

ANIMATION

WORLD

Vol. 6 No. 4

MAGAZINE

July 2001

The Internet's *Crazy* Times

Plus:

Miyazaki's Museum

Annecy

and More



Table of Contents

JULY 2001

Vol. 6 No. 4

NINE AND A HALF QUESTIONS...

3 With June Foray

The legendary June Foray... Will Ryan has just enough time to ask her nine and a half succinct questions before she is off on her busy, busy schedule.

INTERNET ANIMATION

5 Entertainment on the Internet: Where Did the Promised Land Go?

There is no denying that the Internet entertainment market has changed...so how are four prominent leaders in the field adjusting to the brave new world? Rick DeMott reports.

9 The Ghibli Museum: Miyazaki's Genius On Display

Get an inside peek! Tom Sito visits the construction site of what is sure to become a destination for animation fans world-wide - the Ghibli Museum, honoring none other than Hayao Miyazaki, one of animation's foremost legends.

ADDITIONAL FEATURES

12 June Bugged: Cartoon Network's Controversy

Who was right and who was wrong in the "June Bugs" Cartoon Network fiasco? Martin "Dr. Toon" Goodman reveals that that is not the question...it is, of course, a much deeper issue.

16 Producing Animation: Buying and Selling Projects

This month's Producing Animation excerpt by Catherine Winder and Zahra Dowlatabadi features stories of advice from the pitching room!

18 The Animation Pimp: Shrekxxx

The Animation Pimp takes a closer look at the sexual politics of Shrek, where it's better to promote bestiality than homosexuality.

20 The Career Coach: Jobs In A Visual Effects House -- Defined

Part One of a three-part series that describes the steps involved in different specialties of visual effects production, the specific skills required for each specialty as well as what the studios are looking for in a portfolio and demo reel.

GAMING

23 The NewKidCo On The Block

NewKidCo is bringing some of the most well-known properties and characters into the children's gaming arena. Jacquie Kubin gains insight from executive Paul Samulski.

EVENTS

28 Annecy 2001, An Artist's Sketchbook

Visit Annecy 2001 through Don Duga's sketchbook. Come take an inside peek at a professional artist's sketchbook. Plus...could you ask for better subject matter?

39 Annecy In Pictures

Join AVN's evolving photo album from Annecy, featuring the highlights and hot spots of the 2001 event. Have some snaps you'd like to add? Let us know!

44 Confirming a New Tradition: Cal State Long Beach's 2nd Annual Japanese Animation Festival

By Fred Patten

Fred Patten reports from CSLB's growing anime festival. Only in its second year, the festival featured quite an impressive line-up of screenings and guests.

FILMS/VIDEOS

48 Fresh from the Festivals: July 2001's Film Reviews

Maureen Furniss reviews five more short films straight from the festival circuit. This month we learn about: The Shadow of Doubt by Cynthia Wells, Patrick Smith's Drink, Graceby Lorelei Pepei, Chicken Kiev by Thomas Stellmach and We Are Immortal (Nous sommes immortels) by Daniel Guyonnet.

BOOKS

52 Jim Henson's Designs And Doodles: A Muppet Sketchbook

What did the Muppets look like before they were "the Muppets?" This new book reveals Jim Henson's first sketches and concepts. Will Ryan reviews.

54 From Akira to Princess Mononoke? Don't Think So

Alan Neal reviews Susan J. Napier's latest book on anime entitled From Akira to Princess Mononoke and reveals a less than perfect text.

© Animation World Network 2001. All rights reserved. No part of the periodical may be reproduced without the consent of Animation World Network.

Nine And A Half Questions...

With June Foray

by Will Ryan



June Foray.

In a world of low-fat foods and California cuisine, people are demanding less for their money. And they're willing to pay more for it! Ever one step ahead of the curve, Will Ryan offers you the *Nine And A Half Questions* interview: lighter and less filling than

the mundane *Ten Questions* concept, but just as intellectually unsatisfying.

* * *

June Foray is one of the great legends of animation. In the last year alone, she starred with

Keith Scott and Robert DeNiro in the live-action feature film *The Adventures of Rocky & Bullwinkle*, was featured in the first theatrical release of *Fractured Fairy Tales* (released in over 2,000 theaters nationwide by Universal), completed her seventh year stint as the voice of "Granny" and others on *The Tweety and Sylvester Show*, starred and sang on the video feature musical *Tweety's High-Flying Adventure*, and signed for three seasons of *Elmo Aardvark: Outer Space Detective!*, playing many characters including the show's popular villain, the mysterious Salamagrandy.

* * *

Will Ryan: Hi, June. I haven't seen you in three days. What's new?

June Foray: I'm getting organized.

WR: Oh?

JF: I spent most of this afternoon writing a new introduction for my autobiography. It explains the meaning of the title.

WR: Oh, you mean "There's A Horse in My Living Room?"

JF: No, I came up with a new title.

WR: Oh, right, right. You mean, "That Voice! Where Have I Heard That Voice Before?"

JF: Nope, nope. newer than that one. I just thought of it yesterday.

WR: Great! What's it called?

JF: Guess.

WR: Hmmm . . . I'm flummoxed.

JF: I'll give you a hint. My publisher thinks this new title is much more commercial than the others.

WR: Um. "The Secret Diaries of Mary Astor?"

JF: No.

WR: "How To Make A Million Dollars and Lose Weight By Simply Buying This Book?"

JF: No.

WR: Okay, I give up. What is it?

JF: "Pickup."

WR: "Pickup?"

JF: Uh huh.

WR: Oh, I get it. "Pickup!" You mean — ?

JF: You got it, Sherlock.

June Foray is currently starring in three series, including the upcoming Judge Granny for Warner Bros. and Elmo Aardvark: Outer Space Detective! for Renegade and Snappytoons, in which she portrays over thirty characters, including Mr. Aardvark's nemesis, the mysterious Salamagrundy. June has just signed a multi-CD deal with Audible Records, her exclusive pact with Turner/Warner having just expired. "Pickups" is a term used in the voice-over business to describe line readings, which an actor must re-perform, either on

the spot or at a later "pickup session." These pickup sessions are usually the result of technical glitches, script changes or a producer's decision to override the director's vision. The amount of money that June has made over the years on pickup sessions alone would pay for a fleet of shiny new pickups.

Emmy-nominated writer/producer Will Ryan is always impressed by shiny new pickups. Only his close friends call him by his given name, videlicet Sherlock.

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

PLYMPMART



Cels, videos,
books, t-shirts,
posters and more...
Now available
in the
AWN Store!

<http://www.awn.com/awnstore>



Animation World Network, 5700 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 600, Los Angeles, CA 90036
Phone (323) 634-3400 • Fax (323) 634 3301 • E-mail info@awn.com

Entertainment on the Internet:

Where Did the Promised Land Go?

by Rick DeMott

At the beginning of the year 2000, professionals and fans alike were joyous about the seemingly endless possibilities for animation on the Internet. Celebrity deals and big dollars were in the headlines regularly. New entertainment firms sprung up left and right trying to make waves in the new medium. However, by the end of the year, eyes shifted from IPOs to business plans that just weren't working. And like the pog, Web entertainment sites were disappearing faster than the dinosaurs. So what happened to the promised land?



As Stubby finds while reviewing *Planet of the Apes*, role reversals can be tough to deal with! © 2001 Mondo Media.

There are many culprits in the plummet of Internet entertainment. The quick blame has been put on the ad market, which pulled dollars out as stock markets fell. Technology had been the "plastics" of the new millennium, but now it's a roller coaster very few people want to ride for any extended period of time. As

Douglas Kay, president of Mondo Media, explains, there was huge pressure in 2000 to expand fast so your company would not be left behind. This strategy proved to be one of the key blows to many hopeful companies because they were spending money and creating content with no concrete way of making the money back. Once that became a reality and backers started getting major jitters during second and third rounds of financing, everybody wanted to take their hot Internet properties off-line where the money was. However, that plan proved as easy as selling pilot television series. *Entrepreneur's Web* wonders weren't the cat's meow like many creators hoped they would be in the eyes of off-line decision-makers. As a result, many companies like Anteye closed. Others like Icebox shut down and now are operating bare bones in an attempt to sell their assets. In the case of Stan Lee Media, lawsuits have sprung up regarding misallocated funds and stock manipulation. Even major players like AtomShockwave were forced to lay-off the majority of their staff in an effort to cool the capital burn rate of their parent company. Even this Web savvy writer has found himself in the unemployment line searching for a new home. So

now that the holy land has turned into a holy mess, what's next? I sat down with four of the key players in the field — Hypnotic, Brilliant Digital Entertainment, Mondo Media and AtomShockwave — to see what direction they are going now that the high hopes are grounded and Internet businesses need to get down to just that — business.

Hypnotized By More Than The Web

When I talked to Jeremy Bernard, president and CEO of Hypnotic, calling his company an Internet company was like calling him a foul name! All jokes aside, his company started moving out of the Internet exhibition business almost a year and a half ago. He states straight out, "There is no money to be made in Internet exhibition." Bernard describes Hypnotic as an entertainment marketing and services company. They acquire content from talented filmmakers from around the globe and license it in various mediums including the Web.



Rick & Steve: The Happiest Gay Couple In All The World brings Lego to life!
© Hypnotic.

With most of their current work being done in traditional media, I asked how the company's recent merger with Nibblebox, a network of college-based Internet content sites, fits into the overall strategy. Bernard said the Web is a way of reaching and promoting emerging filmmakers. Nibblebox gave Hypnotic a chance to contact a younger audience and open



Hypnotic features a wide array of graphic styles and subject matter as seen here with *Dignified Devil in Shirley Temple* (left) and *I Was a Strip Club Virgin* (right). © Hypnotic.

doors to acquiring content from emerging artists. "Short films are a visual resume and not a passing fad," Bernard says. It's this visual resume idea that attracts licenses and larger deals. Currently, Hypnotic and one of its filmmakers are producing a live-action feature in association with Vivendi Universal, who is one of the major backers of the company.

Bernard sees the Internet going in the direction of sponsored entertainment. "As broadband develops, ads will become more compelling and more interactive." He feels that companies that can show higher penetration numbers will get support for content. Bernard also points to syndication as a very viable market. "Large portals dominate 90% of the online audience. Those companies will benefit," explains Bernard.

BDE: Technology First

Sponsored entertainment and syndication were also on the lips of the three other firms I spoke with. However, each is approaching these directions in different ways. Brilliant Digital Entertainment has always been a tools and technology-based firm; however a year ago when its software wasn't available to the public yet, the company was focused on produc-

ANIMATION WORLD MAGAZINE



Brilliant Digital's 3D animation software can be applied to everything from games of chance to customer service. © Brilliant Digital Entertainment.

ing and syndicating its content to various sites. Now the company is focusing on selling its b3d software to other companies to create content on the Web. However, the

firm still creates content as a means of promoting its software's capabilities and increasing player downloads.

When asked about the



The infamous Superman and the newly famous Sisko have both been rendered 3D by Brilliant Digital.
© Brilliant Digital Entertainment.

future, company CTO Anthony Rose started by recapping what hasn't worked. Specifically with 3D animation on the Net, immersive worlds and chat rooms failed pretty early on. "Why haven't they worked? It could be a combination of poor graphics performance, clunky characters and so on," says Rose. "Webisodic content is very popular, however there's not revenue right now to support it." He adds that one of the main issues is broadband. Three years ago people predicted that it was just around the corner. So the true potential of content on the Web lies in the answer to — when will consumers readily use broadband? However, when your TV and Internet merge, "If you can stream video of *Gone with the Wind*, why would you want to watch an animated version?" At this point, immersive content will become more desirable. Brilliant Digital is working on many ways to capitalize on this very idea. Currently, they are designing ways for people to send them personal pictures to have characters created in their likeness. This approach could be very attractive as a tour guide for personal and professional Websites or putting oneself

directly into games.

Plus, Brilliant Digital is maximizing its potential for growth by gearing its toolset for *global/practical* use. The software has the capability to take animation from Maya and 3D STUDIO Max and "library" identical geometry, thus reducing file sizes and shortening downloads. In addition, the system can also plug new characters into already completed animation. For example, in a Webisode of *The Multipath Adventures of Superman*, Superman could be replaced by an animated version of oneself. Moreover, the b3d technology has multi-language support enabling it to adjust the lip-synch to a selected language. With over 4,000 studios using the software, the possibilities could be endless. For example, MindGel in Florida created a 3D banner ad advertising its services in banner creation, which garnered a huge response, generating a large amount of added impressions. So in turn, companies could use 3D banners as a way to make their message stick out from all the rest. Another advantage Brilliant sees for itself in the market is its relationship with its customers. For instance, Brilliant was contracted

by Rock the Vote! to create 3D talking heads for its Website. Due to the amount of work involved, they outsourced some of the project to one of their customers "as a way to give business to people who bought our tools," explains Rose.



A newer addition to Mondo's line-up is Elmo Aardvark: Outer Space Detective, seen here in the affectionate grasp of VaVa LaVoom. © 2001 Will Ryan & Co, Ltd.

Sticking to a Plan

Where Brilliant has moved from creating its own content to helping others create theirs, Mondo Media remains the top producer/syndicator of original animation for the Web. Out of all the major players in the space, Mondo is the one that has really stayed with its original business plan and made it work. They create and acquire 2D animation for syndication on high-traffic Websites. So how was Mondo able to stay vital as the market

started to dry up? Simply put, president Douglas Kay said, 'Prove it then move on.'

Kay does not remove Mondo from the list of companies that overextended themselves a little in 2000, but is proud of Mondo's ability to focus on the goal at hand, prove it can work and then move on to the next stage. In the beginning, Mondo Media wanted to prove it could create compelling content for airing on the Internet. Once that was proven, they moved onto distribution and then rich media advertising.



Thugs on Film has proven to be a hit for Mondo Media. The beer-swilling, film reviewing mates are now found all over the Net. © 2001 Mondo Media.

Kay explains the key to its business relationships is "making it profitable for everyone." It starts with good content. "It's cost effective to go to the high-traffic sites," says Kay. More eyeballs on your content creates good buzz and buzz brings more eyeballs. Once their distribution channels were established, Mondo was able to interest advertisers into adding rich media ads in front of Mondo Mini Shows. Each show has a measurably targeted viewership, which is appealing to companies.

For the future, Kay sees advertising more integrated with content. With the onset of broadband, he feels the possibilities are endless for advertisers and content producers. However, the key for Mondo is "getting from here to there and positioning itself for the future."

A Change of Focus

Finally, we come to AtomShockwave. They too haven't really changed their business plan — much. They will continue to be a games, films and animation destination Website. The major change that has come in the past year is a slow down in original content production. AtomShockwave's general manager and executive producer, Scott Roesche, says, "In the past year, original production has proven pretty costly." AtomShockwave had to cut back to focus on profitability.

About the future, Roesche says, "The big debate, these days, is over whether free content is a viable model." He believes it is, however ad sales can't support it currently. He sees brand integration as a way free content will survive in the present market. For example, AtomShockwave has a partnership with Ford, which integrates the Ford Focus into content like the game *DJ Fu*. In addition, both the AtomFilms and Shockwave sites leverage their current high traffic to sell ads that pay before each short. For the animation community, Roesche says, "Bare with the industry. The opportunity for talented artists will be there."



Despite layoffs, AtomShockwave is still as confident as *DJ Fu*. © AtomShockwave.

The Internet has proven to be a savage land for hopeful entrepreneurs and the space has slowed down to let dreams catch up with reality. Anthony Rose makes a good point about the habits of people and new technology: "Technology runs way ahead of what people actually want. We can often produce things faster than people can get use to, like in the case of e-commerce. But people just don't want to change their habits. In retrospect, their habits are pretty sensible and these pipe-dreams were really silly. Who wants to sit in an uncomfortable chair waiting for something to download for two hours?"



With a new emphasis on casual, fun gaming, AtomShockwave recently launched skateboardin', record mixin' *DJ Fu* (above) and a wacky wild West world with *Tamale Loco*. © AtomShockwave.

