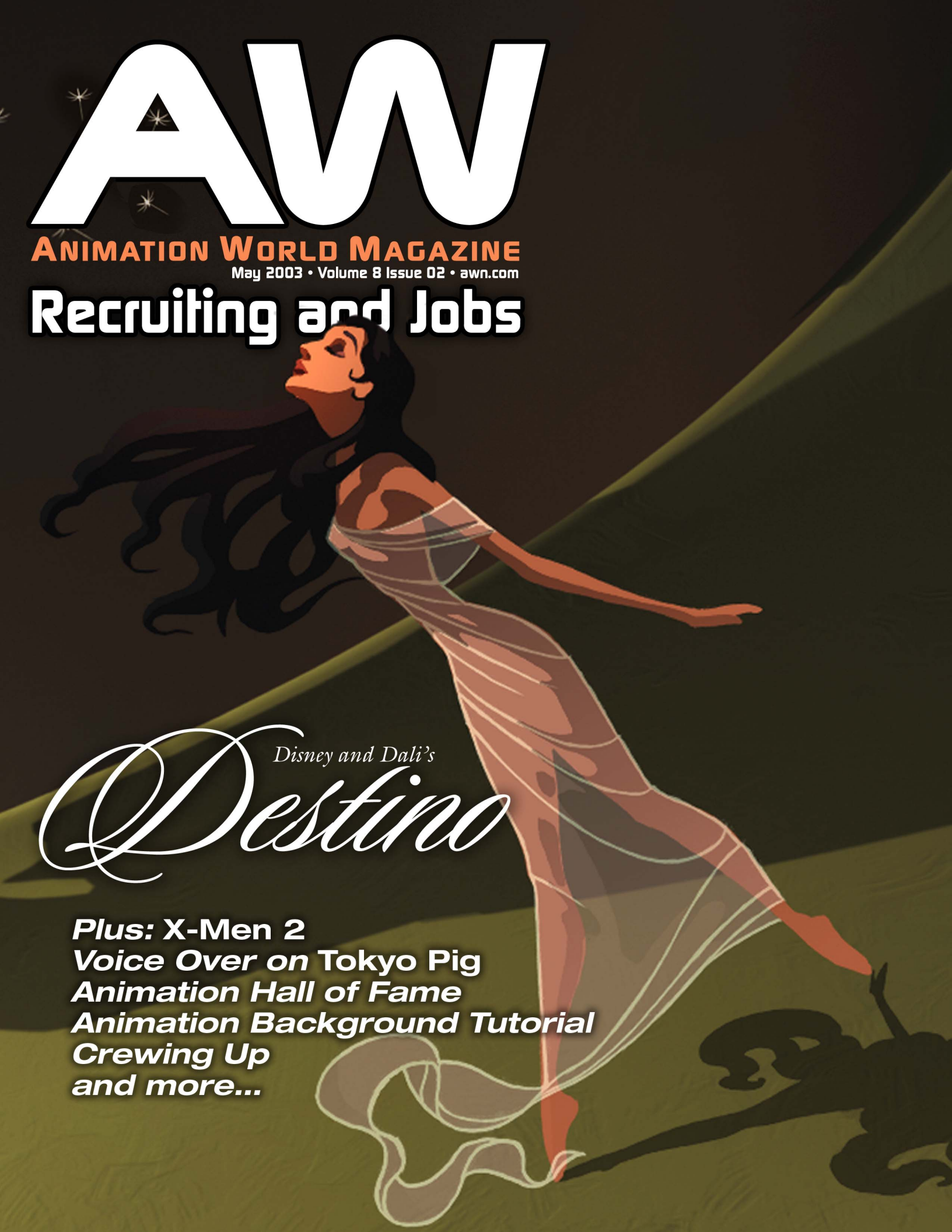


AW



ANIMATION WORLD MAGAZINE

May 2003 • Volume 8 Issue 02 • awn.com

Recruiting and Jobs

Disney and Dali's
Destino

**Plus: X-Men 2
Voice Over on Tokyo Pig
Animation Hall of Fame
Animation Background Tutorial
Crewing Up
and more...**

Recruiting and Jobs

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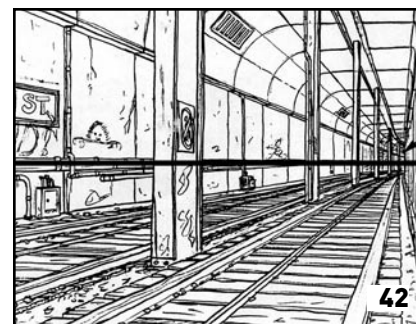
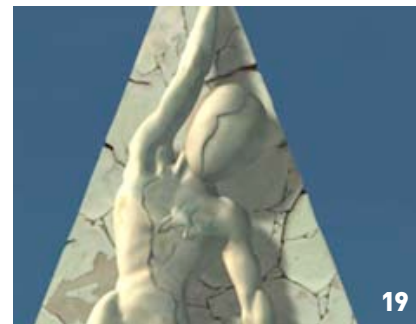
Mark Simon continues his series of 12 excerpts from his new book *Producing Independent 2D Character Animation: Making and Selling a Short Film*. Every independent needs help... this month Mark runs down ways to obtain a crew that won't just help, but excel.

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ANIMATION WORLD MAGAZINE

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AGENT CONSULTING

Can I Get Some Representation Please?

by Darlene Chan

OF COURSE, REPRESENTATIVES HAVE THEIR OWN FANTASY STANDARDS FOR WHAT COMPRISES THE PERFECT CLIENT.

IT'S A LONG ROAD FROM CONCEPT TO PREMIERE FOR A PROJECT. Before creative talent can even deal with buyers, executives, producers and the people who can greenlight or torpedo their long-coddled project, they must first engage in a frustrating, peculiar rite of passage to find someone to represent them and their work to the marketplace. All talent have their ideals of what a representative should be like: honest, with integrity and a high regard for the client's unique and bountiful talent; but ruthless, dragon-slaying and loyal to a fault when negotiating with the buyer for money, rights and credit. Of course, representatives have their own fantasy standards for what comprises the perfect client. AWN asked the top agents, managers and lawyers working in the animation business today what they look for when signing new clients and what kind of relationships they value. Novices and established talent alike will be interested in all the factors representatives must consider before taking on a new client.



Harvey Harrison of Catalyst Agency looks for artistic talent and a good personality in new clients.

Harvey E. Harrison, Partner and Founder, Catalyst Agency

Harvey founded Catalyst, a literary and talent agency in 1996. He began his career as an entertainment attorney and continued as a business affairs executive before joining the Jim Preminger Agency in 1989. Catalyst represents all aspects of animation, digital and interactive media for motion pictures and television. More on Harrison's company can be found at www.catalystagency.com.

Catalyst is seeking artists with two main qualities: (1) Artistic talent about which we are passionate and (2) human beings with whom we would like to go on a long journey. Moreover, I designed Catalyst based upon a simple, single idea: it is the agency I would want if I were the client; consequently, we tend to attract clients who meet the criteria above.

IN SELLING TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE, THE CLIENT AND I MUST HIT THE BUYER FAST AND EFFECTIVELY... THE TALENT'S SAMPLE MUST ACCOMPLISH THIS TASK.

— HARVEY E. HARRISON

At the same time, I must stress that current and future conditions in the animation media are more unpredictable, let us say fluid than ever before. I have seen it from a variety of angles from my 25 years in this field as agent, attorney, producer, studio head and executive at Columbia/TriStar. Also, I have been devoted to the digital entertainment media since their infancy, and those media grow and spread wildly. "fluid" may be the best term. So, I would add to the two criteria above that I seek collaboration, understanding, and versatility in a client. The conditions are just too, well, "fluid" for anything less.

Potential clients need to show samples of their

work in forms that are as creative as the work itself... whether on a Website, a CD, a videotape, on a good ol' script... but the work must be presented in a way that SELLS the talent who created it. I believe that our business — our society really — suffers from what I call "chronic attentional panic"... that queasy, jittery feeling that you have to hurry up and do something other than what you are doing right now... hence, multitasking! In selling today and in the future, the client and I must hit the buyer fast and effectively... the talent's sample must accomplish this task. For those who want the entire book-length message on what I recommend, the Catalyst site contains "For The Creative Mind," a text I use when I teach art students "Professional Studies," a course designed to prepare them for the adventures of the Real World.



Matthew Ellis of Metropolis Agency thinks about how a potential client will fit into the current marketplace.

Matthew Ellis, The Metropolis Agency

Matthew Ellis is a talent agent at The Metropolis Agency specializing in the representation of artists and writers working in animation and children's programming. Ellis works closely with Metropolis' founder and president John Goldsmith. Prior to joining Metropolis, Ellis was an agent at The Irv Schechter Company. Matthew began his career as a stage manager in Beverly Hills, California.

When evaluating which clients to sign, we're looking for a strong background in animation with a wide variety of training ranging from traditional to CG. We look for people who have original series/feature ideas that we can help sell while simultaneously staffing them on a series or feature while their personal properties are in development. We are always looking for clients that will expose us to new arenas in the animation/entertainment industry, where new and interesting opportunities can be found for our clients.

In picking clients, we first must consider the direction of the marketplace. If the marketplace is only

doing CG feature films then what would be the point of signing someone who only directs, writes or creates traditional animation? We also have to consider whether we have had much success in recent history procuring employment for artists with similar talents and status in the entertainment industry. Many people ask why, when shown two similar people with like credits, would we pick one over the other? The answer is we follow our instincts. After all is said and done, we have to follow what our hearts say. The most important part of selling a client is believing in that client. We need to believe 100% in what we are saying, and the only way we can do that is when we truly, instinctually believe in our clients.

There is only one thing in animation that is ever for sure, and that is that nothing is ever for sure. Before we sign a client we always think about whether that person's particular talents are in line with what the marketplace is currently after. Unfortunately, what buyers look for can change overnight, solely based upon one unexpected hit feature or series, or conversely a feature or series that does not measure up to the expectations of studio or network executives.

In deciding whom we should sign, we review the potential clients' previous credits, what their demo reel consists of, and what their goals are for the future. Then after meeting with them we decide if there is a personality fit between us and the prospective client. We do not take on too many new clients only for the reason that we do not like to have multiple clients with very similar skills, credits and goals/ambitions. We look at their sense of originality and style in the work they have done and assess how that work has fared in the marketplace and try to make a judgment as to how their work will be received in the future. Particularly exciting is a new client that is not only very enthusiastic about their work, but they have a reputation in the community as a team player. We love people that know how to play nice in the sandbox.

Richard Sigler, Entertainment Attorney

Richard Sigler has been an entertainment attorney for more than 30 years, specializing in animation. He has been general manager of Hanna-Barbera, sr vp of Marvel Productions and New World Animation. For the last 10 years he has been in private practice representing production companies and individuals whom executive produce, create or direct animated projects.

It helps to understand the different roles attorneys play from agents and managers. Agents generally work for 10% of the income they obtain for their



Entertainment attorney Richard Sigler explains the difference between lawyers, agents and managers.

clients; they don't expect to be paid up front, if they do not obtain work or a deal. They are regulated by the state as to certain matters. Managers legally may not act as agents (that is, obtain work or sales for their clients), but are supposed to manage their clients' careers in a more general sense. They are unregulated by the state and charge more than 10% of the client's income (typically 20% or more). Attorneys tend to work on an hourly basis, regardless of the results obtained, and they frequently require new clients to pay a retainer up front to assure that they receive their fees. Some attorneys will shop material, and a very few will work on a percentage basis (usually 5%) but the successful ones do so only to make more money, not less money, than their hourly rate. Attorneys generally do not work "on spec" like the agent and manager do.

TURNOFFS INCLUDE CLIENTS WHO THINK THEY ARE THE ONLY CLIENT YOU HAVE, DON'T PAY ON TIME OR AT ALL (ESPECIALLY IF THEY EXPECT THE WORK QUICKLY), AND WHO ONLY TOLERATE YOU AS A NECESSARY EVIL.

— RICHARD SIGLER

In my experience, talent in the animation area are "second class citizens" to their live-action brethren, in part because they do not utilize unions, agents, managers, and attorneys like live action talent does. Historically, animation projects cost more and made less than live action projects, so the old economics contributed to this status. Now, however, animation is not more expensive to produce and makes just as much money as live action. Unfortunately, the talent has not caught up to the product and still acts like second class citizens, much to the pleasure of the studios.

The attorney and client (with agent/manager) are

a team devoted to helping the client succeed. An attorney wants to work with clients who appreciate and value what the attorney does, are honorable and fun to work with, and who can help further the attorney's reputation, such as by being involved in high profile projects, making good press, referring colleagues, etc. Attorneys, like everyone else, are running a business, so clients should, of course, be able to pay the attorney's retainer and fees, and the most likely ones to do that have work or deals already in place.

In deciding on whom to represent, I have to consider several factors. (1) The first decision is whether the attorney has a conflict of interest with the new client. Attorneys are constrained by conflict of interest and confidentiality rules that do not apply to agents and managers, so a client has to be free of those problems (for example, the attorney cannot work on a deal where one client is opposed to another client). (2) The client has to be "real," that is, have real legal work to be done, and not just want the attorney to act as an agent by finding work or a buyer for the client's property. (3) The client has to be able to pay the attorney's fees, and requiring a retainer payment up front not only helps assure the attorney of his fee, but helps cut out the poseurs from the client list. Of course, not all who have talent and opportunities can afford to make the payments, and the attorney has a judgment call to make about whether to risk the attorney's time in hopes of being paid later. Generally this time is lost to the attorney. (4) Will the client be fun to work with and help the attorney build the quality of his practice? The attorney wants clients who might recommend the attorney to other clients and who think the attorney's work is good. An attorney does not want to have a client who views him as a "necessary evil," an adversary, a money pit, someone he has to be "all business" around, etc.

Sometimes a deal is not acceptable to the client and goes away, in which case there is an awkward moment between client and attorney for the work the attorney has done and billed for. Another difficult situation is when the studio submits an onerous 30- to 40-page option agreement contract, entirely one-sided, and the cost to negotiate it will be \$3,500-\$5,000. The client may be obtaining an option payment of \$1,000-\$2,000, so the client will have to pay more to negotiate the deal than the client is receiving. On the other hand, if the studio exercises the option, all the terms are in place so the client will regret trying to save at that point. This is a big advantage the studios have over the talent.

I generally do not like to review creative materials because it is irrelevant to the attorney's function in

negotiating and documenting deals someone else has obtained. Some clients try to encourage me to do so (I suspect in hopes I will find their material irresistible and work on spec for them). However, it does not matter what I think of the material, because I only work if the client has sold it or had a job. Of course, you have to be sure the client is legitimate, so if there is no deal at present, you want to see some evidence of talent (which can be determined from a résumé, the work itself, or the fact that a studio has offered a deal). Turnoffs include clients who think they are the only client you have, don't pay on time or at all (especially if they expect the work quickly), and who only tolerate you as a necessary evil.



Hollywood Comics' Jean-Marc Lofficier needs to see a potential client's movie inside his head before signing him or her on.

Jean-Marc Lofficier, Hollywood Comics

Jean-Marc Lofficier has a 1977 M.B.A. from the Paris Business School and a law degree from the Sorbonne University. Lofficier founded Hollywood Comics in 2000. Prior to that, he was vp of Starwatcher Graphics and an executive with Credit Lyonnais and Barclays Bank. Lofficier is also an award-winning writer. You can learn more about his company at www.hollywoodcomics.com.

In most cases, an agent fulfills two functions: that of a salesman, and that of a contract advisor. Because of my background as a lawyer, my years of experience, and the thorny issues involved in securing a good deal when selling or licensing comic-book rights, we tend to be more involved in the latter. Clients tend to hire me when they already have made a sale, as opposed to trying to make a sale. As a result, we also deal with more established talent, as opposed to newcomers.

On a personal level, I want to make sure that I understand their career goals, and that we can effectively be of assistance to them (and not waste their time), and conversely that they understand what we do, and can't do. This is, of course, a very subjective process; but I have to be able to picture in my head what the finished

film (or TV series) would be like. If I don't see it, then I'm likely to pass.

Louise Nemschoff, Entertainment Attorney

Louise Nemschoff is a sole practitioner of entertainment and intellectual property law, with offices in Century City. She represents a wide range of parties in domestic and international transactions in animation, gaming, digital media, film, television, comic books and other publishing. Nemschoff is a graduate of Harvard College and Yale Law School who has been in practice for over 25 years. She has published a number of articles and spoken extensively, both in the United States and Europe, on various aspects of copyright, trademark and entertainment law. In addition, she sits on the board of the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund.

For the most part, I do not get involved in submitting my clients' services or properties to potential buyers like an agent would do. If, in the course of talking and dealing with people in the animation business, an opportunity presents itself, I would naturally recommend an appropriate client and make the necessary introductions, either directly or to the client's agent.

Ordinarily, I will get involved in a transaction when someone has already made an offer or otherwise expressed serious interest in my client's work or material. At that point, a client will retain me to negotiate their agreements with a third party, to review, analyze and comment on a proposed agreement or to draft an agreement on their behalf.

Thus, I do not get heavily involved in evaluating a client's work or properties. While I am happy to give potential clients my impressions of their material, I tend to leave decisions as to commerciality to the agents and buyers more directly involved in the marketplace.

In picking clients, I look first at whether I can provide the services that the client needs. For example, as a transactional lawyer, I negotiate and draft contracts and give general business advice regarding employment in the animation, gaming, comic book and general entertainment industries, the purchase, sale or optioning of entertainment properties and the production and distribution of films, television and other entertainment properties. I do not, however, handle any litigation or litigation related matters, such as claims of infringement or theft of ideas.

If I can provide the needed services, I will see if we can come to an agreement as to payment of my fees. Usually, I work on an hourly basis, but fees are negotiable, depending on the nature and the amount of the services.

Finally, I look for a more intangible quality — an ability to work together and communicate well with one another. Working with an attorney is a collaborative process and it helps if both attorney and client are on the same "wavelength."

The contraction of the animation business over the last few years has dramatically reduced the opportunities for a lot of very talented animators and writers. Vertical integration in the media has hit the animation business particularly hard, reducing the number of buyers and the number of outlets for animation properties. However, since I do not get very involved in selling their services and properties, I tend to see the impact more in terms of the pressure it places to reduce fees for services. The equation is simple: fewer jobs and more people looking for work means buyers are offering less money for the work that is available. In response to the changing economies, a number of my clients have begun to work not just in animation but also comic books, gaming, book publishing and other media.

Out of all the material I have seen in over 25 years in practice, I can only think of a handful of times when the material was so extraordinary that it knocked me out. But then, I don't consider picking the winning talent or properties to be my primary area of expertise. I tend to look more at the business realities. How is a potential client received in the marketplace? What kinds of deals has he or she been offered (either in the past or currently on the table)? Does he or she have potential for a long-term career in the animation business? What excites me is the prospect of working with someone to help them build that career.

Julie Kane-Ritsch, The Gotham Group

*Since joining The Gotham Group in 1999, Julie Kane-Ritsch has been instrumental in developing animated and family entertainment related television series, shorts, features and Internet content, as well as strategic and business plans for the company. Her diverse list of clients include Piet Kroon, director of *Osmosis Jones*, Luisa Leschin, writer on *The George Lopez Show*, Stephen Fossati, director of *Shrek 2*, DKP Effects, a Canadian production and effects house, and Unbound Studios an innovative new media company. Kane-Ritsch began her career as a lawyer and has worked in business and legal affairs for Hanna-Barbera, Turner Feature Animation, Saban Entertainment and DreamWorks.*

We look for three primary attributes: unique creativity, professionalism and an ability to get along with executives, producers and other creative talent. First and foremost, we always look for a unique creative vi-



Julie Kane-Ritsch of The Gotham Group uses a three-point criteria in assessing potential new clients.

sion. We look at the individual's portfolio and/or writing samples to see if the material is fresh and compelling. The individual's original ideas are always discussed as we have a strong desire to work with creators and/or potential creators. Second, the person must be professional and reliable. The studios and producers rely on us to represent talent that will get the job done on time and on budget. Finally, the person must have the interpersonal skills to work with studios, producers and other creative talent. Since the studio and networks finance the show, the client must be able to walk that fine line between adhering to their own creative vision and accommodating the studio's desires.

DIFFICULTY CAN ARISE IF THE CLIENT HAS A PASSION FOR ONLY ONE TYPE OF STORYTELLING, OR IF THE CLIENT'S EXPECTATIONS ARE NOT REALISTIC.

— JULIE KANE-RITSCH

After determining whether the potential client has the unique creative vision, professionalism and ability to interact with the studios, producers and other creative talent, we look at what the individual brings to our client roster as a whole. We do not want to represent too many people who excel in a particular style or voice. We also like to work with new clients who will get along well with current clients since they frequently work together in the industry.

The demands of the marketplace are always changing. But, our clients have a wealth of skills that translate into a number of different storytelling arenas. Not only do our clients work in television and features, but they also work in the arenas of book publishing and comic books as well.

Difficulty can arise if the client has a passion for only one type of storytelling, or if the client's expectations are not realistic. For example, if a director will only

direct pure action/adventure, and will not consider working on any other type of show, that person may find employment more difficult to obtain. Furthermore, if a client does not heed our advice and their expectations are not in synch with the realities of the marketplace, it makes the task of helping them achieve their goals more difficult. For example, if the client expects a large salary increase when salaries are being depressed in the marketplace, or wants to run their own show without the necessary background, the client may overlook good opportunities because they do not have a realistic assessment of the world around them or their skill set.

A potential client needs to show us material with a strong, original voice and either strong writing, design or directing skills. It can be a pilot script, sketch material, or a feature spec for a writer. For artists, it can be a unique design style displayed in a portfolio, the ability to create a unique visual style displayed in a test, reel or short, or a polished director's reel reflecting a great body of work. We see so much material that the strong and unique voices do stand out.



Attorney/manager Paul Husband needs to make sure that a new client's career is at the stage where a manager can be useful. Photo credit: Carlene Edwards

Paul Husband, Husband Management, Inc.

Paul Husband is a Universal City, California-based manager in his eponymous firm Husband Management, Inc. He is also a practicing attorney who focuses on animation and tax matters. He was co-founder of AniManagement LLC in 1995 and was a licensed talent agent until 2000. He has been active in ASIFA-Hollywood where he serves as general counsel. Husband was an ASIFA-Hollywood director from 1997 to 2003. He represents primarily talent and production entities in animation and digital effects areas.

As a manager, I am not presently looking for new clients. As an attorney, I look for clients with work to be done and/or deals to be made and the ability to pay hourly rate-based fees for many types of work or for talent negotiations, sometimes fees based on the compensation negotiated.

To accept a management client, I determine first whether or not the individual is ready for a manager; that is, his or her career/project has reached a point at which management services can be effectively utilized. Also, I try to ascertain if the prospective management client realizes that he or she needs professional management to achieve his or her goals and therefore is willing to accept the operation of a manager as a part of their professional team. If these prerequisites are present, then there are seven factors which I utilize to evaluate and determine whether or not I would manage a client:

1. Integrity of the individual;
2. Talent;
3. Passion for the art;
4. Reasonability (i.e., not a petulant prima donna);
5. The credits and/or body of work that has been achieved by the artist (or writer) to this point in time;
6. Compatibility of the taste and sensibility of the artist with my own. There are many brilliant artists I would pass on as a manager simply because their primary motivating principles are so different than my own that I would not choose to make that commitment, even though I may respect them, hold them in the highest personal regard and wish them the best of success;
7. Sources of financing for his or her services/property.

