

AW

ANIMATION WORLD MAGAZINE

January 2003 • Volume 7 Issue 10 • awn.com

The Year in Review/The Year to Come



Plus: John K Interviewed, Notes from the Underground, Ottawa in Pictures, Market Advice and More



AW

ANIMATION WORLD MAGAZINE

An ANIMATION WORLD NETWORK Publication



The Year in Review / The Year to Come

The Year In Animated Features

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BOX OFFICE

The Year in Animated Features

by Jerry Beck



When all is said and done, 2002 will be considered an excellent year for theatrical animated feature films. By my unofficial count, a total of 19 fully animated films were released in Los Angeles county in the previous calendar year, and I saw 'em all.

Yes, I even saw *Hey Arnold! The Movie* — but despite that, any year that can boast the charming *Lilo & Stitch*, the emergence of a new CGI powerhouse (*Blue Sky*) and a brand new Miyazaki masterpiece can't be all bad. Though my personal checklist of released titles (see <http://www.cartoonresearch.com/movies2002.html>) doesn't quite jibe with the Academy's official tally, the level of artistic quality I saw this year was quite impressive. And on the financial end, the total estimated U.S. box office gross for animated features last year was well over half a billion dollars (\$569,695,919 to be exact) — and that doesn't include revenues from home video sales and merchandising.

The year began with the national release of Disney Television's *Return To Neverland*, starring Peter Pan. This is one of the many "cheapquels" (thank animator Brian Mitchell for coining that term) churned out by the studio, ostensibly for home video,

High and low in 2002: Animation master Miyazaki's *Spirited Away* (above) is the likely Oscar winner, while one wonders why *Peter Pan II: Return to Neverland* was even made. *Spirited Away*: © 2002 Nibariki. TGNDDTM. All rights reserved. *Peter Pan II: Return to Neverland*: © Disney Enterprises, Inc. All rights reserved.



AS I LOOK AHEAD TO THE OSCAR RACE, ONE THING SEEMS CERTAIN: HAYAO MIYAZAKI'S *SPIRITED AWAY* IS A SHOO-IN...



Ice Age introduced large audiences to the talented Chris Wedge and his Blue Sky Studio. TM and © 2002 Twentieth Century Fox. All rights reserved. Photo Credit: Barbara Ni

SPEAKING OF HIGH TECH EYE-CANDY, *ICE AGE* OPENED IN THE EARLY SPRING AND INTRODUCED US TO A NEW CREATIVE FORCE...

Cartoon Network from trying again. The visuals were superb, but visuals alone, as they have learned, do not a movie make. *Powerpuff* had some story problems, which could have been fixed, but I did like the idea that they went with an "origin story" approach. Is the lesson of this film, and

but one or two are given a bigger budget (and fuller animation) for a theatrical "window."

Return To Neverland is capably made, but it begs the question: Why? Why was this made? Do we really need a sequel to *Peter Pan*? Or *Cinderella*? Or *101 Dalmatians*? Or *Lady & The Tramp*?

No, we don't. But they make money.

When we were kids, Disney re-released a classic film every seven years, for a new generation of kids to see with their parents in a theatre. With cable TV, DVD, VHS and the Disney Channel there is no longer any theatrical life left in the original classics (oh, but wouldn't I like to see *The Three Caballeros* or even *Sleeping Beauty* on the big screen again).

Disney knows that there are enough young parents who'd still want to experience the tradition of taking their child to a Disney classic cartoon — just as they had. Thus, *Jungle Book 2: Electric Bugaloo*. These safe sequels do have a audience — but as soon as Mom gets wise to the Disney marketing patterns, she'll opt to wait home for the DVD — and take the kids out to see DreamWorks/PDI's latest piece of new wave high-tech eye candy instead.

Speaking of high tech eye-candy, *Ice Age* opened in the early spring and introduced us to a new creative force — Chris Wedge and his Blue Sky Studio. What a delight this film turned out to be. The script, the music, the animation and art direction, superb. I particularly liked how they designed and animated the human characters — stylized, yet real.

Another great looking film, *The Powerpuff Girls*, failed at the box office, but I hope it doesn't discourage



Lilo & Stitch exuded great charm. © Disney Enterprises, Inc. All rights reserved.

Hey Arnold!, one that people won't pay for what they can get at home for free?

The Wild Thornberrys Movie tried to disprove that theory at Christmas time. I admire Klasky-Csupo's ambition with the features they've made and Thornberrys didn't disappoint. Families who saw this film were entertained with a big, bonafide theatrical feature, not a blown up TV pastiche.

Lilo & Stitch, *Treasure Planet* and *Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron* were enjoyable, strong state of the art, character animation films. But why, oh why, did Disney decide to kill *Treasure Planet* three days after it opened? The trouble brewing in Disney's executive ranks exploded at year's end. Let's hope a phoenix will rise from these ashes. I believe it will.

2002 WAS A YEAR OF UPS AND DOWNS, HIGHS AND LOWS...



The Powerpuff Girls (top left) was a good looking movie, but suffered from story problems. *Treasure Planet* (top right) and *Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron* (bottom right) were both strong works, but was *Treasure Planet* a victim of the executive changes at Disney? Meanwhile, *The Wild Thornberrys Movie* (bottom left) delivered more than the TV show it's based on. *Powerpuff Girls*: © AOL Time Warner; *Treasure Planet*: © Disney Enterprise, Inc. All rights reserved; *Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron*: Courtesy DreamWorks Pictures *Wild Thornberrys Movie*: Courtesy of Paramount/Nickelodeon.

The low budget *Jonah: The Veggie Tales Movie* was not the embarrassment I thought it would be. Aimed at young youngsters, it was suitable family fare and made a tidy profit at the box office. A couple of other films snuck into L.A. for Academy consideration, though nobody saw Mark Swan's *The Princess And The Pea* nor Italy's *The Living Forest* and lived to tell about it.

I sort-of admire the surrealistic *Eden* (from Poland). It was like one of those abstract, absurdist student films you see at short film festivals — only it went on way too long and wasn't very funny. India's

CGI *Ali Baba* feature was clearly the worst animated film I'd saw last year. Stiff motion-capture is hard to achieve, but the Pentamedia studio achieved it. To the film's credit, I still can't get some of its haunting images out of my mind. The nightmares from the atrocious dubbing, poor animation and horrible character design are ones I'll likely keep forever.

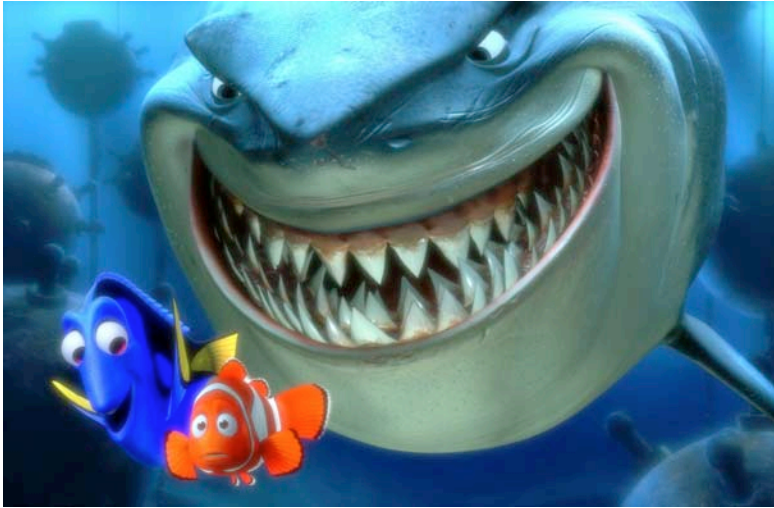
Adam Sandler's *Eight Crazy Nights* is a film I so wanted to like, but it fought me at every turn. I love scatological humor, I love subversive animation, but this was just plain poor. I'm happy the project gave many animators a nice paycheck for several weeks,



Disney has two more "cheapquels" set for 2003: *Piglet's Big Movie* (top left) and *Jungle Book 2* (bottom left). Good family fare and a small profit were the results of *Jonah: The Veggie Tales Movie* (top right). *Eight Crazy Nights* (bottom right) turned into two long hours for some viewers. *Piglet's Big Movie* and *Jungle Book 2*: © Disney Enterprises, Inc.; *Eight Crazy Nights*: 2002 Columbia Pictures; *Jonah: The Veggie Tales Movie*: Property of Artisan Entertainment. All rights reserved.

but for me it was a waste of two hours.

As I look ahead to the Oscar race, one thing seems certain: Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away* is a shoo-in to be nominated — and is the leading contender to win. I wish I could say I liked the film better. It's great, to be sure, but is it really better than *My Neighbor Totoro* or *Laputa: Castle In The Sky* or *Nausicaä*? No, not in my book. But Miyazaki deserves the prize, even if it's symbolic for lifetime achievement. Can you think of a living animator with a greater body of quality work in feature animation than Miyazaki? I can't.



Upcoming animated fare for this year include anime's *Cowboy Bebop* and Disney/Pixar's *Finding Nemo*. *Cowboy Bebop*: © Bandai Entertainment; *Finding Nemo*: © Disney/PIXAR.

2002 was a year of ups and downs, highs and lows — and the forecast for 2003 looks like more of the same. More than ten features are scheduled to debut during the coming year as of this writing. This includes more Disney cheapquels (of *Jungle Book* and *Pooh* in the form of *Piglet's Big Movie*), even more anime (*Millennium Actress*, *Cowboy Bebop*), a new Pixar (*Finding Nemo*), another Disney (*Bears*), an SKG "tradigital" (*Sinbad*), and a variety of others (including Sony's R-rated *Lil' Pimp*, Warner Bros.' live-action animated Looney Tunes movie, and a new Klasky-Csupo *Rugrats* adventure).

The good news is that animated features have come of age. Disney isn't the only player in the field and the quality of competing films is quite high. Grab your popcorn, we've got a lot to look forward to. ■

JERRY BECK is an animation producer and cartoon historian with a nifty Website www.cartoonresearch.com and a new book, *Outlaw Animation*, due out this spring from Harry N. Abrams.

Online Highlights

Every online (HTML) issue of *Animation World Magazine* contains additional features not found in the download or print Acrobat version, such as QuickTime movies. Don't miss the following highlights that are showcased exclusively in this month's *Animation World Magazine* HTML version:

DETHEUX ON ESCAPING MUYBRIDGE'S CURSE

Jean Detheux continues his series on the nature of art and draws us to understand that perhaps mimicking reality isn't a true representation of the world with two clips from *Bingo* as examples. → [Bingo excerpt 1](#) and [Bingo excerpt 2](#).

FRESH FROM THE FESTIVALS: JANUARY 2003'S FILM REVIEWS

Jon Hofferma reviews five short films fresh from the festival circuit: [Le foto dello scandalo/Shame's Photos](#) by Daniele Lunghini, [Home Road Movies](#) by Robert Bradbrook, [Pasta for War](#) by Zach Schläppi, [Populi](#) by David Russo and [The Velvet Tigress](#) by Jen Sachs.

View the QuickTime clips online!



BATHROBE BLUES

Don't Call Before Noon

(OR HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE MY TIME OFF!)

by Sari Gennis

The author at her desk pondering the pros and cons of having a job. © Sari Gennis.



DESIGN THAT TATTOO. (BUT BE CAREFUL, "WILL ANIMATE FOR FOOD," MAY NOT SEEM SO FUNNY IN 6 MONTHS.)

WITH THE ANIMATION INDUSTRY GOING THROUGH ONE OF ITS... cycles, if you're like me, you've found yourself with more time off than maybe you'd planned. It can have its ups and downs, but I've actually come to peace with being laid off. Okay, I like it. Who doesn't, really? Your time is your own, you can sleep in, you get to spend time with your loved ones, finally work on all those art projects...What about the money thing, you ask? No, I'm not independently wealthy and it does get scary being unemployed for any length of time. So let me share some of my tips and tricks for staying sane...

First, my daily schedule.

6 AM: to the gym, one-hour workout

7 AM: yoga

8 AM: coffee and toast, getting me at my computer by 8:30 to continue work on my screenplay and/or short film.

Ha ha ha ha ha haaaa! Okay, for real:

9:30 AM: the alarm goes off.

11 AM: the cats decide it's really time for breakfast...and coffee and toast for me. Check CNN to make sure we're not at war yet...head for the shower. Sometimes I make it there and sometimes...well, the kitten takes a post-breakfast nap, why not join him?

Then lunch, and checking in with my other out of work friends, and plans for later. Maybe some job search calls, then settling in with my work. If I'm lucky, I can get in a good 4-6 hours on one of my projects. Sometimes I sit down to work at 2 or 3 PM and five minutes later...it's eight o'clock...talk about being in the flow! But I have to admit, I wasn't always like this.

cupboards. THAT can be fun. After a few creative meals like hummus and tuna fish with cherry Jell-O for dessert, I gave that up. And I once had a boyfriend who made me a Kraft macaroni and cheese burrito...but that's a whole other story.

WATCH OUT FOR STAGE 3!

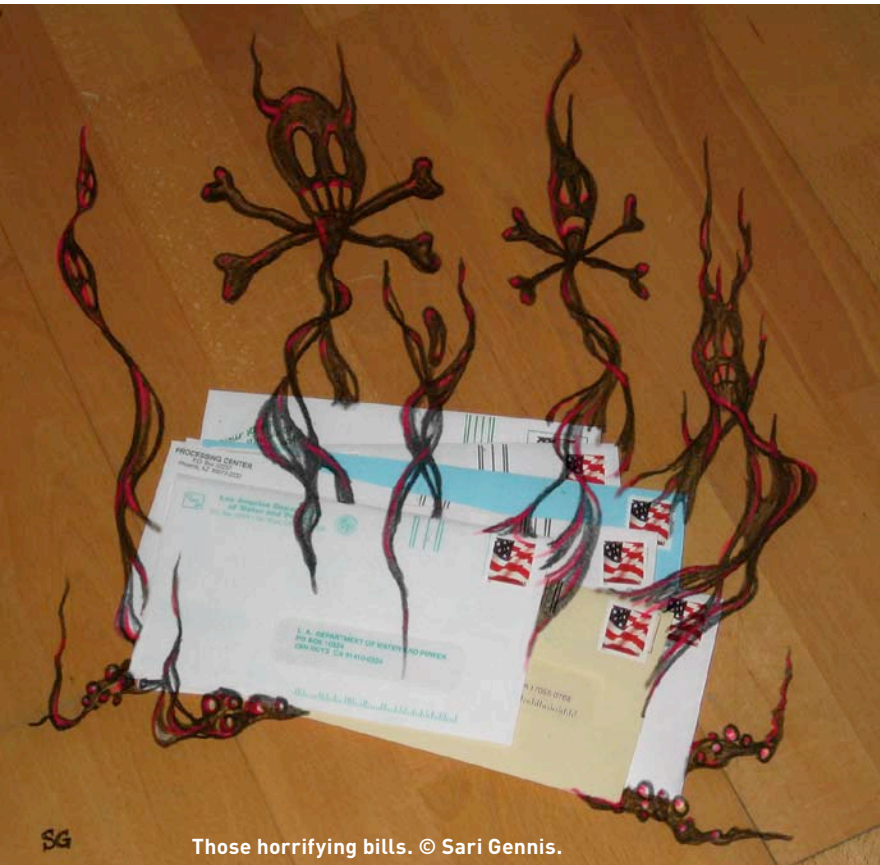
Not to scare you or anything, but I've found that the stages one goes through while being unemployed are very similar to the stages of someone with a terminal illness...only don't worry, I promise it's not terminal! The definition of a "stage" is a period, a level, or degree in a process of development. It's important to know that a stage is dynamic and not fixed. In other words...if you don't like the phase you're in, you *can* change it.

YOU JUST HAVE TO STAY SANE WHILE YOU'RE UNEMPLOYED (JUST!).

I've also found that each stage comes with its own mood, soundtrack and even style of dress.

Stage 1 (Denial and Delusion): This is great! I'm going to catch up on my movies and get so much done! Sign up for all those classes: Maya, Shake, Figure Drawing, Wine Tasting, Psychic Communication with Animals...There's plenty of work out there; it'll find me. Usually accompanied by frenetic list making and bursts of energy. You still get up every morning and put on normal clothes. Head out to Starbucks and smile at all the other creative people over your latte. You listen to high-energy house and rock, and even show tunes. Life is good!

Stage 2 (Bargaining and Anger): This is the roller coaster stage. One minute you're hopeful and then... crash. You realize that recruiters don't seem to be pounding on your door and maybe it's time to put together a new resume and reel. Of course, by now either the company you just worked for has gone out of business, the people you need to talk to have been fired, or the movie you worked on isn't out yet and you can't get hold of anything you need...that's where the bargaining starts. ("Just let me have my scenes...I'll only show one person...I'll bring the tape right back after the interview...I'll make them watch with their eyes closed...") You start looking for work on the Internet and get glimmers of hope...there is work out there! Then you realize that the jobs are either all in India, or it's for somebody's student film, or you need a doctorate in programming and physics. The promis-



Those horrifying bills. © Sari Gennis.

MONEY

Oh yeah, the money thing. Funny, isn't it, the way the bills keep coming? Aren't they supposed to stop when you don't have an income?

Back in the good old days of hefty salaries and signing bonuses, my incredibly mean accountant made me save almost half of everything I made. All I can say now is, thank you, Harvey! And unless you know Harvey or you've learned to live on unemployment, I can't help you much there. I can tell you I've found some creative ways to save money. I mean, how often do you watch the Cinemax Western channel? And...resist that urge to put everything on credit cards! No good will come of it!

One of the brilliant ideas I had early on was not to go grocery shopping until I used up everything in my

ing ones have gotten so many replies they've disconnected their e-mail.

Now your energy is starting to slump. You're listening to mellow jazz and "Morning Becomes Eclectic," that is, when you can turn off the television. Here starts the intense television watching and avoidance-of-life phase. Eating lots of takeout and not leaving the house for days at a time. Sometimes associated with, well, a decline in personal hygiene. The uniform for this phase becomes sweats and baseball caps.



How could anyone resist crawling back into bed with this guy?
© Sari Gennis.

Stage 3 (Abject Apathy and Depression): You can't pick up the phone and call anyone because it weighs a thousand pounds. You're sure you'll never work again and you'll be living in that sexy car you bought back when you were under contract and the paychecks were flowing. Pajamas and/or bathrobe. Break out the blues CDs...Bessie Smith singing, "Nobody knows you when you're down and out," is a good one to play over and over. (It's fun to belt out in your bathrobe, too.)

Stage 4 (Acceptance!) Acceptance is the magic stage and the hardest one to find. This is where you want to end up, and as soon as possible. You decide, okay, if this is how it is, so be it. You finally get up out of your bathrobe and, well, maybe not into real clothes yet, but at least back into sweats. You start taking showers again. You start job searching and sending out more resumes and reels. You haul out those neglected projects and start working on them. Kinda feels good, doesn't it? Now you might even get into the romantic starving artist mode. Then one morning...you slowly open your eyes and wiggle your

toes and take those extra luxurious minutes to meditate and wake up all the way...and realize how lucky you are to have some precious time to yourself, to not have to drive in traffic, to do what ever you want... almost like being back in art school...and that's when the phone will ring.

MOVING FORWARD...AND DANGER SIGNS

But how to get through the hard part and to that all-important stage, acceptance? Watch out for signs that you're stuck in a phase and not moving forward...

You start conversations with strangers at Ralph's;
You know the names and style of every designer on *Trading Spaces*;
You catch yourself showing the barristas at Starbucks (who you're on a first name basis with by now) photos of your pets and/or children;
The UPS guy has started to call you "darling" (and the neighbors don't even bother to ask anymore if you'll be home to accept a package). You're not even embarrassed when he makes a delivery at 3 PM and you're still in your bathrobe.

BESSIE SMITH SINGING, "NOBODY KNOWS YOU WHEN YOU'RE DOWN AND OUT," IS A GOOD ONE TO PLAY OVER AND OVER.

You just have to stay sane while you're unemployed (just!). The key is to "act as if" you know you have a job coming. Pretend you've only got, say, three weeks left to play and be creative. Of course, WAY easier said than done. Some suggestions:

Join everything! Over the years, I've become a member of ASIFA, Women in Animation, The Visual Effects Society, LA SIGGRAPH and the Writers Guild. There's a screening or some kind of presentation almost every week, and more around awards season. All very helpful in getting me out of the house during Stages 2 and 3...Not to mention it's a great way to "network" and stay in touch with what's going on out there.

Do your footwork! Finish that updated reel. Force yourself to make a certain number of work calls every day... even if it's just one.

Remember you're not alone. Talk to other people. This isn't a great time for our economy...it's not just you! Although it may feel like it some days, there is no secret "blacklist" Website with your name and picture on it.

Take those classes you signed up for! It really is a good time to add to your skills.

Pursue other interests. Design that tattoo. (But

be careful, "Will animate for food," may not seem so funny in 6 months.) In my time off, I was finally able to devote big chunks of time to the short film I'd been toying with for years. It forced me to learn different styles of animation and new computer programs...all of which painlessly qualifies me for a variety of new

THE KEY IS TO "ACT AS IF" YOU KNOW YOU HAVE A JOB COMING.

jobs...which will be handy if traditional animation is going to tank for a while. And I finally finished *The Screenplay* after only about a zillion drafts...which feels indescribably great. You can come out of this with nothing, or you can end up with great new experiences. Looking back, after you do go back to work, (and you will) which would you rather have behind you?

