

AWW

ANIMATION WORLD MAGAZINE

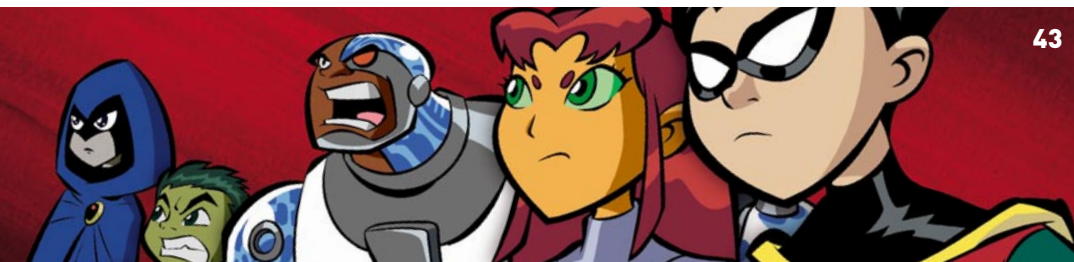
August 2003 • Volume 8 Issue 05 • awn.com

**commercials,
ids and
music vids**



**TEEN
TITANS**

Plus: Anima Mundi,
Speaking SpongeBob,
Fred Seibert — Part 2,
Outlaw Animation and
Makin' Toons reviewed
and more...



Commercials, IDs and Music Vids

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[Includes QuickTime movie clips!](#)

BY RICK DEMOTT

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BY RICK DEMOTT

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COMMERCIAL TRENDS

In the Eye of CGI Commercial Productions

by Sarah Baisley



This high-flying spot was done on spec. Impressive.
Photo courtesy of A52.

IT MAY JUST BE A DIGITAL ILLUSION, BUT THERE'S A LOT OF professional and physical pain, heightened and abated by technical wizardry, that goes into advertising spots. Still considered the R&D hotbed of the industry, techniques and tricks are born here and migrate to motion pictures and TV series. Yet many clients and [ad agencies](#) see something that wows them in a movie, and expect the same sort of work will help them sell their product, not realizing the costs and timeframe aren't always so applicable to the commercial world. *AWN* rounded up facts, thoughts and examples of issues and trends driving producers of CGI commercials today.

Our survey includes viewpoints from:

Denis Gauthier, CGI supervisor/3D artist and
Westley Sarokin, digital effects artist, A52
Howard Sly, animator, [Framestore](#)
Saam Gabbay, creative director, Humunculus
David Gioiella, editor/co-founder, Northern Lights Post
Aladino Debert, head of CG, Radium
John Myers, exec producer, [Ring of Fire](#)
Jonathan Privett, head of 3D, Rushes Post Production
Craig Tozzi, creative director, Twothousandstrong
Michael Capton, head of CG/commercials, [Zoic Studios](#)



First row: Westley Sarokin (left), digital effects artist, A52. Michael Capton (center), head of CG/commercials, Zoic Studios. Saam Gabbay (right), creative director, Humunculus. Second row: David Gioiella (left), editor and co-founder of Northern Lights Post. Jonathan Privett (center), head of 3D, Ruses Post Production. Aladino Debert (right), head of CG, Radium. Third row: John Myers, exec producer, Ring of Fire. Sarokin photo courtesy of A52. Capton photo courtesy of Zoic Studios. Gioiella photo courtesy of Northern Lights Post. Privett photo courtesy of Ruses Post Production. Debert photo courtesy of Radium.

1. Who raises the bar for you?

DG/A52: We constantly raise the bar for ourselves. We try to do something new, something a little bit better, on every single job. We nitpick and criticize each other's work in an effort to make it better, long before any client sees it.

WS/A52: Observing everyday reality almost always raises the bar for me. In merely keeping one's eyes open for interesting details and moments that the bar is raised. However, more than anything, I try and constantly raise the bar for myself.

Framestore: We in the commercials department raise the bar from demands put upon us by directors, our competition, our reputation and our dedication and commitment to a high quality product and service.

Humunculus: People at our company are constantly trading spots and commercials with each other. It prompted us to devote space on our server just for inspiring design and commercial spots and trailers. It forces us to raise the bar internally, as a group. As far as who raises the bar externally, that depends on the day. Sometimes it's a peer company like Psyop, sometimes it's a musician/group like Telefon Telaviv, sometimes a reel from overseas like [The Mill](#), etc.

Radium: Clients and other companies' work, but mostly, myself.

Ring of Fire: Anyone who collaborates openly and has a clear vision. This could be a director, a creative director at an ad agency, an effects supervisor, a producer or someone within your team. The person or process that raises the bar can come from anywhere, anyone, anytime. That's one of the great things about doing what we do. Inspiration strikes without warning from the oddest places.

Ruses: Generally, work done on features with big budget effects has a knock-on effect in raising the stakes of quality and creativity in commercials. Having said that, we always strive to push what is possible in terms of CG on all our work, to offer our clients something a bit special. Many independent/art house filmmakers also produce work of incredible quality and ingenuity.

Twothousandstrong: It's a given that as soon as a piece of groundbreaking animation hits the airwaves, a lot of people want to recreate it for half the cost, in half the time and with just as high expectations. I feel the CG industry is overselling itself in a lot of cases – promising more that sometimes is possible to deliver, at budget points that don't seem sustainable (this seems to be happening more at the smaller shops level). Good work takes man-hours and time. The Radiohead [video](#) took 14-15 animators and eight flame artists to complete!

Zoic: Really talented and hard working people raise the bar for me. A lot of these people work in the industry and that is great. Many just do stuff for themselves at home, and, once in a while, they post their work on the Web, you see it and it is amazing.

It is hard to say, you watch a movie like [Lord of the Rings](#), and there are so many people that work on each scene or each character or each effect. This industry is so much of a collective that one person is almost never responsible for an entire shot.

2. Who/what are sources of inspiration?

DG/A52: The entire natural world, as created by God; everything that "isn't" computer graphics is an endless source of inspiration.

WS/A52: More than anything, taking a good look at the world around us provides for an endless source of creative inspiration. In particular, music inspires me; the way that sound can become imagery, color and emotion when it enters the mind. I am constantly fascinated with the infinite microcosms that are generated everywhere we look. Close examination of a small, seemingly unnoticeable moment in the corner of the room, is a point where time, space, matter and energy come together to create an exquisitely unique conjunction, which is unlike anything else. Every moment is special if it is looked at from the right angle or with the right eyes.

Framestore: Inspiration and motivation are derived from all over. Not only from our competition and our surroundings, but from our ambitious and talented staff. Forward thinking individuals within the company, focused talented directors and team leaders all play their part.

IN PARTICULAR, MUSIC INSPIRES ME; THE WAY THAT SOUND CAN BECOME IMAGERY, COLOR AND EMOTION WHEN IT ENTERS THE MIND.

— WESTLEY SAROKIN, A52

Humunculus: Currently, MUSIC. Most people in our studio are quick to see images once they put on their favorite track. So I would have to say music is the biggest source of inspiration. In fact, some of our designers pick a piece of music they think fits a project before they start on the boards.

Other than that, again it goes to our peers. Because of the steady and revolving pool of freelancers and the constant access to images we get from the Web, we are pretty well stimulated. Freelancers act as cross-pollinators in a way, helping push design forward as they travel from company to company.

We are, finally, inspired by each other. Our studio is built around group exchange and lunchtime banter. When someone brings in a new MP3, magazine or Web page — it can transform the entire mood and attitude of the day.

Radium: I think that my main source of inspiration professionally is talented people and their work. I'm an avid reader and movie buff, and I get constant ideas from



Check out Framestore's inspiration on this Daewoo spot. Clip courtesy of Framestore.

seeing other people's work. It doesn't matter how much experience you may have, there're always people out there who are more talented and have more experience than you, so being able to have access to their work is very important to me. The Internet has made that access infinitely easier. When I started in this industry, you had to wait for the yearly CLIO reels and other international festivals to see new work. Now you can log-in into a variety of sites and see that same work, often months earlier than any of those festivals ever happen.

Ring of Fire: Unlimited. Could be the person who delivers lunch that day or it could be Pixar's latest and greatest you saw over the weekend...

Rushes: Trends in fashion, modern art, photography and print design often inspire new approaches to CGI, mixing ideas from different media can lead to completely new 'looks' and ideas. The world around is always providing CGI artists with inspiration.

Zoic: Science and biology are huge inspirations. The world we live in is so unique and amazing. Scientists are constantly discovering new species of living things that have adapted to the world in incredible ways. Truly, real life is much more interesting than anything we could imagine. Most of the inspiration is taken from nature to begin with and expanded on from there.



Zoic helps this driver slip right into his Nissan Altima. Photo courtesy of Zoic Studios.

3. Do clients know when and how to use CGI?

DG/A52: Absolutely. The clients we have been working with are very well versed in the medium. It's been this way for the last eight years or so. We find that clients come to A52 because they know our photo-real CGI will integrate seamlessly with the live action picture.

WS/A52: That depends, some clients who have had experience using CGI are very aware of its capabilities, how it can be used most effectively and where it comes into play in the creative and technical process. Other clients often have no idea how CGI comes into play in an effects-driven spot, and it is part of our job to educate them and facilitate understanding of the CGI process. Lastly, and worst, there are clients we come across who have had terrible past experiences using CGI at other facilities, and are totally against using it again. With these clients, we do our very best to show that CGI, done properly, is a wonderful tool and medium for effects work. As with any tool, it takes a skilled artist with a trained eye and good creative instincts along with communication skills to wield CGI effectively and with a good result.

Framestore: I think some clients have a clear vision of what they want and how to get there based on their experience. Other clients perhaps will rely on our judgment, based on our knowledge of the industry. It really depends on the clients and the job.

Humunculus: Yes and no. We are up for a theatrical commercial that requires shooting a television screen. The client does not know what they want, so we suggested modeling the TV instead of doing a tabletop shot. We explained to the client that since they don't know what they want, and don't have the budget to shoot twice, using a CG TV would allow them infinite control and be a cost savings at the same time.

There have also been instances where shooting was a better idea than going CGI-like doing an underwater shot we had to prepare. So it depends on the project.

Other clients are very clear and ask for it from the start of the project.

Northern Lights Post: More needs to be done in terms of educating clients about when and how to use CGI. Even though it has been around for a while, the majority do not have that much knowledge about the process and costs involved. Thus they opt to shoot many elements that can in fact be created in CGI if they felt comfortable working in that medium.

Radium: Not always, but that is part of my and Radium's job — to help a client define their artistic goals and help them utilize the best possible tools for the job at hand. Sometimes that means not using CGI. As a vfx supervisor, my job is to devise the best approach for a shot, not to sell a particular method.

Ring of Fire: The majority of the time they don't. Having said that, there are some really experienced clients who have it dialed. The ones that do, have been there, done that, on several occasions. It's all about experience.

Rushes: On the whole, yes. The understanding of CGI has grown rapidly, and most clients are conversant with which particular approaches will best suit their project.

Zoic: Some do and some do not. There seems to be a trend right now where people are spending less time in pre-production and thinking "we can fix it in post." This is unfortunate because with a little forethought, they could save a lot of time and money.

4. Would some live elements be better in CGI or visa versa?

DG/A52: It is completely dependent on the circumstances of each individual shot. We suggest to directors that if they can shoot it, then shoot it. But, if they can't shoot it, don't worry, because our CGI will intercut seamlessly with what they shoot.

WS/A52: This depends on the shot. Before the footage is captured, we consult with the director as to what a given shot is trying to achieve and then advise whether it would be more effective to try and capture it in camera or use CGI. When it is decided that CGI is to be used, we capture all the necessary elements we can in camera, and then seamlessly integrate the CGI in to the live action, thus achieving the visual appearance that it was all shot in camera.

Framestore: It's job specific. We need to bear in mind production costs, timeframes and the overall look of the project. It may be more cost effective to produce CGI rather than a live-action shot. With CGI, you also have a flexible element, which can be modified and utilized all through the production process.

Humunculus: Of course, it depends on the project.

Radium: Yeah, but again, it always depends on the job at hand. Humans for instance...well, live-action humans just look better. [Cars](#) would be the other end of the spectrum. We've gotten to the point that we can make CG cars look absolutely real, and that makes shooting car commercials a lot easier, and gives the director much more creative freedom.

Ring of Fire: Absolutely. This is always the case and the

never-ending debate. The real question is what are you trying to accomplish and what are the technical and logistical limitations. Find the balance, make the right decisions and execute. Many constantly changing dynamics affect this question.



Ring of Fire has done a lot of high-profile work like this Bug Light spot. Photo courtesy of Ring of Fire.

Rushes: Personally I would advise to use live action wherever possible. There is no substitute for reality. CGI should be confined to use in situations where budget or concept necessitate its use.

Zoic: Yes in both instances. Each case should be assessed on an individual basis. The best approach should be decided upon that will deliver the best creative in the most timesaving and cost effective manner. Don't get me wrong, the lack of preplanning and the inability to approach something in the proper way has kept a lot of us employed for a long time. You see some of the work come in and ponder, what in God's name were they thinking?

5. What is the impact of lower cost of tools?

DG/A52: No impact whatsoever from an artistic perspective, though, downward movements of prices are always appreciated from a business perspective.

WS/A52: From a creative standpoint, there is really no impact. People can be creative with anything; it just takes a good idea, solid execution and understanding of the tools. Lower cost computers and software does mean that more people can become involved in CGI and digital effects, because it no longer costs \$150,000 for a high-end CGI workstation as it did 10 years ago.

Framestore: Costs are an issue, however, the right tools are required for a quality product. It's not a question of lower cost tools it's what tools we need to do the job. Even when software was £20,000 a license, it was still necessary to have it.

Humunculus: More competition. Lower budgets. Higher expectations.

Radium: Wow, it's tremendous. When I came out of school in the early '90s, to get a workstation running production-ready software, you had to spend at least \$75K, which of course kept all of us poor students out of the high-end loop. Now you can get a number of excellent packages and machines for under \$10K (sometimes a lot less).

What this means in terms of the industry, is that you now have an exponential number of artists that are acquiring the necessary skills to work in production, sometimes with no actual work experience at all. Schools can afford many more workstations, and software companies have student versions of their high-end software. In the company side of things, it

means you can expand the CG departments very quickly and with modest investments to accommodate for big projects.



Radium sets the bar high for themselves on this Volkswagen spot.

Ring of Fire: It opens the talent pool up immensely. Gives people who have interest in what we do access to the tools of the trade. This is a great benefit. Also, it allows companies, big or small, to expand or set up shop, ultimately raising the level of competition.

Rushes: The state of the industry in general is driving costs down, and lower cost tools are allowing companies to meet the demand for cheaper visual effects work. It also means some very small operations have started up successfully to do work that is on a shoestring budget. These houses do not compete with larger post companies since a serious infrastructure is still required to handle larger projects and commercials.

Zoic: The impact of the lower cost of tools is the lower cost of production. There is a greater availability of those tools to more people. Therefore, there is a greater pool of talent to choose from and a hell of a lot more competition.

6. Which tools are you beginning to make more use of? Have any particularly saved you in a crunch?

DG/A52: We just installed a Linux renderfarm to support our SGI workstations. No tools have "saved us in a crunch," because we try to manage our projects so that they don't need "saving."

WS/A52: It is rare that a particular tool will save you in a crunch. More often than not, it is good preplanning, accurate assessment of the task and effectively allocating resources that make a project work out. However, there are often times where simply having more computing power has enabled us to get things done faster or see the results of a shot rendered more quickly. We recently bought a Linux renderfarm to use on our last job, which we delivered in HD. The Linux renderfarm enabled us to turn around shots twice as fast as our old renderfarm.

Framestore: This again depends on the job. We have a dedicated R&D team who develop specific tools as and when they are required. In a very recent commercial a lava lamp effect was needed. After several failed attempts to achieve the required look a last minute result was achieved with our own version of metaclay.

Humunculus: Nothing has been as valuable as the local renderfarm. We use Render Core in Hollywood. They are a professional company and we consider them an extension of our own. They even get a line item in our budgets. There is just no way to meet advertising deadlines and ambitious designs without them.

Otherwise, we use [Maya](#) and Cinema 4DXL for our CG work and composite in After Effects.



Humunculus really dived into the Pocari Sweat spot. Photo courtesy of Humunculus.

Radium: We are definitely using more HDR (High Dynamic Range) image-processing software. Using Global Illumination techniques such as HDRI Maps, Final Gathering and Ambient Occlusion allow us to generate incredibly realistic images, as well as CG elements that integrate much better on a live-action environment. But the two things that always save us on a crunch are talent and more rendering power!

Ring of Fire: Any compositing software on Mac or a NT workstation. CGI renderfarm. Firewire drives. FTP posting and e-mailing MPEGS. Oh, and our genius systems engineer who makes all of the above work. The renderfarm is all about saving time. Film rez i-o has been streamlined in a big way with use of the firewire drives. FTP and e-mail are pretty close to instant off-site work in progress evaluation followed by conversations, etc... all of the technological advances available have increased efficiency and saves time in the process.

Rushes: We are starting to use some of the more advanced rendering techniques such as HDRI and global illumination, which give a beautiful result. Also boujou tracking software is fabulous and always saving the day. Virtual cameras are derived here on a daily basis using boujou... and no, I'm not on commission.

Twothousandstrong: There is an increasing number of very high-end animation tools that are beginning to wind their way down from proprietary usage and/or usage only on high budget motion pictures into the commercial and music video arenas. Software like Massive and Behavior — both crowd creation tools where you can populate a city block with CG characters that walk around each other, each character animating individually and automatically. Massive is being used on the *Lord of the Rings* Trilogy (the big battle scene at Helms Deep in [Two Towers](#) was constructed using it) but was also recently used for a Radiohead video recently completed by The Mill. Behavior is Softimage's crowd creation tool, now available as a standalone. Also, advances in rendering, particularly out of Mental Images GMBH, are allowing near photo-real scenes to be built virtually. Very processor intensive, but getting to the point where it's being used at the commercial level.

Zoic: My primary tool is Maya, but as I stated above, whatever gets the job done is the best. Recently, my tool set has been expanding more rapidly. [2D3's boujou tracking software](#) is amazing. It's used to do 3D tracking on shots that require 3D elements to be placed into

WE ARE ON A CONSTANT SEARCH FOR TALENT. WE STILL FIND THAT THE PEOPLE AND THE TALENT THEY PROCESS ARE WHAT SETS YOU APART.

— JOHN MYERS, RING OF FIRE

them. It saves us a lot of time. Tracking a shot by hand is rather labor intensive and time consuming. This software allows us to do 90% of the tracking using boujou and then tweaking the last 10% ourselves by hand.

7. How/where to you find talent? Are you outsourcing at all?

Framestore: We have a dedicated team in the commercials department. We also have the option and ability to source from a large pool of talent in our long form and film departments and freelancers. On occasion we have work experience individuals, often a great source of emerging talent. We advertise internally and our Website has a positions vacant section.

Humunculus: Humunculus uses a well-established group of freelancers if we have to outsource, but we prefer the work to be done in-house even if by a freelancer. This allows the cross-pollination I mentioned above to occur, and it cuts down on miscommunication. If we really run short, then we use the Web, design sites and friends of friends to track down talent. Recently we started looking at people fresh out of school since their techniques have become quite developed in the past year...

Radium: Finding talent is always difficult. We receive tons of reels a month, and if you find two or three that are good you consider yourself lucky. The most important thing is to keep a big enough pool of good freelancers, so at any given time there are at least a few you can call.

Ring of Fire: Mostly word of mouth and by recommendation. Things move very quickly, you need to be able to plug and play and fly like the wind. Performance is key. We have had our best luck working with people that have come by way of recommendation. Once in a while, we will be contacted by an experienced artist with a great reel. If we aren't up against some crazy deadline, we will be more likely to try that person out to see how they do. We are on a constant search for talent. We still find that the people and the talent they process are what sets you apart. Now, more than ever, anyone can have the tools, it's what you do with them that will make or break you.

Rushes: London is a small market so we generally find talent through people we know within the industry who recommend them. At present we are not outsourcing.

Zoic: We find talent anywhere we can. We've recruited in schools, SIGGRAPH, web postings, etc. Sadly, it is usually through friends in the business because it is always nice to have someone you trust vouch for the person's work. I say sadly, because if you don't know someone in the industry, it can be hard to get in. Whenever we get very busy, we outsource the less creative, mundane and time-consuming work.

8. What's next, what tricks do you think there will be more of a call for?

DG/A52: We'd like to further enhance our realism with more extensive use of global illumination. Computers are finally fast enough that we can consider that now.

WS/A52: More than anything, increased computing power is allowing the use of rendering techniques, which can more accurately simulate natural phenomenon. Subsurface scattering, a technique used to create a realistic look for human skin, and global illumination lighting techniques, which are employed to simulate the way ambient light bounces off multiple surfaces, are extremely expensive computationally. Having more processing power means that techniques, such as the ones I've mentioned, can be employed more frequently and push forward the level of computer-generated realism.

Framestore: As far as tricks and techniques, we use any available means to achieve a cost effective and efficient production. One thing we will not compromise is the quality. Every project is different and requires different techniques — one thing, which is common is the process. We are always trying to streamline and improve efficiency on every project.

Humunculus: 3D. There is such a shortage of just plain old 3D animator/designers right now. We've been noticing a huge focus on organic materials and mimicking silk thread, membranes, underwater particles, etc.... If there are any good Maya artists out there...

Radium: Ah, futurists tend to look silly in retrospect, but Global Illumination is getting used more and more every day. Computers are getting fast enough that it is now cost effective to use it in commercial production. I think though, that the real tricks and techniques come from artists when presented with a problem they haven't faced before.

Ring of Fire: That's a good one. I wish I knew the answer. There is always the "soup of the day" trick flying around town... multi-planning through 2D objects in a 3D environment seems to be the "trick" this week. The best results we find are combining techniques and mediums that may not have ever been combined before. We have the bag of tricks and ideas, just not unlimited time to try them out on spec work. We are always looking for people who are open to collaborate and try new things. This is offset with the request we often get, "we want to see something that has never been done before, but we aren't seeing it on your reel, can you do a test?" R&D and previz is a great tool for this, if you have the time and a budget to support it.

...THE REAL TRICKS AND TECHNIQUES COME FROM ARTISTS WHEN PRESENTED WITH A PROBLEM THEY HAVEN'T FACED BEFORE.

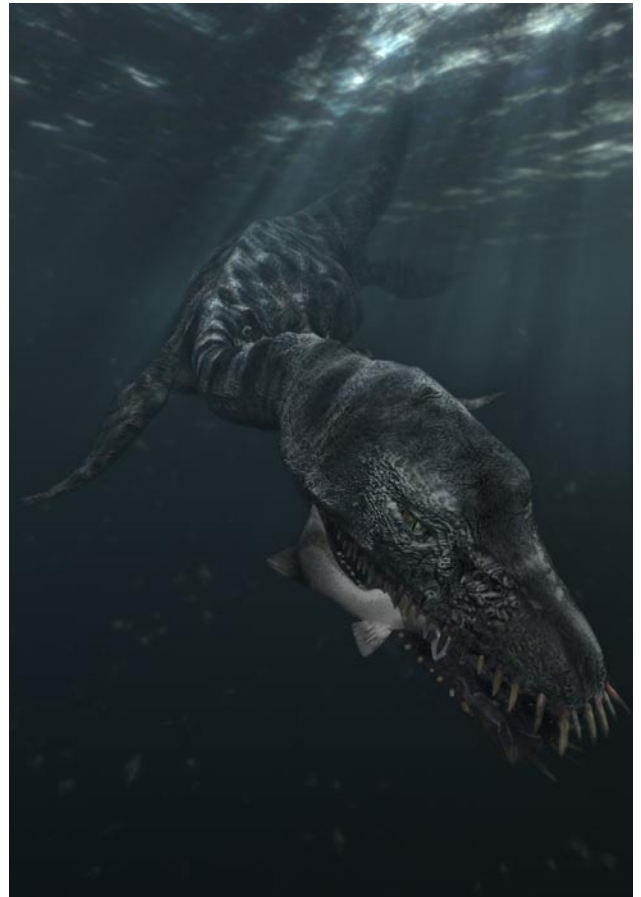
— ALADINO DEBERT, RADIUM

Rushes: I think that CGI will be used to create more and more content, and that it will be used in more obtuse ways and not simply to replace an existing reality. Advances in CG lighting will also feed down to more areas giving a more natural feel to CG.

9. How is the greater use of HDTV impacting your methods, costs?

DG/A52: Creating for HDTV doesn't impact our methods at all; other than the obvious increase in render-time, and the need for higher resolution input elements. As resolution goes up, both manhours and machine-hours increase, and so, all else being equal, HDTV is more expensive to produce than NTSC.

WS/A52: We really haven't had to deal with HD all that much. Our last job was one of the first that we've delivered in HD. It simply takes longer to render an HD frame than it does an NTSC frame because of greater image resolution. Other than that, our methodology, technique and creative integrity are identical



Effects work can be eye-catching. Photo courtesy of Rushes.

for any image we create at any resolution. We're solid like that.

Framestore: As of yet, HDTV has not had a significant negative or positive on us in the commercials department. Heavy rendering times and image transfer issues spring to mind. We have a large dedicated renderfarm and, in the long run, HDTV looks better so it's worth it. Whatever it takes.

Humunculus: Not by much so far — only about 20% of what we do goes out to HD. We're already used to doing film resolution work for the trailers and titles we do, so HD is really nothing unexpected to our company.

Radium: We do a lot of HD work, but mostly in our 2D department (Radium has six inferno bays). In the CG side of things, well, it is not any more complex than doing film work in 2K, but of course, in film your schedules are considerably longer. So it affects CG in the sense that you can't hide behind the "it's only vid-

res" motto anymore. But then again, improving our tools and techniques so we can do our work faster, better and cheaper is what the industry ultimately is all about.

Ring of Fire: Time. An online or simple assembly is one thing, but when you are working with multiple layer composites, it takes more time to do the work itself, even on the fastest tools available. The client doesn't allow for the time or the budget to support the time it takes. The other fact would be that since HDTV has multiple standards, it makes it difficult to have all the hardware necessary to do the work, mostly in the i-o category. Do you purchase a D5 deck or an HD cam deck? Depends on the volume of work you have to support that decision. This can also equate to equipment rentals. Again, from a budgetary standpoint, machine rentals are difficult to pass on to your client. The end result and look of picture are fantastic, the bottom line is that it costs us more to produce and the budgets aren't really supporting it.

Rushes: HDTV is fantastic and Rushes is fully HD capable, so we do a fair bit of work in HD. It has some

impact on production in that rendertimes are pushed up and compositing is more exacting, but the end product is worth it and provides a master that can save costs in the long run, especially with delivery to multiple formats. Obviously these costs have to be passed on to the client.

Zoic: It is making us work a hell of a lot harder, but at the same time, it brings the quality of effects in television closer to that of movies. Which is in effect making the turnaround time for effects in movies much faster. Stop this crazy world — I need to get off! ■

SARAH BAISLEY is the editor of Animation World Network.

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:

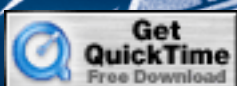
HOT SPOTS SHOWCASE: THE BEST IN ANIMATED & VFX COMMERCIALS

Rick DeMott collects some of the best animated and visual effects commercials from top companies to highlight the wonderful work being done in the medium.

FRESH FROM THE FESTIVALS: AUGUST 2003'S FILM REVIEWS

Greg Singer reviews five short films fresh from the festival circuit: *Originated By Descent* by Jung Eun Lee, *Shaved Monkey* by Thor Adam Goodall, *7 Cats* directed by Laura di Trapani, *Cameras Take Five* by Steve Woloshen and *Ananda* directed by Mike Smith.