What do potential clients have to show me to make me excited? Multiple major sources of financing in hot pursuit or his or her services/property, with an artist who possesses the qualities described above is very exciting!!

Jason Dravis, Partner, Monteiro Rose Dravis Agency

Jason Dravis joined the agency in 1995 as an assistant and was recently named partner. The Monteiro Rose Dravis Agency represents writers in film and television with a specialty in animation. Dravis' clients have included Eddie Guzulan (Lilo & Stitch 2, Kim Possible), Mark Drop (Recess, Lloyd In Space), Madeline Paxson, (Lilo & Stitch [the television series], PepperAnn), Scott Fellows (Fairly OddParents, Ned's Declassified School Survival Guide), and Peafur Productions (AAAGH! It's the Mr. Hell Show, Bounty Hamster).

In looking for new clients, I must be blown away with their talent. I need to be really excited about the work and the possibilities. I really think there is a gut feeling, in addition to being excited about the talent. It's important to "click" with the new client. This is an

important relationship and there needs to be a comfortable line of communication and trust. The times I didn't go with my gut feeling, I have also found myself in situations where I was really excited about a project or client and found I was alone. This is a subjective business and it's important to remember that. You never really know what it will be, but it must really get me going. Sometimes it's a simple one-sheet, other times it's sample animation. It really depends on how we will be marketing this person.

Eric Treibatch, Entertainment Consulting Group

Eric Treibatch is a former TV agent at Endeavor Agency. Treibatch left to form Entertainment Consulting Group, which manages writers, directors, animation studios and FX houses. Also a producing entity, ECG will launch a 13-episode series Camp Chaos on VH1 this fall. ECG is also producing Firedog, a direct-to-video \$2 million animated feature.

In evaluating new clients I look for a creator who has thought out the entire world surrounding the story, a creator who can tell me how each character will react in every situation. Besides story, character development is key.

We are all at the mercy of the buyers. We must be familiar with what demo, genre and style they are currently programming. If a rep doesn't know the needs, they won't be able to pick clients and the respective material they need to develop.

Buyers will change their mandate every six months. Yesterday it might have been boys action 9-14, tomorrow it will be something entirely different. You must develop projects that you feel strongly about, but that also falls in line with the buyers' demand. Anyone who tells you that they do not take into consideration the buyers' needs is not being realistic.

To get excited about representation, a potential client needs to show me a bible that includes story, character/ background designs, character breakdowns and preferably a script or treatment. ■

An alumna of UCLA, DARLENE CHAN has worked in the motion picture industry for 14 years. She served as a production executive for Paramount Pictures, Walt Disney Pictures, Davis Entertainment and Motown. She produced Grumpy Old Men (1993) for Warner Bros. In 2001, she joined Animation World Magazine as general manager and was named managing editor in 2002.



HIRE ED

Jobs and Recruiting: How are Schools Today Preparing Students for Life in the Post-'90s Job Boom

by Darlene Chan

ANIMATION HAS BEEN AS HARD HIT AS ANY
OTHER SECTOR OF BUSINESS...

EVERYDAY REPORTS ON THE U.S. JOB MARKET SOUND A dire cry: unemployment is up and the number of people searching for jobs is at a record high. Animation has been as hard hit as any other sector of business, and to compound matters, it wasn't so long ago that studios were punch drunk on the bags of money animation could bring in. *The Lion King* intoxicated the corporate fat cats in the mid-'90s and the powers-that-be spent with wild abandon. Animators were even the subject of bidding wars! Well, Dorothy, it's not the '90s anymore and the animation employment marketplace has taken a drastic downward turn.

Animation World Magazine investigates how animators navigate and survive the harsh realities of the narrowing job market. Students expect higher education to free their minds and souls and enable them to perfect their drawing technique and storytelling abilities. But how do they learn the skills for securing a job and a career upon graduation? On a very practical level, students have trade tech expectations of their schools. They need to learn how to find the job opportunity that will let them apply all the knowledge they've accumulated. We turned to five respected animation department heads, some of whom are also artists in their own right. We asked them quite bluntly, "What are you doing to prepare your students for job placement?" There's no doubt that every prospective animation student and those presently attending animation programs will be interested in their responses.



At CalArts, Frank Terry offers students a Visiting Artists Program to hear professional artists speak as well as a Corporate Presentation Program where companies describe their needs. Drawing by a CalArts student.

Frank Terry • Director of the Character Animation Program, CalArts

Frank is currently the Director of the Character Animation Program at CalArts. He received his BFA from the Chouinard Art Institute and focused on advertising commercial production, animated documentaries, titles and entertainment specials. Frank has been based on the west coast since the mid 1960s.

The Character Animation Program here at [CalArts](#), has, by its design and past history, been very connected with the animation industry. While we certainly are not a trade school, we are an art program that expands four years of traditional art study into the understanding of the process of animated narrative theater, or acting animation. To this extent, the fundamental focus of our curriculum has not had to change.

The '90s, however, have brought many side channels to the industry, which we have responded to. We have honed the curriculum in many directions, entrepreneurial understanding being included! Our curriculum is set up to not only instruct "acting animation" but seriously reinforce the student's understanding of "visual problem solving" for all acting requirements — for all job markets. Games have one set of needs that are different from those of graphic novels, or of feature films, TV series production is different from advertising or theme park design. And yet our curriculum can and does support the needs of the student to be ready for opportunities in all these areas. Additionally, we are also aware that students need to be ready to "carve out their own territory," and to that extent, even entrepreneurial studies are no longer outside the parameters of acting animation.

As to the job market and job placement, we have simply expanded many of our programs. To help our students understand what opportunities are available, our Visiting Artist Program invites voices from all arenas to talk with the students. These Friday night visits are then augmented with classroom visits by artists

coordinated by the instructor of the inviting class. We have a Corporate Presentation Program, which provides a podium for the companies wishing to present their needs to the students. We have a Portfolios in Review day, where the work of the student is placed on display for the industry to review, giving them the ability to track a student's growth through the passing years. This is promoted by widely advertised and flyer-promoted screenings of the students' work.

Job opportunities received by the Department are e-mailed to all the students on our internal e-mail trees so that they may respond directly to the inquiring source. We are adding the portfolios of the graduating class to the CalArts Character Animation Website, for the ease of the industry in finding talented acting animators. Finally, the Department is very busy keeping in touch with international production areas so that we can also refer quality artistic talent whenever need is expressed. In short, it is quite a full job keeping in touch with where and what the animation industry is up to, but one we enjoy taking on.



Jim McCampbell of Ringling School of Art & Design believes a deep, not wide curriculum best prepares his graduates.

Jim McCampbell • Department Head, Computer Animation, Ringling School of Art & Design

Jim McCampbell began his career as a graphic designer. He started doing computer animation in 1986, working for several film and video production companies with national clients. He has been teaching at Ringling School of Art & Design in Sarasota, Florida since 1995, where he is department head of the Computer Animation major.

[Ringling School of Art and Design's](#) Computer Animation major is quite distinctive in several different ways. First, unlike most other institutions, ours is truly a four-year BFA program in Computer Animation. Although many other schools may claim that they have a Computer Animation major, the reality is that most only have a few individual courses on the subject. This is simply

not enough for someone who aspires to be a professional animator in today's competitive world.

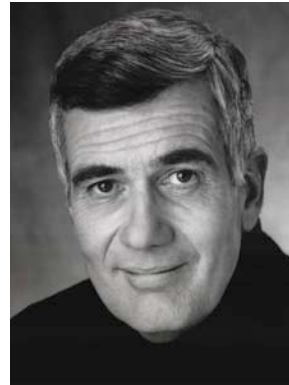
Next, the structure of our curriculum is unique. We have worked very hard to create a balance between the conceptual and the technical. In parallel with learning the latest technology, students learn all of the important aspects of concept development and story development. Ours is a philosophy of communication through movement, so it is very important to have a great idea to communicate. Our student work is highly successful and universally well-received because it is not only technically sound, but also because of the unique designs and interesting stories as well. Our students think.

ALTHOUGH WE ARE CHARACTER ANIMATION HEAVY, WE DO TEACH OUR STUDENTS TO HAVE A COMPLETE RANGE OF SKILLS IN THE AREA OF 3D.

— JIM MCCAMPBELL

Our department prides itself on the fact that its curriculum is deep, not wide. Many other schools adopt an approach of having students sample a broad spectrum of tools and techniques that are used in a wide range of computer graphics applications. Instead, Ringling School students delve deeply into 3D animation as an art form. With our concentrated focus, we are able to address the subtle nuances that distinguish movement from true animation. Although we are character animation heavy, we do teach our students to have a complete range of skills in the area of 3D. This opens up a broader range of opportunities for them because we are discovering that there is a current trend toward increasing the responsibilities of the artist in studios today. Having artists with a complete skill set allows studios to have a smaller, more efficient company which keeps more full time employees since the artists are able to be productive in every phase of a project instead of in just one area.

Lastly, at Ringling School of Art and Design, we are focused on instilling the desire in our students to become lifelong learners. This means not only learning the conceptual and technical skills necessary to succeed in today's professional world, but also to embrace the notion of change and the opportunity to continue to learn and grow throughout one's career. The result is a graduate that understands the importance of anticipating future trends and aligning themselves appropriately.



At NYU, John Canemaker encourages students to broaden their scope of specialty and study live-action as well as animation filmmaking.

John Canemaker • Director of the Animation Program, NYU

*John Canemaker is a tenured full professor at NYU Tisch School of the Arts, and, since 1988, Director of the Animation program there. His personal animated films are part of the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art and are distributed on DVD by Milestone/Image Entertainment. He is the author of nine books on animation history, including his latest, *The Art and Flair of Mary Blair* (Disney Editions, fall 2003).*

In today's economic environment, students in all disciplines must broaden their horizons. The enormous expansion of the animation industry in the last decade includes not only TV series and theatrical features, but the Internet, games and special effects for live-action features. Digital technology has merged live-action and animation — a fundamental shift in aesthetics pointing toward a new art form and a re-defining of animation itself. [New York University](#) Tisch School of the Arts offers a balance of introductory and advanced 2D and 3D computer techniques alongside traditional drawing and visual communication skills (such as Life Drawing, Storyboarding, Action Analysis, Stop Motion, among others). Animation-focused students are also encouraged to partake of the Film Department's multiple offerings in Scriptwriting, Cinematography, Editing, Sound Design, Acting and Cinema History classes. A university is a place of exploration where students develop not only technical skills but a sense of themselves as creative individuals. To land that all-important entry level position, a "calling card" film project should be an expression of who they are and what they have to offer as artists as well as a showcase of their varied moving image-making skills.



Interning with New York companies and networking with alumni and other professionals is important to Mirosław Rogala's animation students at CGIM/Pratt.

Mirosław Rogala • Ph.D., Professor and Department Chair, Computer Graphics and Interactive Media, Pratt Institute, New York

Mirosław Rogala is an internationally recognized interactive media artist. His work is represented in exhibitions in 42 countries and permanent collections, including the Lyon Biennale, ZKM Multimediale and Center for Art and Media, The Brooklyn Museum and the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art. He researches and lectures globally in the area of Interactive Public Art and artist/(v)user (viewer-use) participant relationships.

With the explosion of new techniques and applications in the last several years, the Computer Graphics and Interactive Media Department at [Pratt Institute](#) has greatly expanded our course offerings to reflect and address these innovative methods and skills. Our curriculum improvement has coincided with the economic downturn — we have made an overhaul at the moment when the market became more competitive. As an adjunct to introductory courses, we impart a variety of advanced, special topics courses. For example we offer character design and modeling, character animation, motion dynamics, 3D for the Web, 3D game graphics, non-narrative animation, animation production-team, advanced lighting and texturing.

As the market changes, we rotate through these courses, and keep adding new courses. In addition, we offer non-computer graphics animation courses through our university's Media Arts Dept, including cel animation, stop-motion animation, character animation, etc. We have become much more specialized at precisely the moment when this is needed most. Our faculty reviews portfolios and provides students with feedback, including simulated "interviews" with students to prepare for interviewing situations. Within the classroom, emphasis is placed on the importance of professional presentations/practices, making students aware of the competitive nature of the field and provid-

ing each with the means to compete. Depending on the direction in which students want to go, we distinguish between commercially viable work and approaches that could be considered more "fine art."

DEPENDING ON THE DIRECTION IN WHICH STUDENTS WANT TO GO, WE DISTINGUISH BETWEEN COMMERCIALLY VIABLE WORK AND APPROACHES THAT COULD BE CONSIDERED MORE "FINE ART."

— MIROSLAW ROGALA

Of primary importance for professional work experience and future employment is an on-going internship course with New York City companies. Networking with alumni and professional resources through our department's diverse faculty connections/involvements is a major avenue for employment and recruitment. Students are encouraged to attend conferences such as SIGGRAPH. Undergraduate students are urged to consider graduate school. The faculty also stresses that students should complete senior projects well ahead of schedule in order to be competitive in the market.

Joan Ashworth • Head of Animation, The Royal College of Art

After graduating from the National Film and Television School in 1987, Ashworth co-founded 3 Peach Animation through which she directed many commercials, title sequences and stings for TV and cinema including the opening titles for Tim Burton's Batman. She joined the RCA in 1994, becoming professor of animation in 1998. Since joining the RCA Ashworth has continued working as animator. Recently, Ashworth completed a 10-minute film How Mermaids Breed inspired by Bronze Age Cycladic fertility figures, the drawings of Henry Moore and Birling Gap Beach, Sussex.

The two-year MA Course at the [Royal College of Art](#) focuses on students finding their own voice and developing the skills to communicate their ideas. We encourage students to develop creative problem-solving abilities that give them transferable skills. If they choose not to stay in animation, they can then apply their skills to other areas.

Learning to research intuitively and questioning the design problem is important and yields creative results. Learning to present work in an engaging way shows an understanding of the audience. Because students will need to stand out in the jostling for independent film



At RCA under Joan Ashworth's watch, students are encouraged to identify their strengths and learn to apply them in the working world.

funding, we encourage students to develop their writing and business skills. These are taught through creative writing workshops, professional practice workshops and the embedded and personal examples of most filmmakers who present their work at the college.

During the course, the students' strengths and saleable skills become obvious and they are made aware that they could consider applying these skills in a commercial environment, and some students choose to embrace this route. Others combine selling these skills with creating their own projects. It is not always easy to keep a balance, but the staff at the college show the example of balancing teaching with independent production and commercial work.

LEARNING TO RESEARCH INTUITIVELY AND QUESTIONING THE DESIGN PROBLEM IS IMPORTANT AND YIELDS CREATIVE RESULTS.

— JOAN ASHWORTH

Flexibility of the mind, creative risk-taking and the practical ability to understand what is needed to realize a project through all its twists and turns are key elements examined on the course. These are all elements required in the workplace and most students graduate with these skills in place and a hunger to create more. ■

An alumna of UCLA, **DARLENE CHAN** has worked in the motion picture industry for 14 years. She served as a production executive for Paramount Pictures, Walt Disney Pictures, Davis Entertainment and Motown. She produced *Grumpy Old Men* (1993) for Warner Bros. In 2001, she joined Animation World Magazine as general manager and was named managing editor in 2002.

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

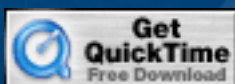
Online Highlights

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:

FRESH FROM THE FESTIVALS: MAY 2003'S FILM REVIEWS

Jon Hofferma reviews five short films fresh from the festival circuit: *The Freak* by Aristomenis Tsirbas, *The Love Nest* by Shelly Wain, FengTing Tsou's *Oblivion*, *Pandorama* by Nina Paley and *The Tortoise & the Hare* by Ray Haryhausen.

View the QuickTime clips online!



PIG TALK

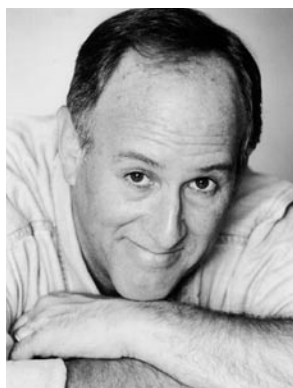
Voice Over Experience from *Tokyo Pig*

by Diane Michelle



Tokyo Pig. All *Tokyo Pig* images © Miramax Television, in association with SME Visual Works, Inc.

I THINK DUBBING THE ENGLISH FOR ANIME SHOWS LIKE TOKYO PIG IS ONE OF THE HARDEST JOBS.

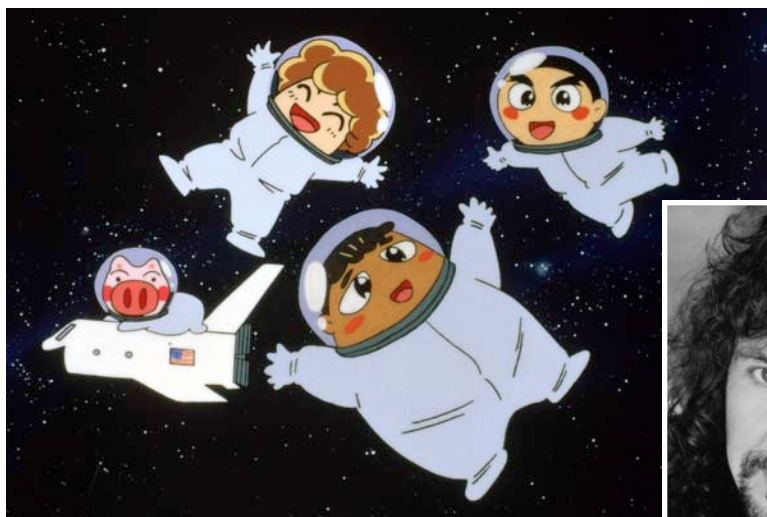


Steve Kramer is the writer, director and an actor for *Tokyo Pig*.

I'VE JUST FINISHED WATCHING THE JAPANESE ANIME TV show *Tokyo Pig* (ABC/Family, most Saturdays and Sundays at 11 am) and I feel like you do when you come off the Tilt O'Whirl: dizzy and nauseous. In a good way. As my nine year-old describes the show, "It's whacked, bent and frantic but I wouldn't miss it!" Okay, maybe she says that partly because I'm a regular on the show as the weather lady/narrator, but *Tokyo Pig* writer, director and actor Steve Kramer (best known for *Robotech* and *Transformers*) says, "We were encouraged to keep the pace fast with lots of jokes," so she isn't making it all up.

ADAPTING A SHOW

Because the show was originally animated to Japanese voice actors, we have to re-dub which causes some interesting challenges. I asked Steve if he stuck pretty close to the original scripts and dialogue lines and he says, "No, in *Tokyo Pig* we didn't because there are really two attitudes you run into from producers. The first is, they want it just like the Japanese — they don't want to change anything, just want it to fit somehow. If they could, they'd take the translation, stick it on a page and record it. But the truth is, that's not going to work. You need to adapt it to fit the mouth movements and the pacing of what's happening on the screen. If you don't, it's Kung Fu theatre, where you have



Finding the right balance between Japanese culture and American sensibility was a challenge in establishing the tone for *Tokyo Pig*. Wally Wingert (left) tells aspiring voice actors to soak up all dialects, mannerisms and voices they hear. *Tokyo Pig*'s Wendee Lee (center) is thankful to ravenous anime fans. Author Diane Michelle (right) serves as the weather lady/narrator on *Tokyo Pig*. Photo Credit: Michael Helms



someone talking straight through when the mouth has stopped moving." When Steve started explaining about fricatives and bi-labials I blushed, but it turns out those are just the fancy names for consonants that require our lips to come together. Hmmm....

"The second thought producers have is to rewrite the show completely," he continues. "I actually agree somewhere in the middle. When you get a Japanese anime like *Tokyo Pig*, usually the translations are pretty literal and you just can't use them. I mean, to have someone look at the guy who just attacked him and say, 'How dare you attack me in such a disrespectful and impertinent manner!'— you can't use that! It makes sense to them culturally but it's not accessible to a Western audience. What they're laughing at over there isn't what we're laughing at over here. Part of it is our tradition of humor all the way from vaudeville on down. It's a little faster paced, it's set up/pay off, set up/pay off."

"That was the hardest thing to do on *Tokyo Pig*. We had to impose that pacing of humor on a show that maybe took more time or didn't have as many individual set up/pay off jokes. The writers were encouraged to find every humorous moment they could milk, and if they didn't then I was encouraged to try and do it in the studio [as the director]."

Pratfalls, slurping food, homework and crushes hit the target audience of kids between six and 11. In the show eight year-old Spencer, played by [Joshua Seth](#), sketches a pig and it comes to life. He then spends each episode getting into a predicament from which only Sunny Pig, voiced by Mona Marshall, with its magical powers, can save him.

TALKING WITH MY PEEPS

Well, what about my partners in voice over crime?

What do they have to say about *Tokyo Pig*? First, I talked to Wally Wingert, who plays Spencer's dad, about how he created the voice: "Well, when [producer/director] Jamie Simone asked me to come up with a voice that would be different from the average, dumb dad, I tried a raspy, back in the throat sound, suggestive of Christopher Lloyd."

What kind of advice would Wally give an up and coming voice actor? "Work hard. Nothing comes quickly. Study, study, study. Drink in everything you hear — accents, cadences of people's voices, impersonations of people you know."

If you go to wallyontheweb.com you'll be amazed at the self-marketing this guy does. (Oh yeah, that's the other really important part of this business called show!)

Another example of someone who promotes herself while performing, writing and directing full time is Wendee Lee, who voices Miss Spelt, the teacher on *Tokyo Pig*. "Her voice is a little higher pitched and a little more conservative than mine," Wendee explains.

I wondered what she would do if she were booked into the recording studio and started feeling like she was catching a cold. "First I stop talking and rest my voice until I need it for the show. Then I throat coat with tea and honey." She started rattling off a list that included grapefruit seed extract, goldenseal and other things but I couldn't write that fast so I rest assured she can handle a cold.

Other occupational hazards we talked about are more insidious and harder to get rid of, like ageism and sexism. "Absolutely I'm affected," says Wendee. "Unfortunately, there are fewer roles for women, but I'm starting to see a trend where more material is being supplied

for girl viewers. I'm glad Tokyo Pig is airing on TV."

Wendee is very active in the anime scene and she explained to me that it can become a very expensive habit when anime fans have to purchase from a store the titles they want to see. "Thanks to the support and perseverance of devoted fans, anime is here to stay!" she decrees.

For me, anime is just one of the many places I get to do voice over work. Beginning years ago with Scooby Doo I got cast as a Greek tavern owner on "The Stoney Glare Scare." I frantically called all over San Pedro (my hometown) to ask restaurant owners who were Greek to read off the menu so I could imitate them the next day! Tomorrow I'll be doing the voice of Disney's Daisy Duck for a Christmas CD. It's never dull.

I think dubbing the English for anime shows like Tokyo Pig is one of the hardest jobs. Not only do you have to come up with original character voices, you have to sustain them while fitting whole paragraphs into the mouth of the cartoon on the monitor. But I'm not complaining. I've stayed pretty busy and knock on wood I'll continue.