So you'll do all these things, and start feeling better, and not be freaking out all the time, and SWEAR you're really okay with being unemployed for a while...and then, still, nothing happens. It's like

what my sister says about being pregnant. When you get to the point where you absolutely positively can't stand being pregnant one more second...then you have 6 more weeks. For me, it took being so okay with my time off that I committed to writing this article. THE NEXT DAY I got a call from the studio I most wanted to work for asking me to start that following Monday! And my first thought? "Wait! I need 3 more weeks!" So here I am, late on my article because I'm working on a great film at a great studio. Stay positive and it will happen to you too. ■

SARI GENNIS has been in the animation field long enough to have seen several of its cycles. She's worked on a variety of films including *Fantasia 2000*, *Space Jam*, *James and the Giant Peach*, *Titan A.E.* and *8 Legged Freaks* as an animator or visual effects supervisor. Remembering fondly her carefree days on unemployment, she's currently working at *DreamWorks* and doing her best to help the economy recover.

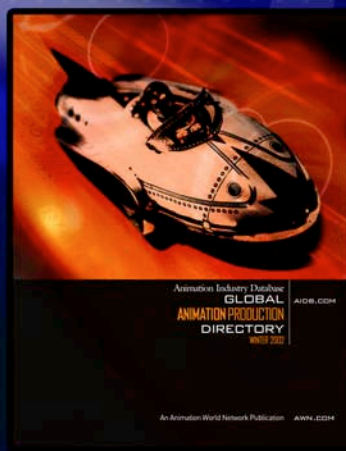
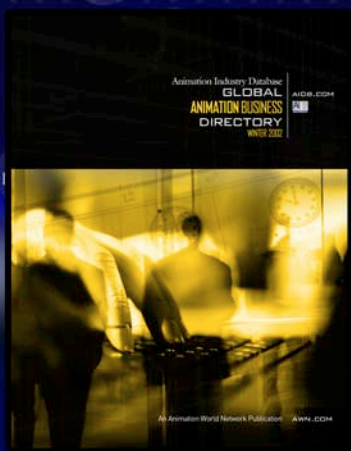
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Pitching and Networking at the BIG Shows

MARKET ADVICE
by Rob Davies



Atomic Betty is a project Atomic Cartoons has been pitching at markets and is inching toward a production deal.



Rob Davies of Atomic Cartoons feels it's imperative for small independent companies to network at festivals and marketplaces. All Atomic Cartoon images © Atomic Cartoons.

Editor's Note: Independent studios have to be ingenious in order to bring work through the door. More and more frequently, depending solely on domestic broadcasters isn't going to work. Branching into international markets is a crucial move for many companies that now need to pull together a blend of service, production and co-production work. Rob Davies and three other artists banded together to form [Atomic Cartoons](#), an independent studio in Vancouver, Canada that is making its way in the international animation arena. Now a regular at the markets, Rob sat down at October's MIPCOM and decided to write a few pointers for others as we head to New Orleans for [NATPE 2003](#) and then back to Cannes in March for [MIPTV](#).

"Showing up is 80 per cent of life."

— Woody Allen

EVER CONSIDER MAKING YOUR OWN CARTOON? Well, if you're working in the animation field or even just a fan of animation, chances are the answer is 'Yes.' If you are one of only a handful that has actually done it, then bravo, hats off to you. On the other side of the coin, if you are like the majority of people in the animation field, chances are you have not followed the dream of creating your own cartoon through to fruition. Or even attempted it. That's a shame.

A large part of Atomic Cartoons' business plan revolves around pitching our show ideas and networking. I believe that a large part of our young company's success has been a result of our attendance at many different markets over the past four years. What could have been a much longer growing curve has been shortened substantially because we have been able to concentrate our efforts and really find and approach our target market at festivals and trade shows. Granted, everyone's results from attending shows will be different from each other, but consistently making the trek to

markets creates invaluable opportunities to meet key industry contacts. This is why I am so positive about the trade shows as a venue to showcase properties.

Trevor Bentley, Atomic Cartoons' CEO and VP of co-productions, adds, "While we pride ourselves as being one of the leading service studios around, in conjunction we are also striving to create our own proprietary properties. Having a participating presence at the trade shows is helping us to accomplish this goal."

Success from attendance comes in a variety of forms.

The first, and the ultimate in my mind, is having a network or large studio shake hands on your pitch. I personally equate much, if not the majority, of our proprietary series *Atomic Betty's* successful green light to pitching at markets such as MIPCOM, MIPTV, NATPE and others like them over the past two years. It has been a long process that has paid off through the property's exposure to the right people. Because we go to the dance, our chances of getting a date are much better than those folks who never go. A person's level of success will also depend on how organized he/she is prior to a market. Make sure to have all your ducks in a row. Have all your support materials organized and ready well ahead of time, and be prepared for any eventuality. A good plan is to have someone play the role of buyer with you before the trade show so that no questions catch you off guard. Beware: not being 100% clear on your idea is a quick way to be shown the door.

The second benefit for us from traveling to venues has been networking. It has become increasingly difficult to sell a show directly to large North American networks these days. A straight one-on-one deal is almost unheard of in today's competitive, cash-poor animation climate. International co-productions and multi-partner relationships are now a very common way to bypass the old way of getting a show on the air. Finding the right partnerships has become one of the biggest reasons for our participation at trade shows. As well as meeting representatives from international broadcasters at the markets, we are also gaining access to potential co-production and strategic alliance partners, which are also a key factor to many a show's successful birth.

Another positive from attending markets has been for us to get feedback on our premises and ideas. We use this in our development process to either fine-tune or scrap our pitches before taking them to the next level. Both positive and negative industry feedback is essential to the creative development of a show. However, I do strongly recommend taking some advice with a grain of salt,

as you want to be sure you are not watering down your original ideas in the hopes of pleasing everybody. If you want to create a property with originality and a unique 'edge,' you have to realize that ultimately your show cannot be everything to everybody.

The knowledge gained from feedback helps us to determine if an idea is a keeper or not. Truth be told, we have more failures than successes, but the process is much like investing. If the development of a show is regulated by some kind of system that incorporates industry feedback and data, it stands to reason that it will become less of a 'gamble' and have a better chance of success. We find that although it is disappointing for us to hear that an idea of ours is not working or is just not a commodity at the time, it's better that we find this out earlier in the process rather than later. I've seen people go to a lot of trouble and expense bringing their property to an advanced state, only to fail during their pitch, proving that spending a lot of money and time on a weak idea



Blair Peters of the highly successful Studio B Productions suggests that sellers research potential partners thoroughly before pitching them on a new project. Photo credit: Cindy Obermiller.

"A FEW DAYS OF HARD WORK AT A MARKET CAN EQUAL MONTHS OF SIMILAR WORK OUTSIDE OF THAT FORUM" — DAVE WARREN

will not polish a lump of coal into a gem. One group I saw last year had an entire pilot episode of a show fully animated, complete with top voice talent and music, only to see it fall flat because nobody wanted it. In my experience, it is much better, and easier on the pocketbook and blood pressure, to find this valuable information out at the one-sheet stage and then moving the project forward only if it warrants further development based on industry interest.

"Look at the markets as a learning experience, experience, as education," suggests Trevor Bentley of Atomic Cartoons. "Worse case scenario: If you get nothing else out of a market but a little more knowledge and insight than what you had before, you come out ahead and can use this information in your pitch for next time." He goes on to add, "It sounds cliché, but generally the positive results you get out of a show are directly related to the amount of energy



Dog in a Box with 2 Wheels is currently an Internet co-production between Atomic Cartoons and [Honkworm](#), which will be pitched as a TV show at NATPE and MIPTV.

you put into them. If you just show up expecting stellar results without being prepared, you will be sadly mistaken. We may not have the large budget of some of the big players, but we compensate through attention to detail and preparedness. We spend a lot of time putting together our support materials and lining up meetings well in advance."

"NETWORKING IS KEY TO SUCCESS."

— DAVE WARREN

"NETWORKING IS KEY!"

— MIKE KUBAT

Other than following the trades (magazines and Websites), there is no better way to see what is going on in the industry, good, bad or otherwise, than by attending a large trade show. We go to the markets to see where things are at and where they are headed. As with feedback, one has to be cautious as to not read too much into everything others are doing. Take others' creations and direction with a grain of salt as well and do not interpret all that you see at a market as what is 'expected' in the industry. Believe me, if

you have never attended a market before, I can tell you there are a lot of poor ideas on display there (as well as many good properties, don't get me wrong) and in my opinion this is all the more reason for creative independents and studios to show up with their 'good' materials.

Four BIG Misconceptions

All too often good ideas go unnoticed. Creativity is not explored fully. Plans and schemes fall through. Potential goes unrealized. Why? Well, let's first look at some of the common misconceptions that people have and try to clear them up:

1. "If I show somebody my idea/premise/pitch they will steal it, I'll get ripped off, and end up with nothing."

Sure, it could happen, but life involves risk. If you are second-guessing showing your idea to a producer or broadcaster, ask yourself how you think other people got their ideas onto the air. Obviously someone who makes decisions at the executive level had to see the idea at some point. If you have an idea, nobody is going to knock on your door and say a little bird told them about it. You will have to do the legwork and present your concept to someone at some time. The best thing to do is protect yourself by employing an experienced entertainment lawyer as soon as your project is at a stage where you start showing it to people. Good legal council from the get-go is always a good plan. Many people who have been burned by someone stealing their concepts have had absolutely no recourse because their bases were not properly covered. Legal counsel is a form of insurance against this piracy. Of course, nothing is ever fully guaranteed. In animation, as in any artistic endeavor, there will always be ideas that are similar and are developed around the same time as each other, but an artist has to move forward with their project or not at all, and legal protection is at least a little peace of mind.

2. "I can't compete against the big guys in the pitching arena."

Not true. Having a great idea is only half the battle, but it's a terrific start to approaching broadcasters on a level playing field. For now, let's say you have that idea. What additional firepower do you need to compete with the big guys? The next thing you need to do is research your audience. Who is the show targeted at? What age group? Boys or girls, or maybe both? Most broadcasters want you to know exactly what your target demographic is, so take the time to really think this part of your pitch through.



Dave Warren, founder of channelzero, recommends that new sellers to the marketplace try to create trends instead of following others' leads. Photo credit: Frank Longford, Studio2 Productions, Santa Ana, CA.

The next weapon in your arsenal is knowing who the person is you are pitching directly to and what their company is about. You wouldn't want to pitch a series about buxom latex-clad prisoners that escape from a secret underground gladiator arena (*Gladiatrix Slave Babes from Middle-Earth* © 2003 Puddin' n' Pie Films) to Disney, just like you wouldn't want to pitch *Huggly Wuggly Purply Bunny Pals* © 2003, Monty Krueller to HBO or MTV. Knowing who both the audience at home is and who the broadcaster you are pitching to is essential information to have for getting

the attention and results you are looking for.

Blair Peters of Studio B Productions in Vancouver says, "Put the time and effort into your creative materials and know who you're pitching. Do your research. Potential partners' Websites, broadcasters current

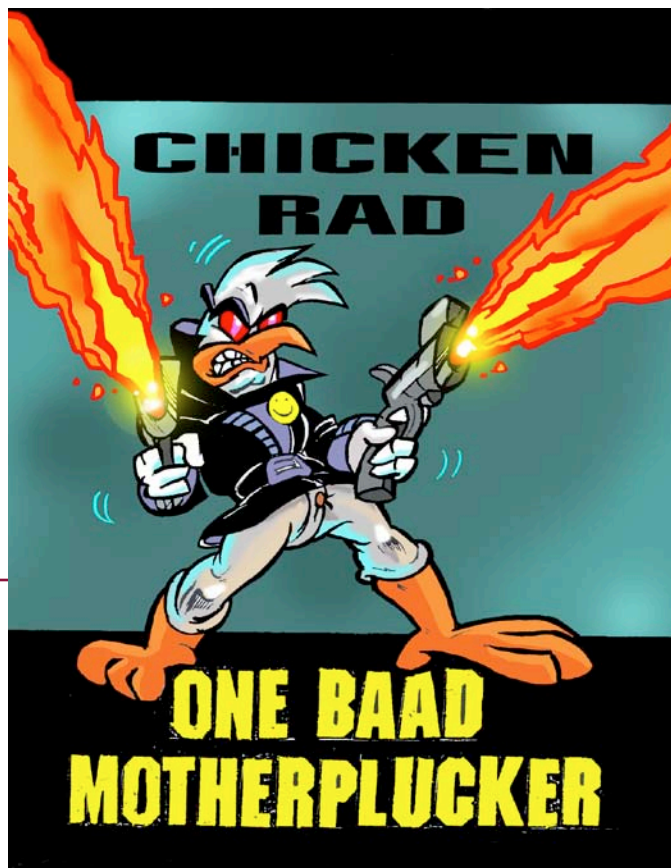
"IT'S BETTER TO MAKE A FRIEND AND THEN TALK BUSINESS LATER, BUT SHOW THEM ENOUGH THAT THEY KNOW YOU'RE NOT TALKING OUT OF YOUR ASS."

— MIKE KUBAT

slates, etc. are invaluable information tools." With regards to Studio B targeting their pitches, Peters goes on to say, "We look at our slate on a property by property basis and determine who the best partners (broadcasters/co-producers) will be and take next steps from there." Studio B Productions is one of the many studios that has found success at industry shows over the past ten years. Studio B has made the jump from service-only to proprietary production and has successfully produced over 100 half-hours of their own series over the past five years. Much of their ability to produce proprietary product comes from pre-sales generated at markets and from meeting the right co-production partners and distributors there.

Mike Kubat, animation writer and owner of Duck, You Sucker! Productions in Los Angeles, suggests: "Do your homework! Know who's going to be there. What people, what networks, what studios. Anyone you know? Make sure you *specifically* hit that person. Lie, cheat, steal, what have you, just bring your best stuff

because you may actually have to impress somebody..." Kubat goes on to say, "Staying current is as easy as picking up a trade or checking out AWN or *Animation Magazine's* daily emails. It's important to keep informed of what's going on and who's doing what because you'll be surprised how many people you know are in those articles and just knowing them opens up opportunities you didn't think about before."

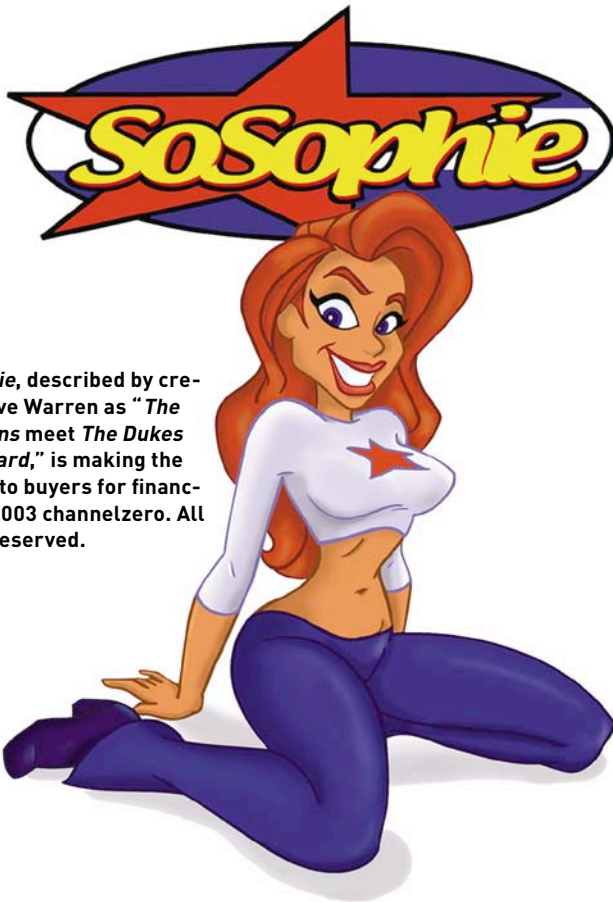


Mike Kubat of Duck, You Sucker! Productions is currently pitching *Chicken Rad*, the story of a brave and heroic chicken, who stands up to a tyrannical general in a futuristic America that's become a blighted wasteland. © 2003 Duck, You Sucker! Productions.

Executives at markets are busy people. Their time is typically tight, and they generally have a full day of meetings lined up back-to-back for the duration of a show. This being the case, don't assume that you will squeeze in a meeting on the spot; ideally you should have the meeting scheduled before the market. It is incredibly important to have your meetings lined up at least two weeks prior. Any last minute attempts to line up a meeting and you run the risk of having the contact person's schedule already full up. "We start organizing our calendar a month and a half before any show," says Atomic's Trevor Bentley. "Even if the person is not ready to commit to a time, we quickly find out if they are going

"PUT THE TIME AND EFFORT INTO YOUR CREATIVE MATERIALS AND KNOW WHO YOU'RE PITCHING" — BLAIR PETERS

or not and break the ice that we are wishing to meet with them there. This way it is not a surprise when we contact them again for a meeting closer to the show date."



SoSophie, described by creator Dave Warren as "*The Simpsons* meet *The Dukes of Hazzard*," is making the rounds to buyers for financing. © 2003 channelzero. All rights reserved.

Most trade shows have a list of companies that are registered for the market. If you can, try to have yourself signed up well in advance so that you can gain access to the show's contact list. Most trade show directories have company contact people's names, phone numbers and emails listed, but you cannot get to this information until you have registered. You also want your name in the directory well in advance, in case someone is wishing to set up a meeting with participants who offer your type of services. A special bonus to signing up early is that most trade shows, festivals and summits offer a discount for early registration.

Channelzero founder and creator of *SoSophie*, Dave Warren, a relative but extremely motivated newcomer to the international market scene, offers up his insight to other people who also want to participate in

the pitching frenzy of the trade shows: "Don't follow trends, create one. Dress and act like a professional if you expect to be treated like one. Animators can be their own worst enemy. If you're lucky enough to get a meeting to pitch your idea, don't show up in clothes that look like you slept in them the night before."

Trevor Bentley reinforces this notion, "If you are a newbie to a trade show it is important that you don't come off like one. Part of a professional presentation at a big-time event is having a professional dress code. It is especially helpful for those who are just making the difficult leap from artist-for-hire to content creator and producer. Sure, I'd rather show up in jeans and a T-shirt myself, but it's not about me. Unlike a trip to a ballgame, the whole reason for being at a market is personal presentation and delivery. What executive is going to take you or your project seriously if you look like a bum? The last thing I want is to have someone negatively judging my appearance even before they've seen what I have to offer. By the time the pitch comes around, the damage is already done."

"At one show," Bentley recalls, "In an effort to shake the casual artist stereotype, three of us from Atomic showed up on the morning of the first day dressed in almost exactly the same sport coat as each other. Without knowing beforehand what jackets each of us had, we ended up looking like we had tweed Atomic Cartoons uniforms. The only thing missing was nametags. We joked that we looked like real estate agents, but at least we were professional in our appearance."

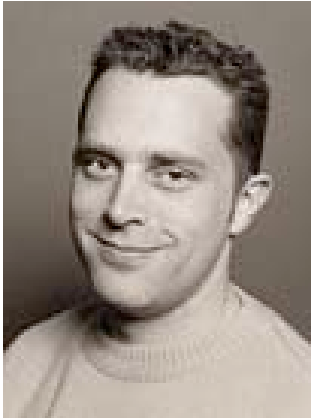
3. "It's just too costly to get to the shows!"

Well, it does cost money, but consider the networking possibilities at a trade show or festival. Where are you going to get such a concentration of key people outside of that environment? Shaking hands and meeting face to face with people may not have direct results, but it sets up potential long-term relationships with top people and decision makers.

Mike Kubat understands the financial pitfalls of attending the markets, but has a few ways of dealing with this issue proactively: "Depending on your size (and your 'juice' for that matter), I think local markets are the best to start out at, just until you network and build your repertoire enough to join into the 'big leagues' (MIPCOM for instance). Not everyone can afford airfare to France, *especially* the 'independents'..."

Okay, so your materials are prepared, you've got

your pitches targeted at the right people, now the next thing you'll need to address is the funding for attending the market. If you are like most people (individuals/independents) who don't have deep pockets or a giant studio behind them, you may have to decide on whether



Trevor Bentley, Atomic Cartoons' CEO and VP of co-productions, suggests sellers dress professionally, prepare their pitch thoroughly and set up meeting times well in advance.

or not you really need to lease that new car this year, that maybe the personal loan for the business endeavor is a better option. Besides loans, some countries also offer funding programs for small businesses and individuals. Look into these by accessing the appropriate government Website. Venture capitalists are another route, but really a tough sell after the dot-com bust of the past couple of years. One cost saving route

is to run expenses through a registered company. This way, more expenses can be accounted for and used as tax write-offs at year's end. Avoid paying for anything with personal out-of-pocket money. This can make the pennies stretch further. Eating macaroni and cheese for a year to finance a venture is a reality for many people looking to fund their own travel and marketing expenses, but that's part of the cost of making your own show. Blair Peters stresses, "Be passionate about your creatives and believe they deserve to be made."