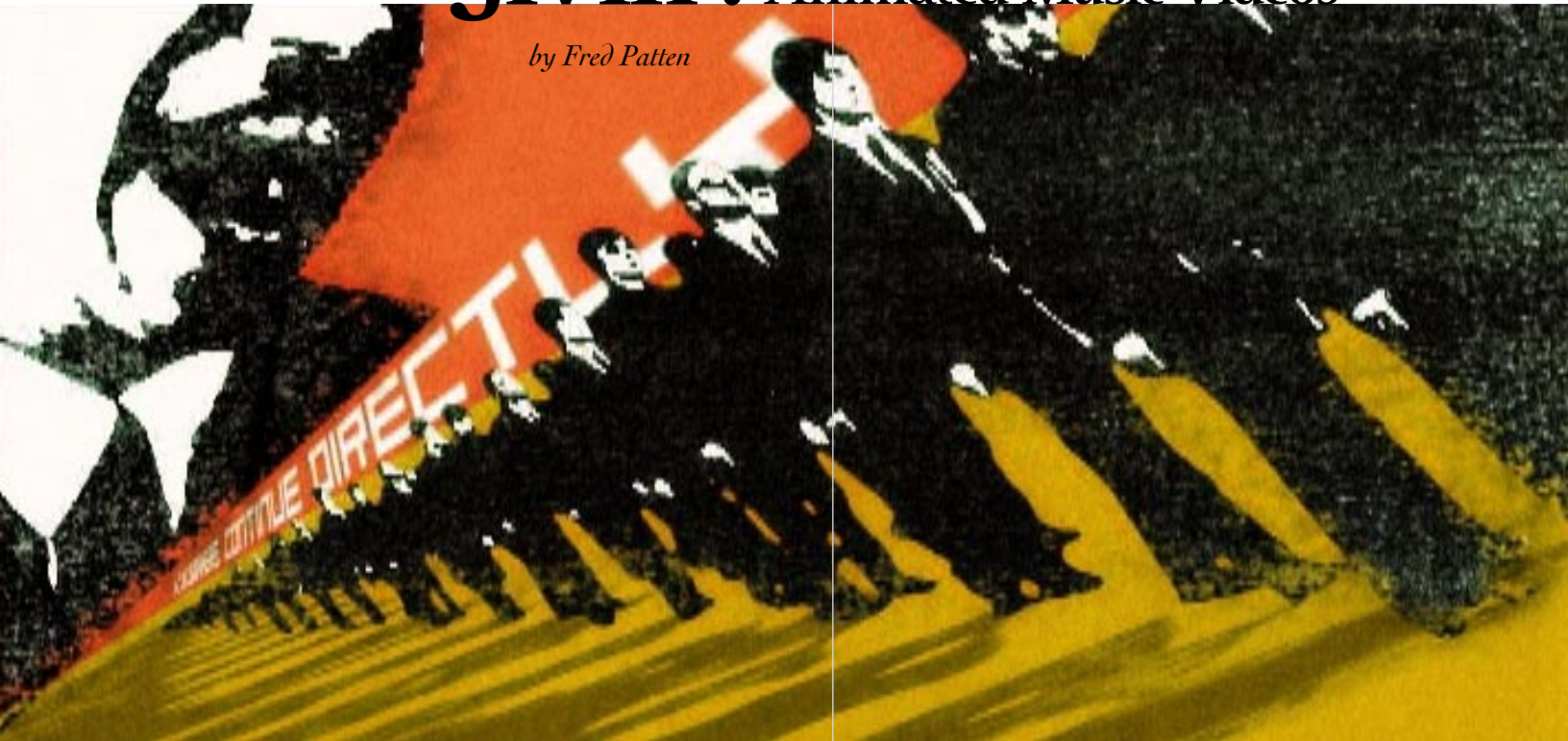
View the QuickTime clips online!



FREE-SPIRIT

Jumpin' & Jivin': Animated Music Videos

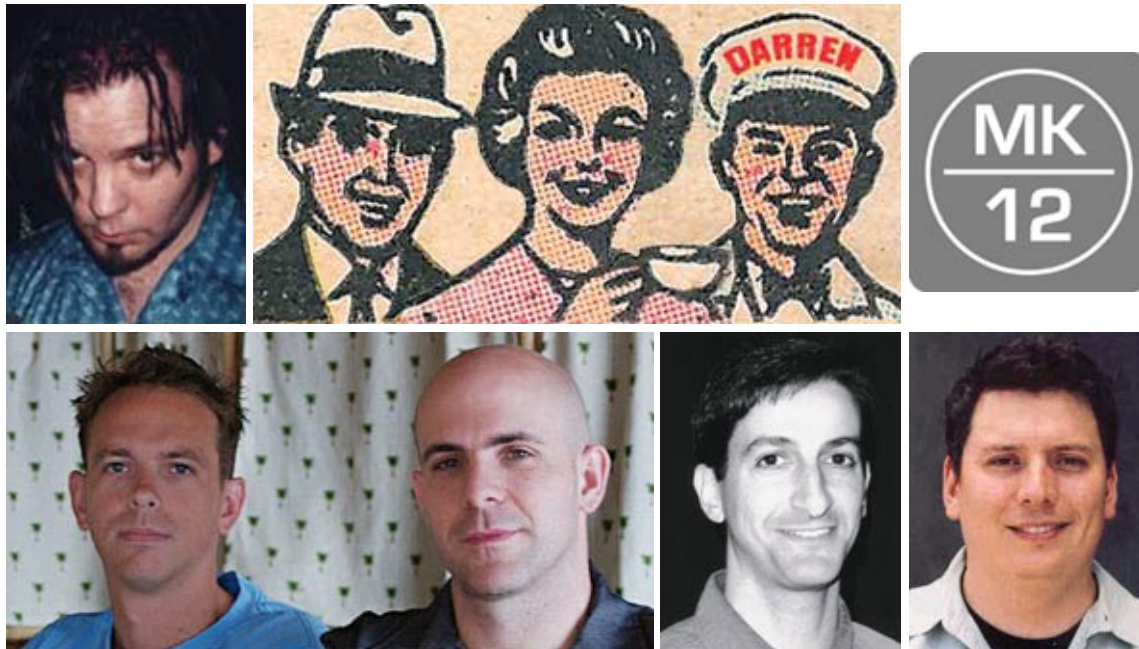
by Fred Patten



The corporate drones in Faint's *Agenda Suicide* video. Images courtesy of MK12.



mUSIC VIDEOS CAN BE ONE OF THE MOST FREE-spirited forms of animation, where visual imagination is encouraged to run wild. Although artistic and technical experimentation are not the primary goals of music videos, they are often an ideal opportunity for the animator to stretch his or her limits. Here are six views of music videos from both the designers and animators who create them and the clients who request them.



First row: Cliff Galbraith (left). Fluorescent Hill's (center) Mark Lomond, Johanne Ste-Marie and Darren Pasemko. MK12 logo (right). Second Row: Moneyshots (left) visual effects supervisor Chris Eckardt on left and creative director Elad Offer on right. Co-founder of Girdwood Partners, LLC Howard Soriano (center). Zoic Studios' Andrew Orloff (right), founder and head of CG projects. Galbraith photo courtesy of Cliff Galbraith. Photo of Eckardt and Offer courtesy of Moneyshots. Soriano photo courtesy of Girdwood Partners, LLC. Orloff photo courtesy of Zoic Studios.

Cliff Galbraith is an independent producer/director in North Hollywood, California. He also produces the comic book *Rat Bastard* under his Crucial Comics, Inc. label.

Fluorescent Hill is a collective formed by Mark Lomond, Darren Pasemko and Johanne Ste-Marie, in Montreal, Canada, straight out of school. Lomond responded for the three entrepreneurs.

MK12 is a design collective consisting of 10 to 15 creative artists based in Kansas City, Missouri. Matt Fraction answered us as MK12's spokesperson.

Moneyshots is a full-service visual effects design facility in Santa Monica, California. It was founded in 2001 by Chris Eckardt (visual effects supervisor) and Elad Offer (creative director) as a music video post house, and has worked on videos for artists including Celine Dion, Janet Jackson and Britney Spears. Both Eckardt and Offer contributed to this response.

WeeBeeTunes Travel Adventures is a series of award-winning educational animated music videos intended to "introduce kids to countries and cultures around the world." Howard Soriano, co-founder of the Chicago-based Girdwood Partners, LLC which produces and

markets them, and the executive producer of the series, tells us what his company wants when it commissions these music videos.

Zoic Studios was founded in Los Angeles in September 2002 to provide visual effects and CG animation for commercials, music videos, feature films and TV. Andrew Orloff, one of Zoic's founders and head of CG projects, has given us his viewpoints.

1. How do you get music video assignments?

CG: I'm currently working on an animated video for a band called Trouble Is. I got this gig from former MTVVJ Matt Pinfield, who is now with Sony Music. Pinfield was a huge fan of my work on a comic I put out in the late '90s. So much of a fan, that he invited me and my partner Tim Bird to be interviewed on the MTV *Beach House* in '97 to talk about our comic book *Rat Bastard*.

Tim and I were from a very music intensive scene in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Everyone we knew was either in a band, worked for a record label, booked talent or was in management. Tim also worked in a record store. Underground music was our culture since the early punk days. So we know a lot of people in the industry. You could say we made our



Galbraith's work on the *Trouble Is* video. Image courtesy of Cliff Galbraith.

connections without even trying, over 20 years ago, because we shared a passion with people who went on to make music their career in some way or other.

FH: We're all big fans of music. Our tastes really fill up the spectrum, so we tend to search out musicians or bands that we feel have a strong artistic sensibility to their music. Not every musician and song lends itself to animation, but when it does it makes for a really fun collaboration. We also send out newly completed projects to bands and labels as a gift. Sort of a, "we like your work here's some of ours..." Either they really appreciate it or they want to collaborate on something.

MK12: We shared mutual friends with a band called The Faint. They asked if we would do a video for them and we did.

We tend to wait for a request to do a video, but if anyone in the music video industry circle is reading this, MK12 is available.

Moneyshots: We get work by having a relationship with several production companies in the music video business. When they have a job they need post work on, they call us and ask us to bid on it.

WBT: At the outset of the project we reviewed samples and demos from a lot of different animators. We narrowed the list down and made personal visits to about seven different animation studios, mostly on the west coast and in Canada. It was important to find a studio that had the technical skills to animate to music, could carry the creative process from storyboards through to final animation, and understood and believed in the goals the project (with the ability to deliver production quality to match).

Zoic: Usually an artist or company is known for the work they do on animated videos. A music video production company will often look at another video or commercial that they like and contact the artist or company responsible for it. Directors develop a level of trust with people that they've worked with in the past and come back to them over and over again.

2. Who are some of the well-known animators of music videos that you know of and admire?

CG: I like Kevin Altieri's *Do The Evolution* for Pearl Jam. *Tank Girl* creator Jamie Hewlett did some nice work on the Gorillaz videos. There's a pretty cool Rob Zombie Flash video in black-and-white with hot rods that I've only seen once. The White Stripes have a stop-motion video for *Fell In Love With A Girl* that's done entirely with LEGOs — it blows me away every time I see it.

FH: None of us have MuchMusic or any of the music video stations so we don't see a lot of the current videos. But we do see a large amount of work at festivals, and do a fair amount of scouring the Web for the couple of gems that do get out there.

MK12: Who was that dude that did the a-ha video? He was rad.

WBT: Our songs are animated by a studio called [Atomic Cartoons](#) located in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Zoic: Companies like Hydraulix, Digital Domain, The Syndicate and R!OT have all done some great work with animated music videos.

3. To what extent does the client have an idea of what the animation should look like, and to what extent does he just say "we want an animated video to go with our song" and let the animator design it? This varies considerably from project to project, but is there an average procedure?

CG: In my case they just said go for it.

FH: Generally we've had complete creative control over the look of the videos. The musicians have asked us to put their likeness in there or something that's personal to them, but they also want it to be hidden. For the new Boy video, his picture is in there twice, but it's REALLY buried. I don't even know if he's seen it yet.

MK12: We've only done two videos, and in both, the bands were fans of our work and let us go nuts with what we were doing. Very little input, stylistically, on both instances.

Moneyshots: In most cases the director knows what he/she wants and directs the action. There is usually a lot of room for play, though, because most directors are not really aware of what's possible and what isn't within the budget and timeframe they have.

WBT: The animator has a high degree of flexibility, but must work within certain parameters. First, the animation studio must be able to work with the *WeeBeeTunes* characters (the series revolves around seven animals that are indigenous to the seven continents). To some degree, this dictates the overall art direction of the series. Next, the animation for each episode (content, energy, editing, etc.) needs to follow the musical style of the song. The style of music varies depending on the place being visited (i.e., a tango in Argentina, country music at the Calgary rodeo, New Orleans jazz, or the cancan in Paris). Finally, the specific lyrics of the song and the overall educational focus of the series will influence decisions on backgrounds and storyline. There is much research that goes into each animated episode.

Zoic: All music videos start with a treatment. The treatment is written by the director and has a two-page written description of the main action and tone of the video. Once the treatment is approved, a storyboard and animatic (rudimentary CG animation) of the song is generated and cut to the song. From that point on it's a lot of hard work until the delivery.

4. Once a project is approved, how long does the animator have to complete it?

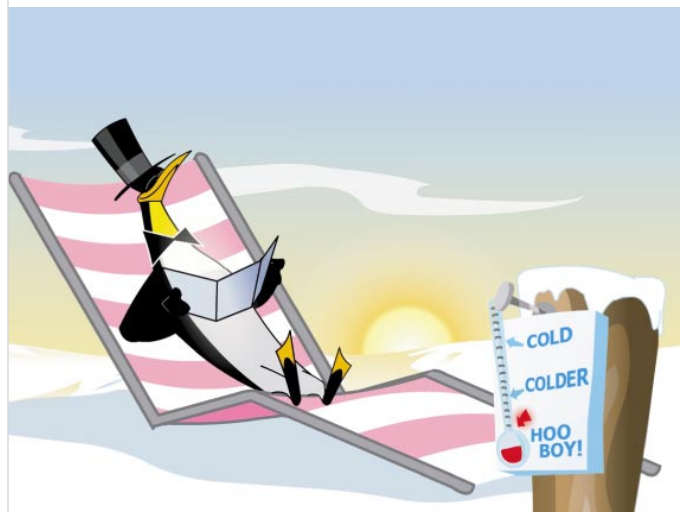
CG: I'll let you know when I'm done.

FH: In Canada, a lot of the labels don't have money for music videos so you have to apply for grants. If you get approved by the grant committee, you have 90 days to complete the video. But if the label needs it to coincide with a release you have to work inside the 90 days. We did our first video for Pilate and it took five weeks, it was just over five minutes long. The video for Boy is under three minutes and it took about six to eight weeks, and that's with all the paperwork and transfers included. Nothing will ever be under four weeks, not with the grant process.

MK12: That depends. We did the Hot Hot Heat video in six weeks. The Faint video took a little longer, but there was a rolling deadline on that.

Moneyshots: Most music videos have no more than two weeks to be completed. Sometimes, if the client is really great, you can have as much as a month. It used to be that post schedules were longer, but that isn't the case anymore.

WBT: Anywhere from four to eight weeks.



WeeBeeTunes Travel Adventures even goes as far as Antarctica. Image courtesy of Girdwood Partners, LLC.

Zoic: Usually for a big animated project the schedule will range from about six to 12 weeks. I worked on *Californication* for the Red Hot Chili Peppers and that was tight — around four weeks.

5. How closely does the animator work with the client? Does the animator usually work alone until the video is finished, or does the animator frequently show his work-in-progress to the client?

CG: I've got a free rein up to a point. Then we'll all sit down and see what works for the band, the label, etc.

FH: We usually work alone and show the video at the very final stage. But we do send the artist and managers a couple of stills of the first few completed scenes so they know what to expect. After that, there isn't much going back. Due to the grant process, every detail of production is hopefully, ironed out long before we begin. Everything from the designs to the final timing of the animatic is seen by the musician before it's

THE CLIENTS SEE ALL THIS COOL STUFF IN FILMS FROM PIXAR, DISNEY AND THE LIKE, AND WANT THAT WITHIN TWO WEEKS AND FOR A REALLY SMALL BUDGET.

— MONEYSHOTS

sent out. So they get a feel for the general flow of the video, long before we begin production.

MK12: We've worked alone, mostly. We showed some animation tests, but even then, they weren't requested by the bands. We just wanted to show them what we were up to. This most likely varies.

Moneyshots: This depends on the relationship with the director and the label, but there are definitely "show and tell" schedules while post is going on. With a really trusting client these might be only a couple of times a week. With other more controlling clients, this might be every day, or the director might even sit in on the sessions on a daily basis.

WBT: There is a close working relationship between the animation studio and Girdwood Partners. Several check points and approval steps are built into the process.

Zoic: Animated music videos are like a feature film on fast-forward. The crew is smaller, but there are animation supervisors, modelers, texture artists, character animators, composers. It takes a lot of work to get this kind of project done. The visual effects or animation supervisor is involved with the project from start to finish, but individual animators may come on and off, as their skills are needed.

6. Are clients' requests for an animated music video usually realistic and practical, or do they sometimes show a lack of understanding of what animation can accomplish?

CG: I think they have some idea of what to expect. They know my work, my style, my sense of humor.

FH: The managers and artists have had a pretty good knowledge... so far. We do make every effort to explain the many levels of the production. While working on the video for Boy, his manager Larry Wanagas and promoter Antonello DiDomenico from the Bumstead Recording came to town to see how the video was progressing. We were in the compositing stages of the video. We showed them the video pieced together from finished scenes, line tests and animatics. The video is quite nonlinear to begin with, so when we

saw this rough edit, we thought we would get fired on the spot, but they surprised us quite a bit with how much they knew and understood.

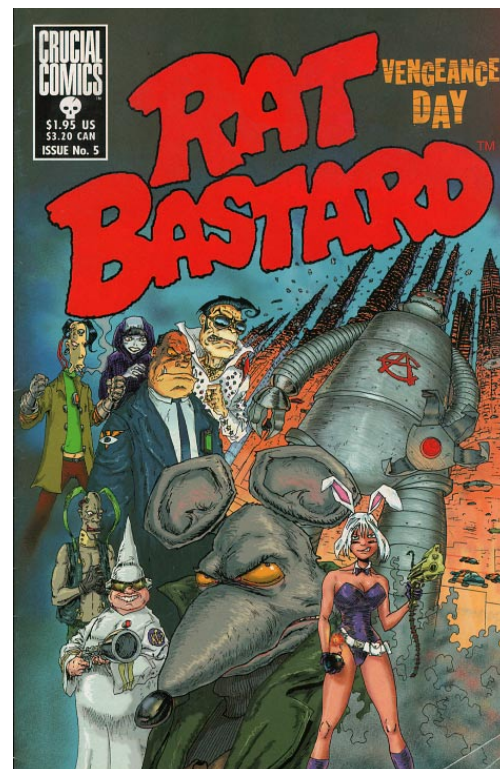
MK12: Again, both times we had a free rein to go nuts. So we can't really answer that.

Moneyshots: They always show a lack of understanding of what can be achieved within the timeframe and budget. The clients see all this cool stuff in films from Pixar, Disney and the like, and want that within two weeks and for a really small budget.

WBT: It is an ongoing and evolving process. Both sides continue to learn as the project evolves.

7. How long have you been animating music videos? About how many have you made?

CG: This is my first one.



Galbraith's work on *Rat Bastard* proves that just doing great work can open doors for you.

FH: We began just about a year ago while in school. But we had to kind of sneak around and do it behind the school's back during the end of the year and summer. Boy is our second video, and we're in the development stages of a couple right now. The first two were made while in school.

MK12: About a year-and-a-half; two.

Moneyshots: Moneyshots has been active in post for the last two years. We have done over 80 videos, only one of which was CG animation from beginning to end. Most videos have short (:30 to :60) sequences that involve some form of CG animation.

WBT: There are 29 travel episodes in the series [which started in November 2001] to date. In addition, there is an animated theme song for each of the seven characters as well as two different productions of the *WeeBeeTunes* theme song.

Zoic: I've been working on animated music videos for about four years.

Computer animated music videos credits:

Red Hot Chili Peppers: *Californication* — lead animator

Linkin Park: *In the End* — visual effects supervisor/lead animator [the band won the VMA [MTV's Video Music Award] award for Best Rock Video]

Linkin Park: *Points of Authority* — visual effects supervisor [nominated for two VES [Visual Effects Society] awards]

8. About what percentage of your work has been music videos as opposed to other types of assignments (such as TV commercials or TV cartoons)?

FH: It's about 50% right now. We just finished an animated title sequence for a live-action TV show, and we did some effects and animation for a short film that was part of the 48-hour film competition here in Montreal. We have about three short films nearing completion right now. Johanne just finished a film for the NFB that's really different from a lot of their other works.

MK12: We've done way more other assignments than videos.

Moneyshots: We do about 80% music videos and 20% commercials and other work.

WBT: The entire focus of our company is on the animated



Moneyshots has worked on high-profile videos like Janet Jackson's *Son of a Gun* (remix). Photo courtesy of Moneyshots.

music videos of *WeeBeeTunes Travel Adventures*.

Zoic: About 10%. I work a lot on commercials and television shows at Zoic Studios. Our visual effects and animation projects include: *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Firefly*, *Angel*, as well as spots for Suzuki, Nissan and Popsicle, among others.

9. How do you like producing music videos compared to other types of animation? What are the advantages and disadvantages?

CG: With a rock animation, there's a good chance you won't have to synch up vocals or dialog with the images as tightly as a TV series.

FH: Producing music videos is great! It's a lot of hard work and really challenging, but just as equal in fun. The hardest part is finding something that will complement the music and not deter from it. Having complete creative control over the look and feel of the work is also a major plus, but we'd be up to collaborating with a musician's idea.

There are several disadvantages to working in this medium as well...The hours are twice as many as any I've had to put in at a studio. And the money is considerably lower (depending on how long it takes you). Sometimes it seems just as much paperwork as there is animation. Balancing a budget is not something they teach you in any animation school I've heard of or been to. But then again, most animation productions go through all of the same obstacles.

We've done the music videos and promo work with a considerably small staff. The most we've ever had working at once is five and the smallest is one. That in-

THE BIG ADVANTAGE IS THE CREATIVE EDGE. YOU USUALLY GET A LOT OF SPACE FOR EXPERIMENTATION AS WELL AS CLIENTS WHO ARE WILLING TO LISTEN TO YOUR INPUT.

— **MONEYSHOTS**

volves a lot of pulling double duty, whether it's layouts and animation, or directing and coloring or all of the above. It forces you to be a multi-tasked and independent, while at the same time focused, and able to work in collaboration with the rest of the crew. This is something you just don't get at a commercial studio.

MK12: We've had a lot of fun doing our videos, because we were lucky enough to have full creative control over them. This is very rare elsewhere in our portfolio.

The biggest disadvantage is that videos are, you know, long. A show open or commercial is :30, and videos are much more time- and work-intensive.

Moneyshots: We like music videos a lot, that's why we keep on doing them. The big advantage is the creative edge. You usually get a lot of space for experimentation as well as clients who are willing to listen to your input. The bad part is you don't get to sleep when you work on them, because the schedules are way too short and you don't really make any money because the budgets are too low.

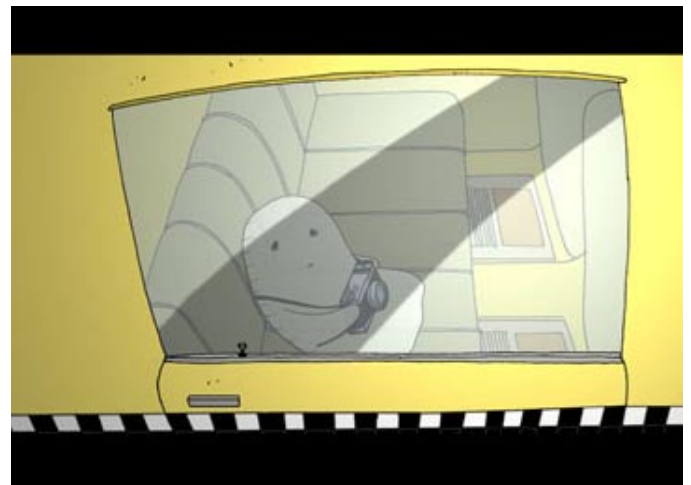
Zoic: The main disadvantage is the restrictions in time and budget. In a video, you always wish you had a little more money and a few more days. On the flipside, the work is really creative and it gives you more freedom as an artist than a lot of the other types of projects.

10. What were some of the challenges you had to meet on a music video or fun things you got to do on it. What tools did you use?

CG: I'm using Flash, but a lot of it is frame-by-frame animation and looks like traditional.

FH: One of the projects we're working on is a video for the band, Motion Soundtrack. The video is a mixture of live-action film and animation. During the shooting of the film, I rode atop of a freight engine through the highlands of Nova Scotia. It was the combination of intense fun and fear, a definite highlight. We also shot a lot of footage on sunny beaches, which was a nice alternative to the bright light of an animation table. There was quite a bit of shooting of cliffs and mountains. Unfortunately there are also quite a bit of challenges while shooting these videos.

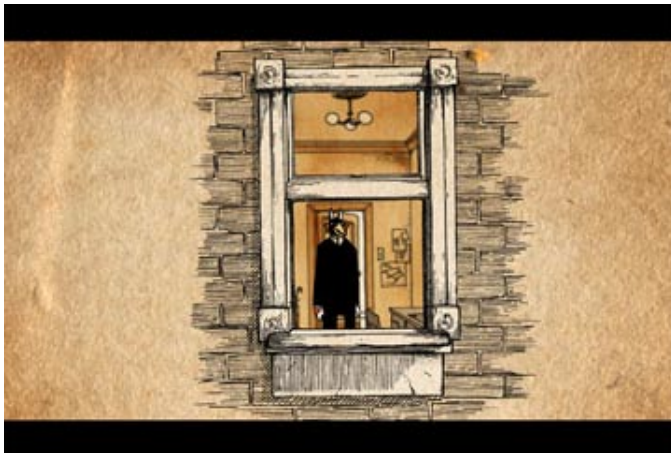
One of the most important things is trying to find the right kind of people to work with; not everyone works well together and it's a hard lesson to learn. We've seen it both ways. But the best part of the video process is when you see a scene that someone has been plugging away at for awhile and when it comes out... it just works so well. Darren's shot of the fox ripping off the head of the crow was a scene like that. I thought he did an amazing job on that scene. Johanne has got some crazy visuals for her NFB film that I'm nuts about. Funny and stylish. I don't think any of us really like our own work, but we're blown away by what the other can accomplish. That's probably the single most important thing that drives us to get going on more and more work.



Is this little guy from the Pilate video alright? Image courtesy of Fluorescent Hill.

In terms of tools we use, it's just about everything under the sun, from Super 8mm to ToonBoom. Everything we do is run through at least three or four programs before it comes out the way we want it.

Moneyshots: We did a music video for Linkin Park's remix album for the song *Frgt/10*. The video was a fully CG animated music video based on a treatment that one of the partners (Joshua Cordes) wrote for the track. We had very little time to do it in, so we had to maximize the use of pre-existing elements. CG elements that were created for different spec spots were modified and reused. Textures that are out of sight were kept simple and basic. The whole thing happens



Zoic helped bring Blue Man Group (top left) from Vegas to MTV. There's a unique look to Boy's Joey (bottom left) that sticks out. Moneyshots relied on Maya to work on Linkin Park's *Frgt/10* (top right). What kid could resist these *WeeBeeTunes* cute critters (bottom right)? Blue Man Group image courtesy of Zoic Studios. Joey image courtesy of Fluorescent Hill. Linkin Park image courtesy of Moneyshots. Critter image courtesy of Girdwood Partners, LLC.

at night so there is less to see. Most of the attention was given to getting the motion of the characters right so that the emotion in the treatment comes through in the final animation. All this was done using Maya 4.0. As each shot was done, it was loaded into flame and treated so that some of the texturing and rendering problems don't show.

WBT: One of the primary challenges is to maintain the educational integrity of each episode while producing finished product that is highly entertaining. This is also what makes this project so fun and rewarding.

Zoic: When I did Linkin Park's *Points Of Authority* with Joe Hahn and Patrick Tatopolis (which was completed when I was at Radium in Santa Monica, California), we

developed the most creative involvement I've had in a project. We started with storyboards and concept art. We worked on the CG characters and started blocking out the shots at the same time. Patrick and Joe worked with me and the artists on every detail from the lighting to the camera angles. These animatics were later integrated with the final models and animation and lighting was applied. Joe and Patrick were involved every step of the way. It was a real collaborative process. We did 4.5 minutes of CG animation in a little over 10 weeks. It was a lot of fun. ■

FRED PATTEN is has written on anime for fan and professional magazines since the late 1970s.

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SIZZLIN' COMMERCIALS

Hot Spots Showcase: The Best in Animated & VFX Commercials

by Rick DeMott



WE PUT OUT A CALL TO VARIOUS LEADING ANIMATION AND VISUAL EFFECTS HOUSES TO MAKE THE DIFFICULT DECISION OF PICKING ONE SPOT THAT REPRESENTS THEIR WORK.

Rhythm + Hues' [EA Sports NASCAR Thunder 2003](#).

mANY INDEPENDENT ANIMATION HOUSES MAKE THEIR monthly nut doing commercials. So often you hear artists, especially younger ones, professing their hatred for working on commercials. It's like they're selling out. However, they're not looking at the positive side of doing work on spots. Innovation is often present in the medium. The short format, which is highly funded, has opportunities that TV and film project sometimes don't have in regards to experimentation. [Agency creative directors](#) are always looking for new and innovative ideas that will make their client's product stick out from the rest.

