerned with media effects, George Gerbner's Cultivation theory and Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory. Gerbner's Cultivation Theory posited that sustained, long term exposure to mass media influenced how viewers interpreted the real world around them, chiefly that it reflected what they saw on television (Gerbner et al., 1996; Gerbner et al., 1977). This theory is relevant to this paper as it speaks to the idea that a child's aspirations are in part informed by exposure to television. One theory that offers an alternative model to Bandura and Gerbner is Bradley Greenberg's Drench Theory, which posits that viewing an influential character in a significant role has greater potential to impact viewers more than a large number of incidental characters in a similar role (Greenberg, 1988). Greenberg argued that traditionally screen viewing was argued by academics to have either no effect on viewers or Gerbner and Bandura's 'gradual, cumulative drip-drip-drip' effect (Greenberg, 1998, p.97). Building on these theories, the paper investigates the link between off screen and on screen representation and argues that authentic representation is key to appropriate representation of those protected by the Equality Act.

Dr Maliha Miriam graduated with a PGDip in Animation from Central Saint Martins in 2011 and worked within the animation industry on Channel 4's *The Snowman and the Snowdog*, CBeebies *Hey Duggee!* and the Royal Opera House. She completed her PhD titled "A Study of the British Animation Industry's approach to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion 2000-2020" under the supervision of Professor Chris Pallant from Canterbury Christ Church in 2024. She joined UAL in 2022, and is currently the Diploma in Professional Studies Coordinator for Screen School UAL. Additionally, she has recently joined the Governing Body of the Global Academy.

Animating A Different Type Of Guy: Racial Stereotypes In Practice Based Research / Omeiza 'O' Haruna

Twentieth century Britain offered on-screen black representation through its televised cartoons at two extremes. At one end American animation was imported over-representing black characters between 1920-60s with an evolved stock of racial stereotypes (Klein & Shiffman 2006, pp. 175-177; Klein & Shiffman 2009, pp. 65-66). At the other, British borne animation, on the other hand, has so few cartoons with black character leads, that they are symbolically annihilated. Reflected in off-screen contexts, it is suggested black people are under-represented in occidental animation, visual effects and post-production workforces worsening with role seniority (UK Screen Alliance 2019). Thus, the history of popular black representation in the West has frequently been under construction by white imaginations and fantasies.

The transatlantic slave trade created an ideology of a white ownership of black bodies, fixing them to colonial-era myths and stereotypes through popular media and discourse (Hall 2003). As neo-imperialism subsumed its predecessor, ownership of black bodies was replaced with the ownership of black representation in the consumerist age of the image. In America, the Civils Rights Era acted as a catalyst for animated black representation to be returned to the depicted, and decades later, the tidal wave brought forward Britain's own

representations of its public. With the increasing affordability of and access to animation software coupled with the decentralising of distribution platforms in the wake of streaming & social media, the next generation of animators and audiences has become increasingly diversified.

This paper is a transdisciplinary response to challenges of how to animate black British representation between problems of stereotypes, ideals and authenticity. Outlining the first phase of my practice-based PhD, my black British identity becomes the core of auto-ethnographic storytelling. The resultant outputs of stylistic explorations, animatics and animations form an inquiry into the racialisation process of teenage black boys in secondary school. Though much progress has been made in cultural competencies and racial sensitivities, my practice suggests that though animation has changed, the myths and stereotypes of blackness have not.

Omeiza 'O' Haruna is a Postgraduate University Teacher at Loughborough University in the School of Design & Creative Arts. His practice-based research investigates the experience of negotiating racial identity, and how such tensions can be represented through animation using a mixture of collaborative and autoethnographic practices. His broader interests include revolve around animation, illustration and film, with an emphasis of practice-based & practice-led research.

Death-Driven Lives: Animation, Queerness and the Question of Vitality / Ferdinando Cocco

If representation in many ways remains the privileged subject of queer media studies, how do we attend to the queerness of a medium that, with few exceptions, has historically eluded overt representations of queerness? To answer this question, this paper turns to the ontology of the animated image, which, as it is widely known, has been traditionally theorized in terms of animation's privileged relationship to life. Animation, the argument goes, is a medium that is ontologically preoccupied not with mediating life but with synthesizing a manufactured form of being, a technogenic kind of vitality. This vitalistic compulsion, this commitment to sustaining the so-called "illusion of life," some scholars have argued, makes animation a site where life is in surplus: a site, in other words, devoid of death. Building on the oft-forgotten insight of Alan Cholodenko, who has already noted how we cannot speak of the life of animation without also speaking of its death, this paper pushes against the dominant foregrounding of the "aliveness" of the animated sign to find in death a productive rubric for understanding the implicit queerness of the vitalistic spectacle of animation. Specifically, I turn to a tradition of animated films that, since at least the early works of Ladislav Starevich, has predicated the spectacle of animated life upon the all-too-real deaths of the pro-filmic subjects. By attending to how these animators renegotiated not only death into life but also life into death, I hope to demonstrate that, from its earliest days, animation has facilitated a technological manipulation of the material world aimed at unyoking the propagation of life from the exigencies of genital reproduction as well as at perverting the chrono-politics of biological living. It is in this manipulation, the paper concludes, that we can find the foundation for a queer theory of animation ontology.

Ferdinando Cocco is a PhD candidate in the Centre for Film and Screen Studies at the University of Cambridge. A theorist and historian of queerness and media, he weaponizes the academic studies of particular neglected histories and practices of queerness and animation to make wider theoretical statements about the relationship between visual culture and ideology. At present, his research tries to stage an encounter between the fields of Queer and Animation Studies in pursuit of a reparative history of queer animation as well as of a queer theory of animation aesthetics.

Paul Kim and Queerdom: For Love and Advertising / Jeremy Speed Schwartz

"Queerdom" (1978) is the earliest known work of animation that centralizes a queer character. The film reflects comedic styles of adult animation, 1970s advertising, and standup comedy, as well as the emerging visual language of queer representation. The film's credits are deliberately obscured, making it difficult to identify everyone involved in production.

The near-total prohibition on queer characters in American animation ended in 1968, coinciding with a rise in animation film festivals screening experimental, political, and subversive works. In the wake of the Lenny Bruce-narrated short "Thank You Mask Man" (1971), and Fritz the Cat (1972) new forms of animated comedy emerged that deconstructed society's views of gender and sexuality, often based on improvised or live-recorded soundtracks. "Queerdom" (1978) reflects these trends while centralizing a queer character for the first time in animation. The short features a man questioning his sexuality and beginning a relationship with another man, all told with a stream-of-consciousness narration.

Uncovering the crew that made "Queerdom" has foregrounded the work of Paul Kim, the first Korean-American animator and studio owner. Kim's innovative work in the 1950s through the 1980s included advertising,

educational work and pieces he called “Love Films.” Many of these works were presented alongside underground and pornographic festivals in the 1970s. Kim’s fascinating history traces a path from Pyongyang to Hollywood to New York to Zagreb, and tells a story of outsider art, humor, and politics that run through Queerdom’s 20-year production.

This presentation will present influential but rarely-seen works by Paul Kim, including “Queerdom” and “Calma.” These pieces contain nudity and sexual content.

Jeremy Speed Schwartz is an animator, historian and interactive artist. As a founding member of the art collective ‘The League of Imaginary Scientists’, Jeremy has created animated and interactive work for the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, The Art Museum at the University of Memphis, and the Sundance Institute. Jeremy is the co-author of the upcoming edition of ‘A New History of Animation’ from Thames and Hudson. He lives in Atlanta, GA and teaches at Kennesaw State University.

TUESDAY JULY 8: 3:45pm-5:30pm
PANEL 6C: ANIMATION AND CARE

Papers:

The Politics of Care: Enhanced Audio Description and accessibility in *Visible Mending* (2023) / Samantha Moore, RCA London

Indexing Care: Animation Pedagogy and Intermedia Dependence in the work of Jules Engel / Tim Ridlen, University of Tampa

Maintaining the Future of Animation: Countering Disruption with Acts of Care and Repair / Kara Lynn Andersen, University of North Carolina School of the Arts

A Role for Animation: Enhancing Well-being in Paediatric Healthcare Environments / Dr. Pedro Serrazina, Universidade Lusófona; Dr. Lea Vidakovic, Universidade Lusófona; and Dr. Natalie Woolf, Universidade Lusófona

The Politics of Care: Enhanced Audio Description and accessibility in *Visible Mending* (2023) / Samantha Moore

Audio Description is usually done by adding an extra voice track to a film giving a third person commentary on the visual action. In my experience as a director it is included as part of the post production phase of the film, and comes after the final sound mix is complete, with little creative directorial input beyond approving a script. In my 2023 film *Visible Mending* one of the stated aims of the work was to enhance accessibility particularly for an older audience, since the collaborative consultants on the films were all aged between late sixties and early nineties. As part of this active accessibility quest we met Mariana Lopez and Gavin Kearney from York University and were asked to participate in their Enhanced Audio Description (EAD) AHRC funded scheme. Enhanced Audio Description works in several different ways. Firstly by adding extra sound effects 'to elicit information on actions, indicate the use of establishing shots, convey abstract scenes as well as indicate the presence of characters, time and place' (Lopez et al, 2020). Secondly, by using sound spatialisation through binaural audio (e.g. Dolby Atmos) and thirdly the use of the I-voice (or first person narration) (Chion, 1999) to indicate feelings and clarify actions.

With live action drama film, the recording of the first person narration can be done through retaining key actors to deliver extra lines and provide the sense of an internal voice which the audience recognises. *Visible Mending* is an animated documentary and there were several big obstacles to providing this kind of seamless addition. This paper looks at the ways that EAD can be added to animated films and the ways in which audience accessibility can be enhanced more generally. Finally it looks at whether animation provides a particular perspective by offering 'new insights into cinematic spectatorship and some of its naturalized sensual hierarchies' (Greenburg, 2023).

Samantha Moore's research and practice explore the ways that animation can document the invisible; particularly in scientific arenas. Sam's work spans diverse subjects, from competitive sweet-pea growing, to archaeology, neuroscience, and her own experience of having twins.

Her work is internationally recognised as pioneering, having won two awards from the journal *Nature* (2010, 2016), the Directors Prize at Athens international Film + Video festival USA (2024), 'Best British Film' at the London International Animation Festival (2019), nominated for three British Animation Awards (2004, 2020, 2024), and nominated for a BAFTA (2024).

Sam is Head of MA Animation at the RCA, London.

Indexing Care: Animation Pedagogy and Intermedia Dependence in the work of Jules Engel / Tim Ridlen

Despite his earlier work within the Hollywood animation industry, and his work as a successful gallery artist, Jules Engel is rightly treated as both an experimental animator and educator, caring for future generations of practitioners and reproducing the world of avant-garde and experimental animation. At its widest point, this chapter looks at experimental animation to learn something more about intermedia dependencies, which should significantly shape how we read experimental animation. An emphasis on process, collaboration, and the profundity of trial and error infuses experimental animation with its intermedial significance, which in turn offers an approach to experimental animation and sustainability. I take these points of emphasis in Engel's and other animator-educators' works to be an index of care. Following scholars like Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, care is a practice of doing and thinking with, what Tronto and Fisher write of as "everything that we do to maintain, continue and repair 'our world' so that we can live in it as best as possible." Care is thus a conceptual

framework for thinking about animation and sustainability practices. Care is involved at the level of production and thematized in Engel's experimental works during his time at CalArts. Engel's "graphic choreography," as he called it, treats animation as both a document and a score, expanding our ability to think about experimental film as a contingent set of once existing and future relationships, decentering the prevalent emphasis on individual creators and singular aesthetic experiences in discussions of experimental film. This paper examines Engel's experimental works as well as his works in the Hollywood industry, to argue an aesthetics of care in his work that points to his role as an animator-educator, a role that was also taken up by others at midcentury.

Tim Ridlen is Associate Teaching Professor at the University of Tampa in the department of Film, Animation, and New Media. He is the author of *Intelligent Action: A History of Artistic Research, Aesthetic Experience, and Artists in Academia* published by Rutgers University Press (2024). His current research focuses on intermedia art with a particular interest in the intersections of dance, performance, and experimental film and video.

Maintaining the Future of Animation: Countering Disruption with Acts of Care and Repair / Kara Lynn Andersen

This presentation will argue that maintaining the historical record and artifacts of animation's past is a key method for shaping and even countering the transformations generative AI tools are imposing on animation practice today. Using maintenance studies as a framework, I will analyze animated films that depict themes of maintenance and repair in the face of potentially destructive changes, including *Wall-E* (Andrew Stanton, 2008), *Tsukumo* (Shûhei Morita, 2012), and *Inside Out 2* (Andrew Stanton, 2024).

Maintenance studies, a response to early 21st century tech industry's craze for innovation and disruption, emphasizes the importance of sustaining existing systems. Andrew L. Russell and Lee Vinsel's scholarship highlights the overlooked labor of maintenance, repair, and care work, leading to the formation of The Maintainers, a global network of scholars and practitioners from a wide variety of disciplines. Maintenance can take the form of repairing physical infrastructure, but it also encompasses creating maintaining historical accounts and care work supporting social structures. Maintenance work can sustain interest in animation history and ensures that older forms of animation remain relevant in contemporary discourse.

The films chosen demonstrate the wide applicability of maintenance philosophy to animated work. In *Wall-E*, the titular robot's task is to compact the destroyed Earth's garbage into neat cubes, but his choice to preserve select artifacts transforms WALL-E's own future in his own terms. *Tsukumo* pits an 18th century wanderer against the ghosts of abandoned household objects interfering with his journey. His way to appease them is to restore them to new use. In *Inside Out 2* Riley's emotions must contend with the disruption of puberty by engaging in careful care and use of old memories to shape Riley's future self. I argue that the maintenance, repair, and care for animation's past artifacts and practices will determine our relationship to its generative-AI future.

Kara Lynn Andersen is an Associate Professor of Cinema Studies at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. Her research explores the use of the material world in both animated and live-action filmmaking, which particular interests in representations of collecting, materiality, and the physical environment.

A Role for Animation: Enhancing Well-being in Paediatric Healthcare Environments / Dr. Pedro Serrazina, Dr. Lea Vidakovic, and Dr. Natalie Woolf

This presentation documents a practice-based animation research project designed for and installed in a healthcare environment to explore the potential role for animation to enhance well-being in paediatric hospital waiting spaces. Supported by theoretical and practical approaches, we will reflect on practice, process, impact and outcomes. Examining the role of animated imagery as an expanded practice, combining aesthetic and psychological research to produce outputs with purpose and function. We present a case study that developed content collaboratively with psychology experts, to address anxiety issues and tested it within the specific context of children's hospital waiting areas.

The knowledge gained in visual, auditory, and haptic sensations aims to contribute significantly to animation studies, broadening its role in visual communication. While existing research identifies the therapeutic value of static art and views of nature in reducing stress and supporting recovery, the psychological and emotional potential of animated installations remains underexplored, lacking evidence-based studies.

Addressing this gap, this study evaluates the impact of animated pieces installed in paediatric hospital waiting areas. This project builds on a pilot study by Sefcic-Vidakovic that revealed limitations in current projection technologies, and references Ulrich and Gilpin's work on the healing potential of natural imagery; Chen's insights into interactive installations in hospitals; and Marks' concept of "the Haptic Eye", linking vision,

sensation, and immersive engagement.

The research team will present the interdisciplinary framework that integrated animation, psychology, and collaborative design and how it developed its tests and animated installation solutions, emphasizing the non-verbal dimensions of sensory engagement. By combining visual research with psychological evaluation methods, the project generates new insights into the use of non-verbal art in a therapeutic context. By exploring the potential of this cross and interdisciplinary study we aim to contribute to knowledge and improve healthcare environments for patients and their accompanying family or caregivers.

The core project team includes Dr. Lea Vidakovic, an award winning multimedia artist, animation film director, researcher and educator; Dr. Natalie Woolf an internationally exhibited Artist/Educator/Researcher working in expanded drawing and former consultant in Public Arts Practice; Dr. Pedro Serrazina, award winning animation director, researcher and educator; Dr. Art. Melinda Sefcic, assistant professor ALU Zagreb and Psychology team partners from Universidade Lusófona de Lisboa: Dr. Ana Beato, Dr. Ana Loureiro and Dr. Isabel Santos.

WEDNESDAY JULY 9: 9:00am-10:45am

PANEL 7A: SUSTAINING MOVEMENT: ANIMATING ANTI-RACISM

Papers:

Monumental Unrest: On building Unease in the Animations of Sabine Gruffat / Melissa Friedling PhD, The New School

The Urgency of Nonsense in the Palestinian Context / Nerian Keywan MA, Kingston School of Art

Transcontinental Studio Collaboration in the Production of Disney's African Anthology: *Kizazi Moto* / Jane Cheadle MA, Kingston School of Art

From Harlem to Hollywood: New York's Early Black Animators / Robby Gilbert, Rowan University

Monumental Unrest: On building Unease in the Animations of Sabine Gruffat / Melissa Friedling

Towards the end of Sabine Gruffat's 35mm short, *Take It Down* (2019) which observes protests and subsequent toppling of a Confederate monument in the southern United States, an animated sequence performs the removal of these racist symbols from a collection of North Carolina souvenir postcards. Visualizing the aims of the collective unrest that fueled a national movement to take down Confederate memorials, the monuments depicted on the postcards shutter nervously and then disappear – an animated effect that imagines an historic dismantling of the foundations of white supremacy in the U.S. As with other work by Gruffat discussed in this presentation, *Take It Down* lays bare the underlying mechanisms of animation as movement set in relation to stillness. Intermittent stillness in Gruffat's experimental animations calls our attention to the accumulation of historical forces that operate to obscure the value of monuments for the neocolonial state (as commemorative structures of hierarchy, exclusion, and dominance). Mediated by uneasy, juddering, animated effects, the monument that is never at ease recalls the way scholar, Esther Leslie, describes animation's operative and enabling paradox of "petrified unrest." Examining three of Gruffat's short films, this presentation seeks to clarify the ways in which the artist's work posits an understanding of monumental unrest as a hallmark of our time and, perhaps, a condition of possibility for building a more just world.

Melissa Friedling, PhD, is a film and media artist, scholar, and educator interested in jumbled layers of media histories. Her creative work has been presented at numerous international festivals, screening venues, galleries and museums. Her writing on film, art, and culture has been published widely including essays in *Portable Gray*, *The Journal of Environmental Media*, *Flash Art International*, *Afterimage*, *Discourse* and a book, *Recovering Women: Rhetoric, Feminisms, and Addiction* (Westview Press, 2000). She lives in Brooklyn and is an Associate Professor of Filmmaking at The New School in New York City.

The Urgency of Nonsense in the Palestinian Context / Nerian Keywan MA

This paper focuses on the importance and urgency of creative nonsense to socio-political expression, focusing on exaggeration, naiveté, carnivalesque, and the mundanity of tragedy, providing a critical read into the current Palestinian art scene, and exploring issues of conventions and audience that lead to creative limitations. Simultaneously, it discusses creative nonsense, animation, and contemporary Arab internet culture, as a call for artists and institutions to minimize the gap between the artist and their audience.

Nerian Keywan MA (RCA) is a Palestinian visual artist and early career researcher. She is a lecturer in Animation at Kingston School of Art and has a background in Philosophy, History of Art, and motion design.

Transcontinental Studio Collaboration in the Production of Disney's African Anthology: *Kizazi Moto* / Jane Cheadle MA

The African-futurist, animated anthology *Kizazi Moto: Generation Fire* was released on Disney+ in 2023 as part of Disney's extension of their streaming platform into Africa. The 10 animated shorts, billed as African content made by and for Africans, with 13 directors selected from a call-out for 'fresh new African voices' was a global production by Disney EMEA with service studios based in Europe, North America and Africa. This presentation explores the complex creative labor networks that underpinned this project within the context of their colonial and imperial legacies. Based on a series of interviews with key actors in the production process, the research highlights areas of friction where the animation tools and production norms were contested, revealing skewed perspectives and ideological assumptions baked into processes, software, and global studio culture, pointing to a need to redefine and acknowledge the creative impact of animation workers 'below the line', service

studios and popular culture production's ongoing 'continuous and necessarily uneven ..dialectic of cultural struggle' (Stuart Hall: 1972).

Jane Cheadle, MA (RCA) is a South African animator, educator and researcher. Her films have been screened internationally at festivals and in gallery contexts. Her forthcoming research paper is to be published by *Illuminance Journal* in 2025. She lives in Brighton and is a senior lecturer and MA Animation course leader at Kingston School of Art.

From Harlem to Hollywood: New York's Early Black Animators / Robby Gilbert

The contributions of Harlem's early Black animators are numerous but have only been marginally examined. Their approaches to animation were often revolutionary, even as the racism they experienced while navigating the industry was both overt and subtle. Painfully aware of the conscious as well as unconscious biases of art directors, studios, audiences, and people in power in the animation world, these artists forged their way through an industry that was dominated by white men and birthed in racist tropes that had metastasized into a carefully curated 'Disneyfied' idealization of animation as somehow sweet, pure, and romantic.