Rick DeMott is a freelance writer, working in Los Angeles.

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

The Ghibli Museum: Miyazaki's Genius On Display

by Tom Sito



Tom next to Laputa's giant robot. All images courtesy of and © Tom Sito.

This past May I was invited to be a judge of student work at the Japan Digital and Animation Festival (JDAF) 2001 in Nagoya, Japan. My host was Professor Yasuki Hamano, who taught at Tokyo University and was director of the Akira Kurosawa Foundation. Professor Hamano was once a production assistant on Kurosawa's film *Dodes'ska Den* and *Ran*.

Over the course of the festival, I made friends with Mitsuhsa Ishikawa the producer of *Ghost In The Shell* and *Jin-Roh*, and Hiroyuki Kitakubo, the director of *Blood Of The Last Vampire*. Mr. Kitakubo told me he liked *Rock & Rule*, a film I worked on years ago.

Touring Tokyo

After the festival, I did a stop in Tokyo for a talk and was invited by Professor Hamano to tour several animation studios including Disney Japan and an outsourcing studio called Fuga. There I got to handle the Neo-Tokyo landscape background painting that was the opening shot of Otomo's classic *Akira*.

The highlight of the day however was a visit to Studio Ghibli, the famous home of director Hayao Miyazaki. The studio has produced such beloved works as *Nausicaa*, *Porko Rosso*, *My Neighbor Totoro*, *Kiki's Delivery Service* and *Princess Mononoke*. They are currently completing

their new project *Spirited Away*.

Unfortunately, I was unable to meet Miyazaki-san himself. He was ill from overwork and not present the day of my visit. Feeling the same during the most intense parts of my own deadline on *Osmosis Jones*, I can well sympathize with his exhaustion and wish him well.

We met 20 years ago in Los Angeles at the offices of Tokyo Movie Shinsha (TMS). At one point the translator left the room. As he could speak no English and I no Japanese we just looked at one another. I smiled and said: "Sushi." He smiled and replied: "Hot-dog."

I was impressed that his own desk was not in a big penthouse office but was just another workspace alongside all the others without even so much as a cubicle wall. It was no different than any painter or inbetweeners. The only signs of his habitation of that space were his slippers, an ashtray filled with cigarette butts and the beautiful story sketches strewn about. Plus he likes to doodle little *Porko Rosso* pig heads on the production flow charts.

The studio felt larger from the last time I was there before *Princess Mononoke's* release. I noticed many more SGI computers. Many use the TOONZ program. Miyazaki-san has stated he still prefers the hand-drawn look, but I noticed a lot of background manipulation and digital tricks in this next film.

Onto the Museum Site

After touring the studio I was brought to inspect the site of the Ghibli Museum, currently under construction in Inogashira Park in Mitaka City in suburban Tokyo. Although called a Museum it was conceived not so much as a vault to collect Miyazaki's old artwork, but more a mini theme park where families and fans could visit the wonderful worlds introduced in his films.

Miyazaki planned the museum as he would one of his films. The architect guide constantly referred to a large folio of conceptual watercolors he carried with him. It was as though Miyazaki had storyboarded the creation of his museum. The project will cost \$30 million dollars, money mostly raised by Ghibli and Nippon Public Television among other sponsors.

We donned hard hats, climbed up scaffolding and stepped gingerly over workers napping on their break time. Being of a rather rotund girth, I was the cause of much laughter when I couldn't squeeze through a narrow passage.



A worker enjoys an afternoon nap!



Tom, along with representatives from Nippon Public Television, were taken on a tour by the Ghibli Museum's architects.



Here we see an example of Miyazaki's watercolor renderings of the museum to be.

The Museum sits in the middle of a lovely suburban park and is comprised of several buildings connected. I was told jokingly that Miyazaki wanted to fit 30 rooms worth of stuff into three small buildings.

The buildings are painted bright playful colors and a replica of the giant robot from *Laputa - Castle In The Sky* looks down benignly

from the roof garden. One room is planned to have a full size replica of the Catbus from *Totoro* for children to climb and play on. There is a screening room, souvenir shop with Ghibli merchandise and a cafeteria also planned.

Many of the rooms are direct full size reproductions of rooms portrayed in the various Ghibli animated movies. Miyazaki

has planned every detail down to the ornamentation on the tiles in the ladies' bathrooms. No two stalls are painted the same. The projection booth in the theater is shaped to resemble an old subway car. It looked to me more like the cockpit of one of those big airplanes in *Nausicaa - Warriors Of The Wind*. The ceiling fans look like airplane propellers from *Porco Rosso*.

Even with all the rough construction and unfinished walls the overall feeling of the place is one of warmth and fun. One problem they are working on is accessibility. The Museum is a twenty-minute walk from the nearest train station and there is one municipal bus that goes by Inogashira Park. But after seeing the care with which details are being addressed, I'm confident they can solve this problem by the opening.

Hmmm...now if I can only interest somebody in an Osmosis Jones Museum...

The Ghibli Museum will celebrate its grand opening October 1, 2001, and welcomes animation fans from around the world to come and visit. The address is: 1-1-83 Shimorenjyaku, Mitaka, Tokyo. We wish them great success and good fortune and look for even more great films from Hayao Miyazaki and Studio Ghibli.

Tom Sito is an animator-director who has worked extensively at Walt Disney, DreamWorks SKG and Warner Bros. He has just completed co-directing Osmosis Jones, which will be released in the United States on August 10, 2001.

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



The museum, while still under construction, already shows its bright colors and whimsical nature.



Professor Yasuki Hamano envisions the completed buildings as an architect uses Miyazaki's sketches to explain.

June Bugged



The wascally wabbit himself.
© AOL Time Warner.

by Martin “Dr. Toon” Goodman

April showers bring May flowers, but June traditionally brings a special treat to all lovers of classic Warner Bros. cartoons: it's the month when Cartoon Network clears the decks for their annual “June Bugs” — as in Bugs Bunny — marathon. Whether one is a scholar of the Runyonesque rabbit or a casual fan enjoying the antics of animations most adorable antagonist, this is the opportunity to immerse one's self in a cavalcade of carrot-chomping hilarity. This year's Rabbitfest was the most ambitious ever attempted; a full retrospective of every cartoon ever to star the mercurial bunny. What's up, Doc? We were, from the opening shots of *Porky's Hare Hunt* to the fade out on *From Hare to Eternity*. When at last our reddened eyeballs and overheated VCRs found

repose we had witnessed legend, as interpreted by some of the most talented directors and skilled artisans ever to ply the craft. A marathon indeed! Forty-nine hours — June 1 through June 3 — were needed in order to see them all. For the record, Bugs' career spans sixty-two years, and the Bugs Bunny manifest includes nearly one hundred and eighty shorts. Fifty-five of those cartoons made their debut during this amazing tribute...but the cartoons we didn't see were the ones that snared the headlines.

The Twelve and Their Legacy

There weren't many — only twelve — and the reason they made news was the upshot of a clash between Cartoon Network executives and their owners, AOL Time Warner. It was the intention

of Cartoon Network (and former president Betty Cohen) to present a retrospective that was not only entertaining but historical. As Ms. Cohen told the *Wall Street Journal* (5/4/01): “We wanted to please the animation community.” Unfortunately, the manifest included a dozen cartoons with potentially offensive racist content. The shorts featured questionable gibes aimed at blacks, Native Americans, Eskimos, and our erstwhile foes of WWII, the Japanese. Even though the annual “June Bugs” fest was planned as early as February, it appears that Cartoon Network did not inform their parent company of their full plans until April 26. AOL Time Warner, owner of the licensing and merchandising rights to the beloved Warner Bros. characters, were leery of these cartoons. Their argument held a modicum of merit: offended parties tend to protest — and worse — to boycott. Further complicating matters was Warner's recent launching of a new Website (*LooneyTunes.com*) designed to drum up even more interest in their classic stable of stars. While no one knows how much Bugs and his buds are actually worth, tending fifty contracts to Alex Rodriguez, baseball's highest paid star at over US\$20 million a year, would likely render the lesser figure. Big Daddy Warner reportedly stopped short of an actual veto, but sometimes whispers speak louder than words; as April came to a close Betty Cohen pulled the Twelve from the lineup, conceding that, “I don't like sweeping things under the rug. I wanted to honor the intense interest that animation fans have for us, but I can't deny that we're a mass medium.”

Cartoon Network was not unaware of the risks; the cartoons

were to be plucked from chronological order and shown late at night, as if they were refugees from some hardcore cable channel. Each one was to sport a rolling disclaimer across the bottom of the screen: "Cartoon Network does not endorse the use of racial slurs. These vintage cartoons are presented as representative of the time in which they were created and are presented for their historical value." It would be difficult to think of a more appropriate plan, but the point is now moot. Each side has had its defenders and detractors; Jerry Beck, one of our premier animation historians and archivists, believes that the right and responsible decision was made in pulling the cartoons. Others, such as columnist Kay McFadden of the *Seattle Times*, believes that AOL Time Warner's concern for their coffers triumphed at the expense of Art. Yet, there is a greater issue at stake than whether Warner may lose revenue or whether completists get to enjoy the full complement of Bugs Bunny cartoons. Rather, it is the continuing argument of what to do with past artistic artifacts that include racial content. Is censorship ever justified? Should history be eradicated, even in a judicious cause? Is there ever a way to separate art from its historical context, or is such racism timeless and still lethal today? As one of *Animation World Magazine's* monthly commentators, I wish to express my view on the "June Bugs" flap, however controversial my take might be: Both AOL Time Warner and the Cartoon Network are wrong. They are also both right. If this seems confusing, it merely reflects the fractious and contorted state of race relations in America today.

The Issues at Face Value

There was nothing inherently wrong with the original decision to air "June Bugs" as planned; showing the Twelve in the wee hours with appropriate disclaimers was not an unsound move, and both history and art could have been served. The courage of Cartoon Network was admirable; for the sake of presenting the career of a cartoon rabbit, the Network was prepared to expose itself to the fiery criticisms and controversies that were sure to follow. Such bravery (even if it only lasted a week) is rare in televised media today. Considering that few forms of broadcast have undergone more scrutiny than kidvid and that Cartoon Network survives on nothing but cartoons, Cartoon Network's original decision was even more courageous — no cowardly dogs here! However, the Cartoon Network cannot be all things to all fans; although they would like to be "the world leader in animation," Cartoon Network cannot do so on their own terms. The Cartoon Network, it will be recalled, is a commercial channel that has to answer to owners and sponsors while catering to the juvenile end of the demographic scale. Cartoon Network cannot play by the same rules as PBS, which could have done the retrospective with far less trepidation. Cartoon Network could still have shown the Twelve, but not as part of the "June Bugs" gala; mixing controversial toons in with the general merriment was not the appropriate context.

As for AOL Time Warner: If Cartoon Network's parent company was concerned about their profits, this is not as cynical as it sounds. Companies run on capital, not controversy. There exists in

this nation a cadre of professionals without portfolio who make at least a partial living as anti-racists. Let me make this clear: These are not the same people who recognize racism as the evil it is and fight it on moral grounds. I am referring to the self-righteous on all sides of the color or ethnic line who relentlessly watchdog, agitate and accuse at the slightest suspicion that any form of communication contains racist code. At best these groups and individuals force upon us a grim and vigilant "celebration of diversity," their finely tuned antennae evaluating the ethnic content of every program produced. At worst they are paranoid and accusatory to the point that their anti-racist rhetoric becomes paradoxically racist in itself. These are the people who lead boycotts, and it does not take much to incite them; many of them are highly educated professionals who ought to know better. During this strained and confusing time when race relations are at a difficult point and the recent census suggests that America may no longer have a clear racial "majority," why should Warner risk offending anybody? Is Warner's position really so different from Walt Disney's during the early 1930s? When angry parents assailed Walt with letters about Mickey's randy or cruel behaviors in the Mouse's early films, Walt commanded his staff that it should happen no more. Mickey's image must not be tainted. He's a good scout. And it's bad for business. Shouldn't Warner feel the same about Bugs Bunny, one of the most adored (and marketable) cartoon properties ever created?

Still, it is regrettable to see censorship sustained under these terms. If the Cartoon Network was

truly meant to be the Royal Archive of All Toons Warner, then by all means AOL Time Warner should have worked with their corporate stepchild in order to preserve the Cartoon Network's integrity. If Cartoon Network had given Warner more advance notice, and Warner possessed the bravery and sincerity of their subsidy, perhaps a position could have been reached that satisfied the Network, the fans and the money men. The Twelve could have been packaged as a separate, historical addendum to the Bugsfest (reportedly, Cartoon Network is working with Jerry Beck on just such a project). In such a context, wider issues could have been discussed and the reasons behind the disclaimers explained in full. Instead, Warner stood accused of killing the shorts to save Bugs' lucrative image, the Cartoon Network did not present a truly historic event, and (as is typical where censorship is involved) the fans were cheated.

The Greatest Crime?

The saddest part of all? These censored shorts were indeed "representative of the time in which they were created." That also means they are laughably outdated and more ridiculous than offensive. Racism is indeed a detestable moral crime; the mother of genocide and an execration upon all civilized nations. Yet, the face of racism has changed over time and the manner of its presentation has changed as well. Although racial stereotypes will never be outdated — they are far too handy to use as icons of contempt — their representations can be. The Twelve, particularly those unkind to blacks, belong in that class; their racism can be best found today among the residents



Ah, the war years. U.S. patriotism brought out the best — and sometimes, looking back, the worst — in its citizens. © AOL Time Warner.

of nursing homes. There has not been a formally presented minstrel show in this country for at least sixty years. Mammiferous mam-mies, shuck-and-jive dice tossers and shufflin' watermelon chompers are offensive but antiquated foolishness. Today's racism takes more serious forms: racial profiling; the dismantling of Affirmative Action; schools that are segregated *de facto* if not legally; the new stereotypes of the Gangbanger and the Welfare Queen; the discriminatory "crime" of Driving While Black; standardized tests that produce nothing but damage and "bell curve" mentalities; and a disproportionate population of young black males incarcerated in our prison system to name just a few. Is the most grievous offense society can commit that of showing Bugs Bunny imitating a white man imitating a black man?

No cartoons could be more outdated than those featuring anti-Japanese propaganda. In times of

war it is typical to slander and dehumanize an enemy, and Japan was one of the deadliest foes America ever faced in combat. By the time WWII ended, 150,000 American servicemen — half of those who died in the conflict — perished in the Pacific Theater. It is impossible for those who did not live through this war to appreciate the fear and hatred of an enemy who actually did threaten our shores. So great was this terror that thousands of innocent Japanese-Americans were shamefully interred in detention camps lest they form a "fifth column;" this was a racist crime greater than any seven-minute propaganda cartoon could ever perpetrate. Today we are economic allies with Japan and most high school students can barely identify that nation as our adversary in the Second World War. Anyone who, at this late date, takes these cartoons seriously still drives a Studebaker and supports the New Deal.

The cartoons featuring Bugs and Native Americans are more regrettable, but in two cases the Amerinds in question are mere stand-ins for Elmer Fudd (the dumbest white hunter in cartoon-dom). In both cases the protagonists hunt the rabbit — something I'm sure Native Americans *never* did — and both live to regret it, as many of Bugs' adversaries do. The third cartoon is a parody of Western cavalry pictures and is meant to be portrayed as a farce. Cartoon shorts portraying caricatures of Native Americans were pulled from broadcast some five years ago; the Cartoon Network has at least conceded that they are unacceptable. Today Native Americans fume at the sight of Chief Wahoo adorning the caps of the Cleveland Indians, rail against the "tomahawk chop" practiced by fans of the Atlanta Braves and are disgusted with the Washington Redskins for reasons unrelated to the obnoxious follies of owner Daniel Snyder. All three football franchises are among the most successful of the past decade, invariably playing before sellout

crowds. Would a single showing of three antiquated cartoons in their historical context exceed these modern examples of stereotyping?