Therefore, we've decided that it was time to highlight the eye-catching work that is being done in advertising. We put out a call to various leading animation and visual effects houses to make the difficult decision of picking one spot that represents their work. It's amazing the range of styles and feel to the commercials we received. Some are silly, some are informative, some are dramatic. All of them capture your attention. This is great for an advertiser, but it's also skills that are greatly needed in all forms of storytelling.



Curious Pictures' [Target Airstream](#).

CURIOUS PICTURES

Joan Raspo was commissioned by PMH advertising in Minneapolis to direct a third spot for Target's DVD sales campaign. The audience for the spot is the 25-35 year old market demographic, and it focuses on romantic comedies and dramas. The two previous spots of this campaign, *Treehouse* and *Traffic*, were recently honored at the 2003 BDA awards in Los Angeles. PMH art director, Carl Byrd relates "We wanted to work with Joan again and her team at Curious because they really get what we are trying to say. Joan added a lot to this project, from a sweeping, cinematic opening camera move, to little details which give the spot tons of texture and flair."

Credits for Target Airstream

Airstream was shot in HD in order to capture high-resolution facial features. After AVID editing, the footage was digitally roto-scoped.

Advertising Agency: Peterson Milla Hooks
 Agency Creative Director: Dave Peterson
 Agency Art Director: Carl Byrd
 Agency Account Executive: Ken Barlage
 Agency Copywriter: Nate Morley
 Agency Producer: Aldo Hertz
 Director: Joan Raspo
 Producer: Sara Nahas
 Production Manager: Dana Discordia
 DP: Stuart Dryburgh
 HD Technician: Abby Levine
 CG Shoot Supervisor: Damon Ciarelli
 Editor: Anthony Orkin
 Designers: Joan Raspo, Justin Harder, Austin Shaw
 Compositor: Mario Stipinovich

3D Artists: Lewis Kofsky, Joseph Cross, Paul Liaw
 Rotoscope Artists: Kyle McCulloch, Connie Conrad, Sheldon Drake, Tim Dingersen
 Casting: Becky Moore at Donna Deseta Casting
 Original Music and Sound Design: Rick Meyer at Modern Music



DUCK's [M&M's Strip Poker](#).

DUCK

The M&M's *Strip Poker* spot represents what we as a small studio do best: character animation. We recognize that a crucial aspect of animation is the personality exuded by animated characters. Our focus, therefore, has always been to bring life, and humor, to the projects we undertake. And we get plenty of opportunity to do this working with such popular icons as the "Yellow" and "Red" M&M's characters. Although this spot was not overly challenging on the technical side, the animation had to shine, and to be convincing. We wanted to animate the interactions of Yellow and Red (with each other as well as with the human characters in the spot) in a way that enhanced the humor of the writing and added a touch of innuendo to the situation. We are proud of this spot and feel we successfully achieved our goals.

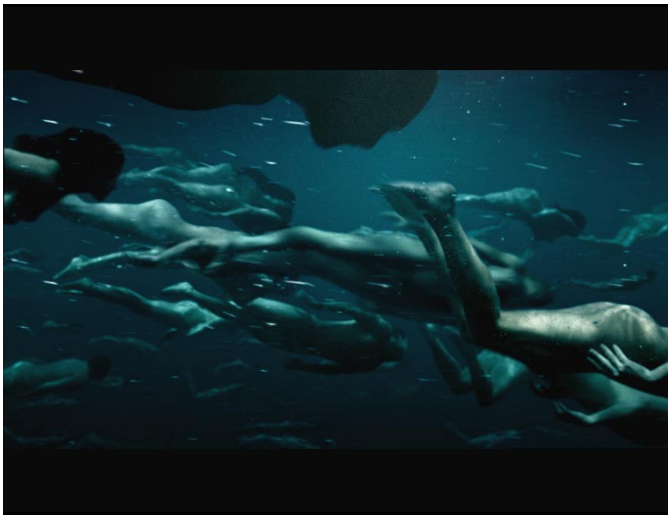
— director Lane Nakamura

Credits for MasterFoods M&M's Strip Poker

To match the lighting on the CGI characters with the live-action lighting, we use a technique called High Dynamic Range imaging (HDR) to accurately record the lighting conditions of the set. With this technique, photographic images of a highly reflective (chrome) sphere are taken at the set, merged and then converted into a lighting map within the 3D software, where they are used to light the 3D character models.

3D Modeling and Animation: Alias Maya
 3D Render and Lighting: NewTek LightWave
 3D Translation Software: The Beaver Project
 Compositing: Adobe After Effects
 Texture Map Creation: Adobe Photoshop
 Tracking: 2d3 boujou

Advertising Agency: Clemenger BBDO
 Agency Producer: Jenny Livingston
 Creative Directors: Jacqui Patterson and John Akritidis
 Live-Action Director: Paul Middleditch
 Live-Action Editor: Michael Horton
 Executive Producer: Mark Medernach
 Animation Director: Lane Nakamura
 Animation Editor: Melissa Timme
 Technical Director: Jiannjyh Chen
 Animators: Jiannjyh Chen, Lane Nakamura, Laura Sasso



Framestore's *Johnnie Walker Body and Shoal*.

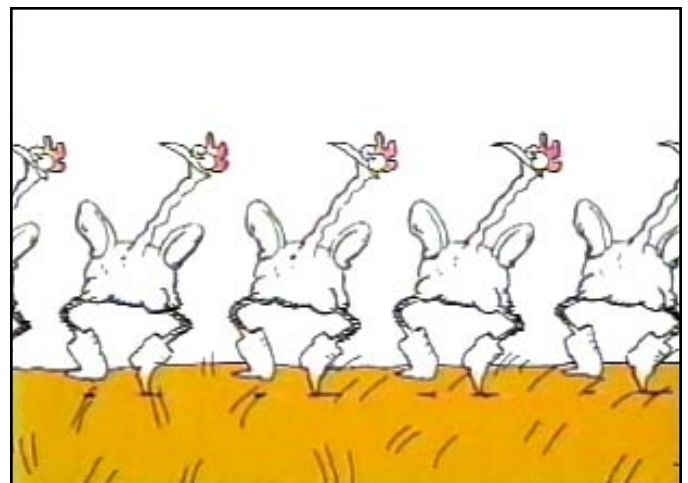
FRAMESTORE

"The CG people needed to have enough variety so that they didn't look overly synchronized, like marching troops," CGI supervisor Andrew Daffy recalls, "So I came up with a character sheet giving different swimmers different swimming styles. We had 'travelers', 'powerkicks', 'generics', 'gliders' and 'coastdwellers'." The CG process, whereby the shots could proceed from animatic to finished shot, operated via several stages. (1.) A shot plate was created, often tweaked for lighting effects by the inferno operator. (2.) Daffy then sketched rough paths over a still of the shot plate within Photoshop, giving an indication to the animators for the swim-paths. (3.) The animators 'blocked' out the scene with a small number of low-resolution people. (4.) With a small amount of tweaking, the 'ran-

dom people generator' would then create hundreds of the high-resolution, fully defined people. (5.) The shot would then need to be rendered. This was done by Jake Mengers and Simon Stoney. Smaller models of the swim cycles were given to Andrew Chapman, technical director, who developed the early shots featuring the huge shoals. The power of 'particle' technology in Maya, meant that he was able to create a vast number of people — at times reaching 8,000.

Credits for Johnnie Walker *Body and Shoal*

Advertising Agency: Bartle Bogle Hegarty
 Agency Producer: Amy Sugden
 Production Company: Spectre
 Director: Daniel Kleinman
 Producers: Johnnie Frankel
 DOP: Ivan Bird
 Editing Company: Cut and Run/Steve Gandolphi
 Post-Production: Framestore CFC
 VFX Supervisors: William Bartlett, Murray Butler
 inferno Artists: William Bartlett, Murray Butler
 2D Matte Artists: Stephanie Mills, Sophia Tufail, Bruce Nelson
 CGI Supervisor: Andrew Daffy
 Modeling: Howard Sly
 Character Setup: Rachel Ward, Felix Balbas
 Animators: Craig Bardsley, Brendan Body, Rosie Ashworth, Gwilym Morris, Kate Hood
 Shoaling: Andrew Chapman
 Lighting and Look: Jake Mengers, Simon Stoney
 R&D: Alex Parkinson, Tim Aidley
 Telecine: Dave Ludlam
 Post Producer: Helen MacKenzie



Kurtz & Friends' *Burger King Burger and Chickens*.

KURTZ & FRIENDS

I love silly animation and what could be more silly

than hip marching clucking chickens. It was fun to choreograph the chickens as though they were members of a southern college marching band — pelvis thrusts and all.

— director Bob Kurtz.

Credits for Burger King Corp. *Burger and Chickens*

Advertising Agency: Amoeba

Producers: Nick Coxe, Len Fink

Director: Bob Kurtz

Designer: Robert Peluce

Animators: Pam Cooke, Gary Moody, Shane Zalvin

Digital Ink & Paint Supervisor: Jody Carmen

Editor: Kevin Locarro



Wild Brain's Lamisil *It's Alive*.

WILD BRAIN

Wild Brain created *It's Alive* for Novartis's anti-toenail fungus drug, Lamisil via Deutsch Inc., NY. The spot follows a sinister creature named Digger who lifts the toenail of a human foot and corrupts it with fungus. The agency wanted Digger to be a memorable character, but not come across goofy or cuddly. Wild Brain created a sinister guy who is smugly confident and unabashed about his intent to wreak havoc under your toenail. A few variations were tested of him being hairier, but a smooth peach-like fuzz on top of subtle scales was the result. To help him feel slightly crusty, scabby stuff was added to his back and creepy little red hairs sprouting from unknown sources. A hand-held camera feel was used in the first half of the spot, and Wild Brain played with racking focus here and there to make it feel that Digger was being pursued by some unknown cameraman. The world under the toenail was designed to feel organic and look believable.

— director Phil Robinson

Credits for Lamisil *It's Alive*

Modeling, animation and lighting were done in Maya and composited with Shake. An innovational thing was, using the tool in Maya to create mattes in 3D to show the tissue changing from unhealthy to healthy right at the end. The matte spreads like a waterspill over the bad tissue and reveals the healthy tissue.

Advertising Agency: Deutsch Inc. - NYC, NY

Agency Producer: Rich Horlick

Director: Phil Robinson

Producer: Nina Rappaport

Animation Supervisor: Joe Henke

CG Technical & Lighting Supervisor: Ed Davis

Editor: Alex Hauser

Head of Commercials: Andrea Mansour

Music/Sound Design: Fluid - NY, NY



Red Rover Studios' ADT *Big Bad Wolf*.

RED ROVER STUDIOS

When asked to send our best spot, we as a studio agonized and struggled over the decision. After a few days of looking for the answer, we decided to change the question. We sent our favorite spot. *Big Bad Wolf* gave us the opportunity to go back to our roots of classical animation. This is something we're not able to do often. All movements and effects are hand drawn.

— head of sales & marketing Dave Clark

Credits for ADT *Big Bad Wolf*

Advertising Agency: Doner, Baltimore

Producer: Randi Yaffa

Directors: Greg Court & Andy Knight

RHYTHM + HUES

NASCAR Thunder 2003 represented a number of creative and technical challenges for Rhythm + Hues Commercials. The goal: to seamlessly blend the Eisenhower-era epic *Ben Hur* with high-speed, modern NASCAR racing, all within a two-week time-frame, while wrangling an approval chain that included OWN&P, Turner Ent. and at least two different NASCAR racing teams. Director John-Mark Austin says he's relatively certain that viewers will recognize the piece as a playful nod to a filmic masterpiece, and that the integrity of the original will remain untarnished as a result. Still, he expects a few double-takes from his list of production credits. "At least I'll be able to say we worked on *Ben Hur* — the NASCAR version."

— director John-Mark Austin

Credits for Electronic Arts **NASCAR Thunder 2003**

Advertising Agency: Odiorne Wilde Narraway + Partners
Agency Creative Director: Jeff Odiorne

Agency Copywriter/ACD Pete Crosby
Agency Art Director Mark Bell
Agency Producer/ Head of Broadcast Production Chris Weldon
Agency Account Executive: David Rosenberg
Director: John-Mark Austin
Executive Producer CG + Post: Amy Massingale Hassler
Head of CG Production: Jane Stephan
CG/Post Producer: Deborah Gates Austin
Digital Artists: Karl Denham, D.R. Greenlaw, Mark Kochinski, Patrick Perez, Brian Tatosky, Jesse Toves
Flint: David Sweeney
Production Assistant: Daniel Seidner ■

RICK DEMOTT is managing editor of Animation World Network. Previously, he served as the production coordinator for sound production house BadaBing BadaBoom Productions and animation firm Perky Pickle Studios. Prior to that position, he served as associate editor of AWN.



AWN'S ONLINECHAT IS NOW LIVE!

AWN is pleased to announce that our online chat room is open! So, drop in, start a discussion and get to know your animation comrades around the world. Be sure to check in regularly for an opportunity to chat with noted animators and industry professionals scheduled to appear.

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

ANIMATED ADVERTISING

Creative Directors Doing it the *Animated* Way

by Rick DeMott



Peter Crosby can be an animated person. Photo courtesy of Peter Crosby.

HOW DO ANIMATED COMMERCIALS GET MADE? THAT'S the question we were curious about. AWN decided to interview three top [advertising agency](#) creative directors to find out how they make the decision to go animated over live-action. In addition, we asked the important questions about how they pick who will create the animation for them and how they seek out new talent. In an animation industry that seems to be recycling ideas instead of inventing new ones, it is interesting to hear what these advertising execs have to say about creativity and originality.

PETER CROSBY, ODIORNE WILDE NARRAWAY + PARTNERS/SAN FRANCISCO

Crosby attended the University of Dayton, Ohio, graduating with a B.A. in Commercial Design with concentrations in Marketing and Philosophy. After working as a junior art director in Rochester, New York, he took a job at Montgomery Zukerman Davis where he wrote and art directed several bad TV commercials. Despite this, he was promoted to senior art director. Later he moved to little-known agency Paradigm Communications as senior art director where he was later promoted to group head on the NHL Tampa Bay Lightning account. There he won numerous local, regional Addy awards and the occasional national award. He then moved to The Zimmerman Agency, but after six months, he returned to GSD&M/Austin where he eventually became senior writer/co-acd.

After moving to Miami with his wife, he took the senior copywriter post at Turkel Schwartz and Partners/Miami where he only stayed six weeks before being lured to McFarland & Drier/Miami. However, even in his short reign at TS&P, his Joe's Stone Crab campaign for TS&P took Best of Show at the Addys. For his year at McFarland & Drier/Miami, he worked on South Florida Ford Dealers, Domino's Pizza and the Florida Lottery spots, while he taught "Concept & Copywriting" at the Miami Ad School. From there he was offered a copywriter post at his current home, OWN.

IF, HOWEVER THE CONCEPT DOESN'T DEMAND A SPECIFIC TYPE OF APPROACH, WE GO LOOKING FOR NEW OR UNEXPECTED WAYS TO EXECUTE THE CONCEPT.

— PETER CROSBY

During his seven-year tenure, he was promoted to senior copywriter, then associate creative director. He's done work for Electronic Arts, Burger King, Lucky Brand jeans and has been repeatedly asked to judge award shows across the country. His work has appeared in Ad-week, Communication Arts, the One Show, the New York Festival and on his parents' refrigerator.

The decision whether to go with animation or live-action all starts with the concept. That dictates the approach, generally. If, however, the concept doesn't demand a specific type of approach, we go looking for new or unexpected ways to execute the concept.

We don't usually have to convince clients to use animation. With the level of technology available today, our clients now see the advantages of using it over more costly, sometimes less controllable live-action shoots.

When determining which talent or production house to use, excellence is the price of admission. There are lots of great animators out there. They have to be great to even get considered. We've told our client what the spot, or effect, will look like and the animation has to live up to that expectation. If we're not convinced someone can pull off what we want, we'll look elsewhere. Appropriateness matters the most. The best animators won't necessarily have the right style for the job. It's all about making our vision for the spot come across in the commercial.

We have people we've worked with before who offer a degree of comfort for us, but if we see something new that we like, we'll pursue it. One of the advantages of animation is its ability to do things that aren't possible in live-action, things that can make commercials more interruptive — to stop people, make them pay attention. And that's getting harder and harder to do. People think they've seen it all.

We look for new talent by keeping our eyes open. The creatives at our agency screen award shows and vendor reels on Fridays. We'll have a creative department lunch and order pizza. After seeing an outstanding commercial or film, we search out who created the project. Our broadcast department is really good at finding directors, animators, effects people, etc., with only the smallest clues. In get the contact information, we just request it from our production department, they make a few calls and the next day, the reels on our desk. It's kinda spooky, actually.

The best way to get into any agency is to do work

that agencies think is cool. Make us come after you. Or bring along Krispy Kreme doughnuts. That seems to work really well, too.

Rhythm & Hues did some nice work for us recently. We did a spot for Electronic Arts' *NASCAR Thunder* video game using CG cars racing each other over licensed footage from the movie, *Ben Hur*. The car animation is amazingly realistic. The effect was powerful.



Margie Weeks recently started her own agency, Outloud LLC. Photo courtesy of Outloud LLC.

MARGIE WEEKS, OUTLOUD LLC

Weeks has had diverse career as art director and illustrator, culminating in the launch of Outloud, LLC in March 2002. Most recently, she was creative director/vp/muse at Carton Donofrio Partners, Inc. At CDP since 1987, she has worn many hats, taking the creative director role in 1998. She has been responsible for developing many campaigns, including ones for Procter & Gamble, National Aquarium in Baltimore, Jiffy Lube International, ReMax, Lifebridge Health System, Armstrong World Industries and Ocean City tourism. Her illustrations for a Campaign For Our Children Website (room411) resulted in a 1997 New York Art Directors Award.

She has received numerous National awards for her work: The O'Toole Award, National and local Addys, The Mobius Award, NYC Ace Award for Business to Business and the Avon Fellowship. Her work has appeared in Communication Arts, Print and Creativity as well as screened at the Cannes Film Festival. Most recently, her work for Jiffy Lube International, Lifebridge Health and ReMax received national television honors winning 11 Telly Awards.

Before joining Carton Donofrio Partners, Margie was a film designer for special effects and animation at Woo Art International in New York City. She produced commercials for Skittles, Bold detergent, Jif

peanut butter, Clairol, Tonka Toys and the U.S. Armed Forces. Margie received a B.S. degree in Studio Art from Skidmore College, studied film at the Corcoran School in Washington, D.C., Design at the University of Copenhagen and has a M.S. degree in Communications from Pratt Institute, in Brooklyn, New York.

When I come up with a concept for television I am mostly concerned with the strength of the "idea" first, then I determine what is the best way to communicate that idea. In this day of special effects anything can be done, so my decision to use animation is not because you can't shoot it live-action, but based in the art of communication. Animation streamlines the idea, usually making it easier to understand. I also believe in the extreme "delight factor." Animation engages and totally delights the audience.

I have used animation in categories that are steeped in live-action such as with real estate with ReMax, healthcare with Sinai Hospital in Baltimore, The National Aquarium, Jiffy Lube, Anti-Smoking and Teenage Pregnancy Prevention. The use of animation as an insert works well to describe technology or scientific reasons that a product is better than another. It is a good way to provide a "reason to believe." I have also used animation in the logo treatments, which is a great way to brand a logo.

I must say I have been so fortunate to have worked with some of the best animators in the world — Cordell Barker, Sue Loughlin, Alexandra Korejwo, Raimund Krumme, Daniel Guyonnet and Caroline Leaf. I am an animation groupie; I am always looking for new styles and new talent. I get drawn into the beauty of the techniques, the humor of the line, the power of the color and the magic that unfolds. Good animation is an emotional ride, the spots that I have done run the gamut from serious to funny, scary, imaginative and downright weird. That is the beauty of the genre; it delivers a message in an unexpected way.

When it comes to finding new talent, I pretty much always start with Acme Filmworks. Ron Diamond and Holly Stone listen to what I am trying to communicate and then they always have something for me to look at. I am always looking, when I see something on television, I start the research the next day. My producer uses spot search and I love to see students' work.

There are three spots that are very dear to me and have really cut through the clutter of traditional advertising, they are: *Every Move You Make*, by Alexandra Korejwo; *Everything You Want to Be*, by Sue Loughlin and my all time favorite, *Bone-Heads*, by Cordell Barker. Each one of these spots are jewels.



Jacques DuFour created cereal icons like the Honey Nut Cheerios bee.

JACQUES DUFOUR, SAATCHI & SAATCHI

DuFour is an advertising veteran who has worked on some of the most recognizable animated commercials in history. He began his career as an animator and animation director, then moved over into commercials. He is responsible for designing and bringing to life the Honey Nut Cheerios bee. He has also worked commercials featuring the Trix rabbit, the ChocoPuffs cuckoo bird and the Lucky Charms leprechaun.

I only work on animated commercials. So it's very important to interview the artist who may be working on the project. We'll have the idea of what we want, but we want to know how they will get us there. What are their ideas about the style and the effects used? Everything starts out with the storyboards.

When picking a production company to work with on a particular spot we do look around a little bit. We search around for artists who are open to try something new or have a different style. The way I find new talent is to speak with animators. They have a better grasp on production and they know what work is being done. When I see a film or commercial that impresses me I absolutely seek them out. I want to know how they do that. I look in publications to find new talent. We don't just use U.S. talent — we use a lot in Europe. The CPW (Cereal Partners Worldwide) is good place to look outside the U.S.

The best way to show us your work is by sending us your portfolio. Most of them we receive are on CD or DVD. It's up to the artists to initiate the contact, but we are very open to submissions. Some of the production companies that we like to work with are Calabash in Chicago, DUCK and Uli Meyer out of London. ■

RICK DEMOTT is managing editor of Animation World Network.

ANIMATION ODDPARENT

The Fred Seibert Interview — Part 2

by Joe Strike

IN THE SECOND INSTALLMENT OF A TWO-PART INTERVIEW, JOE STRIKE TALKS TO FRED SEIBERT ABOUT ANIMATED LIFE AFTER HANNA-BARBERA, THE CREATION OF FREDERATOR STUDIOS AND HIS NEW SERIES ON NICKELODEON AND UPCOMING PROJECTS.



Fred Seibert found working with entrepreneur Ted Turner a liberating experience.
Photo credit: Michael Yarish/
Nickelodeon

Joe Strike: When did you decide to leave Hanna-Barbera?

Fred Seibert: First of all, understand that the day I got in there I said to everyone 'I know nothing about animation,' and the likelihood that I will ever work in animation again outside the studio is virtually nil. My career has been characterized as having no career. I was like a ping-pong ball in a wind tunnel. Wherever I went where I thought I could do something interesting I did it.

I went to work for an entrepreneur — Ted Turner — who I knew was going to indulge my entrepreneurial impulses. When I went there, the guy who was running the studio at the time asked me, 'What do you think Ted Turner wants from us?' I said, 'I only met him for 20 minutes — I have no idea what he wants us to do. But I read a book about him and I'm going to guess what he wants me to do. I'll do what my best guess is, and if he doesn't like it he'll fire me.'

Ted was a fantastic boss but he was entrepreneurial. He basically approved a budget at the beginning of the year and checked in once a month to see what I was doing. I knew when we merged with Time Warner that was not going to happen anymore. I was not going to be in a company as small as Turner was. Turner was a company run by an entrepreneur, a 'loony entrepreneur' — I say that in quotes, and I say that with affection. There was nothing like that at Time Warner.

JS: A much more corporate culture.

FS: It was just a completely different culture, and it was not one that indulged people like me. I knew that my time was up, so I left with the merger.

When I knew I was going to leave, I looked back, which is the only time I really looked back. I realized that for the



ChalkZone is a result of Seibert challenging producer Larry Huber (left) to make a short and Bill Burnett's (center) writing talents. Seibert gives all props to John Kricfalusi. Huber and Burnett photo credits: Michael Yarish/Nickelodeon. Kricfalusi photo © Spumco.

first time in my career I had actually developed an asset for myself that I could leverage elsewhere: I understood how to develop talent in the animation world and get hits. I'd never really gone into any new venture with that kind of asset.

When I was still at Hanna-Barbera, someone from Nickelodeon called: 'How come in the last three years you've made 48 shorts and we made five pilots?' I said 'I can't tell you that — I'm the competition.' When I announced I was leaving, the same person called back, 'You're not the competition any more,' and I said 'Yeah, but you're not paying me. It's a secret.' He said, 'Well can we rent the secret?' I said, 'Sure,' and I made a deal as an independent producer of new animation for Nickelodeon.

JS: That's when Frederator was born?

FS: Yeah. I left Hanna-Barbera in October 1996 and Frederator started January 1997.

JS: You credit people like [Larry Huber](#) as having a knack for recognizing and developing talent; it sounds like you share that ability with him.

FS: It's something I'm interested in. As an independent producer it's required, because the only reason that companies make deals with producers is that producers know something they don't. And 99% of the time the thing that producers know and companies don't is how to root out talent and nurture and develop them into something valuable for the company.

So, aside from the fact that I shared it with those guys, I understood it was a requirement of my new life to know how to do it.

JS: How do you find talent? Or do you wait for it to come to you?

FS: No, you can never wait. Well you can wait, big companies wait. The studios wait, the networks wait; they literally sit there in their offices and take phone calls from agents. As an independent or as a small place you can't afford that, because frankly you're the last one on their phone list — you're never first.

I'm analytical. I'm not very disciplined, but I'm very organized — I'm a systems guy. When I have to deal with an issue like rooting out talent, I develop a system. Within that system I figure out how to put out a call to the greater community, saying I'm looking, and now I've developed a system for them to come in and to judge, which is ultimately what you have to do.

JS: You have a brain trust you'll call and say 'I have a project here that I need you to come in and give me some feedback on.'

FS: Yes, that's exactly what I do.

JS: People like [Kricfalusi](#)?

FS: Yeah, absolutely. Literally when I started *What A Cartoon!*, in part based on things I learned from John Kricfalusi, he was the first one I called. I said, 'John you'll never believe it, I'm doing exactly what you believe should be done.'

If anyone should get credit for changing the name of the game in traditional cartooning, it should be John Kricfalusi. There were also the Mike Judges of the world and a few other people. But for people who work in the commercial grind, making commercial cartoons — John Kricfalusi's the man. He changed the game. He wanted to make the kinds of cartoons Hollywood wanted to make, in the system they wanted to make it, but he wanted them to be passionate and successful.

When I started Frederator and *Oh Yeah! Cartoons*, my first talent pool were the people that I had already done stuff with that I thought were special, but maybe hadn't hit the mark yet. There were people that didn't show up in time for the *What A Cartoon!* and get those. One of the most interesting ones was Larry Huber who had been my supervising producer for *What A Cartoon!* I asked him to leave Hanna-Barbera and come over with me like a shot in the dark and be my partner in the cartoons. Here I am, I haven't been in the business five years, I'm really young, younger than he is. He said, 'Well I'll be your supervising producer.' I said, 'No, be my co-executive producer.'

He said, 'Okay, what do I need to know?' I said, 'There's only one thing, you have to make a short.' He said, 'Why?' I told him, 'You're an awesome story man. You're not paid to be a story man, no one thinks of you as

a story man, you're paid as a line producer.'

Larry said, 'I'm not going to do it.' I said, 'You can't be the guy unless you do a short. Why don't you want to do one?' The reason was he was basically scared of all the young folk, who he saw rightfully as stunningly talented. 'I can't compete with them,' he said.

I said, 'I'm not giving you the job unless you do your own.' He reluctantly agreed. The first one he did, he partnered with Bill Burnett, an animation and advertising writer I'd worked with in New York that I'd brought to L.A. — and that was *ChalkZone*. That was Larry's first creation in his life that made it to production. At the time he was 50-some odd years old.

JS: Was he sort of hedging his bets working with Burnett?

FS: It just happened. It was Larry at his very best. Bill was also lucky. He's about as old as Bill and he was comfortable working with someone of a certain age. When we started *Oh Yeah!*, one of the first people who came to see us was this 20-year-old recently graduated student from CalArts who had already been working in the business doing props and other things. He said, 'I heard that you might need somebody.' I'm looking at his portfolio. I don't know how to judge artists — but this guy looks amazing!

So I sent him to Larry, who calls me up immediately, he's like whispering in the phone, 'What do you want to do with this guy? This guy's the best guy I've ever seen!' That was a young guy named [Carlos Ramos](#). He brought Carlos on to design *ChalkZone*.

What Larry did was put a team together. He's an awesome film story man. Bill Burnett is an awesome writer — probably 45 at the time — and Carlos is not just young, but has a vision. He's in many ways is in the top five or 10 artists I've ever worked with — of any kind.

JS: He's going to get a swelled head when he reads this.

FS: He has one already, it's okay. Larry put together a real creative team, which very rarely do the shorts makers do. Usually the shorts makers do it single-handedly — a one-man show. What Larry did after 30 years in the trenches of running teams is, even on the creation side, he put together a team — which is very smart.