In closing I thought it would be cool to share with you something my mentor and friend Daws Butler (the voice of Yogi Bear, Huckleberry Hound, Elroy Jetson, Snagglepuss, Captain Crunch and a lot more characters) used to say: "Don't forget. Words are the actor's tools. They become truly meaningful when you get them off the paper and up into 'your computer,' to be spilled out newborn as your thoughts." ■

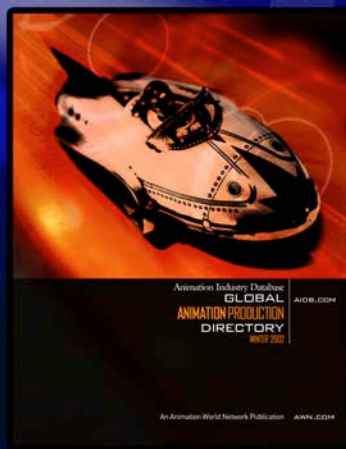
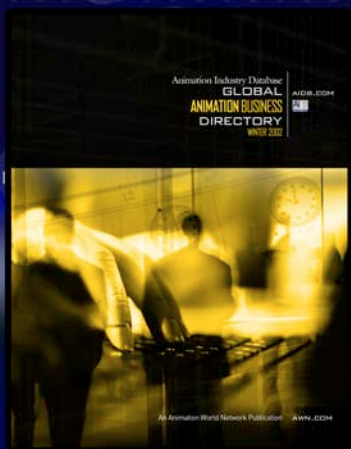
DIANE MICHELLE, a San Pedro, California native and UC Santa Barbara alumna, can often be heard in TV and radio commercials, and creating off-beat voices for cartoons, CD-ROMs and films. Since 1990 she's been the singing voice of Daisy Duck, among many other animated characters. Her credits include The Simpsons, The West Wing and Little Mermaid II. In '02 she launched a one-woman show in Los Angeles as the Annie Award-winning cartoon spaceship captain/diva Va Va LaVoom. Michelle is an expert in dialects and celebrity impersonations, and is also a painter, guitarist and vocal teacher.

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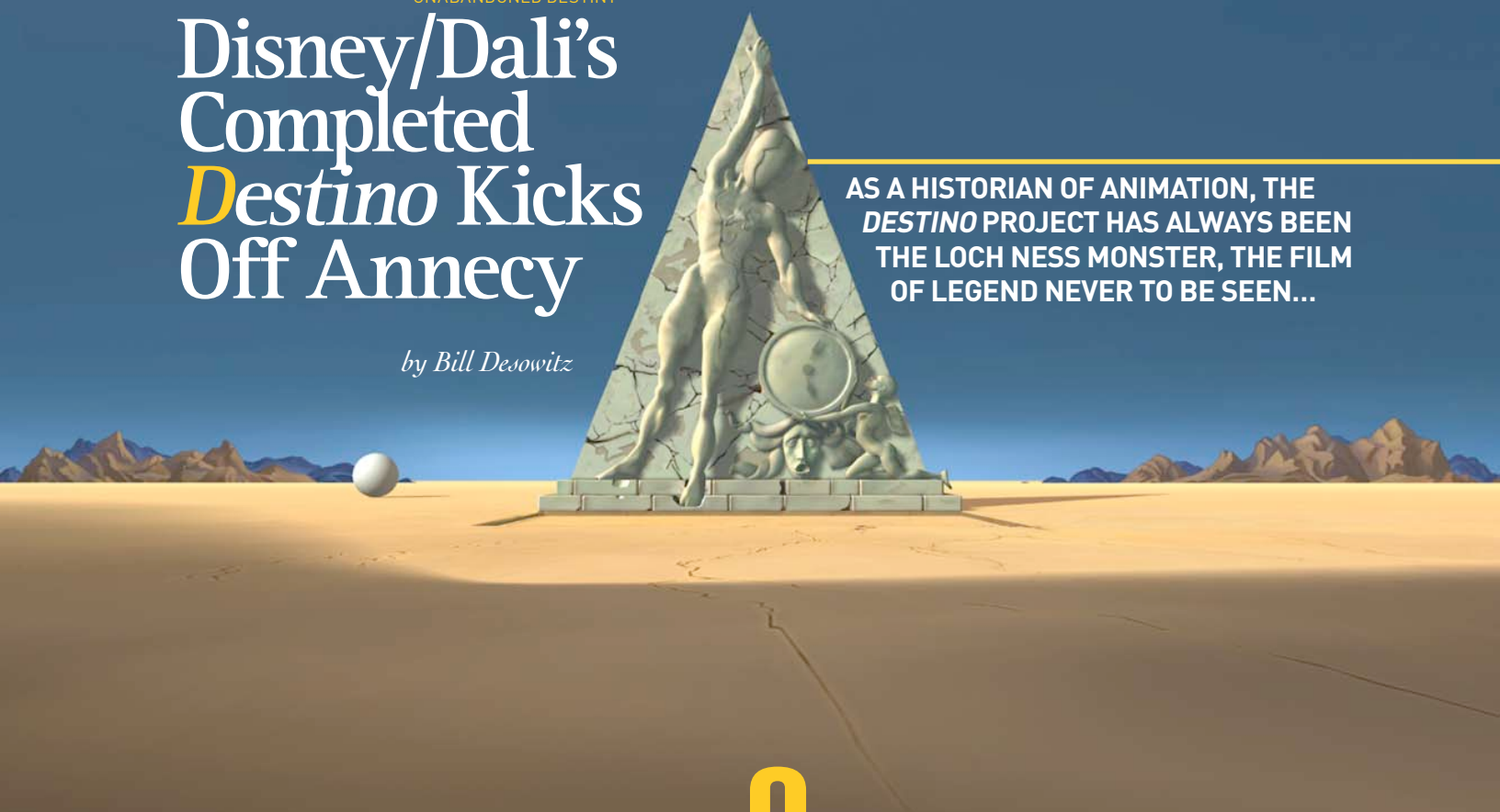


UNABANDONED DESTINY

Disney/Dali's Completed *Destino* Kicks Off Annecy

by Bill Desowitz

AS A HISTORIAN OF ANIMATION, THE *DESTINO* PROJECT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE LOCH NESS MONSTER, THE FILM OF LEGEND NEVER TO BE SEEN...



a

T LONG LAST, *DESTINO*, THE LEGENDARY UNFINISHED ANIMATED collaboration between Walt Disney and Salvador Dali — two visionaries that struck up a friendship when the flamboyant Spanish painter worked in Hollywood in the '40s — has been completed and premiered June 2, 2003 at the opening of this year's [Annecy International Animation Film Festival](#).

Most animation observers assumed *Destino*, mysteriously abandoned after eight months of storyboarding in 1946, was a lost cause. But the surrealist short, originally envisioned by Disney as a compilation film along the lines of *The Three Caballeros*, found new life when vice chairman Roy Disney initiated its completion last year, largely at Disney Studio France.

"It is a little different [project] for us," Disney says of *Destino*'s cryptic artistic merits, which features such trademark Dali images as ravaging ants, eyeballs, melting clocks, the Venus sculpture coming to life as a beautiful woman and two gargoyle heads resembling the artist with turtles' bodies. "But I'm enormously proud that we've done this because it is about who we are as artists, how long our history is and how long we respect it."



The artistic marriage of two cultural titans — Walt Disney and Salvador Dali — can be seen in *Destino*, a short film begun in the '40s and recently completed by the Paris Disney Studios. © Disney 2002.

Serge Bromberg, Anecy's artistic director, adds that the premiere is not only a great coup for the festival but a very fitting one. "It has been a great honor to premiere *Destino* in Anecy. As a historian of animation, the *Destino* project has always been the Loch Ness monster, the film of legend never to be seen... When Roy Disney [who was honored at Anecy in 2000] called me to say that the film was finished, I could not believe my ears. It was obvious right away that the only place to premiere the film was Anecy, not only because Anecy is the place for discovering new genres, new techniques and new ways of doing animation, and because France was the center of the world for Dali, but also because the new version was produced at the [Paris] studio and by a French director [Dominique Monfery].

Disney, who served as exec producer, first hit on the idea of completing *Destino* after doing the Bette Midler interstitial for *Fantasia 2000* that makes reference to the Dali work. "Out of using the material, I got into a conversation with attorneys about using Dali artwork to promote *Fantasia 2000*," Disney explains. "They told me that we possess it but don't own it." It turns out that the contract between Walt and Dali stipulated that the artwork doesn't become Disney property until after the movie is made. So there was a financial and historical impetus to this. Disney believes the project was abandoned because the compilation film was no longer

commercially viable by the end of World War II."

Yet *Destino* is certainly profitable today, what with lithographs, books and inclusion on a future DVD with an accompanying documentary. Disney says the plan is to play other appropriate festivals after Anecy in the hope of garnering an Oscar nomination for best Animated Short subject.

Baker Bloodworth (*Dinosaur*), who returned to Disney after a brief sabbatical, served as producer. He says then animation president Tom Schumacher chose the French studio because of its unique sensitivity to the material and that Monfery (*The Emperor's New Groove* and *Hercules*) seemed the most appropriate animator to helm the five-minute short even though he had never directed before.

"At first Dominique said no," Bloodworth recalls. "'Why would you want to finish a project started by Salvador Dali? Are you insane?' — he said in a polite French way. Two months go by and he finally agreed to do it. I told him to start drawing, just start playing with it and see if something sparks you. He started storyboarding and re-storyboarding sequences that Dali and John Hench [background artist on *Fantasia* and *Dumbo* and layout artist on *Three Caballeros*] had done."

Despite the theft of the portfolio decades ago, about 80 pen-and-ink sketches survive along with and a few paintings a storyboard and a 15-second reel that can be

DESTINO IS COMPRISED OF A SEAMLESS BLENDING OF COMPUTER-GENERATED AND TRADITIONALLY DRAWN ANIMATION.

viewed on the [Fantasia 2000 DVD set](#). “*Destino* was ultimately recut from eight to five minutes because some of it was incomprehensible,” Bloodworth continues. “Dali had always said, ‘If you understand this, then I’ve failed.’ There’s some truth to this but we also wanted it to be watchable. Roy was very conscious of holding an audience. We pulled together the love story and compressed. And yet there is a long baseball sequence that no one could make sense of that we only touched on.”

“We were true to the look that Dali painted. Several of his [sketches and paintings] make the piece look timeless because you can’t tell where it’s from. Dali would start with an image, which would become another one, and just when you thought it would hold on that image, it would become something else. The man and woman and swallows were central character designs, but she never looks the same — her hair is long, then short. He always looks like he emerges from rock.

“Dominique took the best of the drawings and then went back to the Dali works to find patterns. We used elements from the original story reel, such as the two Dali heads, and chose some CG techniques because it felt right. Nothing is advanced, just available tools. Twenty percent are CG elements, the rest is 2D. Dali is linear, angular, sharp, clear. Very graphic. And characters are true to that. It was Dominique’s idea to have strong shadows.”

Disney says the CG work is appropriate given the “plastic quality” of Dali’s work. “It’s highly dimensional so the few things we did construct in 3D fit right in and you could move the virtual camera around these objects — the Tower of Babel, the monastery bell tower, the wall where sands of time slip away. We spent a lot of time figuring out the man and woman’s faces and bodies. There’s relatively little animation [of them] and we wanted her poses to reflect the time... she’s kind of anti-modern.”

Destino is comprised of a seamless blending of computer-generated and traditionally drawn animation. Many elements throughout the film were modeled in Alias|Wavefront’s Maya. For instance, the closeup portions of the Babel Tower, is a CG model built in Maya. Also, the four partygoers and eyeballs wearing tuxedos that are featured prominently on various parts of the Babel Tower were modeled in Maya. All of these elements were texture mapped and rendered in Maya as well. In the scene with the two heads coming together, the only surviving piece of film from the 1946 reel, the

Matador software package was employed to create intricate mattes. These mattes were used to separate the painted heads from the background. An extensive digital restoration was performed once those elements were separated. All of these elements came together with the traditionally drawn animation in Disney’s proprietary Computer Animation Production System (CAPS). The final 2k resolution images were then outputted to digital film recorded and shot on to 35mm Kodak EK film.

The revelation for the Disney vice chairman and the other animators came when they finally understood the continuity of Dali and Hench’s work. Sketches were



While working on *Fantasia 2000*, company vice chairman Roy Disney made the decision to revitalize the abandoned *Destino* project. © Disney. Photo credit: Gary Krueger.

originally assembled into a storyboard and photographed on 2’x3’ cards and stacked up. However, they were not numbered. A year-and-a-half ago, Disney and a group of animators laid them all out on an enormous display table at the research library in Burbank and started playing with the troublesome middle section. “We discovered that they didn’t read like most storyboards where you go across a given card,” Disney explains. “These read all the way across the top of a set of three cards. The next line would then read across the next line. Don Ernst, who co-produced [Fantasia 2000](#), pointed this out and it was a big epiphany.” ■

BILL DESOWITZ is the editor of [VFXWorld.com](#)

MUTANT CINEMA

X2: X-Men United: Teamwork?

by Danny Fingeroth

X2: X-MEN UNITED IS A FUN RIDE. IF ONLY IT WAS more...what's the word I'm looking for...? Oh, yes. United! The movie has so many terrific elements, I just wish they'd been able to put the parts together better at the story's end.

SOME GREAT STUFF

X2, of course, is the sequel to the hugely popular [X-Men](#), and both chronicle the philosophical and physical battles between Marvel Comics' two extreme camps of superhuman mutants, with plain ol' mankind caught — less and less passively — in between. While X2 isn't as novel as [X-Men](#), as moving as [Spider-Man](#) (or as flawed as [Daredevil](#)), it has more than its fair share of cool stuff. For example:

- A knock-your-socks off, how'd-they-do-that opening introducing Nightcrawler;
- A great raid-on-the-X-Mansion scene, where Wolverine shows just how unique his powers are — and just how savage he can be;
- An even better suburban siege where the heroes actually have to face off against “a world that hates and fears them” — and where Pyro, Rogue, and, of course, Wolverine, show how dangerous it can be to be a mutant — and a mutant hater;
- A Magneto escape scene which, alone, is worth the price of admission (Sorry if I ruined it for you. He escapes. Get over it.);



Cyclops (above), played by James Marsden, releases an energy beam against a deadly foe. X2 introduces Alan Cumming as Nightcrawler (below) in a spectacular way. All photos TM & © 2003 Twentieth Century Fox. Unless noted otherwise





- The nifty cameos by characters only diehard X-Fans would know, as well as script references for the same aficionados;
- The “do-or-die” climax wherein a major character undergoes a... significant change. It was dramatic and exciting and pretty much defined the “can’t/must” choices that superheroes always have to make. (“I can’t do that — but I must do that! What do I do?”)

But...

So why didn’t the sum add up to as much as — or, even better, more than — its parts?

Well, for starters, there’s the team’s leader, Professor X — actually played even *better* this time around by the man who really was born to play the role, Patrick Stewart. But, despite being “the world’s most powerful telepath,” Xavier is played as a passive, ineffectual figure. One can understand that, as founder of and — literally — the mind behind the X-Men, he would be a vulnerable target and the one the bad guys would focus on. That he would spend so *much* of the movie as a victim, and not even be allowed to contribute much to his own rescue or the events that follow, is a letdown.

Then, equally well-cast and well-played, Ian McKellen’s Magneto is also relegated to a sort of autopilot villainous role, betraying little of the complex mo-

tivation he was allowed in the first X-film. McKellen, too, is given precious little screen time, and little chance to have much real interplay with Stewart.

Hugh Jackman as Wolverine is, again, the real star of the movie. Jackman — and writers Michael Dougherty and Dan Harris, as well as director Bryan Singer — indeed brings a lot to a role that could be just another killing machine type. But I wonder how the slowly unreeling mystery behind his origins will sustain itself over the course of several movies. It’s not like a weekly TV series where the pieces add up to something by the end of a few months, and you have the full story within a reasonable time frame.

ENDINGS ARE ALWAYS TOUGHEST

The biggest problem with the movie, for me, and it seems to happen with a lot of action films, is when the filmmakers try to bring all the elements together for a rousing ending. There’s something about a team of anything — football players, dancers, horses — that makes you want to see them act together at the climax of a story. Sure, one or two of them will stand out, and maybe many of them will be reduced to looking on and acting impressed. But, much as you may love Derek Jeter, it’s the New York Yankees — the team! — you want to see win, even if Derek gets to be the hero of the game. And you want to see him win as part of the group. In basketball or football, this need is even more clearly expressed and satisfied. The quarterback



throws the ball and the receiver catches it and makes the touchdown. But the rest of the team is out there making sure no one gets in their way. They don't just watch and grit their teeth.

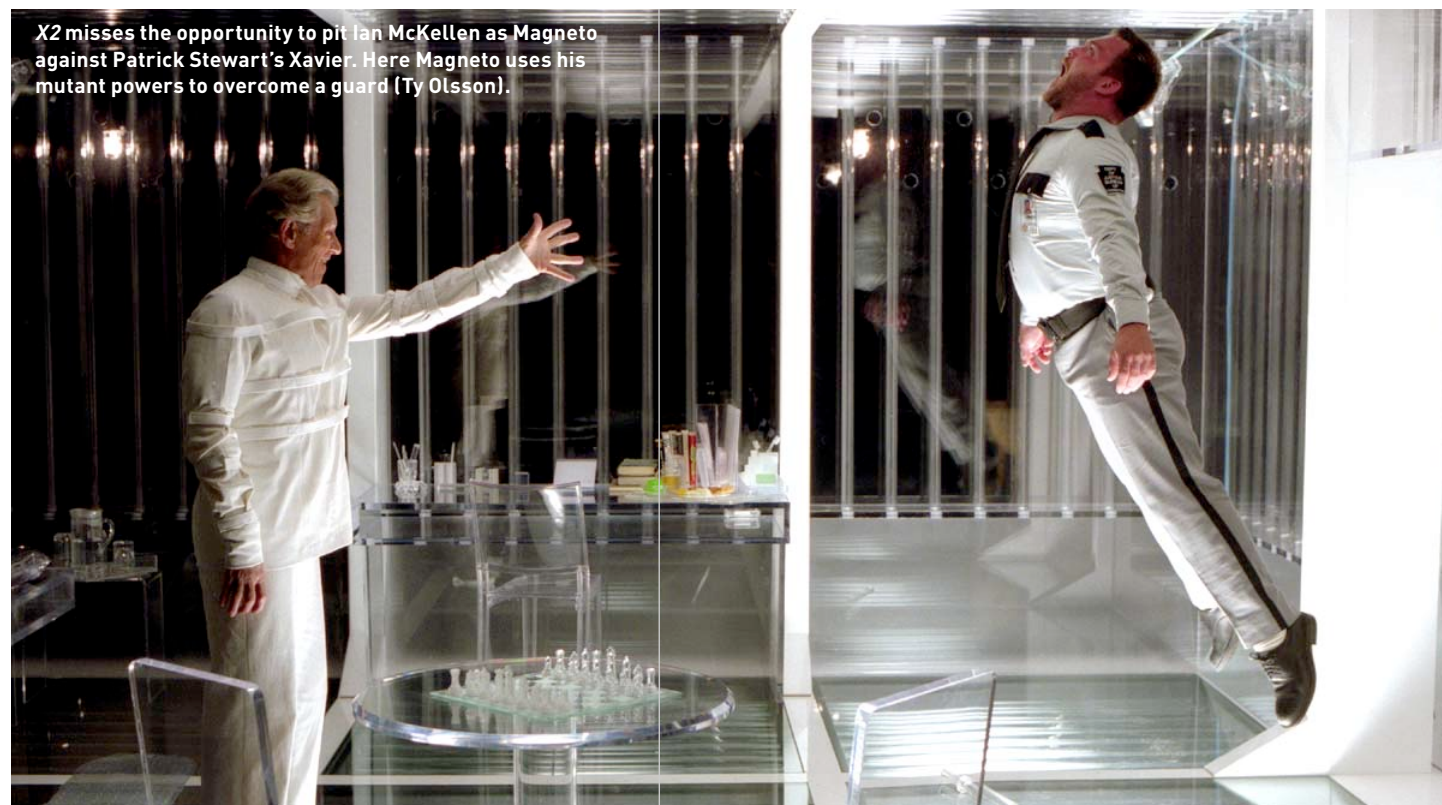
So, without giving away the ending — and believe me, the end has a lot of great stuff, some of which blows up real nice — I'll just say that the X-team members battle separately but, dramatically speaking, less effectively than one wishes they would. While the way that the crises and complications in the climax keep escalating is impressive, they ultimately seem to have less dramatic effect than their potential promises. Each crisis feels of equal weight to the one before, as in each, a specific team member gets to take center stage. Again, this is a tried and true building block in action team stories. But in this one, you never get the sense the whole team is racing down court to win the game.

Don't get me wrong. X2 is great fun, and reasonably true to the characters. (Topics such as whether — or how much and when — Wolverine kills his foes has been a topic of geek discourse since the

Pyro (Aaron Stanford) shows off his fire power. Photo credit: CINESITE.



THE BIGGEST PROBLEM WITH THE MOVIE... IS WHEN THE FILMMAKERS TRY TO BRING ALL THE ELEMENTS TOGETHER FOR A ROUSING ENDING.



1970s, after all. The X-films stir that sort of debate up all over again.) You certainly do feel like you're in the X-Men's world from beginning to end. You get the feeling that you've been told a good story, yet one that's just part of a larger tapestry, one that makes you want to be sure to see the next one.

I just never got the feeling the X-Men were united. And that's too bad — because, y'know, they're a team of outcasts, fighting to protect a world that hates and fears them. People that selfless deserve to have a better choreographed ending than these folks get.

So go see the movie. You might want to read Chris Claremont and Brent Anderson's *God Loves, Man Kills* X-Men graphic novel before and/or after you see it. A lot of the film's story was inspired by that. The X-Men franchise was created by [Stan Lee](#) and Jack Kirby, with significant parts of the mythos added to by Len Wein, Claremont, Dave Cockrum, John Byrne, Neal Adams and Roy Thomas, among others.

Talk about great teams... ■

DANNY FINGEROTH, veteran [Marvel](#) Comics writer and editor, led the company's Spider-Man line, as group editor, during its highest-selling years. Way back when he was assistant editor on the X-Men, including *God Loves, Man Kills*. Danny has also created, developed and written comics and animation for AOL-Time Warner, ShowTime Online, Visionary Media, Brilliant Digital Entertainment and Byron Press Multimedia. Currently, he is the creator and editor of Danny FingerOTH's Write Now! magazine, published by TwoMorrow's, a highly acclaimed publication about writing comics, animation and science fiction. Danny's Behind the Scenes at an Animated Series, from Scholastic, is now on sale. He is also at work on Superman on the Couch: What Super Heroes Really Tell Us About Ourselves and Our Society, to be published in 2004 by Continuum. The Animated Century, a documentary feature film about the history of animation, which Danny co-wrote, will appear on Bravo later this year.