The beauty of getting a pick-up for a show is that you can work your development and travel costs into the budget and it will come back to you off the back-end, but obviously only if the series is picked-up. A gamble, yes, but if you have a good idea and a good presentation, and if you show up to a trade show, the odds are in your favor. Why? The simple fact is, not many independents actually attend the markets. So, by sheer default, you are already in a better position than the person who didn't make the show.

Trevor Bentley suggests to "start saving early for a show if you are on a tight budget. Be realistic. If you can't afford to go this year, shoot for next year. This will also give you time to prepare all your materials and be totally ready for the big market. Maybe you only go to one market a year, but if you pick the one that is right for you, it is a terrific way to get your feet wet. We are not a huge studio, but we make a point of setting aside a certain percentage of profit to pay for our market participation. Like advertising, it comes



D'Myna Leagues is a baseball flavored 2D/3D animation blend series appearing on the CTV and YTV networks in Canada. © Studio B Productions 2002.

under the heading of 'marketing' for us. I'm always miffed that more start-ups and small studios *don't* show up to the markets. Seems obvious that if you want to meet prospective clients and partners, a trade show is the place to be...but perhaps it's not that obvious. Maybe they [trade shows] just seem inaccessible to most individuals and small companies."

Dave Warren emphasizes, "Networking is key to success. The sharing of information is crucial to knowing what's selling and who is buying. Knowledge is power and the more you know the more you'll grow."

A WISER MAN THAN ME ONCE SAID, "SUCCESS HAS A SIMPLE FORMULA: DO YOUR BEST, AND PEOPLE MAY LIKE IT." — DAVE WARREN

This is especially true for the independents. Besides, a sense of community makes the difficult task of selling a show much easier when you realize that you are not alone in the universe. In my opinion this is something sorely lacking in the American independent animation community."

Warren goes on to say that, "They [trade shows/markets] are an excellent opportunity to present your idea to a concentrated group of industry professionals. A few days of hard work at a market can equal months of similar work outside of that forum."

Mike Kubat reinforces this notion, "Networking is key! Glory be to those who don't have to know anybody to get a job in this business. What's their secret?! I'd like to know..."

Bottom line: If nobody knows who you are or sees your work, then it will be darn near impossible to get that idea off the launch pad. If a person in today's stingy entertainment environment really wants to get their name and face out there in the international industry and receive the attention that they desire, perhaps the question should be, "Can you afford not to attend these shows?"

4. "There are disadvantages to pitching at the markets."

All things positive about the markets aside, Linda Simensky, senior vice president of original animation at Cartoon Network, has a slightly different view of the market scene, stating that trade shows tend to be more 'business' oriented and therefore may not be the best environments for pitching. She adds that Cartoon Network does not typically send 'development' people to the markets.

This is good advice, as meetings at these events are generally 15 to 30 minutes long at best and it can be a challenge to generate the maximum effect from a pitch. She advises that a 'simple' pitch pack is best, concise and to the point, and subscribes to the K.I.S. (Keep it simple) philosophy. She points out that really looking at the characters, having a basic but solid idea, a strong one-line 'hook' for the show, and a well defined one-sheet are all very important elements for a pitch. Simensky also says that Cartoon Network typically deals with people who don't normally attend trade shows, primarily



Linda Simensky feels trade shows are difficult places to pitch a creative idea effectively. She advises sellers to keep it simple when it comes to presenting projects in distracting situations. Photo courtesy of Cartoon Network.

small companies and artists. These creative folk generally can't afford to make the markets or don't see a need to, and approaching a network such as Cartoon Network directly does have its advantages, provided you know who the right development executives at the networks to approach are. Simensky notes that the [Ottawa Film Festival](#), which she has been a supporter of, has an actual "pitch session." A terrific article ["Pitching Perfect: A Word From Development"](#) on pitching by Heather Kenyon cites tips from Simensky and others.

Another prominent Canadian market, *The Banff Television Festival*, also has a "pitch session" attended by many key decision makers from international networks and studios.



Atomic Cartoons unveiled its new property, *The Carneys* in October 2002 at MIP. Currently, a pilot script and an animated trailer are being prepared for MIPTV.

"Markets are a bad place to pitch your idea, but a good place to pitch *yourself* so you're in a better position to pitch your *idea* when you both sober up enough to go back to work. That's been my success, at least. It's important to understand that they are looking at many different properties in a short amount of time, so to me, it's better to make a friend and then talk business later, but show them enough that they know you're not talking out of your ass," says Mike Kubat on the subject of the negative aspects of pitching at a trade show.

Dave Warren also believes that the markets and festivals are not the only place to pitch and cites "going directly to the networks, film festivals, the Internet" as market alternatives for pitching and networking.

To improve the trade show environment for pitching and to make it more independent-friendly, Warren suggests: "How about kiosks at the markets that allow everyone with a show to sell to put a preview of their property up there? This could be tied into a Website specifically set up for this purpose, along with a messaging system to allow interested parties to hook up. This would create more opportunities and waste less time." Not a bad plan; trade show planners take note.

Improvement from Within

The current state of animation, with all the cut-backs and its hunger for lower and lower production budgets, is making it extremely challenging for artists and writers to 'create' and express themselves freely. This is not a particularly good breeding ground

for the next great cartoon. Perhaps if more creative types showed up to the markets, and if executives were more receptive to unsolicited pitches, this kind of exchange of new ideas and concepts might produce more spontaneous and sincere properties.

"I don't feel it's the market's responsibility to improve the animation industry," says Dave Warren. "The markets are a forum open to anyone with a good idea and the willingness to do the work necessary to bring it to fruition. Improving the current state of the animation is up to those individuals who are passionate about their craft and willing to do something about it. Sitting in a cubicle complaining about how bad things are isn't going to change things. Change requires action and action speaks louder than words."

A wiser man than me once said, "Success has a simple formula: do your best, and people may like it." So, when making the big decision to brave the trade show circuit, use your common sense. Remember, no amount of money or smoke and mirrors can cover up a bad idea or presentation. Before you make the commitment to become part of the market scene, be honest with yourself and be sure you have all the right goods to make a sale. As well, the importance of being properly prepared for a trade show, in order to

get the desired results, should once again be stressed. Another fitting quote on the subject of success comes from Secretary of State, U.S. General Colin L. Powell: "There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure." Be aware too that all creative endeavors are at the mercy of others' criticism, so there is never really any guaranteed success.

On a closing note, keep in mind that there will always be a need for fresh, new content. Whether to pitch and/or network at the big shows ultimately comes down to personal opinion and circumstance. If you have an idea you feel strongly about, all you *have* to do is decide what you *want* to do with it. Good luck out there and no matter what, stay positive, believe in your shows, and yourself. ■

ROB DAVIES is an Emmy award-winning director, co-founder and VP of business development of Vancouver's Atomic Cartoons, and president of the Association of British Columbia Animation Producers. Creator credits include Atomic Betty, Dog in a Box with 2 Wheels, Dysfunction Junction, and Dirty Lil' Baster.



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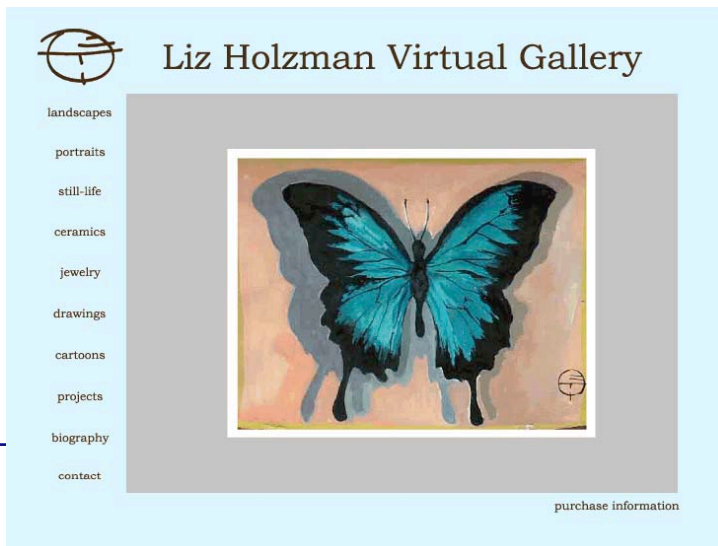
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A Website allows potential clients to see an artist's portfolio anytime, anywhere. Here, Derin Basden designed this site to showcase artist Liz Holzman's work. © 2002, 2003 Liz Holzman. All rights reserved.

Representation 24/7

WEB PRESENTATION

PROMOTE YOUR CAREER WITH A WEBSITE

by Zabra Dowlatabadi

“JUST SPENT \$500 UPDATING MY DEMO REEL,” MY friend Adam said on the phone. His voice was mixed with pain and optimism. “This new reel will do the trick, it will help me get a job soon, it has to.” Meanwhile, on the other end of the phone, I picture the recruiter’s office. There are a few shelves with mountains of portfolios, drawers full of resumes, and a whole corner of the room solely devoted to little black VHS boxes. Some are very dusty; some are less so. However, among these boxes, there is one VHS tape, Adam’s, which is, believe it or not, “the little VHS tape that could.” During the afternoon, it manages to slide its way all the way from the corner of the room, and hop unnoticed on top of a series of conveniently placed stacks of books all the way to the recruiter’s desk. “Okay,” it thinks, “mission accomplished, I thought I could and I did. I am where I ought to be in order to get noticed.” Hours later, while listening to a myriad of conversations, the tape realizes that the recruiter does not make any final decisions — the producer and the director do, but their offices are on another floor. Momentarily dismayed, the tape starts mulling over a few strategies, “I can cartwheel my way down the hall, but how do I get to the fifth floor? What if I get noticed in the hallway? Will I be sent back to the corner? I think I can, I think I can.” And off it goes looking for the real limelight.

I can’t promise this is what really happens, but just about everyone has lost a portfolio at some point in their career, and I wonder, could it be that their portfolios took it upon themselves to get their creator a job? And then some how mysteriously turned down the wrong hallway into the insurance agency’s office — or landed on the wrong floor! Where are they now — all these brave souls that “thought they could?” Is there a portfolio heaven somewhere?

A SINGLE PAGE THAT SHOWS SAMPLES OF YOUR BEST WORK, YOUR CREDITS AND OR BIO, ALONG WITH HOW YOU CAN BE REACHED VIA EMAIL AND TELEPHONE/FAX IS PERFECTLY SUFFICIENT.

GET A WEBSITE!

Did I share this vision with Adam? No, I didn't. I simply said, "Next time you have some money to spend promoting your career, consider creating your own Website. If possible, use your name as the name of your site, and let any one around the world who has access to the Internet see what you have to offer." "Still pictures, can't replace animation," Adam responded. I agreed whole-heartedly, however, I re-

be scrambling to put a demo tape/portfolio together to ship to China. Instead of wasting valuable time and money getting your artwork together, agonizing over how to address the envelope, and having it get stuck in customs, your work would already be there."

We all know that the industry is suffering, and too many of us are out of work — however this is the ideal time to work on creating your site. If you are an artist, you can show your commercial work and perhaps your fine art as well. You can even let your personal cyber gallery sell your work for you. Another friend called me earlier this year asking me for advice on local galleries. I asked her, what about www.lizholzman.com? Now, Liz happens to be an artist who does animation, ceramics, painting and jewelry — you can't really appreciate Liz's talent until you get to spend some time with her. She took my advice and had her site designed for her, and I think she is finally in a gallery that does her work justice. And for once she has a choice on when the exhibition will end, if at all!

START SLOW...BUT START

For many, the thought of creating a Website is overwhelming. So many artists have told me, "My friend has offered to make one for me when he or she gets a chance." I ask the same question a few months later, I get the same answer. I can tell you one thing, if I got a dollar for every time I heard, "My friend is going to do my Website for me," I would have enough money to fund your site right now.

I think it's important to start simple, and then develop your site based on your needs and budget. A single page that shows samples of your best work, your credits and or bio, along with how you can be reached via email and telephone/fax is perfectly sufficient. When you are choosing artwork for your site, select art pieces that best illustrate your talent, versatility and range. If it's too difficult to pick your best work, ask a few friends whose opinion you respect. It's not an easy task, but it is critical.

Create your Website on paper. Where should the artwork appear versus the text? Think of all the features you have seen on other sites that you felt were effective — choice of color and font, composition, pop ups, bouncing balls, graphics, etc. Once you have the blue print for your site on paper, you are ready to get your material (i.e., text and images digitized) so that it is Internet ready. You can take care of this step either at Kinko's or wherever you have access to a high quality scanner.

Recycled Reality

Surrealistic painting of Goran Micic

ENTER



(c) Goran Micic

Color and composition are important considerations when designing a home page. Web designer Lea Milic elegantly and simply frames Goran Micic's striking visual artwork for a bold effect. © Lea Milic.

minded him that it was always possible to convert a few animated scenes to MPEG files or digital videos and add them to the site. Am I saying that it's time to burn your portfolio? No. All I am suggesting is to let your Website open the initial door for you, and then your portfolio can fulfill its mission. Together Adam and I brainstormed about who is looking for artists, and he said he might consider moving to another state to look for work. All of a sudden when he talked about considering Texas, I said, "Adam, I know of a CG feature looking for board artists for a couple of months in China — it is the brain child of one of the world's most highly regarded sci-fi artists." Adam was excited. "Now, if you had your Website, you could just forward the URL via their email address, and they could look at your work instantly. You wouldn't

WAYS TO GET IT DONE

How do you find a good Web designer? I have recommendations, however, I would highly recommend visiting other sites (which are similar in terms of their complexity), finding the name of their designer, and contacting the designer to learn about their services and fees. You can start a generic search at Google and Yahoo. Google Directory of Web Designers is at: directory.google.com/Top/Computers/Internet/Web_Design_and_Development/Designers/ and Yahoo Directory of Web Designers is: dir.yahoo.com/Business_and_Economy/Business_to_Business/Communications_and_Networking/Internet_and_World_Wide_Web/Web_Site_Designers/

THIS IS THE PERFECT TIME TO FLEX YOUR ARTISTIC MUSCLES — WE ARE TOO OFTEN JUST A COG IN THE LARGER MACHINE.

You might decide to create your own site. This is exactly what Mike Vosburg did. You can see his work at www.vozart.com. Mike attended a one-week workshop, and purchased Adobe PhotoShop and Adobe Go Live software. This route involved close to an \$1,800 investment, and took Mike a couple of months to get familiarized with the programs and launch his first site. He does however now have a whole new set of skills. Yet another option is to try Image Squirrel. This is a site that allows you to upload your own images to an already built product, and was created specifically for artists. It requires some technical savvy, and the interface is not highly flexible, but it may be just the right tool for you. You can find Image Squirrel at: www.imagesquirrel.com

Or you may wish to hire a designer. To create a one-page Website (with all materials already digitized, requiring no PhotoShop fixes), Lea Milic charges \$100. She will help you find free hosting or she will direct you to sites where you can register your domain name. Lea will also assist you in uploading the page so that your site is officially launched on the Internet. To see samples of sites that Lea has designed, you can visit the following URLs: www.geocities.com/artgoranmicic and www.kathybrunette.0catch.com. Lea can be reached at: home.pacbell.net/milicd/

I also recommend Derin Basden. I don't know his specific rates, but I do know they are reasonable. Here are a few examples of his design work: www.deborahreber.com, www.lizholzman.com and



Artist Mike Vosburg designed his own site after taking a one week course and buying the software. All material © Mike Vosburg.

www.versura.com (Derin worked with two other people on the design for the entire site). In order to contact Derin, go to www.spazden.com.

There are also online services that will create a Web presence for you by hosting your reel or portfolio and making your work available to a community of industry researchers and buyers. The best among these services, PlanetPoint.com, provides an excellent service at very affordable rates. PlanetPoint members enjoy exposure (via an easily searchable member directory and a monthly newsletter) to a user base of over 45,000 industry professionals. Other similar services in the space include eCreativeSearch.com, Portfolios.com and WatchReels.com.

This is the perfect time to flex your artistic muscles — we are too often just a cog in the larger machine. Well no longer, when it comes to your site. By creating your own spot light on the Internet, you enable the whole world to view what you are capable of, and essentially you have representation 24/7. As far as self-promotion goes, I don't think it can get any better than that. ■

ZAHRA DOWLATABADI is directing a documentary for PTV, Los Angeles (www.ptvla.org). She is also developing a proposal for a Website focused on "Global Voting." Concurrently, she is indulging her love for children by writing a Persian and English book for pre-schoolers. For more information on Zahra, visit www.producinganimation.com.

JUST RE-VISITING

Lilo & Stitch *Revisited:* Part II

by Andrew Osmond



We're honored to be speaking to Andreas Deja, a master Disney craftsman who brought cutely stumpy Hawaiian girl Lilo to animated life. Deja's two-decade tenure has seen him animate Disney heavies — Gaston, Jafar and Scar — along with numbskull hero Hercules and two Mickey Mouses (Mickey Mice?) in *Runaway Brain* and *Fantasia 2000*.

This interview was conducted in the Dorchester Hotel next door to [Chris Sanders](#), who was recording a Stitch 'voice-over' for a Disney TV special. Somehow a serious conversation about animation technique gains an extra something when it's punctuated by crazy growls and howls...

Andrew Osmond: What was your move to the Florida Disney studio like?

Andreas Deja: I had been involved in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* in London and I worked on the Mickey Mouse short *Runaway Brain* in Paris. So I was a little



Andreas Deja's working relationship with *Lilo & Stitch*'s co-writers and co-directors Chris Sanders and Dean DeBlois was unusually close since there was no story department to go through. All images © Disney Enterprises, Inc. All rights reserved. Photographer: Richard Glenn.



During a research trip to Hawaii, Deja was impressed by the honest and uncomplicated way Hawaiians communicate.

After I was led in, the kids did drawings for me and I sketched for them before class. At one point the teacher said, "The kids would like to greet you now." I thought they would all line up and shake my hand or something. Instead, they stood in front of me and sang the most beautiful Hawaiian greeting song. Just witnessing this, I almost became teary-eyed. It was so genuine and emotional and I felt so privileged. I think that feeling carried over into the movie characters. There was

bit used to this kind of change, working with a different group of people. This move was in a way the easiest because I knew most people in Florida; a lot of them started in L.A.

They have the most beautiful building in Florida. It seems to me that they've learned from all the mistakes they made before, building new studios. There's lots of space, all the offices have windows, and it's terrific to work in. It was fairly easy getting set up. There's a smaller crew, which is good, because if you work tighter, it seems there are more immediate results and fewer meetings. Chris and Dean didn't have a story department, for example; they storyboarded practically everything themselves. It was pretty much their vision on paper to the animators.

AO: Tell us about your research trip to Hawaii.

AD: I'm really glad I went. On these research trips, it's usually the art directors and background people who go and look at the local colors and sunsets and mountains. People had this idea I might want to check into a local school that teaches Hawaiian tradition and language. We had this Hawaiian tour guide who said, "Well, I don't know if we'll be able to get in because they're very protective of their heritage." But I talked to the teachers a little bit, with the kids looking out of the door, thinking, "Who's this person?" I explained that I worked for Disney and that I worked on these movies and the kids were all going, "Yeah!"

something so honest and uncomplicated about the Hawaiian culture, the way people communicate.

YOU HAVE TO KNOW WHO A CHARACTER IS, WHAT HE OR SHE IS FEELING AT THAT MOMENT, HOW THEY RELATE TO OTHER CHARACTERS IN THE SCENE.

AO: How did you develop Lilo's designs from Chris Sanders' drawings?

AD: Usually when a supervising animator comes on a movie the first task is to set the design for the character. In the case of Jafar or Scar or some of the other characters, that's my design. In this case, it was really Chris' cast of characters he'd created. Nobody questioned it because we all loved what he had done.

I only had to make sure what he'd drawn stayed intact. There were some slight inconsistencies in the drawings; Chris would even say, "Look, even though we're going to take this design, I draw Lilo a little differently from board to board because I'm not concerned with animation." But I could see the essence of it in a storyboard, and it was up to me to...I don't want to say fine-tune, but make it work for animation and movement. I certainly didn't want to change anything.

AO: How do you create a character? Where do the small mannerisms (for example, the way Lilo flips her hair) come from?

AD: You have to know who a character is, what he or she is feeling at that moment, how they relate to other characters in the scene. You go through the storyboards; you talk with the directors. You think about their all-round personality, down to what the character has for breakfast. The tricky part to get beyond the techniques and open up the animation, make it a personal statement.

As for mannerisms, you do what's appropriate for the scene. With the example of Lilo flipping her hair back over her ear, I actually never had a chance to do that. I wanted to because it was a very "girly" gesture, but it was the other animators working with me who did that.

AO: Tell us about Lilo's acting.

AD: Looking at the first drawings of Lilo, she's pretty caricatured, not that realistic. She's certainly much more caricatured than Snow White or Cinderella or Pocahontas or the other major Disney girls. It seemed that she would have to be animated broader because the design is broad, but on the contrary...Because of who she is, the emotions she's going through and her problems with other characters, I had to be much more selective with the acting patterns.