JS: Carlos just walked through the door on his own?

FS: Dan Smith, one of our old development guys from Hanna-Barbera who was then at Disney, met Carlos and realized there was no room for him at Disney. He is a real stylist — not merely a fist — he had a thing. Dan



Seibert and Larry Huber assembled a talented team for *ChalkZone*. Courtesy of Nickelodeon.

understood we were the only shop in town where people with a thing had a chance.

JS: Is *Oh Yeah! Cartoons* the *Frederator* version of *What A Cartoon!*?

FS: Exactly the same. I just brought the 'system' across the street. And the first pool of talent for *Oh Yeah!* came from *What A Cartoon!* and Hanna-Barbera. Then I put the word out in the community and people started coming in. But then the next place, which is the most obvious, was our own crew.

When we give something to a creator we say, 'Here are the people that are in our shop right now' — and we started with five people — 'Here are the five we have, do you want to work with any of them or who do you want to bring in?'

So, one by one, as we signed creators, they started bringing in people. Within that team we already had they saw the opportunity and now the crew started coming in and pitching shorts.

JS: The opposite of your experience at Hanna-Barbera.

FS: Well by that point, *Dexter's*, *Johnny Bravo* and *Cow & Chicken* were on the air. We now have three hit examples of what could happen. So it was no longer an experiment and like, 'Who is this guy?' It was now like,

'Ohmigod, if I can get into this thing, I could go to the top.'

JS: *Where and when did Oh Yeah! Cartoons run?*

FS: Nickelodeon scheduled *Oh Yeah!* on Friday nights in an hour block with another anthology show, *Kablaam!* *Kablaam!* was basically what I think of as the indie version of *Oh Yeah!* Bob Mittenhal, *Kablaam!*'s producer worked with a lot of independent animators, people outside of the Hollywood mainstream, and had a much more writer-driven approach than I did.

Kablaam! had a different mission, although the mission for both of us was to find hits for Nickelodeon. The two shows complemented one another: *Kablaam!* gave Nickelodeon the cream of the indie crowd, and we gave them the cream of the commercial filmmaking world, the people who have come to Hollywood to make cartoons, not animation. I'm a cartoon maker, I'm interested in cartoons and I have a distinctive view of them as different from animated films.

JS: *What successes came out of Oh Yeah!?*

FS: We made 51 shorts, 51 original *Oh Yeah!*s, plus another 49 or 50 sequels of the best ones. Someone would come in, Larry Huber would come in with *ChalkZone*, and once we saw the film, we said 'why don't we make six more?' Or a guy named [Dave Wasson](#) — who went on to do *Time Squad* for Cartoon Network — would come in and make *The Goose Lady*, which was basically like a *Fractured Fairy Tale*, and we said, 'Why don't you make three more?'

So far — and I don't think we're anywhere near the end of this process — *Fairly OddParents* and *ChalkZone* began as *Oh Yeah!* shorts. The *ChalkZone* series launched with the highest debut ratings in Nickelodeon history. *My Life as a Teenage Robot* was an *Oh Yeah!* short. We made seven or eight *Super Santa* shorts. That project has skipped animation for the time being, and is being developed as a live-action feature with its creator Mike Bell.

I think there's more to come. We're talking Nickelodeon into taking a second look at a few others, because if that's four out of 51, you still have 47 to look at closely. We started in January of '97 and here we are in March of 2003 and we've only gotten four into series. We created more original characters for air in three years than almost everyone else combined in a five-year period. It takes a while to absorb that. We're not producing any new character shorts at the moment, which I'm fine with.

JS: *In and of itself, Oh Yeah! didn't make as much of a*

splash as What A Cartoon!

FS: First of all, it was only promoted to Nickelodeon audiences, and we didn't do a lot of 'hey look at this' promotion when we launched it.

JS: *Like What A Cartoon!*

FS: Well, I ran that studio at the time so I got to control the publicity. Nickelodeon had other things on their mind. When they're launching a show, they're watching it for ratings, and an anthology show is always going to do attenuated ratings. It's historically always the case — we want characters we can watch all the time and fall in love with.

JS: *What else was Frederator doing at time?*



Fairly OddParents began as an *Oh Yeah!* short. Courtesy of Nickelodeon.

FS: We made two animated features for Nickelodeon when they thought they were going to launch a series of original television movies called NickFlicks. One was *The Electric Piper*, which was a contemporary piper story written by Bill Burnett. My log line for it was the piper is Jimi Hendrix.

The second one was directed by John Eng, who is now directing the third *Rugrats* movie. We took the title *Around the World in 80 Days* and wrote a new story to it. It wound up being called *Globe Hunters*, and, by the way, I think it was the most beautiful animated made for TV movie I've ever seen. It's stunning. Aside from being a good director, John Eng is one of the most amazing stylists you've ever seen.

In 1999 and 2000 we greenlit the *Fairly OddParents*



***My Life as a Teenage Robot* also grew out of *Oh Yeah! Cartoons*.
Courtesy of Nickelodeon.**

and *ChalkZone* series. Right around that time I decided to leave L.A. My wife and I had two small children that we wanted to raise in New York. Nickelodeon was gracious enough to allow me to remote control my role in these series.

In addition to being a producer at Nickelodeon, I was also consulting with MTV and VH1, which are all owned by the same parent company, MTV Networks. This was during the online explosion, and at the start of 1999 MTV Networks asked if I'd run their online business for a while. Frederator was still going strong, so I took a step back and became an employee of MTV for a year running their online business. I was wearing two hats.

Luckily, I hire very high-level executors, or in this case creator-executors like Butch, Larry or Bill. At the point we go to series they don't really need me — or at least we hope they don't really need me. So it worked out very well that they produced their series and only occasionally do I have to be involved.

In the middle of this the online thing blew up, which is just as well, and I went back fulltime to Frederator.

JS: Any interesting online war stories?

FS: None that I'm going to tell. [Laughs] The most interesting thing for me was that I went from being a head in the sand traditional media guy, to saying there really is a new world, and the world has changed forever with the advent of this interactivity.

In fact, when I went back to Frederator in New York I dragged in a couple of partners, one of whom was Emil Rensing, a top online guy out of AOL who was all of 25

years old. We started developing online businesses and consulting arrangements. We helped Primedia build their team Internet business, we continue to consult with Avon Products, with the Viacom network TNN, so we have a thriving little online operation.

The other partner I bought in was Travis Pomposello, a young man in his early thirties who happens to be the son of my first business partner. We set up a little television promotion business to revisit my roots. A lot of people continue to call me for those branding things. With Travis, we were able to build a separate wing of the business that handles that stuff. We have clients from Nickelodeon, TNN, Disney, The Playboy Channel and all that kind of stuff.

What also happened in this process is that after I dusted myself off from my online wars, I started looking at animation again in a completely different way. Up until two years ago, animation was a late life avocation of mine. I did a lot of animated MTV commercials for 10 years, but in terms of show business, I didn't get into animation until I was 41 years old. I always looked at it like a temporary thing that I was doing because someone asked me to do it. It seemed like fun at the time, and I thought I could learn something.

When I set up Frederator, it was just the competition thinks I can help them and they'll pay me to do it, so that'll be fun. But I didn't look at myself as a fulltime animation person, even though, sometimes, I was more than fulltime.

Two years ago, right around the beginning of 2001, I looked up and I took stock. I had a couple of small kids, I had to figure out what I was going to do for the next 20 years. I had actually gotten further with this animation thing that I'd gotten with almost anything else. I've enjoyed it more than anything else, I love the talent, I'm a big fan of the talent. And at this point in my life I seem to have become financially productive for the networks that I work with.

JS: Which opens all the doors.

FS: Probably for the first time in my life I decided to be very focused and give production the majority of my activity. I started making calls again and said, 'I'm back in the game in a big way, let's figure out what to do.'

I'm more actively pursuing and developing animation projects than ever before. In the meantime, we've launched our fourth Nickelodeon series. We've become

their number-one supplier of *anything*, not just animation. We produce or have more series on their air than anyone.

I'm exclusive to Nickelodeon. When it comes to kids I can produce animation for no one else at this moment — which by the way is a fantastic problem to have, because Nickelodeon is not just number one, it's number one by a factor of three or four. They've got about half the kids' TV market, broadcast and cable, which is pretty awesome. All the rest is split among four different places: Cartoon Network, Disney, WB and FOX — everybody else.

JS: *Is it a first refusal deal?*

FS: No, it's exclusive.

JS: *If they don't like it, it stays in the vault.*

FS: There's a reason for this and it's just sort of an aside. I also consult for the company on network issues and so I hold their secrets. I can't go and work for the competition. It's an unusual circumstance, and one I'm happy to be in. But I had a fantastic time with Cartoon Network and all those people, they're great people. I like them a lot, there's no problems — they're just my competition now.

JS: *But still good relationships.*

FS: Absolutely, and by the way, my first hits continue to thrive on that network so I feel very good about that.

JS: *They're your kids but they're grown up and on their own.*

FS: Exactly. Now we're pursuing a number of different things. We have a bunch of movie projects that we're developing. In certain ways I'm very forward thinking, but in other ways I'm very conservative, and I always felt that the Disney method of making [animated] movies, which was wonderful, was but one method of making movies.

JS: *How would you describe that method?*

FS: Florid. Orchestral. Large. Classic. But, you know, that's like saying the only way to make a hit record is the way that Nelson Riddle and Frank Sinatra did. It's wonderful, but it's never the only way.

So when I went back with MTV Networks I was a great advocate and proponent of using television production techniques, which Disney had brainwashed the



Emil Rensing (right) and Seibert are partners in an online consulting business. Photo credit: Elena Seibert.

critics and studios into believing was a low-class method that could never succeed in movies.

I was a great supporter of MTV Networks of putting *Beavis & Butt-Head* and *Rugrats* on the screen using those déclassé methods. The results are almost \$200 million in box office — just on the first two movies. I continue, in the face of conventional wisdom, that the only animated movies people now like are computer-generated movies — to think that, it's complete hokum.

JS: *It's the stories, the characters.*

FS: And as a partner of mine here says, there are no little budgets, there are just little movies. I really believe that the low budget animated movie is an underestimated opportunity. *The Rugrats*-type movies cost more than \$20 million to produce, but I think there's still an opportunity at lower budget levels to have big hit movies.

JS: *You didn't work on the [Rugrats films](#).*

FS: That's Klasky Csupo, and God bless them, they've done a fantastic job. It's not my cup of tea, but I wouldn't know how to do what they do.

I'm a cartoon guy not an animation guy. They're animation people, you know. Right now I'm in development on five family-oriented features at this low budget level. They'll use television techniques, overseas studios, but stunning talent to do it.

Simultaneously, on the exact flip side, I have another theory: I believe that you have in the generation of people who are the key movie-going people between 15 and 30 years old, a unique opportunity related to animation. We have for the first time an adult generation that has grown up with animation aimed at them in every developmental period of their life. With you and me, by

IF ANYONE SHOULD GET CREDIT FOR CHANGING THE NAME OF THE GAME IN TRADITIONAL CARTOONING, IT SHOULD BE JOHN KRICFALUSI.

the time we were 12, we were out of the animation game, and that was it.

JS: *Not me.*

FS: Well, you're the exception. For most of us, it never ever came back, unless you would include *The Simpsons*. Occasionally people would try: the *Fritz the Cats*, the *Cool Worlds*, but let's be real. What you and I know at our age is that cartoons are for kids. No matter what evidence is in front of us, cartoons are for kids.

It's very rare for me to go to an animation movie, even for business purposes. If I'm flipping through the newspaper and I see an ad for one, my first thought is, 'Why would I go see that? That's not for me.' My 29-year old partner Emil is exactly the opposite: when he flips through the newspaper and sees an animation movie, he goes, 'I wonder if it's any good?'

Animation is not his issue; it's not a gating issue. What that means to me is that there's a huge opportunity the movie studios don't understand. They're not making movies for that audience. So we're developing five or six movies that I'm defining as PG-13 or R-rated movies with \$1-3 million budgets.

JS: *I read something about this recently...*

FS: Not from me.

JS: *It may have been about Kricfalusi.*

FS: John is doing a series of \$10 million movies with [Ralph Bakshi](#).

JS: *Also PG-13 to R-rated?*

FS: Right.

JS: *Is there a competition there or just 'great minds think alike'?*

FS: We talked. One of the things I like about Ralph and John is that they're thinkers. They see the same thing I do, and by the way I wish them all the luck, because if they do it and succeed or I do it and succeed, it's better for both of us, as it always is in our business.

But I'm developing my features at a much lower

budget level than Ralph's and John's. My reasoning is the studios don't want to distribute these movies, they don't want to make them, so I need to make it as easy as possible for them. Again, commerciality has nothing to do with budget level. I'm interested in making commercial movies so we're developing commercial movies.

JS: *This would be theatrical and not direct-to-video?*

FS: Theatrical is the vision. My favorite working title so far is *The Asshole Magnet*, about the woman who always picks the wrong guy.

JS: *You've made a distinction several times now between cartoons and animation. I sort of get the idea, but how would you define it?*

FS: Animation is a production technique. It does not define creatively or emotionally anything. It defines a very wide range of things. *Minority Report* had animation in it, the Vin Diesel movies have animation in them, *Star Wars* has animation. What the hell is it — it's a technique. It's like saying 'film.'

Cartoons define for me a couple of key things: they're funny, they tend to be short, they tend to be character-driven, not story-driven; there's a design factor to it. And to me, the most subtle, but maybe one of the most important is they use music as a character, rather than as a support mechanism.

I think you'll agree when you hear a great cartoon score — and, by the way, I don't just define [a score as being by] Carl Stalling, it can be Hoyt Curtin at Hanna-Barbera — you can actually read characters and action by just hearing the score. So score has a radically different role in cartoons than it does in almost any other kind of filmmaking.

I also define it as lots of physical humor. In my very narrow definition, the words fill in the gaps between the pictures rather than vice-versa; seven minutes long — that's cartooning.

When I'm talking with my development group about these animation features I want to do, the family ones, and they walk in with the *Sleeping Beautys* of the world or some such — I say, 'I don't do that.' My natural space in life is cartooning. The talent that I've developed over a 10-year period consists of cartoonists, not animators. I

want creative projects that take advantage of where my natural understanding is, and where my talent goes.

By the way, there's a big preschool project that's on the table that I should tell you about. I've never done preschool before either. I'm attacking it in a very large and very real way like *Oh Yeah! Cartoons*. My partner in this is a woman named Susan Miller, who's the producer of *Ella Enchanted*, Miramax's first family movie. She is also a leading licensing/merchandising person — she used to work at Warner Bros., then went off to her own company.

In order to work with a system that I know, we've teamed with Brown Johnson at Nick Jr. I think Brown is one of the best executives in the industry, and she happens to be the first person I met in television 23 years ago.

We're developing 50 projects again, but as books — as preschool children's books. The secret of our books is that we're developing them not with authors and illustrators, but with animation people. We will have a load of books created solely by animation people.

We haven't officially announced the project yet. We'll probably put out a press release sometime in the next month or two. But I'm very, very excited because the idea that I can make these 50 books with animation people means that I will have books for my network partner to scrutinize and be able to choose what they would like to go to series with.

It means that I will have characters actually designed to move in film rather than have to be reinterpreted for film. It means that the story was conceived by a commercially driven, character-driven creative work force who can move immediately into filmmaking when we go to series. And I really expect that we'll have the same level of success that we've had before in *What A Cartoon!* and *Oh Yeah! Cartoons*.

JS: *It also gives them pre-exposure so they're not unknown quantities when they hit TV.*

FS: Exactly.

JS: *Are any particular names associated with the preschool project yet?*

FS: No, it's just starting up. I'm developing it with Eric Homan, someone I used to work with at Hanna-Barbera.

JS: *Anything else you can tell me about the family or adult features?*

FS: I think the family ones are going to end up being 'funny animal' movies. Part of the reason I'm going there is so many of my cartoonists come out of the funny animal school and the television marketplace isn't particularly friendly to funny animals at this point. It's so foolish, but let people do what they want. We've got at least five funny animal projects in the house.

JS: *Any details?*

FS: They're not in a place worth talking about yet.

JS: *Same thing for the adult features?*

FS: I have a bunch of titles that are in development, but they're all very genre-like, extreme: *I Was a Cheerleader for the CIA*, *Satan Was My Lab Partner*, that type of stuff.



Seibert and Bill Plympton (above) are developing a project based on one of the animator's books.

JS: *And they'll all be creator/art/style-driven?*

FS: I'm trying to get one together with Bill Plympton, which would be one of the adult movies which I think will be awesome.

JS: *He's great; I remember when he did a single-panel cartoon for a long gone newspaper, the Soho Weekly News years before he started doing animation.*

FS: It's interesting you say that because of the way this picture came up. I saw one of those cartoons in his self-published book, *The Sleazy Cartoons of Bill Plympton*. I asked him, 'Can you make that into a movie?' and that's what we're talking about.

JS: *There's a William Joyce illustration from one of his children's books up on your wall. Are you working on anything with him?*

FS: No, I love him though. I tend to develop talent rather than take talent that has hit a certain level. And Bill doesn't need me, I offer very little to him. He can go into anybody, make any deal he wants and do what he wants to do.

Bill Plympton and I, we go back, we've known each other for 20 years. In fact, he's going to be the first guest cartoonist in *ChalkZone*. You know the

show's concept: anything that's erased will live in the *ChalkZone* world. So Bill's characters are going to appear in an upcoming episode.

JS: *Mixing in with the house style?*

FS: Well, that's the great thing about *ChalkZone*: there is no house style – it's whoever happened to draw on the chalkboard.

So that's how you do it: you go out and tell a story, and hopefully people come in and populate your story. ■

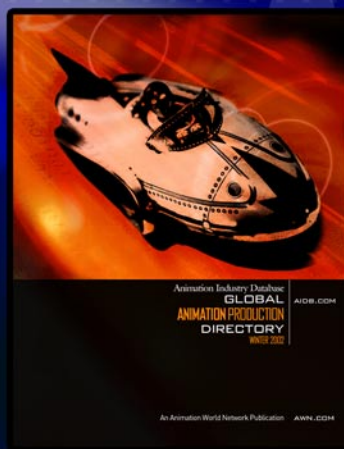
JOE STRIKE is a New York City television writer/producer with a lifelong interest in animation, and who remembers watching *Astro Boy* when it first aired in the U.S. His work includes numerous promotional campaigns and special events programming for cable outlets including Bravo and the SCI FI Channel. He interviewed Disney animation director **Mark Dindal** in the November 2000 Animation World Magazine.

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Tom Kenny hangs out with his alter-ego. Photo courtesy of Nickelodeon.



Looks like Bob Clampett was a big influence on a young Tom Kenny.

SPEAKING SPONGE

Tom Kenny: Voice of *SpongeBob* Revealed

by Rick DeMott

When you see actor Tom Kenny, the [voice](#) of many cartoon characters — including that of SpongeBob — for the first time, you get images of cartoons in your head. With his slender build, he reminds me of those Bing Crosby-look-a-likes that popped up in Looney Tunes shorts from time to time. His thick, black horn-rimmed Buddy Holly glasses catch your attention right away. Personable and energetic would be how I'd describe his personality. At a recording session, he chats with anyone he can. He's curious about what everyone does. When it comes to the work, he's enthusiastic from the first to the last take and works hard to give the director what he or she wants and more. "I have the best job in the world," Kenny says, and you can tell just from the tone in his voice that he really believes that.

Kenny grew up in East Syracuse, New York, and became obsessed with comic books and cartoons at a young age. He searched out information on animation wherever he could find it. When he discovered a new tidbit, he said it was like discovering the Dead Sea Scrolls. Once animation legend [Bob Clampett](#) came to Syracuse to speak and Kenny was the only non-college student to attend. He says he never tried to imitate characters as a kid, but loved creating voices of his own. When he read books to his younger siblings, he often created different voices for each character.



Landing the role of Heffer in *Rocko's Modern Life* (left) was Kenny's big break into voice over work. Aren't you top dog in kindergarten when your dad's *SpongeBob* (center)? Dog from *CatDog* is another on his list of top animated programs. *Rocko's Modern Life*, *SpongeBob* and *CatDog* images © Nickelodeon.

He started his career in entertainment as a stand-up comedian first, in Boston and then in San Francisco. He said, "Tex Avery was a bigger influence on my comedy than Johnny Carson." In addition, Kenny cites Chuck Jones and Jay Ward as major influences. If you see his stand-up act you'll see it clearly. His performance is very visually based. For instance, he has one bit where he sets up hilarious visual gags in the audience's heads based on the silly look of the Popemobile.

From his stand-up work he landed live-action gigs in film. His first big role was as Binky the Clown in the 1992 cult flick, *Shakes the Clown*. Throughout the 1990s, Kenny made the rounds on various sketch shows including Fox's *The Edge* and HBO's *Mr. Show*, as well as late night talk shows like *The Dennis Miller Show*, Pat Sajak, Conan O'Brien and *Late Night With David Letterman*. He even spent a year as the host of NBC's *Friday Night Videos*.

Though he loved cartoons as a kid, he wasn't actively seeking out voice work at first. One night, he was performing his stand-up routine at a showcase of stand-up talent. Execs from Hanna-Barbera and Nickelodeon were in the audience. Afterwards, they approached him about doing voice over work. In no time, Kenny had landed himself the gig as the voice of Heffer on Joe Murray's *Rocko's Modern Life*.

During the run of *Rocko*, Kenny started working on *Mr. Show*, where he met his future wife Jill Talley (*Ladies Man*). After bringing Heffer to life, the voice work started pouring in. Kenny's résumé is a laundry list of top animated programs, including Dog on *CatDog*, the Mayor on *The Powerpuff Girls* and Ratbert on *Dilbert*. But the character Kenny will probably be most remembered for will be SpongeBob SquarePants.

"It's a *SpongeBob* world," Kenny said. "The success of the show is bizarre and shocking. It only sinks in at certain times. *SpongeBob* has been part of my life since 1997 when [creator] Stephen Hillenburg first showed me drawings of the character."

Asked how his experiences working on various cartoons have been different, he said, "In some ways, remarkably, they are the same. I've worked on shows which were created by nice, brilliant guys. They would give me the storyboards and let me play around. They gave me a long leash and a lot of leeway."

When asked how working on cartoons and sitcoms differ creatively, "It depends on the format," he said. "On shows like *Just Shoot Me* and *That '70s Show* you're often known as the one-week guy, and that you don't want. But with shows like *Mr. Show*, you get a lot more leeway." He said that he thrives in environments where the creative process is immediate, and where you run by the

WHEN HE DISCOVERED A NEW TIDBIT HE SAID IT WAS LIKE DISCOVERING THE DEAD SEAS SCROLLS.

seat of your pants. These environments allow the creatives behind the scenes the opportunity to throw something off of him and let him run with it. Kenny also admits that animation is conducive to his short attention span.

With so much of his time dedicated to voice work, Kenny has little time for stand-up. It's just as well because he has a five-year-old son and another little one on the way. I asked him if his son knows that his dad is SpongeBob, and he said the kid is very aware. Kenny seems a little bit envious of the world his son is getting to grow up in – a sort of ground zero for the animation community, with his father's friends being artists and other voice over actors. Unlike when Kenny was a kid, his son knows how the animation process works. But in spite of this knowledge, the young boy can get lost in the Bikini Bottom world just like any other kid.

When it comes to advice for aspiring voice actors, Kenny said, "Don't do it in the half-baked way I did. I went through a backdoor." However, from his friends'

experiences, he said that breaking into the business is a matter of compiling voices and getting it out there and in front of the right people. He encourages people to take classes, but to be careful because some of them are worthless.

So what's in the future for Tom Kenny? One day he'd love to get behind the scenes in animation. He said his drawing skills are crappy and would have to work with a friend on collaborations. He hopes to use the connections and knowledge he's gained from voice work to "pitch and create shows down the line." But for now, he's extremely happy with what he's doing. He said he wouldn't trade places with a big movie star any day. The tradeoff of a bigger house for less fun is just not worth the price. ■

RICK DEMOTT is managing editor of Animation World Network.

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Talkin' Teen Titans:

MAKIN' MURAKANIME
GLEN MURAKAMI RAPS ABOUT HIS LATEST SUPERHERO SERIES

by Martin "Dr. Toon" Goodman



Glen Murakami. Photo courtesy of WB TV Animation.

9

LEN MURAKAMI SPENT THE LAST 12 YEARS working on such notable shows as Batman: The Animated Series, Superman, Batman Beyond and Justice League prior to being tabbed as producer for Cartoon Network's new Teen Titans series. He won an Emmy in 2001 for his work on Batman Beyond.

Dr. Toon: Congratulations, Glen, on your new series, Teen Titans. I was wondering how it was decided to go with the 1980s version of the team as opposed to the 1964 originals or even the Titans of the mid-'90s?

Glen Murakami: Sam Register (svp of original animation), who came aboard at Cartoon Network, was really interested in developing it since it was a comic he grew up reading. Then I was brought on board. I'm from that generation where those were the characters that I read about growing up too. That led to the

All Teen Titans images © Cartoon Network.





Murakami took home an Emmy for his work on *Batman Beyond*.
© Warner Bros. Animation.

decision as to why the 1980s (Marv) Wolfman and (George) Perez *Titans* were chosen. I think we wanted to portray characters that hadn't really been seen before, and we were trying to make something that was different from the *Justice League*.

Using Robin as the lead, well, he's the type of character that everyone can identify with. We definitely wanted to show the audience a different Robin than they thought they were going to see, rather than someone who's normally a sidekick character. It's like taking Batman and putting him out of your mind: How would you portray Robin? We made him confident and really kind of cool. A lot of people say, "Well, Robin has no superpowers." I don't think that matters. There's kind of a nice balance to the group now — an alien, a robot, a shape-changer and a witch. It's very iconic.

Dr.T: *Is that why Donna Troy (Wonder Girl) and Wally West (Kid Flash) didn't make the cut?*

GM: Pretty much. We wanted to show characters that hadn't been seen before.

Dr.T: *Glen, Batman The Animated Series, Batman Beyond, Justice League, all of these series you worked on before taking on Teen Titans were very popular with*

a late-teen to adult audience. Sam Register stated in an interview that he was going for a slightly younger demographic with this cartoon. Was it difficult for you to switch gears after doing those other shows and design a show for younger viewers?

GM: No, it really wasn't. After working on those shows since 1991 — 10 years of working on those shows — it was kind of nice to move in a different direction with superheroes. The show is more for kids, but I don't think it excludes an adult audience. I think *Teen Titans* is lighter and has humor, but I wouldn't say that it's a parody or a spoof, and I don't think we're making fun of the essence of the characters. I think we stayed true to the intent of the characters, we just skewed it a little bit younger. I've gotten a chance to do the darker, more adult stuff, I think, with *Batman* and *Justice League*, so we felt it was OK to go in a very different direction with the *Titans*.

Dr.T: *When I remember the series from the 1980s, the New Teen Titans could be a pretty adult comic book at times, what with inter-dimensional rape by demons, traitors who committed suicide and some adult-style relationships including a broken heart or two. What sort of challenges did you face in turning this kind of material into an animated series?*

GM: When you're working on *Batman* you've got 40 or 50 years worth of material to take and distill down into its best parts. Same for us. We kind of have to take into consideration that we're not making this cartoon just for fans of the comic book, the ones who know all the backstory and know all the continuity. We have to tell the Starfire story in half an hour! I think we took all those things into consideration, but there's just some things you can't do for children's programming. David Slack, the story editor, and I even talked to Marv Wolfman about it. He said, "You know, if I was doing the *Teen Titans* today, I would do them completely differently than how I would have approached them in the '80s." Because in the '80s the *Titans* were sort of a response to what was going on with Marvel Comics and the *X-Men*.

Dr.T: *One of the most unique aspects of this Teen Titans series is its visual style, a merging of American animation and anime. Sam Register describes your look as "Murakanime." How did you come to develop this style and what influenced it?*

GM: (Laughs) Well, I think the *Batman* and *Superman* series I worked on was part of that. When those shows



Left to right: Robin, Beastboy, Cyborg, Raven and Starfire.

were being done, no one else was doing those kinds of things. *Batman* is more filmic and more *film noir*, and even the kinds of stories that were being told in the two series, I don't think anyone had ever done that with comic books before in an animated context. So, when we talked about doing *Teen Titans* we wanted to go in a different direction than what Bruce [Timm] had done with the other DC properties. We were fans of anime for years while working on the other shows, and it seemed natural to use that as the new direction to go in.