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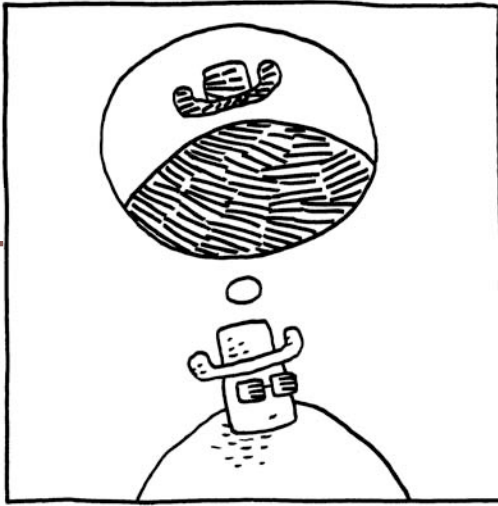


Illustration by [Andreas Hykade](#).
Courtesy of Chris J. Robinson.

ANIMATION PIMP

Leftovers, B-Sides and Outtakes

MAYBE IT COMES WITH TOSSING THE BOTTLE OR HAVING A KID OR HITTING THAT DANTE AGE. YOU STEP BACK, SLOW DOWN AND ACTUALLY THINK THINGS THROUGH.

by *Chris J. Robinson*

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

"It takes a shallow grasp of history to believe that solutions exist to most international problems. Often there are no solutions, only confusion and unsatisfactory choices."

— Robert Kaplan, *Warrior Politics*

"Between grief and nothing, I'll take grief."

— William Faulkner, *The Wild Palms*

"Everybody's hoppin' just a boppin' just a boppin'."

— Jerry Lee Lewis, *High School Confidential*

"DON'T CARE." THERE I SAID IT. I DON'T FEEL A DAMN BIT OF SHAME either. The U.S. has done what it said it would do and I don't care anymore. Same goes for animation, the part of my life that earns cash. These days I'm more concerned with my dog's limp, my book deadline, what we're going to do for a new venue for [Ottawa](#) 2004, the endless e-mails I keep getting about penis size (I don't know 'bout you...but I got over that whole thing when I was about 14. I mean are there really any women out there who believe that a BIG PENIS is everything? If so...please write c/o address below), and the NHL playoffs. I know, I know. What a petulant, self-righteous spoiled s.o.b. Well hey la dee da. At least I'm not a self-styled polygamist. (Sorry I just really wanted to say that phrase.) Maybe you're right but what do you want me to do? Maybe it comes with tossing the bottle or having a kid or hitting that Dante age. You step back, slow down and actually think things through. All I know is that I find myself sitting atop a couple of fences at this moment.

WE ARE ALL PUPPETS!

Up 'til about December, I was pretty much lefty. It was easy... just quote Nader or Chomsky, wave your fist, go to a few protests, visit altnet or common dreams, go see *Bowling for Columbine*, forward a few emails and you're done. Barely a sweat, but man do

THIS REALLY WASN'T NEW... I WAS ALWAYS ANNOYED BY THOSE DRUM BEATING COMMUNIST HIPPIES.

u feel good about yourself. Well...I got called to the mat by my friend Hayden. He lives in Toronto. Big deal. (That reminds me: it was Hayden and I who actually wrote that opening night speech for Ottawa 2002. I lied about buying it off a speech writing Website. Sorry.) During the month of January he and I started discussing the war. I'd just finished (almost) this book called *The War on Freedom*. The book argued that the U.S. government basically knew and allowed the 9/11 attacks to happen. This had left me thoroughly depressed because how do you fight something so complex and jamesbondingly evil? Well...anyway...Hayden and I started gabbing about Iraq. He took the centre of right. I took the left. By the end of it I realized how daft I'd been. All the lefty stuff I was spouting: *9/11 was a conspiracy, Bush is an idiot. It's all about oil. Killing people is wrong*. It was all empty rhetoric. It wasn't that I became an anti-abortionist Negro hating redneck...no it was that I came to understand that the left could generate the same impotent verbal crap that also drips from the mouths of Bush, Fleischer, Rumsfeld and the rest of the boys' club. This really wasn't new...I was always annoyed by those drum beating Communist hippies. They always struck me as so bloody intolerant of difference. They were morally superior, above it all and ironically almost sort of fascistic to a degree ("You're either with us or against us!" Hmm...). They could all quote Chomsky, Biafra, Rollins and assorted lefty pop stars. Worst of all, like Newt Gingrich, they had NO SENSE OF HUMOUR. Man...I once wore this T-shirt I got from *Bust Magazine* that said, "Feminist chicks dig me," and you should have seen the scowls. (Kinda like the reaction Borak [the Kazakhstan TV host on *Da Ali G Show*] got when he went to an animal rights protest and talked about how he used to hunt dogs for fun.) Anyway, all these gals pushing strollers and wearing those hats... sort of circular...kinda thing a lame ass jazz musician might wear (my friend Andrea calls them NGO hats — non-governmental association)... anyway... these broads confronted me and said they were offended by my shirt. I told them it was obviously a joke...but umm...they weren't laughing. Can u imagine what they'd do if I wore my T-shirt with Bin Laden wearing an "I Love NY" T-shirt? Shiver me timbers. And hey...just look at their poster boy, the self-righteous tattle taler, Noam Chomsky: "Well...the U.S. did this and this and then they did this and this...oh...and that too. That was really bad...and I think they should be spanked."

Chomsky apparently lives in an error free, perfectly knitted (like his sweaters) world. I was part of some lefty e-mail groups and they'd always annoy me but now they did so more than ever. Again they seemed humourless, ignorant and downright childish — like the hippies in Beavis and Butthead's *Animation Sucks*. (You're purple! You're green! Yeah...but we're both red inside.)

Now okay...I'm picking on the extreme left here. Not all of the left are this cartoony...but hey...ya know what? That's true of the right as well despite what television tells you. It's easy to mock Bush. He's not an articulate man. He's a recovering alcoholic. He believes in God. His daughters like to tie one on. Hell...he wasn't even elected to office. But really come on...do you really believe he's a Jerry Lewisesque moron? What is being served by reducing Bush and his administration to cartoon characters? (Yes...I realize that Rumsfeld is doing a cartoony Clint Eastwood of late.) These people are not morons and the sooner you come to grips with that, the closer you come back to reality. And please protesters...stop forcing your not-yet-hippie children to carry "War Kills Kids" banners. War kills men too ya know.

In the end, I'm stranded in a hailstorm of confusion spewed forth by the rhetoric of left and right. The task of discovering the cold hard truth becomes that much more difficult. Meantime...oh yeah...well... Hayden recommended that I read the writings of Robert Kaplan. Chomsky calls him a right wing jingo, but don't believe the hype. Kaplan is a foreign policy writer for the *Atlantic Monthly*. Two of his recent books are *The Coming Anarchy* and *Warrior Politics*. It's dark stuff, but contrary to what Chomsky says, Kaplan seems to me to be more of a realist. He sees the world as it is and not some ideal that may in fact never be. In short, Kaplan argues that foreign policy and the rest of our social world do not play by the same rules and never have. He points all the way back to the Roman Empire to show endless examples of how foreign policy has always been about shaking ends with one of two evils (ideally the lesser one) and acting out of self-interest. The U.S. is an empire. Naturally, it's going to act in its own self-interest and do what it must do to protect its assets. Find me a country from the past that hasn't lived this way? So why all the fuss now? Well...maybe it's because we (North Americans) are living a very, very comfortable and isolated spectator existence. We think that the peace (9/11 aside)

IT'S EASY TO MOCK BUSH. HE'S NOT AN ARTICULATE MAN. HE'S A RECOVERING ALCOHOLIC. HE BELIEVES IN GOD.

we have was gained by hugs and kisses and diplomacy. Umm... wrongo boyos. Remember them injuns we done slaughtered? Oh... gee...remember dem blacks we enslaved...or maybe you remember World War I or II or the Civil War or how 'bout the American Revolution (an idea inspired by another conflict, the French Revolution)? Any of that ring a bell? Hell...to win sporting events even involves conflict muchacos. From harmony comes discord and discord harmony. That's the way of the world. I'm not saying it's how it should be, but rather how it has ALWAYS BEEN.

AND THIS RELATES TO ANIMATION HOW?

Still with me? I bet you're wondering how all this ties in with animation. Well...it's like this...animation, for my money, continually falls short as a meaningful social art form. Like politics, animation seems dominated by extremes: the ballcap wearing guns ablazin' bodies a tollin' kill everyone world of video game animation or the just short of it world of *Powerpuff Girls*, *Justice League* and all those violence without effect films I brattled on about last year or any number of phoney baloney films like *Spirit*, *Trumpet of the Swan*, *Treasure Planet* OR (huff huff) on the other side we get the trite preachy wishy-washy let's hug and forget our troubles with a nice cup of Ovaltine (oops...sorry... can't do that...they employ 14 year-old retarded mid-giraffes from Kokomo), visions of gee...pick a card any card: [Jacques Drouin](#), Bratislav Pojar, Stormin' Norman McLaren, [Raoul Servais](#), [Paul Driessen](#), [Karen Aqua](#), [Joyce Borenstein](#), Ishu Patel (*Divine Fate*...ugh)...and assorted do-gooders (hey...if we can have evildoers, we can sure as hell have Adam West like do-gooders) — Speaking of which...anyone notice that at least three former Soviet colonies are in the coalition (including Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) — I don't know if it's just the nature of animation, the fact that it takes so damn long to do (although that's increasingly false) or that it's always been a more personal orientated form of expression....but animation just seems more and more out of touch with the surrounding world. [Norstein](#), [Back](#), [Dumala](#), [The Quays](#), [Tilby](#), [Kovalyov](#), [Kucia](#)...the list goes on...are among the leading animators...the voices that, apparently matter, and yet sometimes I think they're just speaking to themselves. And before you start calling me a fascist...this isn't about the denial or repression of individual expression. It's about urgency, passion, communication. Where are the outraged animators — ei-

ther left or right? These be some pretty fucked up times kids...with terrorism fears, Iraq, Korea...and who can even begin to tell what the attack on Iraq is going to lead toward. In these times...hell...most of the time...we turn to culture for some guidance, some suggestions, even comfort...and I can find relevant (past and present) voices in writing, music, live-action, painting (and all those new fangled media arts), but what about animation? I was originally planning to have a look at protest films in animation but ya know what? There aren't that many and those that do exist are so bloody cloyingly naïve. Where are the voices (past or present — not including propaganda films)? Aside from the ASIFA-East 9/11 project (most of which, unfortunately, included many smug and spoiled "how could this happen to us" responses)...there seems to be nothing out there beyond Flash animations — and even then most of these animators succumb to limitations of caricature.

Who cares, you ask? Exactly. This comes back to what I wrote about in February: No one gives a damn about animation outside of this little community. Aside from newspaper articles focused squarely on new technologies and jobs and all that industry stuff...no one talks about what animation is saying. Why? Okay... you can fall back on that old pegleg, lack of exposure... but ya know what? Animation gets as much exposure as short experimental film/videos and yet they seem to get talked about. Maybe the answer is simple: animation says nothing interesting or relevant about the world. In [Priit Pärn's](#) film, *1895*, there were lots of jokes about what useful careers people might have had had they not become filmmakers....and you have to wonder about animators in general. It's almost like we've got too many Ingmar Bergmans and not enough Godards. Too many self-enclosed artists isolated from society. What would have happened if McLaren hadn't hid in his room playing with abstract musings all that time? Imagine what Norstein might be doing if he hadn't wasted the last 10-20 years with this bloody *Overcoat* project? Same with Dumala and his romantic school boy obsession with the existentialists or Kovalyov and his land of selfish paranoias. And whatever happened to [George Griffin](#)? What about [Priestly](#)? Aqua? Borenstein? [Leaf](#)? The list goes on. Priit Pärn is one of the few animators (a slight nod to [Pierre Hebert](#) and [Phil Mulloy](#) as well) to really try and grapple with the complexities of history, politics, technologies and identity. Maybe the fact that he is so unique is what makes

him so problematic for many animation artists. Animation needs to undo the noose and live a little. Stop treating the world as some precious jewel to be cloistered away behind a glass shelf. We need trash. Trash is life. Trash has been eaten, chewed, swallowed, shitted, wiped, jerked off into, dropped, embraced, beaten, broken. Animation, odd as it is to say, needs more realists and less idealists. Animation has no Hubert Selby, Jack Kerouac, William Faulkner, Nick Tosches, let alone a Jerry Lee Lewis, Robert Pollard, or a Jackson Pollack. Animation has lots of Wayne Gretzkys, Tiger Woods, Michael Jordans...but you need grinders to win, those guys who give 110% game in/game out, who play with raw intensity, embracing every shift as if it were the last. Animation seems to lack that rawness, the reactionary, GOTTA SAY IT OR I'M GONNA BUST nature that others have. Even the improvised scratch animators like [Barbel Neubauer](#) and [Richard Reeves](#) are often missing that fire that every artist MUST have. Martha Colburn and to a lesser extent, Andreas Hykade, are about the only ones whose work can really excite me. Everyone else seems to go about a nice leisurely pace,

taking 4-5-10-20 years to make a film. That's something I really can't understand (aside from the technical excuses) or respect. If it's not burning to come out, then maybe it don't need to come out. And maybe that's just a problem inherent in animation. Maybe that's why animation will forever be seen by some as the pottery of the art world.

Just a small dose of pragmatic realism would give us some balance and, ironically, take us beyond the limits of our current imaginings. Yoda was right...it's about balance, kids. Just like that German toon tells us...we need balance to have a level perspective of things. Without balance, we'll end up like Duck Dodgers and that Martian, clinging to a small piece of nothing in the middle of nowhere. ■

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>*



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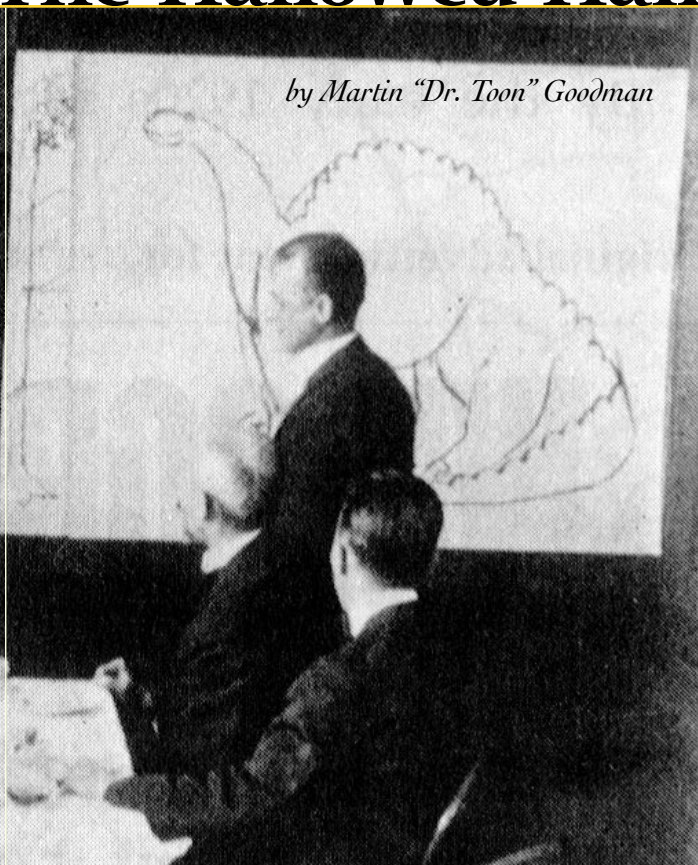
TOON PSYCHOLOGY

The Hallowed Hall

by Martin "Dr. Toon" Goodman



It's a foregone conclusion that animation pioneer Winsor McCay, seen here drawing *Gertie the Dinosaur* in an undated photo, would be in the Hall of Fame.



THE ANIMATION HALL OF FAME IS GRACED WITH NARY A HALLOWED NAME.

I S I BEGAN TO COMPOSE THIS MONTH'S COLUMN there were 256 legends ensconced in the Baseball Hall of Fame. The Basketball Hall of Fame held only ten fewer enshrinees. The Pro Football Hall of Fame boasts 150 busts representing the greatest who ever played the game. The Animation Hall of Fame, on the other hand, is graced with nary a hallowed name. This is primarily because there is no Animation Hall of Fame in existence. It is true that as of this writing a Cartoon Hall of Fame is being designed by ASIFA Hollywood. This is a most worthy project that deserves our accolades, but preliminary plans appear to indicate that enshrinement is being limited to cartoon *characters*. What about the people behind the toons? Are they not part of the story as well? Where there should be monuments to the magnificent men and women who made animation one of the most popular cinematic art forms on the planet, there are only informal listings and varying opinions on far-flung Websites.



Goodman's choices for the ideal screening committee include (from left to right): Leonard Maltin, Jerry Beck and John Canemaker. Maltin and Beck photo courtesy of ASIFA-Hollywood; Canemaker photo by Joe Henson.

THE GROUND RULES

A Hall of Fame for animation greats does appear in Jerry Beck's classic book *The 50 Greatest Cartoons*. Mr. Beck, one of our premier animation historians, writers and producers, came up with an unofficial list of those to be enshrined in a hypothetical Hall of Fame. It is difficult indeed to quibble with his choices. To wit: Winsor McKay, Max Fleischer, [Otto Messmer](#), Walter Lantz, [Walt Disney](#), Friz Freleng, Tex Avery, [William Hanna and Joseph Barbera](#), [Chuck Jones](#) and Bob Clampett. Any dissent? I wouldn't think so. Still, these exalted names are only 11 in number, and so many more are deserving of a place in the animation hall of heroes. Therefore, taking Mr. Beck's estimable list as a starting point I humbly propose, for the enjoyment of my readers, an Animation Hall of Fame.

Where to put this monument? Hollywood is a fine choice, as the industry thrived there, and so is New York, as the birthplace of what is likely the first animated film (*Humorous Phases of Funny Faces*, 1906). However, the coasts have their share of cultural glory and film history, so I propose putting the Hall of Fame in the Heartland — Chicago, which also claims the birthplace of Walt Disney. Having cleared space in the Windy City for the Hall, I then consulted another Hall of Fame for rules of procedure and protocol — The Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. Their rules for enshrinement are as follows: The Baseball Writers Association of America selects a screening committee of six members (two new members are voted in every three years). The committee prepares a ballot of no more than ten nominees for the Hall, and these candidates must have been nominated by at least two of the six committee members. The ballots are distributed to eligible members of the Baseball Writers Association of America; one must have been a baseball writer for at

least ten years. Any nominee garnering 75% of their vote then joins the hallowed Hall. No write-ins are permitted. There are separate rules for a veteran's (or, "old-timer's") enshrinement, but to keep things simple I dispensed with them.

Let's substitute the entire professional animation community for the Baseball Writers Association of America, including animation writers as well as artisans. To keep the number reasonable, the same ten-years-as-a-pro rule applies. (This leaves me out; I've only been writing since 1997. I obviously need more flexible rules!) Since I can't contact America's entire animation community and make a deadline, I give you my version of the ideal screening committee: [Mike Barrier](#), [Jerry Beck](#), [John Canemaker](#), [Karl Cohen](#), Leonard Maltin and [Charles Solomon](#). I am going to usurp their jobs just for this year and present...19 stellar nominees for the Animation Hall of Fame. If there is disagreement with my picks, well...there's always next year!



Other shoo-ins include Bob Clampett (left), shown here in the mid-1950s, and Bill Hanna, along with his partner Joseph Barbera.

FIRST BALLOT NOMINEES

Animation greats born mostly in this century who were not generally considered to be part of the "Golden Age" of theatrical cartoons. Their careers flourished from the mid-1950s on.

[Ralph Bakshi \(1938- \)](#) Animator, producer, director, studio chief and outrageous auteur. Bakshi launched the careers of many cartoon stars, revived the careers of others, and along the way made several feature films drenched in biting social commentary. Among the latter was *Fritz The Cat*, the first X-rated animated film in general release.

I PROPOSE PUTTING THE HALL OF FAME IN THE HEARTLAND — CHICAGO, WHICH ALSO CLAIMS THE BIRTHPLACE OF WALT DISNEY.

Don Bluth (1937-) Bluth could have had a brilliant career at Disney but walked out on principle, determined to do “classic” animation the way he felt it should be done. Although critical acclaim such as that lavished on Disney never quite came, Bluth did what he set out to do admirably. *The Land Before Time* series was his gift to millions of preschoolers; *The Secret of NIMH* was a promise he kept to audiences and himself.

Gene Deitch (1924-) If the UPA studio made stylized animation an art form, Gene Deitch made it accessible to the masses. Deitch was ahead of his time at Terrytoons, and he led even the studio’s lifetime stalwarts such as Jim Tyer and Connie Rasinski into uncharted territory. The oppressive studio management at Terrytoons couldn’t entirely quell the spirit that gave us *Tom Terrific*.

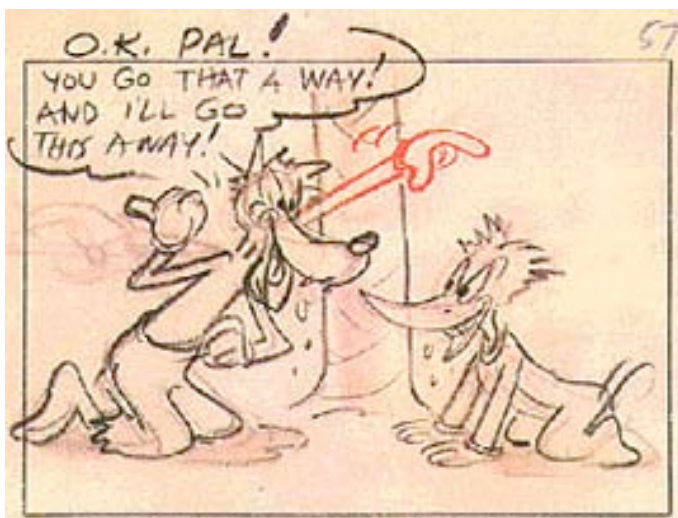
Ray Harryhausen (1920-) During his tutelage under stop-motion effects wizard Willis O’Brien, Harryhausen achieved such genius that he soon surpassed his master. The secret was Harryhausen’s ability to display emotional foibles and reactions in his fantastic stop-motion creatures. If *Jason and the Argonauts* doesn’t convince one that a magician is at work, then one simply doesn’t believe in magic.

John Hubley (1914-1977) Creative, contentious and controversial, John Hubley was the epitome of the temperamental artist — and what an artist he was. While in his role as the guiding spirit of the UPA studio, Hubley produced some of its most notable shorts. His release due to suspicions of Communist connections fazed Hubley not at all; he simply went on to become one of America’s most notable independents. The versatile Hubley could give audiences the sassy energy of *Rooty Toot Toot* or the gentle rhythms of *Moonbird*.

Jay Ward (1920-1989)/Bill Scott (1920-1985) The second team to make the Hall. Ward and Scott countered creaky animation and tiny budgets with wit, verve and stellar voice artists. *Rocky and Bullwinkle* set patterns for political and cultural satire that are still followed today. This hilarious duo followed up with characters like George of the Jungle and Super Chicken, raising animation to new heights of pure silliness. Even the characters they created for advertising, notably Cap’n Crunch, were probably strong enough to carry a series had Ward and Scott been so inclined.