In a 1965 article written for *The Nation*, noted black author and screenwriter John Olive Killers cast a critical look at Hollywood. After expressing disgust at images of blacks in movies, the film industry's racial fears, and the dearth of blacks within the film/TV industry, Killings archly noted that: "Ironically, the American Negro, at whom Hollywood has eternally aimed her fire, has been the least vulnerable of all Americans, the least brainwashed. We have never been completely taken in by the hypocritical culture, by film or television. Our belief in our innate inferiority has been, at most, superficial. Yes, the black American is a believer, but not a True Believer in the Word according to Saint Hollywood."

Those words were written thirty-five years ago. It is difficult to believe that black self-awareness and pride have diminished since the struggle for civil rights, or that

blacks have regressed back to a docile acceptance of any image Hollywood wishes to portray of them. The same is true for all minorities, whom today are asserting their racial and ethnic identities with unprecedented self-esteem and confidence. Discrimination still exists, but at an increasingly steep cost to its perpetrators. If a handful of old cartoons can reverse or even destroy such progress, then so much the worse for America and all people black, white, Hispanic and Asian. I prefer to bet that such a scenario won't come to pass: Let the Twelve be shown again, but with the sensitivity, consideration, and intelligence needed to portray a regrettable part of our past history. I believe we can handle it.

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

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

Stay current with all the latest AWN news, industry events, Flash headlines, job postings, product announcements and much more, delivered every week to your email box...

For Free!

Register Now!

It only takes a minute, so fill out our reader survey and register to receive the

AWN Spotlight

[www . a w n . c o m / s u r v e y](http://www.awn.com/survey)

Producing Animation: Buying and Selling Products

by Catherine Winder and Zahra Dowlatabadi

This chapter in *Producing Animation* is devoted to the identification of potential animated projects, in addition to the process of selling them. It includes:

- Sources For Ideas (with examples on how and where established television series and feature projects were initially found)
- The Buyer - Creative Executive and Production Executive
- Preparing a Pitch
- Pitching
- Representation
- Negotiation

Here is an excerpt:

**When pitching,
try to remain as
natural as
possible.**

Pitching

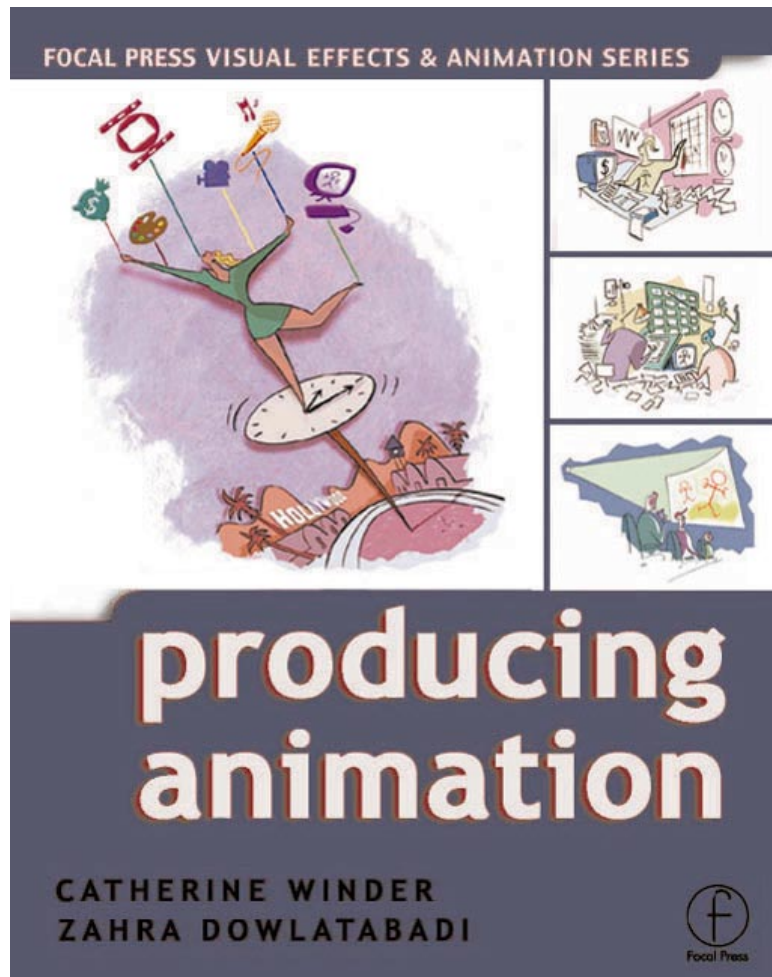
Let's assume you have managed to get in the door to pitch. The creative executive's goal is to determine whether your project is suitable for their studio. Since you need to establish an ongoing relationship with this person, be smart about the meeting. If this isn't the project for them, take the rejection gracefully. You want to leave a good impression so that they will

want to see you again, at this job or their next, as executives tend to move around a lot. (It has been said that the average life of a creative executive at a studio is between one-and-a-half to three years.)

When pitching, try to remain as natural as possible. Analyze your audience's response

and try to cater to what their needs are rather than taking the pitch in a direction that is suitable for you. Again, be short and to the point — don't waste time. Summarize what you are selling and get the concept across in just a few sentences.

When I (Catherine) worked as a creative executive, I saw peo-



You can purchase *Producing Animation* now by visiting
<http://producinganimation.com>.

ple make basic strategic errors. In one pitch, the creator was told in advance that we were looking for primetime content. We were assured that that was exactly what we would see. After everyone was introduced and we sat down to begin the usual small talk that takes place prior to a pitch, the creator stood up and commenced to sing and dance. This individual literally bounced around the room singing his heart out and sweating away for 30 minutes straight. It was impossible to cut in and ask a question. He performed an entire animated musical without a break. Since this project was suitable for a children's special, he had unfortunately wasted everyone's time, including his own. The next time he called to pitch a project, I chose not to hear his new idea since I was not sure what I would get and my time was very limited.

On another occasion, a seller brought 20 different projects to our meeting. The materials were placed in front of me, and like an auctioneer, this producer began to extol the merits of each rapidly, asking me to pick out the ones I wanted. In this case, she should have done her homework (researched our programming

needs), selected the strongest concepts, and handed me one or at most three properties. Instead, she lost my attention within the first three minutes as I had little desire to sift through all the projects and figure out what was appropriate. There may have been a gem in the pile, but I had no urge or time to do her work for her and find it.

After a pitch, it generally takes time to get a response. Creative executives have many projects cross their desks each week. Consequently, it is almost impossible to get back to everyone in a timely manner. Unless you meet with the person who can greenlight optioning a property, the creative executive still needs to sell it to their superiors, who may want you to pitch the property again. They may also ask you to send more materials. You should thus expect to wait at least three to four weeks before hearing anything.

Catherine Winder has worked as both an executive producer in television and feature animation. Her background in development, as well as production with studios from around the world has given her a rare global expertise

in the field of animation. In her present position as vice president production for Fox Feature Animation, she is overseeing production of the studio's 2D traditional and 3D CGI animated movies. She has co-written Producing Animation with Zahra Dowlatabadi.

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

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

Bonus HTML Features

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

• Fresh from the Festivals: July 2001's Film Reviews

Maureen Furniss reviews five more short films straight from the festival circuit. This month we learn about: *The Shadow of Doubt* by Cynthia Wells, Patrick Smith's *Drink, Grace* by Lorelei Pepei, *Chicken Kiev* by Thomas Stellmach and *We Are Immortal (Nous sommes immortels)* by Daniel Guyonnet. Catch four QuickTime movie clips only on-line at: http://mag.awn.com/index.php3?ltype=search&sval=furni&article_no=275



Illustration by Andreas Hykade.
Courtesy of Chris Robinson.

Shrekxxx

by Chris Robinson

I didn't plan on writing more about sex, but after seeing *Shrek* last month, I knew there was more to discuss. This is a film that critiques superficial beauty. It attempts, like its ancestors *Freaks* and *Terror of Tiny Town*, to celebrate the fringe folks of society (e.g. ugly, short, fat, talkative and all-round dysfunctional). *Shrek* suggests that true beauty is found on the inside far from the exterior scars of the body. This is pretty radical stuff for an animation feature. Unfortunately, *Shrek's* "treatise" on beauty is as superficial and hollow as the beauty it attempts to define. Hmm...it's all kinda ironic when ya think about it.

"Beauty is skin deep," the film suggests. Really! Well phuk a duck! Never heard that one before. Much pilfered film theorist, Laura Mulvey once noted that the film protagonist is our substitute. He/she represents us during the film. Sounds good to me. In fact, this adds an element of subversion to *Shrek* because while Hollywood traditionally asks us to identify with the rich, good looking and cool, *Shrek* gives us a butt ugly, misanthropic ogre. Not since *Marty* (and recently *Julian Donkey Boy* and *Gummo*), has a film asked us to identify with two drink minimums.

But wait a minute, let's look beyond the cinematic surface toward the actors: Mike Myers and Cameron Diaz. Now I dunno 'bout you, but I bring certain expectations to a movie with these actors. We are able to accept this grotesque figure because of Mike Myers. Myers represents a harmless, nostalgic comic style (Wayne Campbell, Dr. Evil and Austin Powers) that relies ironically on false appearances. It's much easier to accept the ugliness of *Shrek* knowing that nice guy (hey, he's Canadian!) Myers is behind the body. It's the same with the princess. Cameron Diaz is a hottie. Her characters are fun loving, a little quirky and a bit sassy. We KNOW that Myers and Diaz can do no wrong. What's not to like? Consequently, when we glance at the screen we are looking at ugly folks, but seeing our modern day fairy tale heroes.

The film's ending is a cop out. The princess maintains her undesirable appearance. I want to see the ugly guy get the hottie. We all do. I mean...what?...ugly folks are instantly attracted to other uglies? Is the film suggesting that freaks should stay with their own kind?

Herein lies da paradox!

While the uglies stick together, the donkey (Eddie Murphy) and the she-dragon are on the verge of getting it on (hmm...didn't Murphy do a transvestite?). That's just fugged up. One minute the film is promoting quarantined love and in the next bestiality.

Okay. Fine. You don't buy this theory. That's fine, even dandy...but there is no denying, lying, ignoring or getting 'round this sad truth: in order to discover her inner beauty, the princess must receive a kiss from her true love. Umm...this sounds like *Snow White* syndrome all over again. A man is necessary to this woman's existence and identity. The princess is nothing until she gets a peck from the pecker. Seems to me...she'd be better off doing a Lorena.

The sexual politics of *Shrek* are mighty confusing. Like *Toy Story*, we've got two fellas who grow to learn, understand and respect each other. Pretty much what love should be, don't ya think? But no, once again, underneath this supposedly liberal surface (and hey, isn't liberal just an active conservative anyway?), we have the uniting of a man and a woman. Viewers just aren't ready for homosexuals yet. But hold on a second! What's this? The dragon is coming on to the donkey!? The donkey, initially uncertain, returns the admiration! Okay...so basically it's better to promote bestiality than homosexuality. It's okay for a donkey and a dragon to mack, but not two men (cartoon characters at that).

I'm NOT on a crusade for homosexuality, what I am on about is this bloody need for a COUPLE to begin with. Why must every film end with a formalized union? It's all marriage propagan-

da, which in turn is Christian nonsense. People....marriage is not a given fuggin' truth! It's an ideological system. A system of belief. As Philip Roth's character, David Kepesh whines: "Coupled life and family life bring out everything that's childish about everyone involved. Why do they have to sleep night after night in the same bed? Why must they be on the phone to each other five times a day? Why are they always WITH

each other? The forced deference is certainly childish. That unnatural deference." So there.

Fukwad had it right. Exiling fairy tales would sure as hell create a lot less chaos in the world. People might even come up with their own dreams. Imagine that.

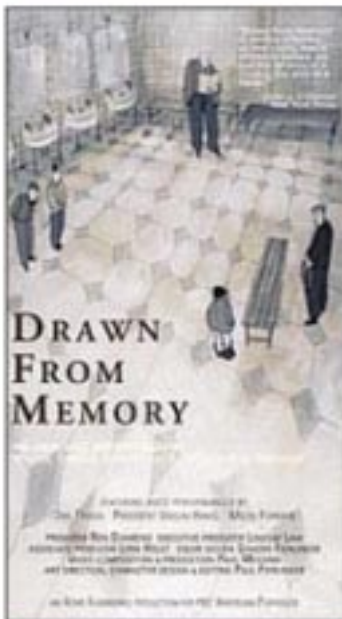
Hottie Animator of the Month

P.C. for mixing mushrooms and Esther Williams.

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

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

PAUL FIERLINGER'S DRAWN FROM MEMORY NOW AVAILABLE ON VIDEO !



"Drawn From Memory is an extraordinary reminiscence about an improbable but true life, rendered in pen-and-ink images as whimsical as those of James Thurber and words as piercing as those of Milan Kundera. The work, which could be called The Movie of Laughter and Forgiveness, uses the lighthearted medium of animation to heartbreaking effect."

--Carrie Rickey
The Philadelphia Inquirer



<http://www.awn.com/awnstore/acme/drawn.html>

The Jobs In A Visual Effects House — Defined

Part One of Three: Modeling and Skeleton/Bones Set-up

Pamela Kleibrink Thompson

There are two major conferences for animation happening next month: The World Animation Celebration (August 7-12) in Hollywood and SIGGRAPH (August 12-17) at the Los Angeles Convention Center. Visual effects companies will be recruiting at these conferences. You may want a job at one of these companies, but you have no idea what the jobs are.

The next three articles in Career Coach will describe the specific sequence of steps in any visual effects shot using computer graphics — modeling, skeleton/bones/set-up, texturing, animation, lighting and compositing/rendering. If you are skilled or talented in three or more of these areas you may want to consider a job with a smaller company that uses generalists. You'll have an opportunity to do many different jobs. If you are a specialist, you'll probably be happier at a larger company where you will do one specific job and develop a specific skill set that you do well.

These articles will show you what is involved in each of these steps, along with the corresponding skills required. You will also find out what the studio wants to see in a portfolio and demo reel



Pamela Kleibrink Thompson

from CG applicants for each specialty.

If you are planning to attend either WAC or SIGGRAPH or both, check out the Websites to find out which companies will be recruiting at the conferences. It's a good idea to send your materials to these companies as soon as possible, before the shows, as companies get swamped with applicants during the conferences. They will have more time to review your work before the show. If they like what they see, you may be given an opportunity to interview with company representatives at the show.

Many American studios have the same basic requirements

for submissions: a reel in VHS NTSC format, a resume, a cover letter specifying your area of interest, samples of traditional work and a demo reel breakdown. A demo reel breakdown identifying your responsibility on each sequence and shot, along with the software used (if applicable), must be included.

Demo Reel Breakdown Example: Shot 1: Witch Melting — animated the witch melting using Softimage; modeled the witch and the scarecrow using Maya; created the textures on the scarecrow using Photoshop.

This month you will learn about modeling and skeleton/bones/set-up.

Modeling

In 2D animation, the first step in the process is prop, character and background design. In 3D computer animation this is called modeling. A model is a virtual object that is created, colored, textured and animated using computer graphics. Modelers are responsible for creating complex, organic models needed for character animation, prop elements for effects, and virtual sets for layout. Modelers must build models that are high quality, efficient to render, and easy to animate.

The model begins as a series of lines called a wireframe that outlines the shape of the object. These wireframes communicate just the basics about the 3D object to come. While incomplete, these transitional illustrations have the benefits of being easy and quick for the computer to calculate and manipulate. The elementary shapes of 3D objects can be quickly rotated in space and viewed from different angles.

Skill set: Know how to

sculpt — how to model things in the real world. Know how to draw. A background in art, design, architecture or film is a plus. Some general animation skills are needed for character modeling and testing.

Portfolio tips: Reality is key. If it is a horse, it should look like a horse. Show a sense of proportion and detail unless you're going for a stylized cartoon look. Wireframes of models show how efficient you are as a modeler. Include low-poly work if you want to get into games. Include a hard copy or video output of digital models, photographs of traditional sculptures or models, a drawing portfolio of model designs and sketches and life drawing. Your portfolio should show you understand modeling methods, know how to build true shapes and forms, and how to use shaders and textures to add detail. An ability to paint textures is a plus.