Today's generation is growing up with *Pokémon* and all the shows now available on Cartoon Network — *Cowboy Bebop*, *Gundam*, other things like that — I think they're used to that. When we were growing up, I think anime was considered really foreign, really different. I came in at like, the tail end of *The Amazing Three* and *Gigantor*. I grew up with *Speed Racer* and *Kimba*, and then, in the '80s, with *Akira*. It was kind of always there, but I think the direction Bruce wanted to go with *Batman* was a little more traditional, a little bit more "pure." I had seen a lot of different things being done with anime, and I thought that was a wonderful opportunity to tell stories in a different way, a very stylistic way. So it just seemed sort of natural that a hybrid would occur.

Dr. T: After the overwhelming success of anime in America, audiences seem more ready to accept facial and physical distortions, or characters going way off-

model for a couple of shots, and you're integrating those elements into the new series. Do you sort of feel that you're pioneering a new style for American audiences?

GM: I don't think I am — maybe it's new to western superhero fans who aren't used to that sort of thing. Even though we've added humor to a superhero show, it's not the same kind of humor as the Adam West *Batman* or like *Superfriends*. You're laughing at the show. I don't think we're making the characters silly. And a lot of the animation is actually being produced overseas, so it just seemed natural to use what they do best, you know, to bring the two styles together, the U.S. animation side and the Asian overseas animation side.

I think that the Titans kind of has a sixties-seventies feel to it, but it's not retro. I like to describe the *Titans* as having the feeling of the Nick Cardy *Titans* mixed with the Wolfman/Perez characters. The Nick Cardy *Titans* are really colorful — I don't want to say psychedelic or groovy, but they're very charming. The Wolfman/Perez *Titans* was during an era when everything got heavy and serious, so we took some of the '60s feel and mixed it with the '80s. Did you feel that it was pure, still kind of true to the comic?

Dr. T: I think it was, considering the changes that you had to make, and the fact that you had to style things that American kids and teens would really connect with — like making Raven kind of a Goth — I liked the

EVEN THOUGH WE'VE ADDED HUMOR TO A SUPERHERO SHOW, IT'S NOT THE SAME KIND OF HUMOR AS THE ADAM WEST *BATMAN* OR LIKE *SUPERFRIENDS*.



Superfriends provided humor, even if it wasn't always intentional. Photo courtesy of Cartoon Network.

way you did that. When I originally saw the character designs, I was very curious about how they were going to animate. And they animate beautifully. They're thin and shadowy, but when they move, especially with some degree of speed, well, the action is terrific to watch. You noted, Glen, in the Cartoon Network's preview tape that sometimes you were told that the show wasn't weird enough and that you should push it even farther. That had to be fun! What were some of the notable instances when you and your team really pushed the package?

GM: We're doing something that I think anime fans are familiar with; it's called "Super D." It's the equivalent of, say, a Tex Avery take. So, for example, when a character is feeling angry they get big or when they're feeling sad they shrink down small. I guess it gets kind of surreal, but it seems it's an effective way of telling the story, of conveying emotion in a really stylistic way. I think it's something that fans aren't really used to seeing, so it seemed natural to go in that direction with it.

What else did we try to do weirder? I think the music is different because the style of music changes with the style of the show. I think the story structures are different compared to what you've seen from *Batman* and *Superman*. They're not as linear — not as if there's a crime where the Riddler steals something, and Batman has to solve the crime and then, in the end, Batman defeats Riddler. In some of our *Titans* episodes we have the villain appear and then just go to jail right away and then we introduce a different villain.

Dr.T: Well, that's in the anime tradition, too. You mentioned *Akira* earlier — that was a wonderfully nonlinear film.

GM: *Akira* was more intellectual, more heady. I think I'm going more back to things like *Kimba* and *Speed Racer* where there was sort of a moral to the story. I think we're trying to do it without making it sound like an after-school special, you know, hitting the audience over the head and saying "Here's the moral of the story!" Even if we were saying that, I'd like to think that at the end of the episode you had a good time watching the show while you were being given the moral.

Dr.T: Your second episode, "Sisters," was very much like that. It gave a lesson about the meaning of true friendship, and the message didn't feel heavy-handed.

GM: Well, to me that's just good story. In the beginning, when David Slack and I were talking about developing the stories, we said that they should be about things that kids could relate to. The whole story shouldn't involve building a laser cannon — it should be about how people interact and get along. We wanted all of the stories to have heart. We wanted the show to be able to focus on one or two of the characters and their relationships. So we won't really focus on Cyborg's origin or Starfire's origin, but throughout the course of the series there'll be little glimpses into the characters and what their backstory is. We took things from the comics, but we sort of twisted them around to fit. We had to cram material from — well, how many issues of *Titans* — into 22 minutes and figure out which parts to use to tell the stories.

Dr.T: The only character I noticed that doesn't have an anime feel — in fact, he feels like a throwback to you earlier work on *Batman* — is Slade the Terminator.

Teen Titans originally was DC's response to Marvel's *X-Men*.



Was that done on purpose to set him more apart from the Titans characters?

GM: I guess so. The threat should seem real; the villain should be serious, because if he's not then you won't have any tension or drama. The Titans have to behave like normal teenagers, but in the case of Slade, I don't think you have to humanize him.

Dr.T: *The original Teen Titans writer Marv Wolfman has already penned an episode for the upcoming season. Have any other comic book writers stepped forward to take a crack at the show as well?*

GM: If there has been I really don't know about it, because that would be trafficked by David Slack. There's nothing wrong with that, but I really want to make something that's more of a companion piece, rather than an extension, of what's been done before.

Dr.T: *I understand that DC Comics has some influence over the show. Have they ever supplied you with a specific list of "do's" or "don'ts."*

GM: Not really. The Titans are their characters, so we do have to honor their property, but so far they've been very good about what we can or can't do, and not in a restrictive way.

Dr.T: *Do you feel that your team has a really good feel for the show right now?*

GM: Yeah. It was real learning curve but we've pulled it off. I think we've made an entertaining show that we think people will really like.

Dr.T: *A real learning curve in what way?*

GM: After working with Bruce Timm for 10 years, I've learned to focus on stories and to tell them the way that Bruce would tell stories. So I had to learn to go against what I learned from Bruce.

Dr.T: *Sam Register stated that there would be no continuing episodes or event movies. If the Teen Titans really take off, could we see a direct-to-video release or feature-type events in the future?*

GM: *I have no idea at this point. That would be cool, but there are no plans right now. I'm just trying to finish up the first two seasons at this point and then see where we're at.*

Dr.T: *Since you've begun your career in animation, you've been working on DC Comics properties. Are there any original ideas of your own in the works that you would someday like to produce?*

GM: I guess someday, but for right now I've been pretty happy with what I've had to work on. Hey, *Batman*, *Superman* and the *Justice League* — that's not too bad. Sure, I'd like to do my own thing someday but right now, I like what I've been doing.

Dr.T: Some of your most important influences in terms of comic book artists were Jack Kirby, Alex Toth and John Byrne. Do you feel you've absorbed any of their influences into the style you use?

GM: Yes, I do. Byrne was my idol in junior high and high school. As things went on after high school I got more into undergrounds, things like that. And the independent comics. Some of the influences on the show would be *Love and Rockets*, *Betty and Veronica*, *The Hernandez Brothers* — things like *Mister X* were a big influence on *Batman*, and Kirby was an influence on *Superman*. I think even growing up at that time I was exposed to a lot of variety as far as independent comics. I'm sure that affects the show. *Titans*, though, has been more influenced by anime than anything else.

Then there are some weird, more obscure things — for *Titans*, I went back and reviewed stuff I grew up with like *Little Rascals*, and for story inspirations I thought, "What were some of the shows I watched as a kid?" *Brady Bunch*, *I Dream of Jeannie*, things like that. Even with the *Titans* theme song, I wanted it to reflect how shows used to be. I feel that TV shows don't really have cool theme songs anymore. I don't know why the trend moved away from having a great theme song to hook you into the show! Like that title sequence from the *Wild Wild West* — now that was really stylish!

Dr.T: That title sequence reminds me of the one on your show.

GM: Yeah, kind of. I don't know if I just absorbed a lot of that stuff or if it's from working with all those guys on *Batman* — they're all slightly older than me, and some of those influences rubbed off on me.

Dr.T: Going back to your career, Glen, it's been about 12 years since you came to work at Warner Bros. with no previous experience in animation. And now you've won an Emmy and are executive producer of your own series. How would you sum up your progress at this point and what are you looking forward to?

GM: I'm actually surprised I've gotten this far. I'm just trying to be open-minded and see what happens next. *Batman* wasn't anything I had planned on doing, *Bat-*



Batman Beyond was one of the happy surprises in Murakami's career. © Warner Bros. Animation.

man Beyond wasn't anything I was planning on doing, same for *Justice League* and even *Teen Titans*. It's pretty weird that I grew up reading all that stuff and now I'm working on it. I've been pretty lucky, getting to meet the people who I've met and worked with. Everything's going fine right now. This is my first time running my own show. I've produced alongside Bruce Timm, but he was definitely the lead on all those other shows.

Dr.T: Were things Bruce took care of and shielded you from that later you wanted to go back and say, "Why didn't you tell me about this?"

GM: I'll be honest. I wasn't ready before to run my own show. In the past there might have been opportunities for me to leave and get my own show, but I've been working on great shows for 10 years. There was no reason to leave. And during that time I've learned, well, tons of things and it's really paid off. Hopefully, it shows in the final product. ■

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

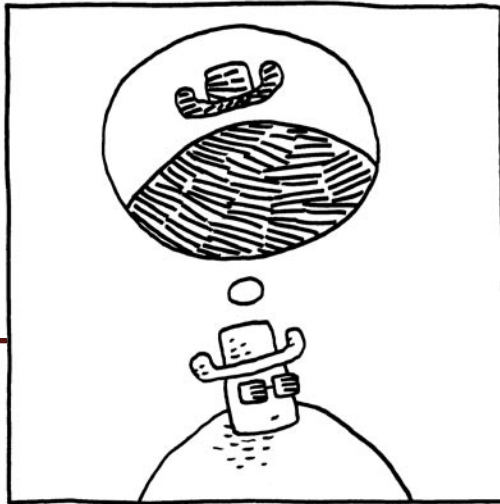


Illustration by [Andreas Hykade](#).
Courtesy of Chris J. Robinson.

Like Everyone, I'm *Not* Like Everyone Else

ANIMATION PIMP

I'D SPENT THE LAST 12 YEARS INVOLVED IN ANIMATION AND, BAM, JUST LIKE THAT, IT WAS POTENTIALLY GONE.

by *Chris J. Robinson*

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

A COLLEAGUE SENT ME A MEDIA RELEASE FROM A TORONTO-based company. Now almost every PR release is full of fluff, pomp and equivocation, but this one was pretty over the top. They said that they did something related to the software development which was used for some big feature film. What it amounted to was, oh yeah, I know "insert celebrity name here." He's a friend of my sister's cousin's husband's uncle's brother's mother's daughter's step-cousin's friend of a friend's friend who went to the uncle's brother's mother's daughter's step-cousin's old high school one year and sort of knew the step-cousin through his sister's boyfriend's brother's aunt who was sleeping with a teacher who knew the math teacher at the step-cousin's high school.

Another person I know was fond of telling everyone about all her wonderful splendiscious experiences in the wonderful splendiscious world of animation, and that all they wanted to do, all they REALLY WANTED TO DO, was just share this wealth of knowledge that they had mined, working with some great masters (are there piss-poor masters?). Of course it turned out that this woman had only worked with one of these masters vicariously while they were teaching together at some school. (Sort of like me saying that I'm a radio/TV personality based on the fact that I've done TV/radio interviews.)

It's not just the small timers; even the big fish stretch the truth. Virtually every Disney feature film has been re-marketed for home video/DVD as a "masterpiece." OK, sure, I can accept

DURING THAT FIGHT I DECIDED THAT I WAS NOT GOING TO LET THE OTTAWA FESTIVAL DIE... THAT NO MATTER HOW MUCH I WANTED TO GET OUT OF THE FESTIVAL BIZ, I WAS NOT GOING TO LET IT GET TKO'D ON MY WATCH.

Bambi, *Pinocchio* and *Sleeping Beauty*, but umm... yeah... the rest of dem? I dunno. Granted, they have toned the masterpiece stuff down on DVD. Anyway, equivocation is the nature of advertising. You only sell the bright side of life.

Initially, this piece was gonna be about these grifters, the people and companies in the animation world (and every other industry/community) who exist through smoke and mirrors... but then the Ottawa Festival had its funding cut. All of a sudden I didn't care about illusionists. Instead, I wondered what the fug I was going to do. I'd spent the last 12 years involved in animation and, BAM, just like that, it was potentially gone. My entire adult life has been spent working in animation. It's, in part, defined who I am to myself, but mostly to other people.

David Ehrlich (American animator) once interviewed me and we started talking about how we came into the animation scene. We both admitted that it was the people. It was an environment that made us feel less alone. I was even more of an outsider because I didn't give a tinker for cartoons really. I came from an academic background and, for me, technique always came second, third and fourth to concept. When I say concept, I don't necessarily mean message, smarts or learnin', I simply mean IDEA. That can be a series of Tex Avery gags or some high falutin' Norman McLaren musing.

Don't listen to those wanks who sputter about non-figurative, non-representational, abstract material, conceptual art. That whole 'high-brow' definition of conceptual art is the biggest snow job this side of 'democratic' elections. Post-Sec. academia is just another gap filler, tenured ad men using new words to sell used ideas to the next generation of something seekers.

Ah yeah, so as I was saying, I was really an outsider when I came into this scene, and, despite the many things that the OIAF and the animation world have given me materially and intellectually, I've pretty much remained near the border — hey the phone just rang! Friend of mine from a big studio. We started talking about this whole identity thing and maybe the big difference would be that no one will talk to you anymore because they don't need you anymore. We agreed that that's not a bad thing — anyway sorry I mean for the last few years, I've worked my way more towards the... umm... literary world, I guess. Let's face it, most of my 'animation' writing these

days, for example, uses animation as a bridge, beard, guise and cloak to get to the 'bigger' issues in my life and yours (e.g., finding good porn to stroke or finger to). And, slowly but surely, I've been writing more outside the animation world, so I've been slowly preparing myself for that day when I bid adieu to the animation scene. But still, it's tough, like a death or divorce, and maybe that's the final step I needed. After two-plus boozeless years, a sharper healthier mind/body, maybe this was the last step toward shedding off some dead skin.

Maybe. Maybe not. The same week we got the funding cut news, I was watching this incredible boxing match between Micky Ward and Canadian Arturo Gatti. These two beat the shit out of each other in three separate matches. In this second fight, Gatti smashed Ward's eardrum with a hard right. Ward lost all balance, stumbled, turned and fell toward the corner of the ring. He managed to keep standing, but with two minutes to go in the round, and his equilibrium absent, there was no way he'd be standing much longer. Gatti came at him with more jabs, hooks and rights, but Ward did not go down. Crazy Irish Micky not only came out of the round, he went the whole 10 rounds. During that fight, I decided that I was not going to let the Ottawa festival die... that no matter how much I wanted to get out of the festival biz, I was NOT going to let it get TKO'd on my watch.

Then came the bizarre and tragic news that the festival's co-founder, Kelly O'Brien died. She died alone in her home. No one is quite sure how, just yet. How weird is it, that the news that the festival's founder comes out the very week the festival's existence is threatened? I'm not much for voodoo and assorted magic, but THAT was too strange. Kelly was a really positive person. I only met her during Ottawa '96 — when we had invited all the old directors to come for the 20th anniversary. I had a few phone chats with her, and she was just so damn enthusiastic (and I don't mean in a retarded way).

Anyway, I read some old catalogs, checked the old files, talked to Frank Taylor (another former director) and realized that this festival has always had these sorts of battles. It's entire history has been a bloody Ward-Gatti fight. So her death sort of re-charged me a bit, made me want to say thanks to her, made me want to let her know that she didn't really die alone, that her

work (with Frederick Manter) and ours meant something, that it touched thousands upon thousands of lives from [John Lasseter](#) and Nick Park to lesser known students, animators, teachers and industry folk. What else is there to live, or die for?

Identity. I've talked about it before and, specifically, how we create identities for others and even define those around us. Who are we? How do we define who we are? I remember studying a bit of that French head-studying guy, Jacques Lacan. I always liked the things I managed to understand in his writing. Let me try and shrinkwrap it. As babies, early on we see everything around us as one, We are linked to it. Everything is whole. Then comes the mirror stage when the baby recognizes itself in the mirror, when he/she sees for the first time that they are not connected with all those other images around them. They immediately sense that there is a gap, that they are incomplete, a fragment.

This lack is the backbone of human nature and it creates desire. We desire to fill this lack. BUT... it's a lack that is just an illusion. We spend our entire lives desiring and craving something that doesn't exist to begin with. (Advertising fucks have clearly read some of Lacan because they are continually — and I mean CONTINUALLY — telling us that we're missing something, that we're incomplete people, and that if we buy their TV, radio, stereo, CDs, books, hand lotion, toilet paper, coffee, liquor, car, house, frying pan, cups, plates, forks, shirts, shoes, hats, tampons, vaginal itch cream, anti-aging, anti-depressant, cottage cheese, low-fat, low-carb, gut-buster condoms, we WILL fill that lack.)

Our mistake, which comes from Freud I think, is that we assume there is some stable, coherent, unchanging superego — some perfect form of identity. It's a very Christian idea (superego as God). What Lacan suggests, is that, there is no such ideal or... God... that we are all (and this comes back to ol' Heraclitus yet again) in a constant state of motion and uncertainty, a constant clash of harmony and disorder. I dunno 'bout you but that sort of makes me feel better.

Work didn't define me, I defined the work. What you know or think of me is the result of the choices I've made as a writer, programmer, etc., not the other way around. Ya know what I'm saying? And this comes back to the grifters — they are seeking to define themselves through their jobs — and I don't mean their work at these jobs, but through labels and assorted name dropping references (like my friend above).

These people are racing around, spending all their time trying so hard to find what THEY think that OTHER people IMAGINE to be an IDEAL identity, that they end

up achieving nothing in the end. When the job goes (and it will because they ain't done nothing) so, too, will that identity. All that's left is nothing. It's hard though, and I don't pretend to have some mastery over it. I get lost in emulation and parasitical behavior as much as you, but until you realize that YOU define the world around you (and no, I don't mean that in some Machiavellian way), not the other way around, ya ain't ever gonna find any real satisfaction from the world or yourself.

(My apologies if I bungled Lacan and Freud, but hey, at least I gave it the ol' college try).

Just got word that our funding was re-instated (I'm writing this on July 10, 2003). Not sure if the call to arms did it. When we got the word, I was angry. I might have been angrier than when we received the initial 'cut' letter. It felt like the last two weeks had been so unnecessary. All this time and energy devoted to stress, fear, worry and confusion, all that time spent appealing and blabbering away to the media about why anyone should care. But maybe it wasn't so bad, perhaps we (I) needed this, a wakeup call of sorts. A time to decide if Ottawa needs to step it up and, if so, figure out if I really want to be part of that new road.

Is this "scare" gonna make me a better person? Is it going to mean conventional opening night "speeches" at Ottawa '04? Is this gonna mean that the job will now define me?

Yeah, right.

HOTTIE ANIMATOR OF THE MONTH

Every person who wrote a letter of support... and kudos to Bill Plympton and Mike Belzer for going on national radio to fight our cause. And, hey, Judith, I know you didn't do it for me, but thanks all the same.

AND... I want to say a belated farewell to Heather Kenyon. She's moved on from AWN to the Cartoon Network and I'm really gonna miss blondie. She gave the Pimp the go-ahead and (along with Dan Sarto and Ron Diamond) has always defended and encouraged these columns — even when she probably didn't know what the hell I was talking about.

Along those lines (or these lines below): PEOPLE, please, if you're going to post comments (negative or positive)... USE your real name OR at least leave an e-mail. Have some courage. ■

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>.

BOOK EXCERPT

Don't Give Your Right Name! — Part 2

by Gene Deitch

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

JAMISON HANDY HIMSELF WAS ALREADY (TO ME) AN old guy when I was there, and he reigned, rather than ruled, over the JHO roost. The actual creative head honcho was Grant Harris. He was also a Hollywood import, and was supremely self-confident. He never doubted for an instant that he was right in all of his thoughts. I didn't reach that level of creative authority until years later, but I did learn from my relations with Grant that a certain humility is necessary to get the most from your staff. A director, and certainly a studio creative director must be clear and definite in his or her conceptions, but still there must be room to accept the ideas of others, as long as they fit into the perceived pattern.

MY GOD, ALL OF THESE PEOPLE ARE WORKING AWAY ON A PROJECT I SET UP. THEIR LIVELIHOOD DEPENDS ON MY BEING RIGHT!

Even when I later did become creative director of large studios, and even as director of individual films, I never got over the awe I felt when I walked through the studio. I said to myself, "My God, all of these people are working away on a project I set up. Their livelihood depends on my being right! And I am committing my client's money!" I gave a lot of thought to what I was doing, and had to believe that in fact I was right!

It amazes me that I manage to be mentioned in most of the animation history books, and yet the largest portion of my work over the past 50 years is either obscure to the point of invisibility, or never even got out the door. Much of it is children's films, tucked into cozy little school libraries, and of virtually no interest to animation film buff historians. And so it is with the first film I directed. It was a paean to capitalism, produced at Jam Handy, — the quintessential capitalist film studio, and titled, *Building Friends for Business*. Now what history of animation mentions that film? And yet it was in early UPA style, and I herewith show you the one surviving set up from that first film I ever directed.

As with any young director's first film, I went out of my way to dazzle, and I took extraordinary risks. In order to smoothly suggest the development of businesses and technology from the birth of the USA, I devised a panorama background that unrolled out to 19 feet in physical length. (I forget how long it ran, but it was several minutes.) As it slowly panned under the camera, Paul Revere galloped through on his horse, carrying one of his teapots, oil wells were dug and began pumping, carriages animated into automobiles, villages grew into towns and cities, etc. It alarmed the hell out of the JHO animation cameraman, Larry Lippman, but he shot it at one go — no intercuts — and everything worked. There wasn't a dry seat in the house when the brass screened it.

What is interesting about *Building Friends for Business*, (black-and-white, 1950), is that it is also the first film designed by Cliff Roberts. I would say that my biggest success in the two years I spent working in Motown was my discovery there of two young geniuses, Cliff Roberts and Fred Crippen. Cliff was a rolypoly, gag-spouting jazz fan who showed up at our weekly record sessions, which we carried over from

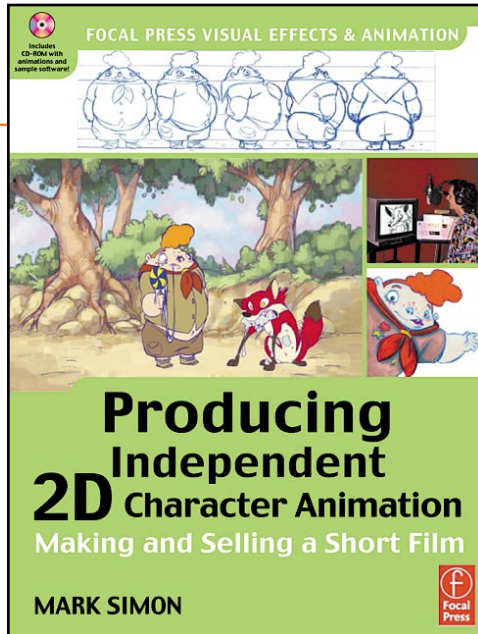
Hollywood. He loved to bang on things to the rhythm of our jazz records, as did I, and we loved to spend the nights hand-drumming together. It also turned out that he was a precocious graphic designer, so good that I got him hired as my assistant at JHO. Fred Crippen was a chunky blond kid, a friend of Cliff's, who had a great talent for visual gags, and quickly learned to animate. Cliff and Fred both later joined me in New York at UPA, and ended up as writers for Hanna-Barbera.

While still at JHO and still on a roll, I wrote and directed *The Mite Box*, a simplistic trifle about how church contributions bring color into the gray life of poor African natives, (my first experiment with color film), *Roger Windsock* for the U.S. Air Force, and a film for the Otis Elevator Company, announcing the first computer controlled lifts. Talk about obscure films!

I finally got a real professional animator into my department, Rudy Zamora, possibly the only mainstream animator who ever worked at the place. He was a touchy heavyweight whom I dared not cross. Nobody dared rile Rudy! But we got along fine, and had a good time working together. He animated my second important JHO film, *Roger Windsock*, which featured a little boy who was so gaga over airplanes that he actually sprouted wings. That one was more than a little influenced by UPA's *Gerald McBoing Boing*, another little boy with a physical problem. The movie extolled the wonders of the Age of Flight.

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, "Bratři v Triku."



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: Key Animation

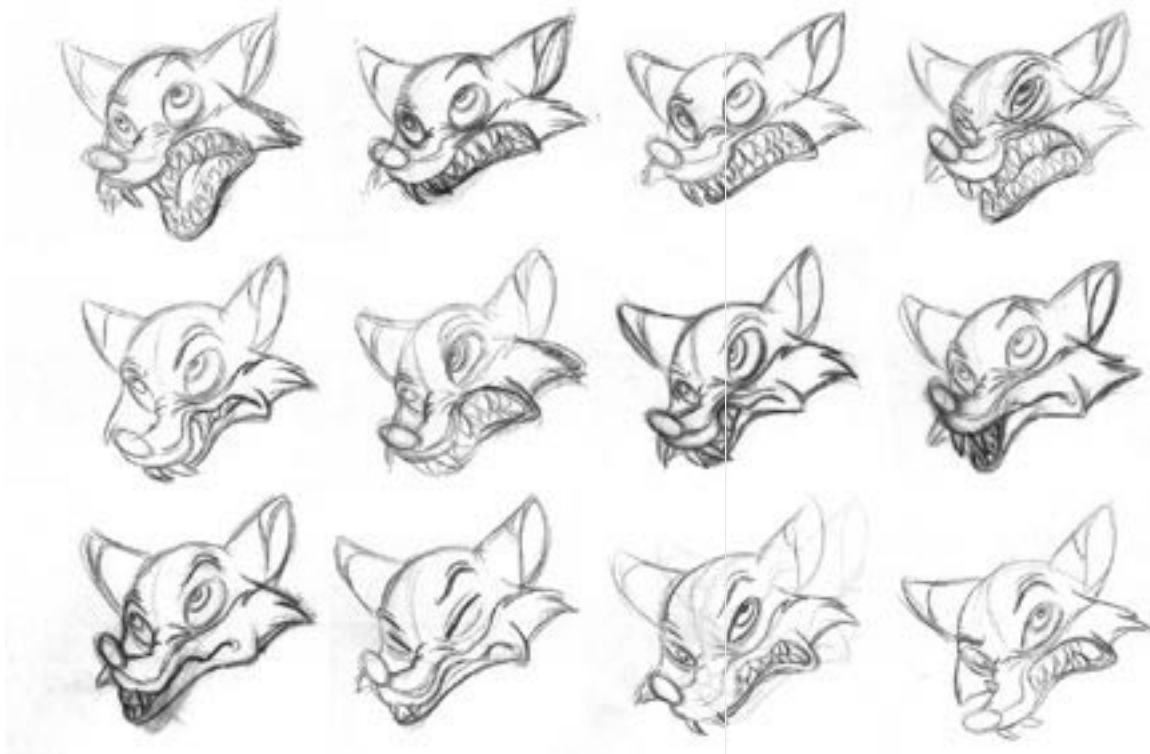
by Mark Simon

This is the sixth 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 animated 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 more than 600 full-color images, interviews and a CD-ROM containing sample animation, animatics and sample software described in the text.

THE REAL FUN BEGINS WHEN TRULY TALENTED ANIMATORS take a scene and make magic with it. Animators will often adjust the original timings of scenes while they are animating to take advantage of the inspiration they get while drawing. The better prepared each scene is, the easier any potential changes are. The only timing animators shouldn't change is the lip-synch.

In key animation, the animators take the character sheets and start roughing in the actions of the characters (Figure 1). Rough animations allow animators to quickly capture the character's motions without worrying about the details of the character. While working, they place the background layouts under their animation to make sure the characters line up with the proper background elements.

Animators use either the top or bottom pegs when they animate. Each style has its value. Using the top peg allows you to draw without your hand hitting the pegs and tightening a screw on the bottom. It also allows you to flip as many sheets as your pegs will hold (Figure 2). Many golden age (1940s-1960s) when



[Figure 1] Rough animation of the fox's head talking to Timmy.