The Great Migration, a period in American history between 1910 and 1970 when millions of African Americans moved north to settle in cities like New York, Detroit, and Philadelphia to escape segregation in the South, led to a boom in arts and intellectualism centered in Harlem. Among these artists were a handful of animators who would go on to shape the industry.

Understanding the efforts of Harlem's animators who navigated their way in this environment has escaped rigorous examination for too long. Their experiences significantly expand the dialog on the meaning—and even the very definition— of animation itself.

This paper presents new and in-depth research on the histories of three of Harlem's animators: Tee Collins, Jim Simon, and Dan Haskett. They were among the first Black animators and directors in the U.S., and their legacy is essential to the history of animation in general. The research is based on hours of first-hand interviews with the artists, families, archives, and existing materials from their time. Here, contrary to information propagated by the Disney machine, a convincing argument will be made that the first Black-owned and operated animation studio in the U.S. traces its roots not to Los Angeles but directly to Harlem.

Robby Gilbert is an animator, artist, and historian of animation and moving images. He has worked as an animator for several studios and has illustrated numerous works for children, including *The Adventures of Ranger Rick* for the National Wildlife Federation. He is currently an Assistant Professor of Animation at Rowan University and has recently completed a monograph for Palgrave Animation titled *City in Motion: Animation in New York 1966-1999*, due out in 2025. More information can be found at www.robbygilbert.com.

WEDNESDAY JULY 9: 9:00am-10:45am
PANEL 7B: STOP-MOTION 2

Papers:

The Workmanship of Risk: Mediating Stop-Motion Animation through AI / Simon von Wolkenstein, JMC College

Miniature Realities: Scale, Time, and Materiality in Stop Motion Animation / Jack McGrath, University of Newcastle, Australia

Hybrid Stop-Motion: An Attempt to Integrate the Latest Bells and Whistles / Dr Miriam Harris, Auckland University of Technology

The Workmanship of Risk: Mediating Stop-Motion Animation through AI / Simon von Wolkenstein

Something in the irregularity of the handmade object speaks to our deeper selves, reviving for a moment a human urge to manufacture things with our hands. These signs awaken within us an empathy of the hand, acknowledging the tactile sense we all share. In our world of digital refinement there is still room for the wonder of imperfect objects because they remind us of the person behind the hand that made them. In David Pye's book, 'The Nature and Art of Workmanship' (1968), he divides workmanship into two streams: the 'workmanship of certainty' being the repetitive manufacture of mass-produced objects; and the 'workmanship of risk' being handmade objects where, at any moment in their creation, there is a great risk of failure; saved only by the maker's tacit knowledge and skill. Creating stop-motion animation with physical objects creates a sense of visual tactility that emerges from a direct memory of surfaces and textures from our own lives. Stop-motion films involve the 'workmanship of risk' because they are produced in an analogue space governed by the laws of physics where successful outcomes are not predetermined. In the digital space, animators are cradled by the algorithmic control of software in crafting impossibly perfect and repeatable moments — a 'workmanship of certainty'. With the arrival of AI as an intervention in animation workflows this certainty in digital post-production can now be challenged. Generative AI re-introduces elements of the unknown and creates a digital workflow with heightened risk. Can the emotional and textural affordances of the physical be maintained through these new hybrid AI workflows? This paper poses the question: is it possible to merge the physicality of stop-motion and harness the imperfections in AI to create animated objects that still maintain the 'workmanship of risk' and reveal the 'hand' of the animator?

Simon von Wolkenstein is Head of Department for Animation, Games and Visual Communication at JMC College in Sydney. Previously he was a lecturer in Animation and Design at University Technology Sydney since 2011. He is an interdisciplinary designer and animator whose focus is on experimental story-telling and post-digital hybrid animation practice. Exploring architecture and stop-motion with digital and analogue making techniques, his practice interrogates ideas of the tactile and emotion through the mediation of cinematic and emerging technologies.

Miniature Realities: Scale, Time, and Materiality in Stop Motion Animation / Jack McGrath

Stop motion animation is innately entangled with crafting and animating miniature worlds, and with the experience of scale. Filmmakers painstakingly design, fabricate, and add motion to small-scale physical materials, which are then blown up and magnified on the big screen. Many have attributed stop motion's persistent appeal to haptic visuality and an appreciation for the hand crafted, however, rarely discussed is the phenomena of scaled materiality.

Miniatures in both stop motion animation and visual effects, take the audience into an alternate material reality. Down at the micro level, materials exhibit aesthetics and behaviours that differ from our full-scale experience of the world. Seeing small things large on screen presents an inherent duality of tension and harmony, a strange combination of incoherence and enchantment when we see the world from new phenomenological perspectives. At miniature scales, material qualities differ from their larger counterparts; viscosity, stiffness, and texture do not scale uniformly (Margolies, 2019). These peculiarities present both challenges and creative opportunities for animators, who must navigate the physical world at small scales. The phenomenon taps into a playful willingness to accept illusions, requiring audiences to inhabit these tiny universes (Bachelard, n.d.).

In the case of miniatures, time emerges as a crucial element, being experienced differently in the micro world compared to our full-scale reality. Visual effects artists counter these differences by slowing down miniature sequences to give the illusion of greater scale (Fielding, 1985). The frame by frame, both still and moving nature

of stop motion animation subverts the time scale relationship further.

This paper explores the influences of scale, materiality and time on stop motion animation. Drawing on the author's own work with 3D printing, miniatures and stop motion, it demonstrates how experimenting with small scales has led to intriguing new discoveries, enriching the practice and theoretical understanding of the art form.

Jack McGrath is an academic, filmmaker, and creative practitioner specializing in animation, visual communication design, and video production. Jack has a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Sydney and has lectured in film and animation for over a decade, he teaches animation at the University of Newcastle, Australia. Jack's research focuses on miniatures, scale, and materiality, exploring the relationship between traditional stop-motion animation and emerging digital technologies. Through hybrid workflows, he integrates traditional techniques with innovative approaches. His work bridges creative practice and research, contributing to experimental animation methods. Jack also likes writing in the third person.

Hybrid Stop-Motion: An Attempt to Integrate the Latest Bells and Whistles / Dr Miriam Harris

How might a tertiary animation programme persuade potential students - and parents holding the purse-strings - that they will acquire an appropriate skillset for future employment? The answer, depending upon the university's available finances, is frequently to install a raft of equipment and facilities, replete with cutting-edge technological bells and whistles, in order to lure students.

My university, for instance, is lucky to have state-of-the-art motion capture and virtual reality studios, computers furnished with a suite of up-to-date software, and a green-screen room. These assets have paved the way for our students to be employed by large CGI commercial studios, including WETA and Framestore. We also teach analogue skills such as stop-motion animation, and this paper will look at several issues involved in ensuring that students are exposed to some of 'the latest methods' within the stop-motion field.

Birgitta Hosea, in the book *The Crafty Animator*, observes a 'resurgence of interest in hand-crafting', in response to the ubiquity of digital methods and AI. A number of students within our programme - even those with a predominant digital focus - are also interested in stop-motion by LAIKA and Aardman Animation. Wholeheartedly subscribing to Adam Elliot's exhortation that 'the story is everything', we endeavour to teach both narrative inventiveness and analogue innovation.

In 'Mixing it up: Coraline and LAIKA's hybrid world', I explored the innovative hybrid approach adopted by LAIKA studio, in which both digital and analogue strategies are employed. These methods were also incorporated within the Pinocchio animation by Guillermo del Toro. In turn, as an animation practitioner with some stop-motion experience, I have attempted to emulate these cutting-edge practices, through a research project that integrates handmade puppets and digital 3D printing, drawing and digital compositing, while drawing upon my university's facilities. This paper documents the process, and also reflects upon its degree of success.

Dr Miriam Harris is an Associate Professor in Animation, VFX, and Game Design (AVG) at the Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. She completed post-graduate study in Digital Animation and VFX at Sheridan College, Toronto, and is an award-winning animator. She edited the book 'Experimental Animation: From Analogue to Digital' (2019) with Lilly Husbands and Paul Taberham, and is co-editor, with Dr Katerina Athanasopoulou, of the international animation academic journal 'Animation Practice, Process & Production'. Her animation research exploring digital materiality, experimental practices, memory, and Czech and Polish animation, has been published in different books.

WEDNESDAY JULY 9: 9:00am-10:45am
PANEL 7C: ANIMATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT 2

Papers:

Tracing the Green Aesthetics of Animation Movement / Virág Vécsey, Eötvös Loránd University

Experimental Animation for the Environment / Sara Gevurtz, Auburn University

Narrating Non-anthropocentric Worlds: The Magical and Technological in Children's Animated Series /

Stephanie Rincon, University of the Balearic Islands

Tracing the Green Aesthetics of Animation Movement / Virág Vécsey

Drawing on the intersections of the literatures of ecocriticism and animation, this paper explores the formal and aesthetic specificities through which animation (re-)constructs the relationship between human and nature. Metamorphosis, the illusion of life (Heise, 2014; Husbands & Ruddell, 2019), plasmaticness (Eisenstein, 1940/1986), anthropomorphism (Wells, 2009, 2015) and reverberating space (Wood, 2006) are not only features differentiating between film and animation, but also bear of ecocritical importance. For they enable the crossing of boundaries between the living and the inanimate, humans and animals, between different species, nature and culture. These traits also allow the blurring of subject and object relations and can thus transform nature from an object of otherness into a subject of identification. From a green perspective, the significance of these formal features lies thus in their subversive potential as they touch the core of the nature-culture divide by endowing nature, traditionally assumed to be discursively passive, with agency. The constructed language of animation interrogates its subject inherently so it can be an excellent means of challenging the status quo. It is important to stress, however, that these formal and aesthetic specifics are not inevitably vehicles for articulating ecologically progressive messages but only bear the potential to do so. Through showcasing examples from contemporary, animated films such as *The Four souls of Coyote* (2023), *Chicken Run* (2000) and *Flow* (2024) this paper shows how situative anthropomorphism, complemented by Wells' concept of bestial ambivalence; metamorphosis regarded as the endpoint of plasmatic transformativity, and the notion of illusion of life, which I explore through the concept of reverberating space, can be used as interrogative tools for the ecocritical analysis of animated film. The methodological framework, set up along these lines, points out the semantic conditions that are essential for conveying environmentally sustainable messages.

Virág Vécsey is a PhD candidate and assistant professor at the Institute for Art Theory and Media Studies at the Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), Budapest. Her fields of research are animation studies, environmental communication and ecocriticism. Her doctoral research explores how European animation represents human-nature relationships in the past 60 years, in context of the changing social, political and industrial landscape. She is the founder and head of the BA media design specialisation at the Department of Media and Communication at ELTE.

Experimental Animation for the Environment / Sara Gevurtz

I wish to propose a presentation regarding my work, which is heavily video and experimental animation, and which explores environmental themes. Specifically, I will explain my use of the visual language of animation to deepen the viewers' awareness, both on an emotive and intellectual level, of the impact of humans on the natural environment and the impact of the environment on humans.

My videos use various techniques to allow audiences to contemplate the loss of biodiversity and native landscapes. This entails different approaches to animation, from the conventional to the unconventional that pushes the boundary of what is considered animation.

Works from my series, *Listed*, make use of visual language recognizable to audiences, for example, from movie end-credits, to stimulate elucidation of the hundreds of animals listed on the US Fish and Wildlife's Endangered Species lists. My *Woody's Last Laugh* works further highlight species loss, by drawing the connection to an American cultural icon. *Woody's Last Laugh* is also an example of how to make use of work in the public domain to bring awareness to the current environmental crisis. My *Plains* series uses repetition and abstraction to explore the surreal structures of the modern agricultural landscape. These experimental animation and video projects create a space that allows for time to meditate on what is being lost around us in the natural world due to the Anthropocene influences.

Sara Gevurtz is an Assistant Professor at Auburn University. Gevurtz graduated from the CADRE Laboratory for New Media at San Jose State University where she received a Master of Fine Arts in Digital Media Art. She

received her bachelor's degree in Evolution, Behavior and Ecology Biology from the University of California, San Diego. Due to her interdisciplinary background, her artistic research focuses on ecological and environmental issues. Gevurtz is a multimedia artist who works primarily with video and experimental animation. Gevurtz has been published and shown work nationally and internationally.

Narrating Non-anthropocentric Worlds: The Magical and Technological in Children's Animated Series / Stephanie Rincon

Fantasy media has traditionally used magic as a metaphor for Nature, a literary legacy from folklore and mythology. As a result, most contemporary fantasy media narrates magic and technology as dichotomies, further cementing the anthropocentric binaries that maintain human exceptionalism. Scholars have recognized that in children's literature magic is often treated as analogous with Nature (Friedman 2012) and therefore its characterization falls prey to anthropocentric discourses that fracture the human from the more-than-human world. Yet, de-anthropocentric critique has not been applied to the study of children's animation thus far, and therefore its treatment of magic and/or technology often goes unnoticed.

The present research aims to examine the world-building strategies of the animated series *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power* (2018-2020). Arguing that its narrative use of magic and technology subverts traditional dichotomies found in anthropocentric discourses, this study analyzes how this series creates a post-anthropocentric storyworld. To do this, a critical analysis of the narrative elements of the series has been carried out, focusing on world-building and characterizations. *Econarratology* (James 2015) will be used as the main methodological framework, as well as various critiques of the Anthropocene (Haraway 2016; Moore 2016), to explore how the series blurs the distinct categories of magic and technology, foregrounding our response-ability to environmental crises. This suggests that recent children's animation adopts distinct narrative strategies that problematize anthropocentric imperatives, moving towards more fluid and symbiotic ways of viewing the entanglements of the human and more-than-human world.

Stephanie Rincon is a second-year PhD candidate at the University of the Balearic Islands. She is the recipient of the FPU CAIB 2023 grant and a member of the research project "Cinema and Environment 2: Ways of seeing beyond the Anthropocene" funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities, and led by Dr. Katarzyna Paszkiewicz.

Her research is situated at the intersection of studies of popular culture, critical posthumanism, affect theory and queer theory. She is interested in examining how recent children's animated series represent the more-than-human world, oftentimes challenging the binaries that typically underlie anthropocentric narratives.

WEDNESDAY JULY 9: 11:15am-1:00pm
PANEL 8A: POLITICAL ANIMATION

Papers:

Animation as Resistance?: The 'Woman, Life, Freedom' Movement and Creative Expression in Iran / Reza Yousefzadeh Tabasi, Bournemouth University

(Inter)(in)animation, Diaspora, and Un-War Making: A Conversation with Maryam Mohajer / Karen Redrobe, University of Pennsylvania

The Evolution of Mr. Prokoup: From Propaganda Tool to Animation Icon / Mgr. Tereza Bochinová, Masaryk University

Animation as Resistance?: The 'Woman, Life, Freedom' Movement and Creative Expression in Iran / Reza Yousefzadeh Tabasi

This paper explores the pivotal role of animation in the "Woman, Life, Freedom" movement in Iran, which emerged following the death of Mahsa Amini in September 2022. Amini, a young Iranian woman, was killed for allegedly violating the regime's strict hijab laws, igniting a six-month wave of protests marked by widespread repression. The movement witnessed the production of an unprecedented volume of creative work, including music, illustrations, and animation.

Focusing on animation, this paper examines how it was used to resist a suppressive sociopolitical landscape. Created largely by anonymous practitioners and disseminated through social media, these works also gained visibility through Iranian diaspora TV channels in the UK. Animation played three significant roles in the movement:

1. **Community Building and Visibility:** Animation enabled Iranians to connect, amplify their presence, and counteract the regime's narrative of an insignificant opposition. Non-violent protest was central, and animation allowed protesters to express dissent without direct confrontation, making their numbers and unity undeniable.
2. **International Outreach:** This was the first major unification of opposition forces inside and outside Iran since 1979. Animation, with its universal appeal, effectively engaged global audiences, drawing attention to the movement's cause.

3. **Therapeutic Expression:** Amid severe repression, animation became a medium of catharsis, enabling individuals to voice their pain and resistance when conventional avenues were inaccessible.

The movement, driven by Gen Z adept in technology and social media, also leveraged AI to produce art rapidly and anonymously. This accessibility democratized creative participation, prioritizing message over technical skill. Animation's inherent anonymity further protected its creators and subjects, making it a uniquely potent tool in a moment of unprecedented resistance.

Reza Yousefzadeh Tabasi is an academic and art director, specializing in computer animation at Bournemouth University, UK. His PhD, awarded in 2011 by Brighton University, explored the use of animation to engage with social realities. In addition to his academic role, Reza is a talented puppet maker and illustrator, with a strong track record in the creative industry. He has received awards for his illustrations and has served as a consultant on numerous TV shows. Reza's research interests include realism and animation, animated documentaries, political art, subversive art practices, and Iranian New Wave cinema.

(Inter)(in)animation, Diaspora, and Un-War Making: A Conversation with Maryam Mohajer / Karen Redrobe

This proposed presentation aims to explore a variety of questions about the relationship between animation and war, and to do so through a feminist lens. Activating the concept of "(inter)(in)animation" that Karen Redrobe introduces in her new book, *Undead*, the presentation will structurally emphasize the role of various forms of relationality in the work of what feminist art historian Rosalyn Deutsche calls "un-war making" by taking the form of a dialogue rather than a monologue. Over the course of the presentation, Redrobe and the BAFTA-award-winning British-Iranian animator Maryam Mohajer will be in conversation about the role of animation in processing, surviving, and resisting war. Speaking across the realms of theory and practice, Redrobe and Mohajer will discuss the interlocking temporalities of war and animation; the impact of national identity and diaspora on animators and their practice; the role of intermediality in making available forms of animation capable of braiding differentiated times, places, and experiences; the gendering of both war and animation practice; and how animation provides a vehicle for mediating intergenerational relationships and experiences of war trauma and memory. Mohajer has proposed a screening of her 2018 short "Red Dress. No Straps." This film, a still from which is on the cover of Redrobe's new book on war, feminism and animation, will

provide a starting point for a more wide-ranging conversation about the way the issues named above permeate Mohajer's larger body of work.

Karen Redrobe is Elliot and Roslyn Jaffe Professor of Cinema and Media Studies at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, USA. She is a feminist film theorist who is the author and editor of a number of books, including *Animating Film Theory* and *Undead: (Inter)(in)animation, Feminisms, and the Art of War* (UC Press, May 2025). With Kartik Nair, she is currently coediting an edited collection on the topic of film, freedom, and pedagogy, which includes contributions from festival directors, archivists, filmmakers, and scholars from around the world.

The Evolution of Mr. Prokoup: From Propaganda Tool to Animation Icon / Mgr. Tereza Bochinová

Czechoslovak animation faced numerous challenges in the post-war years. Chiefly among them was the issue of funding as the only profitable type of animation was the one used in advertising films. Sociopolitical changes accelerated the need for social advertising, leading to many campaigns propelled by the Czechoslovak Communist Party reflected in film production. Amidst these changes, Karel Zeman created Mr. Prokoup. This puppet became a “spokescharacter” (fictional character used to promote a product, brand or idea) during the early era of communist agitation and propaganda (1946–1949).

This study reveals through media analysis of 20 various periodicals how historical discourse in both film press and daily newspapers shaped Mr. Prokoup's evolution from a propaganda tool through an educational figure to ultimately the symbol of Karel Zeman's legacy. Mr. Prokoup initially reflected social values and moral lessons through comedic missteps. These narratives aligned with campaigns promoting waste collection, alcohol abstinence or worker recruitment. Humour, expressive puppet design, and the absence of dialogue contributed to this character's international appeal and educational potential, extending beyond cinema into printed media, merchandise and festivals.

Between 1949 and 1955, Prokoup's series paused, and attention shifted to Zeman's other films (e. g. *Journey to the Beginning of Time*, *An Invention for Destruction*). In the 1960s, Mr. Prokoup re-emerged as an emblem of Zeman's oeuvre, despite being directed by different artists (Zdeněk Rozkopal, Arnošt Kupčík and Eugen Spálený). Moreover, his educational role gradually replaced his agitational function, targeting a younger audience in the process.

The proposed presentation examines Mr. Prokoup's evolution from a tool of social propaganda to a lasting icon of Czechoslovak animation, reflecting broader trends in the state-controlled film industry. Mr. Prokoup became an integral part of the Czechoslovak puppet animation and Karel Zeman's brand, bridging political intent and cultural identity.

Mgr. Tereza Bochinová is a PhD student of the Department of Film Studies and Audiovisual Culture at Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic. Her current research focuses on the nationalized film culture in Zlín using the Actor-Network Theory as a methodological tool. She was a member of research teams in projects “Relational database, map projections and data visualisation used for promotion, education and support of tourism – implementation on the case of Zlín film culture” (2020 – 2023) and “Animated film studios in Gottwaldov and Łódź (1945/47-1990) – comparative collective biography” (2021 – 2023).