That means holding still a lot, which is very difficult in animation. Sometimes you would have a scene where she's just looking at the social worker and not really doing anything, maybe just an eyeblink. Those are the challenges because if you just hold a drawing, the chances are it will die on you. There are exceptions where you hold one drawing for a certain effect, but it usually becomes lifeless. So what you end up doing is a little thing like tilting her head very, very slowly, or having an eyeblink. You have to be right on with the drawing and the expression. Because of the

lack of movement, the audience sees that drawing.

I can point at one particular scene that haunted me. It was in the sequence with Lilo and Stitch in the bedroom, looking at the photograph of the parents. Lilo's questioning Stitch about his family. (Lilo voice) "What happened to yours? I hear you cry at night" — and then there was one shot, a clasp of her — (Lilo voice) "I know that's why you wreck things and push



Deja took his cues on how to animate Lilo from her character's complex emotional range.

me" — and she looks at him out of the corner of her eye. Chris had done this drawing that was just... devastating. I said, "I can't animate this! The drawing represents the emotional movement, so if you add movement, it'll ruin it!"

I SAID, "I CAN'T ANIMATE THIS! THE DRAWING REPRESENTS THE EMOTIONAL MOVEMENT, SO IF YOU ADD MOVEMENT, IT'LL RUIN IT!"

AO: What was the emotion? Sadness?

AD: It was much more than that. She was saying something that was very difficult for her. She didn't quite want to face him because of that but she was sort of checking him out and turning her head and seeing what his reaction would be... and there was a sort of hesitation in the look. All of that has to be in the scene; it certainly was in the drawing. Of course I kept that pose, but I had her turn away and then come

IT DAWNED ON ME, SEEING THE STORYBOARDS, THAT A LOT OF THEM ARE VERY GROUNDED... WITH EMOTIONS THAT ARE VERY REAL, NOT CARTOONY.

back and that seemed to be the right approach. So she says, (Lilo voice) "I know that's why you wreck things and push me," and then she takes a little look back.

I asked Chris recently, "Do you think I wrecked the scene?" and he said, "No, no, I think it worked!" It was very important to me that I get it right, or at least try my best. Those are the challenges, not the scenes

well. Nani does this beautiful look...she waits until the social worker's gone and then it's: "Where are you, you little brat?" (laughs). We cut to Lilo standing in the doorway frozen. I kept one drawing — just one drawing — and that goes into, "AAAAAH!" Then the tremendous scramble begins, Lilo's almost falling over, I have her with one hand on the ground...and off she goes and Nani's after her. There's a great contrast



Deja's early renderings of Lilo were more caricatured, but in the end, he became more selective on how she was portrayed.

where she's screaming or yelling or biting, easy stuff!

AO: How did Daveigh Chase's voice affect the character?

AD: They found her pretty early and because of that fact, they were saying, "Let's look a little further, test other girls." But we came back to Daveigh because she just seemed to hit the right emotional attitude. It was a big help to have a voice like that. I found her voice very contrasting; it's one thing or the other (laughs). She gets into this big SCREAM when the social worker leaves, after the first meeting didn't go

— silence, then this gigantic scream.

AO: No inbetweens at all?

AD: It's straight into the big mouth. I said, "Chris, do you want a little move in the hold?" He said, "No, no! Just one drawing. There's a shocking change we need to get across."

It was a revealing moment to me when I saw that sequence, the big fight between the two of them. What they're saying, how they yell at each other, and how they make up afterwards was so much like real life. I have an older sister and younger sister and this was just like home back when we were kids. It

dawned on me, seeing the storyboards, that a lot of them are very grounded, very earthbound sequences with emotions that are very real, not cartoony. And yet you have Stitch coming in and this element of science-fiction, which I think, makes it a very interesting mix. This whole thing is not all cartoony; the emotions are very real. Even Stitch becomes real, in terms of what he's going through.



From the DVD bonus material "Inter-Stitch-Al," Stitch breaks onto the set of *Beauty and the Beast*.

AO: You've talked about how Lilo interacts with Nani, but how about other people?

AD: Well, she would like to be friends with the other schoolgirls but it's a challenge for her. They resent her; a girl in her class actually says, "You're weird," when she tells the story of Pudge the fish. That's when she loses it, even Lilo can only take so much. In every screening I've seen, that gets a big laugh because people don't expect it of her, for Lilo to actually punch the girl. Lilo just takes a big leap (laughs) and lets her have it!

AO: At least one U.S. reviewer was extremely shocked by that scene...

AD: You know, it's amazing because animated characters punch each other all the time, whether it's Daffy Duck or Sylvester or even some of the Disney characters. It's common so you wonder why is it so shocking? Because it's a little girl, it's unexpected, and I think she comes out as being believable. If the audience just sees another cartoon character, they wouldn't care, they wouldn't even laugh — but Lilo gets this big reaction, which I find amazing, absolutely amazing.

With the teacher, it's her impatience. [Teacher voice] "Lilo why are you late?" — She goes into this, [Lilo voice, sigh] "Here we go again, every Thursday I have to explain it again, feed Pudge the fish a peanut-

butter sandwich, don't you get it? Don't you understand?" She gets impatient with him because she can't be understood; she sees her things her way and can't understand why other people can't see them that way too.

AO: How about her interaction with Stitch?

LILLO GETS THIS BIG REACTION, WHICH I FIND AMAZING, ABSOLUTELY AMAZING.

AD: From very early on, she is determined to deal with him. He's mean, he pushes her, he doesn't behave like a dog should (laughs) but she goes for dog training and uses a water pistol... She is determined to turn him into a good thing. It's her project; she doesn't want to give up. When Stitch comes into her room for the first time, he does this monstrous snarl. She sees it and says, (Lilo voice) "Look how curious

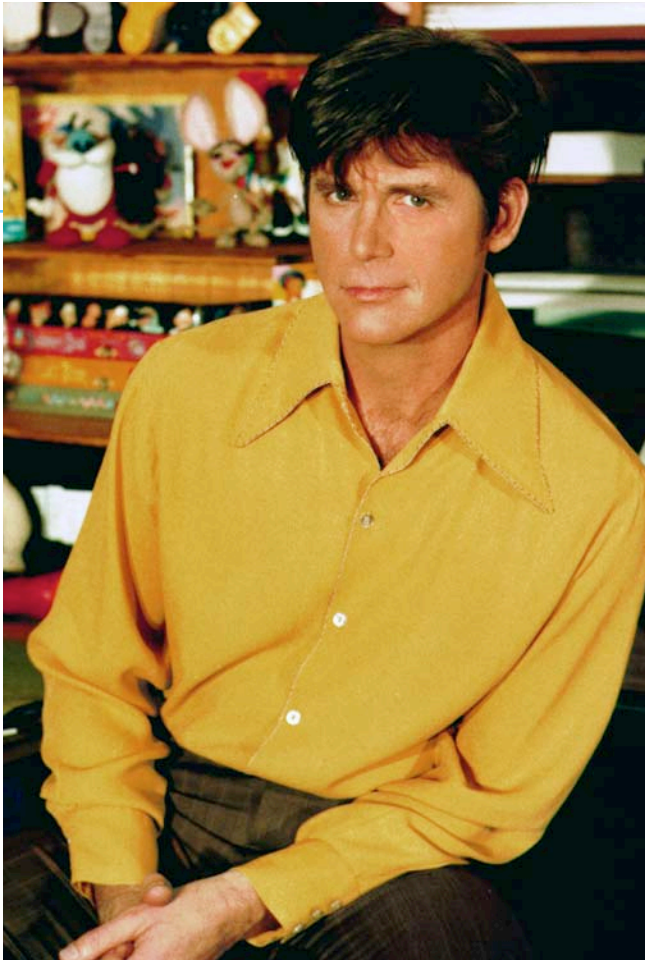


Deja's main concern was to keep Sanders' original visual ideas of the characters intact. Here, Lilo, Nani and Stitch hit the waves.

this puppy is!" (laughs) — completely innocent, you know? (Lilo voice) "This is my room, this is mine, this is your bed, this is your dolly and bottle, doesn't spill"...She's just like a real kid and determined to deal with him.

Because of the different relations Lilo has to all the characters, it makes her a very rich character herself. ■

ANDREW OSMOND is a freelance writer specializing in fantasy media and animation.



The Second Time Around: John Kricfalusi is excited about the opportunity to produce new episodes for the revived *Ren and Stimpy*. Courtesy of Spumco.

Tell the Story!

FROM BLAMMO!

An Interview with John Kricfalusi

by Martin "Dr. Toon" Goodman

Martin "Dr. Toon" Goodman: First off, John, congratulations on the *Ren and Stimpy* revival; we're all looking forward to it, but I was wondering...you've always said that whatever you do, you wanted it to be new, even down to not even drawing the same expression twice. Were you at all disappointed that Viacom approached you about reviving *Ren and Stimpy* rather than asking you for an original series?

John Kricfalusi: Well, if you look at the first couple of seasons of *Ren and Stimpy*, you can see that we did new things all the time. They're the easiest characters I've ever written for. The whole show is designed to be experimental. They don't live in one particular place; it's just like the old comedies with the Three Stooges or Laurel and Hardy. You can do any kind of situation, tell any kind of story. You could do a philosophical story, a purely gag story, or a science-fiction satire. *Ren and Stimpy* are easy creatively — well, it's not an easy production to do — but creatively it opens itself up to a million possibilities.

Dr. T: Are there any changes you'll be making in the show?

JK: Well, there's nothing to tinker with — it always changed. There really isn't any formula to change.

Dr. T: Is the show still going to have that throwback look, with bumpers, "commercials" and closing bits?

JK: It'll have some; it may not have quite as many because the stories are longer. They get longer and longer the more I do them. I tend to elaborate on everything. Every time I have a scene, something that's not meant to be that important, we get all excited about it, come up with more gags, and it just gets longer. The stories are all half-hours now. They're more intense than they used to be. More ups and downs.

Dr. T: It seems to be in your nature to enjoy proving people wrong whenever you can. Was that part of your motivation in agreeing to revive *Ren and Stimpy*?

JK: My main motivation was, I didn't have any work. That's always number one — putting food in my mouth. At the same time, it's the best project I ever worked on, the most fun I ever had, the most creatively rewarding, and it put me on the map.

Dr. T: Well, good to see you have them back, then!

JK: Yeah, me too. I mean, it's a riot. We're having a great time. I've had to start a new studio from scratch, and it's just a lot fun. Really exciting. We have all sorts of great talent and we have some of the best talent from the original series. Some of it is classic *Ren and Stimpy*, but some of it is all new.

Dr. T: Do you still have Richard Purcell, Robyn Byrd, Ben Jones and your other Spumco people?

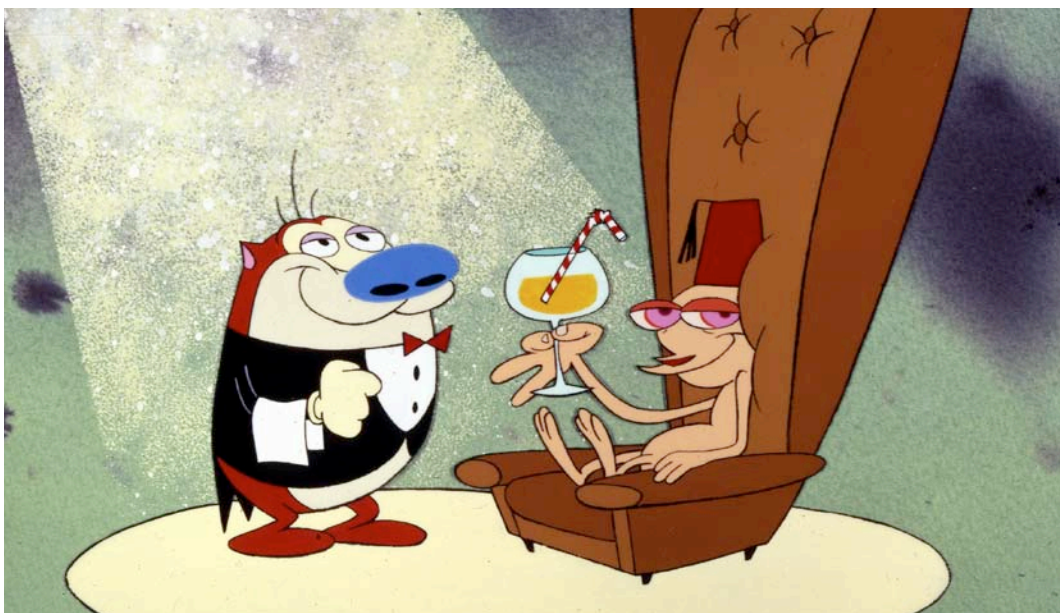
JK: Well, Robyn Byrd and Ben Jones never worked on the original *Ren and Stimpy*. I do have Richard Purcell and Eddie Fitzgerald — they're all on the new show and they were on the old one, too. We have new luminaries such as Fred Osmond, Katy Rice and Nick Cross, my genius find here up north, so we have lots of great new talent and some of the old talent, too.

Dr. T: How long did it take you to get *Ren and Stimpy* back into production? Were you up and running right away?

JK: I was a little nervous at first that we might not be able to recapture the feeling we had when we were first doing it, so we started by taking one of the old scripts, *Ren Seeks Help*, that never got produced. As we did it, within the first week we came up with most of the rest of the stories for the season, all new. Once we started working on it again, it all came back and the new stuff is even weirder than the old stuff! We got into it real fast.

Dr. T: I see that you're only making six new episodes right now, and that must be a relief.

JK: Yeah, it is. We wanted to do thirteen episodes, which I'm all for. But I was worried because I knew I'd have to start a studio from scratch in [Canada](#). It is a hard show,



It didn't take long for Kricfalusi and his team to get back into the *Ren and Stimpy* spirit. All *Ren and Stimpy* images courtesy of Nickelodeon.



Bob Clampett, seen here with Mel Blanc, regaled the young Kricfalusi with stories about Warner Bros. animation. All Bob Clampett photos courtesy of the Bob Clampett Collection™ & © Bob Clampett Productions.

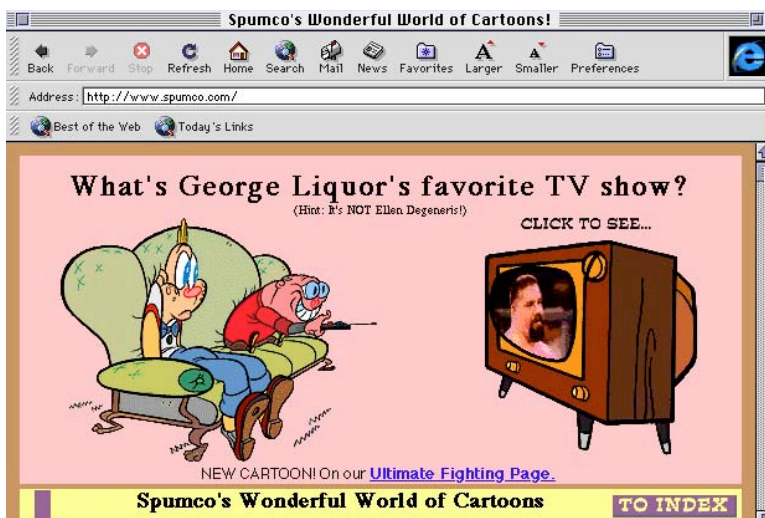
and I remember how I had to train everybody from scratch the last time and I knew I was going to have to do that this time. I figured that if we had thirteen episodes, then we might have six good ones and seven not so good ones. So I asked them if it would be okay if we made six the first season to buy us the time to train people. And it is taking a while to train people. This is the first week that I've decided to delegate to some people who've got the style down and have them train others.

Creatively, it's really exciting, we have a killer crew, and everyone's having a great time.

Dr. T: Speaking of having great new talent...you've been very critical of today's animation.

JK: Oh, do you mean the last thirty-five years?

Dr. T: Yeah, let's take the last thirty-five years. Animation, in your view, seems to get locked down at the story stage and dominated by writers who can't or don't draw.



The George Liquor Show, an Internet series, is another of Kricfalusi's creations. © Spumco.

JK: Can't write, either!

Dr. T: The system is an assembly line of poor communication among compartmentalized workers, in your words, designed against creativity. Do you find that you have to totally retrain people when they come to work for you?

JK: Yes. Even people that worked for me before, because if they go work on other projects, they instantly fall into bad habits.

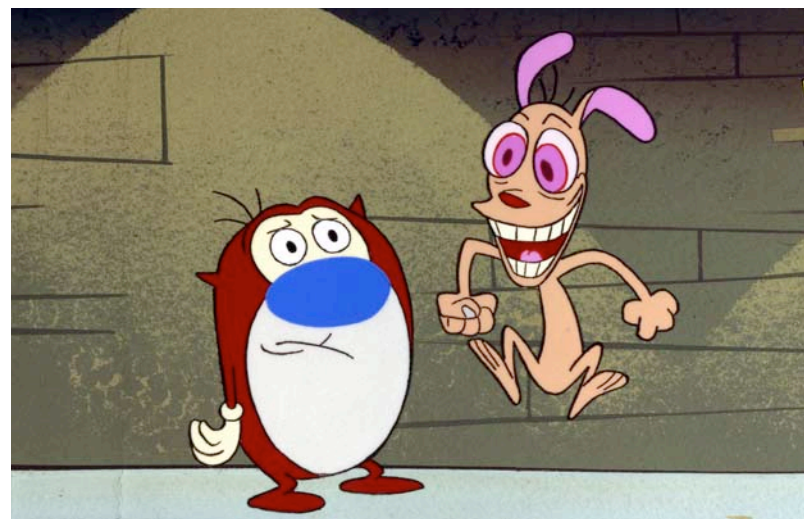
Dr. T: How difficult is it to retrain them into your system and style of unit-based animation?

JK: Extremely difficult. It's my biggest frustration.

Dr. T: For example?

JK: Here's a good example. Everyone in Canada basically follows the Nelvana system; many of the TV studios follow their methods, which are kind of similar

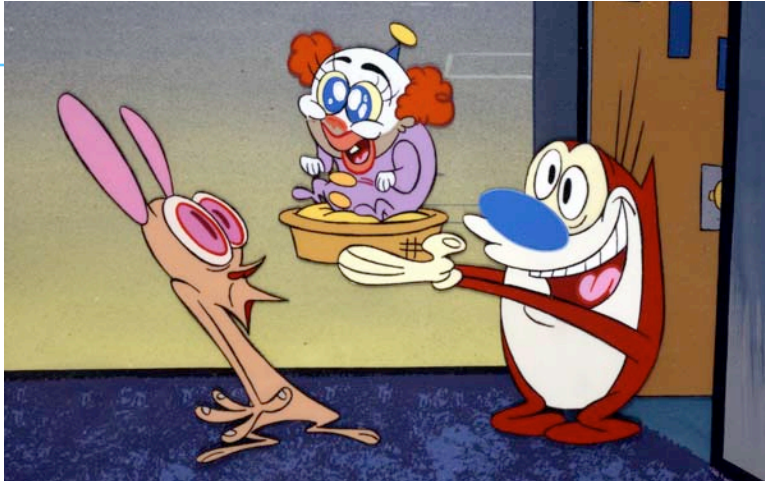
to the DIC methods. So, when we were first doing storyboards up here, every person that was doing the boards did every single establishing shot of a new location from a "down shot." They used to do that at DIC too, and at some of the other Saturday morning studios in L.A. And I always hated that — it's beyond me where the hell that came from! I think they think they're doing live-action, but they don't do that in live-action. Who wants to look at the top of everyone's head? What's on there that's so interesting? I ask people, "Why is this on a down shot?" and they say, "Well, I want to establish where everything is." I tell them: "We don't need to see



Judging from graduate students' portfolios, Kricfalusi believes art and animation schools don't teach useful fundamentals to their pupils.

all that and you don't have to have an establishing shot as the first shot in every cartoon and every scene, either." Every single new location would open with a down shot, showing me where everything was — I said, why don't you just have a hand pointing at where everything was? Yeah, here's where the toilet seat is, and here's where the empty beer can is! Who cares! Tell the story! Find out what's important about the story! Figure out a good, dramatic moment to get it started. When you read novels, they don't start by explaining: "Well, in this room, where these characters are about to enact an incredible drama, there's uh, a chair..." They reveal stuff a little bit at a time; start with some kind of dramatic moment to grab your interest and catch you. The most amateurish thing to do in the world is to just tell everyone everything right off the bat. And especially from the top. It never looks good in animation; you can't animate characters walking while looking down on them.

Dr. T: You seem to have a pretty dim view of how students are trained in today's animation schools and programs. Have you ever thought about forming your



Kricfalusi knew that he'd need extra time to train new members of his *Ren and Stimpy* team to his way of working.

own school or doing your own textbooks on animation methods and production?