Auteur Don Bluth (top photo) would be a first ballot nominee. Courtesy of Don Bluth’s Toon Talk. Gene Deitch (center photo - pointing) made stylized animation accessible to the masses. Here he’s seen with producer Zdenka Deitchova and background artist Miluse Hluchanovicova in 1976 at Kratky Film. Courtesy of and © Gene Deitch. Ray Harryhausen (bottom photo) created magic with his stop-motion work. Here he works on *The Clash of the Titans*. © Animation Art Gallery London.



John Hubley should be remembered for his independent spirit. This is a still from his and wife Faith Hubley's film *Everybody Rides the Carousel* (top image). © Pyramid Media. John Randolph Bray would be nominated for his pioneering inventions. This is a moment from his *Colonel Heeza Lair* (center image). Shamus Culhane could take on any challenge in animation. Here is a storyboard frame from his *Fairweather Friends* (bottom image) (Walter Lantz, 1946). Courtesy of Mark Kausler. © Walter Lantz Productions.

VETERANS BALLOT

Nominees who were contemporaries of the original eleven. They are nominated for significant contribution to the field and art of animation.

John Randolph Bray (1879-1978) Animation was a crude and painstaking process before J.R. Bray applied the lessons of industry and the production line to the infant art. Bray designed dozens of major and minor inventions to speed and improve the animation process, and without his imagination and practicality it is doubtful that animation could ever have become mass entertainment. Virtually every important patent that pushed animation into maturity was at one time or another in Bray's hands.

James (Shamus) Culhane (1908-1996) It would be easier by far to list the major animation studios where Culhane did not work at one time or another. This outstanding animator left the impressive stamp of his style and artistry across the broad history of American animation. Disney's first four features showcased his talents, but this was just one step in a career that included directing, producing, advertising, management and authorship of one of animation's most inclusive training manuals.

Norm Ferguson (1902-1957) "Fergie" was *not* one of Disney's Nine Old Men, nor was his draftsmanship exceptional. Ferguson, however, was perhaps the first at Disney to truly grasp animation as the "illusion of life." Ferguson's characters had weight, volume and shifted under the influence of gravity as no other animated figures had before. Ferguson assured his lasting fame when he began depicting the inner life of his characters by revealing their thoughts, personalities and individual foibles through his energetic animation.

DAVE FLEISCHER (1894-1979) It is doubtful that Dave Fleischer, credited with directing over 600 cartoons, truly directed them all. It is definite that the younger Fleischer brother possessed a talent for gags, timing and direction matched by few of his contemporaries. The Fleischer studios had many talented artists over the years, and nearly all of them worked under Dave's direction in some of the most successful series ever produced in animation. Betty Boop, Popeye and Superman were some of the indelible characters that came to life under his overall supervision.

Ub Iwerks (1901-1971) It has long been known that Iwerks was the designer and seminal animator of Mickey Mouse. History is finally acknowledging this great figure as an inventor, artist, special effects wizard and contributor to the artistic and technical perfection of the animated arts. Iwerks also had his own studio, contributing characters such as Flip the Frog and Willie Whopper to cartoon history.

Ollie Johnston (1912-)/Frank Thomas (1912-) No team in any Hall of Fame boasted batterymates like these, and it is impossible to consider one for nomination without the other. Friends since the 1930s, Thomas and Johnston defined Disney animation as much, and perhaps more, than any other talent at the studio. Teammate and confidante Johnston worked side by side with Thomas on many of the same films, and complemented his friend perfectly: Whether it was Johnston's Thumper and Thomas' Bambi or Thomas' Captain Hook and Johnston's Mr. Smee, the team-up was always spectacular. Frank Thomas' clarity at depicting melancholy, pathos and heartbreak brought unprecedented depth to animated films; he was equally adept at portraying exuberance, innocence and joy. If you wept with the dwarfs at Snow White's demise, watched Bambi explore his world for the first time, or sighed at Lady and the Tramp kissing over a strand of spaghetti you were touched by some of Thomas' special magic. Johnston, always an expressive animator, actually got stronger as the years went on; his work in *Fantasia*, *101 Dalmatians* and *Pinocchio* were stunning enough, but Johnston continued to hit his stride with creations such as Baloo the bear and Rufus the cat. Thomas and Johnston animated together, published together and triumphed together; their influences are still strong in Disney animation to this day.

Ward Kimball (1914-2002) Another of Disney's legendary Nine Old Men, Kimball animated on the wild side and enjoyed a creative freedom at Disney that few others could claim. There was a good reason for this: Kimball's manic animation was technically perfect, exquisitely drawn and wildly exuberant, even as it flew in the face of Disney realism. Kimball was the creator of Jiminy Cricket, the animator of the surrealistic title song in *The Three Caballeros*, and an Oscar winner for *It's Tough To Be A Bird*, a Disney short animated in UPA style. Only Kimball could have pulled it off.

Robert McKimson (1910-1977) Perhaps Warner Bros.' finest draftsman and fussiest animator, every character McKimson drew looked uncannily *right*. This ability



Ub Iwerks was seminal to the creation of Micky Mouse. Here, he's seen with Walt Disney (left), circa 1932. © Disney Enterprises, Inc.

led to McKimson designing most of the studio's model sheets and the Warner house style was strongly set by his fine hand. McKimson also left his stamp on that venerable studio as a director for three decades. Still, he found the time to create characters of his own; Foghorn Leghorn and the indecipherable Tasmanian Devil are just two of the stars that flowed from his intuitive pen.

Myron (Grim) Natwick (1890-1990) One of the country's earliest animators, Natwick enjoyed challenges from which other animators shied away. His ability to animate the female form turned Betty Boop into a major cartoon star at Fleischer. Walt Disney was quick to nab "Grimmy" when it was time to consider seriously how Snow White would be designed and brought to life. Other characters animated by Grim included Woody Woodpecker, Flip the Frog, Popeye and Andy Panda. In all, Natwick's facile pen traced memorable characters for over sixty years at eight major studios; he worked beside every veteran nominee with the exception of J.R. Bray.

Paul Terry (1887-1971) Terry's early cartoons were the envy of Walt Disney. By the mid-1920s, when most studios were struggling to produce a single cartoon on time, Terry's studio was cranking them out one per week. Terry's cartoons were always an uneasy balance between economy and creativity with the latter often the loser, but characters such as Mighty Mouse, Heckle and Jeckle, and Gandy Goose still became animated stars despite formulaic scripts. Terry was the first theatrical producer to sell his cartoon backlog to the television market, yet another example of the sharp business sense that marked his entire career.

SINCE I CAN'T CONTACT AMERICA'S ENTIRE ANIMATION COMMUNITY AND MAKE A DEADLINE, I GIVE YOU MY VERSION OF THE IDEAL SCREENING COMMITTEE...

Vladimir (Bill) Tytla (1904-1968) Tytla was known as a true artist even among his awesome peers. Tytla's knowledge of anatomy, movement and perspective was matched only by his ability to make his characters act with a startling inner life. An intense and emotional perfectionist, Tytla brought a single-minded fanaticism to his craft, making history along the way. Tytla's rendering of the Seven Dwarfs made one believe that they actually existed outside of the screen. Tytla also animated the demonic Tchernobog in *Fantasia* and, in a signature moment, the melancholy trunk-touching scene in *Dumbo*. Once separated from Disney, Tytla wandered to lesser studios, a misplaced giant. His legacy, however, lives on in some of the fin-

est animation ever done at Disney...or anywhere else.

And there you have it: The first round of nominees. Future first ballot and veteran choices are now up to the animation community. Glen Keane? Eric Goldberg? John Pomeroy? [John Kricfalusi](#)? Bill Nolan? Milt Kahl? Art Babbitt? Raoul Barre? I leave it in your hands. See you at the Grand Opening in Chicago. ■

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

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BOOK EXCERPT

UPA: Back to the Future

by Gene Deitch

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

CLEARLY, THE LURE OF UPA AGAIN HAD ME DAZZLED. I took another chance. By 1951 UPA had achieved a tremendous artistic and critical — if not financial — success. Tee Hee had replaced me as Bobe Cannon's designer, and together they had come up with one great film after another, exploring new graphic and story-telling ideas. Bill Hurtz had designed Gerald McBoing Boing and directed James Thurber's story, *The Unicorn in The Garden*. Hub had launched Mister Magoo and directed the landmark classic, *Rooty Toot Toot*. UPA was now Big Time.

Within two years, UPA had come back to me. Steve Bosustow had decided to open a branch in New York, 3,000 miles closer to Madison Avenue, to be able to latch on to the blooming market of television commercials. He flew to see me in Detroit, and made me the offer that indicated I was no longer an apprentice. I was so thrilled to be called back to the fold, and to be sent to New York, that I agreed to back off from my so recently acquired director status, and to start as production designer in the founding cadre of UPA-NY.

We came in with a hail of publicity, and were expected to lure the Madison Avenue bucks on the basis of the UPA name, which by now had sparkles shooting off it in all directions. We opened with a very nice bang.

There may have been a reason why Steve sent Abe to New York that I didn't know about, my having been off in the Detroit outlands for two years. But from the very beginning, Steve began to undermine Abe's position. It was uncomfortable, to say the least. Steve began to criticize everything Abe did, and after only a few months he was out. Steve named me Creative Director, and, of course, I didn't fight it. I enjoyed a real blossoming.

WE UPA-NEW YORKERS QUICKLY BECAME THE DARLINGS OF THE MADISON AVENUE AD AGENCIES ...



Abe Liss, director; Gene Deitch, production designer; Grim Natwick, animator; Don McCormick, assistant animator; Ted Bethune, background painter; Barbara Baldwin, ink & paint supervisor; Wardell Gaynor, camera; Stan Russell, production manager; Ed Cullen, business manager; Hedy Cramer, secretary. (Not all are in the above photo).

Ted Bethune, the background painter, was a Canadian, and wanted to go home. That presented us with our first crisis, and I got on the phone several times with Steve, imploring him to send me a replacement. Orders were coming in, and we didn't have a background artist. As my desperation mounted, Steve put his hand over the mouthpiece, but I could still hear him ask someone, "Can you paint backgrounds?"

"Uh-oh," I thought. "What are we going to get?" Shortly, a handsome 20-year-old with bright black eyes showed up. He painted the worst backgrounds I had seen up to that time. "What else can you do?" I asked plaintively. I could not throw back a fellow Steve had sent me.

"I have this reel I animated when I was 18," he said. I led him into the projection room with no real hope. The animation was sensational. Here was a natural born animator! He became my star. He was Duane Crowther.

I solved the background and design problem by getting permission to call in Cliff Roberts and Fred Crippen from Detroit. I began to have a group of talented people around me that made me look very good. Here is how our staff developed, with the inevitable departures and arrivals:

Barbara Baldwin, ink & paint supervisor
Howard Beckerman, assistant animator
Bill Bernal, sales and story collaboration
Peter Cooper, camera
Hedy Cramer, secretary/receptionist
Ed Cullen, business manager
Fred Crippen, animator and designer
Duane Crowther, animator
Tisa David, assistant animator
Gene Deitch, creative director
Ken Drake, production manager
Marvin Friedman, design and layout
Steve Frankfort, designer
Lu (Lucifer) Guarnier, animator
Wardell Gaynor, cameraman
Jack Goodford, designer and director
Chris Ishii, designer and director
Edna Jacobs, inker & painter (and studio sex-object)
Irwin La Pointe, incredibly eager and efficient production assistant
Don McCormick, studio manager (originally an assistant animator)
Grim Natwick, animator
Cliff Roberts, designer
Pat Ward, ink & paint supervisor
Bard Wighorn, animator

Even George Dunning worked with us for a while before taking off for London.

My sincere apologies to any I have forgotten, and my great thanks to Marvin Friedman, whose sharp memory reminded me of some on the above list. He even remembers my garish plaid shirts, and the exact way I hired him. (The dummy asked for the minimum wage!) He didn't mention my daring and ridiculous attempt to raise a beard. It just wasn't done in those days, and nearly cost me some clients!

Marvin also remembers the surprise visit to our studio of Ernie Kovacs, the great conceptual genius of early comedy television. We had a large UPA logo in our window facing 5th Avenue, that attracted Kovacs' attention, and he was waving at us. Marvin signaled him to come up, and he did, giving one and all a great kick.

Meeting and working with the great Grim Natwick was a revelation. I had been previously unaware of his existence, and was charmed by his laconic manner and amazing stories. Just now, after the recession in 2001, I'm reminded of something Grim Natwick told me when I first got to know him at UPA-New York in 1951. He said, "In the early '30s I was making really good money in animation, and I didn't even know there

was a Depression on until my family began writing me and asking for money!" Of course. During the Depression of the 1930s people's only escape from the grim reality was going to the movies. Times were bad, but animators had work!

We UPA-New Yorkers quickly became the darlings of the Madison Avenue ad agencies, and created some of the early classic TV commercials.

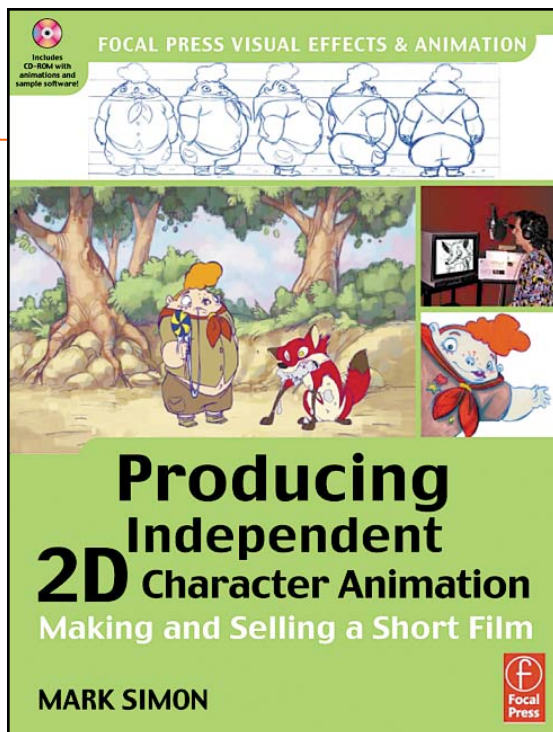
To [read](#) more about the production of these classics visit Gene's online book now. ■

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, "Bratri v Triku."



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

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All images are from *Producing Independent 2D Character Animation: Making and Selling a Short Film* by Mark Simon. Reprinted with permission.

BOOK EXCERPT

Concept to Creation: *Crewing Up*

by Mark Simon

This is the third in a series of 12 excerpts from Mark Simon's book, *Producing Independent 2D Character Animation: Making and Selling a Short Film*. This book is a full-color concept-to-pitch guide that teaches animators, students and small studios the art and business of producing short, cel animation films. Animation producer Mark Simon has detailed the process in an accessible how-to manner using his award-winning series, *Timmy's Lessons In Nature*, as a guide. This 432-page book contains over 600 full-color images, interviews and a CD-Rom containing sample animation, animatics and sample softwares described in the text.

ONE OF THE TRICKS TO DOING INDEPENDENT PRODUCTION is attracting enough people to help. The other trick is completing all the work and accomplishing the desired quality. This is where the producer has to be both a salesperson and a motivational speaker. You need to be able to inspire people to believe in your vision and to feel that they are an important part of the project. People tend to do better and more creative work when they feel responsible and have a sense of pride in what they are doing.

Medium to large animation houses have staffers who can work on in-house projects between paying jobs. It often inspires staffers if you allow them the freedom to work on their own projects at work, as long as it doesn't interfere with delivering to clients. Smaller animation houses and independents do not have this luxury though, and they will have to make deals with outside artists to get the project done. Even larger companies may not have staff available for every aspect of production, such as custom music and sound effects.

Audio and music are extremely important in helping make animations come to life. You can produce these yourself with available programs, or you can try to make a deal with a person or company to help you out.



CREATE A WIN-WIN

Every negotiation should be a win-win situation. If everyone benefits, the final product will always be better and more fun to work on. Every project has different benefits it can offer people, and each person may have different motivations. It's up to the producer to figure all that out and make it work. Following are general motivations to entice people to work on your project:

- Pay them. (Everyone likes this choice the best.)
- Give a crew person his first stab at a higher position to help his career. People will often offer their time for free or a deeply discounted rate to further their career.
- Use the project as a training ground for someone who hasn't worked professionally in the field and needs experience. Interns from schools fit this category. (Figure 13-2)
- Give them, in writing, a percentage of the project that is equal to the amount of their invested time. Their percentage is calculated from a complete budget; divide the dollar amount of their invested time and resources by the total budget to get their percentage. (This is back-end participation with ownership.)
- Give them, in writing, a percentage of income from the project. This can either be open-ended or up to a certain amount. (This is also back-end participation, but without ownership.)
- Partner with other people who also need to prove themselves and who have a desire to build a portfolio. Share the project and profits as needed. Just make sure everything is in writing.

T.J.'s designs and drawings were inspirational and instrumental in getting artist help on the *Timmy* series. Enoc Castaneda (right) was an intern on one *Timmy* episode, but was subsequently hired by A&S Animation to work on other projects.



The remaining chapter contains more crewing contract offers/options and explanations of how the crew was assembled for Timmy's Lessons In Nature, Lesson 3. To learn about other topics, check out Producing Independent 2D Character Animation, published by Focal Press. It can be purchased at any bookstore or [online](#). ■

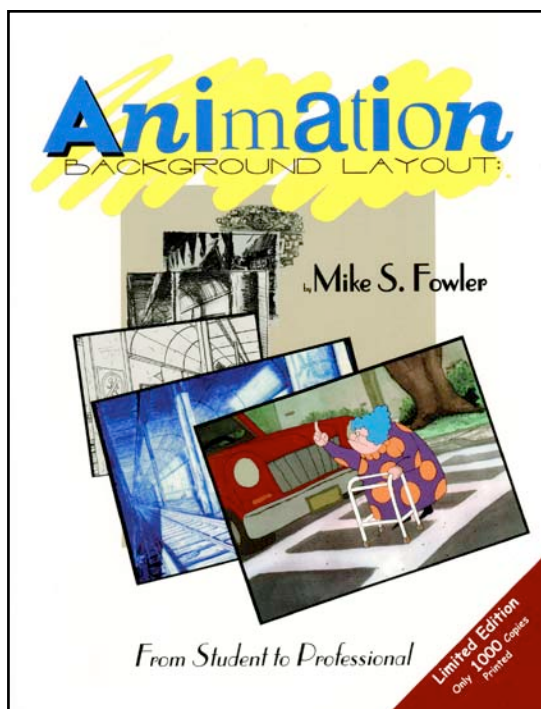
Producing Independent 2D Character Animation: Making and Selling a Short Film by Mark Simon. Burlington, Massachusetts: Focal Press, 2003. 432 pages. ISBN: 0-240-80513-5.

MARK SIMON founded and owns A&S Animation, Inc., an award-winning cel animation house in Florida, which develops and produces character animation for commercials, TV, training videos and the Web. He also owns Animatics & Storyboards, Inc., the largest storyboard house in the southern United States, which has provided work on over 1,200 productions. Mark's accomplishments include owning an award-winning advertising firm, being a syndicated cartoonist, production designer of film, TV and animations, and writing entertainment industry books and lecturing on both animation and storyboards. Having won over 30 animation awards for his efforts, Mark has directed Timmy's Lessons In Nature (which he sold as a TV series), My Wife Is Pregnant, numerous commercials, training videos and television series special effects. Read more about [A&S Animation](#) and the author.

PERSPECTIVE TUTORIAL

Animation Layout: Getting Perspective

by Mike S. Fowler



This month AWN begins a new series of excerpts from *Animation Background Layout: From Student to Professional*. Author Mike S. Fowler has especially adapted his book for our readers. In this essential and educational easy-to-follow guide, Mike, an animation layout artist, supervisor and college instructor illustrates the purpose and function of animation layout. He creates an easy to follow format with so much information and diagrams, people of any animation skill level should be able to learn something new. Whether an inquisitive beginner, a college animation student who wants to better prepare for a job, or an animation industry professional, everyone can learn something new in this book.

INTRODUCTION

THE REASON BEHIND CREATING *ANIMATION BACKGROUND Layout: From Student to Professional* stemmed from the frustration I had as an animation student and now, as an instructor. This frustration was encountered when searching for extra layout material over and above the lengthy illustrations and classroom lecture notes.

There are countless books on perspective, tonal studies, and large architectural manifests that describe the process to become a superior draftsman. There are also many powerful animation books that eloquently explain character creation and the importance of the animation clean up line. Some books, such as *The Illusion of Life* and the recent Richard Williams' *The Animator's Survival Guide*, have become industry appointed bibles of the animation art form, but what about information about animation background layouts?

Many of my students that arrive on the first day of the layout class only know of layout as something to do with advertising or publishing, with little idea of what it actually entails.

They ask, "Who creates the background drawings? Why is it created? Do I need to know how to use

MY INTENTION WAS TO CREATE AN ANIMATION LAYOUT BOOK THAT TAUGHT, EXPLORED THE RATIONALE BEHIND VARIOUS FUNCTIONS OF LAYOUT AND DEMONSTRATED THESE PRINCIPLES WITH CLEAR VISUAL EXAMPLES.

THERE IS NO ONE WAY TO CREATE PERSPECTIVE. TRY LOOKING UP THE WORD PERSPECTIVE ON THE INTERNET, IN A BOOKSTORE OR IN A LIBRARY. THE NUMBER OF BOOKS AND ARTICLES ARE SIMPLY STAGGERING.

perspective? What is staging? Do layout artists make up whatever they want for the background? What is a model sheet or a location design? Do layout artists only draw the background? Are there any technical things to know about in layout? Who does the painting of the backgrounds? How does character animation get put over top of the background? Who gets the drawing after the layout department? What is the difference between animation background layout verses character layout?"

Like most tasks in life, we learn short cuts or tricks to complete the job more efficiently and quicker than others. This is what makes each of us unique or even more marketable than the next person in the workforce. Is it wrong? I am just as guilty as the next person. Layout, animation and even teaching are no exceptions to this safe keeping of knowledge.

Recently I attended the internationally known "Great Teacher's Seminar" that was hosted by its founder, David Gottshall. He spoke about sharing our ideas with our peers. Sharing information to solve, understand and even enlighten each other to the fact that as an individual we know much, but as a group our collective talent is endless. Then he said jokingly about sharing this knowledge, "There are two rules. The first rule is: Tell them all that has to be told, but don't tell them everything."

Throughout this book I have called upon the experience and knowledge of my peers — layout artist-professionals from animation studios around the world, and my own diverse background as a layout artist, supervisor and instructor of animation and layout.

My intention was to create an animation layout book that taught, explored the rationale behind various functions of layout and demonstrated these principles with clear visual examples. After all, I wanted a layout book that I could use as a support tool for my own college animation classes.

For this reason, *Animation Background Layout: From Student to Professional*, was designed, chapter-by-chapter, to sequentially build on fundamental components of layout with easy to follow step-by-step examples and diagrams. Many answers to how, what, who and why layout is created are covered by using variations of animation studio techniques and guidelines. Personal insight and relevant tales of the

trade add to the direction of this book. From start to finish, my intent is to give you, the student and professional alike, the opportunity to experience animation background layout.