Skeleton/Bones/Set-up

After the character model is created as a wireframe, the model must be given a skeleton or bones. Once the skeleton is established, the scope or limitations of movement must be specified by selecting the locations and types of joints. These selections are known as "controls." Controls define the

way a character's limbs or an object's parts can move. This work is done by an animation or character set-up technical director (TD), (which is also sometimes called a character engineer or motion technical director). Character set-up TDs work directly with character animators and modelers to define and create the controls that will help the animator create a realistic, convincing performance. This job requires an understanding of animation principles and strong technical problem-solving skills.

The character set-up TD will also optimize repeatable processes through scripts and macros and assist in developing custom set-ups for a job based on studio production standards. Character set-up TDs also program or set-up deformation tools to create the muscle movement that happens when joints flex.

Skill set: Know how the body moves and works and know where and how the joints rotate. Know the many types of joints: ball and socket, hinge, saddle, ellipsoid, pivot and gliding. Understand deformation issues such as how muscles properly animate. Some companies prefer you to have experience with motion capture or motion control and data conversion experience.

Demo Reel Tips: Examples

of work showing computer animation and organic modeling are important in a portfolio for this area. Show your solid understanding of anatomy and skeletal issues and your expertise in computer animation and character design.

In the next two months you will learn about the other steps in any visual effects shot using computer graphics — texturing, animation, lighting and compositing/rendering.

Pamela Kleibrink Thompson is a career coach/mentor for hire/recruiter and management consultant. She produced the world-famous Career Boot Camp for computer animation and is a frequent speaker at trade shows, seminars and colleges. She will be speaking at the World Animation Celebration (www.wacfest.com) on Wednesday, August 8 at the Career Seminar at 10:45 a.m. and at SIGGRAPH (www.siggraph.org/s2001) on Thursday, August 16 at 10:15 a.m. in Room 502B. She can be contacted at PamRecruit@aol.com.

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

Only on the Internet ... And it's Free too!

Animation World Magazine



www.awn.com

The business of television

The People > The Vision > The Business

TELEVISION FILM VIDEO CABLE SATELLITE WEB WIRELESS MEDIA

MIPCOM. Where programmes are bought and sold. Where convergence of traditional and new media isn't just talked about.

And the concepts and solutions are more than just business conversations.

MIPCOM is the International televisual content market of the autumn. Where serious deals are conducted and business partnerships forged.

Take a stand; it's the most beneficial way to participate.

Advertise in the MIPCOM guide, preview and Daily News.

It's focused marketing to a guaranteed target audience.

Be sure that, however you participate, you are networking within a global market. The future of television has never been brighter.

Join us at MIPCOM and watch your prospects shine.

MIPCOM

International Film and Programme Market
for Television, Video, Cable and Satellite

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

HEADQUARTERS/FRANCE

Contact: Jacques Gibout, Franck Graumann,
Olivia Chiverton and Eric Villalonga
Tel: 33 (0) 1 41 90 45 80
Fax: 33 (0) 1 41 90 45 70
Jacques.GIBOUT@reedmidem.com
Franck.GRAUMANN@reedmidem.com
Olivia.CHIVERTON@reedmidem.com
Eric.VILLALONGA@reedmidem.com

USA

Contact: Barney Bernhard and Leonard Gold
Tel: 1 (212) 370 7470
Fax: 1 (212) 370 7471
Barney.BERNHARD@reedmidem.com
Leonard.GOLD@reedmidem.com

UK/AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND

Contact: Peter Rhodes or Catherine Atthow
Tel: 44 (0)20 7528 0086
Fax: 44 (0)20 7895 0949
Peter.RHODES@reedmidem.com
Catherine.ATTHOW@reedmidem.com

JAPAN

Contact: Lily Ono
Tel: 81 (3) 3542 3114
Fax: 81 (3) 3542 3115
lily-ono@mtf.biglobe.ne.jp

ASIA/HONG KONG

Contact: Pauline Sim
Tel: (852) 2965 1618
Fax: (852) 2507 5186
midem@pacific.net.hk

The NewKidCo On The Block

by Jacquie Kubin

The NPD Marketing group has reported that children, aged six to nine, represent 24% of all interactive game users. This could mean a potential demographic group of millions that are coming to video gaming anxious to emulate big brother and sister's play patterns. At issue is that this ever-growing group is familiar with a whole different genre of brand familiarity and entertainment needs. NewKidCo International, Inc. (www.newkidco.com) has their cross hairs on the goal of becoming the leading publisher in the children's video game category by creating quality gaming that meets this demographics needs. Publishing games focused from early childhood (EC) to just before the 'tweens, NewKidCo is concentrating on the already significant and growing group of kids 2-12.

With a wide range of licensees, spanning the classic cartoon *Tom and Jerry* to today's hottest rated PBS children's show *Dragon Tales*, this New York group has a very defined formula for success that includes recognizing the characters and brands with which children are already comfortable and that will provide a fun, engaging and safe play experience. Paul Samulski, executive vice president and chief creative officer for NewKidCo International, Inc., stepped away from the demands of the corporate and creative to



All images courtesy of and © NewKidCo.

answer a few questions about meeting the challenges of children's game development.

Jacquie Kubin: Who is NewKidCo?

Paul Samulski: We are a publisher of video games for children, creating content for the dedicated console, including Playstation 1 and 2, Game Boy, Game Boy Color and Game Boy Advanced, Nintendo and Game Cube and, eventually, the Microsoft X-Box, though right now they are concentrating on games for the more "hard core" or older gamer, so the time is not right for that platform, yet.



NewKidCo faces challenges when bringing such well-loved characters as Goofy into new, interactive realms.

JK: What are early childhood, or EC, rated games?

PS: When I came to NewKidCo from Acclaim, I said, "I have no problem moving from *Mortal Kombat* and *MBA Jam* to *Goofy* and *Sesame Street*, but I don't want to write down to these kids." Too often it seems that developers feel you don't have to give them a lot to satisfy them because, "Hey, the kid is only four." But that is not true. Kids know their own lives and what they can do. For example, they can reason, "I can bend down and touch my toes, so why can't the character?" You have to bring a level of kid maturity to the table if you want to create games for younger viewers.

Also, the game progression must be justifiable and go beyond the surface of the game. Children will become bored from a game that is only two-dimensional. Face it, if it is boring for mom and dad to play, it's probably not a lot of fun for the toddler either.

JK: What are some of your biggest challenges?

PS: One of the biggest problems we have is that we take the EC products and try to push them as far as we can, always pushing the line. For example, we are doing things with the *Sesame Street* characters that the characters would never do on television, because they are puppets. But now, in the context of the game, they are walking, talking, individual, three-dimensional characters that must react in a way that is consistent to how children think they should.

JK: Computer games often contain an edutainment element. Do you try to bring that to the console games as well?

PS: Children's gaming is often given the label of being edutainment, meaning that it contains some kind of curriculum or moral-based teaching element. Honestly though, while learning may be a part of our games, we try and steer away from the curricular and aim more toward the fun. We may have the underlying lessons and moral stories, but at the end of the line we are creating a game that has to be fun.

Finally, the games are designed to give children what they need to go on to the next step in video gaming. So, if you are a young kid and you like interactive products, you will find games that are challenging and will serve to bridge the gap between young and old games and game players.

JK: Explain the role of a "publisher" versus a "developer."

PS: A developer includes groups, or teams, that create a game almost entirely in-house. NewKidCo is a publisher/producer. We work with the licensor to determine how their character(s) will work in an animated environment and then we assign a NewKidCo product developer and game producer to a development team.

While we are working with a contracted development team, NewKidCo is very hands on in the development of the script and the project. At the end of the day, we are writing the checks, so we closely watch the process, applying our expertise with what will and will not work in the marketplace, while making sure that the final project will meet with licensor approval.

JK: How do you choose a developer?



Bringing beloved evergreen properties to gaming life is what NewKidCo does best.

PS: We do work with quite a few teams from overseas; Edinburgh, Scotland and Manchester, England being two places that we frequently visit. Each team that we work with has their own expertise. Some are really good with sports characters or Saturday morning characters.

Being in the industry for more than 20 years, I have worked with a lot of these people before and many of the company owners were entry level programmers when I started. The ones that are successful will tell you that they made a decision to create a studio that would satisfy a certain need — dedicated to a certain genre of gaming — say horror role playing versus children's programming, both of which take very different skills.

Of course, if you have the

talent, you can do anything, but we are looking for a company that has talent and is passionate about the work they do. Today, even a short project for GameBoy Advanced is going to take 10-12 months, while the next generation platforms will require 14-16 months to create a game. Wouldn't it be horrible to spend up to 18 months working on a children's title if your passion is first person shooters? More importantly, wouldn't it be horrible for the children's property if the animator did not care about the characters?

JK: There are a lot of people that you and your teams are working with. Are your teams' ideas in the middle of two very separate groups of creatives?

PS: We defend our work everyday

by asking the question, "Are we here to satisfy a quarter or create a profitable game?" Being in business, everyone understands you have to ship and sell to see profit, so the corporate individuals want to see how quickly, and inexpensively, it can be done in order to increase the margin and sales window. You are always defending the project internally, fighting to make sure that the final product is done properly, even if it takes longer, so that in the end it flies off the shelf.

Then we also need to defend the game concept against the licensor. They often do not understand what it takes to turn an existing property, whether it is a television, movie or literary character, into an interactive product. They need to understand technical limitations, game play limitations and that even though certain elements, a character or their universe may be a big part of the property, it may not work in the game play. So you have the process of trying to get the licensor to accept and believe you know what should be done in the interactive realm.

JK: Is it hard to get the licensor to understand the difference between their characters' existing world and the interactive one?

PS: Going into a licensor and saying, "We are going to take your property into an interactive realm and this is how, even though this is not how the property was brought into the world," is difficult. For example, all stories, whether cartoons, movies or books, have a beginning, middle and end. But that is not as true in interactive gaming as elements are determined by an unknown factor, the

game play.

Additionally, though those elements may be in the interactive environment, they are not going to be the same as the original content, because the player is looking for something new. We do not want to create, "You have seen the movie, now play the game," products. For example, if the player knows the ending of the story, or even how a conversation will turn out, why play, or buy, the game? So we say we know what you have done, and where you are coming from, but know we want to turn down this corner with the story.



Rarely do games completely mirror the properties from which they come.

JK: A very familiar story, and license, you recently garnered was *E.T.: The Extraterrestrial*, correct?

PS: I am very excited over this because I worked with Amblin Entertainment and Steven Spielberg in the creation of a series of toys, plush and hard, for the original movie, so it is wonderful, twenty years later, to go back and revisit this license in a totally fresh way.

With the *E.T.* license, we told Amblin that we were not interested in doing a series of *E.T.* games that mimicked the movie. During creative discussions we talked about everything we know from the movie, but that might not have been developed within that context. For example, he obviously possesses powers to make

things grow, and he and his crews have obviously been to other planets. These are just two examples of things that the viewer, and game player, will readily accept about this character, even though they have never seen him use other powers or travel to other planets.

Without giving too much away, in the first games, four of which are being released for Christmas 2000, we have *E.T.* returning to the Green Planet. This was originally the idea for the never-realized sequel, so in the game play we are going to sequel the movie, having *E.T.* take on the role of an interplanetary environmentalist that takes care of emergencies in other worlds. As *E.T.* is dealing with trying to solve a problem, he might also have to be dealing with individuals who don't want him to succeed and who are creating obstacles, leading to the game play.

JK: How big is the *E.T.* license for NewKidCo?

PS: Right now, the plan is four releases for this holiday, following with two more for the 20th anniversary release of the movie, which is scheduled for March, 2002. We will follow that with four more games through quarters three and four, before we go on to year three of the license.

We will be creating *E.T.* games for cross platforms, including a "Back-To-School" release that will work with the Color Game Boy to create a PDA application that includes a lot of science-fiction and technology-based games and space exploration facts, in addition to the PDA elements.

JK: Another fabulously hot license that NewKidCo has is *Dragon*

Tales. How did you choose this property?



Dragon Tales, another successful NewKidCo license.

PS: *Dragon Tales* is the number one rated children's show on PBS right now, but when we first began looking at the license it was going into its first season with no ratings, no street word of mouth. Fortunately, from dealing with licensors that we have worked with in the past, when it was introduced to us we were able to recognize that there was something there. Strong characters and story quality, wrapped around the whole idea of a gentle journey for the kids' imagination.

JK: What do you mean by "gentle journey?"

PS: In the story you have these dragons that can fly and do things that are great, but not to the point that it takes them too far. Though they go on wonderful adventures, it all remains within the confines of Dragon Land, where it is safe and never frightening.

JK: Was the license instantly successful?

PS: Yes and no. When we first started taking it out, no one knew what it was, unless we were talking to a buyer with children, than it was a fast and immediate sell. It's

a great license, and going into year three, it is still rated number one for ages 2-11 on PBS. This is really amazing because they have not even started to work it as far as the advertising and promotion machine goes. They do not want to burn it out; they want to create it as an evergreen property.

JK: You have quite a few licenses, including *Sesame Street* and *Tom and Jerry*, that are, without a doubt, evergreen products.

PS: This is important when choosing a license. You want things that have been, will be, and will always be popular. Standing by our decision-making process, we had the opportunity to pick up *The Powerpuff Girls* and we passed. We did not see it as evergreen and we could not predict if the title

would, in the 12-14 months that the product would take to develop, be strong enough to support the game.

JK: I love that you have brought the classic cartoon, *Tom and Jerry*, to video games.

PS: *Tom and Jerry* are about as classic and timeless as you can get. An interesting aspect of *Tom and Jerry* is that while their exposure to children in the United States is limited, in Europe, they are huge.

Because there have been so many different renditions of the duo, we are creating *Tom and Jerry* games based on their various periods beginning in the 1950s. Warner Bros., the licensor, is very defined about the art approaches and style guides that we are able to use. When looking at the



Tom and Jerry's high-flying cartoon antics add to the fun when creating games.

license potential of *Tom and Jerry*, we decided that we liked the cartoon history of the property and the level of cartoon violence that is no longer allowed or tolerated. For instance, at a design meeting for a game, we can say, "We want to slice this character in two," which is something you can't do in children's gaming. However, within the boundaries of cartoon violence, we can put a zipper into the character so that instead of "slicing," we are unzipping.

JK: What are some of the other things you look for in a license?

PS: One thing to be careful of is the creator of the characters and whether they are going to be interested in the product in two years, much less long term. One of our benefits is the amount of experience we have in the upper and middle management range. Everyone here has 8-20 years of experience in interactive gaming and I feel confident in saying we have seen it, done it and we can tell when something or someone does not have the depth, the heart and the passion to create a good game...on any level.

Another important factor of early childhood (EC) gaming is gender neutrality. A lot of the really popular properties immediately relate to a universal audience. For us, doing EC products, it's very important to have that gender neutrality. It reminds me of all those years when the industry was clamoring over how to get more girls interested in gaming. The answer was not, nor is it now, to create games for girls, but to create good games that girls, and boys, will enjoy playing.

JK: According to your press releases, NewKidCo is showing 50% increases in fourth quarter sales from 1999 to 2000, resulting in a company revenue (Dec. 2000) of \$26.0 million. What is your secret?

PS: Last July 2000 we set up a North American sales and distribution network that has led to two consecutively profitable quarters for year end 2000. In 2000, we released nine new titles including Winnie the Pooh and Tigger-based games for Playstation, Nintendo 64 and Game Boy Color, *Dragon Tales* for Playstation and Game Boy Color and Disney's *Doug* for

Game Boy Color, all of which are very strong properties.

But when you are talking about a group that has been around as long as we have, we are able to make decisions. We keep the number of employees low, and bring in strong experienced people not afraid to work and have someone tell them, "I don't agree, and I challenge you to that point," and then enter into a strong dialogue. We understand the business so that products are on schedule and good.