WEDNESDAY JULY 9: 11:15am-1:00pm
PANEL 8B: THE BOUNDARIES OF REALISM

Papers:

Sustaining the Value of Realism in Animation in Isao Takahata's 'Pom Poko' / Idris Kellermann Williams,
 University of Adelaide

Exploring Connections between Animation and Phenomenology through Practice Based Research / Owen
 Stickler, Cardiff Metropolitan University

Collectivized Cine-Trance in the More-Than-Human Moving Image / Chris de Selincourt, University of the
 Arts London

Sustaining the Value of Realism in Animation in Isao Takahata's 'Pom Poko' / Idris Kellermann Williams

When Isao Takahata entered the animation industry, the amount of animation being produced was far smaller, and the technical standard far lower. His directorial feature debut 'Horus: Prince of the Sun' (1968), was revolutionary in using stylistic devices from live-action cinema to depict its village uniting against their oppressor. However by the 1990s, immersive visual realism in anime was common and commercially successful. The techniques Takahata had pioneered in and after 'Horus' had arguably lost their power, and 3DCG animation was beginning to promise even greater visual realism. Seen in this light, the struggle 'Pom Poko' (1994) depicts, in which Tanuki (raccoon-like Japanese animals) attempt to sustain their way of life in the face of urban development, becomes an allegorical engagement with how to sustain the value of visual realism in animation: can it ever truly bring about progressive change through making people think, or is it doomed to be co-opted by capitalism?

I will argue that the film's stylistic shifts and the characters' physical transformations form an ethos of constant change through which Takahata hoped to create a distanced overview of the situations the film presents, preventing the audience from being immersed and trapped in any one point of view. I will contextualise these techniques within Takahata's other works, his hitherto untranslated writings, and within the film's depiction of the Tanuki's struggle and their ability to create illusions, showing how it represents an evolution towards hypermediacy, building on techniques he had experimented with as early as 'Horus: Prince of the Sun' and honed in 'The Story of Yanagawa's Canals' (1987) and 'Only Yesterday' (1991).

Idris Kellermann Williams holds an honours degree in film from the University of Adelaide with a thesis on Isao Takahata. He is currently undertaking a PhD at the same university, which expands on that thesis. He presented a paper titled "Depth, Flatness, and Community in Isao Takahata's 'Horus: Prince of the Sun'" at the 2024 Society for Animation Studies conference, and one titled "Isao Takahata's minimalism in the unseen writings and works of an underseen master" at the 2024 SSAAANZ conference.

Exploring Connections between Animation and Phenomenology through Practice Based Research / Owen
 Stickler

Animation, in part through its material differences from live-action film, shifts and broadens the limits of what and how we can show about reality by offering new or alternative ways of seeing the world. It can present the conventional subject matter of documentary (the 'world out there' of observable events) in non-conventional ways. It also has the potential to convey visually the 'world in here' of subjective, conscious experience. Roe (2011).

This paper develops ideas discussed in my presentation at the 2023 SAS conference in Philadelphia that posed the question 'Can animation's elastic relationship with time, movement, and space provide unique possibilities for making sense of our lived experience of the world?'. This latest paper outlines the further research, production and subsequent reflection of the making of 'Wedi'r Dilyw /After the Flood', an experimental animated documentary. The paper also explores connections I have made during the process between animation and phenomenology through practice-based research.

There are profound connections between animation concepts, processes, and experience and phenomenology's 'study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view' Smith (2018). Both disciplines provide unique perspectives on perception, experience, and the nature of reality. I'm interested in exploring connections between phenomenology and animation both throughout the history of art and animation and through my own research and practice.

I'm currently a senior animation lecturer at Cardiff Metropolitan University School of Art and Design. Previously I was an animator, director, producer, and studio owner. My work is inspired by animators and experimental

filmmakers like Robert Breer, Stan Brakhage and Jonathan Hodgson. More contemporary animators such as Joedi Mack and Vojtěch Domlátil have also greatly influenced my current work and thinking about animation. My recent film 'After the flood' has been selected for several experimental film and animation festivals and was a finalist in the Experimental Brazil film festival 2024.

Collectivized Cine-Trance in the More-Than-Human Moving Image / Chris de Selincourt

'Slow motion and fast motion reveal a world where the kingdom of nature knows no boundaries. Everything is alive. A surprising animism is being reborn.' (Epstein, 1935) The attentiveness constituted by cinematic technologies and discussed by early film theorists like Jean Epstein, foregrounds an enquiry not only toward how we see nature but to where the boundaries of nature are located. As the apparatus of cinema continues to expand, the intertwined relationship between what has agency and is alive, as opposed to what is merely a mechanism of media technology (Fisher, 1999) urges us to question the subject and source of animation further. And where we find more than a single subject, between Interdisciplinary practice and research, artists studying the natural world do so through a networked form of attention or distributed noticing of changes in the environment

To address these novel forms of attention, through and toward which the animatic apparatus frames nature, this paper will analyse the production processes and ecologies of two artists collectives operating at the extreme opposites of historical digital and analogue divisions (Forensic Architecture and Sustainable Darkroom). Speculating on the chiasm that binds these two seemingly opposed practices, the emergence of a collectivized form of cine-trance will be discussed. From its original formulations through Jean Rouch and Gregory Bateson at the site of anthropological study, to the development or processing of images in the context of a newfound 'animatic apparatus' (Levitt, 2018). And where trance, often conceived of as a form of non-attentiveness (Holl, 2017) can be discussed as a necessary state of mind for connections between the human and the more-than-human to permeate.

Chris de Selincourt is a moving image researcher and senior lecturer for BA and MA Animation at London College of Communication (UAL). His teaching areas include Film Theory, Documentary Studies, Disruption and Digital Networks, Audio-Visual Culture, Multimedia and Multisensory Environments. The areas of his research include; Artists Moving Image 1966-1999, Media Ecology and Consciousness Studies. His short experimental documentary 'At Home with the Boyle Family' was recently awarded Best Art Prize at the Portobello Film Festival.

WEDNESDAY JULY 9: 11:15am-1:00pm
PANEL 8C: CHINESE ANIMATION

Papers:

The Revival of Chinese Animation: International Distribution and Exhibition through Film Festivals / Yuexi Yu, Queen's University Belfast

Research on Content Innovation and Challenges of Chinese Animated Mini Series Powered by Artificial Intelligence / XU, Wen-xue, Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications

Social Concern, Government Regulation, and Industry Self-Regulation: A Comparison of Media Violence in *Boonie Bears* TV and Cinematic Creations / Dr Shaopeng Chen, Southeast University

The Revival of Chinese Animation: International Distribution and Exhibition through Film Festivals / Yuexi Yu

During the golden periods of Chinese animation in the 1950s–60s and the late 1970s–80s, Chinese animated films were frequently screened at international film festivals. These films captivated Western audiences with their unique Eastern style, emphasising national ideology and promoting cultural heritage. After a 30-year hiatus, Chinese animation gradually reemerged on the international stage, beginning with *Piercing I* (Liu Jian, 2010), which was shortlisted in the Feature Animation Competition at the 2010 Annecy International Animation Film Festival. Between 2017 and 2024, 12 Chinese feature-length animations were showcased in various competitions and events at Annecy. The animations exhibited at festivals during the 2010s demonstrated a departure from the creative styles of the golden eras, showcasing more diverse themes and artistic approaches. While mainstream productions like *Ne Zha* (Yu Yang, 2019) and *White Snake* (Amp Wong and Zhao Ji, 2019) adhere to traditional national and literary themes, they have also begun to embrace diverse modern technical expressions and narrative innovations. Amid globalisation, film festivals serve as vital windows for exploring international distribution and sales. The participation of Chinese animation in international film festivals underscores its ongoing pursuit of contemporary global dissemination and international distribution beyond the exhibition of culture and art.

This paper focuses on the revival of Chinese animation at international film festivals post-2015, particularly at the renowned Annecy International Animation Film Festival and the MIFA (Marché International du Film d'Animation) animation market. It explores how the screening of contemporary Chinese animated films has captured the attention of international distributors, underscoring the festivals' significance in the sustainability of Chinese animation on a global platform.

Yuexi Yu is a PhD candidate in Film Studies at Queen's University Belfast. Her research focuses on contemporary reinterpretations of Chinese animation after 2015 and how they perform in the global market, with a particular emphasis on aspects such as co-production, international marketing, and reception of Chinese animation in the context of globalisation. Her academic interests include animation, adaptation, and the film industry.

Research on Content Innovation and Challenges of Chinese Animated Mini Series Powered by Artificial Intelligence / XU, Wen-xue

With the rapid development of artificial intelligence technology, more and more industries and fields are beginning to benefit from its capabilities. The Chinese animation industry, as an important component of the cultural and creative industries, has also encountered new opportunities and challenges in this transformation. In recent years, micro-dramas have rapidly emerged, providing audiences with more entertainment options. Micro-dramas refer to short dramas that usually last one to two minutes per episode, with a maximum length of up to 15 minutes. According to the "White Paper on the Development of China's Micro-drama Industry (2024)" released by the China Network Audiovisual Association, data shows that the micro-drama market size is expected to surpass the box office of mainland Chinese films for the first time in 2024. Animated mini series, as a new emerging form of animation derived from micro-drama, cater to the fragmented entertainment needs of modern audiences with their short duration and fast-paced characteristics. Artificial intelligence is gradually permeating scriptwriting, character design, image processing, and animation production in animated mini series, driving the diversification and innovation of animated content.

This research uses a combination of literature analysis, case study, and in-depth interviews. By reviewing relevant domestic and international literature, this study analyzes the current state and trends of artificial intelligence technology in the creation of animated mini series. Select typical cases of AI animated mini series,

such as “Go ‘Rabbit’ to the Moon”, “Chinese Mythology”, “Fantasy Store” and “Han Dan Dream: AI in the Warring States” to discuss their creative process, content features, and technical applications. In conjunction with interviews with creators and audiences, we will delve into the new forms, new expressions, and new explorations of AI-generated animated mini series, as well as the existing problems and challenges, to provide new pathways for the diversified development of future animations.

XU, Wen-xue is a lecturer in the Animation Department of the School of Media and Art at Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications in China. She graduated with a BA in Animation from the School of Animation and Digital Arts, Communication University of China, and an MFA from the School of Art, University of Cincinnati, U.S.A. After graduation, she worked in animation and design companies in Los Angeles. Since 2017, she has been a teacher in the School of Media and Arts of Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications. Her main research areas are contemporary Chinese animation, animation and culture, and new media art. She has been in charge of and participated in 5 provincial and municipal level research projects, published 9 papers and 12 artworks in CSSCI, SCD and other journals, and her artworks have won many awards in various domestic and international animation and comic competitions.

Social Concern, Government Regulation, and Industry Self-Regulation: A Comparison of Media Violence in *Boonie Bears* TV and Cinematic Creations / Dr Shaopeng Chen

The Chinese *Boonie Bears*/*Xiong Chumo*/熊出没 brand, whose primary audience is young children between 3 and 10 years of age, comprises adventure-based 3D animated TV series and films produced by the privately owned Shenzhen Huaqiang Digital Animation Company. In the original television animation, two bear brothers, Briar (熊大, Xiong Da in Chinese, which means elder bear) and Bramble (熊二, Xiong Er in Chinese, which means younger bear), and other small animals live happily in the forest in Northeast China. However, their peaceful life is disturbed by the arrival of Logger Vick (光头强, Guangtou Qiang in Chinese), who is employed by the voice-only Boss Li to cut down forest trees for profit. The whole story centers on the farcical fight between the two bear brothers (sometimes with the help of other small animals) and Logger Vick as the animals seek to protect their forest home.

This article compares the TV and cinematic versions of *Boonie Bears* in terms of their representations of media violence within the context of social concern, government regulation, and industry self-regulation. These works are particularly significant among domestically produced animation with respect to their effects on children of exposure to violent programming. The first part of this article examines physical violence and verbal abuse in *Boonie Bears* and *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf*, the two most influential and widely watched animated TV series in China. The second part reviews the corresponding public criticism the above two works have received and the reasons behind it. The third part of this article analyzes how and to what extent the production company has reduced the degree of children’s exposure to media violence in cinematic *Boonie Bears* productions (especially the first two films), which have been deemed acceptable by the majority of potential audience members.

Dr Shaopeng Chen is an associate professor in School of Arts, Southeast University (China). He received his PhD degree in Film Studies from University of Southampton (UK). He is the recipient of The Emru Townsend Award from Society for Animation Studies in 2017 and 2024. His research interests include animation aesthetics, Chinese national cinema, film industry in China, and contemporary and historical screenwriting practices. He has published essays on prestigious academic journals such as *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*, *Journal of Screenwriting*, *Film Criticism* and *Animation-An Interdisciplinary Journal*. His monograph titled *The New Generation in Chinese Animation* was published by Bloomsbury in 2021.

WEDNESDAY JULY 9: 4:45pm-6:30pm

PANEL 9A: SUSTAINING POLISH ANIMATION: DATASETS, ARCHIVES AND MEMORIES

Papers:

Methodological Reflections on Studying Central-European Animation Studios: Challenges, Approaches, and Insights / Ewa Ciszewska, University of Łódź

Sustaining Memory: An Oral History of The Puppet Film Studio in Tuszyn-Las / Joanna Kosińska-Wajcht, University of Łódź

Expanding and Sustaining Animation History: Polish Animation in the 1950s and 1960s / Jennifer Lynde Barker, Bellarmine University

Seeing-Thinking-Animating. Creative Practice of Wojciech Zamecznik (1923-1967) / Grażyna Świętochowska, University of Gdansk

Methodological Reflections on Studying Central-European Animation Studios: Challenges, Approaches, and Insights / Ewa Ciszewska

In the 1980s, Film Studies revisited the division of labor in the film industry, influenced by The Classical Hollywood Cinema by David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson. In the early 21st century, John T. Caldwell revived production studies, focusing on media industries and film studios as workplaces with shared norms and values. Brian R. Jacobson advanced research by examining studios as environments, symbols, and intersections of knowledge, technology, and expertise. More recently, Sarah Street led a project on film studios' infrastructure, culture, and innovation in Britain, France, Germany, and Italy (1930–60).

The comparative research project Animation Studios in Gottwaldov and Lodz (1945/47-1990) — Comparative Collective Biography led by Pavel Skopal and Ewa Ciszewska (2021–2024), seeks methodological innovation. It employs prosopography alongside Pierre Bourdieu's field theory, Howard S. Becker's concept of art worlds, Bruno Latour's actor-network theory, and social network analysis. This approach explores the history of animation production in Central Europe, integrating film production studies with sociology of art to reveal new perspectives on film history.

The proposed approaches to researching Central-European film studios in the post-war era have been tested through two books, a series of articles, special issue of a journal and two databases. The presentation will focus less on the project's findings and more on the methodological challenges encountered during this research on animation studios. It will address the consequences of methodological decisions, the limitations of data collection and analysis methods, and the challenges of making the collected data accessible through film databases.

Ewa Ciszewska - Assistant Professor at the Department of Film and Audiovisual Media, University of Łódź. Her publications include cultural heritage management in the field of animation, history of Polish animation, Polish-Czech film cooperation during the communist era, and film education in Poland. She has published in 'Studies in Eastern European Cinema', 'Animation. An interdisciplinary journal' and "Journal of Open Humanities Data". Project leader of the 'Film Animation Studios in Gottwald and Lodz (1945/47-1990)'. Co-author of the book Społeczne światy Studia Małych Form Filmowych "Se-Ma-For" w Łodzi [Social Worlds of the "Se-Ma-For" Small Form Film Studio in Łódź], University of Lodz Press, Łódź 2025 (forthcoming). Founder of the Polish Animation Research Group.

Sustaining Memory: An Oral History of The Puppet Film Studio in Tuszyn-Las / Joanna Kosińska-Wajcht

The Puppet Film Studio, located in the suburban area of Tuszyn-Las, 25 kilometres outside Łódź, served as the institutional predecessor of the largest puppet stop-motion company, "Se-Ma-For" Studio of Small Film Forms in Łódź (1947–1999; until 1960 operating as the Puppet Film Studio). The studio no longer exists, nor does its building remain. The aim of this presentation is to introduce the outcomes of a research project focused on reconstructing the history of the animation studio in Tuszyn-Las. The project employs oral history methods, based on semi-structured interviews with residents of Tuszyn who lived near the studio but were not directly involved in its activities. This approach offers a perspective on the studio's operations in a local context while also enabling the exploration of a hypothesis of the lost memory of a place that once carried the experiences of many nationalities, but whose past has been overshadowed by the animation studio's presence.

A critical analysis of witness accounts will be presented, with particular attention to the social context, especially the role of Jewish and German minorities who were active on the site before and during the Second World War. The presentation will demonstrate how previously unarchived materials, such as interviews, can

serve as a foundation for developing a new critical perspective on the history of the Puppet Film Studio. In addition to its contribution to the history of Polish animation, the research offers a critical evaluation of in-depth interviews as a methodological tool for exploring non-sustainable cultural phenomena in film history.

Joanna Kosińska-Wajcht - a graduate of The Gdynia and Kiejstut Bacewicz University of Music in Lodz and of Film Studies and Audiovisual Media at the University of Lodz. Currently a master's student in Audiovisual Media and Digital Culture at the University of Lodz. A member of the Polish Animation Research Group and co-leader of the group for the 2024/2025 term. Her research focuses on film music in animation, the history of cinema practices, and institutions associated with film. She places particular emphasis on the oral history method, which she regularly employs in her research.

Expanding and Sustaining Animation History: Polish Animation in the 1950s and 1960s / Jennifer Lynde Barker

Film history can be tricky to study—recorded on fragile material, it tells stories that fall out of favor, or which some may wish to forget. It requires monetary support and careful handling to preserve it. This happens only sporadically, and the vicissitudes of political regimes, economics, and cultural preferences all play a role in survival. Animation is often even more difficult to trace, as it features many short films, often receives little attention in historical scholarship, and is seldom a priority for preservation. Add to this its complex construction and a lack of attention to key contributors (especially women), and forming an accurate portrait of its historical presence and impact can be frustrating. Also problematic is the common assumption that “everything” is now digitized or online. This is, of course, untrue. It is a disservice to film history to even entertain this idea as valid: from movies that are difficult to access for a single archival view to films that are lost forever, the actuality of analogue film history is quite different than an accessible digital canon would suggest. But despite formidable hurdles (made more challenging when doing international research), recouping these films is essential: they offer a sustaining and visceral record of the past that is inclusive and varied, and which undermines the hegemony of contemporary animation giants (like Disney and Pixar) that colonize global distribution.

My own progress with researching (and theorizing a book) on several national animation traditions has been slow as visits to multiple archives is difficult to manage, and though the archivists themselves have been an invaluable source of information, films are not always available. My presentation uses Polish animation in the 1950s and 1960s (primarily but not exclusively produced at Se-Ma-For) as a case study for this process. Wide-ranging and artistically innovative (with important contributions by women), this body of animation offers creative and important stories that persist, despite the state control of the period and problems of access.

Jennifer Lynde Barker is Professor of Film Studies at Bellarmine University in Kentucky, where she directs the film studies minor and specializes in animation, film history, and aesthetics. Author of *The Aesthetics of Antifascist Film: Radical Projection*, she has published numerous articles and film reviews in *Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, *Literature/Film Quarterly*, *MUBI Notebook*, *Cinema Scope*, and *FilmiHullu*, among others. She also writes DVD essays for Deaf Crocodile, curates animation programs at the Midnight Sun Film Festival, and was a Fulbright Lecturer in Kyoto, Japan. She is currently writing a book on midcentury animation.

Seeing-Thinking-Animating. Creative Practice of Wojciech Zamecznik (1923-1967) / Grażyna Świętochowska

The animation factor in the graphic design oeuvre of Wojciech Zamecznik (1923-1967) embraces posters (mainly film posters), film opening sequences, film-poster Italy '61 and autonomous attempts in film animations. Seeing-thinking-animating manifests itself in the most important logotypes – example of First International Poster Biennale in Warsaw (1959, implemented in 1966), tv programmes opening sequences – example of Pegaz (1. edition, 1959), display projects (museum exhibitions, market and trade fairs inside and outside Poland), magazine covers design („Projekt” and „Architektura”) or text and photos layout in the graphic design of books – example of Zofia Rydet' Mały człowiek, 1964. Through many years Zamecznik was enumerated only as a part of Polish School of Poster when he was in fact a very active player in the field of visual culture.

In one of his letters, he stressed that the crucial factor of composition is time – it's crucial for moving pictures, crucial for film animation. The limited resources of Zamecznik's commentaries—comprising few letters and oral history accounts from his son, Juliusz—make it challenging to reconstruct the theoretical framework of his creative practice. However, a comprehensive digitization project, culminating in a 2016 exhibition at Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, has facilitated this process. On the one hand this type of creative practice is a part of

the wide reflection on the concept of human “seeing” inherited from the avant-gardes of the 20th century and on the other hand, it continues the humanistic aspect established by the international exhibition of Edward Steichen *The Family of Man*. The aim of my speech is to locate Zamecznik's projects, including film animation, in an analytical reflection that takes as its guides Rudolf Arnheim, László Moholy-Nagy, Gyorgy Kepes, Władysław Strzemiński.