JK: Well, we might start a school up here. Some of the quicker learners here, I'm just now promoting them, and having them explain to some of the other people just artistic principles in general. Which they don't teach in school anymore. I don't care which school you're talking about — they do not teach art in art schools anymore, and it drives me insane. I cannot believe the portfolios that come out of the art schools. I tell them all, just get your money back because they didn't teach you to draw! Even if they're talented. Talented people can teach themselves, but there's only so much you can teach yourself because every single person has weak points, things that they don't see. If you don't have somebody to point them out to you, they're going to stay weak. The whole point of paying \$30,000 a year is to get somebody to tell you that you're wrong, not that everything you do is wonderful and creative. The animation schools don't teach even the fundamental, basic concepts of animation; they don't teach you how do construction. They say the words "construction." They don't teach you how to do line of action. They say "line of action." Everyone's familiar with the terms, but nobody does them.

Dr. T: What do they teach, then?

JK: You got me! They teach five-minute life drawings. Everybody brings in these scribbles! Just pages and pages of scribbled life drawings. And I ask everyone, "Ah, why does this look like a scribble?" "'Cause I did it in five minutes." Why would you show a potential employer something that you drew in five minutes? How do I know you can draw a finished drawing? I know you can make

scribbles, that's great. What good is it? And I ask the teachers too. The only reason they do it is because sixty years ago the Disney studio — when Don Graham was teaching — supplemented their life drawing classes with gesture drawing classes. But you don't give gesture-drawing classes to people who don't already draw well. If you can already draw the human body and you know how anatomy works, great — now you can do a quick sketch. But they're teaching you the last step first. So, if you don't know how to draw anything yet, go ahead and draw really fast! How the hell can you learn anything? You can't see what's there in five minutes. You can't do line of action with that. But meanwhile, the pose doesn't

have any line of action — because the model doesn't know anything about animation. He's not doing a gesture that has a line of action. But they still do it because the last generation of teachers did it, and the previous generation of teachers did it, and so on back six generations or something. But no one knows why they're doing it anymore. They only do it because it says in the curriculum: "You must have gesture classes." You know what I equate it to? The fall of the Roman Empire.

Dr. T: How so?

JK: Because a few scattered bits of information from classical Greece were saved during the Dark Ages. Nobody knew what the hell any of it meant or what the thinking was behind it, so it became dogma. So the schools now are teaching dogma. They remember the words, but they don't remember the meaning behind the words.

Dr. T: Are there any disciples currently under your tutelage that we should look for in the near future?

JK: Well, I wouldn't call them disciples, but colleagues. As I said before, Nick Cross is really great. Another one is Helder Mendonca.

Dr. T: Perhaps your most controversial stance is the one you take on writers.

JK: I like writers. There aren't any in the animation business. But I read all the time. I'm a voracious reader — I've got about six books on my bed every night. Real writers, not these weirdoes that come into the animation business.

Dr. T: You've always said that artists are the best writers and gagmen.

JK: No, I didn't say that — I always get paraphrased and misquoted as saying that. Not every artist is a writer. Not every musician is a writer, but would you want somebody to write a symphony who wasn't a musician? Would you want somebody to write a science book who didn't know science?

Dr. T: Ah...not my science book.

JK: You write what you know. So why would you come into the animation business not able to draw and all of a sudden you want to tell all the people who do know, how the stuff works and what to do? You don't know anything about the art of it. I mean, yeah, physically you can write, but you're going to make every artist hate your guts, and you're going to make crap. It won't stand the test of time because it's just not utilizing the media.

Bob Clampett, receiving an award here from Rudy Ising, introduced Kricfalusi to Milton Gray, who worked at Filmmation by day and taught classical animation class by night.



Dr. T: Let's talk about a subject dear to both of us — Bob Clampett. How important was his personal guidance in your career?

JK: He honestly didn't give me that much personal guidance. Whenever I asked him how he did anything, he wasn't that articulate in explaining the creative process. He was just a natural, he was gifted — he just did it. He was so good at it that he never overanalyzed it. He did tell me what it was like working at the [Warner] studio; he told me tons of stories about the people



Kricfalusi feels animation today is marred by writers who can't write well or draw.

there. He was totally inspirational in that sense. And also, I was too young to really know exactly what questions to ask him to find out anything in a technical sense. I didn't know enough yet to ask any intelligent questions. But he was totally inspirational both in his work and his personality because he was as funny as his cartoons.

Dr. T: Your work, from *Mighty Mouse* up through *The Ripping Friends*, has always been marked by emotional intensity, surreal characters, outrageous gags, funny character design — that's out of the Clampett tradition, but how would you say you differ from him?

JK: Well, I have a tough time writing short cartoons. I don't know why, because I love short cartoons. I guess I'm long-winded. Maybe I get more into the psychology of the characters than Clampett does. Then, this is a different time period, and that's the main difference. He just grew up in a different world. I don't purposely try to be different than Clampett; he's my absolute favorite cartoonist of all time, and I'd like to be able to do something half as good as his cartoons.



George Liquor first appeared in *Ren and Stimpy*. © Spumco.

Dr. T: Clampett seemed to go through distinct phases in his career. From about 1937-40, he was into wild distortions, like in *The Daffy Doc*.

JK: Man, I love those black and white cartoons!

Dr. T: Then, like for a year or two he seemed to settle down into spot gags and celebrity-driven cartoons.

JK: You know what that is? That's because he was finishing Tex Avery's cartoons. He took over that unit when Avery left, and finished a lot of cartoons that Tex had already storyboarded.

Dr. T: Then he geared up again right around 1942 with *Wabbit Twouble*, and by 1943 he was doing some of his best work. Do you feel that your career has gone through distinct phases as well?

JK: Well, I don't analyze it, so I don't know. You'd probably be better at picking that up! I don't think about the last thing I did. Once it's done, I don't even want to look at it. I'm thinking about the next thing.

Dr. T: Wasn't it Bob Clampett who first referred you to Filmation in 1979?

JK: Well, Bob Clampett didn't refer me to Filmation; he introduced me to Milt Gray, who worked at Filmation and was a classic animation freak. He worked at Filmation doing crap, and he knew it was crap, but he was teaching a classical animation class at night. So Bob Clampett wasn't recommending Filmation to me. He recommended that I go meet Milt Gray, join his class, and then maybe Milt could let me know where there's work and get me in somewhere.

Dr. T: Milt Gray is one hell of an animation historian.

JK: Well, he and Mike Barrier did all those interviews in the '70s and '80s with all the classic animators. It's all in that book [*Hollywood Cartoons*](#) that Mike Barrier wrote.

Dr. T: Yeah, great book.

JK: I hated it. It was a whole book about how rotten everybody was! It's okay to have a little bit of criticism, but you know, you're talking about the best animation that was ever done. The book makes it sound like it's the worst animation that was ever done. You should qualify it by saying: "Well, I'm criticizing things that I personally don't like." It doesn't mean that they're wrong or right, just that he doesn't like them. All kinds of things that he said he hated I loved, and most people loved.

Dr. T: There were some harsh judgments about classics like *What's Opera, Doc?* and Bill Tytla's animation in *Fantasia*...

JK: He hates it when they get over-distorted in cartoons — I love that one! He said that when Clampett — well, I'm going to be guilty of paraphrasing — ah, dismembers his characters, it makes him queasy. Well, it doesn't make me queasy, and it doesn't make 99% of humanity queasy. People laughed at that stuff! That's part of what a cartoon is!

Dr. T: As far back as 1993, you've been coming up with ideas for feature films. If I'm not mistaken, *The Ripping Friends* was originally planned for the big screen, is that right?

JK: Nope. I don't know why everyone keeps saying that! It was originally meant to be a satire of all the toy shows from the '80s — like *GI Joe* and *He-Man*, all that stuff. And then after a while I actually liked what we were doing with it as we were creating it, and I thought, this would probably be really hard to do for television, maybe it should be a feature. But I had never made a feature, and I had no idea how to even go about selling a feature. I think I pitched it a few times but it never sold.

Dr. T: Is a feature film still in your future plans?

JK: We're looking to do a feature-length film with The New TNN. We're hoping that at some future point that we can make a feature film for the theaters, that'd be great. I'd love to do a *Ren and Stimpy* feature; I'd love to do a *George Liquor* feature. Or a *Ripping Friends* feature



Kricfalusi is looking to produce a feature film in the near future and *Ripping Friends* could be a candidate. © 2001 Fox Kids. All rights reserved.night.

at some point. I'd want to practice first on simpler characters like Ren and Stimpy.

Dr. T: So...what was the best Kirk Douglas movie of all time?

JK: *Detective Story*. I love that movie. There was another couple of great ones too — *Young Man With A Horn*, which I think is the best movie about creativity and about artists ever made. And *Champion*, the one where

he's a boxer — yeah, that one's great, too. ■

If you'd like to learn more about Bob Clampett or the history of animation at Warner Bros., please check out Beany & Cecil, The Special Edition available on DVD from www.facets.org and www.amazon.com. This collection includes some of Clampett's lost works as well as in-depth audio interviews that Milt Gray, Mike Barrier and others conducted with Clampett about his Warner years.

John Kricfalusi has been redefining animation for the past fifteen years. He is the creator of Ren and Stimpy, The Ripping Friends, and Internet classics such as The George Liquor Show on his own Website and Weekend Pussy Hunt for Icebox.com. He is an avid yodeler and a great fan of the films of Kirk Douglas...even when they use the occasional "down shot."

MARTIN "DR. TOON" GOODMAN is a longtime student and fan of animation. He lives in Anderson, Indiana.

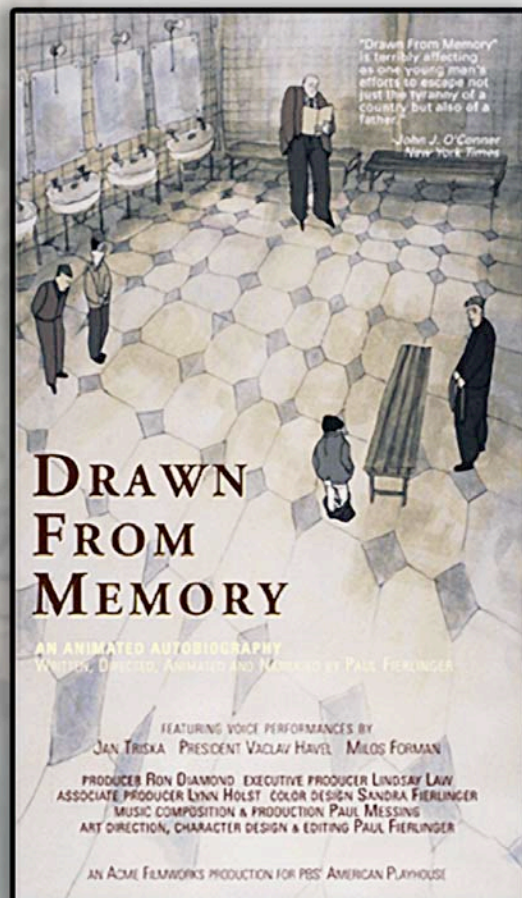
Paul Fierlinger's DRAWN FROM MEMORY Now Available on Video!

"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>

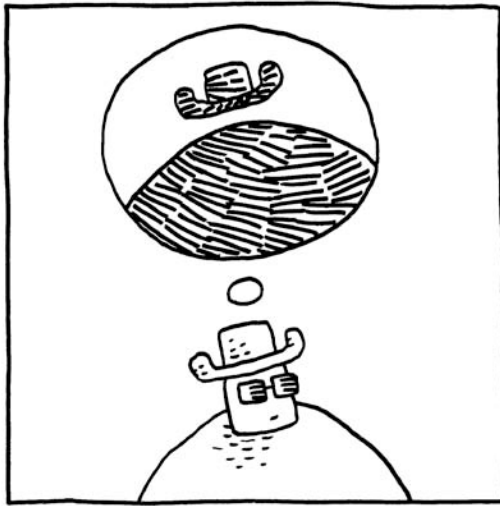


Illustration by [Andreas Hykade](#).
Courtesy of Chris J. Robinson.

A Modest Request

ANIMATION PIMP

IF YOU AIN'T GONNA SHARE YOUR TOYS, THEN YOU CAN KISS MY ASS.

by Chris J. Robinson

Insignificant and occasionally interesting contributions to the cognition of reality...

I'VE BEEN VISITING THAT WEBSITE KAZAA.COM A LOT. In a matter of weeks, I was able to catch up with *The Sopranos* (it sometimes takes a year for me to see recent shows), watch three seasons of *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, discover *Six Feet Under*, and watch loads of lesbian and gay porn. Meantime, I was also watching the show *Oz*; mostly because they were the same joes who made *Homicide: Life on the Street*, one of my favourite shows of all time.

NO, WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR IS SOMETHING THAT HAS PERSONALITY, HUMOUR AND YET IS MATURE AND REFLECTIVE.

Now okay...*Curb* is pretty funny, but still quite self-indulgent, juvenile and ultimately meaningless. And hey...that's okay...(as I said in December) meaningless ain't such a bad thing. What I like about *Homicide*, and to a lesser degree *Sopranos*, *Six Feet Under* and *Oz*, is that they attempt to deal with mature, sensitive MEANINGFUL questions, but not in a big over the top way. They are often quite funny...and I don't mean funny in a snot ass intellectual way...but in a real gut busting snorting kinda way (e.g. the Paulie character in *Sopranos*).

WHERE IS IT?

Funny thing is that outside of [Waking Life](#) and maybe some Japanese stuff (I don't know nuttin' about Japanese animation aside from indie stuff) there are no (North American) animation shows that

combine this maturity and humour with the exception of maybe *Samurai Jack* (even though it's little more than a cliff's notes to Kurosawa). We've heard all this talk about animation growing up, how there are more adult animations being produced, and okay, yes...there was [Pond Life](#), [Bob and Margaret](#), [Dilbert](#), [Family Guy](#), [King of the Hill](#) and, of course, *The Simpsons*, but all of them fall back on laughs. There might be some nods to political, social or cultural issues, but it's rarely more than a passing, "Hey, look how smart I is!" gesture.

Now hold up...I'm not asking for heavy handed Ingmar Bergman chamber dramas directed by the [Quays](#), [Simon Pummell](#), [Piotr Dumala](#) or [Alexander Petrov](#). FUCK THAT. I have almost no capacity left for humourless films that explore the horror, horror, horror of life with absolutely no sense of humour. That's just self-indulgence. If you ain't gonna share your toys, then you can kiss my ass.

No, what I'm looking for is something that has personality, humour and yet is mature and reflective. [Waking Life](#) was a great example. Yeah...okay...I hear those "philosophy 101" critiques. So what? What the hell's so bad about trying to articulate your views of life? Besides...it was funny and even comforting to hear all these theories and perspectives. Most of us (me too) plow through life without really thinking about every action. You can't possibly reflect all the time because you'd never get a damn thing done. But it seems to me that it is necessary (even if life is ultimately meaningless) to have those reflective moments where you analyse your life and how to live it. That's how we

I'M NOT ASKING FOR HEAVY HANDED INGMAR BERGMAN CHAMBER DRAMAS...

evolve and learn not to repeat past ignorance(s). We often slip into routines and habits and just as often we need to be smacked with a left hook or uppercut to shake us from complacency.

A DEEPER SIDE?

Sopranos, *Homicide* and *Six Feet Under* all deal with those issues of life, death, sin, salvation, loyalty, violence, sex, power, etc. They sometimes lead you to reflect on an issue in your own life (e.g. *Sopranos* might lead you to think about your relationship with your mother). I can think of no animation shows that achieve the same. Okay...yeah...I'm sure one of my PhD. pallies can (and have) deconstructed *King of the Hill* and *The Simpsons* and come to all sorts of conclusions about what it REALLY says about social life in America. Hell, academia has shown that you can find meaning in department store mannequins. And sure why not...that's fine...okay...but I ain't got time. I want my meaning just beneath the surface if not up front. I want it funny. And I want it told in under an hour. (Remember I'm talking TV, not books.)

I was reading this fella's book about my old chum, Heraclitus, and he was saying that there are two kinds of people in the world: private (personal) and open (universal). Private folks live with a closed understanding of the world, whereas open or broad folks have a wider understanding of the world. If a closed person was examining animation (for e.g.), they'd watch different animation films whereas a broad person might explore the nature of human sight and sound (animation is about seeing and hearing). In short it's being able to see yourself in the larger scheme o' things.

What I like about *Waking Life* is that it remains aware of both the private and broader realms. We see people from different backgrounds informally musing about the meaning of life. It's done seriously, off the cuff and with humour and personality. They use the private world to explore broader social-cultural issues. Even the one episode I saw of *Samurai Jack* seemed to address larger issues of identity, time, honour, etc...but that's it. I can't for the life of me think of any other animation shows (and yes...*Waking Life* is not a series) that speak in this manner. (Okay...okay... maybe *Avenue Amy* — or how about *Chris Lanier's* occasionally fantastic, *Romanov*? I know, I know it's an Internet series...but still...)

STUCK

Outside from the festival circuit (which has its own problems — see the next Pimp), television animation remains stuck in that old habit (now masquerading as truth) of being nothing more than a raucous, naughty, cutesy, infantile medium for toddlers, pre-pubescent man-boys and other associated virgins. It's about time that someone came along (a network executive?) and shook this oh so tiresome ga-ga giggling snort snort fart chuckle muffled laugh medium out of its semi-soiled training pants. Animation is routinely hailed as the great liberator, an artform that can take us to new realms of possibilities. Animation can shatter the laws of physics and excavate the imagination like no other art, so why is it that all we ever get are the entrails of semi-retarded pre-pubescent who wonder at little beyond the depth and length of their latest dingleberry? Even THEN that limited wondering is censored and quite innocuous (using animals as human reps). Take *John K.* For all his notoriety, he's really quite conservative. He doesn't show us tits, dicks, nipples, let alone Ren rimming Stimpy. He just chuckles at their possible existence like a wide-eyed pre-teen. And if that same pimply multi-voiced fuck were ever offered a sweet piece of veggie or meat delectable, he probably wouldn't know what to do with it. (Of course this is also a cultural influence. North Americans snicker when they see nipples on a beach, and lionize a woman because she sucked the President's cock.)

I recognize that North American television is pretty limited. *The Sopranos* et al are enjoyable, but by no means groundbreaking or risqué. I know that. I'm really not asking for much. Give me something with the wit and wisdom-light of *Waking Life* or *Six Feet Under* or give me something all out raunchy, sort of a *Salò* meets *Realm of the Senses* meets this Finnish short I saw about vomiting called *Horn of Plenty* (Seppo Renvall, 1998). I'm willing to compromise. ■

CHRIS J. ROBINSON is but a man. His hobbies include squirrel taunting, goat thumping, meat dancing and elderly peeping. You can find the results at <http://asifa.net/robinson>



TALENT UNLEASHED

The Folks at Terrytoons

An excerpt from Gene Deitch's book, [How To Succeed In Animation \(Don't Let A Little Thing Like Failure Stop You!\)](#).

by Gene Deitch

CLINT CLOBBER

**SUPERINTENDANT AND SANITARY
ENGINEER OF THE FLAMBOYANT ARMS**

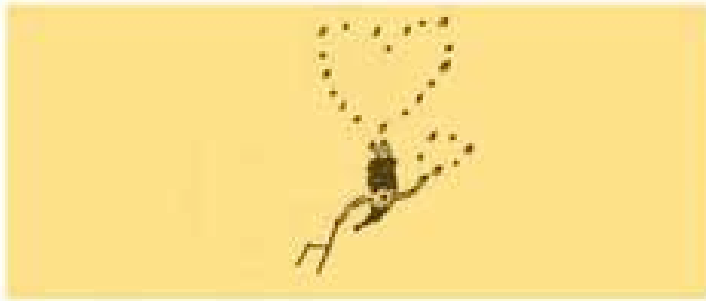
I'M PROUD TO HAVE BEEN THE FIRST TO BRING THE WORK OF R.O. (BOB) BLECHMAN TO ANIMATION PRODUCTION...

IN THESE PAGES ARE MODEL SHEETS OF SOME OF THE characters I created at Terrytoons, for which I had unfulfilled high hopes. For all of these, I made the original model sketches. Some of them were later refined by my key designers. Dewitt Clinton Clobber was my personal highest hope, and I drew all of the model sheets of him myself. Gaston Le Crayon went through several stages of development, with the final model drawn by Eli Bauer. John Doormat also evolved, with Al Kouzel coming up with the final model, and directing his best film, *Another Day, Another Doormat*, of which I am still very proud to have nurtured. On all of these characters, we tried very hard to develop in a multi-dimensional way, writing extensive character studies for each of them.

The Sidney model sheet was drawn by me. Foofle, the precursor of my later Nudnik character, was developed by me, but this production model sheet was drawn by Larz Bourne, Terrytoons' best traditional gagman and storyboard artist.

I'm proud to have been the first to bring the work of R.O. (Bob) Blechman to animation production, with his charming and incisive rendition of *The Juggler of Our Lady*. It was a great gas to put his tiny scribbly characters onto the huge CinemaScope screen! A couple of frames are reproduced here.

R.O. Blechman's *The Juggler of Our Lady*, a Deitch triumph.



1. There once was a juggler named Cantalbert. Every morning he would juggle in a town square but he could never attract an audience.



2. Nobody paid any attention to him.

Here are my notes on the people of Terrytoons during my time there:

Connie Rasinski. One of the old-timers, and probably one of those initially resentful of an outsider being brought in to become creative chief, and one of the most difficult to convince that I was doing the right thing for Terrytoons. But Connie was a capable, professional director, and he did much good work for me.