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

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

**THE ANIMATION
FLASH**
Weekly Email Newsletter
www.awn.com/flash

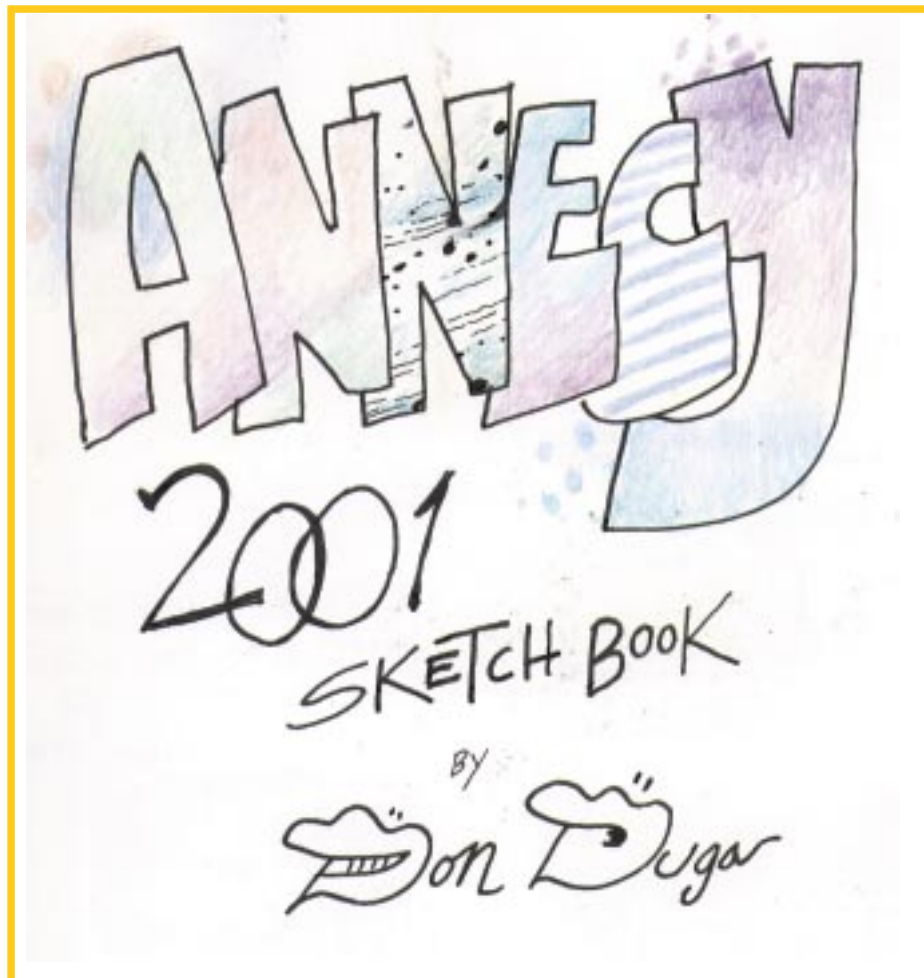
Annecy 2001, An Artist's Sketchbook

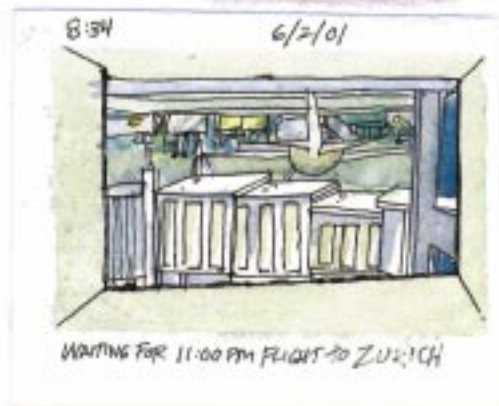
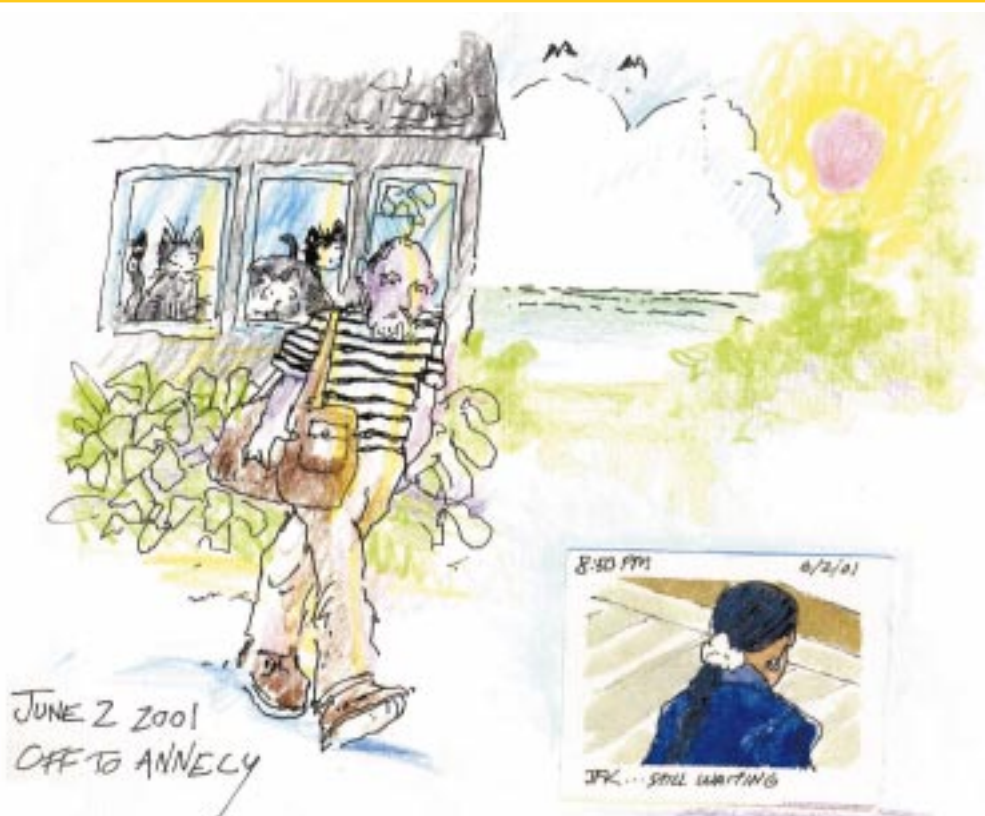
by Don Duga

The Annecy International Film Festival and Market was held in Annecy, France from Monday, June 5 through Saturday, June 10, 2001. Don Duga attended and as most artists do, took his sketchbook with him. Here is Don's look at the festival from waiting in the airport to the closing night party.

Don Duga is an animator, director, producer of animation. From UPA to Rankin/Bass to commercials to Sesame Street to feature films, he is an industry veteran. He has storyboarded such classics as Mr. Magoo, Underdog, The Last Unicorn, Frosty the Snow Man, Mad Monster Party, Wind in the Willows and more. He is also the co-founder of Polestar Films in New York, and has been an instructor of animation at The School of Visual Arts in New York City since 1962.

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





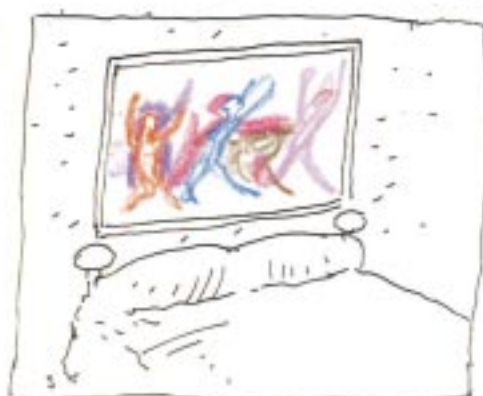
SUNDAY
I ARRIVED AT
MY HOTEL



VIEW FROM MY HOTEL



IN MY ROOM
BLUE DIRECTOR CHAIR
WHITE GUCCO WALLS -



A RODIN DRAWING OVER MY BED





2

WALKED INTO TOWN TO HAVE DINNER... JUST ABOUT TO HAVE MY FIRST PASTIS... IN FRANCE... VO: HI DON...



IT WAS MYRON EMERY FROM CAL ARTS... MYRON: MIND IF I JOIN YOU?

I HAD NOT SEEN MYRON FOR TWO YEARS...



WE MET IN ANNECY... MYRON HAD ORGANIZED A TEACHERS CONFERENCE IN HIS HOTEL... GOOD LUNCH... SO WE TALKED AND TALKED



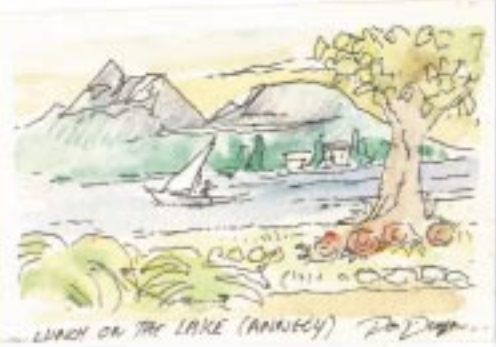
ABOUT... THE NEXT CONFERENCE... AND THAT WE BOTH WENT TO CHOUINARD IN LA. ME... 1958 MYRON 1970... GREAT SCHOOL



AT THE THEATER



WAITING IN LINE TO GET TICKETS





HAVING MY..PETIT DEJEUNER
AT THE HOTEL.....

AND I HEAR---

"FRACTURED FAIRYTALES!"...FROM
THE TABLES ACROSS THE ROOM



SO I GET UP—AND WALK
OVER TO THEM....
(THEY WERE FROM
DREAMWORKS)



ME: WHY MY MOTHER AND
BILL SCOTT DIRECTED AND
ACTED IN A COMMUNITY THEATER
IN TULUNGA CALIFORNIA,
WHY I AS A TEENAGER PAINTED
SETS FOR THEM—



THEY HAD TO GO TO A
CONFERENCE





ANNECY MADALA

Diyda 2001

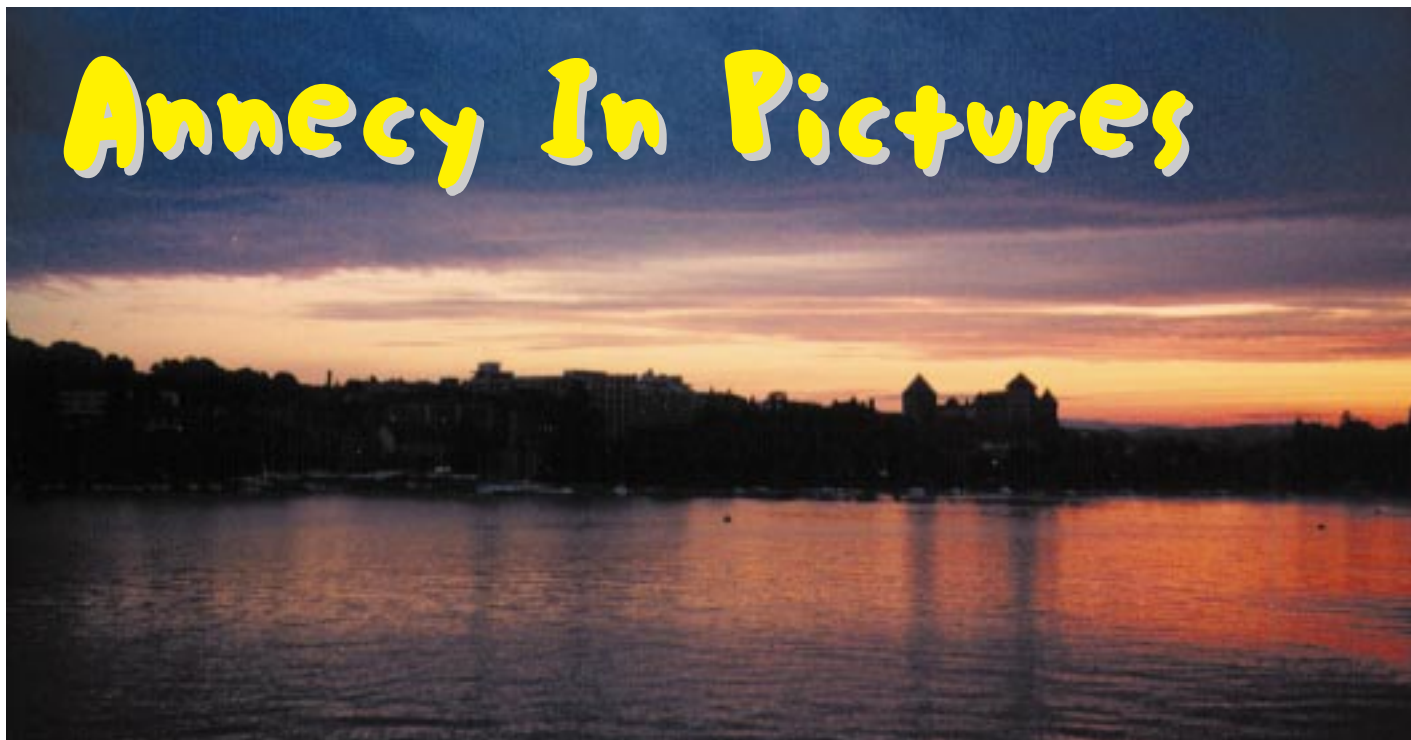




TO
BE CONTINUED
AT ANNECY 2002



Annecy In Pictures



Sunset over Annecy. © AWN, Inc.

Every year the world animation community convenes in Annecy, France for a week of animation screenings, showcases, retrospectives, announcements and parties. A short walk from the Bonlieu Theater reveals the Imperial Palace, which becomes home to panels, workshops, exhibits and a restaurant/bar overlooking the lake and Alps, hopping with business deals and meetings.

Here are just a few of the highlights from The Annecy International Film Festival and Market, which was held from Monday, June 5 through Saturday, June 10, 2001.

In Competition

The Oscar winner for best short animated film, *Father And Daughter*, won the coveted grand prize in Annecy. In an elaborate and festive closing ceremony held on Saturday, June 9, 2001, the awards were handed out by the festival's artistic director, Serge

Bromberg. The Short and Feature Fiction Films jury was comprised of Ron Diamond, USA, Florence Mialhe, France, John R. Dilworth, USA, Françoise Reymond, France and Oscar Grillo, Argentina. A complete list of winners is available on-line in AWN's Headline News section.



The MIFA's home, The Imperial Palace.
© AWN, Inc.



Alpenhorns serenaded participants of the MIFA's opening night party. © AWN, Inc.

Prize Winners



© Cinété Filmproduktie, Clouddrunner Ltd.

Annecy 2001 Grand Prix For Best Animated Short Film
Father And Daughter
Director: Michaël Dudok de Wit, The Netherlands, Great Britain



© The Big Knights Ltd.

Award For Best TV Series
The Big Knights "Knights In Distress"
Directors: Mark Baker, Neville Astley, Great Britain



© Argus International.

Mike Gribble Award
Moya Zhizn / It's My Life
Director: Natalia Berezovaya, Russia



© Bill Plympton.

Annecy 2001 Grand Prix For Best Animated Feature
Mutant Aliens
Director: Bill Plympton, USA



Le Nez. © Svetlana Alexeïeff-Rockwell/Cinédoc. 2001.

Focus on the Master of Pinscreen

A definite highlight of Annecy 2001 was the unveiling of Giannalberto Bendazzi's latest text on pinscreen legend Alexandre Alexeïeff. The *Alexeïeff: Itinerary of a Master* book signing and reception accompanied an exhibition of Alexeïeff's work which included not only a pin screen, original artwork and tools, but also a video installation and screenings in the main theater.

Being it a tree simmering against a bleak background, a man who, as he bows, not only removes his hat but his head as well, a squirrel who jumps in the middle of nowhere, two pendulums criss crossing each other at infinitum, in the silence of his studio, my father would disassemble each of his subjects and illuminate them



Leading animation historian Giannalberto Bendazzi signs copies of his latest animation text for fans. © AWN, Inc.