Grażyna Świętochowska is Assistant professor at the Institute for Cultural Research at the University of Gdansk, editor-in-chief of the scientific journal “Panoptikum” (2008-2022). She is interested in the history of audiovisual culture of Central Europe and the common area of cinema, art, architecture and design. Graduate from the Literary and Artistic Studies at the Jagiellonian University (2020). In 2023, she won the award for the best film studies book in the debut category awarded by the Polish Society for Film and Media Studies for her publication *Kino mniejsze. W kręgu filmów czeskiej i słowackiej nowej fali / Minor Cinema. In the circle of films of the Czech and Slovak new wave*.

WEDNESDAY JULY 9: 4:45pm-6:30pm
PANEL 9B: ANIMATION AND SOCIAL PURPOSE

Papers:

Astro-Animation: Engaging Public Audiences in Astronomy Through Animation / Laurence Arcadias, Maryland Institute College of Art; and Robin Corbet, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Constellations of Aesthetics, Developing Aesthetic Visual Scenes with Retinal Prosthesis Patients / Mark Collington, Art University Bournemouth

Animation as Tool for Change: Breaking the Silence / Dr Nadia Aghtaie, University of Bristol; Dr Ladan Hashemi, City St George's University; Professor Birgitta Hosea, UCA Farnham; and Dr Fatemeh Housseini-Shakib, University of Art, Tehran

Teaching Computer Science and Animation in the App Age / Angela Hernandez-Scoggins, Independent Scholar

Astro-Animation: Engaging Public Audiences in Astronomy Through Animation / Laurence Arcadias and Robin Corbet

Astronomy often involves abstract, large-scale phenomena that are difficult to conceptualise, such as black holes, exoplanets, and cosmic expansion. Animation serves as a unique tool to overcome these cognitive barriers, enabling participants to visualise and emotionally connect with complex scientific concepts. For over a decade, through an astro-animation class, we have been exploring how animation can enhance public engagement with astronomy, particularly among underserved teenagers in Baltimore. To this end, we developed and implemented a series of Astro-Animation Workshops, where participants create animations to explore and interpret astronomical phenomena. To structure and refine these workshops, we developed the Workshop Toolkit, a framework incorporating survey instruments, observational protocols, and participatory exercises to evaluate how different audiences interact with animation as a science communication tool. We began testing this approach with astronomers at an Astronomy conference in Texas, followed by artists at Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU). The feedback collected from these sessions has been instrumental in adapting our workshops to effectively engage both specialists and the general public. Through surveys and interviews, our findings indicate that animation not only makes complex scientific concepts more accessible but also empowers participants—especially those from underrepresented communities—to see themselves as active contributors to scientific discourse. This presentation will share our findings, illustrating how Astro-Animation fosters interdisciplinary collaboration, enhances science communication, and broadens engagement with astronomy across diverse audiences.

Laurence Arcadias is an animator and an animation professor at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore. Her films have been screened at numerous international festivals and received several prestigious awards. She started her career as an animation film director for French television programs. Her series, "Alex," received the prize for Best Short Animation TV Show at the Annecy International Animation Film Festival. Robin Corbet is a research scientist at the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. He holds a PhD in high-energy astrophysics from University College London and worked at Oxford University and the Japanese Space Agency. His research centers on binary star systems containing black holes or neutron stars, where incredibly strong gravitational and magnetic fields produce X-rays and gamma rays. Corbet also explores new approaches for undertaking the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence. He co-teaches astro-animation at MICA to build bridges between science and art. In his spare time, he plays piano and bass guitar.

Constellations of Aesthetics, Developing Aesthetic Visual Scenes with Retinal Prosthesis Patients / Mark Collington

This interdisciplinary animation-biomedical science paper investigates the capacity of ultra-low vision participants with retinal prostheses to process visual aesthetics. The research was adjunct to clinical trials in which participants were monocularly implanted with a very low-resolution electrode array behind the retina and equipped with an external vision processing unit, primarily used the device for object detection, orientation, and mobility.

Previous research has focused on the functional aspects of retinal prostheses but has not extensively explored the aesthetic experiences of recipients. This study aims to bridge this gap by integrating methodologies from

animated documentary, biomedical science, cognitive neuroscience, semiotics, design thinking, and inclusive arts practice.

The research methods underpinning our pilot study with retinal implant recipients involved a series of visual and auditory tests, questionnaires, and haptic aids. With reference to Jung's analysis of primordial symbols, visual scenes were composed of rudimentary symbolic shapes (circles and rectangles) and simple indexical audio cues, to investigate how minimal the sensorial stimuli can be and still prompt an aesthetic experience. Our audio-visual scenes did provide a nascent aesthetic experience for retinal implant recipients, but not based on conventional notions of aesthetics. Rather, our research suggests that there is evidence to support Jung's concept of amplification – the living tie between perceiving an iconic semiotic sign and psychological unconscious symbol, and Ramachandran's concept of bootstrapping together a series of 'mini-ahas' to result in a cognitive reward of interpreting a super-aha narrative from audio-visual scenes and sequences.

The significance of these findings lies in their potential to inform the development of more engaging and enriching visual experiences for retinal prosthesis users, contributing to both clinical practices and the broader field of neuroaesthetics. This fieldwork also provided insights into advancing methods of interdisciplinary design thinking and inclusive arts practice.

Mark Collington is an Author, Animator, and Academic. He is a Senior Lecturer on BA (Hons) Animation Production at the Art University Bournemouth. In 2016 he published *Animation In Context, A Practical Guide to Theory and Making* for Bloomsbury. His academic research includes interdisciplinary fieldwork on animation as a form of design thinking in fields including biomedical science and architectural design. He studied animation at the Royal College of Art, has run undergraduate and postgraduate courses in animation at London Metropolitan University and University of Bedfordshire. His commercial work includes 2D animation, fashion illustration, and projection mapping.

Animation as Tool for Change: Breaking the Silence / Dr Nadia Aghtaie, Dr Ladan Hashemi, Professor Birgitta Hosea, and Dr Fatemeh Housseini-Shakib

Instagram is the most widely used social media platform in Iran, with over 47 million users. A crucial tool for communication that bypasses traditional state-controlled media, Instagram was key to movements like Woman, Life, Freedom, offering a space to share protest videos, infographics, animations and personal testimonies.

This presentation explores the role of animation as a tool of social media activism, by analysing *Breaking the Silence* (2024), a groundbreaking awareness campaign on violence against women and girls in Iran and wider MENA communities in the UK. Aimed primarily for Instagram, six animations and a series of infographics were devised to address gender-based violence. Developed in partnership between a multidisciplinary research team in London and an animation team in Iran, the animations address issues of domestic violence and coercive control, which disproportionately affect women in contemporary Iran. Over 125k hits in the first two days demonstrates the potential of viral animation to engage audiences at scale.

Rather than considering the animations as artefacts or end products, the whole process is framed encompassing ideation, production, distribution and evaluation. The extensive consultation to ensure sensitive issues were portrayed with authenticity is detailed, as are approaches to evaluate the impact and influence of the animations beyond quantitative metrics such as viewership.

By situating this case study within broader discussions of animation as a form of social praxis, the presentation aims to contribute to understanding how digital media and participatory culture intersect to address pressing issues. This holistic approach underscores animation's evolving role in global movements for social justice.

Dr Nadia Aghtaie, Senior Lecturer at the University of Bristol, specialises in gender-based violence among young people and adults in national and international contexts.

Dr Ladan Hashemi is a Senior Research Fellow at City St George's University. Her research focuses on gender-based violence and its impact on health and society.

Professor Birgitta Hosea is Director of the Animation Research Centre at UCA, Farnham and researches expanding animation both conceptually and in terms of practice.

Dr. Fatemeh Hosseini-Shakib, is former Assistant Prof. of Animation Studies in the University of Art, Tehran; Animation and Media Researcher and Founder of Darmiyaneh Animation Platform.

Teaching Computer Science and Animation in the App Age / Angela Hernandez-Scoggins

In previous years, we have seen an overall increase in computer literacy with each new generation. However, while studies show that younger people are more willing to embrace new technologies, educators are seeing a

decline in computer literacy among Gen Z and Gen Alpha. In the past, animation and computer science education could depend on their students entering the classroom with a baseline knowledge of how to use a desktop computer. The coming years will require educators to compensate for a lack of knowledge in this and similar areas. This paper will discuss some of the key differences in how Gen Z and Gen Alpha utilize technology as opposed to their older counterparts, as well as what some of the solutions may look like in the classroom and beyond.

When building curricula for computer-based education such as animation, visual effects, or computer science, the educator must understand what the average baseline digital literacy of the student will be. Many of the software programs used and taught in Higher Ed or Post-Secondary Classrooms rely on the user having a basic understanding of operating a desktop computer. If a user does not understand the principles behind saving, copying, transferring, or editing files in a folder structure, then they will be unable to use the software adequately. This will result in poor academic performance, and possibly discourage the student or user to pursue a career in a computer-minded field.

Up until recently, educators were able to assume that each new generation understood more about computers than the last, as computer literacy had increased with each generation. However, as is shown in the data being collected in various surveys and studies, we are now seeing a decline, rather than an increase, in digital literacy among Gen Z. This is further supported by the fact that Gen Z individuals are susceptible to phishing scams at three times the rate of Boomers. While we can briefly discuss some of the reasons why this phenomenon is happening, this paper aims to foster a discussion on what educators can do today to help bridge this gap of information seen in the current generation of traditional college-aged students.

Angela Hernandez-Scoggins is an Animator and Educator who aims to combine her skills and experience to serve her local community. Being professionally certified in a number of industry-leading software, she is able to teach students new technical and creative skills without any prior knowledge needed by the student. Her latest work, 2030, was screened at a number of film festivals from 2021-2023. Most notably earning Semi Finalist at the 2020 Ontario International Film Festival, Finalist in the 2021 Media Done Responsibly Virtual Film Festival, and Winner of Best Animated short at the 2021 Golden Leaf International Film Festival.

WEDNESDAY JULY 9: 4:45pm-6:30pm

PANEL 9C: EMBODIED AND DISEMBODIED ANIMATION

Papers:

Expanded Animation Practice as an Embodied Sensory Experience / Yanqi Liang, Kingston School of Art

Sustaining Animation through the Animator's Body / Dr Katerina Athanasopoulou, Royal College of Art

Animating Human Dolls: An Animation Acting Method Using the 12 Principles of Animation, Shadow

Puppet Tradition and Lecoq's / Giorgos Nikopoulos, IMAGINE MoCap

Expanded Animation Practice as an Embodied Sensory Experience / Yanqi Liang

Contemporary animation practice presents a range of experimental approaches to challenging the traditional understanding of time and space in animation creation. As a unique exploration tool, animators use it to touch upon wider issues such as culture, society and politics. This paper will explore the animation creation process as a way to document, analyse and represent the embodied sensory experience in the human relationship. As the primary inspiration, sensory experience is an indispensable tool to support understanding of the world, assist communication, and confirm their existence. However, apart from vision, the richness and importance of the other four senses are often overlooked due to their abstract and intangible nature. With the increasing use of virtual communication, offline physical interaction has become even more valuable. Especially in this post-pandemic era, it is necessary to highlight the enrichment of sensory experiences.

Through a practical project case study, this paper will examine how the methodology of animation can support the communication of embodied sensory experiences. Bergamot is a multimedia art project presented as a collection of animation, illustration, and paintings, with a particular focus on the haptic communication between mother and daughter. This project proposes that haptics as a language of communication provide a valuable approach to exploring further possibilities of sensory representation by breaking the boundaries of established visual representation. Using a set of methods developed in the animation practice, I explore the role of animation as a tool to transmit multisensory information and deconstruct material information, as well as a communication tool and a method for exhibition design. By drawing attention to sensory experience, animation can enhance our connection with the world.

Yanqi Liang is an animation director, illustrator and educator, she is currently pursuing a doctoral study at Kingston School of Art. She graduated with an MA in Animation from the Royal College of Art and a BA in Illustration from Camberwell College of Arts. Her practice-based research explores haptic communication in intercultural mother-daughter relationships through expanded illustration practice. Her directorial clients include Swatch, Barbican Centre, Tate, and BBC Storyworks. Her films have been screened at international animation and film festivals and her works have been participating in several international collective exhibitions.

Sustaining Animation through the Animator's Body / Dr Katerina Athanasopoulou

This paper sustains animation by foregrounding the somatic dimensions of a digital animation practice, framing them as acts of embodied play and resistance. Drawing on Vilém Flusser's philosophy of communication (2014), Pierre Hébert's opening of black boxes (2005), and Maxine Sheets-Johnstone's phenomenology of animate life (2011), I argue for the enduring relevance of the animator's body in a creative practice often overshadowed by technological narratives. By countering deterministic views that reduce digital animation to 'code', I highlight the essential role of human gestures in CGI animation—precisely the fingers that stir the digital.

My short film *WAVES* (completed in December 2024) serves as a case study, by alluding to the animator's physical engagement with the tools of her practice. The film uses both keyframed 3D animation as well as motion capture, and invites discussion on gestures as makers of meaning, and on the alienation of the mocap actor in the process of humanising the digital character. While *WAVES* communicates without spoken dialogue, relying instead on the languages of movement and music, this paper articulates and disseminates the often silent labour of the animator's practice—work commonly unseen by audiences and critics.

Through a Practice-as-Research methodology where I animate as a researcher and research as an animator, I pay attention to pipelines, experiments, and ephemeral exchanges that underpin the final work. These 'in-between' moments illuminate a practice in active dialogue with theory, where 'doing-in-thinking' and 'thinking-in-doing' glean knowledge through gesture. Reflecting on the somatic dimensions of my tool-handling, I contest the reductive framing of CGI animation as mere simulation or codework, and the binary of analogue versus

digital. By likening the tactile manipulation of peripherals, such as the keyboard and mouse, to the act of playing musical instruments, I position the animator as a screen-facing performer whose gestures energise screen spaces.

Dr Katerina Athanasopoulou is an artist-researcher working with CGI Animation for screen and gallery space. She has been a finalist in the British Animation Awards, and directed animation for a BAFTA-winning documentary series. The processes and outcomes of her work have been exhibited within film festivals, art shows, industry and academic panels, conferences and publications. In 2024 she completed her doctoral research with Plymouth University on the intersections of documentary, VR and AR, through the lens of animation. Katerina is a Tutor (Research) within the MA Animation at the Royal College of Art, and co-editor of AP3 Journal.

Animating Human Dolls: An Animation Acting Method Using the 12 Principles of Animation, Shadow Puppet Tradition and Lecoq's / Giorgos Nikopoulos

For every animator in the world there is this very well-known method, described by Disney Studios' animators in the *Illusion of Life* (1995). But what happens when Motion Capture enters the field? Many people believe that if there is not something lifeless to be animated, there is no animation. Some others include this technique equally between the other animation techniques. Somewhere between these two opposing ideas the method Animating Human Dolls takes place. This is an original method under development for using the human body as an animated object through Motion Capture technologies by obeying the 12 Principles of Animation while studying also a very well-known real life acting method with masks, the technique of Jacques Lecoq. While these principles were born in the very first years of Disney's success, coming from 2D animation, they are transformed in various ways and being combined with the acting method with mask in order to fit onto the human bodies. Some of these principles concern the directing guidelines (staging, exaggeration etc), others the simulation of physical elements and natural movement (follow through, etc) and others focus on acting of the character through technical guidelines (anticipation, timing, slow in and slow out etc). With the aforementioned technique (AHD) these principles are applied to human movement in various ways so the performers who animate characters through Motion Capture express themselves as if they were cartoon characters. The human body, as a non-plastic subject, simulating the movement of the plastic ones (cartoons, stop motion, 3D). The human bodies are being re-animated under the rules of this "fantastic world" that Johnston & Thomas (1995, 323) mention. AHD method was applied in the feature animated film *THE OX* (2017) by Giorgos Nikopoulos in the way illustrated in the picture below.

Giorgos Nikopoulos is an animation director and Postdoctoral Researcher in the IMAGINE MoCap program. He holds a PhD that explores the relationship between animation and shadow theater as kindred arts. In his work, he combines Jacques Lecoq's theatrical techniques with animation through motion capture, creating dynamic and expressive character performances. In 2018, he was selected as one of 15 artists of his generation to receive the prestigious ARTWORKS Fellowship (SNF, Athens). His debut feature animation film, *THEOX* (2017), has been screened at over 20 festivals worldwide, earning multiple awards. He also directs and creates animation and 3D art for VR projects.

THURSDAY JULY 10: 9:30am-11:15am

PANEL 10A: SUSTAINING ANIMATION: THE STATE OF PLAY IN A SMALL NATION

Papers:

Labours of Love? Women as Caregivers in Animation and Games / Dr Nichola Dobson, Edinburgh College of Art

Tim'rous Beasties? Unpicking the impact of Scotland on Women's experiences of working in the Games and Animation Industry / Dr Lynn Love, Abertay University

Mapping Scottish Animation: Training Environments and Individual Growth / Dr Calum Main, University of Edinburgh

Re: frames - A manifesto for Playfulness in Contemporary Animation Education / Dan Castro, University of Edinburgh

Labours of Love? Women as Caregivers in Animation and Games / Dr Nichola Dobson

Drawing from recent scholarship on women in the creative industries in which we (Dobson & Love) examined the role of women in leadership positions in the Scottish Creative industries, this paper will more closely examine the assumptions, both historic and contemporary, of women in these industries. The lack of women leaders in animation specifically is not new and has been discussed variously across both scholarship (Kennedy-Parr, S. (2020), Smith, S., Choueiti, M., Pieper, K., and Clark, H. (2019), Gadassik, A (2021) and industry interventions (Women in Animation, Animated Women UK) however, assumptions persist and the lack of women in leadership, or more specifically creative director, positions, suggests that little has changed since the mid 1990s.

This paper explores historic examples of female animators, often positioned as freelance and 'independent' and will argue, like Gadassik in 2021, that the work is independent due to circumstance (caring responsibilities) rather than choice and that assumptions that women are the 'carer's and thus the producers, places them in 'below the line, invisible labour jobs. What is assumed to be creative freedom is actually a lack of freedom either by assigned production roles within companies or barriers to entry to anything other than freelance practice.

This historic view, will be combined with contemporary data which will consider the increase in women in the animation classroom with where these students end up working as they move through their careers. By connecting through the panel, this paper will argue that our educational approaches and situating of labour historically might have the potential to re-address the invisibility of women in lead creative roles as we educate the next generation.

Dr Nichola Dobson is a Senior Lecturer in Animation at Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh. Founding editor of *Animation Studies* (2006 - 2011) and *Animation Studies 2.0* (2012- present), she has published on animation, television genre and fan fiction, including *Norman McLaren: Between the Frames* (2018) for Bloomsbury and *Historical Dictionary of Animation and Cartoons, Volume 2* (2020) for Scarecrow Press. She is currently working on the *Routledge Companion to Animation* with Paul Taberham. She was President of the Society for Animation Studies between 2015 and 2019. She is currently the Director of the Animation Research Network Scotland.

Tim'rous Beasties? Unpicking the impact of Scotland on Women's experiences of working in the Games and Animation Industry / Dr Lynn Love

In the UK, there are a wealth of initiatives and organisations working towards supporting and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in video games and animation production. However, there is a lack of women in leadership positions across games and animation (Kennedy-Parr, 2020; Laffa 2023) and that overall, women are under-represented in video games development (Women in Games, n.d.). This is not a new issue, with gender inequality permeating both industries since their inception. Whilst there are studies into gender in the creative industries (e.g. Dent 2020) or focussed on specific geographies or disciplines (Heller, 2018; Bailey et al 2021), there is limited work that seeks to compare practices across games and animation and to situate it geographically.

This paper examines the lived experiences of women working in Scotland within animation and video games, drawing from a qualitative interview data set made up of industry professionals. The data set provides insight into educational background, career development journey and impact of gender and industry culture on women working in games and animation in Scotland. The paper will interrogate these insights through a

Scottish lens to understand the ways in which education, studio scale and structures, the rise of remote working opportunities, freelance opportunities and Scottish national pride have shaped the experiences of and potential futures of women working in these creative industries. We also reflect on the initiatives available to support women and in turn, the personal cost to women working in Scotland (and internationally) in trying to shift cultures to improve EDI.

The paper seeks to contribute to the larger conversation around gender equality in Animation and video games by contributing a Scottish perspective that unpicks the impact not only of gender but also location, the resulting industrial structures and a fierce sense of national pride on talent and career development in the creative industries in Scotland.

Dr. Lynn Love is a Senior Lecturer in Computer Arts at Abertay University, a game designer and a member of the Royal Society of Edinburgh's Young Academy of Scotland. As part of Abertay Game Lab, she creates analogue, hybrid and digital experiences that examine the use of play to bring people together and has exhibited work at DiGRA, CHI, BBC Click Live, V&A Dundee and Edinburgh International Fringe. Lynn is a co-investigator on UKRI CO-STAR National Lab and Horizon GAME-ER project, is a director of Now Play This and an associate of Play:Disrupt.

Mapping Scottish Animation: Training Environments and Individual Growth / Dr Calum Main

There is a necessary collaborative relationship required between the Animation industry and educational bodies to sustain a healthy and creative sector. Over the past twenty years, this partnership has often been strained due to changes in both academic and industry environments, each facing their own challenges. A lack of consistency in this relationship has created barriers for students attempting to navigate development pathways. The result is a perceived widening skills gap, difficulty in transition from education to professional roles and tension between industry and academia. Addressing these challenges is vital for ensuring a better relationship between stakeholders and developing a resilient, future facing workforce in Scotland.