CHAPTER 1: INTRO TO PERSPECTIVE

I have seen many students over the years, including myself, struggle with complicated methods and various approaches to perspective that lose all artistic design. I have also seen perspective demonstrated in ways that can never be recreated accurately time after time due to abstract instruction. There is no one way to create perspective. Try looking up the word perspective on the Internet, in a bookstore or in a library. The number of books and articles are simply staggering.

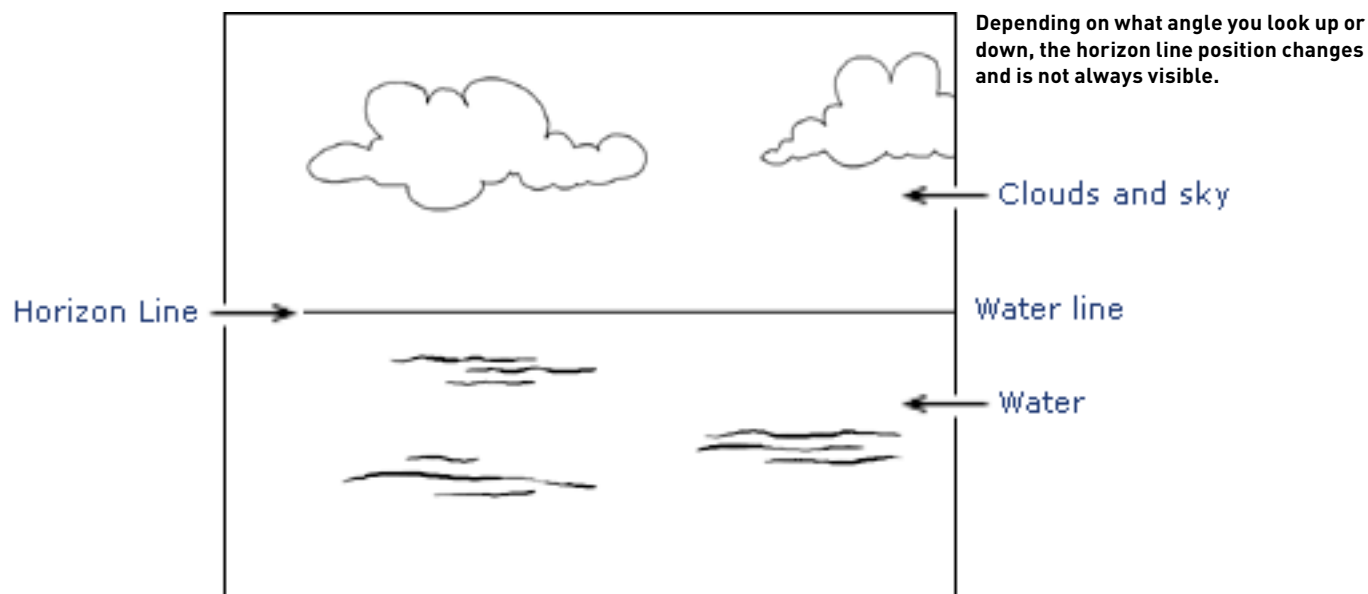
As an animation instructor, I directly and indirectly teach perspective daily, using a combination of several techniques and methods. Artists must be skilled and proficient in perspective, no matter what medium they choose to work with. Perspective has become second nature to me, and it took some time to figure out a suitable approach to explaining it for this book. Yes, there are computer backgrounds, but they are based upon hand drawn conceptual artwork.

This section will focus on a brief review of rudimentary perspective concepts through a few practical exercises and applications. I suggest you take your time to draw each portion of this chapter not once, but many times. Animation is based on understanding perspective. Practice, practice then practice again.

WHAT IS PERSPECTIVE?

Perspective is a theory of drawing, which allows the artist a way to graphically depict three-dimensional objects on paper or other media, as they exist in space. The rules of perspective are many, but are based on the assumption that a single eye, from a fixed point of view, is looking at the subject being drawn. How each object is viewed in relation to other objects will determine a sense of depth, size relationship and false believability that the artwork is real or familiar to what we see in reality.

A three dimensional object is anything that has length, width and height. To avoid listing most everything in the world, a few examples include: a box, a car, an apple, a tree, a building, a person and a book.



Each of the following perspective terms used in this book is broken down to their base definition. They are further explained with a single visual or a step-by-step breakdown to facilitate understanding of the term. So, let us begin!

Many students tend to draw the horizon line at either the exact middle or at a high angle. The trick is to see this in your drawings and consciously lower the horizon line. Look at your own drawings to see how you draw.

Horizon Line (HL): Is the continuous distant line at which the eye can see no further. A great example is standing on the shoreline looking out into the distance where the water line touches the sky. This line is the horizon line.

Below are five examples of various horizon lines. (HL)

Eye Level: The level at which you are standing and looking at an object is known as the eye level. A baby will see everything from the floor upward. A six-foot adult will see the same room from a higher point of view. A bird looking down on a city street will have a much greater eye level.



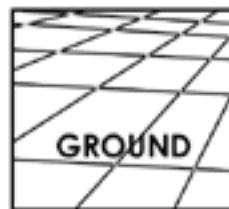
Very Low HL
Up Shot



High HL
High Angle



Low HL
Low Angle



Very High HL
Down Shot

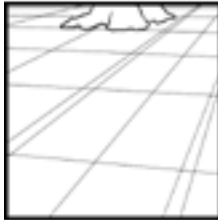


Mid HL - Normal Angle

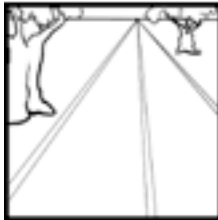
Generally speaking the horizon line is not placed exactly in the middle of the picture. This looks too even and unnatural.



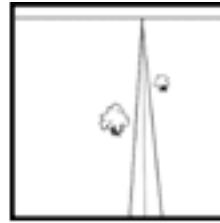
From where we are standing, we see the road as we would normally in our daily lives.



While standing, look down at the road near your feet. Where is the horizon line?



Look up slightly and notice that the horizon line is now within our point of view.



The same effect is created when looking down from an airplane. Our point of view is from the airplane, but our eye level shows more ground than sky.



Again, safely check for traffic then sit on the road. From where we are sitting, at a lower point of view, we see more sky than ground. The horizon line or our eye level, is very low to the ground.

Eye level and the horizon line are tied directly together. By changing the up or down level of where you look, the horizon line changes within our field of vision or picture.

A long, flat, country road is a good example. Safely, we stand in the middle of the road and look off into the distance where the road seems to vanish into a point (Vanishing Point) on the horizon line.

Point of View (P.O.V.): Can be described as what you see from where you are looking. I cannot get any simpler than that.

Station Point: This is the point from which the viewer is looking from.

Line of Sight: Without going in to unnecessary detail, think of the line of sight as what can be seen from your point of view.

Picture Plane: This is similar to the Field of Vision. However, the images we are looking at have been cropped or adjusted so that only a small portion can be seen. Look through the viewfinder of any still camera to find that only a portion of the world can be seen at any one time. By moving closer or farther away, more or less of the view can be seen through the viewfinder.

Field of Vision: Similar to the Picture Plane, the field of vision is all that can be seen from the viewer's eyes while standing at a stationary point.

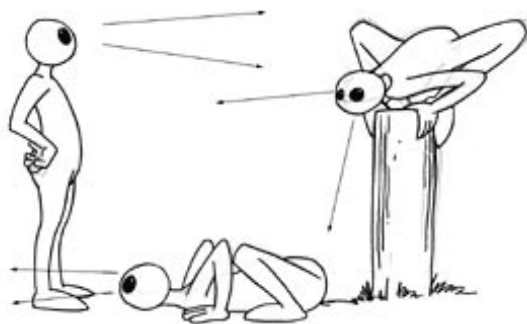
Convergence: Is the point in which all lines meet at one point in space. It is like the row of subway support beams or a subway track that extends far off into the distance. All the lines appear to meet together at the one distance vanishing point.

Diminution: This is the act of decreasing or reducing some things as they are placed in perspective.

Using the telephone pole example above that shows the poles converging to a vanishing point in the distance, visually each pole has the appearance of getting smaller. In reality, each pole is exactly the same size. These poles converging to a distant vanishing point on the horizon line are at equal distances from each other. The illusion is created. Perspective creates the diminution.

Vanishing Point (VP): This is a point where the edges of an object all seem to line up in the distance.

A drawing may have only one VP or it may contain several vanishing points depending on the complexity of the subject, which are almost always placed on the ho-



hizon line. An off-horizon line vanishing point is used to define planes such as stairs, hills, angles or roofs.

Returning to the vanishing point example of a continual line of telephone poles across the flat landscape, let us start with an exercise. From our stationary point of view, the telephone poles seem to get smaller and smaller until they vanish at one point along the horizon line as we discovered earlier. Those poles were randomly placed along the perspective lines.

How do we make the telephone poles look to be at an equal distance from each other?

Start by drawing a horizon line with a vanishing point near half-way. Draw one large stick that rises over and under the horizon line at a 90-degree angle. Use a straight edge to draw a line from the top and bottom of the stick back to the vanishing point.

Using these perspective lines as a guide, draw another stick parallel to the first at a distance you think the poles should be apart.

Find the center of the first stick and place a dot there. From this new point draw a perspective line back to the vanishing point. Now we have all the information needed to create evenly spaced sticks. From the top of the closest stick draw a straight line through the center of the other stick and continue until the line reaches the bottom perspective line.

We can now create a new stick from the bottom point that rises up, parallel to the other two, until it reaches the top perspective guideline.

Repeat this using the second stick as the starting point for the line and continue until the desired amount of sticks are drawn.

Try this. Turn this example sideways to create a foundation for railroad tracks. This method of finding exact distances can be used for many applications including windows, chairs and rows of anything.

FORM & STRUCTURE

I once did a team teaching session with a fellow animator, instructor and friend of mine, Rick Knowles, to a large group of non-animation college instructors about form and structure.

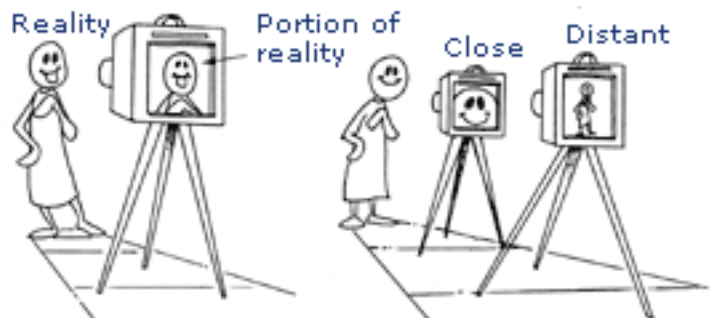
Our obstacle was to explain to the group what form and structure were, and why they were necessary in animation. For us, this knowledge is second nature and it took some time to agree on the easiest way to describe Form and Structure. We came up with this solution.

Every object that exists in space has form. Everything from bugs to buildings, mountains to motorbikes, oceanliners to apples, has form.

Form is something that we can touch and feel. Instinctively we know that in order to pick up an object, such as a ball, we look at it first and perceive that the ball is round. Our brain confirms what we see by comparison to experience, and now belief is introduced when our hand can wrap around this form.

Before we touch the ball we also visually sense that it has mass (bulk) and substance. As we grab on to the ball we confirm this knowledge. This bulk and substance is known as structure.

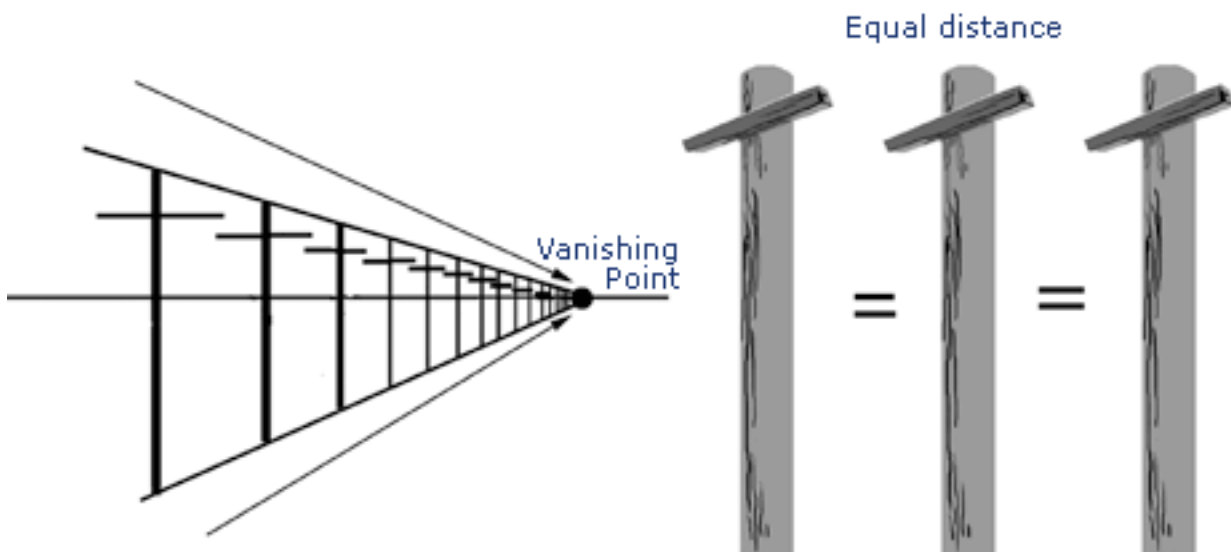
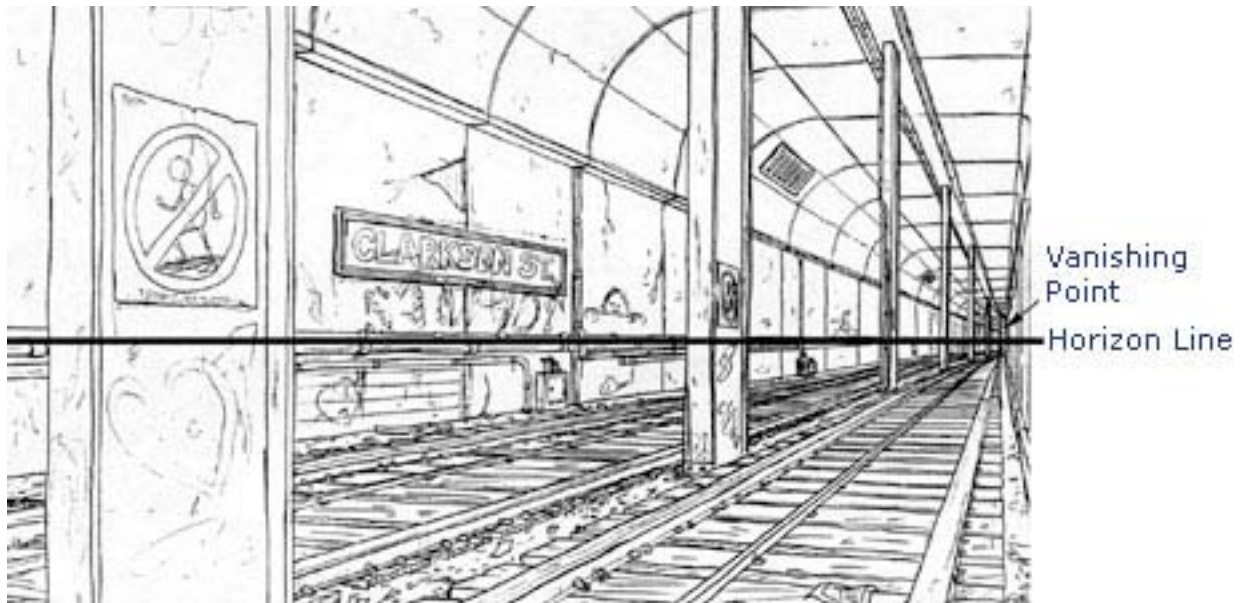
In order to draw any object that has the illusion of real form on paper, a sense of depth must be added to the object's appearance. Since the piece of paper is flat and two-dimensional, the artist must understand what the internal structure is that makes up that object and apply perspective to create believable three-dimensional forms.



If we physically build a box, we must know the length of the side, the width of the base and the height of the box to construct it. When we draw a box we can easily draw the width and length to create a flat square.

By adding perspective to the square we create the third dimension, depth, and the illusion of form is created. This is how a square becomes a cube and a circle becomes a sphere.

A novice artist attempting to draw an object such as a vehicle will often tend to draw the details of the car first, as this is the first thing they see. An experienced artist looks through all the details to the object's basic building blocks or basic forms first. Once the structure of the drawing is in place, the artist draws the detail to completion.



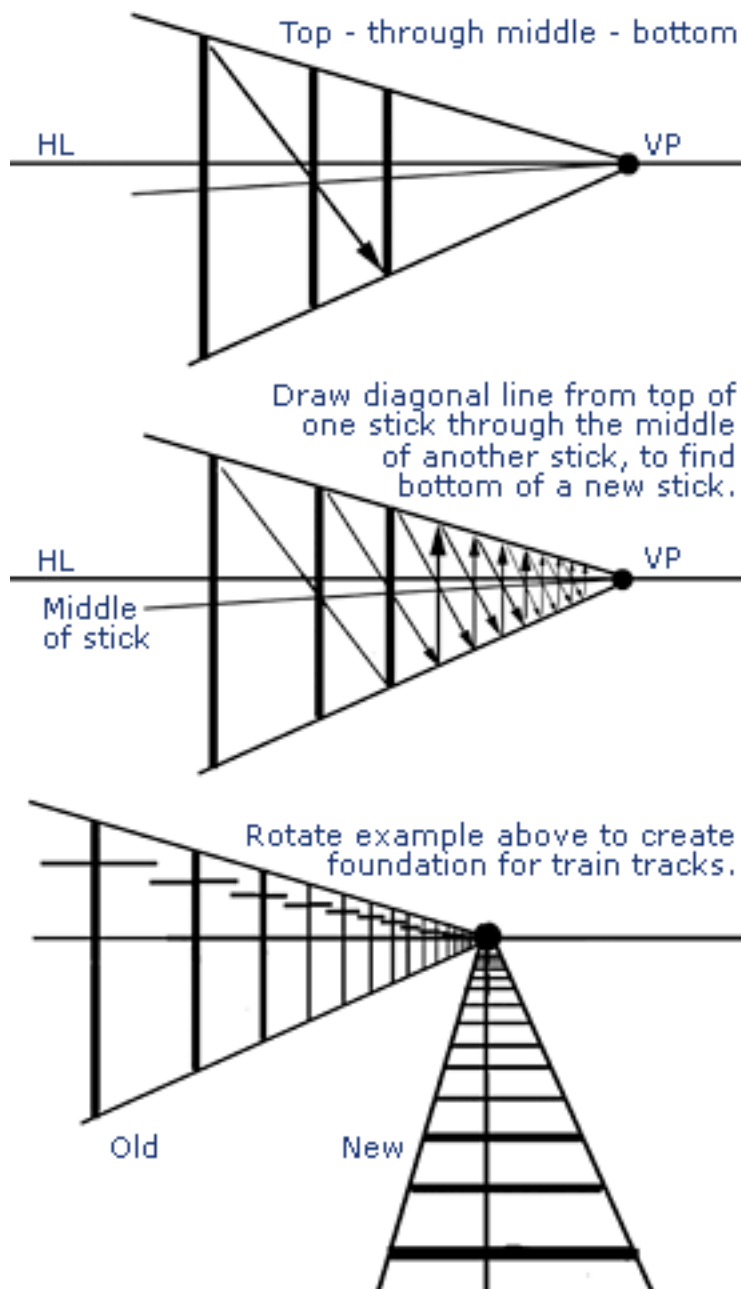
Poles converging to a distant vanishing point on the horizon line. As shown here, the telephone poles are equally distanced apart. Perspective creates the diminution.

One-Point (Parallel) Perspective: Combining most of the mentioned terms, the one-point parallel perspective drawing consists of a horizon line, one vanishing point placed on the horizon line and the understanding that all horizontal lines drawn will be parallel to each other.

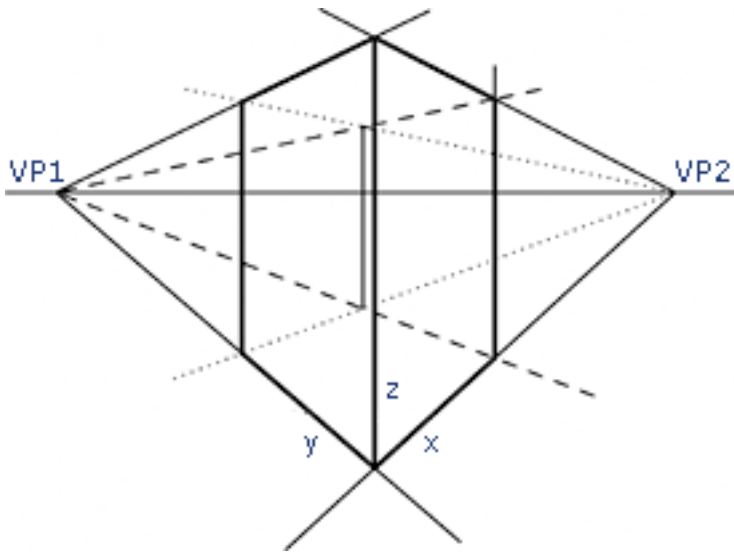
The X, Y, Z lines are axis lines. It is important to note, the x-axis line is parallel to the horizon line. The z-axis is at a 90-degree angle to the x-axis line.

Now, converging at a single vanishing point on the horizon line is the y-axis lines. This arrangement of axis ONLY works for one point perspective.

THE RULES OF PERSPECTIVE ARE MANY, BUT ARE BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT A SINGLE EYE, FROM A FIXED POINT OF VIEW, IS LOOKING AT THE SUBJECT BEING DRAWN.



Author Mike S. Fowler (left) and Rick Knowles review second-year student animation material. February 2002.



Two-Point (Angular) Perspective: The two-point perspective drawing consists of two vanishing points that are both situated on a horizon line. The further apart these vanishing points are on the horizon line, the more relaxed or realistic the perspective will visually seem. In contrast, the closer that one VP is to another VP on the horizon line, the more squashed or forced the perspective will become. Understand that a cube is created of parallel lines for its height, width and length. Perspective will not physically change this; only visually will it seem to change.

The two-point perspective drawing has the y-axis lines converging to one vanishing point and all the x-axis lines converging to the other. The example below demonstrates the forced and distorted creation of a cube when the vanishing points are placed closer together.

Three Point (Oblique) Perspective: An example of where this would be utilized is the view as you look up at large buildings, or look down from the fortieth floor balcony window to see the street below. The three-point perspective drawing consists of two vanishing points that are both situated on a horizon line while a third point is introduced far above or below the horizon line.

Be patient when drawing objects in three-point perspective. Understand that the third vanishing point is located off the horizon line and now becomes the z-axis. All lines on the z-axis converge towards this vanishing point.

Beware of forced or distorted products that occur when drawing an object outside of the vanishing point triangle. Plan your design well!

Incline Plane: Similar to three-point perspective, incline planes are areas which slant to or away from the main perspective grid by utilizing a third vanishing point directly above one main VP.