Bendazzi and Annecy guest of honor, Peter Lord, have a word. © AWN, Inc.

one after the other, in order to bring them to life again. As if sifted through his childhood's dreams, they would magically settle on his copper plate or in front of his camera.

This slow metamorphosis done step by step, this dialogue between what is real and what is imagined, created in him and gave others, a dreamlike sense of irreality. This very tension gave both his life and his work a particular thrust and dimension.

Unpopular as it may be, he still forces us, thank goodness, to slow down the way we see and the way we listen.

— Svetlana Alexeïeff-Rockwell upon her father's centennial and the launch of *Alexeïeff: Itinerary of a Master* at the Annecy 2001 Festival.



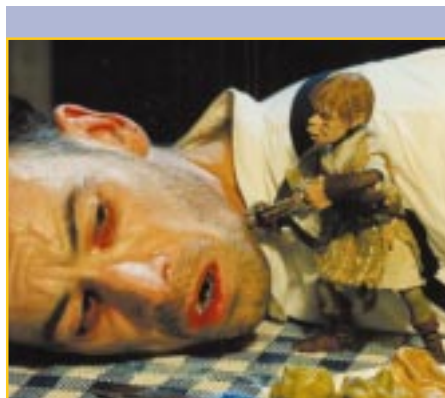
Svetlana Alexeïeff-Rockwell and the NFB's Jacques Drouin, today's leading proponent and proprietor of pinscreen animation. © AWN, Inc.



Bendazzi with his family and Cinédoc film distributor representative. © AWN, Inc.

Britain and Aardman Highlighted

This year Annecy had a focus on British animation. These special screenings featured some of the best films in the U.K.'s illustrious animation history.



© Bolex Brothers.

The Secret Adventures of Tom Thumb

Director: Dave Borthwick, 1993



© Wyatt Cattaneo Prod. Ltd.

Mr. Pascal

Director: Alison de Vere, 1979

Aardman Animations had a special exhibition in Annecy's castle, which was fascinating. Not only did the exhibit feature sets and models, but original, conceptual drawings of Wallace and Gromit (when they were but a man and a dog), storyboards and a slew of different removable mouths, noses, et. al. that are needed to make puppets living breathing characters.

Need we say who any of the below characters are?



© 2001 Aardman Animations.



© Aardman/W&G Ltd. 1989



© 2001 Aardman Animations.

Gene Deitch on the Web

A highlight for the AWN team at Annecy 2001 was the announcement of Oscar-winner Gene Deitch's latest book, *How To Succeed In Animation (Don't Let A Little Thing Like Failure Stop You!)*, which is featured at Gene Deitch.AWN.com. Readers are invited to comment, argue and contribute, thereby creating an interactive dialogue with one of animation's true greats. Since interesting contributions will be incorporated into the book and credited, we think this is one of the first truly interactive books on the Internet. "Publishing my new book on the Internet lets me reach out and interact with people from around the world in ways not possible with the printed page," explained Gene during the press conference.

From left to right: AWN co-founder and co-publisher Ron Diamond, the legendary Gene Deitch and Dan Sarto, AWN co-founder and co-publisher.



© AWN, Inc.



© AWN, Inc.



© AWN, Inc.

If You'd Only Been There

Here's a selection of films featured during the Annecy festival screenings. If you'd been there, you could have seen them in their entirety, plus so much more... in fact, you would have proved your mother right and your eyes would have probably turned square if you'd attended every screening throughout the week.



© Cako Studio Ltd.

Karaván

Director: Ferenc Fischer

(Short film made on film print.)



© Swamp – Switzerland's Weeniest Animated Motion Pictures.

Credo

Director: Jonas Raeber

(Short film made on film print.)



© Tube Studios.

Fridge Magnets

Director: Danny Bergeron

(Pilot.)



© 2D/3D Animations.

Le bain

Director: Florent Mounier

(Short film made on video print.)



© La Boîte,...Productions.

Les ballons ne reviennent jamais

Director: Cecilia Marreiros Marum

(Short film made on film print.)



© Je Suis Bien Content.

Le calendrier du père Noël

Directors: Jean-Paul Guigue, Guillaume Febvrel, Stéphane Roche
(TV series.)



© 4+1 Production-Distribution Sh.P.K.

Rimodelim

Director: Stephan Taci

(Short film made on film print.)



© Cosgrove Hall Films Ltd.

Blink

Director: Peter Dodd

(Pilot.)



© 2D/3D Animations.

Driving Home

Director: Susan Kim

(School and graduation films.)



© Right Angle.

The Canterbury Tales "The Journey Back"

Director: Jonathan Myerson

(TV special.)



© TV Company Confetti.

1001 Pugovitsa "Lady in a Black Hat"

Director: Victor Azeev

(TV series.)



© Manuel Hauss.

Noé Noé

Director: Manuel Hauss

(Short film made on video print.)

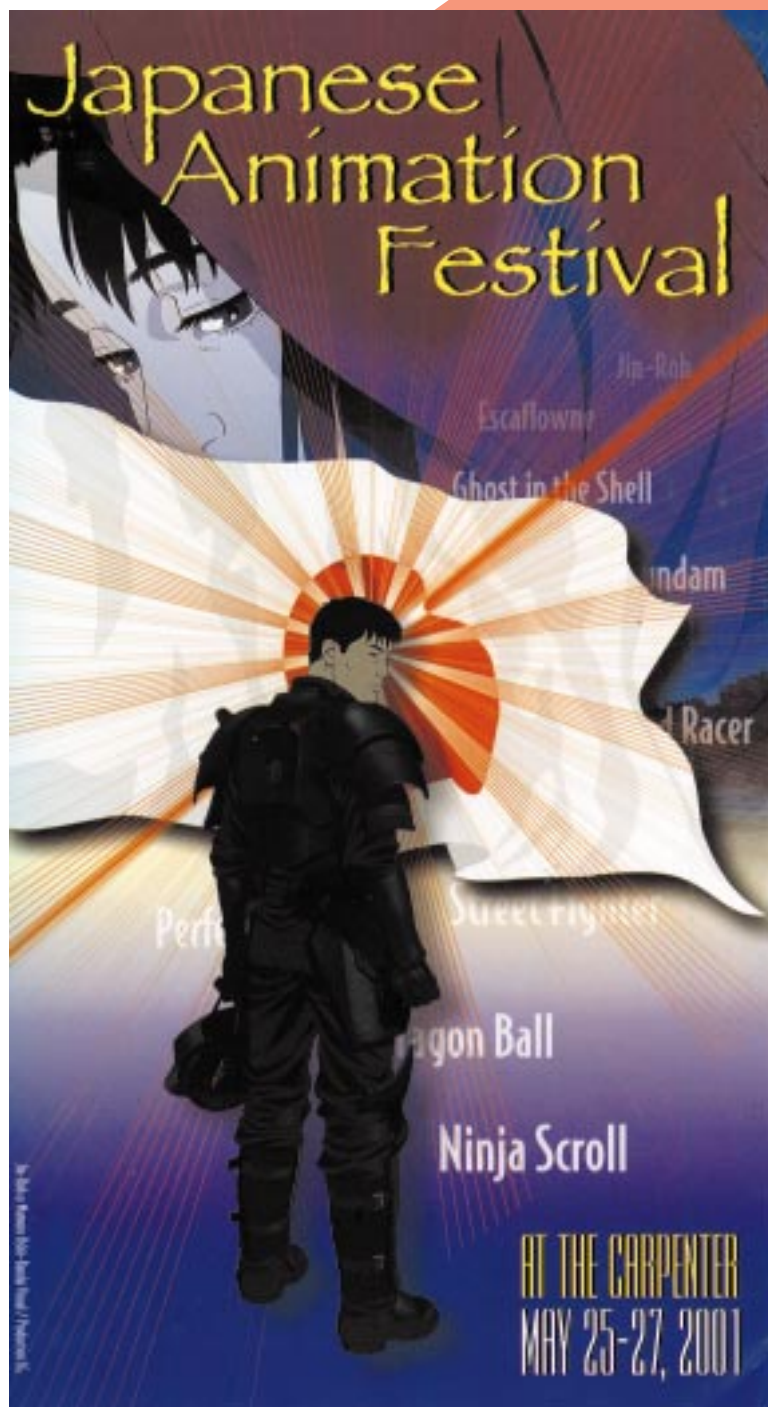
*Do you have photos
that you'd like to share?
Let us know!*

Email

*heather@awn.com and
put "Annecy Photos" in
the subject line of your
note. We look
forward to hearing
from you.*

Confirming a New Tradition: Cal State Long Beach's 2nd Annual Japanese Animation Festival

by Fred Patten



Brochure cover design by GI Design. Jin-Roh images
© Mamoru Oshii – Bandai Visual/Production I.G.

One aspect of anime's rapid growth in America has been the explosive proliferation of anime conventions throughout North America during the past decade. Modeled upon the earlier science-fiction and comic-book conventions, these are classic "amateur" gatherings. They are usually organized by a committee of volunteer hobbyists from one or more local anime clubs. They are attended as much out of a hobbyist social spirit as to see anime. Fans may travel hundreds of miles to spend a weekend at panels with celebrity speakers such as anime directors or voice actors, participating in anime amateur theatricals such as costume parades, shopping for collectibles in a room of anime specialty vendors, and just socializing with fellow fans.

This is different from a traditional film exhibition organized by an established educational or artistic foundation, or by an art-house theater. Their audiences are primarily film enthusiasts from just the local area. The films themselves are usually the only attraction; there is no reason to stay around after they are over.

Last year, California State University at Long Beach organized a Japanese Animation Festival, which was an attempt to combine aspects of both a fan convention and a film festival. The two-day event on the Easter



The Festival's home. Courtesy of and © Brent Lynch.

Sunday, 2000 weekend was held at the campus' Richard & Karen Carpenter Performing Arts Center, an 1,100-seat theatrical auditorium, which is a popular venue for theatrical premieres in Southern California, as well as film retrospectives and live performances. This first festival was more successful as a film exhibition than as a convention. It featured only one guest speaker. Nevertheless, it did well enough that the university was encouraged to expand it to a three-day event this year, moving it from Easter in April to Memorial Day weekend at the end of May.

Special Guests

This year's 2nd Annual Japanese Animation Festival on May 25 - 27, 2001, fortuitously coincided in its timing with the plans of Bandai Entertainment, one of the major anime video distributors in America, to begin theatrical distribution. The Carpenter Arts Center's director Peter Lesnik and Bandai's marketing manager Jerry Chu arranged to preview Bandai's first two anime theatrical features, which will be released later this year. The Festival opened

on Friday afternoon with the U.S. premiere of *Jin-Roh: The Wolf Brigade*, a 1999 political thriller produced by the team famous for the 1995 *Ghost in the Shell*. *Jin-Roh* has been playing at international film festivals in Japanese subtitled in English, but this was the just-completed English dubbed version. This premiere was publicized as including personal appearances by *Jin-Roh*'s director Hiroyuki Okiura (principal animator of *Ghost in the Shell*), writer Mamoru Oshii (director of *Ghost in the Shell*) and animation studio president Mitsushisa Ishikawa (whose Production I.G. studio produced both features). Okiura unfortunately had to cancel at the last minute, but Oshii and Ishikawa spoke at length during the Festival's opening press screening, at a panel moderated by animation expert Charles Solomon. Other guests included Toshifumi Yoshida, the producer of the English version of *Jin-Roh*, and voice actor Michael Dobson, who voiced the lead character, a paramilitary trooper who falls in love with a suspected terrorist.

The afternoon press screen-



Mamoru Oshii not only spoke on panels but was also on hand for fans to meet in person! Courtesy of and © Jerry Chu, Bandai Entertainment.

ing was followed by a fancy catered press party at the university's formal Japanese Gardens; then the Festival opened to the public with the 8:00 p.m. public theatrical premiere of *Jin-Roh*. Oshii and Ishikawa spoke again for the general audience, though without Solomon. Where most of the questions at the press screening had related to anime industry production details, most of those at the public screening were directed to Oshii as a filmmaker. Oshii has been a prominent anime director since the 1980s and many in the audience were familiar with his films. This *Jin-Roh* premiere drew the biggest crowd of the weekend. It was followed by a screening of their earlier, but still extremely popular, *Ghost in the Shell*.

Giveaways, Shopping and Panels

Saturday opened with an atmosphere designed for children and teens. A mini-theater was set up in the lobby for a free screening of anime children's videos donated by Pioneer Entertainment.



Raffling away a framed *Final Fantasy* poster. Courtesy of and © Brent Lynch.

ment. Free full-sized movie posters for the following month's release of the anime feature *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within*, were given away by the promotions manager of the nearby multiplex and the afternoon's film program began with an on-stage drawing for a framed copy of the poster.

Favorable reports of last year's Festival encouraged four anime specialty shops from Los Angeles and San Diego to set up sales tables this year. This marketplace was light by anime convention standards, but the opportunity to buy anime music CDs, model kits, wall scrolls and similar merchandise imported from Japan increased the Festival's anime ambience considerably for filmgoers not used to the fan conventions.

Saturday's program began with a panel on voice dubbing, moderated by the Carpenter



Voice actor Michael Dobson greets fans. Courtesy of and © Jerry Chu, Bandai Entertainment.

Center's marketing director Bethany Price. Most of the speakers were voice actors (from Ocean Studios in Vancouver) who had performed the roles in *Jin-Roh*, but for the benefit of the predominantly young attendees and parents, it was emphasized that this was also the voice cast for the *Digimon: Digital Monsters* TV series. Participants included *Jin-Roh* producer Yoshida, voice actors Michael Dobson, Jamieson Price and Dorothy Melendrez, *Digimon* producer Terri-Lei O'Malley, writer/director Michael Sorich and casting director Paul DiFranco. They described the procedures and some of the problems in translating a Japanese production for American viewers. Many in the audience asked enthusiastically how they could become voice actors. The panel, in a small room that only sat 60 people, was so crowded that the Festival hopes to repeat it in a larger room next year.

Varied Screenings

Saturday's first anime screening was a premiere of three *Dragon Ball* episodes, provided by Funimation, set to debut on The Cartoon Network a month later. These were original *Dragon Ball* episodes, not its better-known (in the U.S.) *Dragon Ball Z* sequel. *Dragon Ball* was passed over when it was first offered to American TV because it was too raunchy for children's TV cartoons. But edgier TV cartoons are more acceptable today, especially for a cable channel like The Cartoon Network. This program drew the third-largest audience of the Festival, and both parents and youngsters loved the *South Park*-type humor.

The second-largest draw of the Festival was the Saturday

evening preview of *Escaflowne the Movie: A Girl in Gaia*, the 2000 theatrical version of the 1996 26-episode TV series *WWWThe Vision of Escaflowne*. Bandai is currently releasing the TV series on DVD, one three-episode DVD every couple of months; and many fans came to the movie hoping for a preview of how the story ends. They were semi-disappointed; everyone loved the theatrical animation quality, but the story had been revised so heavily that it offered little clue as to how the TV version concludes.

Sunday's program featured only one major American premiere; *Spring and Chaos: The Life and Times of Kenji Miyazawa* (1996), to be released a month later by the new Los Angeles anime specialty company Tokyo-pop. Miyazawa (1896-1933) was a writer and poet of allegorical fantasies, and this fine-art fantasized biography of a misunderstood intellectual depicts his life in the often-surrealistic imagery that he employed in his fables.

The remainder of the three-day program was broadly split between "premieres" of new anime videos and DVDs just a month or two ahead of their commercial releases, and film festival favorites such as *Barefoot Gen* (1983), *Ninja Scroll* (1993) and *Perfect Blue* (1997). The Festival tried to put a fresh slant on older titles where possible. A sampler of the popular TV series *Cowboy Bebop* (1998) was themed around episodes which featured parodies of topical American events (the "good buddy" highway trucker community, the Unibomber and Disney theme parks), as examples of how American culture and news events are influential on Japan's popular culture. This par-



From left to right: unknown; Satoshi Kanuma, producer; Michael Dobson, voice actor for Fuse; Mamoru Oshii, creator/writer of *Jin-Roh: The Wolf Brigade*; Mitsuhsa Ishikawa, president of Production I.G.; Toshifumi Yoshida, producer; and Ken Iyadomi, executive producer of Bandai Entertainment.