Exploring this research through a rhizomatic methodological approach, this paper investigates Scottish industry and education, focusing on how their collaboration can be strengthened to create a training environment fostering development of a creative mindset required for contemporary animation practice. Through stakeholder perspectives and interdisciplinary insights drawn from sporting domains, this research allows for the establishment of macro and micro level development environments, creating a data map that visualises Scottish animation as well as understanding the responsibilities each stakeholder has within an individual's development.

Once the infrastructural propositions have been addressed, it allows education the space to propose strategies, expanding traditional educational approaches into more contemporary practices. It advocates a shift from a predominantly technical focus to a more holistic approach that emphasises a resilient and growth mindset required for the demands of the modern day animation industry. Leading into Castro's playful work, developing an individual's mindset prepares students for the diversity animation offers as a medium as well as adapting to the ever-changing industry needs. Through this paper, a framework will be proposed to help sustain pedagogical evolution in the animation field and contribute to a more cohesive relationship between academia and industry.

Dr Calum Main is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in XR Technologies at The University of Edinburgh. He is a practice-based researcher, currently working within the CoStar RealTime Lab, with interests in how new immersive technologies impact more traditional methods of working such as virtual production pipelines working with stop-motion workflows. His doctorate focused on training environments and improving development pathways for individuals looking to transition from education into professional roles and is keen to develop further research in this area. He is currently co-director of Animation Research Network Scotland and on the Education Committee of Animation Scotland.

Re: frames - A manifesto for Playfulness in Contemporary Animation Education / Dan Castro

Like humans and bananas, animation shares a surprising amount of its DNA with play. Animation was born out of playing with its contemporary art forms (Power, 2012); play and animation both require us to suspend our disbelief; they are both 'metacommunicative'. Playfulness is the cognitive engine which drives creativity, and animation is a notably creative, playful medium. But are we promoting – or indeed, teaching - playfulness in animation Higher Education?

Seeking to address the gap in literature that combines playfulness and animation practice and education, this paper argues that playful learning (Nørgård et al., 2017; Whitton, 2022), and (re)learning how to be playful, are

integral to contemporary animation practice and pedagogy. By combining theoretical, contextual and practice-research, the paper introduces the concept of ‘plork’ (Kent and Steward, 1992) – play/work – through the lens of a practicing animator and animation teacher, interrogating the ways in which play and playfulness might be summoned and put to work in both the independent animation studio, and HE classroom.

In connection to Main’s paper, this paper considers the mindsets adopted and encouraged by the animation institution, industry and individual. Whilst it might seem that playfulness comes naturally, De Koven (2014; 2016) argues playfulness is a choice. Further, he continues, it is not that we choose to be playful – it is that we inhibit our playful selves by choosing not to. Humans are playful by default; we just talk ourselves out of it, through embarrassment, habit, or perceived financial or educational necessity. But playfulness can be changed, cultivated and developed by “deliberate intervention” (Proyer et al., 2021). This paper seeks to contribute to the wider conversation around creative practice and playful learning in animation – and arts - Higher Education, advocating for plork as a framework to empower animators, animators-in-training and animation pedagogues to give themselves “permission to play” (Walsh, 2019). In doing so, we might reframe plork as a legitimate, necessary, but unexplored way of making and teaching animation today.

Dan Castro is an award-winning animator, researcher, and Lecturer in Animation at the University of Edinburgh. He makes colourful, playful work with a focus on personal narratives and play, and loves stories about Big Things told in small ways. His PhD research advocates for plork - the cultivation and conscious engagement with playfulness - as a way of making, teaching, and thinking about creative practice. He is also quite tall.

THURSDAY JULY 10: 9:30am-11:15am
PANEL 10B: TELEVISION AND ONLINE ANIMATION

Papers:

Corporate Cartoon Counter-Cultures: Remixing Hanna-Barbera on Cartoon Network UK / Sam Summers, Middlesex University

Sustained Series: Interrogating *The Magic School Bus*'s Brand Identity, Sustainability, and Legacy /

Michael J. Meindl, Radford University; and Matthew Wisnioski, Virginia Tech

Well, it's Virtual... Dimensionality, Deleuze and *The Amazing Digital Circus* / Aaron Borok, Trent University

Corporate Cartoon Counter-Cultures: Remixing Hanna-Barbera on Cartoon Network UK / Sam Summers

Beginning in the 1990s, a trend emerged of the Hanna-Barbera brand and characters, most commonly (albeit not exclusively) associated with children's entertainment, being repurposed to produce content for mixed and explicitly adult audiences with an anarchic, postmodern approach. Included in this are *Space Ghost: Coast to Coast* and *Sealab 2021*, as well as a run of short commercials, stings and bumpers played in-between regular shows. In many ways, however, the most comprehensive and radical remixing of the Hanna-Barbera library took place on Cartoon Network UK's evening slot, entitled AKA. As part of a block featuring many of the aforementioned shows and segments, AKA featured a specially-created show known as *AKA Cult Toons*, produced in the UK, which utilised the collage-like visual and aural syntax of sample-based hip hop music to mash up classic Hanna-Barbera episodes with clips from blaxploitation and kung fu films, kitsch sitcoms, hip hop performances, and other, disconnected Hanna-Barbera shows.

This paper will look at the creative and industrial genesis of *AKA Cult Toons* in the context of the broader adult-oriented recontextualization of Hanna-Barbera's library taking place at the turn of the millennium, and as a British reappropriation of an American cultural institution perpetrated by workers labouring outside of the direct oversight of their corporate employers. It will examine the meaning and humour created through the incongruous juxtaposition of tonally and aesthetically disparate source material, and highlight the ways in which this corporate-sanctioned remix somewhat paradoxically prefigured the irreverent attitude towards comedy and intellectual property exemplified by contemporary internet mash-up and meme culture.

Sam Summers is the programme leader for BA Animation at Middlesex University. His research focusses on the history of animation aesthetics, and the intersections between animation and other cultural forms. In addition to writing a range of articles and chapters on these subjects, he is the author of *DreamWorks Animation: Intertextuality and Aesthetics in Shrek & Beyond*, the co-host of the *Disniversity* podcast, and a contributor to Blu-ray releases from the BFI and Eureka.

Sustained Series: Interrogating *The Magic School Bus*'s Brand Identity, Sustainability, and Legacy /

Michael J. Meindl and Matthew Wisnioski

The mid-1990s saw the release of one of the most iconic public science initiatives in the United States: *The Magic School Bus* (MSB) animated television series. Based on the books by Joanna Cole (author) and Bruce Degen (illustrator), and a result of public-private partnerships, *MSB* focused on the eccentric teacher Ms. Frizzle and her multicultural class, who would take field trips to various locations, including space and the human body. The series was an initial attempt at a wide-scale "branding initiative" by Scholastic. Acting as an example of "useful animation" (Cook et al., 2023), *MSB*'s creators embraced the medium of animation, as well as the broader world of multimedia and synergy, to create a show that ended up being successful and that continues to have an impact on audiences today.

In this presentation, we draw on archival sources and extensive oral history interviews to examine the legacy of *MSB*, as well as compare its own sustainability to other science series. We also consider the term "sustainability" and the different ways we can frame the sustainability of a TV series. We look at the role *MSB* had as a risky "brand initiative" for Scholastic, and how the company's desire to turn the series into a multimedia/multi-pronged enterprise set the show (and entire brand) up to have staying power, though it had many challenges to overcome in the pursuit of its goals. We also consider the show's approach to integrating entertainment, narrative, and scientific content as a factor in its longevity. While we focus on *MSB*, we also compare the show to other educational and/or scientific television series, such as *Sesame St.* and *3-2-1 Contact*. *MSB* was a site of collaboration between "scientific storytellers" (Ockert, 2018), including private and public entities, as well as individual units within those organizations. Its success and longevity were not

necessarily guaranteed (and the show only had four seasons), but, through various decisions and negotiations, it ended up being a truly sustainable series in regard to its legacy.

Michael J. Meindl is an associate professor of media production at Radford University (Virginia, USA). He also serves as the director of the Cinema and Screen Studies program. He has an MFA in dramatic media and is currently ABD in the Dept. of Science, Technology, and Society at Virginia Tech. His research focuses on the intersection of science, technology, and animation. He has presented at numerous national and international conferences. He acts as the chair of the Science, Technology, and Animation special interest group for SAS. He has published an essay exploring the representation of science in *Jaws* and *Mythbusters* and has a soon-to-be-published co-authored piece looking at satire and the media industry in *X-Men: The Animated Series*.

Matthew Wisnioski is an associate professor of Science, Technology, and Society at Virginia Tech. He is the author of the forthcoming MIT Press book *Every American an Innovator: How Innovation Became a Way of Life* which traces the expansion of innovation culture from elite experts to kindergarteners, documenting how and why the relentless pursuit of innovation has transformed our society, our institutions, and our inner selves. An advocate of “critical participation,” he also has collaborated in engineering education reform and transdisciplinary art and technology initiatives.

Well, it’s Virtual... Dimensionality, Deleuze and *The Amazing Digital Circus* / Aaron Borok

The Amazing Digital Circus is an ongoing animated web series, independently produced by Australian-based studio, Glitch Productions. Pitched as an adult dark comedy based on Computer games of the 1990s, the series creator, Gooseworx has described her inspirations as “*I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream* with the aesthetic of an *I Spy* book.” The show revolves around human-turned-jester Pomni (Russian for “remember”) and her fellow cast of humans inexorably trapped inside cartoonish bodies in a colorful virtual reality game, being forced by its wacky unwitting AI, Caine, to constantly participate in “wild adventures” and slowly acclimate to their new lives together. Since its debut on Youtube in October of 2023, the series has gained a massive following and has been lauded for its existential comedy, characters and unique blend of 2D cartoon aesthetics in 3D animation. In this paper, I argue that both the unique aesthetics of *The Amazing Digital Circus*, along with its existential themes of being trapped within a digital world, implies a great deal on our conceptions of dimensionality and “the virtual.”

In his book *Dialogues*, Gilles Deleuze describes “memory [as] a virtual image contemporary with the actual object, its double, its mirror image” (150). In other words, the Virtual is in constant relationship with what can be described as the Actual, despite it might not “actually” existing in physical space. For the denizens of *The Amazing Digital Circus*, they are invariably blended in with the virtual, and through their memories both lost and remembered, are trapped in this in-between.

There is also a similar coexistence with dimension and depth in film and animation. Thomas Lamarre in his book *The Anime Machine*, describes the dichotomy between cinematism and animetism as “movement into depth, [versus] movement on and between surfaces.” While Lamarre explains this as differing forms of movement in cel animation, I argue that *The Amazing Digital Circus*, along with other contemporary 3D animated works, attempts to instead conceal its 3rd dimensionality through “cartoony” animation techniques, rather than how a cel-animated film may attempt to conceal its 2-dimensionality. In this paper, I hope to provide ample evidence that this play with aesthetic dimensionality operates in tandem with the play with virtuality that is in *The Amazing Digital Circus*.

Aaron Borok is a graduate student of Cultural Studies in the PhD program at Trent University. They have a Master’s Degree in English from the State University of New York at Buffalo, along with a Bachelor’s in Sociology and Anthropology, with a minor in Film Studies from the State University of New York at Buffalo State. Aaron has a dedicated interest in the fields of animation studies, film theory and criticism, critical theory, cultural studies and Deleuze studies.

THURSDAY JULY 10: 9:30am-11:15am
PANEL 10C: EXPERIMENTAL PRACTICE 1

Papers:

What we Do with the Shadows: An Auto-Ethnographic Exploration of the Practice of Pinscreen Animation /
 Diek Grobler, Independent Scholar

Grounding Full-dome Animation: Tensions Across Material and Virtual Space / Dr. Timothy Jones, Robert
 Morris University

About Animation as a Medium of Absence / Katarzyna Żmuda, SWPS University of the Humanities and Social
 Sciences

***The Endless Mile* /** Johannes DeYoung, Carnegie Mellon University

What we Do with the Shadows: An Auto-Ethnographic Exploration of the Practice of Pinscreen Animation / Diek Grobler

The pinscreen is an enigmatic animation device created by Alexander Alexeïeff and Claire Parker in 1932 to create animations that would look like engravings (Bendazzi, 2016:141). The medium is notoriously time consuming, difficult to execute, and expensive. In 2015 French engineer Alexander Noyer built a new generation pinscreen, initially out of curiosity but ultimately to 'democratise' the instrument. There has since been a small-scale revival of the medium, with the number of artists expressing themselves with the pinscreen rising from 3 to more than 10.

In this paper I will explore the embodied experience of the pinscreen animation process from the point of view of the handful of practitioners working in the medium. Due to the small number of artists intimately familiar with the pinscreen I need a research approach "that acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity, emotionality, and the researcher's influence on research" (Ellis et al., 2011:2), leading me to explore ethnography and auto-ethnography. Alexeïeff, said of technique and the pinscreen: "There is a relationship between the technique and the way an individual creates; whoever wants to express himself and think in his [sic] own way must find personal techniques" (Alexeïeff in Bertherat, 2016:11). I will introduce the instrument by presenting the observations on its use of Alexander Alexeïeff, Jaques Drouin and Michelle Lemieux, as documented by Bendazzi (2016, 2021), Vincent (2024) and others.

I will juxtapose the experience of these three definitive artists of the pinscreen with the response of a new generation of pinscreen artists. I will use personal interviews to investigate the relationship between artist and instrument, and how working with the instrument influenced the artists' approach to animation production. My own experience of the screen, and how it influences my approach to production and understanding of animation as a medium, will be presented in conclusion.

Diek Grobler is a multi-media and multi-disciplinary artist and has been working with animation for 24 years. His films have travelled widely on the international festival circuit. Diek Grobler's animation is hand-crafted, and his techniques include hand drawn animation, kinesthetic animation, digital cut-out and pinscreen animation. He holds a PhD in Art from the University of South Africa; thesis topic – Narrative strategies in animated poetry-film. He is a practicing film maker, researcher and MA supervisor at the Open Window University, Zambia. Diek Grobler lives and works in Pretoria, South Africa.

Grounding Full-dome Animation: Tensions Across Material and Virtual Space / Dr. Timothy Jones

The ground in full-dome animation serves an essential yet easily overlooked function as the literal foundation for 360-degree projected environments. This paper explores how an animated horizon or surface is not only a compositional device but also a conceptual boundary, highlighting the capacity of full-dome animation to sustain the sensation of presence while navigating the complex interaction between material and virtual space. By considering a range of full-dome practices - educational documentary, art installation, as well as spectacular entertainment - I assess how the ground, whether visible or implied, on- or off-screen, influences audience perception, immersion, and the relationship between animated worlds and lived realities.

In parallel, this paper engages full-dome practice where traditional boundaries of animation are increasingly contested. Across diverse institutional settings, full-dome animation often comes with both audience engagement and distinct calls to action, turning the ground into a site of instruction, persuasion, and speculative thinking. Through these practices, I emphasize how animation sustains itself as a vehicle for social, and environmental change. However full-dome is far from an ideal vehicle for such critique. Animation continues to blur boundaries between human expression and ever more complex technological apparatus,

where the surprising resilience of hand-drawn aesthetics in full-dome serves as a key counterpoint to the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and real-time procedural generation. Tensions between material and virtual, human and algorithmic creative output, reflect unresolved questions for immersive animation concerning authenticity, attribution, economic justice, and environmental impact.

In full-dome, the boundary between earth, floor, and sky is manipulated to simulate recognizable architectural or landscape settings, even infinite space. This highlights the capacity to both ground the viewer in the real while simultaneously situating them within a constructed environment. It reflects on how boundaries are constructed, spatial relationships are mediated, and ultimately both animated worlds and practices may be sustained.

Dr. Timothy Jones is Associate Professor and Director of the Academic Media Center at Robert Morris University. His research interests include animation production culture, inclusive education, and immersion. His work appears in *Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, *Animation and Advertising*, *Animation Practice*, *Process & Production*, *Animation Studies Journal*, and *Reconceptualising Film Policies*. He is treasurer of the Society for Animation Studies and co-hosts the *Spirited Animation* podcast.

About Animation as a Medium of Absence / Katarzyna Żmuda

“Animation as a medium of absence” is a concept of how to look at mainstream animation, taking into account its relationship with absent elements. In order to explain this concept, I first divide it into three elements, which I discuss, before combining them again and presenting their coexistence.

1. Animation

The various ways of defining animation are linked to the history of cinema and the film market. For the most part, they center around films whose defining feature is the recording of movement. Animation has been marginalized and relegated to the background, a side track of cinema history. The language used to define and talk about animation is an apt example of this.

2. Medium

I consider the elements that are absent from the animation medium to be its most distinctive features, the ones that most strongly define its peculiarity. The absence of a physical camera, the voice of an absent actor being a trace of his presence or the absence of randomness are the building blocks of the animation medium, influencing the processes of its creation, reception, analysis and understanding.

3. Absence

From the perspective of Derrida, Heidegger and Husserl, absence appears as a trace of a presence that is currently beyond the reach of our perception. An empty chair can simply be an empty chair, but it can also indicate the absence of a family member who is no longer there. Absence carries a message that can be pointed out and analyzed by making an attempt to understand it.

The coexistence of the three elements set out above implies a certain way of looking at animation. This is considering the three layers that co-create a self-contained medium, of which absences are one of the materials.

Katarzyna Żmuda is a PhD student in the Science of Culture and Religion at SWPS University of the Humanities and Social Sciences, Warsaw, Poland. She specializes in animation. Both of her previous theses, a bachelor's and master's degree, are related to animation: the absence of chance in computer animation and the four elements depicted in animation. She has a strong focus on popularizing animation in general: she speaks at numerous cultural meetings introducing issues related to animated film; coordinates the animation block at the Copernicon Festival; works on bringing the currents of posthumanism closer through animation.

***The Endless Mile* / Johannes DeYoung**

This presentation explores the historical and theoretical underpinnings of “The Endless Mile”, an animated computational artwork that takes the form of a non-repeating and infinitely scrolling shadow play. As a computational artwork, “The Endless Mile” affords interaction and interpretation by sound artists, live performance, and/or ambient audience interaction. Each time the artwork is presented, new arrangements of visual and audio elements are assembled in unique combination. When presented as live performance, elements within the work “listen” for sound-input and kinetically respond to audio frequencies, enabling the artwork to be performed live in collaboration with sound artists or musicians. Given the artwork’s computational affordances, its presentation format and duration are both adaptable.

The fulcrum of this project considers contemporary computational media affordances in relation to pre-cinematic forms of shadow theater and panoramic displays, as well as in relation to the Expanded Cinema

forms of mid-twentieth century neo-avant-garde artists. Looking to historical examples of the scroll, I observe rich and various instances of its mediated panoramas in the service of constructive social relations. I am interested to explore such socially binding experiences through mediated affordances that resist the alienating potentials of contemporary technologies. The prospects for advanced technologies to further hybridize and dissolve silos across media forms present opportunities for people to reevaluate their relationships to the world, unfix perspectives, and experience the world (and each other) with new and enlivened sensitivities. Documentation of the work is available at: <https://vimeo.com/1016207812/5d7b814915?share=copy>

Johannes DeYoung is a multidisciplinary artist who works at the intersection of computational and material processes. His works have been exhibited internationally at venues such as: Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Alicante, Alicante, Spain; Festival ECRÃ, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung, Taiwan; B3 Biennale of the Moving Image, Frankfurt en Main, Germany; Hesse Flatow (Crush Curatorial), Jeff Bailey Gallery, Robert Miller Gallery, Interstate Projects, Eyebeam, and MoMA PS1 Print Studio, New York, NY; as well as numerous festival screenings in countries such as Australia, Greece, Ireland, New Zealand, Turkey, and Vietnam. His work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *The New York Post*, *The Huffington Post*, and *Dossier Journal*. DeYoung is appointed Associate Professor of Electronic and Time-Based Media at Carnegie Mellon University. He previously taught at Yale University School of Art (2008—2018), where he was appointed Senior Critic and Director of the Center for Collaborative Arts and Media, and at the Yale School of Drama, where he was appointed Lecturer in Design.