Phil Scheib. On the basis of the old Terrytoons I had seen, I assumed that I would be stuck with cornball hack musicians, and I would have to find a way of sneaking in other composers if I wanted anything musically decent. However, after some nervous contact on both sides, I found Phil to be a real pro. I was able to release him from Terry's imposed limitations, and he ultimately created some great melodies and great scores for our new characters! Only on a couple of commercial projects we undertook did I feel the need of an outside composer. I got to like and admire Phil, and I remember him fondly. The rotten music for earlier Terrytoons was really Paul Terry's fault. In early sessions, Phil told me that when he had created what he felt were fine orchestral arrangements, Paul would sit in the recording studio booth, and when he heard that there were passages where the strings played, then they rested while the brass played, and so on, he was furious. Terry shouted, "*I am paying for 30 musicians, and I want those 30 musicians to be playing all the time, not resting on my money!*" And that was the origin of those muddled and over-busy musical scores typical of the early Terrytoons!

Tommy Golden. A good animator. His animation of our test Bert & Harry Piels commercial helped me bring this account to Terrytoons from UPA.



Ernie Pintoff. Ernie was a gifted, but temperamental eccentric. He liked to sit in his little room and play jazz trumpet for inspiration, thus rattling the nerves of other nearby animators.

Bob Kuwahara. A very talented animator, who later directed his own series, featuring a Japanese character, I think was called "Hashimoto."

Dave Tendlar. A gentle and likeable veteran.

Art Bartsch. Basically the creator of Mighty Mouse. Art was a skillful director and one of the best draftsmen in the studio.

Larz Bourne. One of my favorite people in the studio, a long-time member of the story department. Larz

ON THE BASIS OF THE OLD TERRYTOONS I HAD SEEN, I ASSUMED THAT I WOULD BE STUCK WITH CORNBALL HACK MUSICIANS...

was the most prolific of the classic animation gag creators. I felt him to be a sympathetic gentleman, and he came through for me with terrific Clobber and Gaston material.



Jim Tyer, one-of-a-kind animator. In the dead-hand roster of Terrytoons animators, Jim was the odd-man out. He didn't hold to models; he did quirky, eccentric actions; he didn't stick to the numbing norms of Paul Terry's regime. In other words, he was exactly what I was hoping against hope to find in that stodgy arena. Jim did amazing things with my elephant character, Sidney, and with Tom Terrific, and Flebus. Sometimes his animation was weird, but it was always inventive, and always funny. In a 1981 article, Will Friedwald summed up well, my relationship with Jim. I quote part of it here:

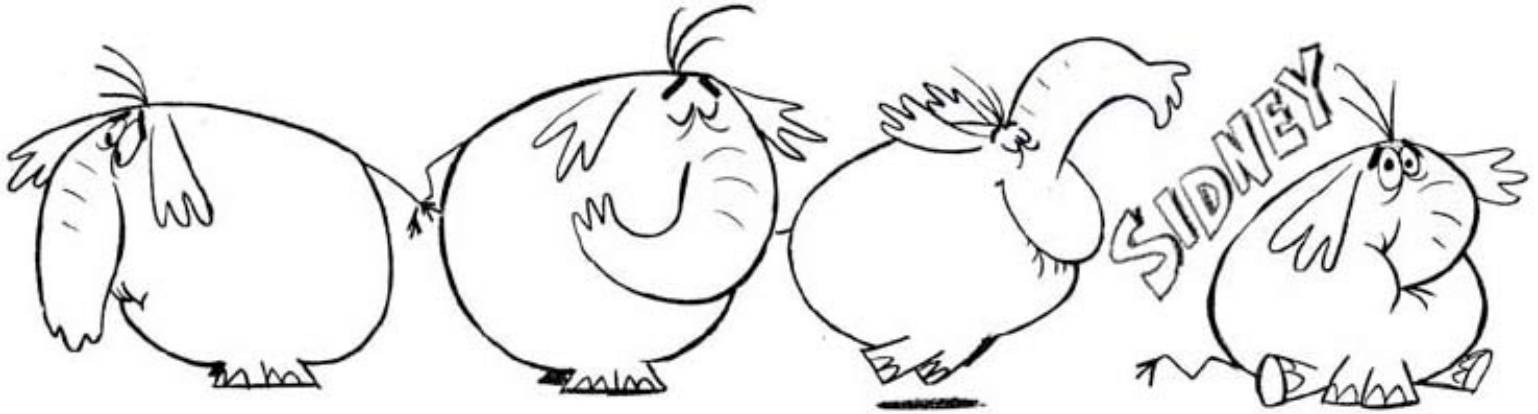
'Deitch brought with him many UPA methods and concepts. Many of the Terrytoon old-timers must have resented what seemed like bold and radical changes at the time, but it was just the opposite with Jim Tyer. That was because, in a sense, Tyer had been working in the "UPA style" all his life. Instead of doing the usual Disney/Hollywood type of animation that most American animators of the Thirties and Forties were expected to do, Tyer's animation had always tried to caricature

real life movement rather than imitate it. This was the point that UPA and Deitch tried to stress, not only in their animation, but in their design and layout as well. Tyer would have fit in well with UPA-Hollywood or UPA-New York, and when Deitch tried to turn Terrytoons into "UPA-New Rochelle" it was just as well.

'For one of the first times in his life, Tyer was not only permitted to draw and animate in his wildest fashion, but actually encouraged to. For once, he didn't have to wait until the less creative minds who ran the studios were looking the other way to draw the way he wanted. He could take it as far as he



wanted with Deitch's blessing. "My father and Jim got along fine," said Gene Deitch's son, Simon, "and they made some good pictures together. He often said that Jim was the most flexible of the older guys at Terry's." The picture one gets of Tyer at this point is vastly different from the Tyer who stubbornly refused to change his style at Famous a decade earlier. Tyer had matured both as an animator and a human being. Deitch also insisted on giving animators the full screen credits they deserved, which Terry had, of course, never done. Tyer's name appeared on the screen for the first time since he had left Famous.



Deitch assigned Tyer to work on an idea for a new series starring a "neurotic elephant" character. The character was originally called "Sick Sick Sidney," which was the title of the first cartoon in the series (in which Tyer animated several scenes), but the name was soon changed to "Silly Sidney." It turned out to be Deitch's single most successful effort at Terry's. Although they came up with at least half a dozen new characters, only Sidney is remembered today. "They put him to work on Sidney," artist Doug Crane reminisced, "It was just beautiful what he did with that character, Sidney. Almost everybody in the studio loved it; it just seemed like the most incredible thing."

Tyer worked on some of Deitch's other projects as well, most notably the character "Clint Clobber," and the highly successful TV show *Tom Terrific* but it didn't last long. There were bad feelings between Deitch and Bill Weiss, the "official" businessman who had ultimate control of Terrytoons. It was decided by Weiss and CBS to revert back to Terry's original idea of "the cartoon as mass-produced product" rather than Deitch's meticulous care for each individual film. Deitch was out by mid-1958, and Tyer left on November 18 of that year. With Deitch gone, the studio was going "limited" the same way that Paramount had already gone. In fact, it looked like New York animators would be turning out limited animation from here on out. Tyer had no reason to stick around."

R.O. Blechman. Bob, of course, was not a member of the studio; quite the opposite. He was the most hard-to-get talent I ever went after. I was dying to do his *Juggler of Our Lady* from the moment I saw the book. I spent night after night on the phone with him for nearly a year, trying to persuade him to let us do the film, but the schlock reputation of Terrytoons had turned him off. He was a shy, seemingly remote and strange fellow, with a nervous, bashful smile, but hard as nails concerning the integrity of his work. Finally I succeeded. I promised him my most advanced staffer, Al Kouzel, to be the nominal director, and that I would personally oversee the project to ensure absolute fidelity to his book. Here is where Phil Scheib also came through for me, creating a classic baroque music track. My greatest inspiration for this film was to get Boris Karloff to narrate. I had heard him do classic roles on the radio, and I wanted to present him out of type, as the gentle, literate man he really was. It was a pleasure working with him, and the film turned out to be my highest achievement at Terrytoons. I am proud that I was the first to bring R.O. Blechman to the screen.

Ralph Bakshi. During my time at Terrytoons, Ralph was the lowest of the lowly, a minor cel painter, and not a very good one. But in the democratic studio atmosphere I was creating, he took full advantage of his right to nose around, ask questions and put in his opinions. He had a lot of brass and a lot of moxie. I began to notice that he was always tailing me around, trying to learn everything that was going on. Almost



immediately after I left, Weiss tagged him as a potential replacement for me, and the rest is history. Ralph really shot up the ladder, and became the enfant terrible of the animation world.

My fondest memory from Terrytoons was the excitement of having such a neat job — the chance to do something big, trying to remold a studio with the worst possible reputation, having the 20th Century-Fox CinemaScope release, having the chance to create new characters, having so many people working on concepts that I was creating and directing,

developing an entire new way of doing soundtracks for animation movies with the help of Tod Dockstader. He was not only a terrific artist and gagman, but a genius sound man. All of this great fun blinded me to the realities...

I was out of Terrytoons about May, 1958, and was then present at the birth of a new studio in Manhattan, with the intriguing name, Gene Deitch Associates, Inc. ■

GENE DEITCH is one of the last surviving members of the original Hollywood UPA studio of 1946 and the instigator of the CBS-Terrytoon "renaissance" of 1956-1958. He was also: Animation Department Chief of the Detroit Jam Handy Organization, 1949-1951, Creative Chief of UPA-New York, 1951-1954, Director at John Hubley's Storyboard, Inc. New York, 1955, President of Gene Deitch Associates, Inc. New York, 1958-1960, Creative Director for Rembrandt Films, 1960-1968, and star director for Weston Woods Studios, Inc., Weston, Connecticut, 1968-1993. He has worked for over 40 years with the Prague animation studio, "Bratři v Triku."



How To Succeed in Animation (Don't Let a Little Thing Like Failure Stop You!)

GENE DEITCH, A SUCCESSFUL AMERICAN ANIMATION DIRECTOR, USES EXAMPLES OF HIS OWN FAILURES TO MAKE POINTS AS TO HOW YOUNG ANIMATORS CAN AVOID SOME PITFALLS ON THE WAY TO SUCCESS, AND STIRS THE POT WITH MUSINGS ON THE MEANING AND WONDER OF ANIMATION. A GREAT READ FOR ANYONE INTERESTED IN THE WORLD OF ANIMATION.

MISLED REALITY

Notes from the Underground Part Five – Escaping Muybridge's Curse (Can We?)

THE PROBLEM WITH THIS "FAITH" IN AN OBJECTIVE WORLD IS
VERY SERIOUS BUT SELDOM PERCEIVED AS SUCH...

by Jean Detheux

(about two kinds of aided perception...)

IN THE PREVIOUS ARTICLE ["Knowing Enough About Seeing To Let 'The Other' Draw Accordingly,"](#) I tried to show that if we want to look at our looking, we are faced with difficulties, and are likely to come to the realization that our seeing is very ambiguous, elusive, even utterly unknown and mysterious.

It seems that, when trying to pay attention to attention itself, we fall almost inevitably in some sort of circularity: trying to look at our looking is looking too, so that we are using the very tool we are trying to examine as the tool with which we do the examining itself!

We obviously need another way, an "oblique progression" as Merleau-Ponty called it.

If "catering to the appearing as it appears" is the goal, it is also the means!

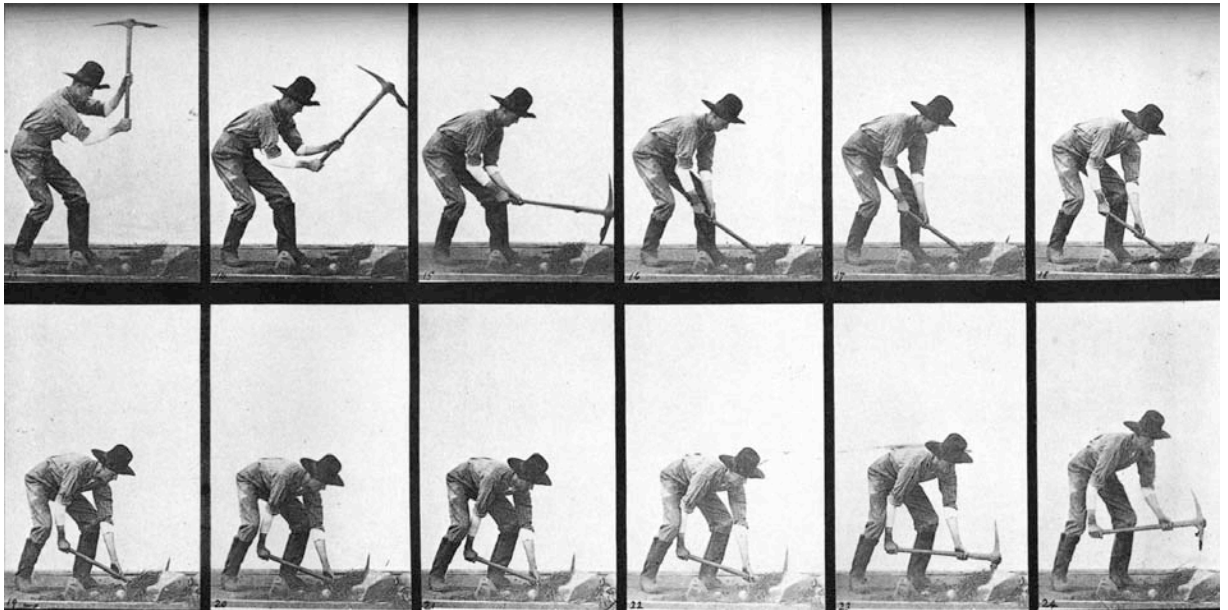
Indeed, if, when faced with ambiguity and confusion, we accept those "as is" and no longer try to set order where we (think we) see chaos and disorder, but instead, accept those as they give themselves to us (to "me"), if we try as best we can to depict them "as is," we enter a different way of working, a different way of seeing. (Here, as I have shown before, we need to reverse our habitual way of proceeding, from "look, understand, do" to "look, do, in order to *maybe* understand.")

To trust that one's "not knowing" has more to offer than the ready-made "solutions" provided by others is an important step in becoming an artist, and a responsible human being.

An old friend, a remarkable philosopher by the name of José Huer-tas-Jourda, used to tell his students "trust your darkness." This is very appropriate to what I am talking about. (José has a lot to do with some of the ideas I am presenting here. He is the one who introduced me to Hus-serl 30-odd years ago, and his own thinking has uncovered many of the aspects of our "living present" that I am presenting in these articles.)

This inherent ambiguity we all can see as being the core, or at the

core, of our own perception and it is possibly our greatest ally in our search for meaning, but it has often prompted many to search for (external) help, often accepting shortcuts and approximations, "simplifications" that bring with them their own sets of problems, and that most certainly do not provide any genuine answers. ("If you did not learn it by yourself, it is merely a borrowed plumage" goes an old Zen saying.)



**THE EYE DOES NOT WORK LIKE
A CAMERA, AND WE DO NOT ALL
SEE THE SAME THING!**

In my previous article, I hinted at the possibility that we may have been (willingly) misled by Eadweard Muybridge's work and by the approach to animation that was (still is) derived from it.

We have been under the spell of those images, as they gave us the impression of explaining motion in a way that can easily be applied to creating animation. However, this "understanding" is far from being reliable, it is not even based on the way we ("I") see and experience motion, it is a fabrication needing the "out-of-human-time" images provided by a camera.

It is a "borrowed plumage."

This I will call "aided perception #1."

Muybridge's images are not very relevant to the way we see motion; they mislead us into assuming we understand how motion is made visible, how it works, but this is not motion as we perceive it when we are immersed in "ordinary" experience, it is motion as it is captured when time is frozen and the mechanical "viewer" is totally passive (an experience fairly unusual to us to say the least, and hardly available without the aid of a camera).

[That type of "understanding" of motion posits it as an isolated "tic-tac-toe," while we experience it much more in terms of a "swoosh" totally immersed in an infinite context, both in terms of space and time.]

Above all, this process singles out a subject and keeps it artificially isolated from its context. (Remember what I talked about in the previous article when I mentioned that in perception, the differentiation between figure and ground is far more ambiguous than we often realize, and each often fades into the other, refusing to maintain a supposedly distinct identity.)

AN OLD FRIEND, A REMARKABLE PHILOSOPHER BY THE NAME OF JOSÉ HUERTAS-JOURDA, USED TO TELL HIS STUDENTS "TRUST YOUR DARKNESS."

I'll say it again in plain language: the eye does not work like a camera, and we do not all see the same thing!

What and how we (really) see has very little to do with "photo-realism," and yet, very few of us are at all aware of that. ("The problem with realism is that it has very little to do with reality," said Giacometti.)

Annie Dillard found some fabulous material in a book called *Space and Sight*, by Marius Von Senden.

The book gives detailed accounts of how people who were blind from birth reacted to their newly acquired sight (through the removal of cataracts by surgery). These reactions showed unmistakably how much "seeing" is an acquired faculty, not an inherent one.

Dillard integrated those stories in an excellent book called *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, the account of a journey that I wish would be more common amongst aspiring artists, and to which art schools should definitely "submit" their students ("Know Thyself").

One of the major points she makes is that "seeing is very much a matter of verbalization," which is exactly what I have been talking about in my previous articles.

If we don't have a name for "it," a name by which to differentiate "it" from the context, we can't see "it." (This does not mean we don't see anything, far from that!)

In fact, even that context/ground from which we differentiate "it" via verbalization is itself constituted by our world view, a world view which is no less rooted in our distinct culture as is the "figure" itself.

Even "space" is an utterly meaningless concept (note: a "concept!") for people who have not yet acquired this culturally induced way of seeing.

Indeed, they have no notion of "near" and "far" in their newly acquired visual world. "Distance" too, is a meaningless concept! ("A patient had no idea of depth, confusing it with roundness.")

Nor do they have a notion of "size," itself being also a meaningless concept.

"Shape" is another meaningless concept: a patient cannot distinguish — visually — between a cube and a sphere, but will instantly identify them "correctly" as soon as he is allowed to feel them with his hands and tongue.

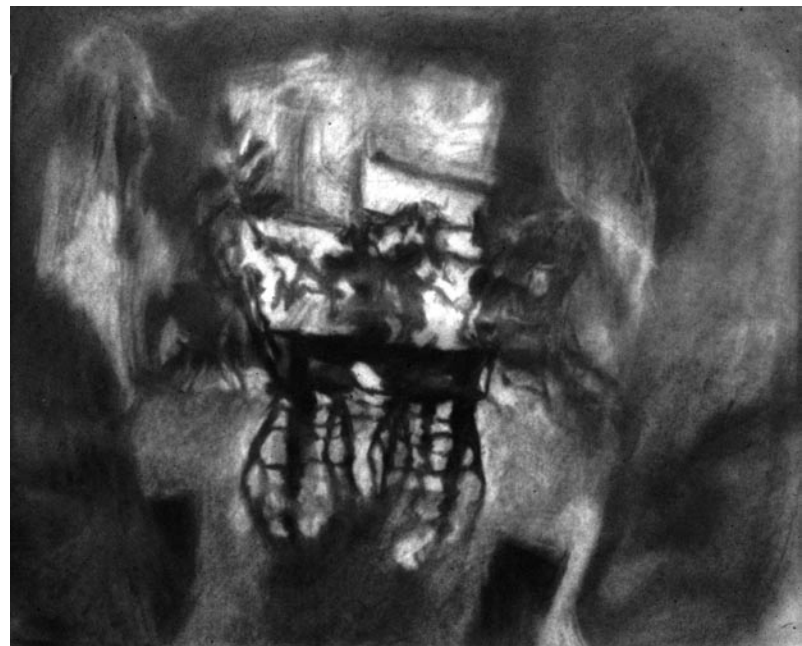
As for the "realism" of photos, a newly sighted girl who saw some for the first time said something like: "Why do they have all those dark patches all over them?"

Someone explained to her that those were not dark

patches, that they were shadows. And the explanation went on to say that shadows were one of the ways by which we know that things have shape.

The girl answered: "But things do look flat, they look flat with dark patches!"

(I am certain that many a painter will immediately relate to this as experientially true.)



St-Hubert 6, 1977. Graphite on paper, 14" x 17". All original artwork © Jean Detheux.

Pilgrim at Tinker Creek is full of amazing examples like these, and Annie Dillard manages very well to bring those "freak" experiences into the context of our "normal" life.

What she manages to do is to show that the experiences of those people who discover sight well after birth are loaded with teachings that can (if we make the effort to learn) show us how dull our habitual vision is.

Settling for the model derived from Muybridge's work gives animators ideas with which they are able to render a certain kind of motion, ideas which progressively leave the realm of the experiential and enter the one of the "fabricated," increasing the gap between our lived experience, and our symbolic world (the world as we represent it to ourselves).

This is very much in tune with the progressive dehumanization of all things in our culture, and animation, being a significant part of that culture, bears a lot of re-

sponsibility for the decline.

Animation constructed according to Muybridge's model is a very crude approximation of "the real." It is as far from "Life" as reading a printed restaurant menu can be from actually eating food.