Courtesy of and © Jerry Chu, Bandai Entertainment.

particular screening was also used to test the audience's preferences, by a poll at the start of the screening as to whether people preferred to watch *Cowboy Bebop* dubbed or subtitled in English. The majority

was emphatically in favor of the Japanese dialogue with English subtitles. (This was hardly a surprise, as it seems consistent with the usual preferences of both film festival and anime fan audiences.)

On To Next Year!

The Festival's overall attendance was about 4,000, showing a definite increase over the first year. It was still primarily a film festival with a daily local commuter attendance rather than attracting out-of-town anime fans to come to Long Beach for the weekend. The third annual Festival, to be held again over the Memorial Day weekend, 2002, will investigate adding more aspects of the fan convention to the event.

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

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

Animation World Store

<http://www.awn.com/awnstore/vilppu>



Never before available!!!

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



Fresh from the Festivals:

July 2001's Film Reviews

by Maureen Furniss

Within the world of animation, most experimentation occurs within short format productions, whether they be high budgeted commercials, low budgeted independent shorts, or something in between. The growing number of short film festivals around the world attest to the vitality of these works, but there are few other venues for exhibition of them or even written reviews. As a result, distribution tends to be difficult and irregular. On a regular basis, *Animation World Magazine* will highlight some of the most interesting with short descriptive overviews.

This Month:

The Shadow of Doubt (2001), 10 min., directed by Cynthia Wells, USA. Info: The Digital Theater Group. E-mail: gandcwel@earthlink.net. URL: www.tdtgee.com.

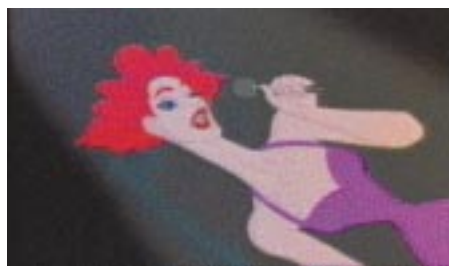
Drink (2000), 5 min., directed by Patrick Smith, USA. Info: Patrick Smith. Tel: 917-549-3763. E-mail: pat@patsmith.com. URL: www.patsmith.com.

Grace (1999), 6 min., directed by Lorelei Pepei, USA. Info: Lorelei Pepei, 806 Kodak Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90026 USA. Tel: 323-953-9579. E-mail: loreleip@jps.net.

Chicken Kiev (2000), 9 min., directed by Thomas Stellmach, Germany. Info: Thomas Stellmach,

Ahornweg 3, 34295 Edermuende Grifte, Germany. Tel: 0049 170 2828194. Fax: 0049 5665 7762. E-mail: thomas@stellmach.com.

Nous sommes immortels (*We Are Immortal*, 1999) 2.5 min., directed by Daniel Guyonnet, France. Info: Daniel Guyonnet. E-mail: daniel.guyonnet@freesbee.fr.



Tallulah returns in *The Shadow of Doubt*.
© Geoff and Cynthia Wells.

The Shadow of Doubt

The Shadow of Doubt, directed by Cynthia Wells, is the second production to feature the sultry redhead character who made her debut in *Tallulah, Queen of the Universe*. Here, the singer is haunted with doubts about her work, after seeing a once-great musician who is now happy to be running a club and serving drinks to customers. Because the film centers around Tallulah's inner questions, it is natural that the work employs a good deal of voice-over narration, to suggest her interior monologue. It is also fitting that the visuals in the work are somewhat 'dreamlike' at times, as they depict both memory and fantasy. It is in terms of the

visuals that the short really shines. In terms of character design, but especially backgrounds and effects, *Shadow of Doubt* is very well designed.

Wells is a veteran animator, having won a number of awards for her work, which includes animation on two Emmy Award-winning shows, *Ziggy's Gift* and *Roman City*, as well as the features *Anastasia* (Fox), *Space Jam* and *Quest for Camelot* (both Warner Bros.). *Shadow of Doubt* was co-produced with husband Geoff Wells under the company name of The Digital Theater Group. The production relied on a large team of assistants who were trained in various capacities in exchange for their work, as well as seasoned professionals. Composer Steve Orich composed this short's score and song, "Shadow Days," which was performed by Deborah Pearl, who also performed Tallulah's dialogue and voice-over. Art director Donna Prince painted all of the short's fine background scenes. Geoff Wells served as writer, script editor, and sound and picture technical director. The 10-minute short is recorded in English.

Technically, *Shadow of Doubt* has much to illustrate about the way in which relatively inexpensive technologies can be used to create a very professional-looking work. While the animation was drawn on paper, Toonz software was used for digital ink-and-paint. Adobe Photoshop and Premier were also employed. The software was run on an NT computer, a Gateway GP6 450Mhz PC using a standard 12GB hard drive and 256 MB RAM. For backup and storage, the team used a Quantum DLT 4000 drive and an 18GB Quantum Atlas III SCSI drive for temporary storage. A softer

look was achieved by using a resolution of 1K, as opposed to the standard 2K resolution of a film frame, in order to reduce the memory burden on the system. The film employs up to 50 levels of effects, with storage of source files exceeding 80 GB. Rendering of the film was done on a single computer, which ran nonstop for five weeks during final outputting.



Drink. © Pat Smith, 2001.

Drink

Seasoned industry animator Patrick Smith also created his independent short, *Drink*, using a combination of traditional methods and computer technologies. An exercise in both metamorphosis and character design, the plot centers on a young boy who drinks a strange green fluid from a flask (note: do not try this at home, kiddies) and finds himself evolving into a series of different individuals. These characters evolve one from another in a growing pile, so that eventually the boy finds himself (back in his original form) sitting high above the ground on a stack of 'peeled' layers from the various forms. Taking another drink, the transformation occurs in reverse.

The images used in *Drink* were drawn with pencil on paper and scanned into a computer, where they were colored. Adobe Photoshop and Adobe After Effects were the software applications used. Backgrounds were painted with acrylic. Eventually, the images were transferred back

to 35mm film. Music was provided by Karl vonKries; the film is without dialogue.

Smith's goal was to retain a rather informal aesthetic in the work, so lines are left somewhat unrefined (particularly for in-betweens), where construction lines and even timing notes sometimes appear. I find the contrast between relatively clean and sharp extremes and rougher in-betweens a bit uneasy at times, but the result is nonetheless unique. Smith acknowledges inspiration by Bill Plympton, which is clear in the initial 'unzipping' of new characters so characteristic of a Plympton short; however, the characters themselves are original and well-designed. The director also cites illustrator Ralph Steadman as an influence in terms of the 'raw' and painterly look he aimed for in *Drink*. The underlying concept, that every individual possesses a wide range of personas, ranging from rich to poor, young to old, and male to female, is an interesting one and well represented by Smith's ability to create a series of distinct character designs. Professionally, Smith has animated, directed and designed for Disney, Olive Jar and MTV. Currently, he is directing the fifth season of the MTV series *Daria*.

Grace

In a very different way, Lorelei Pepei has revealed the breadth of her skills as an animator in her experimental short, *Grace*. With resume credentials that include CG animation for the *South Park* feature *Bigger, Longer and Uncut*, as well as stop-motion animation and assistant camera for Corky Quakenbush's *Mad TV* animation, one would hardly expect to see an artist produce a

highly subjective, sensual film centering on a woman's experience. But Pepei's self-described "layered and flowing poem of visual metaphor" is an interesting piece, both in terms of its aesthetics and its production techniques. Eschewing the use of computer technology, the director used pixilation, single frame projection, optical printing and stop-motion under the camera to create images of performer Susan Simpson. Flame effects were made with the use of mink oil painted frame by frame onto Plexiglas.



Lorelei Pepei's Grace. © Lorelei Pepei.

Pepei's aesthetic is attributed to her influence by such artists as filmmakers Pat O'Neill, Walerian Borowczyk and Patrick Bokanowski, as well as early photographer Margaret Cameron and fine artists Francis Bacon and Joseph Cornell. She also cites an interest in fantasy Victorian postcards. This blend suggests a fascination with objects and individuals that are re-evaluated through a modern perspective and visual dissection. Pepei explains that she tried to access an unconscious flow in her exploration of the body, which is divided into four parts and the separation between flesh and soul. The film's sound design was created by Eric Patrick; it is without dialogue.

Grace was created on 16mm film as an MFA thesis film in experimental animation at the California Institute of the Arts. Pepei not only directed the work,

but also served as producer, art director, cinematographer and editor. Among the awards it has been given is the Grand Prize "Best of Festival" at the International Student Animation Festival of Ottawa and the 2nd Grand Prize "High Risk" at the Fantoche Festival in Baden, Switzerland.

Chicken Kiev

Also broadening his scope is Thomas Stellmach, perhaps best known for his Academy Award winning puppet animation, *Quest* (1997). His drawn and computer animated short, *Chicken Kiev*, differs vastly in form and content from the former film. *Chicken Kiev* tells the story of an extremely cute baby chick who hatches and sets out looking for his mother, who left the nest to peck at some grain. Along the way, the chick tries to be friendly to a host of potentially dangerous characters, but manages to avert trouble every time. My only beef with the story is what I might call its 'Bambi Meets Godzilla-esque' ending; naturally, I won't give it away, but it left me wondering whether this was supposed to be black comedy or some kind of commentary on life. Like *Quest*, I think, *Chicken Kiev* also has an open-ended structure, where there is no real resolution to the narrative events — or, at least, not a very comforting one.

To create *Chicken Kiev*, Stellmach worked with a crew of twenty individuals located in various cities within Germany. This crew included commercial artists, animators and computer specialists who collaborated via the Internet from Kassel, Mainz, Cologne and Berlin. While backgrounds were completely computer-generated, the animated characters were first drawn on paper

and then digitized with a line tester on an Amiga computer so they could be exchanged over the Internet in a small file size. Later, images were drawn with heavy black lines, scanned into a Silicon Graphics computer at a high resolution, and colored with Animo. The 9-minute film was stored in 80 gigabytes of space. Its production was supported by a film grant from the Hessian Broadcast Company and the State, the Office of the Federal Government for Cultural Affairs and Media, and the Institute for Film Promotion in Berlin. It has shown at festivals worldwide and won numerous awards.

Although the film was created as a graduation film from the University of Kassel, where he studied animation with Paul Driessen (who is credited as story consultant on the film), Thomas has created animation for several years. Since 1982, he has produced sixteen animated works and currently teaches at both the Film Academy Ludwigsburg and the University of Kassel. In addition he co-founded an animation company, Lichthof, in Kassel with P. Lemken and Joachim Bode, who is credited as designer on *Chicken Kiev*.

We Are Immortal

Working on a much smaller scale — in fact, completely by himself — Daniel Guyonnet created *Nous sommes immortels/We Are Immortal* as an animated New Year 2000 greeting card for his friends and family. In the 2.5-minute work, a series of odd and interesting characters walk across the screen. For example, a little man who rocks toward and away from the camera stands his ground as a huge fire, a gigantic

creature and even a nuclear bomb threaten to destroy him, yet he holds his ground, untouched. This is the character who demonstrates the film's title message: the words "We Are Immortal" follow this series of actions. As the director explains, there is no narrative in the short; rather he wanted to create something 'energetic' and stylish. Incidentally, Guyonnet made the film in both French and English (there is no dialogue, only printed phrases following each of the actions in the film).



Nous sommes immortels (We Are Immortal). © 1999 Daniel Guyonnet.

Two things make *We Are Immortal* particularly interesting to watch, aside from the array of amusing, original characters Guyonnet has created. The sound design is one of them. While minimal sound effects and music accompany the images, they are well timed and add a lot of depth to the visuals. These images are rendered in monochromatic colors, basically sepia tones, and appear to be on textured paper. In fact, the film was made through a combination of drawing on paper and Photoshop effects, compositing with Premier and output on Digital Beta. Guyonnet says he spent a lot of time creating the grainy texture used throughout the film. It was time well spent, as this texture makes his characters even more interesting to look at. *We Are Immortal* has shown at

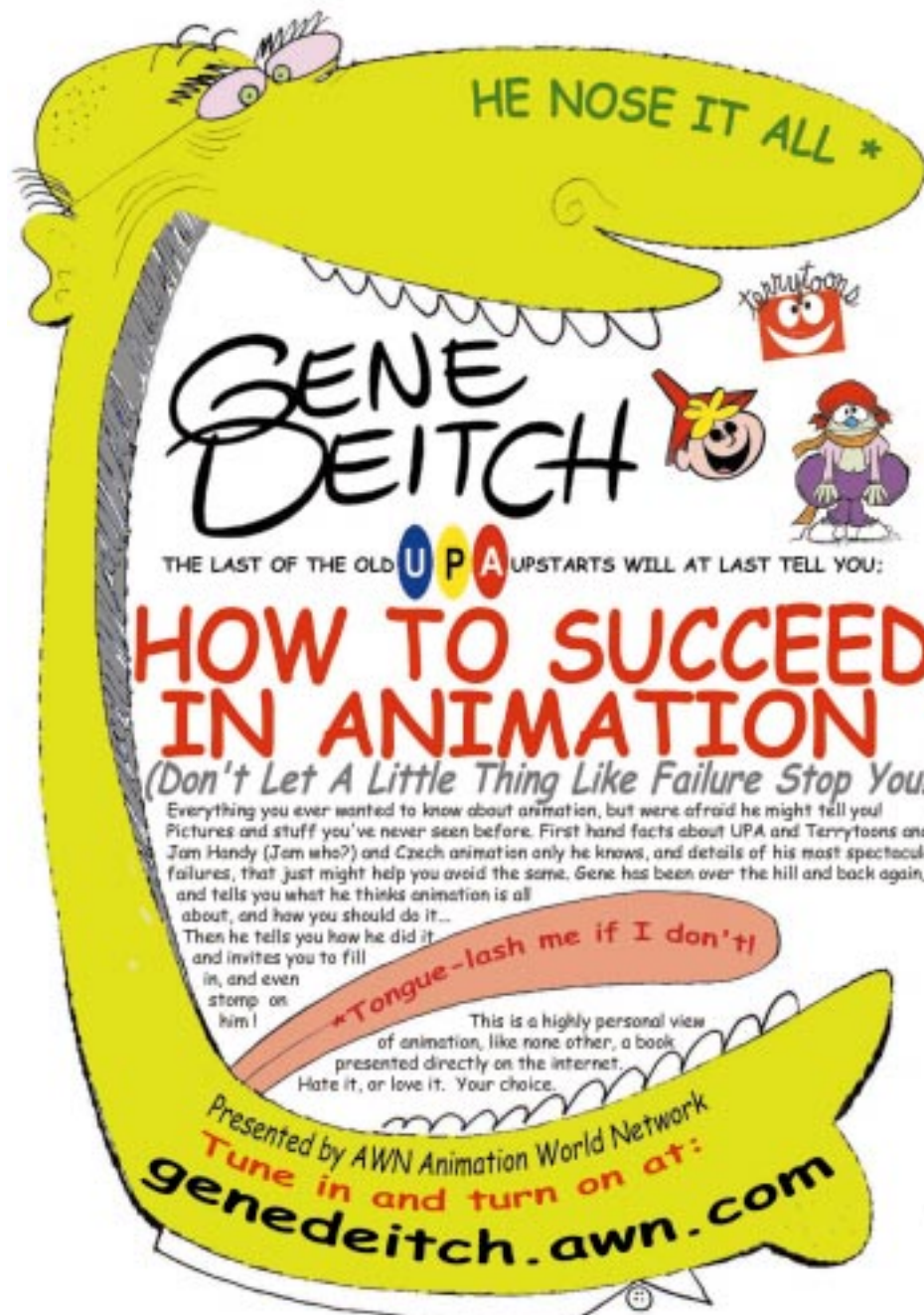
numerous international animation screenings, including the Annecy and Hiroshima 2000 festivals. It won the audience prize in international competition at the BITFILM festival, Hamburg.