THURSDAY JULY 10: 11:45am-1:30pm

PANEL 11A: (UN)EXPLAINABLE AI: CREATIVE TECH BETWEEN ARTISTIC AND AMATEUR PRACTICES

Papers:

Artistic Practices as AI Research: Animation, AI, and the Aesthetics of Seriality / Dr. Nea Ehrlich, BGU and UPC, Spain

AI Animation as Anyanimation: Amateur Aesthetics and Tech Demo(cracy) / Jun. Prof. Dr. Julia Eckel, Paderborn University

Explainable AI in Archival Research / Dr. Erwin Feyersinger, University of Tübingen

Abstract Animation with Generative AI in Higher Education / Max Hattler, City University of Hong Kong

Artistic Practices as AI Research: Animation, AI, and the Aesthetics of Seriality / Dr Nea Ehrlich

Animation is an essential epistemic visual language (Leslie/McKim 2017), central to digital culture and a graphic user interface (GUI) that visualizes code (Ehrlich 2021). As such, researching what animation reveals about AI's underlying algorithms provides a valuable lens to explore AI through its visual culture. Animation, as a mode of mediating media, offers unique epistemological insights into the processes of Artificial Neural Networks, Machine Learning, and their reliance on datasets of moving imagery. This presentation examines animation as a form of "mediating media" (McKim), exploring its role in bridging human understanding and technological systems. I argue that animation functions as a heuristic tool to explain AI processes that are otherwise abstract or opaque through critical artworks that engage with AI both as a tool and topic. By analyzing AI-generated animated imagery I will demonstrate how animation principles—such as morphing and seriality—are embedded in AI's operational logic while using glitches and existing discrepancies to explore the biases inherent in AI data sets, and the many cultural issues these data-sets now raise. The presentation considers how artistic practices, particularly those using animation aesthetics, contribute to the discourse of Explainable AI by rendering complex machine processes visually comprehensible and culturally relevant.

Dr. Nea Ehrlich is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Arts at BGU and a Visiting Scholar at UPC in Spain. Her book, *Animating Truth*, on animated documentary in the 21st Century won the Norman McLaren/Evelyn Lambart Award for Best Scholarly Monograph by the SAS. Her Co-edited book, *Drawn from Life*, was Runner-Up for Best Edited Collection 2020 by BAFTSS Awards. She completed her PhD in the Department of Art History at the University of Edinburgh and was a Polonsky postdoctoral fellow at Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. She is currently working on art and robotics, AI and artificial aesthetics.

AI Animation as Anyanimation: Amateur Aesthetics and Tech Demo(cracy) / Jun. Prof. Dr. Julia Eckel

The development of current generative AI tools is accompanied by the promise that these tools will allow anyone to become creatively active in a matter of seconds – even, or especially, in fields that were previously accessible only to a relatively small group of trained and qualified professionals, such as animation production. The debates here range from fear of loss to euphoria, mapping a terrain that concerns questions of human and/vs. technological artistic agency (e.g. Amidi 2024, He 2024). This paper aims to trace these developments by examining the discourse surrounding GenAI in the field of moving images, with a particular focus on tech demos and tutorials as two forms of media of (un)explained AI. Furthermore, it seeks to contextualise these discourses and narratives historically, linking them to concepts of "Anyanimation" (e.g. Jantol 2007, Hartmann 2012) and (film) amateurism, the latter in particular raising questions about the sustainable documentation and preservation of current, early AI animation amateur practices.

The development of current generative AI tools is accompanied by the promise that these tools will allow anyone to become creatively active in a matter of seconds – even, or especially, in fields that were previously accessible only to a relatively small group of trained and qualified professionals, such as animation production. The debates here range from fear of loss to euphoria, mapping a terrain that concerns questions of human and/vs. technological artistic agency (e.g. Amidi 2024, He 2024). This paper aims to trace these developments by examining the discourse surrounding GenAI in the field of moving images, with a particular focus on tech demos and tutorials as two forms of media of (un)explained AI. Furthermore, it seeks to contextualise these discourses and narratives historically, linking them to concepts of "Anyanimation" (e.g. Jantol 2007, Hartmann 2012) and (film) amateurism, the latter in particular raising questions about the sustainable documentation and preservation of current, early AI animation amateur practices.

Explainable AI in Archival Research / Dr. Erwin Feyersinger

AI is increasingly used in film archives for automated tasks such as object detection and text transcription. Such uses affect animation scholars both in their archival and analytical research. For example, computer vision methods might facilitate finding similar stylistic features across a large corpus of animated films and can thus become a tool for distant viewing (Arnold/Tilton 2023, Chávez Heras 2024, Hasan et al. 2025). As these methods are prone to biases and mistakes, animation scholars need to understand why and how an AI algorithm has reached certain decisions. The paper explores several approaches to explainability based on work in AniVision, a digital humanities project that studies animated sequences in ephemeral films from East Germany, West Germany, and Austria during the Cold War period with the help of computer vision.

Dr. Erwin Feyersinger is a postdoc in the Department of Media Studies and co-director of the Research Center for Animation and Emerging Media at the University of Tübingen. His current research focuses on animation, artificial intelligence, data visualization, and science communication from semiotic, cognitive, and narratological perspectives. He is one of the unit heads of the university's Center for Rhetorical Science Communication Research on Artificial Intelligence (RHET AI) and one of the PIs of the research project AniVision – Animation in Ephemeral Films from Austria, East & West Germany between 1945 and 1989: A Combined Film Analysis and Computer Vision Approach.

Abstract Animation with Generative AI in Higher Education / Max Hattler

This paper presents the findings of the Teaching Development Grant project Abstract Animation with Generative AI, which integrates generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools into the course Abstract and Experimental Animation at City University of Hong Kong. The project investigates the pedagogical potential of generative AI in fostering creativity and interdisciplinary research in abstract animation. By employing tools such as Midjourney and Adobe Firefly for image generation, students created abstract animation films through playful artistic exploration. The project emphasizes AI's role as a creative collaborator, challenging students to harness these tools without undermining their own creativity. The study adopts a discovery-led learning approach, encouraging students to experiment with generative AI while addressing challenges surrounding originality, authorship, and the implications of AI on creative industries. Participants produced a number of abstract animation films, which were showcased in public screenings and submitted to international film festivals. The project revealed that the integration of AI tools enhances students' technical and creative skills, promotes interdisciplinary collaboration, and motivates them to think as artist-researchers contributing to the global experimental media arts field. AI-driven workflows, when guided by critical and reflective pedagogy, can expand the boundaries of abstract and experimental animation, offering students transferable skills relevant to both artistic practice and the animation industry. This paper contributes to the discourse on AI in creative education, emphasizing its role in shaping future-proof artistic practices.

Max Hattler is an artist, researcher, curator and educator who works with abstract, experimental and expanded animation, and audiovisual performance. After studying at Goldsmiths and the Royal College of Art he completed a doctorate in fine art at the University of East London. He is a tenured Associate Professor at the School of Creative Media at City University of Hong Kong. His work has been shown worldwide and has received prizes from Annecy Animation Festival, Prix Ars Electronica, Punto y Raya Festival, Cannes Lions and London International Animation Festival, among others.

THURSDAY JULY 10: 11:45am-1:30pm

PANEL 11B: ETHNOGRAPHIC AND AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ANIMATION

Papers:

Drawing the Riots: Animation Practice as Self-Expression and Social/Political critique / Susan Young, Independent Scholar

Crafting Socio-Political Discourse: The Material Power of Stop-Motion Animation in Alain Ughetto's Autobiographical Film *Manodopera* / Vincenzo Maselli, Sapienza University of Rome

Self-Representation and Feminist Aesthetics in Animated Short Films Made by Women in Brazil: "O Projeto do Meu Pai" and "Guaxuma" / Laryssa Moreira Prado, Institute of Arts of the State University of Campinas

The Handmade and the Analogue in Animated Autobiographies: More than an Aesthetic Question / Agathe Pias, Universitat Politècnica de València

Drawing the Riots: Animation Practice as Self-Expression and Social/Political critique / Susan Young

Incorporating film clips, personal archives, and newspaper references, this presentation explores my first experience of creating animation, and discovery that the medium can be used to both explore subjective experiences and emotions, and comment on politics and issues of social justice.

As a student at Liverpool Polytechnic in 1981, I was intrigued by tutor Ray Fields's proposition that animation incorporates both feeling and thinking, and multiple art forms such as drawing, painting, and sculpture, extended into time and space (Fields, 1988). At the time I was struggling with mental health issues and seriously contemplating dropping out of college, but Ray's description of animation inspired me. I decided to continue my studies when, during the summer of '81, the area I lived in (Liverpool 8), was engulfed by an uprising triggered by racism and police brutality, exacerbated by long-standing socio-economic issues. Appalled at both the stigmatisation of my area in national press coverage (Butler, 2019), and riot control tactics that caused a police van to run over and kill a disabled man, I started making *Thin Blue Lines*, a film that combines drawn observations of the riots and their aftermath, with animated expressions of my feelings about these events, which changed as I was making the film. On discovering that the filmmaking process itself felt meditative and seemed to assist my mental health, I decided to become an animator, and have continued to use the medium to explore both socio-political and personal mental health issues. This has culminated in my recent doctoral research into how animation can be used to both metabolise trauma, and challenge the othering and stigmatisation often experienced by survivors of the mental health system, which I summarise during this presentation (Young 2023).

Susan Young is a BAFTA-nominated animation director based in London. Carnival, her Royal College of Art graduation film, features the fluid, dynamic line that defines her commercial work, which includes *Beleza Tropical* for musician David Byrne, *Jimi Hendrix: Fire*, and award-winning commercials and titles. After developing post-traumatic stress disorder and an overwork-related hand injury, which together prevented her from animating for many years, Susan became fascinated by animation's capacity to metabolise, or process, psychological trauma. Her 2023 practice-based PhD exploring this subject has recently been commissioned as a research methods text for Routledge.

Crafting Socio-Political Discourse: The Material Power of Stop-Motion Animation in Alain Ughetto's Autobiographical Film *Manodopera* / Vincenzo Maselli

Alain Ughetto's animated film *Manodopera* (2022) stands as a remarkable example of how stop-motion animation can serve as a bridge between creative practice and socio-political discourse, by crafting a deeply personal yet universally resonant story (MacKinnon 2019) that blend the filmmaker's own family history with broader social and political themes.

In *Manodopera*, the autobiographical and historical element is not merely a backdrop but is intricately woven into the very fabric of the film through a self-reflexive narrative approach (Wells 2002, Lindvall and Melton 2009). This self-reflexivity is central to the film's storytelling, as it reinforces the pervasiveness of the great migratory movements of the early 1900s depicted by the filmmaker and their connection to his family's history. Sets, props and characters, meticulously crafted, evoke a tactile sense of memory and history, making the past palpable and the denounced socio-political injustices real (Barker 2009).

By examining the directorial, narrative and material choices performed by Ughetto, this contribution stresses stop-motion materiality's effectiveness in depicting historical narratives and driving social messages. The

tangible reality performed by materials is a narrative device connecting the viewer to the physicality of the characters' world, thereby deepening the emotional impact of the story (Maselli 2019). Furthermore, the film's exploration of spatiality strengthens the connection between stop-motion and historical narratives. The manipulation of the detailed miniature sets reflects the changes in the socio-economic conditions experienced by the characters. Through this, Ughetto effectively portrays the passage of time and the impact of historical forces on individual lives.

In conclusion, *Manodopera* will be investigated as a case study for underlining the power of stop-motion animation to convey social and political messages, using the materiality of the medium to create a multilayered experience, and the film's self-reflexive approach to amplify the connection between memory, social issues and the passage of time.

Vincenzo Maselli is a motion designer and assistant professor in multimedia design at the Sapienza University of Rome. His research focuses on motion design teaching approaches and materiality in stop motion animation. On these topics he has authored several publications, including the books *Design Moving Images* (Bordeauxedizioni, 2023), *Anatomy of a Puppet: Design Driven Categories for Animated Puppets' Skin* (FrancoAngeli, 2020) and the article 'Performance of puppets' skin material: The metadiegetic narrative level of animated puppets' material surface' (2019), which received the Norman McLaren-Evelyn Lambart Award in 2020.

Self-Representation and Feminist Aesthetics in Animated Short Films Made by Women in Brazil: "O Projeto do Meu Pai" and "Guaxuma" / Laryssa Moreira Prado

This analysis focuses on two independent animated short films by Brazilian filmmakers, through the lens of self-representation and feminist aesthetics: "O Projeto do Meu Pai" (2016), by Rosaria, and "Guaxuma" (2018), by Nara Normande.

In Brazil, short films are often dismissed as subjects of academic study, largely because they are perceived as having less political, historical, and social significance. This situation is further complicated when the focus is limited to animated productions, particularly those created by women. "However (and perhaps because of this), it is in short films that women had (and still have today) more space for production" (Guerra, 2024, p.20). In "O Projeto do Meu Pai and Guaxuma", the filmmakers explore events from their own lives, using their voice, the representation of their body and their image, and creative expressions as tools for storytelling and for developing a sense of subjectivity and intimacy (Teixeira, 2021). When given the freedom to create outside the constraints of commercial markets, Rosaria and Nara chose to tell deeply personal stories. As Ann Kaplan (1983) observes, in independent, experimental, and documentary cinema, women assert themselves as subjects of discourse. In animation, it is the independent production process itself that allows for the exploration of personal vision with greater intensity (Pilling, 1992).

With that being said, I base my argument on the hypothesis that, without adopting an explicitly feminist approach, both films present a feminist aesthetic through self-representation, engaging with themes such as identity construction, male social privilege, parental abandonment, and sexual diversity.

Laryssa Moreira Prado is a PhD student in the Multimeios Postgraduate Program at the Institute of Arts of the State University of Campinas (IA/Unicamp) and a scholarship holder from the CAPES. With a Master's degree in Communication and Society from the Postgraduate Program at the Federal University of Juiz de Fora (PPGCOM/UFJF), she holds a Bachelor's degree in Social Communication from the same institution (2015). Her research focuses on Brazilian Animation, exploring issues of gender and difference, with a particular emphasis on works created by women. She is a cofounder of the Brazilian Animation and a member of the Movimento Mulher Anima.

The Handmade and the Analogue in Animated Autobiographies: More than an Aesthetic Question / Agathe Pias

The doctoral thesis we are developing proposes an investigation into the use of animation as a non-textual narrative resource for autobiographical narratives. It puts forward the idea that animated autobiographies have their own characteristics and multiple expressive possibilities that make them a powerful tool for transmitting a subjectivity that is difficult to describe. The comparative analysis of certain aesthetic and/or visual features of the films that compose our film sample reveals the existence of points in common, among which the one that will interest us in this essay stands out: the characteristics and functions of handmade and analogue archive material in contemporary animated autobiographies. We find that, in addition to echoing the purpose of the film, their use is often seen as a vindication of the craft as opposed to the industrial and gives the footage a

sensory, authentic and warm character that seems ideal for telling intimate stories. Thus, the identification of these functions in the context of animated autobiography is precisely what we intend to develop in our contribution. To do so, we will rely on the detailed study of several films such as *Patchwork* (M.Manero); *Guaxuma* (N.Normande) or *No Dogs or Italians Allowed* (A.Ughetto) as well as on press dossiers, interviews with the directors and specialised articles. In addition, we will draw on relevant literature on handmade animation, authenticity, documentary animation and the relationship between analogue and digital techniques - including authors such as Carla MacKinnon, Caroline Ruddell, Paul Ward, Annabelle Honess Roe, Cristina Formenti, María Lorenzo and Sara Álvarez Sarrat. With this research we aim to explore the expressive potential of the handmade and the analogue in conveying an intimate story, exploring both the aesthetic and the narrative question and even the meaning of the footage itself.

Agathe Pias is a French artist based in Valencia (Spain). She is currently in her second year on the Doctoral Programme in Art at the Universitat Politècnica de València. She benefits from funding of the Generalitat Valenciana to carry out her thesis, whose theme revolves around autobiography in animation, and she is a collaborating lecturer in several undergraduate and master's degree subjects. She presented the papers 'Humanizing history through grandparents' stories' at the 11th International Conference on Illustration & Animation (Portugal) and "Is it true? The limits of autobiography in animated documentaries" at the 1st Seminar on Animation Studies (Spain).

THURSDAY JULY 10: 11:45am-1:30pm
PANEL 11C: SOUND/MUSIC

Papers:

The 90-Second Spectacle: Music-Driven Formula and Paratextuality in Contemporary Japanese Anime Title Sequences / Sirou Yan, Independent Scholar

Synchronizing Sound and Vision: The Dynamic Relationship Between Animation and Electronic Dance Music / Peter Chanthanakone, Zayed University in Dubai

Imperfect Fathers and Imperfect Sons in the Music of *Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio* / Lisa Scoggin, Independent Scholar

The 90-Second Spectacle: Music-Driven Formula and Paratextuality in Contemporary Japanese Anime Title Sequences / Sirou Yan

Japanese anime has evolved since the 1960s into a distinct audio-visual medium derived from manga comics. Since the 1980s, it has gained significant global attraction, largely due to its transmedia strategy—a collaborative approach involving various industries, with important synergy between the anime and music sectors. As a distinctive product, anime opening and ending title sequences encompass vocal-led popular songs that are usually crafted specifically for the series. These edited-version songs typically last around 90 seconds, following a verse-chorus pattern. Anime title sequences serve as the ‘signature’ of an anime series, sometimes even more recognisable than the series itself. However, most existing literature has ignored music’s role in this audio-visual medium. As an attempt to fill the research gap, this paper employs frame-by-frame textual analysis, drawing on narrative music and paratextuality theories, to examine the 90-second convention of selected anime title sequences. This paper reveals two key findings. First, for anime opening and ending title sequences, music serves as the driving force. It gives structure to the whole sequence and shapes the narrative flow. Second, these sequences function as paratexts and form intertextual relationships with the core text. They provide additional information and exist as the synopsis and signature of an anime, which give definite impressions and encourage spectators’ interpretation. Significantly, this study reveals that it is precisely because of anime’s unique ‘emulative’ nature that these musical sequences can successfully create specific impressions of the anime work they belong to through diverse visual expressions and non-diegetic popular songs. Even when these sequences lack diegetic sounds or feature abstract and imaginative visuals only loosely connected to the main show. The synergy between music and anime visuals plays a crucial role in sustaining its unique artistic style, consistently attracting both anime viewers and popular music audiences.

Sirou Yan holds an MMus degree from the University of Edinburgh and a BA in Popular Music from University of Liverpool. Her research focuses on Japanese anime music, particularly its functions in storytelling and its interaction with visuals and narrative. More broadly, she is interested in animation music, exploring music’s dynamic role and power relations across different animation forms, as well as its potential in meaning construction and worldbuilding within narrative frameworks.

Synchronizing Sound and Vision: The Dynamic Relationship Between Animation and Electronic Dance Music / Peter Chanthanakone

The vibrant energy of electronic dance music (EDM), with its pulsating beats, repetitive rhythms, and layered textures, creates a natural synergy with animated imagery, making it an essential element of the EDM experience. This presentation explores how animation captures and amplifies the dynamic intensity of EDM, particularly in large-scale venues like Tomorrowland and Electric Daisy Carnival (EDC). The focus is on how the rhythmic patterns and energy of EDM music guide the movement, pacing, and design of animated visuals, creating a powerful audiovisual connection. Advances in AI-driven animation further enhance this synergy, enabling the creation of high-quality, visually captivating content that seamlessly integrates with EDM’s vibrant soundscapes. By examining case studies from live performances, music videos, and event installations, we highlight how synchronized workflows and post-processing techniques elevate the responsiveness of visuals to music, creating electrifying experiences that resonate deeply with audiences.

Peter Chanthanakone is a Canadian award winning animator. His 15 computer animated short films have been selected in over 75 international juried competitions in over 30 countries, in all 5 continents. He is also a jury member for Siggraph Asia and the International Symposium of Electronic Art, officer for Society of Animation Studies, director/producer at RiFF Animation Studio in Bangkok, Thailand, visiting researcher at Chulalongkorn

University and is currently an Assistant Dean and Associate Professor in 3D Animation at Zayed University in Dubai.

Imperfect Fathers and Imperfect Sons in the Music of *Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio* / Lisa Scoggin

Most people, when they consider the story of *Pinocchio*, look not toward the original story by Carlo Collodi, but rather, the classic Disney retelling from 1940. In this version, the focus is in the growth of Pinocchio from a puppet to a real boy, with very few changes in other characters' relationships to Pinocchio.

Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio is not that film. Instead, del Toro takes the bones of Collodi's serial and adapts it to incorporate many of the themes that occur throughout the director's body of work. One of the most prominent of those themes in this film is that of the father-son relationship. Del Toro suggests here that both fathers and sons are flawed, as is their relationship; the trick is for each to accept the other for who they are. Not only does del Toro talk about this in numerous interviews, but the film's narrator, Sebastian J. Cricket, even speaks early on about the idea of "imperfect fathers and imperfect sons" with regard to Geppetto and Pinocchio (and perhaps himself). Drawing upon the work of Juan Carlos Vargas, John Kenneth Muir, and Nicholas Perella as well as interviews from del Toro and composer Alexander Desplat, this paper will examine this idea as it appears conceptually and musically throughout the film, noting particularly the primary musical themes for Pinocchio, Geppetto, and Geppetto's dead son Carlo as they relate to each character's changing attitudes.

Lisa Scoggin completed her Ph.D. in Musicology at Boston University and received degrees from Oberlin College and the University of Wisconsin – Madison. She has presented papers internationally at various conferences and is currently co-chair of the AMS Music and Media SIG. Her musicological interests include music in film, television, animation, and video games. Her published writing includes work on *Mulan* (1998), UPA, Cartoon Saloon, *Animaniacs*, and the edited collection *The Intersection of Animation, Video Games, and Music: Making Movement Sing* (Routledge, 2023). Future projects include a short history of music in American television animation in the upcoming *Oxford Handbook of Music in Television* and a textbook on music in animation.