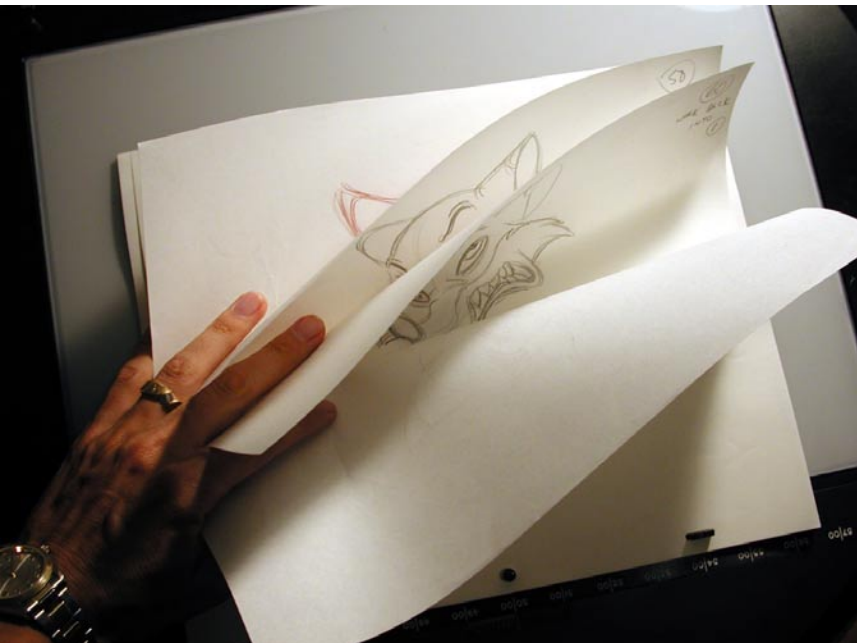
[Figure 2] Example of flipping sheets. (Note: Normally the art is right-side up when flipping from the top peg, but we didn't have any scenes that were animated on the top pegs.)

most animation shorts were produced for theatrical distribution) animators could flip the drawings at the exact projection speed of 24fps. Animating with the bottom pegs allows you roll the drawings while you work. This is helpful for keeping a good feel of the motion while you're working. However, you can only roll about five pages at a time (Figure 3).

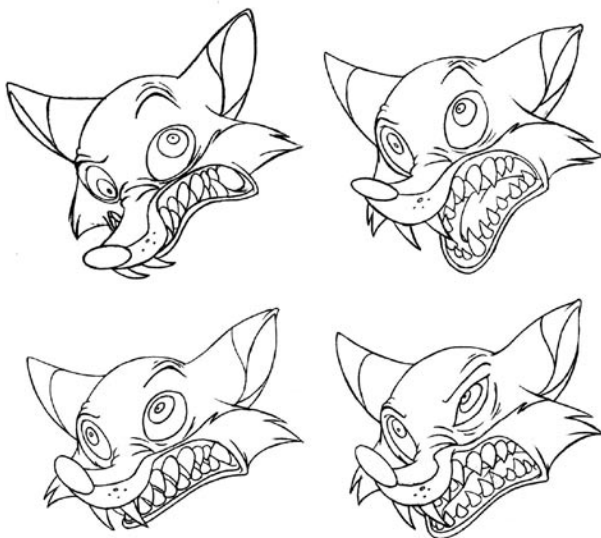
As the animators finish roughing in the main key poses, they start tying down the drawings, or making them look more like the approved character design. They also add in the subtle animation touches such as follow-through, hair movement, subtle emotions and more (Figure 4).

When just one animator is working on a scene, he will do all the drawings and possibly the clean-up himself. If there are other artists working on a scene, the main (also called supervising, lead or key) animator may just draw the key poses showing the motion extremes. The animator will chart (Figure 5) where the inbetweens should go. This chart shows how many drawings need to be drawn between the keys and how close each drawing needs to be to the next or previous one.

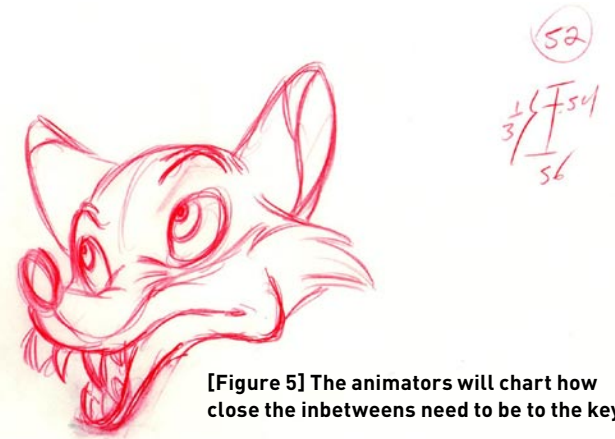
The chart in Figure 5 shows that the key drawing is 52 and the next key drawing is 56. Drawing 54 will be the inbetween. Drawing 54, then, should be one-third of the way between the keys. This is an example of *'easing out'* from a keyframe. The closer the draw-



[Figure 3] Example of rolling pages.



[Figure 4] Tied down key poses of the fox. Animation by R.B.



[Figure 5] The animators will chart how close the inbetweens need to be to the keys.

ings are, the slower they seem to move. The farther apart drawings are, the faster they seem to move. 'Easing out' means that the motion starts more slowly and picks up speed as it eases out of a keyframe. 'Easing in' means that a move slows down as it eases into a keyframe.

The remaining chapter describes the animator's notes and dope sheet. 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 to more than 1,200 productions. Mark's accomplishments include owning an award-winning advertising firm, being a syndicated cartoonist, production designer for film and TV writing entertainment industry books and lecturing on both animation and storyboards. Winning more than 30 animation awards, 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.

CAREER COACH

Internships: An Introduction to a Career



by Pamela Kliebrink Thompson

WHEN I WAS IN COLLEGE, I DIDN'T PARTICIPATE in an internship. I don't think I even knew about them. Today, I realize how valuable an internship can be.

WHY IS AN INTERNSHIP VALUABLE?

Internships are a way to test-drive a job — to explore a possible career and discover whether you truly have passion for that work. The direct exposure to the work is often an eye opener to interns. You might find that the job you thought would be glamorous and fun is not what you imagined, or discover an exciting career you knew nothing about.

Internships are a way to learn by doing, gain work experience and develop job skills, all of which will give you an advantage when you enter the job market.

Internships provide an opportunity to begin career networking. Who you know and who knows you can make a big difference in your job search. Someone who has seen you in action, and has seen what a contribution you make, can give a strong recommendation to an employer.

Internships can give you career building opportunities and significantly increase your chances of landing a good full time position. They can even provide a foot in the door.

INTERNSHIPS ARE A WAY TO TEST-DRIVE A JOB — TO EXPLORE A POSSIBLE CAREER AND DISCOVER WHETHER YOU TRULY HAVE PASSION FOR THAT WORK.

WHY DO COMPANIES OFFER INTERNSHIPS?

Just as you are trying out a career and a company, the company is trying you out. The company wants to find potential new hires and internship programs provide a way to check out potential recruits before a company commits to hiring a full time employee.

TO FIND THE RIGHT INTERNSHIP:

Consider your goals, personal values and available choices. Learn about the range of possibilities available to you.

High profile workplaces (those everyone's heard of) are more competitive. There are lots of people applying for few positions. It may be easier to get an internship at a lesser-known company.

Larger workplaces often have formal mentoring or training programs. You may have a greater chance of getting hired after your internship at a larger company because there are more openings due to a greater number of employees. But a larger company may be more bureaucratic and you may not have as much hands-on experience as at a smaller firm. A smaller company may suit you better if it offers you more opportunity for varied, relevant experience in the field.

Pick a company you would like to work for and contact the human resources department to find out if it has an internship program. Check its Website. Don't be deterred if the company isn't advertising for interns. If it doesn't already employ interns, try proposing an internship for yourself and see what happens. Employers are often impressed by people who are assertive and resourceful. As my mother advises, "No you have, yes you might get." It doesn't hurt to ask for what you want.

Internships are often advertised in the [Career Connections](#) section on AWN.com. You can also find out about internships through college career centers, professors and college staff, other Websites, and internship guidebooks and directories.

A few well-known companies that have offered

internships in the past are Disney, Pixar, Digital Domain and Black Entertainment Television. Smaller companies who have offered internships include Creative Logik, Blizzard, View Studio and the Institute for Creative Technology.

PAID OR UNPAID?

You won't get rich on an internship, whether it is paid or not. Remember what you earn is not as important as what you learn.

There are other factors besides pay to consider, such as the mission of the company, whether you can have a flexible schedule or if they offer educational tuition support. Other factors include what the company expects from its interns, what you may learn and who you might meet (other co-workers, vendors, clients, etc.).

TO APPLY:

Seeking an internship is much like seeking a job. Do your research and learn whatever you can about the company you are applying to or the person you want to work for. Submit your materials early and make sure you follow all the instructions verbatim. Be organized and establish a system for meeting the deadlines as well as tracking the applications and your status with each company.

The application for an internship is similar to any job. You'll need a clear, brief résumé and cover letter. Remember, these are marketing tools. Emphasize your personal achievements and qualifications. Avoid the passive voice.

Address the cover letter to a particular person. Introduce yourself and why you are interested in the company. Highlight your relevant skills and experience. In the cover letter explain why you are interested in the internship at that company. Be as specific as you can. Give the recipient a reason to be interested in you as an applicant. Lay the groundwork for further contact.

JUST AS YOU ARE TRYING OUT A CAREER AND A COMPANY, THE COMPANY IS TRYING YOU OUT.

Prepare for the interview. Think about what you bring to the internship and what you hope to gain from the experience. During your interview, explain what you did on any other jobs (including volunteer work) and the skills you have. Be clear to your prospective employers about what you seek. It may be the only opportunity to do this before you actually start work.

After the interview, follow up with a thank-you note within a day or two. Make sure this communication is as polished as your cover letter and résumé.

Getting a great job or internship takes preparation and luck. Be prepared when opportunity knocks.

RESOURCES:

Internships 2003 by Peterson's (look in your library under 331.2592);

www.internsuccess.com;
www.Collegerecruiter.com;
www.Internjobs.com;
www.getthatgig.com. ■

PAMELA KLIEBRINK THOMPSON is a career coach, recruiter and hiring strategist and recommends internships to anyone starting out in a new field. She speaks regularly at conferences and universities. She is recruiting for a photo-realistic feature being done in Los Angeles. She is looking for experienced lighters, animators, FX animators, texture artists and composers who have experience with photo-realism. If you are interested, send a résumé in MS Word 97 or Adobe Acrobat to her at PamRecruit@aol.com.

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AWN.com Everything about Animation. Only Online.



THE BEST PART OF THE SAN DIEGO CONVENTIONS (AND ALL CONVENTIONS, ACTUALLY) HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE PEOPLE.

HOBBY SHOWCASE

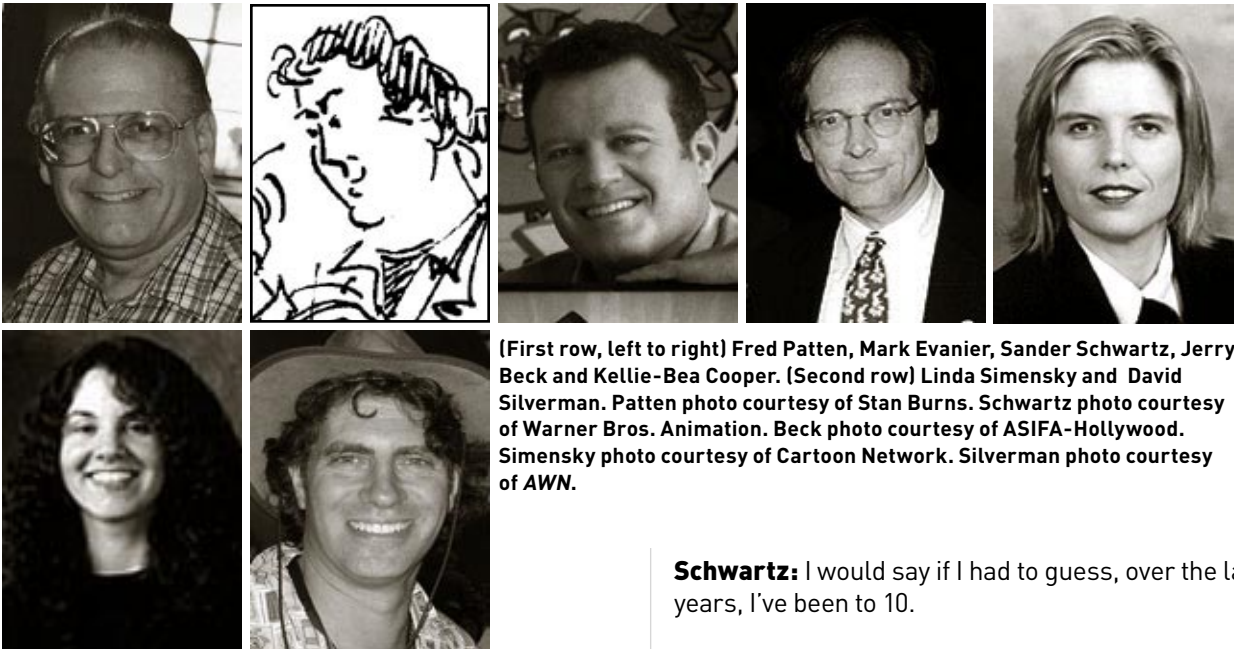
Comic-Con International 2003 Report

by Sarah Baisley

IT'S BECOME THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH. THE [Comic-Con](#) International drew more than 70,000 participants at the San Diego convergence July 17-20, 2003, which has become the preeminent sci-fi, fantasy, animation, gaming and comic book gathering. Conventioneers waited upwards of three hours just to get inside as the hot San Diego sun beat down on them, particularly causing discomfort for those in makeup and costumes. Some finally gave up.

It's become an increasingly important venue for motion picture companies such as Warner Bros., Universal, Sony and DreamWorks to build interest in upcoming theatricals. The WB and Cartoon Network have been particularly aggressive in the past five years, offering screenings and panels about new and returning series. The fire marshals were busy monitoring the huge halls and meetings rooms that often overflowed capacity. This editor could not attend the CN presentation on [Teen Titans](#) and *Duck Dodgers*. Nearby was an informative panel on the migration of videogames to movies and back. SCI FI Channel hyped its *Battlestar Galactica* remake while a concerted band of diehards at SaveFarscape.com worked up support for a fifth season of the canceled show. The UPN sneak peak at its first-ever CGI animated series, *Game Over*, drew lots of laughs.

The show offers many informational panels for the animation-minded, including how-tos on design, writing, pitching and voice acting. Ditto for gamers and people who want to do comics. Plus there's lots of information to be gleaned from the studio and the professionals' presentations, including access to talent, agents and development execs plus prizes, autographs and photo-ops.



(First row, left to right) Fred Patten, Mark Evanier, Sander Schwartz, Jerry Beck and Kellie-Bea Cooper. (Second row) Linda Simensky and David Silverman. Patten photo courtesy of Stan Burns. Schwartz photo courtesy of Warner Bros. Animation. Beck photo courtesy of ASIFA-Hollywood. Simensky photo courtesy of Cartoon Network. Silverman photo courtesy of AWN.

Schools are making a bigger presence at this show with booths. The DAVE School, a computer animation training center in Orlando, screened its film, *Chimera*, based upon the GrossGen comic, during a panel and at the comic publishers booth.

AWN asked some Comic-Con veterans for their perspective and observations on the show. These regulars include Jerry Beck, animation author/historian; Kellie-Bea Cooper, industry ambassador (animation and games), Art Institute of California – Orange County; Mark Evanier, writer/producer; Fred Patten, anime/animation journalist; Sander Schwartz, president of Warner Bros. Animation; David Silverman, producer on *The Simpsons*; and [Linda Simensky](#), svp original programming, Cartoon Network.

AWN: *How many Comic-Cons have you attended?*

Patten: I have attended all of the Comic-Cons since the first.

Evanier: I attended the first Comic-Con in 1970, back when it was called The San Diego Golden State Comic Con and everyone was thrilled that 500 people showed up. This year, I waited in a men's room line with that many people in it. Anyway, I've been there for every one since, marveling at the urban sprawl that is the exhibit hall, watching prices escalate and the percentage of the con that's about comic books grow smaller and smaller.

Schwartz: I would say if I had to guess, over the last 15 years, I've been to 10.

Beck: I've gone to comic book conventions every year since I was 13 years old — since 1968, in New York. The San Diego Comic-Con I've been attending since 1977.

Cooper: I've been attending Comic-Con since I was in high school, so about 10 (off and on over the years).

Simensky: 12

Silverman: Hard to say, but I'll take a guess and put it at six. I haven't been keeping a log...

AWN: *What features, events, booths draw you? What parts of Comic-Con do you most enjoy? And what did you get out of them this time?*

Evanier: The best part of the San Diego conventions (and all conventions, actually) has always been the people — meeting the greats of the field and others of like passion. I never cared about "infomercial" panels, never cared about previews of upcoming movies, stopped buying old comics when I completed my collections of certain books. I like spending four days surrounded by interesting, creative people and seeing friends and meeting new ones. I moderate panels so that the folks I'm interested in me will come to me, and I can ask them questions for an hour or so.

I moderated 11 panels, including spotlight interviews of several veteran comic book creators, the annual Jack Kirby Panel, the annual Golden Age Artists Panel, a panel on my work with Sergio Aragones, and



Fans go to see comic artists draw their favorites like Jughead and Veronica from Archie comics. Photo courtesy of AWN.

panels on the history of Gold Key/Dell Comics and the book, *Seduction of the Innocent*. We had a Cartoon Voice Panel with a dozen top actors who, between them, had about 11,000 voices and, for the second straight year, the convention let me interview Ray Bradbury. Because Mr. Bradbury was in a wheelchair and we couldn't get him onto the platform, a lot of those in the packed audience couldn't see him as he spoke. But they heard his passion as he spoke about being true to your creative instincts and not listening to the many "idiots" (his term) out there who try to tell writers what to write. If you couldn't learn something in any of those panels, you weren't paying attention.

Schwartz: I like all the people dressed up in those funny costumes. I'm particularly fond of the hundreds of people in *Star Trek* costumes and I like the whole group of Klingons. That's my primary purpose.

It's a great opportunity. Besides looking at some very interesting scenery and seeing all the people who have everything except mirrors. There are people I get to see once a year and it's there, from other parts of the country, other parts of the worlds, other planets... It's a great attraction as far as bringing people together not only in my business, but in ancillary and related businesses.

I went back a week later for SIGGRAPH. For the most part it's as interesting a group as the Comic-Con group, but quirky in the kind of computer geek way, not in the colorful entertainment way. So the people watch-

ing isn't nearly as good. Lots of pocket protectors. The contrast is amazing.

Comic-Con is the best show on Earth between the people you see and the properties and the all the stuff there. It's just great eye-candy.

Beck: I go to see old friends, buy old comic books and memorabilia and attend the panels, which are becoming the true highlight. I get to meet people I admire and find out how they do their work.

Cooper: I enjoy that one price covers it all (the screenings, the panel discussions, the conference floor). The amount of what you can do, see and buy could fill more than a week of enjoyment.

Simensky: I like the independent comics booths, from *Drawn & Quarterly* and *Top Shelf* to the people who have a stack of Xeroxed comics they stapled themselves. Every year, I find at least one amazing comic book from one of those little tables. I met a couple of interesting comic book artists this year, and bought some pretty funny stuff. I saw some great new Chris Ware books at *D&Q*.

Silverman: I usually first check out booths like Bud Plant and other booksellers. I'm on the lookout for out-of-print books of Walt Kelly and Ronald Searle. Then, I'll go to Kitchen Sink, Dark Horse, Fantagraphics. I'll also check out booths that sell original art, particularly comic strip stuff.

Mainly, I go to hang out with friends from *Simpsons* and Pixar, crack wise about the costumed customers, have a lot of laughs and more than a few drinks. And, I try to meet or reacquaint myself with artists I admire. Sergio Aragones is an old friend, I always seek him out. It was great to hang with Bill Plympton. Rich Moore and I got a chance to catch up, and laugh at ... um, this is being published, right? And Dan Piraro, of *Bizzaro* fame, did a terrifically funny one-man show as a presentation.

Mainly, I was there for the *Futurama* and *Simpsons* presentations. Both insanely well attended, both great fun. And, for once, no one asked if Smithers is gay.

Patten: What draws me has evolved over the years. I was a comic book collector and an active fan since the early 1960s, so what drew me to the first Comic-Cons was the opportunity to look for missing issues of the comics that I collected, and to meet in person some of



With the success of the DVD launch of the series, *Futurama* still has a growing fan base.

the fans who were friends by correspondence. In the mid-1970s, I discovered and became very enthusiastic about Japanese animation. In 1978, I and some of the other members of the first anime fan club helped representatives of Toei Animation conduct test marketing by running the first anime video programs at the Comic-Con, and selling anime merchandise in the dealers' room to see how American fans would react to anime and manga. (The "boy's adventure" sci-fi anime like *Space Pirate Captain Harlock* was very popular; there was no interest in the girl's anime.) At the 1980 Comic-Con, I served as the U.S. liaison for a group tour of about 30 Japanese animators and manga artists to the Comic-Con (Osamu Tezuka, Monkey Punch, Go Nagai, etc.), and I was awarded the Comic-Con's Inkpot Award for "services to fandom" (helping to create anime fandom). I continued to help run the anime video programs into the mid-1980s.

As the Comic-Con has grown in importance and attracted more professional comic-book writers and artists, it has been an opportunity to see them in person. Even if I am no longer as enthusiastic about the costumed superheroes as I used to be, it has been a thrill to see their creators in person. Also famous animators; **Bob Clampett** used to attend regularly until his death.

One of my interests, which overlaps science-fiction and fantasy, comic books and animation, is stories featuring intelligent animals aimed at young adults and adults (beyond just funny animals for children), ranging from novels like Adams' *Watership Down* and Orwell's *Animal Farm* to animation like *Kimba the White Lion* and *Cats Don't Dance* and comics like Crumb's *Fritz the Cat*. This year I was a panelist on "20 Years of Furry

Comics," and my first book premiered at the Comic-Con: *Best in Show: Fifteen Years of Outstanding Furry Fiction*, an anthology of 26 short stories which I edited. (It actually co-premiered at the Comic-Con and at a Furry specialty convention, the Anthrocon in Philadelphia, on the same weekend.)

I met a number of old friends at the Comic-Con, including Monkey Punch (Kazuhiko Kato), the manga artist-creator of *Lupin III*. He often comes to America for the Comic-Con, so this was no surprise. Another was Dwight Decker. We were both comics fans in the 1960s; he has been working for over a decade now for the major European publisher of the Walt Disney-character comic books.

AWN: Did you see anything or anyone surprising?

Cooper: There was so much to see, that it was hard to be in two to three places at once. There were so many professionals and stars, it was awesome!

Simensky: I met Robert Williams, who signed a book for my brother, who is a huge fan of his work. I found some hilarious unlicensed, off-model *Powerpuff Girls* toys from China. The packages said, "3D Girls Bicycle."

Silverman: The gigantic display of Yoda with a really fierce, angry expression. Guess the Dark Side has finally pissed him off. Oh, and Lara Croft talking to some *Ghostbusters*, I didn't know they hung out.

Patten: There were two big surprises to me, one pleasant and the other rather depressing. The pleasant surprise was the size of the manga and anime displays in the Exhibit Hall. Less than five years ago the anime/manga specialty companies were only beginning to appear. This year their professional trade-show booths were among the biggest in the Hall. As an anime enthusiast, this was very gratifying.

Less so was the accelerating evolution of the Comic-Con away from a friendly gathering of comics and animation hobbyists to a massive promotional showcase of popular culture merchandisers. The whole convention is expanding so explosively that I suppose the volume devoted to comics has not actually diminished much (although Marvel Comics, usually one of the biggest exhibitors, was not at the Comic-Con this year), but proportionately the traditional comic books are occupying a shrinking percentage of the overall convention. There seemed to be less interest in the creative end of comics and animation — the writing and drawing; the inspirations for new stories and new characters —

LESS SO WAS THE ACCELERATING EVOLUTION OF THE COMIC-CON AWAY FROM A FRIENDLY GATHERING OF COMICS AND ANIMATION HOBBYISTS TO A MASSIVE PROMOTIONAL SHOWCASE OF POPULAR CULTURE MERCHANDISERS.

than in the merchandise spinning off what already exists: the new movies, action figures, computer games, toys, posters, etc. featuring the most popular "classic characters" or the closest possible imitations of them.

Evanier: Maybe my eyes were deceiving me but I could have sworn I saw someone there selling comic books.

Beck: I'm still amazed how Hollywood has invaded the scene. I remember the old days when the only time we saw celebrities was when they were competing with you, digging through boxes of old comics. I've met musician Rueben Blades and actor Mark Hamill like that.

AWN: How did this one compare to previous ones?

Beck: It's finally gotten too big for me. They should expand the Comic-Con by one day (at least). There is no way for anyone to see everything — then again, there's never a dull moment.

Patten: Attendance has grown so large that estimates of this year's total ranged all the way from 60,000 to well over 100,000; a variable of over 40,000. The lines waiting to enter the Convention Center each morning were literally over a mile long; and attendants had to herd them in with constant shouts of "Keep in line, don't push, keep moving, don't dawdle, please don't chat and create a bottleneck, there are people waiting behind you." The Comic-Con used to feature an Artists' Alley where anyone, pro or fan, who wanted to draw could do so.

This year there were so many amateurs that only professional artists working for a comic-book publisher were allowed to sit at a table; security guards actually ordered the "mere fan artists" away. It is also getting harder and harder to get a hotel room within walking or even free shuttle bus distance of the convention center without paying \$140 or more per night. More and more attendees are being forced to distant hotels along San Diego's trolley line to the convention center. I suppose the huge population density has made this necessary, but it creates an unpleasant atmosphere that goes beyond just being buffeted by the crowds in the exhibit hall.

Evanier: Every San Diego gathering tops the one before, not only in turnout but memories. I can't recall

ever saying, "I had a better time last year." They've evolved to the point where you really have about a dozen conventions going on in the same edifice — a gaming convention in this section, an animation fest in this part, a con devoted to upcoming fantasy films over there. There's even areas devoted to comics. If you don't have a good time, it's because you didn't go to the right part of the building. This year, I wandered down to Artists' Alley for an hour and you know what? Down there, surrounded by artists with a passion for the form, it even felt like the old, smaller San Diego Cons.

Schwartz: The penetration of manga and anime continues to make inroads into this marketplace and, of course, to bleed over into stimulating American-grown product that apes anime or is influenced by anime.

Cooper: This was the best one, I think.

Simensky: It's getting really big and crowded. I didn't even get to see the entire floor this year. It was a lot like last year's con, and much, much larger than previous years.

Silverman: This was *huge*. And yet, the 'comics' part seems to be getting overshadowed by the 'film/TV/video game' part. And it's a damn shame! And... uh... well, I am part of that film/TV/video game' part. Hmm. Well, then, I'll just shut up.

AWN: *Did you find any good buys?*

Schwartz: I bought a beautiful maquette, a sculpture of Muttley and Dick Dastardly that's sitting right here in my office. Those characters are particularly endearing to me because they are within our library of characters and something ultimately I'd like to bring back in one way, shape, form or another. This year, this was my big purchase.

Beck: I always find bargains on things I'm interested in... One hint: Stuart Ng has the coolest old books for sale. Wise men (and women) fish there.

Cooper: Tons! There were a lot of gothic cartoon properties that caught my eye.



With comics going to the big screen, Hollywood has invaded the Con. (Image above: left to right) Cyclops from *X-Men 2*, *Spider-man*, *Hulk*, *Daredevil* and *Blade*. Visitors can even be scanned to be part of their favorite films at the Gentle Giant booth (left). Con guests battle in a jousting match (bottom left). *X2*™ & © 2003 Twentieth Century Fox. *Spider-man* © 2002 Columbia Pictures. All rights reserved. *Hulk* © 2003 Universal Studios. All rights reserved. *Daredevil*™ and © 2003 Twentieth Century Fox and Regency Enterprises. All rights reserved. *Blade* © 1998 New Line Cinema. All rights reserved. Booth and jousting photos courtesy of AWN.



Simensky: I always find interesting old books on animation at Stuart Ng. This year I found a book on Norman McLaren that was a decent price. I collect old issues of *Funnyworld*, and found a couple.

Silverman: I found this storyboard panel from the *Pogo* special, and it looks a lot like ol' Walt K. drew it himself. And it was a deal, either way!

AWN: *Any additional observations?*

Silverman: How do all those people stand being Klingons all day long? A friend of mine played a Klingon on a *Voyager* episode, and said the make-up experience was just miserable.

Evanier: The convention can be scary — crowded, noisy, intimidating. And I think they ought to issue an "Overstreet Price Guide for Parking Spaces." But I wouldn't miss it for anything.