There's a Sufi story that goes something like this: "A drunk man goes home after a party and drops his keys on the pavement. He starts looking for them until a friend, walking by, stops and helps look for the keys. They search and search, aided by the light of a nearby street light. After a while, the friend stops and says: 'I can't find them, are you sure you lost them here?'"

"No," answers the drunk man, 'I lost them over there where it is dark, but as I can't see anything there, I'd rather search here where there is light.'"

This is very similar to what has happened to our approach to "figure drawing" and animation.

Once we surrendered our own unaided vision to the "filtering effect" of the sciences of anatomy and physiology, we surrendered the reality of our own darkness to the light of false, or at least "borrowed," certainty.

The **"Mighty Principles of Animation"** presented by Gene Deitch are a very potent example of this, reminding me of my early days in art school when, while Pollock and de Kooning were at the height of their art, the school still imposed on us unsuspecting beginners the notion that Art had to do with figure drawing based on 19th Century norms.

In Gene Deitch's "defense," I will stress the fact that what he called "The 12 Principles of Character Animation, as developed at the Disney studio" was modified for the article title into "Mighty Principles of Animation."

That is quite a qualitative leap!!!

As I mentioned in the previous article, many cultures other than our own, and even our own in years gone by, did not — do not — rely on an a priori knowledge of the inner structure of the human body when they deal with "figurative imagery," and yet, they have provided us (still do) with images that deeply affect us today, so potent is their presence, their reality status, their "truth."

But this is rooted in the "magical" (at least in the "poetic"), not in the "scientific."

Given that we tend to credit animation with the status of "Art," we have to understand that "ordinary science" has very little to do with Art if by "Art" we understand an activity that deals with the whole of human experience, including (especially) all our subjectivity.

To draw/animate a walking figure demands a lot

more than merely relying on the mechanics of the figure "out there." It demands that we connect with how we ("I") see and experience "it," bereft of assumptions, in connection with how that walking "figure" appears to us ("I") as if for the first time.

That would be Art.

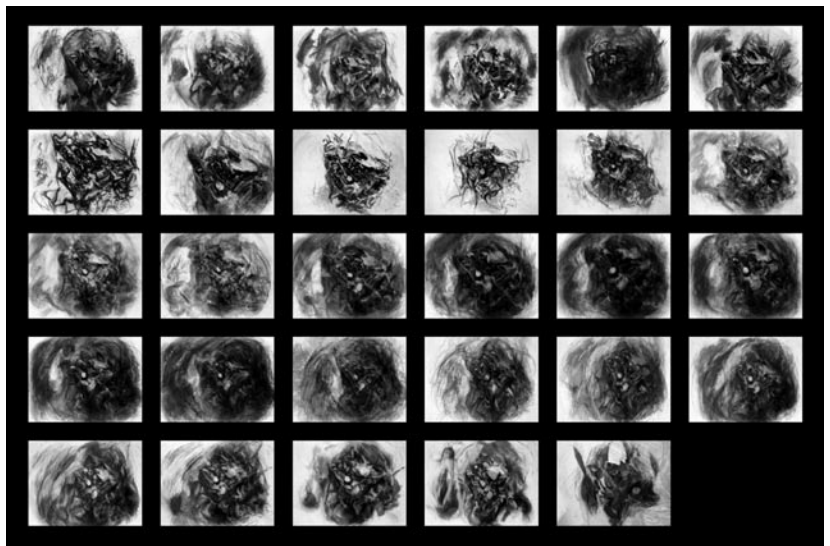
"More than anything else, cinema consists of the eye for the magic — that which perceives and reveals the marvelous in whatsoever it looks upon."

— Maya Deren

And:

"The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science."

— Albert Einstein



View **Paintbox** by Jean Detheux.

Who would today dare challenge the deconstruction of the walking of a figure offered us by the Muybridge plates, their way of breaking down the flow into a series of "logical" steps, frozen moments in time, building blocks with which, from which, we can safely "recreate" the societally approved impression of a walking/moving figure?

This convention reinforces our societal models, it conforms to what we are expected to believe our reality is made of and looks like.

However, this dissecting of motion has nothing to do with our lived experience, it is an act of faith ("ontologizing" as phenomenology would call it) based on a world that is taken for granted, an act of faith, which is challenged at all times by the evidence of our own senses!

But — and this is at the very core of all my articles in this present series — we are "hooked on mediated experience" and can hardly connect with the evidence of our own senses.

What we (can) see does not agree with what we

expect to see, with what we believe in, and the belief and the expectations almost always win out ("almost always" because "the real" has a way of not behaving totally according to our expectation; there always are cracks in our protective shell).

The problem with this "faith" in an objective world is very serious but seldom perceived as such: we are now culturally conditioned into believing in an "abstraction," constantly glossing over and dismissing our more ambiguous "lived experience," so much so that it takes often arduous training and/or severe psychological shock to find ways by which we can reconnect with our own vision, ways by which we can come (back) to our own senses.

There is a huge difference between the naive construction based on the idea of the appearance of reality (as in animation based on Muybridge's plates), and the direct apprehension of "the appearing as it appears."

In order to proceed, this naive construction takes the world for granted, it relies on an assumption that the world is always already there in a known and reliable form, a form that can be identically perceived by any and all. By the same token, this undermines — even denies — the validity of the subject's experience (accusing it of being "merely subjective!").

This naive perception posits the "idea" (culturally constituted) of what one is looking at in such a way as to have it always "confirmed" (and of course, anticipated, intended). This makes one's experience of "reality" very different from being a genuine encounter with the mysterious, a discovery, an uncovering, it relegates it to being a mere confirmation of what was naively intended in the first place, and as "this intended reality" is most often a social convention, it tricks us into believing in it even more because of the societal approval it tends to elicit. (You're a good subject when, along with the group you wish to belong to, you agree to and confirm the beauty of the emperor's clothes.)

In a real sense, our belief in this type of "objective reality" makes us members of a cult, or at best, members of a religion that posits its own brand of "objectivity" as its central object.

Of course, the more we, by way of conformism, surrender to this illusion, becoming more and more alienated from the (our) inherent mystery, the more we experience a lack, a feeling that something vital is missing. We sense a widening gap between our symbolic representation of "the real" and our lived experience of "it."

That experience of a lack often leads us to compensate for what we sense is missing, a compensation that often leads us to exaggerate secondary aspects of our work. (Animation is presently pitifully stuck on having to be funny and/or cynical, even nihilistic!) This also often

drives many to substance abuse and other explorations that are far from being life-sustaining. ("Life is a bitch, and then you die!") And yet, that very experience of lack could itself be an entrance to serious work if respected/accepted instead of being merely reacted against.

Life driven by a need to compensate is hardly a fulfilling life; it borders on being a permanent tantrum!

Culturally, it is nearly impossible to make a 180° turn and start looking for the mysterious where it truly is, "under our nose" (or better yet, an inch or two behind it!).

Walter Benjamin talks about the "impenetrable as daily," and the "daily as impenetrable." (Thanks to [Pierre Hébert](#) and his remarkable book *L'ange et l'automate*, a book that MUST be translated into English, and soon.)

"THE PROBLEM WITH REALISM IS THAT IT HAS VERY LITTLE TO DO WITH REALITY," SAID GIACOMETTI.

What we normally call "objective reality" is in fact an almost complete invention, a fabricated illusion, which maintains its status of "reality" by way of something that approaches mass hysteria. (In very much the same way the emperor has no clothes, our "reality" has no substance.)

So, through aided perception #1, our grasp of Muybridge's work allows us to believe we now know how to dissect motion, and how to use that knowledge to create the illusion of motion in our work, a motion (and the world in which it takes place) that reinforces the societal delusion.

What most animators (and viewers) have now come to accept/expect as "real" (or at least as being "credible") is leading us all further and further away from our humanity, just as the acceptance of the conventions of the language of "live cinema" (which most often naively constitutes habitual animation's underlying structure) has greatly curtailed the potential of animation as a different language in its own right, very much in need of its own "principles" and vistas to explore, vistas no other art form could enter (at least not in the same way animation could).

Just as many artists accepted the "scientific world view" (many still do) as a basis for their work (basically, this forms the underlying structure of most people's world view — solid objects moving about in empty space- conditioning/containing their activities), animators took the same approach in their search for ways to suggest/imply motion within a context that was taken for granted.

When we draw/paint from the visible, we often overlook the importance of the distance from which we are looking at "something," too often calling on our memory and expectations to add details we cannot see because of that distance, or to negate the "distortions" caused by that distance as well. (Edward T. Hall has a great book, *The Hidden Dimension*, that talks very well about this and other aspects of our being in the world. Highly recommended!) This negation of the distance/space dimension is very similar to the negation of time of which we are guilty when we surrender to the Muybridge model: we posit each frozen moment as equal to every other frozen moment, while in experience, in our living present, "now you see it, now you don't!"

It is as if we lived in a world of floating icebergs and pretended that all of the icebergs were equally visible, be it above or below the water surface.

"Mechanistically speaking," Muybridge's model may be valuable, but perceptually, humanely, artistically, it is extremely limited and limiting, even utterly false ("tic-tac-toe ain't swoosh!").

"THE PROBLEM WITH REALISM IS THAT IT HAS VERY LITTLE TO DO WITH REALITY," SAID GIACOMETTI.

From a ("my") phenomenological viewpoint, there is more "truth" in a cartoon character "spinning its wheels" on the spot as it is about to take off, than in all the highly technical renderings of a "realistic" running character made with the most up-to-date 3D software and any and all approaches based on this model!

The animation industry (and many independent authors) are aiming at more and more "photo-realism," ruling out ambiguity and confusion, hunting them down with a vengeance, and in doing so, they are progressively editing out of animation, especially out of its visible aspect, all that makes us human, all that makes our experience so unique.

It is obvious to me that as long as we will place the emphasis on the mechanical figure (anatomy, morphology, the figure totally isolated from its context, containing it all in the concept of a world made of solid objects moving about in empty space) and animation as a rendering of the motion of a 3D mechanical figure in a 3D "container," we will be stuck in the same old box, a box of our own making. (Mind you, this equally applies to 2D animation, it really is rooted in and conditioned by the world view of the animator.)

It really does not matter how much more powerful our tools will become. Whether we can animate individual strands of hair, or even, going to the absurd limit of this approach, whether we can animate from individual molecules or even from the atoms up, we are looking at the "problem" the wrong way.

One cannot create a (convincing) whole starting from the parts. One may end up with some smartly put-together puppet, but a puppet deprived of soul, always.

There's got to be more to it than that!

I felt some trepidation when I first saw *Bingo*. Here was 3D software at its (then) best, which managed to use its power to serve the subjective experience, switching "levels of the credible" as the story dictated, no longer merely operating in the realm of the "habitual."

I find that what has followed has been very disappointing for me; we seem to have gone the way of more "photo-realistic" detailing instead of the way of greater subjective leaps.

The main difference, as I "see" it, between one approach, "photo-realism," (being a response to societal models, at once derived from and enforcing them), and the other, "phenomenological, poetic, magical," (being an attempt at seeing the appearing as it appears, bereft of societal models, or at least, seeing those models as models), is that the former is a tool of status quo, while the latter is one of renewal and discovery.

Aided perception has at least two aspects, one (the most common) reinforces preconceptions, asking "me" to conform, giving me praise if "I" do, singling "me" out as a good conformist.

This, I earlier called "aided perception #1."

The other form of aided perception literally rips open the societal box and makes room for "my" contribution in such a way as to establish my subjectivity as an (the) essential factor.

This I will call "aided perception #2."

One of the best examples of "aided perception #2" I have seen lately is the *Qatsi Trilogy*, an exceptional example of aided-perception-based work that opens vistas, helping us see as if for the first time (if we take the journey) and renew our connection with the magic that our "ordinary reality" truly is.

I had not seen *Koyaanisqatsi* since the early Eighties, and it really hit me between the eyes this time, or as Godfrey Reggio would say, "Right in the solar plexus!"

The idea of leaving space between the music and the images so that the



Bingo. Courtesy of and © Alias|Wavefront.

THE IDEA OF LEAVING SPACE BETWEEN THE MUSIC AND THE IMAGES SO THAT THE VIEWER CAN GET "IN THERE" IS BRILLIANT...



Bingo. Courtesy of and © Alias|Wavefront.

viewer can get "in there" is brilliant, it shows how forcing the music and the images to be "on" all of the time is really a form of propaganda, bordering on fascism!

It's one more example of how easily we can deny the otherness of the other, and how we can deny the mystery that we are to ourselves.

This reminds me of the two poles between which we seem to always swing, "power" and "compassion."

"Power" has been dominating animation for a very long time; one hopes compassion is now ready to start appearing more often.

How futile (or even hostile) so much of animation now comes across to me after seeing *Koyaanisqatsi* again. What a tremendous waste of resources and creative energy the making of habitual animation appears to be!

So little current animation contributes to this "enlightening" category, so many of the works shown in animation festivals and on AWN (for example) are trapped in some sickly obligation to be "funny" or "smart" or "cynical," and their reason for being seems to be to cater to the lowest common denominator, thus reinforcing its grip on our daily life. ("Life is a bitch and

then you die.")

Surely, there's got to be more to animation and to life than that?

There have got to be many amongst us who can sense that there is potentially much more to animation than telling (funny) stories, and that, indeed, animation can be a major contributor to one of (if not the) most important aspects of life, the search for meaning.

In my next and last article, I hope to be able to show examples of animation that are working away from the "aided perception #1" model, and which contribute to the opening of the doors that "aided perception #2" may make possible. ■

JEAN DETHEUX is an artist who, after several decades of dedicated work with natural media, had to switch to digital art due to sudden severe allergies to paint fumes. He is now working on ways to create digital 2D animations that are a continuation of his natural media work. He has been teaching art in Canada and the U.S., and has works in many public and private galleries.



CAREER COACH

Picture Your Dreams

by Pamela Kliebrink Thompson

JANUARY IS A GREAT TIME TO MAKE GOALS FOR THE year. The few of us who actually write down their goals are likely to file them away in a drawer and never look at them again. An alternative to this is to create a dream board, which is a bold, visual representation of your goals and what's important to you. Hang your dream board in a spot where you will see it every day and it will remind you of your priorities — personal, professional, artistic, altruistic — and inspire you to achieve them.

To make a dream board you will need: poster board, old magazines, photographs, markers, scissors, glue sticks, and any other materials that you might want to use such as stickers, fabrics, doilies and fancy papers (available at scrapbook supply services).

YOUR DREAM BOARD GIVES YOU A VISUAL FOCUS FOR YOUR EFFORTS.

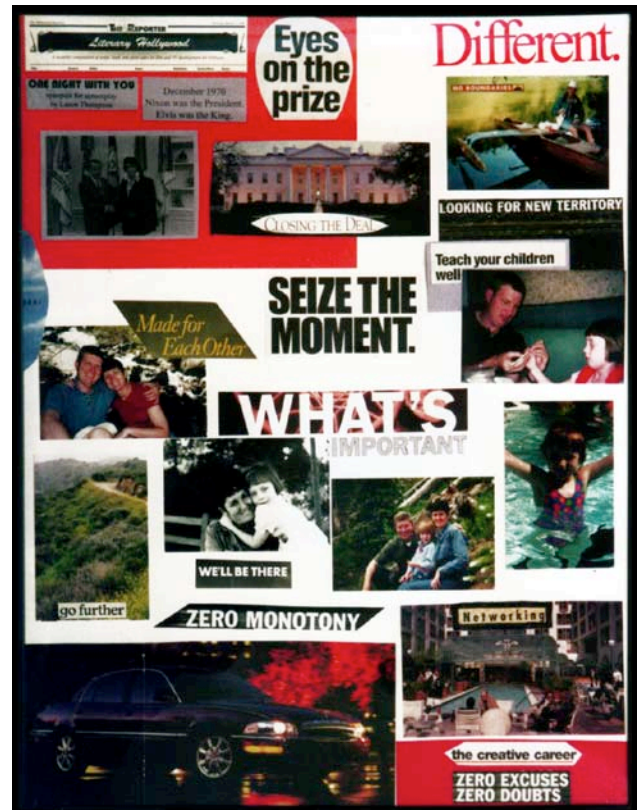
GET STARTED

Cut out images or text that evokes a feeling or that will inspire you. The ideas can be concrete or abstract — whatever motivates you and gets you excited.

Examples of images: A family on a tropical beach to represent a dream vacation; or a runner crossing a finish line to represent finishing a long-term project. Examples of text: "Just do it" to overcome procrastination; "Nothing Down," a real estate headline could represent a goal of keeping a positive attitude.

You may also want to use personal photos, drawings or clip art. After you have collected enough material that will visually represent what you want, arrange the images and text on your poster board.

Layout is totally up to you. Put the most important items in the center, top left or wherever it suits you best to keep you focused on what's important. Experiment with the placement of images and size of



A dream board example: Lance Thompson created this dream board in 2001.

text. Play with both large and small images, giant headlines and tiny type to see what works for you. The only requirement is that the dream board motivates you. Feel free to personalize the poster board with stickers, drawings or other material that will help convey what's important to you. Once you have finished the layout to your satisfaction, glue everything in place on the poster board. Frame the dream board and hang it where you will see it every day.

It's fun to work on dream boards with a group of friends, so you might invite others over for a dream board party. It's a good way to exchange ideas, motivate each other and get to know each other better. And there's no better networking exercise than sharing your goals.

Your dream board gives you a visual focus for your efforts. It's a graphic reminder that you can look at every day to keep yourself on track and your eyes on the prize. ■

PAMELA KLIEBRINK THOMPSON is a career coach and recruiter who helps clients to achieve their dreams in their personal and professional lives.

FESTIVAL FLASH

Ottawa International Animation Festival 2002: Picture Book

by Joan Kim



The halls of Ottawa's National Arts Centre await the onslaught of animation fans for yet another year of festival fun. All photos courtesy of Darryl Gold, except where noted.

HELD FROM OCTOBER 3RD — 6TH, OIAF 2002 CONTINUED ITS tradition of showcasing animation and artists from around the world. Attendees included a diverse group of animators, educators, students and industry professionals. There wasn't any shortage of things to do with over 100 films screening in competition, workshops, retrospectives of [David Ehrlich](#), [Piotr Dumala](#) and [John Amitay](#), a studio spotlight on [Buzzco Associates](#), and the first ever art exhibition of animator/director [Igor Kovalyov](#)...and that's not even all!

A quick glance at the schedule of events revealed a tremendous variety of things to do and see. But, the key ingredient for this festival was the apparent enthusiasm of the participants. The laid-back atmosphere and comfortable setting were inspired backdrops for numerous conversations, animation screenings and the occasional impromptu harmonica jam at the Chez Ani, the designated after hours festival hangout. For a taste of Ottawa, check out our picture book and see what some of this year's participants had to say!

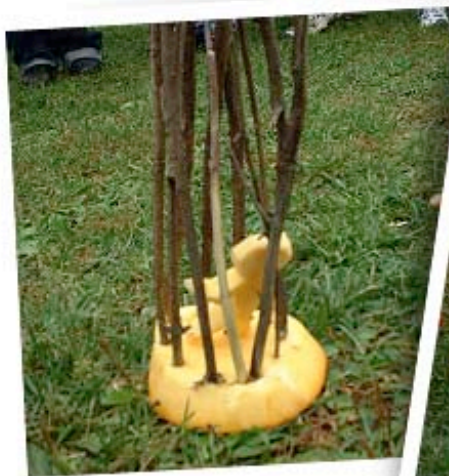
Chris Hinton, animator/director

"The Ottawa Festival is the uber festival for me with all the riveting spark and portly effervescence of a well-crafted lasagna, a jamboree of joy as fine as a sack of warm pickles.

"I would never hesitate to hitch up my trusty travois and head north to Ottawa for this Festival is as useful as a freshly taped hockey stick at center ice."



As always, a heap of folk line up to carve and ogle pumpkins...



...but the real fun starts when they break open the marshmallows.

Martine Chartrand, animator/director

"For a MAXIMUM of happiness, I try to see the maximum amount of films, meet the maximum amount of people and play music and have fun with as many old friends making new friends from around the world whenever I can.

"The best thing about Ottawa is the incredible atmosphere of friendship alongside animation. I discovered new styles of animation, new artists and I really enjoyed playing music and with the great drummer, Frederic Lebrasseur, as well as the harmonica jam at Chez Ani with Pilar Mitchell-Newton. I'm looking forward to returning again."



Chris Lanier, Martine Chartrand and Jean Detheux relax and discuss the day's events at the festival's designated watering hole, the Chez Ani. Photo courtesy of Martine Chartrand.

Pilar Newton-Mitchell, animator/director

"I always have SUCH a good time at the Ottawa International Animation Festival that I catch the worse cold ever EVERY time I go; I call it the "Ottawa Flu." So when I'm not jamming on the harmonica at Chez Ani, I'm popping extra-strength Sudifed. I wouldn't have it any other way! The tie that I always wear to the festival once belonged to the great Mike Gribble (of Spike and Mike's fame) I got it because his lovely wife was giving out the ties at the 1994 Ottawa festival in his memory. A little piece of history on my neck. I have worn it proudly to every Ottawa festival I've been to. Here's to many more!"