THURSDAY JULY 10: 2:30pm-4:15pm

PANEL 12A: ANIMATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Papers:

Pragmatic Green Storytelling in Animation: Bridging Sustainable Production, Storytelling, and Aesthetics

/ Maïke Sarah Reinerth, Independent Scholar

When Believability and Realism Become Primary Causes of Digital Animated Worlds' Environmental

Footprint / Cristina Formenti, University of Groningen

Towards Sustainability in Stop-Motion Animation: From Production to Preservation / Olive M. Gingrich,

University of Greenwich; Min Young Oh, University of Greenwich; and Chris Pallant, University of Greenwich

Stop Motion Set Construction with Bio-based, Biodegradable Materials / Clara Schulze, Independent Scholar

Pragmatic Green Storytelling in Animation: Bridging Sustainable Production, Storytelling, and Aesthetics / Maïke Sarah Reinerth

Discussions surrounding ecological sustainability in animation typically fall into two main categories. On the one hand, a significant body of research examines the representation of eco-conscious themes, such as climate change, the fragility of natural beauty, and other environmental concerns (e.g., Murray & Heumann 2011, Starosielski 2011). On the other hand, a smaller but growing field reflects on the environmental impact of animation production itself, critiquing its often resource-intensive practices and exploring alternatives within the animation pipeline (e.g., Formenti 2024). Building on the concept of “pragmatic green storytelling” proposed by the Green Storytelling Initiative (2023), this paper bridges these two perspectives by investigating how sustainable production decisions can contribute to eco-conscious storytelling and aesthetics in animation.

Unlike narratives that aim to raise environmental awareness by foregrounding eco-conscious messages, often with the intention of inspiring behavioral change, pragmatic green storytelling seeks to achieve a direct positive impact on the ecological footprint of film production through sustainable script and production choices. These decisions—ranging from the selection and number of locations to the materials, equipment, and effects required—often go unnoticed by the viewers in live-action films. In animation, however, material and practical aspects of production are intricately tied to the overall aesthetics and storytelling. In fact, animated films frequently highlight their own process of creation, a phenomenon described as the overt exhibition of their “madness” (Backe et al., 2018).

Adopting the lens of pragmatic green storytelling, this paper examines historical and contemporary examples in animation to explore how (consciously and unconsciously) sustainable production choices influence the aesthetics and storytelling of animated films. It argues that one of animation's unique strengths lies in its ability to make sustainable production practices visible to audiences. By doing so, animated films can underscore the environmental implications of script and preproduction decisions, fostering awareness for sustainable filmmaking practices.

Maïke Sarah Reinerth is a film and media researcher and sustainability expert. Her current research focuses on audiovisual green storytelling and animation studies. Maïke holds a PhD in media studies from Film University Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF where she currently teaches and runs the sustainability office. Her academic publications include a monograph, several edited volumes, articles, chapters, and a video essay. Over the last few years, Maïke has worked relentlessly towards greening film education. Together with an interdisciplinary group of filmmakers and experts, she advocates for more eco-conscious storytelling.

When Believability and Realism Become Primary Causes of Digital Animated Worlds' Environmental Footprint / Cristina Formenti

As Sean Cubitt (2013) pointed out, animation techniques are “highly material in an environmental sense, as well as in terms of labor and toxicology”. Yet, while the environmental messaging of animation has been receiving scholarly scrutiny, this medium's environmental footprint remains understudied. This paper contributes to bridging such gap in literature by investigating the making of computer-animated features through the lens of “ecomaterialism” (e.g., see Vaughan 2019). In particular, the paper focuses on those fictional, simulated virtual environments referred to by Christopher Holliday (2018, 66) as “Luxo worlds” that are entirely molded and recorded within a computer.

In line with digital having become synonym for eco-friendly, on several occasions, such animated works were envisioned as by default more ecological than those created with other animation techniques due to the impression of immateriality that their digital nature might give (e.g., see Murray & Heumann 2011, 247). Yet, by scrutinizing their making the paper shows how not only, in line with what is more generally discussed by Nadia Bozak (2013, 12) for digital images, they bear a “material life” and are not resource-free, but also, they are far from sustainable. In fact, the ecological footprint of computer-animated features can be higher than that of other animation techniques and has been growing exponentially with the passing of years. A quest for either always greater believability or realism has determined such progression. Indeed, even if they portray imaginary worlds that often follow rules of their own and graphically embrace nonrealistic styles, in the name of believability or realism during their making are undertaken anti-ecological actions ranging from pursuing more complex images that require longer rendering times to undertaking carbon-heavy international research trips to study in real life the location and culture that have been chosen as referents for building that set animated world.

Cristina Formenti is a Lecturer in Film Studies at the University of Groningen. She is the author of *Il mockumentary: la fiction si maschera da documentario* (Mimesis 2013) and *The classical animated documentary and its contemporary evolution* (Bloomsbury 2022) as well as the editor of various collections. She serves as President of the Society for Animation Studies, sits in the Governing Council of Visible Evidence and is co-editor of the journal *Animation Studies* and of the book series *Animation: Key films/filmmakers* (Bloomsbury).

Towards Sustainability in Stop-Motion Animation: From Production to Preservation / Olive M. Gingrich, Min Young Oh, and Chris Pallant

The stop-motion animation industry continues to involve a range of materials with potentially harmful ecological consequences, such as the growing use of non-degradable 3D printed materials in stop-motion productions (Heidsiek 2023). Common chemical materials include plastic resin, silicone, and polystyrene—all of which can pose environmental challenges. For example, the reliance on polystyrene in the production of *Marilyn Myller* (2013) raised environmental concerns (Ruslan et al. 2023). To address the substantial non-recyclable waste generated by such productions, more research into new materials, processes, and techniques is required.

While 2D cel-animation has largely disappeared due to environmental and health concerns associated with cellulose acetate, stop-motion is still developing new responses to acute sustainability challenges.

Established companies such as LAIKA started to embrace new technologies: The printing of thousands of modeled faces per week during the production of *Missing Link* (2023) exemplifies the problematic environmental footprint of high-end stop-motion films.

Existing research acknowledges sustainability issues in stop-motion but emphasizes the need for the development of environmentally friendly materials and printing processes. Furthermore, sustainable archive and storage challenges of 3D printed materials demand further academic inquiry (see Cowley 2022). The film industry's increasing awareness of environmental responsibility meets an economic landscape in which research and development budgets often remain limited. While there is support from individual studios, the industry lacks comprehensive research on alternative 3D printing materials and recycling systems.

This paper proposes an analytical overview of harmful chemicals currently in use in stop motion studios and provides insights into efforts by animation studios and individual artists towards more sustainability. The aim of this paper is to initiate further research into sustainable methods for stop-motion pre-production, production, and archival preservation. Understanding the current use of harmful materials will guide and inform the search for sustainable alternatives.

Olive M. Gingrich is Program lead in animation at the University of Greenwich. Their research interests include real-time animation practices, media arts, and participatory arts for public health.

Min Young Oh is a lecturer at the University of Greenwich and an award-winning professional stop-motion director and puppet maker with over a decade of experience. Her research interests center around sustainability issues inherent in the medium.

Chris Pallant is Professor of Animation Studies and Head of the School of Design at the University of Greenwich. His most recent monograph is *Beyond Bagpuss: A History of Smallfilms Animation Studio* (BFI, 2022).

Stop Motion Set Construction with Bio-based, Biodegradable Materials / Clara Schulze

In the face of climate change, stop-motion film productions must take action to reduce their carbon footprint. While at least some green production guides address CGI animation (Ecoprod 2023), only very few (Heidsiek & Kruse 2023) set out measures for stop motion despite the fact that, unlike other animation styles, stop motion film production generates a lot of non-recyclable waste. On the grounds of practice-based research, this paper demonstrates the environmental and health benefits as well as the creative possibilities of working with bio-based, biodegradable materials.

A popular way to avoid waste that can also be adapted to film practice is working with the 5 'R rules' for sustainability (e.g., Johnson 2013): Refuse: reject everything that is not really needed in order to avoid unnecessary consumption; Reduce: reduce what is really needed; Reuse: reuse items as often as possible and share them with others; Recycle: put all items that cannot be reused to another use; Rot: favor biodegradable, bio-based objects that can be composted whenever possible.

While a handful of examples of stop-motion productions exist that apply the first four principles, working with rotting material is still in its experimental stages. For the production of my stop motion film *Bär Bär* (2025), I therefore set out to build a set made purely from bio-based, biodegradable materials. My research showed that there are alternatives to conventional materials and that a stop-motion set can be constructed almost entirely from them. Although these materials are not as user-friendly—mainly because their professional use has not been conventionalized—, they have the advantage that they do not only produce less and purely organic waste with little impact on the environment but are also less harmful to human health. This means that not only the environment but also stop motion artists themselves benefit from the use of bio-based, biodegradable materials. While the study is limited in scope, it can be assumed that working with these materials on larger scale stop motion productions is also possible and will reproduce similar positive effects for humans and their environment. Moreover, working with alternative materials also opens up space to try out new aesthetic approaches.

Clara Schulze completed her B.A. degree in animation at Film University Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF in 2024. Today she is busy researching sustainable production for stop motion film—because even puppets have to reduce their carbon footprint.

THURSDAY JULY 10: 2:30pm-4:15pm
PANEL 12B: EXPERIMENTAL PRACTICE 2

Papers:

Awakening a Sleeping Lantern Slide: Animation Practice for Research and Reinvigoration / Joe Evans, Manchester Metropolitan University

Picturing Security: Drawing Out Agency / Jill Gibbon, Independent Scholar; and Benjamin Hall, Leeds Beckett University, and the Open College of the Arts

Previsualisation, Animation & Divisive Futures / Keanu Hoi, University of Technology Sydney

Awakening a Sleeping Lantern Slide: Animation Practice for Research and Reinvigoration / Joe Evans

I propose an Individual Conference Paper titled *Awakening a Sleeping Lantern Slide: Animation Practice for Research and Reinvigoration* in which I will explain my engagement with a Victorian articulated magic lantern slide known as 'The Rat-Eating Man' or 'Man Swallowing Rat'.

My micro talk at SAS 2022 on the magic lantern slide as a Victorian meme, introduced my early research, connecting modern looping GIF and meme ideas with this lantern slide, produced primarily in London in slipping slide and pivot and rackwork formats, depicting a man asleep in bed, snoring with mouth gaping wide, as rats jump down his throat. The meme-like popularity and adaptability of this image from the 1850s to the 1900s, was the focus of my micro-talk, and since then I have worked further to establish these connections, attempting to balance the preservatory concerns of The Magic Lantern Society, with my own creative curiosity, using animation practice as a lens. I have been making my own digitally animated versions of the Rat-Eating Man.

What can we learn from using contemporary animation techniques to engage with and replicate pre-cinema moving image aesthetics? As a creative practitioner, I want to interrogate the possibilities of practice-led animation research. This is work in progress and this paper will report my findings and frustrations so far. Through this work I have been investigating how the design of the image accommodates the mechanics of the slide (through the action one glass slide hides and reveals elements of another), the role of the Lanternist as a performer (manipulating the image live, and how this might work digitally), and I have considered the contextual appeal (our understanding of class signifiers, representations of sleep and our relationship with rats). This is animation as a tool for investigating, repurposing and reinvigorating icons from moving image history.

Joe Evans is a 2D Animator and Illustrator teaching Animation as part of the School of Digital Arts (SODA) at Manchester Metropolitan University. He graduated from the University of Brighton's Sequential Design/Illustration Master's Course in 2015.

His MA project, 'The Animators of Pre-Cinema & Their Demons,' comprised three graphic novel histories of animation, exploring the development of Victorian optical toys, chronophotography, and magic lantern projection. The project resulted in the production of looping animations presented through phenakistoscopes and a praxinoscope – exhibited as part of a Fabula Collective exhibition at Hove Museum. Joe is a member of The Magic Lantern Society.

Picturing Security: Drawing Out Agency / Jill Gibbon and Benjamin Hall

Picturing Security is an ongoing research project funded by the Independent Social Research Foundation (ISRF) led by Rachel Julian, Jill Gibbon, and Benjamin Hall. The project aims to explore experiences of security, risk and threat using collaborative arts practice as a tool for conversation. During 2023 and 2024, Gibbon and Hall established a studio community consisting of students and staff from Leeds Beckett University to discuss through animation and drawing what 'security' meant to the group. The workshops that took place involved direct dialogue, but a more indirect conversation emerged at a material level in the marks that were exchanged during the sessions. The intention with the workshops was to establish a democratic community that arrived at a consensual trajectory for the activity moving forward. However that which is labelled democratic still suffers bias, and unrepresentative binaries are often formed according to the loudest, most confident voices. This phenomenon is true of a wider global context where opinion is ignored, censored and silenced by oppressive, violent means. Within the workshops we identified that the material gathered during each session had a voice, which could direct us in what to do next and in particular how it could be brought to life, offering an authentic form of democratic representation for all. In her book *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, Jane Bennett discusses 'vital materialism' or 'thing power', a concept whereby all material, whether living or not, has a possibility for agency, indicating its own potential for life (Bennett, 2010, p. 20). In keeping with Bennett's

position, this presentation puts forward a methodology for using animation workshops as a means to foster collaborative, creative communities where all voices can be heard. In addition to a spoken presentation, we will draw upon artefacts from the project which include drawings, music and animation.

Jill Gibbon is a politically engaged artist with research interests in war, art, and aesthetics. She is interested in bringing art and performance out of galleries into contested political spaces.

Benjamin Hall is an animator and educator who teaches at Leeds Beckett University and the Open College of the Arts. His research explores alternative pedagogies that employ participatory arts practices.

Previsualisation, Animation & Divisive Futures / Keanu Hoi

Before a film comes to life, it starts as fragmented imaginations, sketched, written and shared with collaborators, a stage of filmmaking known as previsualisation. Research into previsualisation practices and histories has been minimal, and yet previsualisation has only been increasingly relied upon in filmmaking in the US and abroad. Film studios have employed intensive computer animated previsualisation, involving high fidelity animatics, in order to have greater control over film production and mitigate risk. This presentation seeks to reconcile the fear of strict corporate control of filmmaking achieved via the reliance on previsualisation, and the contrary vision of an imaginative and less centralised filmmaking process. The small but growing rejection of the encroaching purview of previsualisation has rested on the omission of animators or criticism of them as creatively stifling technicians. Film scholars and practitioners tend to reduce previsualisation to a planning tool, that either hinders directors or works as a neutral realisation of the director's creative vision. In this presentation, I argue that by embracing and understanding animation methodologies, filmmakers, especially independent filmmakers, are better positioned to regain creative control over previsualisation and tailor it to the needs of their projects. I trace a rich history of previsualisation created in diverse and creative ways across the history of art cinema and animation to envisage approaches to previsualisation beyond risk mitigation.

Keanu Hoi is an animation lecturer and PhD candidate studying how animated previsualisation impacts collaboration, creativity and authorship. The PhD research was born from his experiences in the film and animation industry, noticing the strange and at times frustrating divisions between these two worlds. He attained his Bachelor's degree at the Australian Film Television and Radio School in Sydney, where he began to blend his love for all kinds of filmmaking processes, both animated and live-action. His work has premiered on Adult Swim (USA), CineQuest (California), Melbourne International Animation Festival, and Cinanima (Portugal), among others.

THURSDAY JULY 10: 2:30pm-4:15pm
PANEL 12C: SAS ANIMATION SCREENING 2

Please note: The list of films for this panel is not intended to change, but the running order has not yet been curated. This will be updated in a future update to the document.

These films will also be able to watch on rotation in the Upper Gallery throughout the conference period.

Films:

Hello UK, Goodbye Hong Kong / Tim Pattinson (legal name); Timothy Walklate (artist name), HKBU Academy of Visual Arts

Bergamot / Yanqi Liang, Kingston School of Art

After the Flood / Owen Stickler, Cardiff Metropolitan University School of Art and Design

Red Dress. No Straps / Maryam Mohajer, Kingston University

2030 / Angela Hernandez-Scoggins, Austin Peay State University

Dancing on the Flying Carpet / Leila Honari, Griffith Film School

Awkward / O Haruna, Loughborough University

Woody's Last Laugh: Gone for All Seasons / Sara Gevurtz, Auburn University

The Endless Mile / Johannes DeYoung, Carnegie Mellon University

Pripyat Horse / Sally Pearce, Independent Artist

Vision / Çağıl Harmandar, Tokyo University of the Arts

inPlants / Yun Lu, Edinburgh College of Art

***Hello UK, Goodbye Hong Kong* / Tim Pattinson (legal name); Timothy Walklate (artist name)**

Between 2022 and 2024, I conducted a series of interviews with queer individuals from Hong Kong to explore their complex experiences of navigating migration away from the city. From this research, I developed the “Animated Queer Experiences” project, which aims to amplify global narratives from often marginalised voices through innovative methodologies of animated documentary and expanded film. “Connor: Hello UK, Goodbye Hong Kong” is the first film created in what I hope will be an ongoing series. In collaboration with Connor, I established Subjective Visions as the creative direction for this inaugural film. This approach entails a visual layering of animated representations that depict Connor’s shared visceral and emotional connections to both Hong Kong and the UK. The animation serves as a visual manifestation of Connor’s engagements with these environments, illuminating otherwise unseen emotions and prompting a critical examination of public spaces and interpersonal interactions through the lens of queer lived experience. Connor’s narrative reflects on his life in Hong Kong from his new home in the UK, offering profound insights into the challenges and opportunities he has encountered on his journey: He articulates his thoughts on identity, experiences with racism, and his aspirations for the future. The film employs a variety of analogue techniques, while revealing the intricate processes behind each sequence to the viewer. This ‘behind the camera’ approach resonates deeply with the New Queer Cinema movement by highlighting my active involvement in the construction of Connor’s narrative, again in-line with the film’s Subjective Visions direction. Through this transparent construction, the materiality of diverse artistic methods, combined with real-world contexts, can evoke and represent responses in ways that differ from purely digital outputs: By leveraging ‘mundane’ technologies rather than focusing solely on often inaccessible digital functionalities, the film illustrates that anyone can share their story, thereby democratising the act of storytelling. I hope the “Animated Queer Experiences” project serves as a compelling call to action for greater representation in independent film, conveying the message that filmmaking is accessible to all and embodying a spirit of inclusivity. My aspiration for these films is to inspire individuals worldwide to articulate and proudly share their authentic truths.

Tim is an Academy Award-shortlisted filmmaker and educator, and currently a PhD student at HKBU’s Academy of Visual Arts. He earned his MFA at USC School of Cinematic Arts. His independent animated films have broadcast on US TV and been licensed for distribution in Japanese and North American territories. Tim has animated for the UK’s Bob Godfrey Studios, and Hollywood’s ShadowMachine, and has lectured at universities in North America, the UK and Hong Kong. He currently teaches animation at Hong Kong’s CityU, and was previously Chair of Digital Media at SCAD. Tim’s lifelong love of animation is helping to fuel his current research, a series of animated documentary shorts about queer lived experiences. Tim identifies as a cis gay male with the pronouns he/him/his.

Bergamot / Yanqi Liang

'Bergamot', also translated as 'Buddha's hand', explores the binary mother-daughter relationship as it shifts as it grows. Buddha's hand and hand are similar but different, opposites but compatible, referring to the mother-daughter relationship, resembling but refusing to resemble, contradicting but adhering to each other, separating but connecting. When I look back at my relationship with my mother, the haptic memory of her caressing my back while putting me to sleep as a child comes to mind. This realisation also reminded me that my communication with my mum was often not verbal or written, but tactile. Words may be divided, and knowledge may be a barrier, but feeling is not. This is the unique language we use as mother and daughter, and it is also an expression, in my opinion, suitable to represent this intimate and complex relationship.

Sigmund Freud (1905) used the Oedipus myth as a prototype to describe how children are attracted to their opposite-sex parents. Psychoanalyst Hendrika C. Freud (2010) has different thoughts on mother-daughter relationships; she believes daughters are much more influenced by their mothers than their fathers. Mother is the first person boys relate to, but daughters are in the same situation. Although daughters no longer have an actual bloodline connection to their mothers once they leave their wombs, this relational bond remains unbroken. Inspired by Hendrika C. Freud's theories and my own experience, I will also demonstrate a dualistic mother-daughter relationship in my work. Mothers and daughters have many similarities, but at the same time, they have many differences, which is what makes this dualistic relationship such a struggle. In my practice, I portray the mother and the daughter as the Buddha's hand and the human hand, both of which have the same shape but are fundamentally different. They mutually and consistently wish to be closer to each other while simultaneously being disconnected by their differences. This power relationship shifts as it grows, affected by changes in the physical and mental states.

The whole film is printed and sewn on fabric, the material and technical methods along with the visual content of the images are used to portray the soft and delicate, yet strong emotional connection between mother and daughter. During the sewing process, I found that when the incorrectly sewn threads were removed from the fabric, the fabric returned to its original state, with no trace of the past, which reminded me of the mutual tolerance between mother and daughter. But the mother-daughter relationship does not only have the good side. It rises and falls as it matures, just like two threads intertwined. Here, the material is used as a language of expression, delivering the sensory information of materiality.