Visit the on-line version of this article in order to view QuickTime

movie clips of these films:
http://mag.awn.com/index.php3?ltype=pageone&article_no=275.

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

Maureen Furniss, Ph.D. is Assistant Professor and Program Director of Film Studies at Chapman University in Orange, California. She is the founding editor of Animation Journal and the author of *Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics* (John Libbey, 1998).



This long-awaited new book is based on the eponymous exhibit at Manhattan's National Arts Club in 1996. As I was present at the kick-off evening of that show and visited the club several times during its run, I had a good chance to appreciate the original art on display. As most citizens of Planet Earth did not reside in Manhattan at that particular point in time, this book is an excellent way to get a sense of the exhibit whilst simultaneously escaping the perdition of subway transit.

Karen Falk, archivist of the Jim Henson Company, was kind enough to write the foreword to this new book. As the curator of the original exhibit she might easily have written the book herself, but the Henson/Abrams casting department selected Alison Inches, a former employee of Jim Henson Publishing. In her foreword, Karen was kind enough to say, "It is extremely gratifying to see this exhibit revived and expanded in book form, giving an even greater audience an intimate look at Jim Henson's creative process." Revived? Yes. Expanded? Well...

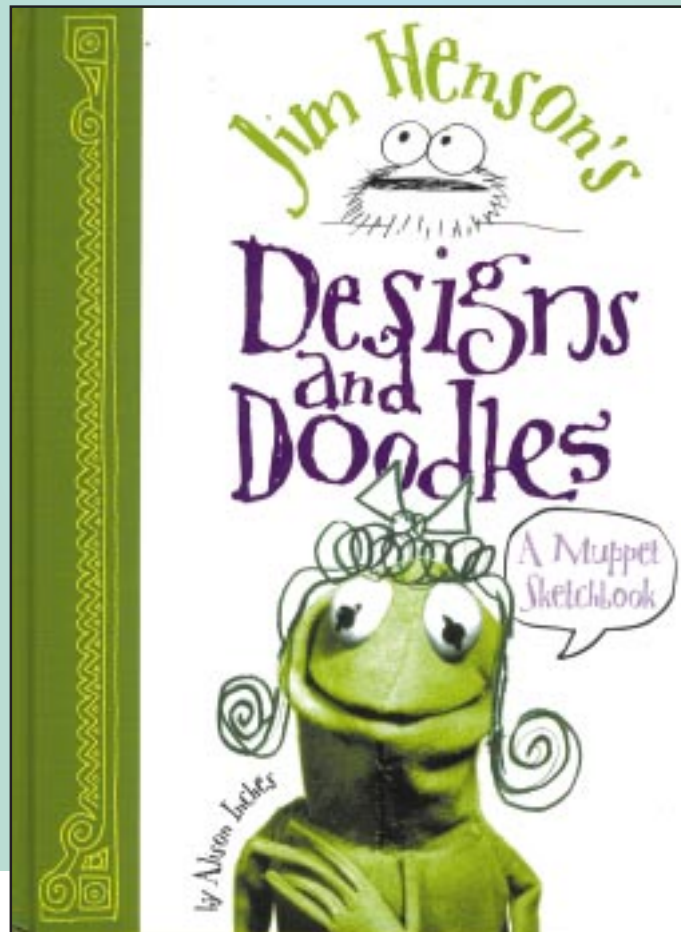
In terms of artwork, this book presents the audience with a reduced, rather than expanded, look at Henson's original works. Reduced, not only perforce in scale, but reduced in number. None of the handful of historic puppets on display at the National Arts Club, including the actual very first Kermit, has found their way into this book via photographs. And, unlike the exhibit, nothing more recent than *The Muppet Show* seems to be represented. So missing is an impressive later piece, sketched by Jim as a guide for veteran puppet builder Rollie Krewson (who had the where-

Jim Henson's

Designs And Doodles:

A MUPPET SKETCHBOOK

Reviewed by Will Ryan



© 2001 The Jim Henson Company.

withal to have Jim autograph his circa 2' x 3' drawing on the spot).

In terms of the text, however, the book expands the original exhibit descriptions into something resembling a limited biography of Jim Henson. 'Limited,' that is, to his professional development and leaving his personal life aside.

The Henson family initiated a biography project several years ago, but the project was aborted. Hence, the volume at hand may be the closest we'll have for some time to an official biography of the father of the Muppets. As such, this book has value beyond the obvious fascination of the touted

"designs and doodles."

As for the graphic works, the reproduction seems to be from 35 mm (or possibly 2 1/4 in.) photographic negatives rather than the 4 x 5 in. or larger negatives more common to art books from this publisher. A certain less-than-distinct quality of line is the unfortunate result. Having said that, however, the stuff itself is fascinating to browse through or study. We see the work (after the ambitious juvenilia) of a busy artist/performer with a focus on basic design and an evident reluctance to use an eraser — he's too busy! Too busy to draw? What could he possibly be doing with his time? Building puppets, building a staff, building a business? Building a career? Building a fortune? Building a legend?

As a matter of fact, yes to all of these. And it's because Jim Henson succeeded in all of those goals that this artwork is as fasci-

nating as it is. We behold nascent doodles, which have transmogrified themselves into icons; subconscious scribbles, which have transformed themselves into universally recognizable images. One might as logically criticize such drawings for being hasty or unimpressive as one might criticize a manuscript score by Mozart for exhibiting poor penmanship. Irrelevant, immaterial.

This book invariably shows up in the animation section of bookstores. In the public's mind, or at least in the minds of bookstore employees, Jim Henson appears to be considered an animator. Jim Henson's studio was responsible for several Emmy-award-winning animated series (primarily *The Muppet Babies*), but in the basic sense of the word Jim Henson and his Muppeteers were animators. They gave life to rags, foam, hunks of fur and a multitude of unblinkingly hemispheric ping-pong balls.

It could have been a coffee-

table book. It should have been a coffee-table book. But it's what we've got and it's all we've got. And at this non-coffee-table-book price, it's worth getting.

Jim Henson's Designs And Doodles: A Muppet Sketchbook by Alison Inches. New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2001. 128 pages. ISBN: 0-8109-3240-7. (Hardback, US\$24.95)

Will Ryan was a writer/producer of The Wubbulous World of Dr.

Seuss for Jim Henson Productions. He received Emmy and Writer's Guild award nominations for his work on the series. Among his current projects is the Annie Award-winning series Elmo Aardvark: Outer Space Detective!

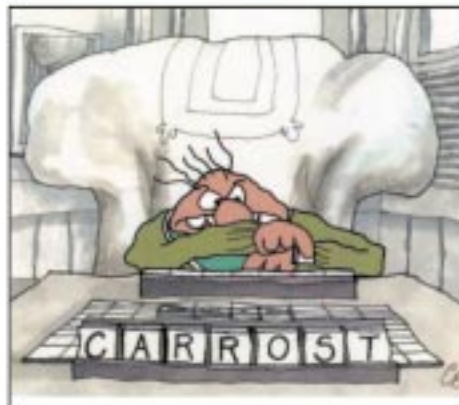
Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an e-mail to editor@awn.com.

Animation World Store

<http://www.awn.com/awnstore>



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

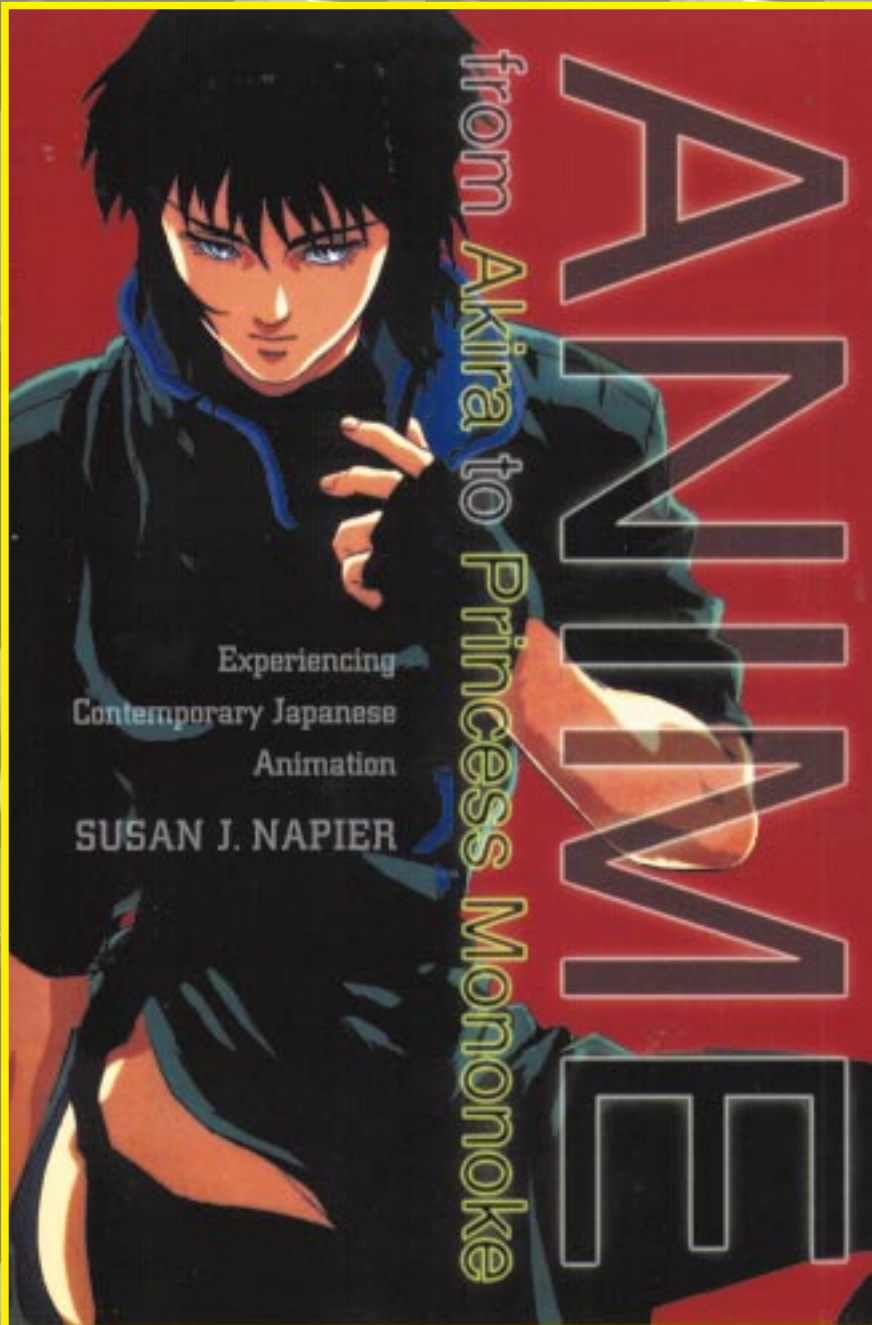


From Akira to Princess Mononoke? Don't Think So

by Alan Neal

This is a layman review. In other words, it's written by an interested, non-academic, non-Japanese-speaking anime fan whose knowledge of the medium is patchy at best. Many readers, no doubt, will be in the same position and many, like me, will have looked forward to this book. I think they're likely to be disappointed.

It's not boring. Susan J. Napier throws out a steady barrage of comments, suggestions and speculations, some of which seem plausible, perceptive and thought provoking. Among the book's virtues is that Napier quotes anime professionals and critics in Japan, whose views make fascinating reading. Napier also quotes Western critics whose direct relevance is less clear, at least to a reader unfamiliar with them. For example, in the first pages she quotes a passage from John Treat (author of *Contemporary Japan and Popular Culture*) on how: 'to worry about the relation of the popular to high or official culture is to think about the perennial problem of value...perennial because value is so exasperatingly mercurial (p4).' Maybe, but it's not clear how this observation advances Napier's discussion, what it entails or 'proves.' There are many sentences like this, including provocative but undeveloped claims on animation. Thus 'animation is a fusion of technology and art, both suggesting in its content and embodying in its form new inter-



faces between the two' (p11). Much later, we're told, 'The definition of animation is of something that gives movement and life to inert materials...anime gives movement and life to any and all fragments of identity in a world that's insistently unreal' (p238). Too much of the book is given to little-argued statements like this, lending an impression — fair or not — of specious vacuity.

But then Napier has trouble with the concrete too. One reason it's hard to trust her is that she gets so much so wrong on the simplest levels. For example, she suggests the sci-fi ghost story *Magnetic Rose* is a self-contained anime (albeit based on a 'manga anthology'), when it's actually part of the anthology movie *Memories*. She talks of the 'puzzling and subversive' last TV episode of *Evangelion* when she means the last two. When Napier moves on to content she fares worse. Her biggest howler is perhaps in discussing *Ghost in the Shell*, where she asserts Kusanagi is a 'technological creation' with 'no past' (pp106-7). One of the key points of the film is that Kusanagi began life as a human. Similar sloppiness abounds, both in terms of plot mistakes and incorrectly describing what's on screen. There's little sense of what a particular film looks or feels like. For example, neither Napier's descriptions of the opening (p201) or end (p42/48) of *Akira* are accurate or adequate. Again, she opines 'perhaps the single most lyrical sequence in anime' is the melancholy canal-journey in *Ghost*, describing it as 'slow-paced,' 'a series of long shots' and 'a brilliant combination of beautiful music and images of crowds, water and rain' (p32). But does that really convey its lyricism to

someone who hasn't seen the film? Similarly shallow is her discussion of the TV and film ends of *Evangelion* (pp101-2, 212-4), where Napier's penchant for abstraction and speculation gives way to a bland synopsis.

Elsewhere there are stunning omissions. Napier spends four pages (pp117-20) on 'shojo culture,' telling us that 'shojo literally means little female' (more conventionally known as girls) and that, 'In the worlds of manga and anime, shojo are everywhere.' She forgets, though, to mention that 'shojo anime' and 'shojo manga' are vast and significant sub-genres within the industries, complete with their own conventions, styles and complex histories. And this is the main problem with the book; there's no context or big picture. It may be 'impossible to sum up the world of Japanese animation' (p235), but surely Napier could go past the narrow selection of U.S. fan-favourites covered here? Despite the book title, she's not confining herself to post-*Akira* anime, discussing *Nausicaa* and *Barefoot Gen*. Nor is she confined to titles widely regarded as masterworks, covering such titles as *The Guyver* and *Oh My Goddess* (in favour of, say, *Wings of Honneamise*). Even if we assume some rationale, her structure feels contrived. One chapter links *Akira* with *Ranma 1/2* because they both involve metamorphosing adolescents. Another four-way epic ties together *Nausicaa*, *Akira*, *Overfiend* and *Evangelion* as depictions of the apocalypse. One yearns for more pedestrian, old-fashioned analyses along the lines of genre and creator. For example, *Beautiful Dreamer* and *Ghost in the Shell* are discussed in separate chapters, when it would have

been easy to connect them via their auteur creator, Mamoru Oshii.

In the end Napier, through attempting too much, produces a sub-standard book less informative or accurate than other anime books in English; try *The Erotic Anime Movie Guide* by Helen McCarthy and Jonathan Clements, or the non-specialist *Encyclopaedia of Japanese Pop Culture* by Mark Schilling, which builds a context lacking in Napier. These books make less idiosyncratic connections, and use fewer words like 'othering,' 'liminal' and 'defamiliarise,' but don't leave you frustrated and unconvinced long before the last chapter.

NB: Unlike much other English-language writing on anime (including this review), Napier follows the Japanese convention of putting family name first. Hence the director of *Ghost in the Shell* is Oshii Mamoru, not Mamoru Oshii, and so on.

Anime from Akira to Princess Mononoke: Experiencing Contemporary Japanese Animation by Susan J. Napier. New York, NY: Palgrave, 2001. 311 pages. ISBN: 0-312-23862-2 (hardback). ISBN: 0-312-23863-0 (paperback).

Alan Neal resides in the U.K. and is a freelance writer and animation fan, albeit a far more knowledgeable animation fan than he lets on.

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