Adriaan Lokman, 2002 Annecy grand prize winner for *Barcode*, and Martine Chartrand. Photo courtesy of Martine Chartrand.



Bill Plympton and Pilar. Photo courtesy of Pilar Newton-Mitchell.



Igor Kovalyov takes a look at one of his finished prints the evening before his exhibition opening. Photo courtesy of Andrei Svislotsky.

Igor Kovalyov, animator/director

"For me, it's a very lucky festival. Twice in my life I received a grand prize. The first time was in 1989 for *Hen, His Wife*. And this year I was able to exhibit my graphic artwork for the first time ever amongst great friends and an enthusiastic crowd. I haven't missed a festival since first attending in 1992. It's always been a great opportunity to see a variety of films and meet with fellow animators and animation supporters."



David Ehrlich and Mikhail Gurevich at the opening of Kovalyov's exhibition. Photo courtesy of Andrei Svislotsky.



A key individual in bringing Kovalyov's original works to Ottawa, art territory's Lev Moross. Photo courtesy of Andrei Svislotsky.

Darryl Gold, animator/director

"The great thing about the Ottawa Animation Festival is it treats animation with the reverence and respect it deserves - even the crap animation! And it's great for meeting people. I've made all my best contacts roasting marshmallows!"

For more photos and information on this year's festival, visit our AWN [Ottawa Affiliate site](#) online. ■



Little Cow's musical composer László Kollár-Klemencz (left) and director/animator Igor Lazin (right) sip on some lemonade at the closing night party.



Kovalyov leans on Robinson at the Chez Ani as another event-packed day winds down.



Darryl Gold, fearless photo-serialist and OIAF supporter, provided images of this year's festival and makes a fine habit of documenting what he sees at [darrylcam.com](#).



Chris Robinson, OIAF artistic director, tests the integrity of the exhibition wall. Photo courtesy of Andrei Svislitsky.

JOAN KIM is the general manager of Animation World Network. Previously as a post-production coordinator at THX she oversaw the lab print quality assurance program for feature releases. She received her B.A. in English Literature from UCLA and continues to pursue an education in computer graphics there.

FILM REVIEWS

Fresh from the Festivals:

January 2003's Film Reviews

by Jon Hofferma



Robert Bradbrook's *Home Road Movies*. © Finetake/Channel 4/Ace 2001.

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.

If you have the [QuickTime plug-in](#), you can view a clip from each film by simply clicking the image.

This Month:

Le foto dello scandalo/Shame's Photos (2001), 7 min., directed by Daniele Lunghini, Italy. Info: Daniele Lunghini, via Ruffini 10, 42100 Reggio Emilia, Italy. Tel: 39-0522-33-7790. Email: daniele@lunghini.it URL: www.lunghini.it

Home Road Movies (2001), 12.5 min., directed by Robert Bradbrook, UK. Info: Dick Arnall, Finetake Productions, 110 Calabria Road, London, N5 1HT, UK. Tel: 44 (0)20 7359 5786. Fax: 44 (0)20 7503 9337. Email: info@finetake.co.uk.

Pasta for War (2000), 4 min., directed by Zach Schläppi, USA. Info: Zach Schläppi, POB 1098, New York, NY 10163-1098. Tel: 212-307-0998. Email: zach@twomills.com.

Populi (2002), 8.5 min., directed by David Russo, USA. Info: David Russo. Email: davidrusso@lycos.com.

The Velvet Tigress (2001), 11 min., directed by Jen Sachs, USA. Info: Jen Sachs. Email: jen_sachs@hotmail.com.



The crime scene in *Le foto dello scandalo/Shame's Photos* recalls film noir and Weegee's photographic work. © Daniele Lunghini.

Le foto dello scandalo/Shame's Photos

Daniele Lunghini's brilliantly conceived and executed homage to film noir and the work of American photographer Weegee is a 3D computer animation that reimagines the rules of narrative to create a visually stunning and highly original mode of storytelling. The film, which is rendered entirely in black and white until the very end, is essentially one long take in which the "camera" moves continuously, tracing the course of events, while the characters are frozen in time at key points in the drama. The story itself, which involves a photographer's bloody confrontation with one of his involuntary subjects, is not especially novel or compelling (and, even after two viewings, certain details of the scenario remain murky, at least for me), but the slightness of the plot doesn't diminish the film's mesmerizing impact. With computer-graphics collaborator Diego Zuelli and composer Complesso Residenziali — whose minimalist score perfectly complements the action — Lunghini has fully realized the potentialities of a great concept.

Daniele Lunghini is a director, illustrator and copywriter who has worked for a number of international companies and whose artwork was included in "Arti Visive 2," a national competition in Genoa. He is currently working on the 3D feature, *Moon Energy Machines*, based on his novel. His frequent collaborator

Diego Zuelli attended the Accademia di Belle Arti in Bologna and has had his CG video works exhibited in many venues. *Le foto dello scandalo* has been screened at more than 25 festivals, including Annecy, London, Miami and Edinburgh, and has received a number of awards, including the Grand Prize at the 2001 World Animation Celebration and the award for Best European Video at I Castelli Animati.

Home Road Movies

Combining 3D computer animation, live-action and digitally enhanced family photos, director Robert Bradbrook has created a funny, poignant and bitter-sweet reminiscence of his father and the car trips he and his family took during his childhood. Though primarily a character study of his well-meaning but somewhat ineffectual parent, *Home Road Movies* succeeds — in the best literary tradition — in also treating larger issues, from the effects of a rapidly changing world (and in particular the waning importance of World War II in the British consciousness) to childhood illusions regarding parental omnipotence. The movie's distinctive visual style, featuring saturated colors and the blending of CGI and live-action to produce a kind of surreal veneer, is well-suited to conveying the deeply felt yet once-removed landscape of memory.



A festival favorite, *Home Road Movies* has already won many awards. © Finetake/Channel 4/Ace 2001.

After an initial career as a cartographer, Robert Bradbrook enrolled in Coventry University in 1991, where he earned an MA in Electronic Arts and Graphics. In 1993 he was awarded a grant from the Arts Council of England, which he used to make *End of Restriction*, a 5-minute film created on his home-based Mac. *Home Road Movies* was made with the support of Channel 4 and the Arts Council National Lottery and has been shown at innumerable festivals. It won the Special Jury Prize at Annecy, Best Animated Short at the Toronto Worldwide Short Film Festival, and the Gold Award for Best Animation at the Houston World-Fest, among many other awards. In addition to making films, Bradbrook works as a multimedia designer and is a regular visiting lecturer at Coventry University.

Pasta for War

Though in some ways more an exercise than a finished work, *Pasta for War* is both very funny and extremely well-done, a mock propaganda film that's part Leni Riefenstahl and part Chef Boy-Ar-Dee. Director Zach Schläppi has done a great job of re-creating the look and feel of 1930s-era wartime filmmaking, using sepia tones, triumphalist camera angles and slightly stilted editing and narration to good advantage. However, instead of phalanxes of young men, his forces are composed of rigatoni and butterfly macaroni, marching and soaring resolutely to their appointment with destiny. Schläppi used a variety of programs to create *Pasta for War*, including



Rigatoni and macaroni ready themselves for battle in *Pasta for War*. © Zach Schläppi.

Softimage/Maya and Adobe Photoshop and AfterEffects, as well as a self-designed C-Shell script to facilitate rendering.

A 2000 graduate of the [School of Visual Arts](#) in New York, Zach Schläppi worked on [Blue Sky Studios'](#) *Ice Age* and Big Idea's [Jonah: A VeggieTales Movie](#). *Pasta for War*, which is his thesis film, screened at SIGGRAPH, the World Animation Celebration, Ottawa and Melbourne, among other festivals, and won the Grand Prize in the DIRECTV/LEVEL13.NET Animated Film Festival. It also earned him a Rhythm & Hues Scholarship Award in Cinematography.

Populi

David Russo's hyperkinetic "environmental pixilation" film is, like Godfrey Reggio's groundbreaking *Koyaniscatsi* (which the director cites as an influence), a kind of alternative travelogue and a tour de force of time-lapse animation. Using a carved wooden head as a focal point, and the inexorable "Mars: Bringer of War" from Gustav Holst's *The Planets* as a soundtrack, Russo charts his icon's travels through the Pacific Northwest, presenting an overwhelming number of variations on a theme. Perhaps even more impressive than the visual cornucopia, however, is the fact that Russo created almost the entire film in the camera (a 1958 Mitchell GC 35mm), a production method that required such feats as rolling a 300-pound steel buoy through the freezing rain of Puget Sound for months at a time. It's not clear whether this single-minded pursuit of a self-imposed ideal — and awesomely labor-intensive process — is apparent on the screen and, ultimately, there may be more meaning in the exercise for the creator than for the audience. However, the film's exuberant nonstop motion, variety of images and landscapes, and underlying sense of gleeful obsession easily supersede any concerns about semantics or means of production.

David Russo is an independent filmmaker and artist living in Seattle, Washington, whose other award-winning short films include *Eggs and Soup*, *Ode to Crude* and *MANZWORLD*. *Populi* was one of several public artworks commissioned for the new Seahawks Stadium in Seattle, funded by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen. On the festival circuit, *Populi* won the Grand Prize at the Northwest Film & Video Festival and a Special Jurors' Award at South by Southwest, and was screened at Sundance, Taos Talking Pictures, and the Cleveland, Atlanta and Florida film festivals, among others.

The Velvet Tigress

Working primarily with flat black-and-white drawings, Jen Sachs has produced a highly imaginative and accomplished film that documents and deconstructs a particularly gory episode from 1930s America, the so-called "Trunk Murders" trial of Winnie Ruth Judd. In particular Sachs explores the way the events were covered in the popular press, and



The journey of a carved wooden head through space, time and landscape is exuberantly presented in [Populi](#). © David Russo, 2002.



Winnie Ruth Judd does some creative littering from a moving train in [The Velvet Tigress](#). © Jen Sachs.

her inventive use of newspaper imagery combined with the layering of graphics and occasional perpendicular camera movements serves to advance the narrative in an integral way, as well as to provide a lot of visual interest. She sometimes makes some strange choices (e.g., a transition involving mannequins seems rather forced, and her highlighting of the ironic juxtaposition of the trial with a contemporary beauty pageant doesn't entirely pay off) and there were times when the virtuosity of the design was in danger of overwhelming the story. However, for the most part all of the elements — from the two-dimensional graphics and Sachs' judicious use of color, to Heather Donahue's nicely understated narration — come together successfully to create a very engaging (and informative) piece of work.

Jen Sachs is a recent graduate of the MFA program in Experimental Animation at [Cal Arts](#), for which *The Velvet Tigress* was her thesis film. In this film and in her previous works (*Translations* and *Fantasy Piece*), her goal has been to "explore contemporary culture by evaluating the lasting influence of established images and themes from the past." Winner

of a Student Academy Award, *The Velvet Tigress* also was voted Best Animated Film at the Ann Arbor Film Festival and Best Student Animated Film at the Nashville Independent Film Festival. It has also screened at Taos Talking Pictures, Black Maria, Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art, and the 9th Biennale de L'Image en Mouvement in Geneva, among others, and had its North American premiere at Telluride. ■

JON HOFFERMAN is an independent filmmaker, writer and graphic designer. He is also the creator of the *Classical Composers Poster* (a unique work of art that makes a wonderful gift for anyone interested in or learning about classical music, available at www.carissimi.com) and a shameless promoter.

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

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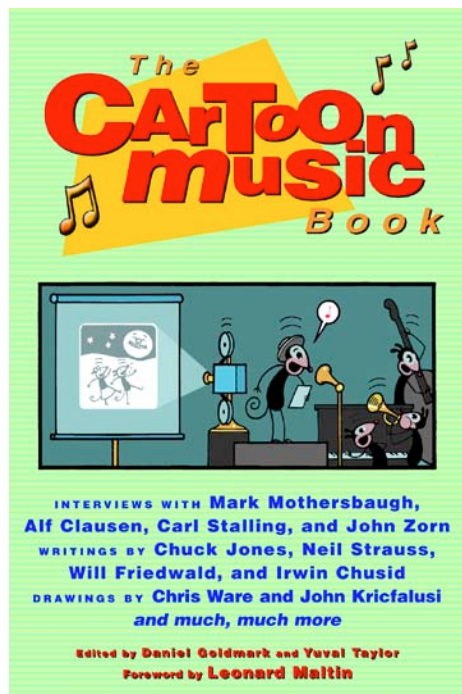
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ANIMATED COMPOSITION

The Cartoon Music Book

by Will Ryan

CARTOONS AND MUSIC. TWO GREAT ARTISTIC DISCIPLINES. Two great subjects, individually or collectively, for a book. So how can an item that calls itself "The Cartoon Music Book" go wrong?

Countless ways I suspect. But, happily for us, this one doesn't!

Oh, you can quibble here and there. After all, it's easy to cavil when a work presents as wide an array of opinions, quality of scholarship and depth of insight as this episodic tome (we get about 30 articles in all from nearly as many contributors). But it's the motley fabric of the varied points of view which gives this compendium its peculiar vitality.

The editors are Daniel Goldmark and Yuval Taylor. The former is the [Rhino Records](#) staff musicologist/editor/compilation producer who left La-La Land to serve as assistant professor of music at the University of Alabama. Apart from co-editing this book, he also is its major contributor. Mr. Goldmark gives us a well-done chapter called "Classical Music and Hollywood Cartoons." He also provides several chapters of interviews with contemporary cartoon composers blessed with not only ability, but with some of the best budgets around. In addition, he gives us a bibliography more extensive than one would possibly expect. Co-editor Yuval Taylor is described as the editor of A Cappella Books (the publisher of this volume) and as editor of *The Future of Jazz*, which we presume is an A Capella book. He co-wrote with Mr. Goldmark, the introduction to *The Cartoon Music Book* and clearly exercised sound editorial judgement in reeling in the knowledgeable and resourceful Mr. Goldmark as his co-editor.

CHUCK JONES IS ALSO REPRESENTED WITH A REASONABLY OBSCURE 1946 ARTICLE ENTITLED, WITH FELICITY, "MUSIC AND THE ANIMATED CARTOON."

FROM THE FIRST PERSON

The first time I read the 1971 [Carl Stalling](#) interview in [Mike Barrier's](#) *Funnyworld* magazine, I was amazed at the music director's response to the first question posed, "How did you become a composer for cartoons?" The famed — at least to title card-scouring cartoon fans of the day — Warner Bros. maestro began his reply, "As I recall, I first met Walt Disney in the early Twenties." Huh?! Walt Disney? Kansas? Do you mean to tell me that Hollywood's Carl Stalling was the Kansas City organist/conductor referred to in Diane Disney Miller and Pete Martin's official biography *The Story of Walt Disney*?! Who knew? This article was the beginning of "cartoon music" scholarship. A highlight of *The Cartoon Music Book* is a reprint of this Carl Stalling interview.

Milt Gray recently gave me some background on this article. It seems that at the time of the face-to-face interviews (conducted by Mike and Milt in June of 1969 and by Milt and Bill Spicer in November of that same year), Mr. Stalling was not as loquacious as could be desired. After all, he'd been retired for years, had rarely if ever been interviewed and wasn't accustomed to spinning self-serving publicity yarns for publication. (In those days that kind of PR baloney was for the show-offs of show biz: actors, producers and the occasional spotlight-loving producer/director, like Hitch or DeMille, or that Castle fella over at Columbia.) The interviewee was amiable and amenable, but given to short, unsparkling, hardly-worth-transcribing responses guaranteed to yield the kind of article that would yawn right off the page. He proved however to be much more capable of eloquence and recall in his written responses to the many follow-up letters sent by his relentless interrogators. So the published interview, which sails along smoothly and reads like a breeze, is actually a painstakingly contrived pastiche, which uses virtually nothing of the actual in-person interviews.

Regarding the topic of "cartoon music," we might all agree that Carl Stalling, as musical director of the Warner Bros. animation division from 1936 to 1958 and with a cartoon career that started in 1928, knows whereof he speaks. Can the same be said of the rest of the contributors to this volume?

GIVE AND TAKE

Well, as hinted above, it's a mixed bag of nuts. On par with the Warner's maestro, we've got Scott Bradley, MGM's cartoon music director. The editors have unearthed two fine 1944 contributions written

by him for the periodical *Film Music Notes*, vintage copies of which are not overly likely to be found in the libraries of most homes. Chuck Jones is also represented with a reasonably obscure 1946 article entitled, with felicity, "Music and the Animated Cartoon." Many of the familiar names in *The Cartoon Music Book*, Goldmark, Maltin, [Will Friedwald](#), Greg Ehrbar, [Irwin Chusid](#), Barry Hansen, Earl Kress, et al., may be relied upon for solid reporting and ruminating in their areas of expertise.

Generally speaking, however, the further you stray from first person source material into the realm of third-hand stories and academic whiffle, the more likely you are to discover unfounded presumptions, ill-supported contentions, idle speculation and just plain ignorance. This is an inevitable, universal law, which I just made up. But it holds true even in the case of this highly recommended volume. Here's an example. One contributor, whose field of expertise is jazz music, startles the reader with an authoritatively presented passage (with footnotes yet!), which reveals a stultifying ignorance of the animation process and of the Disney studios of the 1940s in particular. Checking the footnotes, we discover he's using the sloppy, irresponsible, discredited texts of Mosley's *The Real Walt Disney* and Eliot's [Walt Disney: Hollywood's Dark Prince](#) as his authority. Oops.

So remember: Daniel Goldmark and his associate merely edited this book as a compendium. They did not correct and grade these contributions as individual papers. And, despite the odd howler, *The Cartoon Music Book* is a fine and generous compendium worthy of your bookshelf, be it of the metaphorical or of the old-fashioned, practical kind. ■

The Cartoon Music Book. Edited by Daniel Goldmark and Yuval Taylor. Foreword by Leonard Maltin. Chicago, Illinois: A Capella Books, 2002. 304 pages. ISBN: 1-55652-473-0 (US\$18.95)

WILL RYAN has written hundreds of songs for such energetic characters as Donald Duck, Tigger, Elmo Aardvark, [Jim Henson's Muppets](#) and, um, Patti La Belle. Next month the Duck Brothers premiere one of his compositions on Cartoon Network's *Courage the Cowardly Dog*. Currently, the sultry singer VaVa LaVoom is performing Will's intergalactic hits at the space-age architectural marvel "The Encounter," which looms groovily over the center of the Los Angeles International Airport.



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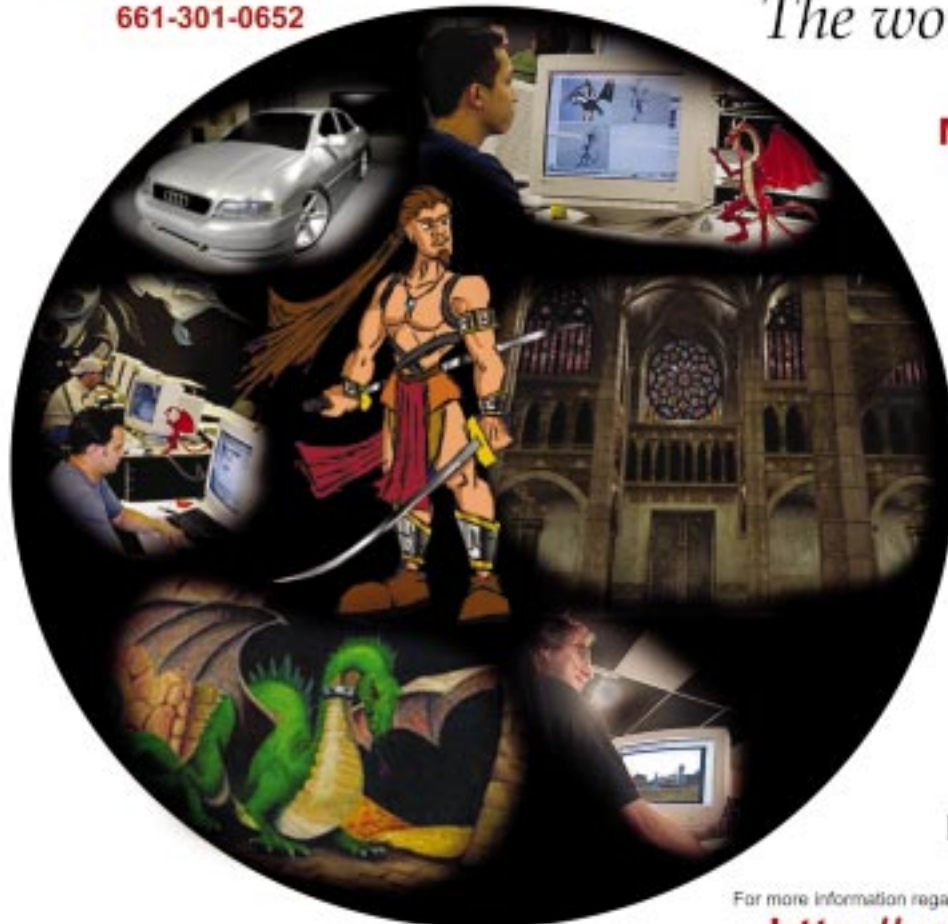
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