The name varies, but the reason behind incline planes remains the same. Incline planes are used to develop believable steps, stairs and roads to name a few items. The best example of the incline plane is the roof of a house.

A third vanishing point and application of the equal spacing knowledge can be used to create hills, man-made ramps and even stairs.



Foreshortening: Foreshortening is taking an object and placing it in two- or more-point perspective while bringing a part of the object close to the viewer's eye.

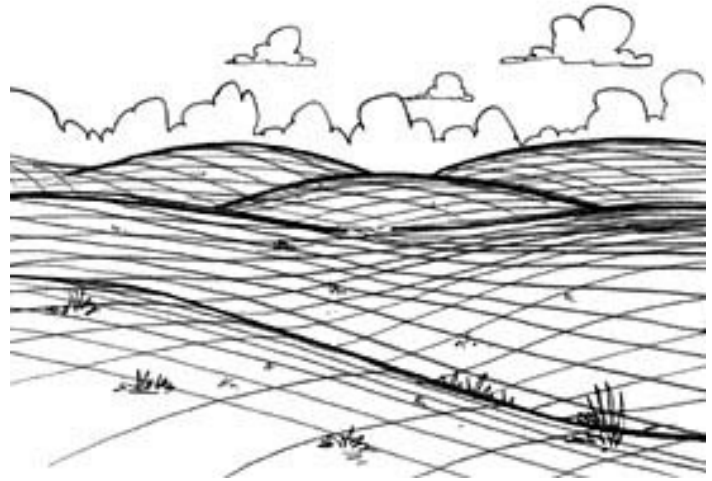
An example would be a person sitting in a chair. From a normal standing position you perceive the person to be normal-looking. If you were to lay on the floor with your head close to the feet of the same person in a chair and look up, what you will see is a distorted view of the person. The size of the person has not changed but your point of view sees the foot being out of proportion compared to the rest of the body.

By adding foreshortening to the drawing an atmosphere of suspense, horror or even fear is created. Try drawing other household items with foreshortening in your sketchbook!

Ground Line: The ground line is not always the same as the horizon line. There are conflicting definitions of what this actually is, or is not, but it tends to be described as the flow or lay of the distant environment edge.

Perspective Grid or Ground Plane: With the vanishing points established on the horizon line, lines can be drawn on the ground back to these points to show the contours of the environment. In animation, this is a very crucial stage of background and character layout setup to ensure the characters stay solidly on the ground.

When drawn correctly, this ground plane helps to define form. A hill is shown as a hill and not a flat surface.



EXERCISES FOR INTRO TO PERSPECTIVE

Try these exercises for creating perspective drawings. Below are four exercises based on the material just discussed. Avoid small drawings at this stage of learning. Use and fill an 8 1/2" by 11" sheet of paper. Once you have completed these exercises, do them again. Practice often.

1. Create a drawing that has a horizon line at a low angle. Using one-point perspective with the vanishing point placed off centered on the horizon line, draw a city street. Only include buildings and the street below.
2. Using a horizon line at a mid-angle create a country road drawing that has a row of evenly spaced hydro poles just off to the left-hand side. Allow both the road and hydro pole to converge at one vanishing point on the horizon line.
3. With a high horizon line, create five two-point boxes anywhere in the drawing. Try to vary where the boxes are positioned in the drawing.
4. Create a drawing that has a normal angle horizon line and uses two-point perspective. Tape two pieces of paper together lengthwise. Draw the horizon line across both pages and place a VP at each end of the line.

ONLY THE PAPER ON THE RIGHT SIDE WILL BE DRAWN ON AFTER THIS POINT.

5. In the center of the right-hand side paper, create a three-inch box using both VPs. Build on to this box as if it were a set of wooden toy blocks using a minimum of 10 different sized two-point boxes to create an original composition. ■

Animation Background Layout: From Student to Professional by Mike S. Fowler. Caistor Center, Ontario, Canada: Fowler Cartooning Ink, 2002. 168 pages. ISBN: 0-9731602-0-9. \$35.00. Buy it [online](#) at Mike's website.

MIKE S. FOWLER has a passion for art and animation. His animation abilities as a supervisor, layout artist, poser, storyboard artist and fun pack designer are showcased in numerous shows. Credits include: Bob and Margaret, Ned's Newt, Hoze Houndz, Elliot the Moose, Little Bear, Eckhart, Maggie and the Ferocious Beast, Rainbow Fish, Anthony Ant, Franklin, Redwall, Ace Ventura, and Blazing Dragons to name a few.

In addition to being a published political and panel cartoonist, graphic artist, and classical animation graduate from Sheridan College, Mike has supervised various Flash Web series, promotional bumpers for major television shows and segments of an educational Flash-HTML based University learning program for U.S. and Canadian markets.

Mike has developed from concept through to production, several critically acclaimed montage/demonstration films, artists' showcase books and educational promotional material.

Fowler's educational background covers Graphic and Advertising Design at Conestoga College, diploma in Classical Animation from Sheridan College, Management and Human Relations at Conestoga and Sheridan Colleges, and a Certificate in Adult Education from the University of New Brunswick. As the lead animation college instructor, he teaches animation, layout, storyboard, Flash and computer graphics.

With the release of his first book, *Animation Background Layout: From Student to Professional*, Mike adds being a published author to his list of achievements. Read [more](#) about Mike.

CAREER COACH

Learn Proper Netiquette

by Pamela Kliebrink Thompson



EVERYONE KNOWS THE INTERNET IS A GREAT RESOURCE FOR finding work. But how you behave on the Internet and how you use it can have a profound effect on how effective your search will be.

MAKE IT EASY

You'll have an easier time finding work if you keep this rule in mind: Make it easy on the employer. Keep in mind that he/she is busy and don't make him/her do extra work to hire you.

Be careful about your communication with employers. Check the spelling of any e-mail you send and make sure the content is what you want employers to receive. Keep your communication brief and to the point so it doesn't take forever to read. If you are emailing a question or request, put enough information in your e-mail so your question can be answered.

YOU'LL HAVE AN EASIER TIME FINDING WORK IF YOU KEEP THIS RULE IN MIND: MAKE IT EASY ON THE EMPLOYER.

GETTING THE RESUME OUT

If you submit a resume over the Internet, paste it in the body of your e-mail. Do not send it as an attachment as many companies do not open or accept attachments. You can include your Website address as well, but don't expect anyone to go to your Website to retrieve your resume information. If you post your resume to a Website, be sure an e-mail address is included as well as your name.

If you send a resume via e-mail, be sure it has your complete contact information on it. Don't assume the employer will copy your email address from his inbox into the body of your resume. If you send a resume and paste it in the message, be sure it is readable before you send it.

Don't expect employers to respond to your posted resume. They may contact you if your qualifications match their requirements. You should not rely on the Internet as the sole source for job leads or applications.

Don't expect employers to respond to your e-mail even if you are applying for a posted job. They may not have the manpower to respond to every e-mail they receive, but if you are a potential fit for an opening, you will hear from them when they are ready to fill the position.

SENDING SAMPLES

If you get an e-mail asking for samples, reply as soon as you can and indicate when you think you'll be able to send them. Few employers will bother to call to follow up on an e-mail they sent and it only takes a minute or less to type, "Thank you. I received your e-mail and will send you samples by Thursday the 12th."

If you are asked to send samples via e-mail, don't direct the employer to your Website, asking the employer to make an extra effort to see your work. E-mail your samples in a jpeg format to the employer as soon as you can. You are competing with others for the job and if others are sending e-mailed samples, don't expect the employer to take the time to go to your Website to view your work. Besides, servers are often unreliable and the employer may not be able to view your site. It's unlikely that they will try visiting a Website a second time if they are swamped with production work as well as trying to find an employee. Make it easy for them to hire you. If you are asked to send three or four jpegs, do not send 15. Send the samples so they don't take forever to download — a good rule is not to exceed 1 meg.

PARTING THOUGHTS

If you are in the job market, keep the employers you've contacted up to date with any contact information changes, especially e-mail addresses. You want them to be able to reach you for that test or interview, or better yet, job offer at all times. E-mail allows an employer to reach you at any time, regardless of time zones and is often a preferred method to communicate with applicants.

If someone contacts you with career information of any kind, be polite and professional in your reply. Remember that though you are online, it is not a time to flame someone — as it could lead to a difficult time finding work. Be careful about what you post to online groups as well. E-mail is the least censored communication we create, yet it can travel around the world in just minutes and be kept forever... ■

PAMELA KLIEBRINK THOMPSON is a career coach, recruiter and hiring strategist. She has been writing articles for Animation World Network for a number of years and both loves and hates to get e-mail.

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ANIME REVIEWS

New from Japan: Anime Film Reviews

by Fred Patten



Betterman marries two stereotypical sci-fi plots. © 1999-2002 Sunrise This product is manufactured and distributed by Bandai Entertainment Inc. under the license by Sunrise, Inc. All rights reserved.

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

Betterman. V.1, The Awakening. V.2, Metamorphosis. V.3, Seeds of Death. V.4, Inhuman Nature. V.5, Despair. V.6, Finality.

TV series (26 episodes), 1999. Director: Yoshitomo Yonetani. V.1-2, 5 episodes/125 minutes; v.3-6, 4 episodes/100 minutes. Price & format: DVD bilingual \$29.98. Distributor: Bandai Entertainment.

Betterman (inconsistently sometimes spelled *Better Man*) is a mix of two stereotypical dramatic anime TV s-f serial plots; the small team of scientists and action field agents who must race to identify an unknown but seemingly invincible threat before it can destroy the world, and the tragic hero who has been turned into a hideous monster, yet loyally uses his new powers to protect the humanity from which he is now estranged. The 26-episode *Betterman* (broadcast on Japanese TV from April 1 through September 30, 1999) presumably had a low budget since the animation is unusually limited for the Sunrise studio's standards.

"It's like we're in some cheap monster movie!" the teen protagonist screams in episode 10, summing it up nicely. Keita Aono, a 17-year-old video-game junkie, is eagerly awaiting the grand opening of the Bottom World underground amusement park when some disaster destroys it, killing more than 200. In the chaos Keita crawls for protection into what he thinks is a dummy giant robot and accidentally activates it. From inside the robot he watches the park's giant mechanical clowns try to kill people, who are saved by a frightening sharklike monster. Keita has seen things that the government is trying to keep from the public. He also has the ability to control the mechanical "neuronoid" suit by his psychic energy, which is almost unheard of. So he is drafted into Akamatsu Industries' research team, which

invented the neuronoid mobile suits, originally intended for dangerous labor, but now pressed into service to fight the menace codenamed "Algernon." The first 10 episodes gradually introduce Keita (and the audience) to his varied but likeable teammates while battling individual horror-moviesque Algernon-caused disasters, most of which are stopped by Betterman. Episodes 11-14 are a four-part struggle against what seems to be the main villain, but who turns out to be only a pawn of Algernon. From episodes 15 on, the attacks focus upon Keita and his friends. The mood quickly turns from comedic parodies of horror movies to grim despair as Keita sees his new friends driven mad or killed, one by one. Clues to the secrets behind Algernon and Betterman are revealed with frustrating slowness.

The main difference between *Betterman* and other sci-fi anime serials using this formula is that the pseudo-scientific babble is centered around organic biochemistry rather than mechanical technology, such as amino acids, brain implants, telomeres, using pheromones to direct waves of attacking insects, controlled biological mutation, misusing cancer research into controlling cellular division to deliberately create monsters and so on. Unfortunately, the plot suffers from too many secrets within secrets, establishing an impression that the heroes are not so much intelligently advancing toward the solution as that the scriptwriters are jerking them around on phony side-adventures until it is time for the serial to reach its final episode.

Fist of the North Star: The Series. V.1-V.5.

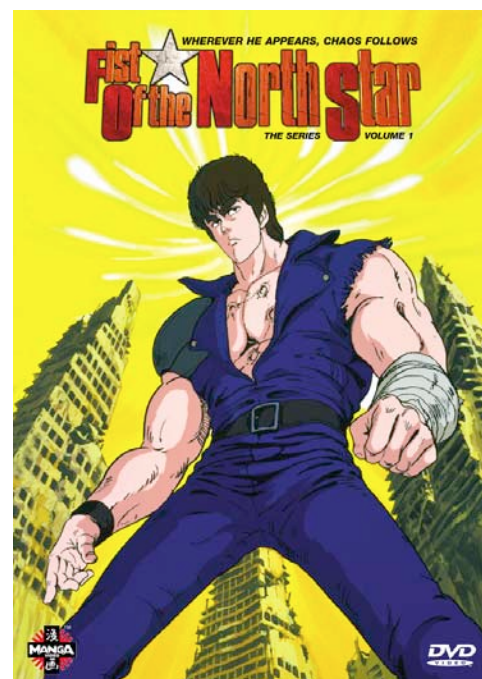
TV series (36 episodes), 1984-1985. Director: Toyoo Ashida. V.1-v.4, 7 episodes/210 minutes; v.5, 8 episodes/240 minutes. Price & format: DVD bilingual \$29.95. Distributor: Manga Entertainment.

Hokuto no Ken (the title is a pun: "Ken" means "fist" but it is also the nickname of the hero, Kenshiro) was one of the legendary anime TV series of the 1980s, produced and animated by Toei Doga, adapted from the popular manga by Bronson and Tetsuo Hara. It ran for 109 episodes from October 4, 1984 through March 6, 1987, and was immediately followed by *Hokuto no Ken 2* for episodes #110 through #152 (March 12, 1987 - February 18, 1988). Manga Entertainment's DVD release includes only the first 36 episodes, comprising the first story arc.

Fist of the North Star is one of those rare works which successfully idolizes yet simultaneously parodies a stereotype; the gory-yet-sanitized violence of martial-arts video games beloved by adolescent males, focused through an exaggeration of *The Road Warrior* and Bruce Lee movies. The futuristic "199X" is a post-nu-

clear war parched planet of dried-up oceans, ruined cities and starving, ragged survivors who are preyed upon by sadistic, hulking punk-tattooed bikers who seemingly have no trouble finding unlimited fuel for their road hogs. Their savior is Kenshiro, master of the North Star school of martial arts, identified by the seven scars symbolizing the Big Dipper punched into his brawny chest by his enemy Shin. Ken and Shin were rivals for leadership of the North Star school; but when Shin was rejected because he refused to use his powers only for good, he kidnapped Ken's fiancée Julia and fled to establish the bloody Southern Cross world-conquering empire. Now Ken wanders the blasted Earth seeking to rescue Julia, stopping at a new town each week to free it from a bullying biker gang, a rogue commando team from the old government's army trying to set itself up as new feudal overlords, a blood-thirsty religious cult, giant mutants or the vanguards of Shin's troops. Particularly difficult adversaries might take three episodes to defeat.

Testosterone-hyped teen males can't get enough of each episode's stereotyped confrontation. Ken is surrounded by sadistically giggling bullies twice his size, licking their knives. Ken calmly cracks his knuckles and growls, "You're already dead!" then launches himself into the air in a super-karate attack. The villains' heads explode or their bodies collapse into sliced pieces, while their blood fountains out in a glittery pastel psychedelic light show rather than nauseating gore. It became a challenge among animators and fans to see how many different tastefully artistic ways Ken could be shown slaughtering his foes. Episode titles like "The Deadly Fist of Lingering Regret! The Future is Sighted in the Barren Desert!" and "The Raging Flame Reverse Flow Punch! There are Too Many Who Must Die!!" similarly both set up and parody this over-the-top martial-arts



Fist of the North Star chronicles Kenshiro's search for his kidnapped fiancée. ©1999 Buronson Tetsuo Hara/Shueisha, Toei An.

atmosphere. Duplicating cartoonist Hara's realistic art style for a weekly TV series forced Director Ashida to bring limited animation to new levels of dramatically held poses and tension developed through dialogue and good voice acting, especially during these first 36 episodes when Toei's animation team was fresh and enthusiastic.



Intelligence, artistry and introspection are found in the romantic story *His and Her Circumstances*. © Masami Tsuda/Hakusen-sha/Gainax/Kareno-jijyo-dan/TV Tokyo/SoftX

His and Her Circumstances. V.1, The Appearance of a Normal Life. V.2, Love and War Under the Cherry Blossoms. V.3, Another Life, Less Ordinary. V.4, Formulation of Truth and Sentiment. V.5, title not yet determined.

TV series (26 episodes), 1998-1999. Director: Hideaki Anno. V.1, 6 episodes/180 minutes; v.2-5, 5 episodes/150 minutes. Price & format: DVD bilingual + Spanish subtitles \$29.95. Distributor: The Right Stuf International.

Usually limited animation is a detriment, but *His and Her Circumstances* could be a case study of what a brilliant writer-director (Anno was the creator of *Evangelion*) can do with limited animation; not to mention scripting a delightful first-love story. 15-year-old Yukino Miyazawa is accustomed to being the darling of her elementary and middle schools, popular with teachers and classmates. She really has an obsession with public approval. Now entering high school, she finds herself mixing with the top students of other lower schools; notably Souichirou Arima, her male counterpart as polite, friendly, and #1 on all tests. Also, all the girls who used to accept Yukino as their social leader are now flocking around the handsome Arima. He, in turn, is

talented but has little drive; he has allowed himself to be passively molded by his parents and teachers. Yukino at first plans to sabotage Arima's popularity, but she is smart enough to realize her own pettiness and how she has built her goals on a childish ego; while Arima watches her dynamic personality and realizes his own lack of goals. *His and Her Circumstances* (26 TV episodes broadcast from October 2, 1998 through March 26, 1999; animated by the Gainax and J.C. Staff studios) is the story of two youths realizing that they are maturing from childhood, beginning to choose their own friends and search for goals for their adult lives, and trying to analyze their new feelings ("How do we know whether this is just our adolescent hormones stirring, or – real love?").

Making the protagonists intelligent and introspective allows for long stretches of artistic but extremely limited animation; thought-voices over an imaginative variety of thoughtful facial closeups and background scenery of greeting-card prettiness. This is intercut with frenetic but cartoony scenes of Yukino's rambunctious home life with two younger sisters, or "raw Id" wish-fulfillment images of what Yukino would like to do if she were not so well-bred. Some sequences are shown as motionless comic book panels. A lengthy sequence telling how Yukino's parents met and wed is shown in the form of a 1950s TV kinoscope; black-&-white and grainy. The visual atmosphere is enhanced by clever use of a music library; Beethoven and other classics plus long, dreamy piano solos for the introspective scenes, and lively pop music (movie and TV themes, pop hits; the lively dinnertimes at Yukino's home always have a background of Herb Alpert's Tijuana Brass) for the action scenes. *His and Her Circumstances* is a realistic adolescent girls' romance story without any of the zany fantasy that is usually needed to attract teen viewers; but it has enough charm and soul, and enough witty zest in its visual presentation to have made it a favorite with anime fans in Japan and America.

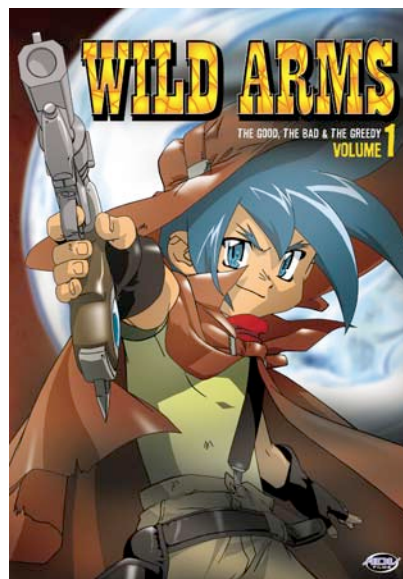
Wild Arms. V.1, The Good, the Bad & the Greedy. V.2, Western Romance. V.3, The Return of Laila. V.4, Lie, Cheat & Steal. V.5, Sheyenne's Last Stand.

TV series (22 episodes), 1999-2000. Director: Itsuru Kawasaki. V.1 & v.5, 5 episodes/125 minutes; v.2-4, 4 episodes/100 minutes. Price & format: DVD bilingual \$29.98. Distributor: A.D.V. Films.

Wild Arms (age-rated 12+) looks like an anime parody of spaghetti Westerns for the *Pokémon* set, but it has enough adolescent humor to make it enjoyable for teens. *Wild Arms* is a popular Japanese video game series; this 22-episode TV serialization (October 18, 1999 through March 27, 2000, animated by the Bee Train studio) was called *Wild Arms: Twilight Venom*, with the subtitle deliberately chosen to be abbreviated *Wild Arms TV*.

The story begins in mid-action on a fantasy world mixing a 19th century cowboy culture with futuristic weapons technology, where humans and *Pokémon*-type cute small "monsters" are social equals. A sadistic warden at an escape-proof prison is torturing a brawny adventurer-type addressed as Dr. Kiel Aronnax. Three female thieves (human adult *femme fatale* Loretta Oratorio, "human" (actually a vampire) juvenile tomboy Mirabelle Graceland, and tiny furry harridan Jerusha) break in to steal an unknown "top secret treasure." Kiel, freed in the confusion, helps the women unlock the treasure, which turns out to be an apparent 10-year-old boy in suspended animation. The boy, when revived, claims to be legendary adult gunslinger Sheyenne Rainstorm, believed to have been killed years earlier. Apparently the government (an oppressive tyranny, which justifies rebelling against it) has faked Sheyenne's death and transferred his mind to a juvenile android body.

This sets up the individual picaresque adventures from episodes #2 on. The main P.O.V. is Sheyenne (the Japanese misspelling of Cheyenne is fixed through numerous wanted posters in the background art), an impulsive adult ego frustratingly trapped in a preadolescent's body. Beautiful women who used to lust after him now treat him like a cute kid brother. He has psychic control over special ARMS weapons which only he can shoot, but his body is now too small to handle the recoil. Sheyenne, accompanied by Kiel and Isaac (a male counterpart of Jerusha), wanders from Western town to town following up on rumors of "hidden treasures" which may be his real body. The women follow, hoping the treasures are of the more negotiable kind. As usual with anime TV serials, the story slowly grows more dramatic. It is not until episode #11 that the viewer is prompted to wonder about Kiel (why is he sticking with Sheyenne, why was he in prison, what kind of "Doctor" is he); about the govern-



19th century cowboy culture is combined with futuristic weapons technology in the appealing *Wild Arms*. © 1999 Sony Computer Entertainment, Inc.

ment's motive for getting rid of Sheyenne without killing him; and other questions which establish that *Wild Arms* does have an ongoing plot, after all.

Many episodes are parodies of Western movie stereotypes, mildly risqué enough to belie the *Pokémon* art style. Two legendary lovers turn out to have been homosexuals. Loretta loses all her money gambling and announces that she is forced to "sell her body;" after milking this for lewd innuendo, it turns out that she has entered a women's mud-wrestling bout. The music (by Kow Otani) is a great pastiche of spaghetti Western composer Ennio Morricone's style. *Wild Arms* is light, tongue-in-cheek fun.

WXIII: Patlabor the Movie 3.

Theatrical feature, 2002. Director: Fumihiko Takayama. 102 minutes. Price & format: DVD bilingual \$24.98/ special edition with extras \$59.98. Distributor: Pioneer Entertainment.