Yanqi Liang is an animation director, illustrator and educator, she is currently pursuing a doctoral study at Kingston School of Art. She graduated with an MA in Animation from the Royal College of Art and a BA in Illustration from Camberwell College of Arts. Her practice-based research explores haptic communication in intercultural mother-daughter relationships through expanded illustration practice. Her directorial clients include Swatch, Barbican Centre, Tate, and BBC Storyworks. Her films have been screened at international animation and film festivals and her works have been participating in several international collective exhibitions.

After the Flood / Owen Stickler

'After the flood' is an experimental animated documentary, intended to be presented as audio/visual installations that explore the concept of wonder. Initially inspired by experiencing a familiar landscape transformed by a storm flood, later, the pieces focus on a familiar domestic world re-experienced through a macro lens and a global pandemic. Both events having occurred within a period of three months or so in 2020.

I'm currently a senior animation lecturer at Cardiff Metropolitan University School of Art and Design, but before returning to education, I was an animator, director, producer, and studio owner. My degree was in Fine Art, and I had ambitions of being a painter before realizing that animation was the medium that could best help me achieve my creative ambitions. Having worked commercially, mostly in kids' tv animation, it was wonderful to come back to teaching and re-connect with the work of animators and experimental filmmakers like Robert Breer, Stan Brakhage and Jonathan Hodgson. More contemporary animators such as Joedi Mack and Vojtěch Domlátil have also greatly influenced my current work and thinking about animation.

Red Dress. No Straps / Maryam Mohajer

1985. Tehran, during the Iran-Iraq War. Marmar is waiting for her grandmother to make her a dress exactly the same as the glamorous American pop star. Bright red. No straps.

Maryam Mohajer is a British-Iranian, BAFTA Winning animator-director who was born in Tehran, Iran just before living through revolution, war and immigration. With a background in painting, she discovered animation after moving to UK in year 2000. She got her MA degree in animation from Royal college of art. Her short films have been screened at many International festivals. She lives and works as an animator, writer, director, and part-time lecturer in London

2030 / Angela Hernandez-Scoggins

This piece, *2030*, was completed in 2020 as part of my Graduate Thesis at the University of Central Florida in Orlando, Florida. Made to highlight the ongoing protests against the construction of a new oil pipeline in North Dakota, as well as past and future consequences of our dependency on oil, this short film aimed to encourage concerned individuals to vote in the then-upcoming 2020 Presidential Election. Voter turnout in American elections is historically very low, often showing only around 50% of the voting-age population casting a ballot. While there are many changes that individuals can take to help lower their carbon footprint, our ability to reduce the effects of global climate change will ultimately depend on the leadership of our governments and the direction their policies take. By creating and screening this film locally on campus, my hope was to encourage more young voters to decide to vote that year. In the end, 2020 saw a record voter turnout of 62.8%, which was a marked improvement over the historical trend. However, this still shows that there is much more work to be done.

This film is largely 2D animated using digital tools such as Toon Boom Harmony and Adobe After Effects. However, I did include one 3D element in the film: the black snake, which symbolizes the pipeline that was, unfortunately, eventually built. Oil is such an interesting substance to me. The iridescent thin film often seen on the surface of petroleum when it mixes with water gives the substance a shimmering, almost ethereal quality, which is in stark contrast to the danger it poses to organic life. Therefore, I wanted this piece of the film to stand out from the rest of the imagery to emphasize that it is out of place not only stylistically but also environmentally. I textured and animated the snake in Maya using the Renderman renderer.

During its festival run, this film was selected to be included in a total of 18 different film festivals across the globe. Notably, it was a Semi-Finalist in the Ontario Film Festival (2020), a finalist in the Media Done Responsibly Virtual Film Festival (2021), and winner of Best 3-Minute Animation in the Avalonia Film Festival (2021).

I believe that animation is a very accessible form of filmmaking. Many people are able to create stop motion films with objects they have on hand and a simple phone camera. Animation can also be utilized to help foster a space to talk about difficult issues such as gun or domestic violence with imagery that isn't quite as visceral, or polarizing compared to the same topics in a live action film. I hope to see animation continue to be used to bring awareness to issues that affect all of our communities and our future.

Angela Hernandez-Scoggins (formerly known as Hernandez-Carlson) is an animator and educator located in Middle Tennessee, where she is an Assistant Professor at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tennessee. She aims to use her skills both as an artist and educator to bring positive change to her surrounding communities. Working with non-profits and on independent projects, Angela Hernandez-Scoggins utilizes a multitude of animation mediums and techniques to create unique hybrid styles in her work.

***Dancing on the Flying Carpet* / Leila Honari**

A carpet of lights spreads, revealing intricate patterns of migratory seabirds that come alive and soar across transboundary waters, only to find themselves trapped on the borders of the carpet. A migrant woman gracefully dances on the carpet, channelling the lights and expressing the profound desires of the seabirds to soar freely and to fly beyond the limits. Through her mesmerizing dance, she creates a poetic fusion of art and nature, symbolizing the collective yearning for liberation. Inspired by Attar's 12th century Conference of the Birds and contemporary human migrations, her performance transcends boundaries, inviting the audience on a surreal journey of liberation atop a dynamic, animated circular carpet.

"Dancing on the Flying Carpet" is a large-scale installation and a captivating live music and dance performance that seamlessly blends Persian carpet design, Iranian classical music, Sufi dance, and early animation techniques with cutting-edge technology. It was originally performed live at Griffith University Conservatorium as part of FilmHarmonic (Brisbane Festival 2022). "Dancing on the Flying Carpet" is a tale of flight. As you step onto it, the carpet ascends from the ground, soaring higher and higher. Eventually, the earth transforms into a rotating blue sphere, with everything revolving within it. It's reminiscent of a children's merry-go-round, where everything whirls from the centre outward. If you look from above, the borderlines are unclear, as are the

colours of people and the variety of animals and plants. From above, we are one, a whole in rotation. The flying carpet embodies this unity—a symbol of migratory birds moving from the centre to the outside of the circle in pursuit of freedom. Lights, images, music, and the fusion of these elements with dance, immerse the audience in this sense of unity. It evokes a collective dance on the extraordinary carpet of life. The flying carpet represents the power of imagination to soar—a vision of a world without borders, where we are all immigrants, and anywhere in the world is our home.

Festivals:

- 1- Nomination for an award at the South Pacific Film Festival, NZ, August 2024.
- 2- Nomination at Mills of Performing Arts, Larissa, Greece, September 2024, a competitive festival with 153 submissions from 34 countries, and only 30 selected.
- 3- Finalist at the Australia Independent Film Festival, Brisbane, October 2024.
- 4- Nomination at the Inspired Dance Film Festival, Sydney, October 2024.

Dr. Leila Honari is the Program Director for the Bachelor of Cinematic Arts (Honours) and leads the Art Direction major in Griffith Film School's Animation program. An animator of Persian heritage and a former traditional carpet designer, her research focuses on cultural and historical animation, exploring motif and metaphor in animated storytelling through hand-drawn and painterly techniques. Her award-winning animated film *Flying Carpet* (2022) reflects her cultural roots and has been screened internationally. Leila's practice-based research also examines women's studies and migrant arts, integrating themes of social, cultural, and historical significance into animation, illustration, and performing arts.

***Awkward* / O Haruna**

Awkward is the first animation of practice-based PhD research that explores representing Black British men's identities through animated narratives. This series of ident styled stories reflect the grey spaces of knowing how we should think, feel, and react. By tapping into commonly shared emotions of embarrassment, confusion, and unease these autobiographical snippets of adolescence reflect challenges of negotiating race in classrooms. Taking stock in 3 distinct experiences, *Awkward* confronts stereotypes and popular depictions of blackness as aggressive, militant and threatening. Each experience stems from memories at private, British, secondary school and begins to hint at a shared struggle between staff and students in knowing how to engage with racial difference. In each case, teachers' use of language forms the conduit from which cultural anxieties are reified and unwittingly transformed into spectacles for the students' white gaze. *Awkward* repackages such experiences, this time, privileging my own view over.

Ident 1, *Awkward In Assembly*, revolves around public mispronunciations of non-English names. Far from unique, academics have recently explored how mispronunciation, typically with non-English names, can undermine a sense of belonging, foregrounding a process of racialisation (Pilcher 2016; Kohli & Solórzana, Pilcher et al. 2021 & 2024). Ident 2, *Awkward In Art Class*, touches upon how assumptions and connotations of blackness are projected in discourse. When the teacher's 'formulaic' and 'disarming' apology becomes over-apologetic, blackness becomes the point of disruption in to minimise the teacher's false guilt (Deutschmann 2003, pp. 204-205; Imani 2021, p. 10). The 3rd and final ident, *Awkward In English Class*, raises a similar question to Kennedy & Volokh (2020) on quoting racial slurs. How should we navigate unpleasant histories, without burying the problematic realities they entail? With my voice narrating these events, visual and multimodal metaphors take creative liberties in showing how I felt.

As the moments aggregate, the series points to an uneven and complex world where sincere mistakes blur into careless microaggressions with an effect that is anything but. In offering you snippets of my past, I hope to encourage viewers to reflect on their conduct in academic circles, and reconsider how they make others feel. So, prepare yourselves, with language and imagery viewers might find upsetting, things might get a little funny, a little dark, and a little bit... awkward.

Omeiza 'O' Haruna is a Postgraduate University Teacher at Loughborough University in the School of Design & Creative Arts. His practice-based research investigates the experience of negotiating racial identity, and how such tensions can be represented through animation using a mixture of collaborative and autoethnographic practices. His broader interests include revolve around animation, illustration and film, with an emphasis of practice-based & practice-led research.

***Woody's Last Laugh: Gone for All Seasons* / Sara Gevurtz**

The piece, "Woody's Last Laugh: Gone for All Seasons" is a video project built around the disturbing fact that the iconic cartoon character, "Woody the Woodpecker," was modeled on the now probably extinct ivory-billed

woodpecker found in the Southeast United States. There has been no confirmed sight-ing of an ivory-billed woodpecker since 1944 and it is only by virtue of occasional unconfirmed reported sightings that the species has not been removed from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife's Endangered Species List as extinct.

In this video, Woody is removed from his 1941 film "Pantry Panic"—made only 3 years before the last undisputed recorded sighting of the ivory-billed woodpecker in the wild. The original animation is otherwise unaltered. In addition to removing the images of Woody, the soundtrack of the animation is edited to remove Woody's iconic and very identifiable laugh. Thus, silence is left where Woody would have otherwise had his dialogue, much like the silence in the trees left by the ivory-billed woodpecker's probable extinction.

Sara Gevurtz is an Assistant Professor at Auburn University where she teaches digital art and animation courses. Professor Gevurtz graduated from the CADRE Laboratory for New Media at San Jose State University where she received a Master of Fine Arts in Digital Media Art. She received her bachelor's degree in Evolution, Behavior and Ecology Biology from the University of California, San Diego. Combining her background in art and science, her artistic research focuses on ecological and environmental topics. Gevurtz has been published and shown nationally and internationally.

The Endless Mile / Johannes DeYoung

"The Endless Mile" is an animated audio-video mural and computational artwork that affords interaction and interpretation by sound artists, live performance, and/or ambient audience interaction. The artwork takes the form of a non-repeating and infinitely scrolling shadow play. Each time the artwork is presented, new arrangements of visual and audio elements are assembled in unique combination. When presented as live performance, elements within the work "listen" for sound-input and kinetically respond to audio frequencies, enabling the artwork to be performed live in collaboration with sound artists or musicians. Given the artwork's computational affordances, its presentation format and duration are both adaptable.

The fulcrum of this project considers contemporary computational media affordances in relation to pre-cinematic forms of shadow theater and panoramic displays, as well as in relation to the Expanded Cinema forms of mid-twentieth century neo-avant-garde artists. Looking to historical examples of the scroll, I observe rich and various instances of its mediated panoramas in the service of constructive social relations. I am interested to explore such socially binding experiences through mediated affordances that resist the alienating potentials of contemporary technologies. The prospects for advanced technologies to further hybridize and dissolve silos across media forms present opportunities for people to reevaluate their relationships to the world, unfix perspectives, and experience the world (and each other) with new sensitivities.

Johannes DeYoung is a multidisciplinary artist who works at the intersection of computational and material processes. His works have been exhibited internationally at venues such as: Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Alicante, Alicante, Spain; Festival ECRÃ, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung, Taiwan; B3 Biennale of the Moving Image, Frankfurt en Main, Germany; Hesse Flatow (Crush Curatorial), Jeff Bailey Gallery, Robert Miller Gallery, Interstate Projects, Eyebeam, and MoMA PS1 Print Studio, New York, NY; as well as numerous festival screenings in countries such as Australia, Greece, Ireland, New Zealand, Turkey, and Vietnam. His work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *The New York Post*, *The Huffington Post*, and *Dossier Journal*. DeYoung is appointed Associate Professor of Electronic and Time-Based Media at Carnegie Mellon University. He previously taught at Yale University School of Art (2008—2018), where he was appointed Senior Critic and Director of the Center for Collaborative Arts and Media, and at the Yale School of Drama, where he was appointed Lecturer in Design.

Pripyat Horse / Sally Pearce

Pripyat Horse (2023, 2mins) is a splinter adapted from my Animated Documentary and PhD by Practice feature length project *Chernobyl Journey*. It was completed as a tribute to my colleague, collaborator and friend, Marianne Kuopanportti Fennell, who died during the pandemic, in December 2020. *Chernobyl Journey* is a work in progress. My PhD supervisor advised me to complete a small section of the film that could be screened in public to include in my final PhD submission. I used the process of making this to come to terms with the loss of my friend.

Although the scene adapted to make *Pripyat Horse* already existed in *Chernobyl Journey* before Marianne's death, it had become associated with losing her in my mind because the featured animation of the horse becoming a swallow was the first I made after Marianne's death. My handmade animation involves making repetitive movement over an extended period. In the context of feeling bereaved, this repetitive movement became an embodied expression of grieving, making the scene resonant for me as a tribute to my collaborator.

The scene also suggested Bede's metaphor for life to me – something as transient as a bird briefly glowing in the firelight as it flies through a hall. I have therefore used this quote as the film's synopsis.

'A sparrow flies swiftly in through one door of the hall, and out through another.... Even so, man appears on earth for a little while; but of what went before this life or of what follows, we know nothing.' (Bede, 673-735 AD.)

The technique used is paint on glass composited into live action. The footage was shot in a school in the abandoned city of Pripyat in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone in 2009, on the first of four journeys I made to the CEZ between 2009 and 2015. To raise money to pay for post-production I crowdfunded, and the University of Wolverhampton also made a financial contribution.

Pripyat Horse has screened at Festivals in the UK and abroad, including amongst others, Mill Valley Film Festival, California, Oct, 2023; the Wild and Scenic Film Festival, Nevada City, California, Feb, 2024; Brighton Animation Festival, April, 2024; The International Wildlife Film Festival, Montana, April 2024; The Portland Festival of Cinema, Animation and Technology, August 2024 and Animex, 2024.

Sally Pearce completed a studentship supported PhD by Practice in the Animation Department at Wolverhampton University in November 2024. She graduated from the National Film and TV School, UK, with an MA in Animation Direction in 2008. Her NFTS graduation film, *Elephants* (2008) screened at over 100 Festivals for instance, Annecy, Uppsala, Chicago, St Louis, London and won the Bafta Cymraeg for short film, and many other awards. She has delivered many conference papers in the field of women's animation and has had three articles published. *Pripyat Horse* (2023) was delivered as part of her PhD final submission.

Vision / Çağıl Harmandar

The eye is a small sphere, 21 to 28 mm in size, most of it hidden beneath our skin and skull, with only the external part and the iris visible. It is both an internal and external organ, translating light into color, which our mind then shapes into matter with volume, mass, and depth. These two eyeballs beneath our brain connect our inner world with the external world around us.

Eyes act as mediators between these two realms, or two worlds. What we notice—or truly see—often reveals something about our inner world. This distinction between looking and seeing is significant: two people can look at the same object but see entirely different things. Looking is a mechanical process, the reception of light and color, while seeing happens deeper, as a collaboration between the body and consciousness, a collaboration between the organ of the eye and the mind.

For seeing eyes, light-dependent vision is essential to understanding the world outside us. We first see, then try to make sense of what we've seen. Humanity's desire to understand has driven us to invent cameras, microscopes, and telescopes—tools that extend our natural limitations. But not all seeing relies on light. There is another kind of seeing: one that happens entirely in the mind. Neurological studies show that these two types of vision activate completely different areas of the brain.

As an artist, every day I have pictures playing in my head. When I speak, I visualize my words as illustrations, films, or random snapshots from my memory—either intrusive or interesting thoughts flashing in quick bursts. I'm interested in the moments when these two forms of seeing—external and internal—overlap. Like in a daydream or when lost in thought, physical vision fades away and inner vision takes over. When two worlds pull each other, during that moment of double-seeing, we remain in balance, still able to carry out our motor acts. My film, *Vision*, is about the eye as both an organ and a magical space where seeing occurs. For a year, I drew the eye repeatedly, meditating on it using a technique called straight-ahead animation. This technique is similar to freewriting; I used the frame before as a guide and inspiration to decide what comes next—which lines to keep, deform, or erase. In these fast-paced, changing scenes, the pupil becomes a mirror, a pillow, or a hole. The iris dissolves or tenses up, breaking apart like grapefruit strings or ocean waves.

Starting with something somewhat concrete, something tangible, detectable, and easily understandable—like the image of the eye—I documented the eye losing its shape and boundaries. It transforms into squiggly lines, architectural places, skies, or underwater worlds as bubbles float to the surface. The abstract and representational elements of the film reflect how our minds oscillate between focus and wandering, clarity and abstraction, mirroring the magical nature of seeing—both inside and out.

Vision is an experimental animation film with a soft narrative about a couple falling asleep and beginning to dream until they see each other inside their eyes. Their inner worlds merge as their gazes meet.

Çağıl Harmandar (b.1992) is a Turkish animation artist and experimental filmmaker. She grew up in İstanbul and studied Studio Art at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University from 2011 to 2016. After returning home in 2017, she received the MEXT scholarship to continue her animation studies at Tokyo University of Arts, where she earned her Master's Degree. Her graduation project, *Vision*, a 7-minute animation

film about the eye and seeing, has received 10 awards and been screened at over 35 film festivals worldwide. She is currently a practice-based PhD candidate at the same institution, based in Tokyo.

inPlants / Yun Lu

This collective animation serves as the final part of my practice-based PhD research: Not Knowing Animation, aiming at exploring the potential interplay between: the discrete images, workflow inherent in not knowing temporality as the non-linear time; and the continuously representational animation. The research investigates the application of non-linear temporality in animation yet remaining its readability, highlighting both customized workflows and discrete movement—where the movement reveals throughout spatial visual differences without temporal continuity.

This collective animation project was created collaboratively by six animators, inspired by animated jam, chained animation and Exquisite Corpse. Its conceptual foundation stems from a single narrative sentence: A person shares their secret with a plant while the plant reveals the secrets to everyone. From this premise, 25 stillness images were created. Each animator randomly selected two images to define the starting and ending frames of their animation sequences. Using only the narrative as a guide, animators crafted their sequences without knowing how their sequence would fit into the final animation. Furthermore, no one has any authority to modify or correct others' interpretation and sequence. Here, the hierarchical structure is transformed into a reconciliation of differences within a horizontal labour division, alleviating the tension between **intention** and **craft** in the animation production process.

This making process embraces structural rules of letting go, that 'chance operation does not constitute the suspension of structure but, instead, opens up new non-anthropocentric perspectives, and entails absolute commitment to the adherence towards rigorous processes'. And thus, the not knowing temporality, inspired by the non-linear movements of plants as non-human subjects and their capacity to interrupt continuous subjectivity. Time in this making structure becomes fluid referring to the 'assemblage'— 'each characteristic can be considered an actor, or a subnetwork of other actors' —which allowing any point to connect each other. The project synthesizes 2D hand-drawn animation with node-based animation and AI animation. The latter two offer technical extensions of non-linear temporality. These methods challenge the conventional keyframe-to-in-between workflow, proposing alternative techniques for constructing a systematic movement across multiple parallel timelines, also enhancing the hand-eye-brain coordination during craftsmanship enabling instantaneous inspiration to occur as feedback in the form of material's imprint. The randomness of the sequences provided significant flexibility in the editing phase, allowing for the creation of a cohesive yet ambiguous narrative space. The final animation constructs a blurred atmosphere where the relationship between human and non-human entities plays a more prominent role that weirdly interplayed through motion between figurative and abstract.

This project also seeks to bridge the gap between the black box and white cube viewing spaces, challenging traditional distinctions between cinematic and gallery-based practices. By incorporating randomness, abstraction, and experimental workflows, it reimagines the temporality of potentiality of animated storytelling with dynamic interplay between discrete, experimental images and representative images in continuity.

Yun Lu is a PhD candidate in Edinburgh College of Art, working across animation, film studies and fine arts. Yun's research interests concern animation experimental animation, animation ontology, philosophy of time, non-anthropocentric animation and animation installations.