Schwartz: The show continues to expand in both floor space and in the people who come, both in the businesses related to comic books and animation and fan-

tasy, but also in the public. The great deal of interest in everything there continues to amaze me. Additionally, all the major studios use Comic-Con as a platform to launch a slate of films. They bring in their stars as Warner Bros. did with Halle Berry and the cast of *Gothika*. The year before, for *T3*, Warner Bros. had Arnold Schwarzenegger and Jonathan Mostow, the director of *T3*. I know Sony had a big presentation.

The fact that the major studios pay so much attention, bring in their stars and show sneak peeks of the pictures, really demonstrates to me that the industry regards it as an important venue for marketing of their films and their products. The fact that it's become such a mainstream event is quite astounding.

A lot of material you only get to see there or get to see for the first time there. We premiered our *Batman: Mystery Of The Batwoman*.

I've noticed it's become an important showcase in the last two to three years. I'd never seen these kinds of lines for the presentations and it's getting more and more popular.

Cooper: This event blew away SIGGRAPH 2003 this year, to my surprise. I look forward to attending Comic-Con next year, where I may pass on SIGGRAPH entirely next year (even if it is in L.A.).

Simensky: It's really not a comic convention any more; it's a popular culture convention. Maybe they should rename it. Also, for those of us in the animation industry, it's become our U.S.-based animation festival.

It's not too early to make your travel plans for the next-best show on Earth when the 35th annual Comic-Con International takes place July 22-25, 2004 in San Diego. Hopefully the Con organizers can streamline registration to contend with the hordes of people who flock at an ever-increasing rate to the show. ■

SARAH BAISLEY is editor of Animation World Network.



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

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

BRAZIL ANIMA

Anima Mundi: Art Critics and Children Agree!

by Phillippe Moins

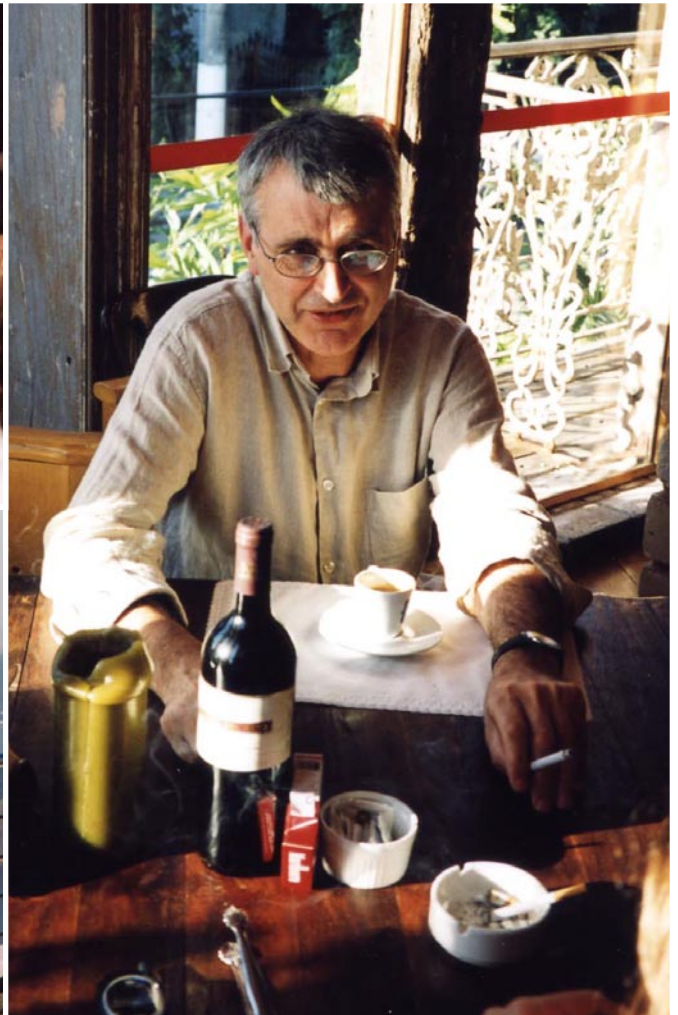


This young girl seems to be enjoying her time at Anima Mundi. All photos courtesy of Phillippe Moins.

IF THERE'S ONE ANIMATION FESTIVAL THAT SUCCEEDS in attracting a really enormous audience, it must be [Anima Mundi](#) in Brazil. This year they broke their own record with 88,000 admissions over a 15-day period. This edition ran from July 11-29, first in Rio de Janeiro and then in Sao Paulo.

The first thing that strikes you upon arrival at the festival is the extraordinary youthfulness of the audience. Anima Mundi is a popular event that, in both cities, attracts an enormous number of teenagers and children to screenings, workshops offering opportunities to try their hand at making animation, and the "animated chats." These encounters with professional animators are extremely successful, enabling audiences to talk with foreign filmmakers about their work. This year's lineup included Janet Perlman, Phil Mulloy, Doug Sweetland from Pixar, [Koji Yamamura](#) and Arnaldo Galvao, who were inundated with questions.

When asked to explain what attracts such enormous numbers of young people, filmmaker [Marcos Magalhaes](#), who is also one of the festival's four co-organizers, cites both low ticket prices and the festival's work over a period of several years to encourage young audiences to discover animation, and to demystify the process of animation filmmaking through the workshops. The festival also has a hugely effective marketing strategy, supported by the festival's sponsors, making Anima Mundi a recognizable and highly visible brand, both in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. On the streets in Copacabana you see bus shelters sporting the festival logo, whilst in Sao Paulo huge advertising billboards carry the Anima Mundi logo. Apparently there is good print and broadcast media coverage, even if this has not yet led to any television programming that happens outside the festival period.



Young adults at work (top left) in one of the workshops. Filmmaker Philip Mulloy was a guest of the "animated chats" in Rio (right). (bottom left photo) Left to right, Philippe Leclercq, director of *Rain Children*, Koji Yamamura and Katrin Arndt from the Institut of Animation, Visual Effects and Digital Postproduction at Filmakademie Baden-Wuerttemberg on top of the Sugar Loaf.

In addition to the explanations cited, no doubt it is also due to the insatiable curiosity of the Brazilian audience, which in a sense discovered auteur animation with the creation of Anima Mundi itself in 1993. Before that, the average Brazilian had as much chance of seeing films by Yuri Norstein or the [Brothers Quay](#) in his or her own country as of seeing the "Sugar Loaf" covered with snow. Over eleven years the organizers have succeeded in achieving their original objective, epitomized in the festival tagline: "It's not everyday that kids agree with the art critics."

The result of this activism on behalf of animation is a high number of entries. This year, the festival received 500 films from 39 different countries, from which they selected 300+ for competition, and around 60 of these were Brazilian. A hugely impressive num-

ber, no doubt rather too many, as even the festival organizers seemed to feel. Doubtless more rigorous selection would make the programs more interesting, but apparently the Brazilian public does not mind since the films are offered such an exhaustive panorama of world production.

Anima Mundi's approach to organizing their competition is quite different from that of any other festival. There is no jury, with prizes being chosen by the audience and local professionals, through a kind of representative voting system. The audience votes at every screening, as they do at Annecy. What is truly original in Anima Mundi's case is that several prizes are awarded (i.e. first, second and third in each category: shorts, video, children's, etc.), reflecting the votes cast. In addition, audiences in each city award

The main entrance to the event.



(From right to left) Arndt, Pixar's Doug Sweetland and his girlfriend, Carolina Rojas and Andrea from Anima Mundi.

their own prizes. In effect, the results in both Rio and Sao Paulo tend to be pretty similar. The drawback of any audience award is that voting generally favors funny and playful films, although the selection provides a wide range of other kinds of animation.

The prizes awarded by the professionals are not chosen by an international jury but by around 80 Brazilian professionals, who are invited to attend screenings and vote on their choices. This system has the merit of closely involving local professionals in the festival, since, according to Marcos Magalhaes, the total number of people directly involved in making animation in the whole of Brazil amounts to around a hundred. So a good majority of them have a great opportunity to check out all that is happening on the international scene.

In fact, the prizes awarded by the Brazilian professionals are not that different from those voted by the local public. The Russian filmmakers Mlikhail Aldashin and Konstantin Bronzit are the darlings of the public as much as they are of the professionals. Clearly, humorous films are the most popular. Brazil also has a tradition of model animation, of which there were several impressive examples at this year's fest. Finally, there is also a competition for Internet animation, again with prizes awarded by the public and by professionals.

Anima Mundi rightly styles itself as "the biggest festival of its kind in the Americas," so it is regrettable to see how few foreign animation professionals attend the event. No doubt the geographical location makes it difficult for professionals to justify the trip, despite the attractions of Rio, the wonderful welcome visitors receive and the festival's infectious enthusiasm. However this doesn't seem to particularly worry the organizers, at least for now.

Yet animation in Latin America, although embryonic, most certainly has enormous future potential. Anima Mundi's official selection included two feature films from South America: *Mercano el Marciano* from Juan Antin, Argentina, and the Chilean, *Ogu & Mamapato in Rapa Nui*, directed by Alejandro Rojas. Both films demonstrate how the development of computer technology has enabled countries to start producing feature films for the first time. Some opt to take the well-worn route of imitating North American models, others are trying something more original.

What of Brazilian production in this context? Young animators are obviously using Flash a great deal and plan to work in advertising, but more ambi-

tious projects seem difficult to get off the ground. Yet there are no less than three feature film projects in development in Brazil, as well as a TV series. Until now, with no real industry to speak of, the situation in Brazil is basically pretty similar that obtaining in Germany and France some 20 years ago. But there is a real sense of things changing: with a strong possibility of a real animation school being set up at the Catholic University in Rio. For some time now, filmmakers have been able to submit projects to a competition organized by Petrobras, which finances four animation projects every year.

Having recently formed an association to represent themselves, Brazilian professionals will certainly be campaigning for the government and major national companies to develop their support for Brazilian animation. In Anima Mundi, they have an undeniably effective tool to make their presence felt. ■

PHILLIPE MOINS is a writer and teacher, and also the co-director of *Anima 2003*.

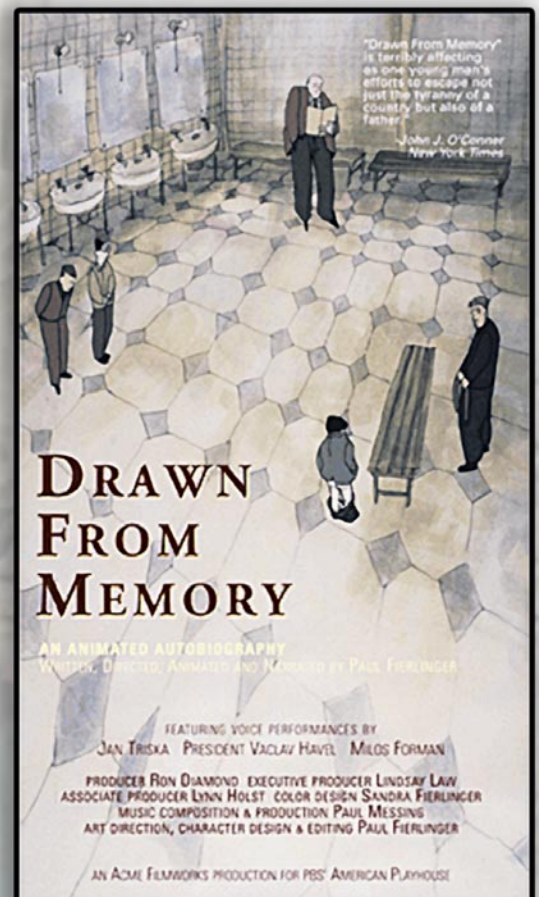
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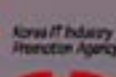
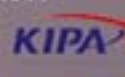
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ANIME REVIEWS

New from Japan: Anime Film Reviews

by Fred Patten

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

Chobits. V.1, Persocom. V.2, The Empty City. V.3, Darkness Descends. V.4, Love Defined. V.5, Disappearance. V.6, My Only Person. V.7, Chat Room.

TV series (26 + 1 episodes), 2002. Director: Morio Asaka. V.1-6, four episodes/100 minutes; v.7, three episodes/75 minutes. Price & format: DVD bilingual \$29.98. Distributor: Pioneer Entertainment.

Chobits has been the most popular title in the anime "magical girls" genre, "robotic maid" subgenre since its appearance on Japanese TV slightly over a year ago (26 weekly episodes, April 2 - September 25, 2002, animated by the Madhouse studio). These are usually played for adolescent slapstick comedy. *Chobits*, based upon the manga by the CLAMP team of four female cartoonists best known for girls' manga (*Cardcaptor Sakura*, *Magic Knight Rayearth*), has enough mildly bawdy humor to rate a 16+ age advisory, but it is a surprisingly tender romance aimed more toward adolescent boys with introverted personalities — especially those obsessed with computers and electronic technology.

Hideki Motosuwa is a 19-year-old from rural Hokkaido who has come to Tokyo to study at a prep school. All the stereotypes about naive farmboys in



Chobits V.1 © Pioneer Entertainment.

**Chobits V.2-V.4.**

the big city apply to him. Hideki faces culture shock over how heavily computerized Tokyo is, with everyone relying on Internet communication and e-mails. *Chobits*' major sci-fi premise is that personal computers (the Japanese slang is "persocoms") have not developed as boxes that sit on desks, but as mobile humanoid robots that accompany their users. The most popular models are designed as girls, with the only obvious giveaway being their I/O ports designed as weird but cute rabbit-like ears.

Hideki is despondent over not being able to afford a PC like everyone else, when he scrounges one discarded in an alley dumpster. His computer-literate classmate and new friend, Shinbo, tells him that this PC (which they name "Chi" because that is all she can say at first) is not a commercial model; it must be an experimental PC that some amateur inventor tinkered together. It only gradually becomes evident just how unique and "impossible" Chi is. There is an urban legend about a new kind of PC called "chobits," which look like ordinary PCs but are intelligent and have independent personalities. Could Chi be a chobit?

Hideki makes friends, finds a part-time job, does "guy stuff" like ogling porno magazines, crams for tests and meets girls. Three girls in particular: Chitose Hibiyaya, the young-widow manager of his apartment building; Takako Shimizu, his young prep school teacher; and Yumi Ohmura, the high-school student daughter of the family-run restaurant/bar where he works. All are old enough to be possible romantic interests. Amidst these activities he "programs" Chi for everyday use, which involves many amusing situations (since Chi is physically a 16-year-old girl, Hideki must buy lingerie for her) and contradictory advice from his friends.

But as Chi develops a puppy-love crush on Hideki, it

becomes a serious matter. There are horror stories about computer geeks who became too attached to their PCs instead of real girls. Hideki is a healthy male, with three women who are seriously interested in him. Chi is merely a cute machine — except that she has an increasingly sophisticated personality and can be emotionally hurt by rejection. What if she is a chobit? What if she is not less than human, but equal to or more than human?

Chobits is rather like the *Paddington Bear* stories for shy teen boys, with examples such as how to look for a part-time job and how to act on your first date rather than how to help Mommy go shopping. It is also a gently humorous guide for the computer-clueless like Hideki into the world of PC technobabble: OS, I/O ports, BBSs, RAM, freeware and so on..

**JoJo's Bizarre Adventure © Super Techno Arts.****JoJo's Bizarre Adventure. V.1 - V.6.**

OAV series (13 episodes), 2000-2001 & 1993-1994. Directors: Hideki Futamura & Noboru Furuse; Hiroyuki Kitakubo. V.1, three episodes/90 minutes; V.2-6, two episodes/60 minutes. Price & format: DVD bilingual V.1 \$29.99, v.2-6 \$24.99. Distributor: Super Techno Arts.

This cross between *Dracula* and videogames like *Street Fighter* has been known by reputation for over a

decade. An American video release has been promised and postponed since before there were DVDs. Now it is finally coming.

JoJo's Bizarre Adventure (*JoJo no Kimyou na Bouken*) has been a super-popular manga serial by Hirohiko Araki in *Shonen Jump* magazine since 1987. There are 80 reprint volumes of about 200 pages each to date. French and Italian editions have given it a good international reputation, and it has spawned bloody video games. It is a multi-generational saga about a secret war between Dio, an evil vampire and an international team of macho vampire hunters led by members of the Joestar family, all of whom have names beginning with "Jo" (the British Jonathan, his son Joseph, a half-Japanese grandson Jotaro) and the nickname JoJo.

It was first animated by the A.P.P.P. studio as a six half-hour OAV serial, directed by Hiroyuki Kitakubo, released in November and December 1993 and July, August, October and November 1994. That was a dramatization of the manga's then-current action, well into the story. A second, seven-volume OAV series, directed by Futamura and Furuse and released between May 2000 and November 2001, was based upon an earlier sequence telling how the team of heroes fighting Dio first met. This American DVD release from the producer (Super Techno Arts is the American subsidiary of A.P.P.P.) combines both OAV series, placing the latter episodes first so Americans will see the adventure in coherent order.

The beginning of the story, not yet animated, is summarized in a DVD extra. In the 1880s, two British youths were affected by an ancient supernatural talisman. The evil Dio Brando became an immortal vampire and began to create a criminal kingdom; Jack the Ripper was one of his first puppets. The good Jonathan finally defeated Dio at sea where both were lost. The anime begins in the present, where a brawny half-Japanese teen, Jotaro Kujo, has begun to develop frightening "evil spirit" powers — a destructive ethereal double.

His still physically powerful British grandfather, Joseph, reveals the family history. The Joestars were psychically linked to Dio; the awakening of these psychic doubles (Joseph also has one) must mean that Dio has finally escaped the sunken ship where he was trapped for a century. Their psychic "ghosts" are a manifestation of their life forces, which they can control to become superheroes. The Joestars must stop Dio from rebuilding his criminal empire. Dio uses his own powers to turn skilled athletes into zombie super-assassins to kill the Joestars.

The second series (now opening) episodes are variations on Joseph and Jotaro tracking Dio around the

world, using their psychic super-doubles (Hermit Purple and Star Platinum) to battle super-killers with names like Hierophant Green and Silver Chariot, breaking Dio's control of his pawns' minds and adding the grateful fighters who still have superpowers to their team. The first series, now the conclusion, shows the Joestar team hammering their way through Dio's new gang of willingly evil killers to his lair in Cairo.

The animation is limited, but nicely directed to project powerful emotional tensions by camera angles, body language and subtle movement like slowly raised eyebrows and faint smirks. The plot is not complex, but the deadly traps and battle tricks that the adversaries use against each other show more imagination than in most martial-arts-driven action fests.



Kai Doh Maru
© Manga Entertainment.

Kai Doh Maru.

OAV (45 minutes), 2001. Director: Kanji Wakabayashi. 75 minutes, including 30-minute production report. Price & format: DVD bilingual \$24.95. Distributor: Manga Entertainment.

Kai Doh Maru (a direct-to-video release on December 19, 2001) was reportedly a project to enable the staffs of the affiliated Production I.G, I.G Plus and SME Visual Works studios to get acquainted with new computer graphics technology. "Set in the political intrigue of Japan's Heian era, [...] this fully digital animation tour de force features elaborately drawn 3D backgrounds, showcasing a unique colorization scheme reminiscent of Japanese artwork from the period."

Kai Doh Maru is specifically set in 894 A.D. Judging by this production, Heian-era artwork must have been extremely stylized and delicately colored. The emphasis is on muted pastels (light turquoises, beiges, pale grays and pinks) often slightly blurred as if being viewed

through a gauze veil or a heavy mist. There are some nice action scenes (and dramatic splashes of scarlet blood), but much of the plot involves political intrigue at the royal court where nobles move slowly in stately, dignified poses.

The art is lovely, and some of the CG effects (particularly slow pans through a heavily wooded forest) are effective, but only for the viewer who is willing to practically stop-frame the motion to study its subtlety. A blurb says, "From the creators of *Blood: The Last Vampire*," but any viewers expecting a dynamic, suspenseful horror fantasy like that featurette will be severely disappointed.

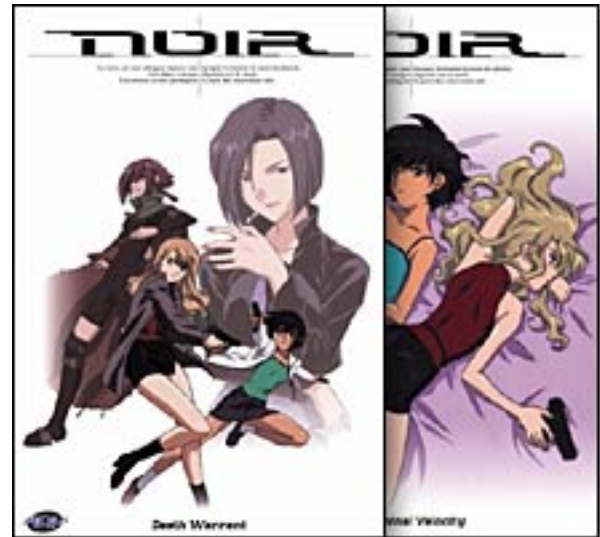
The story may make sense to the average Japanese who is knowledgeable about late 9th century history, but there is little background information; and what there is confuses more than it explains. (The character called Masakado cannot, of course, be *the* Masakado, because he had been dead for a century by then. This raises the question of whether this Masakado is a descendant, an imposter posing as his descendant or reincarnation, or — since this tale is a fantasy — a genuine reincarnation. Fine; but who was Masakado?) The protagonist is a young noblewoman named Kintoki who escapes assassination by her uncle in a family coup, and is taken to the royal court by her supporters who call her the Kai Doh Maru. The term is never translated.

Since Kintoki is the only heir to her faction of the nobility, she is raised as a boy. After five years in the capital, she is 17 and has attached herself to four handsome knights of the royal guard; a situation roughly equivalent to D'Artagnan joining the Three Musketeers. Although she considers herself just one of the boys, and the personal protégé of Lord Raiko, their leader, it is obvious to the four that her feminine emotions are emerging even if she does not realize it yet; and they (especially Lord Raiko) are not sure how to handle this. Then the knights get swept up into the deadly intrigue threatening to destroy the capital city. *Kai Doh Maru* ends on a cliffhanger roughly equivalent to watching Col. Custer and the 7th Cavalry riding toward Little Big Horn.

There is a half-hour "making of" extra, which is almost insultingly fatuous. It boils down to little more than, "Well, we decided to make *Kai Doh Maru*, so we began production and we worked on it until it was finished," and "We have found that skilled animators can make a better film than unskilled animators."

Kai Doh Maru can be recommended to serious students of traditional Japanese art, design art and CGI technique; and to those familiar with Japanese history or who are willing to do a little research to find

out who the Minamoto and Fujiwara clans and their supporters and enemies were. It is much too slowly paced and cryptic to satisfy as light entertainment.



Noir © A.D.V. Films.

Noir. V.1, Shades of Darkness. V.2, The Hit List. V.3, The Firing Chamber. V.4, Death Warrant. V.5, Terminal Velocity. V.6, Cloaks & Daggers. V.7, The End of the Matter.

TV series (26 episodes), 2001. Director: Kouichi Mashimo. V.1, five episodes/125 minutes; v.2, 4 & 6, four episodes/100 minutes; v.3, 5 & 7, three episodes/75 minutes. Price & format: DVD bilingual \$29.98. Distributor: A.D.V. Films.

Noir, one of the most controversial anime series of the last two years (26 TV episodes, April 6 through September 28, 2001, produced by the new Bee Train animation studio, recommended for ages 15+ in America), is full of contradictions: a hard-boiled intellectual action series with beautiful style but minimal action and intriguing but basically unsympathetic characters. Two young Paris-based female assassins search for their past in a moody, slow-paced yet violence-filled quest that is invariably compared to the movies *La Femme Nikita* and *The Professional*.

Kirika Yumura, a Japanese high school girl recently moved to Paris, approaches Mirelle Bouquet, a blonde beauty barely into her twenties. Kirika is an apparently mind-wiped amnesiac who knows only that her history is a fake cover story, that she is a well-trained killer and that she should contact Mirelle who is also a top-notch professional assassin. Also, she has Mirelle's father's pocket watch which Mirelle has not seen since her parents were murdered fifteen years earlier. Mirelle is torn between wanting to kill Kirika to keep her own secret, and adopting

her as a partner to help find out what sinister force from their pasts is trying to manipulate both of them.

Noir has so many secrets within secrets that it is difficult to summarize without spoiling anything. The first 10 episodes are comparatively light, self-contained adventures of Mirelle and Kiriko (code-named "Noir") filling murder contracts around the world, demonstrating their prowess in getting through impenetrable deathtraps, with mere hints of their mysterious adversary. With #10, the presence of their enemy becomes too ominous to ignore and *Noir* turns into a serial. Mirelle's own past is slowly revealed, showing how such a cute young girl could become a skilled assassin; and both gradually discover the existence of a hidden international crime organization that was ancient before the Mafia ever existed.

Common complaints are that the plot is overly enigmatic, the atmosphere of impending tragedy is too depressing and none of the characters are really sympathetic. You can feel sorry for Mirelle and Kiriko once you know their histories, but Mirelle works too hard at being brassy and never developing emotional attachments, while the sad-faced gamin Kiriko is so withdrawn she does little (outside the action scenes) except stand around silently.

Common accolades are that the plot is clever (you feel that all 26 episodes were closely worked out from the beginning), all the weapons look realistic and the artistic settings of urban Paris and the Corsican countryside (the most frequent locales) are beautiful. The hauntingly addictive music by Yuki Kajiura has been so popular that the two sound track CD albums are a constant sell-out at anime import stores. There are unusually informative comments from the production staff published in booklet form in these DVDs. Even the anime fans who feel that *Noir* does not entirely succeed agree that it is ambitious, imaginative and challenging, especially for a TV anime series.

Risky Safety: Omishi Magical Theater. V.1 - V.3.

TV series (24 episodes), 1999-2000. Director: Koji Masunari. V.1-3, eight episodes/80 minutes. Price & format: DVD bilingual \$29.95. Distributor: AN Entertainment.

The cute *Omishi Mahou Gekijou Risky * Safety* (an adaptation of cartoonist Rei Omishi's children's manga, animated by the A.P.P.P. studio) was part of satellite channel WOWOW's *Anime Complex II* TV program, weekly from October 5, 1999 through April 4, 2000. This enabled WOWOW to experiment with shorter-than-usual formats within the half-hour timeslot; *Risky Safety* is only 10 minutes per episode.

Risky Safety is intended for preadolescents, but it is



Risky Safety: Omishi Magical Theater. © AN Entertainment.

so ethnically Japanese that it may be more suitable for students of Japanese culture than for American children (especially with its excellent but extensive "translation and cultural notes"). Moe Katsuragi is a young girl (upper elementary school or lower middle school) in the throes of a puppy-love crisis. Her emotional trauma attracts two tiny apprentice spirits, impish Risky who encourages her to commit suicide so he can take her soul to hell, and angelic Safety who frantically tries to improve Moe's morale. However, both share the same body and have to fight over which one has control of it. Both are so comically incompetent that Moe is soon giggling out of her depression.

As the series progresses, Moe is tempted to help them win their promotions. But she can't really let Risky tempt her school friends into killing themselves, and none are in such dire straits that Safety can win her halo

by helping them. Besides, how can Moe help both Risky and Safety?

An average American adaptation of *Risky Safety* would turn the two sprites into a standard "devil" and "angel." AN Entertainment's translation retains Risky's Japanese identification as a *shinigami*, literally a "death spirit" who leads souls of the newly dead to the Underworld. The traditional Japanese idea of hell is closer to that of Greek and Roman mythology; not a place you would want to visit, but without the atmosphere of evil, terror, torture and pain associated with the Christian idea of hell. Risky performs a needed service, so there is no moral problem with Moe wanting to help him. A subplot is that Moe is confused by the aspects of foreign culture she studies in school (misidentifying French words as English; to her everything is either "Japanese" or "non-Japanese"), and she is equally confused over differences between Christian, Buddhist and "traditional" ideas about the afterlife.

Risky Safety is the first release of the new AN Entertainment company. Vol. 1 includes a booklet of cultural notes covering details that most other companies would

ignore, such as the differences between the honorifics: *-san*, *-sama*, *-kun* and *-chan*. Tokyo Tower, which is frequently seen in anime panoramas of Tokyo without any explanation, is described: "The world's largest self-supporting iron structure, standing 13 meters taller than the Eiffel Tower. It's also one of Tokyo's most identifiable landmarks. Tokyo Tower is a relay tower for nine TV stations and five FM radio stations, and is a favorite tourist attraction for both Japanese natives and foreign tourists." The original broadcast date for each episode is also given. Such thoughtfulness will gain AN Entertainment much good karma from serious students of anime and of Japanese culture. ■

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).

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FILM REVIEWS

Fresh from the Festivals:

August 2003's Film Reviews

by Greg Singer



Ananda © 2003 Vinton Studios.