WXIII: Patlabor the Movie 3 (a.k.a. *Patlabor 3: WXIII, Patlabor WXIII the Movie* and *Patlabor: Wasted Thirteen*) is an enjoyable animated theatrical sci-fi/horror thriller in the Godzilla genre. However, it exemplifies some of the problems of theatrical movies made to capitalize on old TV series. Mobile Police Patlabor (based on a manga by Masami Yuki) actually achieved its popularity through two direct-to-video series, a year-long TV series, and two theatrical features between 1988 and 1994, all early works of noted anime director Mamoru Oshii animated by the Headgear and Sunrise studios. Set 10 years in the



The police force's labor machines are sabotaged in *Patlabor WXIII*. For the real *Patlabor* fan, the special edition version (right) includes almost two hours of extra footage. All *Patlabor WXIII* images © HEADGEAR/EMOTION/TFC

future, *Patlabor* brought the giant robot genre into a relatively realistic setting by using them as heavy-duty "labor" vehicles for military, industrial and police work. The focus was upon the latter, specifically the misadventures of the Tokyo Police Force's Pat(rol) Labor Division 2 while trying to do their jobs in giant robots instead of patrol cars. The mecha immediately took a back seat to the fully-characterized human cast: enthusiastic rookie Noa Izumi, sleepy-looking but sharp-witted Captain Goto, excitable and trigger-happy Officer Ota, plus about 10 others. Many episodes dispensed with the mecha altogether in favor of developing the friendships, loves, rivalries and personal problems of the team. Plots deliberately varied wildly. The audience never knew whether the next episode would be serious or a comedy, a realistic dramatization of police action or a human-interest episode in one of Labor Division 2's member's lives or a fantasy-parody of a classic Japanese monster movie.

Ten years later. How to bring back *Patlabor* for the big screen in a way to please both old fans and new viewers unfamiliar with the old cast? It was decided to create a "side story" in which Labor Division 2 is in the background. *WXIII: Patlabor the Movie 3* (animated by the Madhouse studio, released March 30, 2002) is set in a near future in which a controversial land reclamation project is filling in part of Tokyo Bay. Deadly disasters begin happening to the project's Labor machines and their operators. Police detectives Takeshi Kusumi (old

veteran) and Shinichiro Hata (rookie) initially suspect sabotage by protestors, but clues to a recent cargo plane crash in the Bay and a governmental top-level coverup of what the plane was carrying lead them at first reluctantly but with growing conviction to a more fantastic conclusion. This is confirmed about half way through the movie when the monster fully emerges. The original Labor Division 2 cast appears only for the lengthy climax, called in to support Kusumi and Hata in their trap for the monster. Madhouse's theatrical animation quality is fine, and the story is a plausibly-developed techno-thriller blending conspiracy coverups (what government agency or megacorporation created the monster, and how far can it go to suppress the fact?) with fast-paced police vs. monster action scenes. *Patlabor* fans were disappointed that there was so little of *Patlabor* in it, which may be a benefit for viewers unfamiliar with the series. Pioneer is offering this in both a DVD of just the movie, and a three-DVD boxed set with 220 minutes of extras. ■

FRED PATTEN has written on anime for fan and professional magazines since the late 1970s. He wrote the liner notes for Rhino Entertainment's *The Best of Anime music CD* (1998), was a contributor to *The World Encyclopedia of Cartoons, 2nd Edition*, ed. by Maurice Horn (1999) and [Animation in Asia and the Pacific](#), ed. by John A. Lent (2001).

FILM REVIEWS

Fresh from the Festivals:

May 2003's Film Reviews

by Jon Hofferma

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:

The Freak (2002), 6.25 min., directed by Aristomenis Tsirbas, Canada. Info: Dane Smith. Email: dane@menithings.com. Web: www.menithings.com.

The Love Nest (2002), 11 min., directed by Shelly Wain, U.K. Info: Julian Roberts, Cog Ltd., 27 Beethoven St. London, W10 4LG. Tel: (44) 208 964 0234. Fax: (44) 208 968 7710. Email: cog@netcomuk.co.uk.

Oblivion (2002), 1.5 min., directed by FengTing Tsou, Taiwan/USA. Info: FengTing Tsou, Tel: 909-396-8220. Email: jazzinusc@yahoo.com.

Pandorama (2000), 3 min., directed by Nina Paley, USA. Email: nina_paley@yahoo.com. Web: www.ninapaley.com.

The Tortoise & the Hare (2002), 11.5 min., directed by Ray Harryhausen, USA. Info: Seamus Walsh & Mark Caballero. Email: contact@screen-novelties.com. Web: www.screen-novelties.com.



The highly imaginative [The Freak](#) is irresistible. © Menithings Productions LLC

THE FREAK

Aristomenis Tsirbas's celebration of nonconformity is a superb demonstration of CGI technology used to great effect. Both technically proficient and highly imaginative in its creation of a whimsical self-contained world, *The Freak* has enough visual ideas, interesting details and dizzying camera angles to supply three or four films. (For the most part the technique serves, rather than overwhelms, the story; however, there were times when I would have been happy just to watch the myriad background events.) The film's treatment of the themes of individual differences, celebrity, and the media — while not especially profound or new — works well enough in the frenetic context, although it's possible that *The Freak* might have benefited from a more condensed exposition. However, the generally joyful tone and kinetic pace are pretty hard to resist and, even if the overall conception is a bit simple-minded, the visual and aural pleasures are rewarding enough in their own right.

Aristomenis (Meni) has been working in entertainment and the arts for two decades. After establishing himself in Montreal, Canada as a concept artist, visual effects supervisor and digital filmmaker, he relocated to Los Angeles where he worked on the visual effects for *Titanic*, as well as other features and commercials. He also made the short film, *Full Tilt*, for SIGGRAPH 2000. *The Freak* was created on three computers using LightWave 7.5 in a collaborative arrangement with the software developers. It has received numerous awards, including Best Animated Film and Audience Favorite at the Palm Springs International Film Festival, Directors Choice at Black Maria and an Honorable Mention at Sundance. Other screenings include the San Francisco International Film Festival, Taos Talking Pictures, the Philadelphia Film Festival, Clermont-Ferrand and Bumbershoot!, among many others.

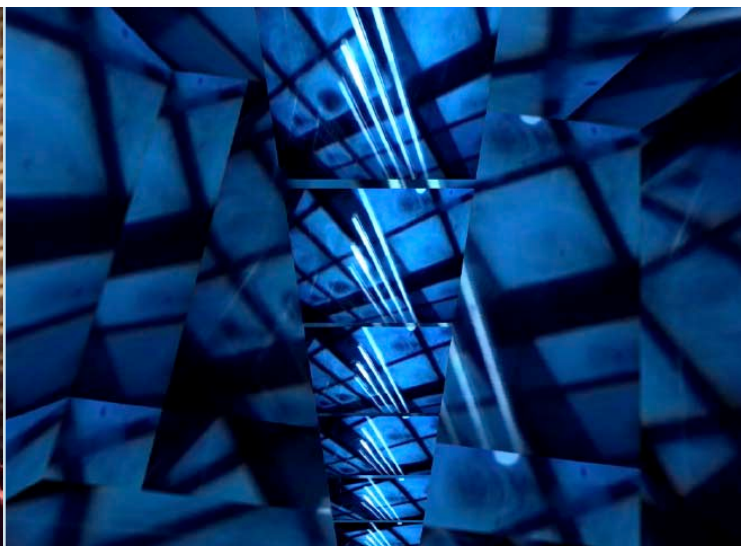


A man's love for his bird backfires on him in *The Love Nest*. © COG Ltd. and Shelly Wain.

THE LOVE NEST

This quite charming and beautifully composed puppet animation ("with a little CG and Flash") employs a classical shooting style in the service of a bit-tersweet fable of avian love and revenge. Walking a fine line between preciousness and knowing irony, director Shelly Wain has succeeded in creating a childlike story that sustains interest through a series of unpredictable narrative twists and turns, while exploiting her limited set in a variety of imaginative ways. (I especially liked her use of animated Chinese screens to reflect the events taking place in the puppet world and the occasional sophisticated use of shadows to advance the story.) If the denouement seems a little too pat and politically correct, it's also well within the logic of the narrative, and the fact that it can be cause for discomfort is a testament to Wain's skill in bringing her characters to life.

As an animator at COG Ltd., Shelly Wain worked on the children's series *PB Bear And Friends* and *Yoho Ahoy*, and designed and created the pilot, *9 Kitten Mews*. She also leads a workshop in filmmaking for children and is pursuing an MA in digital animation. *The Love Nest*, which was funded by the filmmaker and COG, is Wain's first film. It has screened at the World of Women Festival in Sydney, Animadrid and the Tehran Film Festival, among others.



Oblivion explores memories. © 2001 University of Southern California — School of Cinema-Television.

OBLIVION

Using DV footage processed with Alias|Wavefront Maya, this very short film is an attempt, according to the director's notes, to explore the vicissitudes of memory, specifically the problems inherent in trying to forget. Director FengTing Tsou has come up with some striking and suggestive images, including the shifting matrix of rectangular shapes that frames his manipulated footage, but whatever meaning he intends to convey is recondite at best. The track, consisting of a series of recognizable sounds (e.g., a phone ringing, a baby crying) isn't much help in interpreting his intentions. This kind of ambiguity isn't necessarily a bad thing, and the fact that Tsou lists Andrei Tarkovsky, among others, as an influence implies at least some seriousness of purpose. Yet the film feels very sketchy and, (this could be a first), is altogether too brief. While a longer duration might or might not make this a more successful effort, it seems like a minimum requirement to effectively treat the subject at hand.

FengTing Tsou received a BA in Naval Architecture from the National Taiwan Ocean University before beginning his studies in animation and digital art at USC's School of Cinema-Television. *Oblivion*, which was made for a 2nd-year experimental animation class, was created in two weeks. At one point the filmmaker worked straight through four days without sleep. The night before the film was to be shown Tsou borrowed nine additional computers to generate the film's 1,887 frames in time for the screening.



Non-stop images and energy are found in *Pandorama*. © 2001 by Nina Paley.

PANDORAMA

The winner of this month's Manic Energy Award (narrowly edging out *The Freak*), Nina Paley's exuberant and impressionistic jeremiad cataloging the manifold ills loosed on the world with the ascension of humankind is — despite its rather depressing subject matter — an inspired and thoroughly enjoyable assault on the senses. Comprising more than “2,500 individual images hand-drawn, scratched and rubber-stamped directly onto 70mm clear leader and junk footage,” and featuring an appropriately lunatic score by The Revillos, *Pandorama* deconstructs (sort of) the dual myths of Eve and Pandora, two of the alleged perpetrators behind our species' loss of innocence. The idea of “cameraless animation” has taken on a different meaning with the advent of CGI, but Paley's adoption of the technique pioneered by such filmmakers as Len Lye and Norman McLaren (and more recently employed by contemporary animators such as Caroline Leaf and Bärbel Neubauer), coupled with her familiar environmental concerns, yields an extremely lively, funny and intelligent film that you can dance to.

Perhaps best known for her alternative comic strip, *Nina's Adventures*, which ran for seven years in a number of American weeklies, and the shorter-lived daily strip, *Fluff*, Nina Paley began animating in 1998. Her other films, which often incorporate environmental themes (particularly overpopulation) include *I (heart) My Cat and Luv is...* (1998), *Fetch* (2001), *The Stork*, *The Wit and Wisdom of Cancer* (2002) and *Fetco* (2002). *Pandorama* received the Louise White Prize at Veyrier (Switzerland) and was also shown at Bilbao, Ottawa,



The Tortoise & the Hare each compete in their own way. © Ray Harryhausen & Screen Novelties Int'l.

the Kyiv “Molodist” Festival, the KROK Festival, and the Berlin Interfilm Festival, among others. It was screened in 70mm at the Berlin Cinestar IMAX Theater, the Large Format Cinema Association Conference (Los Angeles) and other venues.

THE TORTOISE & THE HARE

More an historical curiosity than a film of much aesthetic interest, this rendering of the famous Aesop fable by legendary stop-motion animator Ray Harryhausen has a certain retro charm, but, by any contemporary standard, feels exceedingly labored and slow-paced. Begun in 1952 and — after 50 years on the shelf — finally completed last year by Harryhausen and collaborators Seamus Walsh and Mark Caballero, *The Tortoise & the Hare* is clearly a labor of love that required a great amount of reconstruction and research to accurately reproduce the director's original sets and characters, as well as special care to match the original footage. The result is a relatively seamless effort that's an admirable tribute to one of animation's great pioneers. However, like the journey of the persevering protagonist who finally wins the race, it's pretty slow going.

Born in Los Angeles in 1920, Ray Harryhausen found his life's work when, at the age of 13, he saw *King Kong* and discovered the stop-motion process that brought the giant ape to life. During a career spanning four decades, his visual effects work was featured in such landmark films as *Earth vs. the Flying Saucers* (1956), *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* (1958) and *Jason and the Argonauts* (1963). In 1992 he re-

ceived the Gordon E. Sawyer special achievement award from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences. Harryhausen lives in London, where he is currently completing a book on his life and work. Mark Caballero and Seamus Walsh have been collaborating since meeting at UCLA in 1993. Their films include *The Old Man and the Goblins* (1997) and *Graveyard Jamboree* (1998) and they've contributed to such commercial projects as MTV's *Celebrity Deathmatch* and *The Flintstones: On the Rocks!* *The Tortoise & the Hare* received ASIFA's 2003 Annie Award for Best Short and was screened at Sundance, Ottawa, Annecy and Anima Mundi, among other festivals. ■

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.

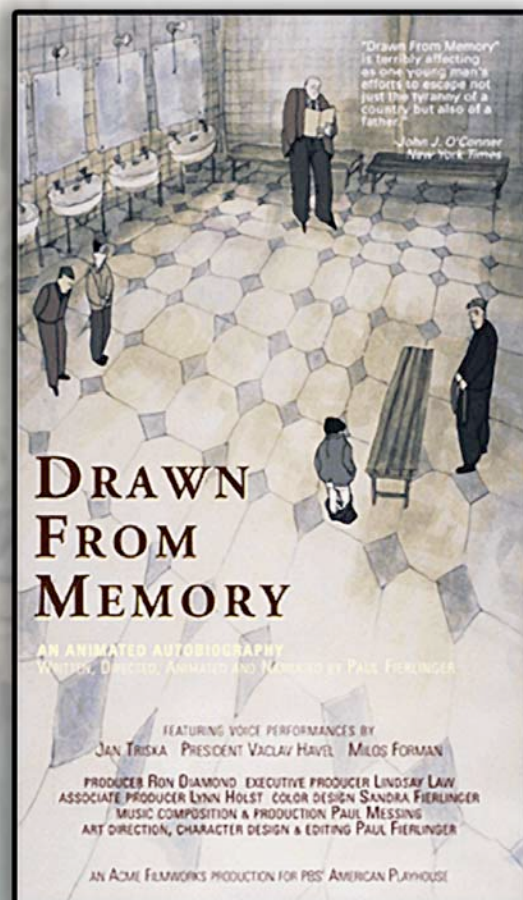
Paul Fierlinger's DRAWN FROM MEMORY Now Available on Video!

"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



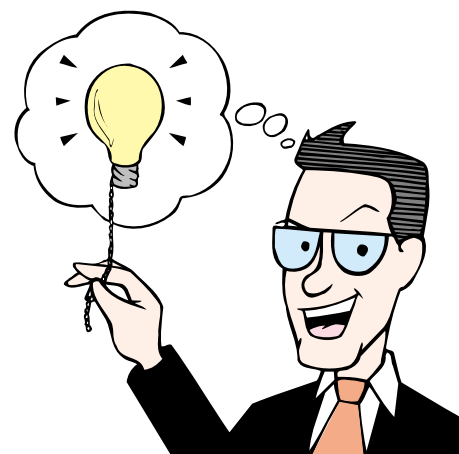
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BOOK REVIEW

Get Motivated About Your Art Dream

by Will Ryan

SHIFTING EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS IN THE ANIMATION FIELD HAVE NOT GONE UNNOTICED BY JACK ENYART...



Jack Enyart motivates the struggling artist with professional advice in his audiotape *Your Art Dream*. Drawing by Brandon Morino. © Jack Enyart 2003.

A GLANCE AT THE HISTORY OF EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS in the animation business would not instantly summon up the word "stability." In the earliest days of one-shot novelty films (*Humorous Phases of Funny Faces*, *Little Nemo*, et cetera), not very much in the way of compensation or job security went to the producer or artist, who was usually one and the same. As the 20th century rolled along and Colonel Heeza Liar, Bobby Bumps, Commodore Buckeye the Braggart and a giggle of familiar characters from the funny pages began appearing on the silver screen, cartoon series were ordered up on a season to season basis. And why not? Legit theatre bookings were planned seasonally (Broadway pretty much closed down for the summer heatwaves). Same with Vaudeville houses, burlesque houses and the amusement parks. Year-to-year seasonal work was good enough for the likes of James O'Neill when he was planning his 4,800th performance of *The Count of Monte Cristo*. It was profitable enough for that enterprising agent William Morris when he was lining up kilted client Harry Lauder's triumphal tours of the States. It was adequate enough for the Salome dancers when they were powdering their Anna Held beauty marks in preparation for another spin on the Columbia wheel. And it certainly made sense to the Schenck Brothers as they prepared next summer's aeronautical wonder to lure the sweltering escapees of Manhattan to their Palisades Park in New Jersey. Of COURSE animation work was seasonal. ALL theatre bookings were seasonal. All of show biz was seasonal. Hey, all of nature was seasonal. The paper-flipping scribblers who toiled away on the *Bringing Up Father*, *Mutt and Jeff* or *Happy Hooligan* film cartoons would no more expect long-term con-

tracts than legit audiences of the period would expect actor DeWolf Hopper NOT to favor them with a curtain-call recitation of *Casey at the Bat*!

ALWAYS OF A SEASONAL NATURE

A quarter of a century ago, Disney's was the only studio providing decades-long security to artists working the animation racket. Oh sure, there were a few year-round jobs to be had at Hanna-Barbara, but most of that studio's output was tied to television's seasonal needs. Layoffs were expected by most after a season's work was finished.

About a decade ago a film called *The Lion King* made an unexpectedly large amount of money. More notably, it made an unexpectedly large amount of profit. It was, and pardon me if you've already heard rumors to this effect, an animated film made by employees of Disney's feature animation division. The Bambi Meets Kimba success spawned not only long lines at the box office, but a new kind of Gold Fever. Suddenly, studios were trying to out-bid each other for animation talent in a new — delusional as it turned out — box office gold rush. There was actual competition for feature animation talent! DreamWorks SKG, newly formed, brought out a checkbook and waved it, along with matching long-term contracts, in the faces of perennially under-valued Disney animators. Other studios — Warner's, Fox, Turner — were competing for the same moving-picture delinquents. Agents and other middle-men entered the picture. Salaries went up.

That was then, as a couple of Monkees used to sing at the time, and this is now. The last couple of years has been a real eye opener for many. Profits from animated

features, for whatever reason, never approached the level executives were gambling on. Such worthies as the next 30 generations or so of Disney CEO Michael Eisner's descendants will be able to live well off of the loot pulled from that company's coffers. But it's a different story for most of those among us today who toiled on the other side of the Magic Kingdom's tracks (read: former denizens of Flower Street in Glendale or of the architectural curiosity in Burbank which shouts the word "ANIMATION" to freeway travelers). Kids who were hired during their sophomore year out of [CalArts](#), who signed multi-year contracts with a studio, who got married, who bought houses and who just recently started having families of their own have been laid off left and right. Some have left the business. Some have left Los Angeles. Many are on the cusp of something, but aren't quite sure what.

SOME SOLID ADVICE

Hence, the appearance of, and a presumed market for, a motivational audio tape such as the one under review: *Your Art Dream*.

Shifting employment patterns in the animation field have not gone unnoticed by Jack Enyart, the author and narrator of this tape. After nearly a quarter century of writing scripts for imaginary stars such as Alvin and the Chipmunks, the Carl Barks gang at Disney's Duck Tales and many other television cartoon shows, he must have noticed the writing on the wall. He pondered the business, met with a "high priced executive-type career counselor," picked up some pointers and is now a consultant himself. Or, as he prefers it, a Consul"toon"t. This a position, we are told, he has held for such animated series as *The Pink Panther*, *Dumb and Dumber* and *Johnny Bravo* and is currently providing for several animation studios, including two in the Far East. The idea, he assures us, is to take the wisdom gleaned from that high-priced career counselor and begin "transposing that advice to MY world — the world of the Arts." Whilst the Muses of antiquity may quibble with the geography, it is indeed to fellow inhabitants of the Land of Talking Ducks and 65-Episode Deals that this tape is directed.

And a well-focused marketing direction it is. This tape is absolutely geared to artists in the animation field. He advises the listener to "dodge those falling anvils" and refers to a business "changing at Road Runner speed." He makes off-hand allusions to the Cruella deVilles, Johnny Bravos and Scrooge McDucks of the world. Such references punctuate the text. They're entertaining and facilitate communication. For example, in a segment where he contrasts different ways of dealing with challenges, viz., as a child, as a teenager and as an adult, he uses three personalities we can readily picture — the

child: Elmer Fudd; the emotional teen: Daffy Duck; and the wisened-up adult: Bugs Bunny. There is also some subtle humor, as when he contrasts the art-school types to "the wise and cranky pro."

So much for style. What about substance? Well, most motivational books, tapes, videos or whatever do not actually reveal earth-shattering secrets. What they do accomplish, if they are in any way effective, is to examine a problem (or a "challenge" as it's usually euphemized), codify common sense solutions and instill the reader/listener/viewer/audience with the desire, confidence and positive attitude needed to solve that problem, to face that challenge! Yo, Joe!

Near the beginning of *Your Art Dream*, Mr. Enyart assures us he will be telling us "nothing theoretical. Everything I say here will have been tested and found true by myself or my clients." Fair enough. Side one deals with the general idea of "a career in the commercial arts." Included is advice on *resumes*, promotion, agents, the current marketplace, etc. The Great Truth he strives to instill with encouraging advice and motivating examples is a simple, basic one which is sometimes easy to lose sight of. Despite the Scrooge McDucks and Foghorn Leghorns out there who seem to be running things, "You are in business for yourself." The second side of the tape is concerned with *Your Dream Project* and how to see it through. Topics such as deal-making, pitching, partners and the like are dealt with here. Good, practical advice is to be had. And, as on Side One, the artist-friendly style combined with the positive reinforcement of the text allows the author/narrator to accomplish what he set out to do: create a good, general motivational tape targeted toward any working, or hoping-to-be-working, artist in or around today's animation business.

So cast away dull glare and grumbling. Even in this dark period of massive layoffs at the animation houses, there is room for hope. As Dewitt Hopper might have put it, there is still some joy in Mudville, even though Casey, mighty Casey, has struck out.

After all, there's always next season! ■

Your Art Dream, an audiobook written and narrated by Jack Enyart. 60 minutes (\$39.00). To order, visit www.toonshoppe.com/JackEnyart

WILL RYAN recently delivered the keynote address at the International Ventriloquists Association's Annual Convention in Las Vegas. Mr. Ryan is an Annie Award-winning, Emmy and Writers Guild-nominated free-lance hyphenate of no fixed transmission. The Elmo Aardvark musical compilations which he produces are available at cdbaby.com