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:

Originated by Descent (2001), 5.5 min., directed by Jung Eun Lee, Korea/USA. Info: Jung Eun Lee, Seungdong-gu, Hangdang2-dong, Sindonga Apt. 3-1305, Seoul, Korea 133-776. Tel.: 82-2-6453-0909. Email: yijungeun@hotmail.com.

Shaved Monkey (2002), 1.5 min., directed by Thor Adam Goodall, England. Info: Thor Adam Goodall, The Art of Darkness Studios, 2 The Haven, Newton Road, Castle Acre, King's Lynn PE32 2AZ. Tel.: 44 (0) 1760-755386. Fax: 44 (0) 1760-755660. Email: thor.goodall@btopenworld.com.

7 Cats (2003), 1 min., directed by Laura di Trapani, USA. Info: Laura di Trapani, 11055 NW Cornell, Portland, OR 97229. Fax: 503-294-7170. Email: laura@ditrapani.com. Web: www.ditrapani.com.

Cameras Take Five (2003), 3 min., directed by Steven Woloshen, Canada. Info: Steven Woloshen, 3900 Place Guay, Apt. A, Montreal, Quebec H4C 1G3. Tel.: 514-931-6294. Email: swoloshen@hotmail.com.

Ananda (2003), 5 min., directed by Mike Smith, USA. Info: Kathy Radcliffe, Vinton Studios, 1400 NW 22nd Ave., Portland, OR 97210. Tel.: 503-276-0141. Fax: 503-226-3746. Email: kathyrv@vinton.com. Web: www.vinton.com.



Life: rock on! *Originated by Descent* © 2001 Jung Eun Lee.

ORIGINATED BY DESCENT

Percussion music accompanies the viewer's multi-plane, watercolored descent into a cavernous cave. We see ancient rock paintings of animals on its walls. The paintings come alive as horses and deer transform into clouds, reflected in a pool of water. We descend into the watery depths and find schools of fish. The fish become fossilized, seemingly painted, into the walls of rock and their bones transform into the branches of a tree, in the open air again, among the chirping birds and passing clouds. The clouds take shape into the earlier, animated rock paintings. The branches of the tree slowly turn into the pulsing, ramifying veins of a heart, which itself forms into a fertility statue among other petroglyphs.

The beating heart of life is seen as the process of the earth itself. The relationship of living beings with the natural flow of the environment is captured in the gesture and memory of our human art, carrying us forward into the present. Director Jung Eun Lee explains that his intent was to see through the "historical spaces" (the remains and relics) of the "accumulated times" around us – to "feel the energy, force and inner rhythm underlying existence."

The work was created as a 2D computer animation, using Adobe Photoshop, Painter, Premiere and After Effects. It has played at the Foyle Film Festival (U.K.); Wissembourg Animation Festival (France); 42nd International Film Festival for Children and Youth (Czech Republic); Kalamazoo Animation Festival and VC Film Festival (USA). *Originated by Descent* won the award for Best Animation at the Semana International Film Festival (Spain).



Monkey business. *Shaved Monkey* © 2002 Thor Adam Goodall.

SHAVED MONKEY

"OBEY" is written in large letters on a monitor. Everything is grainy black-and-white. A monkey is wearing goggles — and a perpetual grimace — seated before a row of levers. A system of wires is plugged into the mask, extending above. The numeral "1" flashes on the monitor and the monkey pulls the corresponding lever. A yellow banana appears in a bin next to the monkey, but he cannot reach it behind the grating. A "2" flashes on screen. The monkey dutifully pulls the correct lever, but this time he receives an electric shock. A "3" then flashes on screen. The monkey is hesitant, but he pulls the appropriate lever and the grating opens, allowing him to retrieve the vibrant banana. The fruit turns out to be a squeaky toy, not the reward he had imagined.

The camera then tilts to reveal, in the background, a whole pile of worthless, discarded bananas. "EXECUTE" appears on the monitor. The monkey turns to his side and pushes a button marked the same. The distant screaming of some other monkey can be heard. The monkey sniffs in the air, as "RESET" appears on screen. The monkey pushes the reset button, and again "OBEY" flashes, beginning the whole process anew. The camera pulls back to a wide shot of rows and rows of cubicles, reminiscent of an office environment, each with cables extending (like marionette strings) into some murky ceiling.

The film is a poignant look at the soul-numbing working conditions of modern life. The feeling is one of no escape. Obey or suffer the consequences. Even worse than its circular, ceaseless futility, our livelihood and welfare are achieved at the expense of others. The monkey works hard, does what he is told to do and receives his reward. Director Thor Adam Goodall says, "It



The #7 is cool. [7 Cats](#) © 2003 Sesame Workshop.

is an allegory of man's thankless task of working for nothing but shallow consumer products."

Goodall studied graphic design at Goldsmiths College in London. His work is inspired by David Lynch, Alfred Hitchcock, Russian puppet animation and the Brothers Quay. From start to finish, *Shaved Monkey* was completed in four months using LightWave 3D and Adobe After Effects on a Mac G4.

7 CATS

Commissioned by the Children's Television Workshop for *Sesame Street*, *7 Cats* is the tale of a family of felines who take a stroll through a medieval village. "Seven shadows all a-move..." The animation is set against a musical backdrop of jazzy, lyrical narration — "They got a continental attitude..." Snapping fingers keep the beat. Seven catssss... They begin in a house, sitting on the windowsills. The cats amble outside and down the street to find seven bowls of "food" left out by some unseen benefactor.

Upon eating the mysterious meal, the cats blur together into a single spiraling pattern, as the narrator wonders, "What if they all spin around?" The brief story concludes with the cats perched on a wall, grooming themselves, watching the setting sun, tails happily tossing side to side.

Director Laura di Trapani observes, "My intent with *7 Cats* was to present a little tale of mystery and intrigue that the child could interpret on his/her own level without being blatantly EDUCATED." The purpose of the piece is to re-enforce number recognition (#7), co-relationships (7 cats will have 7 tails) and partitioning (the #7 is shown in different groupings, such as "3 and 4," or "2 and 5"). Trapani adds, "I never told the people at *Sesame Street* what it was



Um, scratch that. [Cameras Take Five](#) © 2003 Steven Woloshen.

that I put in the cats' bowls. I wonder if they would have let me make the film if I had told them."

To create the film, live-action (digital) footage of a cat was rotoscoped using Macromedia Flash, altered and re-animated using Adobe Photoshop and composited into a photographic collage environment using After Effects. So far, *7 Cats* has screened at Annecy International Film Festival (France), and the daVinci Days Festival (USA).

CAMERAS TAKE FIVE

In between his day jobs, Steven Woloshen has been creating handmade, cameraless animation for nearly 20 years, in cinemascope! His latest work, *Cameras Take Five*, is an abstract exploration of Dave Brubeck's classic jazz standard, "Take Five." Engraving and painting directly on film stock, the animation is a swirling dance, the "enduring romance of lines," as Woloshen says. It is the popping peekaboo pizzazz of dots, a firework display, a miniature maelstrom of color. Lines extending, collapsing, tumbling, folding, curling. Greens and purples. At times, it looks like holes are burned directly into the emulsion.

In his visual interpretation of "Take Five," there were no edits or cuts. There was no planned narrative or characters. Woloshen explains, "The idea was digested in my head for approximately one year. Then, without storyboards or script, I started *Cameras Take Five*, and I let the music lead me where it wanted to go... As I worked and listened to the track, the line drawings (representing the sound of a saxophone) were leading me either to one side of the frame or the other. Two main colors began to dominate, and I was sectioning my parts into choruses, solos and refrains."



Ganesh kicks holy ass. *Ananda* © 2003 Vinton Studios.

This is an experience thrown down (on film). It is the marriage of motion and music, the tender goodnight kiss of animation in its simplest form.

ANANDA

The kaleidoscopic story is charming in its essence — the search of a man and woman to reclaim, within the suffocation of modern society, the unfettered joy they shared as children. Combining live-action, model-making, 3D, 2D and stop-motion animation, the film is seemingly a demo reel for Vinton Studios' present production prowess.

The story begins with a blue-skinned boy enjoying the company of his childhood sweetheart, a little girl who embodies the spirit of awakening with her central third-eye and a lotus flower blooming in her palms. The two children live in a glowing, golden city, where the atmosphere is flecked with sparkles.

Through the eyes of the boy, we see that he has aged into a world-wearied adult. He wanders the bleak landscape of his mind, walking in an overbearing, cylindrical suit that sequesters him from the industrial world outside. His tin-suit looks part trash-can, part smokestack: a melancholic, microcosmic echo of the wasteland in which he aimlessly trudges — a city built of crumbling high-rises and smokestacks spewing fire. Everything seems remote and distant, devoid of hope and possibility.

The man then notices a lotus flower amidst the ruin. In unraveling the dream of memory and choice, his imagination ignites with the playful recollection of his first love. Youthful exuberance chases away, in colors, the encrusted reality of his imprisoned heart, and he is filled with the wish that his beloved might escape tradi-

tion and come in search of him. The sadness of lost opportunity is felt as a small cloud rains on him, alone.

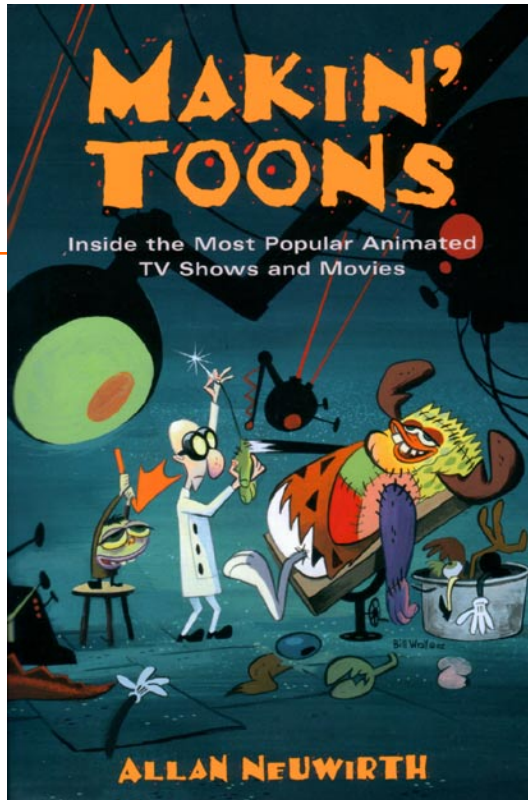
The man seeks to protect the cherished memory of his love, and the lotus flower itself bravely straightens to meet the onslaught of the encroaching city. Ancient, armored gods carry the cold, concretized city on their backs, as an ominous pall of smoke and fire looms above the world. The memory of love briefly transforms the march of modernity, once again, into its colorful, joyful prospect, but to no avail. The man is hit with the momentum of history. His dogma, as the saying goes, is run over by his karma.

When all has fallen apart, the man looks up to find standing there his childhood love. Now a grown woman, she too resides in the shielded constriction of a tin-suit. Waving hello, the two are happy to have found one another, again. Ethereal wisps of joy hover near to them, intimating an earlier time, when the city itself was holy and beautiful. A new, larger lotus flower blooms, floating above them, and a wiser version of youth's freedom is restored.

The style of storytelling is intentionally vague, allowing the viewer to follow the feelings of the characters, but also to reinterpret the Hindi symbols and references. Director Mike Smith describes the film as a surreal fantasy, as "Dali meets Bollywood."

All footage, including FX elements, was captured on high-definition cameras. The entire production took eight weeks to complete. *Ananda* has shown at Cannes Film Festival. ■

GREG SINGER is an animation welfare advocate, eating in Los Angeles.



BOOK REVIEW

Makin' Toons

by Fred Patten

MAKIN' TOONS IS FOR THE READER WHO WANTS
A GOOD SURVEY OF MODERN ANIMATION

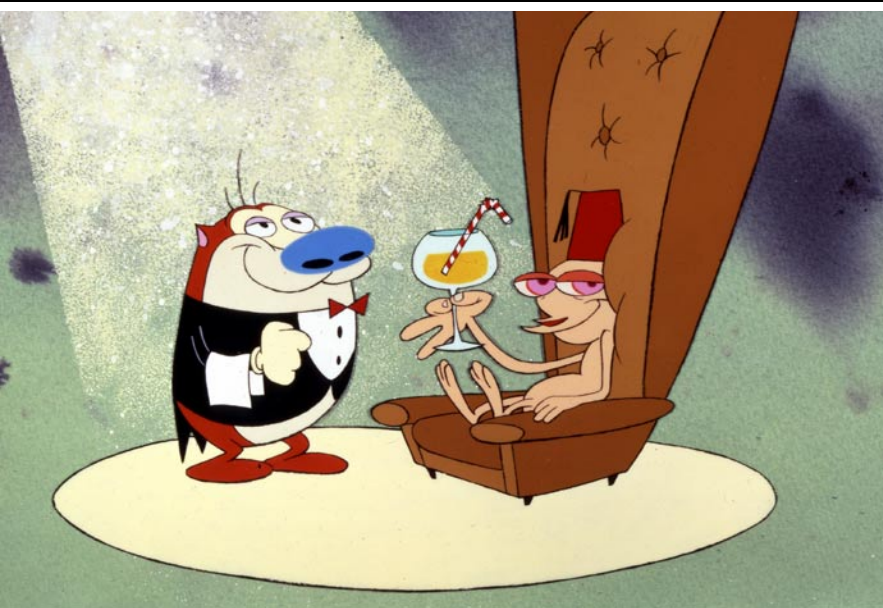
SOMETIMES YOU DO NOT REALIZE THAT A BOOK IS needed until it comes out. Popularized books about animation tend to be either histories of "classic" animation (anything before the 1970s), or studies of individual studios, filmmakers or titles. *Makin' Toons* is for the reader who wants a good survey of modern animation: what have been the hot, new animated theatrical features and TV series of the past 20 years and today? Who made them and how did they come to get made?

Allan Neuwirth covers all this in *Makin' Toons*, a chatty overview of the American animation industry since *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* revitalized what had been a dying art form. More than 20 hit titles are spotlighted. The movies include *The Little Mermaid*, *Aladdin*, *The Lion King*, *Toy Story*, *Ice Age*, *Fantasia/2000* and *Monsters, Inc.* The TV series include *The Ren & Stimpy Show*, *The Simpsons*, *Beavis and Butt-Head*, *The Tick*, *Dexter's Laboratory*, *The Powerpuff Girls*, *SpongeBob SquarePants*, *Rugrats*, *Batman: The Animated Series*, *King of the Hill*, *South Park*, *Samurai Jack* — if it came out since 1990 and it was at all popular, it is probably in here. (Neuwirth does make a distinction between mass popularity and cult popularity that fails to, "lure enough viewers for execs to justify keeping them on the air," which explains why some critical favorites like *Aeon Flux* and *Invader Zim* are mentioned only in passing.)

Avoid the word "history," which implies a study of something that is completed and of the past. Also avoid the "how to make" label, which implies a technical manual or textbook. *Makin' Toons* combines the best of both forms. It is a blend of Neuwirth's own essays and many informal "how we did it" interviews with the creators of the most popular toon movies and TV programs



Who Framed Roger Rabbit rang in a re-birth in the world of animation. John K's *Ren & Stimpy* was a turning point for TV animation. *Roger Rabbit* © Buena Vista Home Entertainment, Inc. All rights reserved. *Ren & Stimpy* image courtesy of Nickelodeon.



of today. The result is both an enjoyable history for the layman of what Neuwirth calls the toon boom era, the period that most of the general public will consider "today" — the new movies and TV hits that have appeared during their memories — and an inspirational series of pep talks by the men and women who have been responsible for this renaissance. This will be enlightening to the "man in the street" who has wondered, "Who is making the new cartoon hits since all those famous old guys like Walt Disney, [Bob Clampett](#), Tex Avery and Mel Blanc are dead?"

Makin' Toons is an appropriate title because Neuwirth takes an occupational rather than a historic or artistic approach. It is reminiscent of those murder mysteries that keep describing the same event from the

often very different viewpoints of the many witnesses. The introductory chapter, "What a Great Idea! How Some Tip-Top Toons Were Born," comes the closest to being chronological and historical as it takes 13 mega-hits from *Roger Rabbit* in 1988, to *Ice Age* in 2002, and briefly describes how each progressed from conception to completion. "Putting It Together" focuses more closely upon just four titles, two theatrical ([Shrek](#) and *The Little Mermaid*) and two TV (*The Simpsons* and *SpongeBob SquarePants*) and presents their production histories in greater detail.

"Auteur! Auteur!" Who are the modern Tex Averys, the Chuck Joneses, the Jay Wards; the creators whose personal styles are so distinctive that even the uneducated John Q. Public will recognize their work even if he may not know their names? [John Kricfalusi](#) describes his vision for *Ren & Stimpy* and grossout humor; Genndy Tartakovsky tells how *Dexter's Laboratory* came to be; Craig McCracken, who got his start on *Dexter's Lab*, interjects the story of his *The Powerpuff Girls*; Tartakovsky returns to tell how he went on to *Samurai Jack* and Mike Judge (*Beavis and Butt-Head*) tells how he evolved from a wannabe comedian and fan of cartoons into a self-taught animator inspired by the [Spike & Mike Festivals](#).

"How Screenwriters and Story Artists Get Toons Moving," or, "It all starts with the writer," makes it sound like no movie or TV series can become successful without a basically solid story concept, whether the writers' approach is through a typescript or art. Ben Edlund tells how he created *The Tick* as an independent comic book and it evolved into a TV series. Sue C. Nichols, a "vis dev person" (visual development) at Disney in the 1990s, was a key figure in the early stages of *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Lion King*, *Aladdin* and *Hercules*, taking the studio's initial decisions and fleshing them out. ("We would sit in on story sessions, and they'd say, 'Okay, the Beast's house is enchanted.' It was our job to come up with why, what, all of that... so you're just as much a story person as the storyboard people," she explains. "If someone said, 'We need a character who fulfills *this* function,' then we could throw out several designs for them.")

Brenda Chapman, the very first female director to helm a major studio's animated motion picture (DreamWorks' [The Prince of Egypt](#)), tells here how she, as one of the original storyboard artists on *The Lion King*, helped coax that troubled project into its final, megahit

Beauty and the Beast's Oscar nomination signaled Hollywood gaining respect for animation as an art form. © Disney Enterprises, Inc. All rights reserved.



form. Andrew Stanton considered himself an animator when he joined Pixar, and was surprised to find himself coming up with ideas during the “seemingly endless series of revisions and rewrites” on *Toy Story* that became part of its basic story.

But then the next chapter, “Ain’t That a Pretty Picture: Creating the Stunning Visuals of TV and Film Cartoons,” makes it sound like it’s the character designers and background artists who are really responsible for a production’s success. Scott Wills, background artist on *Samurai Jack*; [Eric Radomski](#), stylist of the noir look of *Batman: The Animated Series*; Michael Giaimo, art director of *Pocahontas*; and others tell their stories.

Subsequent chapters focus upon directors (Rogers Allers and *The Lion King*; Chris Savino, a director on several series for The Cartoon Network; Pete Docter on directing computer graphics for *Monsters, Inc.*, and Chris Wedge who did the same for *Ice Age*); animators (Andreas Deja who brought *The Lion King's* Scar to life; John R. Dilworth who had to make *Courage, the Cowardly Dog* both cowardly and endearing; Eric Goldberg who made the Genie in *Aladdin* both grotesquely fantastic and recognizably Robin Williams); producers (Margot Pipkin, “mother” of *The Simpsons*; Paul Germain of *Rugrats*; Don Hahn who saw to it that what director Robert Zemeckis wanted done, got done in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*); voice actors (from multi-voice stars like June Foray and Billy West to the story of the voice searches for particular characters, the villainess Ursula of *The Little Mermaid* and Sid the sloth of *Ice Age*); songwriters and composers (Alan Menken and Howard Ashman

reinvent the animated theatrical musical feature for Disney); and a few closing comments on the business aspects of the Toon Boom.

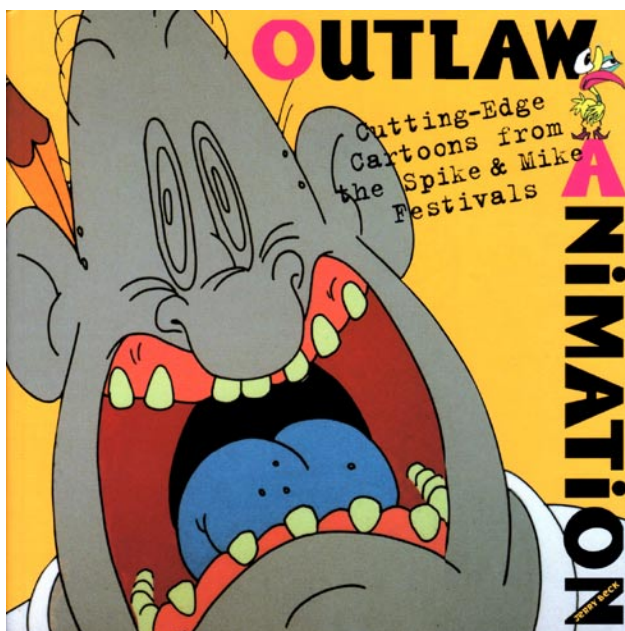
Makin’ Toons jumps around so much that it works best as a kaleidoscopic potpourri; a sampler of all the frenetic activities that have hauled animation out of its embarrassing dead-end of TV babysitter during the ’70s and ’80s. The many “in their own words” stories are all so interesting that one wonders if Neuwirth only interviewed industry professionals who are excellent conversationalists. (One also wonders if the speakers realized that Neuwirth was going to leave the words in their dialogue that are usually replaced with euphemisms.)

The book is well illustrated on almost every double-page spread, mixing photographs of practically everyone interviewed with samples of the artists’ works from model sheets to background paintings. The art is only black-and-white, but the reproductions are very sharp. Neuwirth provides a bibliography and a good index.

Makin’ Toons is both fun to read, and is a key reference volume for any serious library about today’s animation industry. ■

Makin’ Toons: Inside the Most Popular Animated TV Shows and Movies, by Allan Neuwirth. NYC, Allworth Press, May 2003, xiii + 273 pages; ISBN: 1-58115-269-8 (trade paperback; U.S. \$21.95).

FRED PATTEN has written on anime for fan and professional magazines since the late 1970s.



Outlaw Animation: Cutting-Edge Cartoons from the Spike & Mike Festivals.

BOOK REVIEW

Outlaw Animation

by Fred Patten

OUTLAW ANIMATION HAS ALL THE VIRTUES, AND SOME OF THE FLAWS, OF THE BEST AUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHIES.

THIS ART BOOK IS BOTH AN AUTHORIZED HISTORY OF the [Spike & Mike Festivals of Animation](#), to celebrate their 25th anniversary, and a superficial but decent overview of those animated films that are personal creations by individual cinematic artists, rather than corporate products mass-produced for maximum commercial potential.

Outlaw Animation has all the virtues, and some of the flaws, of the best authorized biographies. It tells the complete story of the famous (or notorious) Spike & Mike animation festivals, and it seems to do so objectively. Spike & Mike have always flaunted a raunchy, collegiate, in-your-face approach, and it is boasted of in the book in all its garish, flatulent detail. Mid-'70s college housemates Craig "Spike" Decker and Mike Gribble started out by promoting Southern California rock-and-roll bands. Within a couple of years, they evolved to presenting midnight screenings of films of the bands' performances, then added funky old cartoons as curtain-raisers, then realized that the cartoons were more popular than the concerts and dropped everything except the animation.

S&M (what a *double entendre!*) saw that their spaced-out midnight viewers loved a wild party atmosphere as much as what was on the screen, so throwing a large plush bunny into the audience to be torn apart was done more than once. "The Bad Tie Contest was a standard event," Beck writes on page 22 of the book. "And once, wearing a fencing mask while swinging from the ceiling, Mike invited people to throw money at him. Every night was a free-for-all." The book is studded with photos: their grungy college commune in the mid-



Spike and Mike © Mellow Manor Productions.

THE SPIKE & MIKE FESTIVALS HAVE BECOME SUCH A LONG-RUNNING, OMNI-PRESENT TRADITION THAT TODAY'S ANIMATION BUFF CAN BE FORGIVEN FOR FEELING THAT THEY ARE THE BE-ALL AND END-ALL OF "OUTLAW ANIMATION."

'70s, Spike in a cowboy costume promoting the Festival, Spike & Mike with animator Will Vinton posing with toy(?) machine guns, Spike with Festival alum [John Lasseter](#) at the 1995 Academy Awards where Lasseter got a Special Achievement Oscar for *Toy Story*, and much more. Mike died of a heart attack during chemotherapy treatment for cancer in 1994, and Spike has carried on in both their names.

Spike & Mike's first festival in 1977 was a composite of individual student films like [Marv Newland's](#) *Bambi Meets Godzilla* (1969), foreign art films like Hungarian Marcell Jankovics' *Sisyphus* (1974) and old American theatrical cartoons unseen for decades, which the two knew would blow modern college students' minds like the Fleischer Studios' Betty Boop cartoon *Snow White* (1933). This was fine until the supply of existing "outrageous" animation was used up. Spike & Mike began to haunt art colleges with animation departments to scout out promising student films. This enabled them to become friends with many talented students who would go on to become leading professional animators a decade or two later. In many cases S&M liked what they saw so much that they bankrolled the young filmmakers' projects. Many of those now-famous animators recount their own stories in *Outlaw Animation*.

For those who want to know everything about the Spike & Mike Festivals, this book presents an art-quality color gallery of every poster (with artist's credit) for both the regular Festivals from 1977 and the Sick & Twisted Festivals from 1993. There is also a complete filmography of every title shown at any S&M Festival from 1977 through 2002.

The history of the festivals gets the first 20 pages. "The Roots of Outlaw Animation" is a brief history of non-juvenile animation in America. It surveys animation pioneer Winsor McCay's 1910s films for vaudeville audiences, the naughty *Betty Boop* and *Wolf & Red Tex* Avery cartoons of the '30s & '40s, UPA's artistically creative limited animation in the '50s, non-Hollywood art films of the '60s, like the Oscar-winning *The Critic* (1963), and the adult violence and eroticism exemplified by Ralph Bakshi's *Fritz the Cat* (1972) and *Coonskin* (1975).



These classic characters, *Courage the Cowardly Dog* (top), and Kenny, Stan and Kyle from *South Park* (bottom) made their debut at Spike & Mike. *Courage the Cowardly Dog* © Cartoon Network. *South Park* © Comedy Central.

"Gallery of Independent Animators" is "a sampling of some of the field's more important figures, all of whom have been represented in the Spike & Mike Festivals." Each creator gets one or two pages with a capsule biography and an art-quality frame illustration from one or more of his/her most famous films. The roster includes Frédéric Back, Bruno Bozzetto, Sally Cruikshank, Michael Dudok de Wit, Paul Driessen and nine others including the National Film Board of Canada and Yugoslavia's Zagreb Studio.

"The Top Ten Spike & Mike Festival Cartoons of All Time" are two-page profiles of the top audience favorites which fans demand to see over and over, many of which have gone on to launch TV series: *Bambi Meets Godzilla*, Mike Judge's 1992 *Peace, Love and Understanding*, which introduced *Beavis and Butt-Head*; Trey Parker and Matt Stone's 1995 *The Spirit of Christmas*, which introduced the *South Park* cast and similar classics.

"Even More Independent Films" presents one sample panel from each of another three dozen festival favorites, including several Academy Award winners or nominees such as Chris Wedge's 1998 *Bunny*.

"Outlaw Animators Speak" finishes the book with three- to eight-page interviews with [Bill Plympton](#), Mike Judge, Craig McCracken, John Lasseter, Marv Newland, Don Hertzfeldt, Peter Lord, Danny Antonucci and Andrew Stanton.

The Spike & Mike Festivals have become such a long-running, omnipresent tradition that today's animation buff can be forgiven for feeling that they are the be-all and end-all of "outlaw animation." The book does mention a couple of others in passing, although only as they relate to Spike & Mike. (E.g., the duo were doubtlessly partly inspired by a 1976 one-shot Fantastic Animation Festival in Laguna Beach, for which they handed out flyers.)

Since *Outlaw Animation* does not profess to be a complete history of non-commercial animation, it is unfair to criticize it for omissions such as Oskar Fisch-

inger's abstract-art animation of the 1930s or Yoji Kuri's minimalist gross-out international animation festival favorites of the 1960s. *Outlaw Animation* is excellent as an all-you-want-to-know catalog and history of the Spike & Mike Festivals of Animation, and it is as good a survey of independent animation short films as anything else in print today. ■

Outlaw Animation: Cutting-Edge Cartoons from the Spike & Mike Festivals, by Jerry Beck. Foreword by Todd McFarlane. NYC, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., June 2003, 160 pages; ISBN: 0-8109-9151-9 (trade paperback; U.S. \$23.95).

FRED PATTEN has written the liner notes for Rhino Entertainment's *The Best of Anime music CD* (1998), and 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).

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