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**CELEBRATING THE WHOLE SPECTRUM OF ANIMATION
30 NOV - 9 DEC**



**LONDON INTERNATIONAL
ANIMATION
FESTIVAL 2018**



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Ben & Holly's
Little Kingdom™

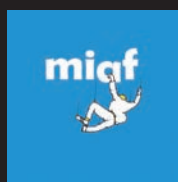
THE BIG KNIGHTS



Partners



EMBASSY OF ESTONIA
LONDON



Crew & Credits

Executive Director **Nag Vladermersky**
Co-Director **Malcolm Turner**
Producer **Mandy Smith**

Programmer **Nag Vladermersky**
Programmer Female Figures **Abigail Addison**
Programmer Aftermath Programme **Elizabeth Hobbs & Abigail Addison**
Programmer Edge of Frame **Edwin Rostron**

Digital Compiling **Claude Trollope**
Website **Mandy Smith & Matt Smith**
Festival Trailer **Daniel Quirke (National Film and TV School)**
Design **Mandy Smith**
Catalogue Notes **Malcolm Turner & Nag Vladermersky**
Catalogue Notes: Female Figures **Abigail Addison**
Catalogue Notes: Aftermath **Elizabeth Hobbs**
Catalogue Notes: Chintis Lundgren **Malcolm Turner & Annie Murray**

Festival Judges: International Competition **Mark Ashworth, Ellie Land, Martin Pickles**
Festival Judges: Abstract Showcase **Emma Calder, Emily Downe, Richard Wright**
Festival Judges: Childrens screenings **Lilith Silver, Joss Goldstein, Reuben Carter, Edwin Green**
Festival Judges: Music Video Programme **Abigail Addison & Chris Shepherd**

Cinema Co-ordinator (Barbican) **Alex Davidson**
Marketing (Barbican) **Tsari Paxton & Ellen Reay**
Publicity (Barbican) **Sarah Harvey, Ian Cuthbert**
And all the amazing **LIAF Volunteers**

Special Thanks

Simon Oatley (The Film and Video Workshop)
Anna Gregory
Kersti Kirs (Estonian Embassy London)
Roger & Sholto (The Horse Hospital)
Robert Bradbrook & Rebecca Havers (the National Film and TV School)
Helen Jack (Shooting People)
Aaron Wood & Ben Mitchell (Skwigly)
Phil Davies (The Elf Factory)
Danielle Viau (National Film Board Canada)
Maret Reismann (Nuku Film)
Rutt Raudkivi (EestiJoonis Film)
Rosto, Jonathan Hodgson, Will Anderson, Ainslie Henderson, Chintis Lundgren, Abigail Addison, Liz Hobbs, Edwin Rostron

...and everybody who gave their time or ideas, shared their work or their expertise. So many people have helped LIAF 2018 come together. Thank you all!!!

Contents

Festival Schedule	5
Director's Message	6
International Competition Programme 1: From Absurd to Zany	10
International Competition Programme 2: Animated Documentaries 1	13
International Competition Programme 3: Being Human	16
International Competition Programme 4: Playing With Emotion	20
International Competition Programme 5: Long Shorts	24
International Competition Programme 6: Animated Documentaries 2	27
International Competition Programme 7: Into the Dark	30
International Competition Programme 8: Looking For Answers	33
Abstract Showcase	37
British Showcase	42
Late Night Bizarre	49
Music Video Session	51
Amazing Animations for 0-7 year-olds	53
Marvellous Animations for 8-15 year-olds	55
Best of the Next	57
The Wolf House	60
Will Anderson & Ainslie Henderson: The Playful Worlds of Scotland's Most Dynamic Animated Duo	63
The Mad, Bad Anthropomorphic World of Chintis Lundgren	66
Animated Documentaries: Truth, Lies, Love and Sex The films of Jonathan Hodgson	70
Female Figures	73
Aftermath	76
Edge of Frame	79
Estonian Centenary Celebration	82
Film Index	86

Festival Schedule

Fri 30 Nov	18:30	🎬	Opening Night: Will Anderson & Ainslie Henderson - The Playful Worlds of Scotland's Most Dynamic Animated Duo + Q&A
	20:45	🎬	British Showcase + Filmmakers Introduction
Sat 1 Dec	11:00	🎬	Barbican Framed Film Club: Amazing Animations for 0-7 year olds
	14:00	🎬	Abstract Showcase
	17:00	🎬	The Wolf House FEATURE
	19:00	🎬	International Competition Programme 1: From Absurd to Zany
	20:45	🎬	International Competition Programme 2: Animated Documentaries 1 + Q&A
Sun 2 Dec	14:00	🎬	Marvellous Animations for 8-15 year olds
	17:00	🎬	Animated Documentaries - Truth, Lies, Love and Sex: The Films of Jonathan Hodgson + Q&A
	19:00	🎬	International Competition Programme 3: Being Human
	21:00	🎬	International Competition Programme 4: Playing with Emotion
Mon 3 Dec	18:30	🎬	International Competition Programme 5: Long Shorts
	21:00	🎬	International Competition Programme 6: Animated Documentaries 2
Tue 4 Dec	18:30	🎬	Special Programme: Aftermath + Q&A
	21:00	🎬	International Competition Programme 7: Into the Dark
Wed 5 Dec	18:30	🎬	Special Programme: Female Figures + Q&A
	21:00	🎬	International Competition Programme 8: Looking for Answers
Thu 6 Dec	19:30	🎬	Best of the Next Programme 1
	21:00	🎬	Best of the Next Programme 2
Fri 7 Dec	19:00	🎬	The Mad, Bad Anthropomorphic World of Chintis Lundgren + Q&A
	21:15	🎬	Estonian Animation: A Centenary Celebration
Sat 8 Dec	18:30	🎬	Edge of Frame & Close-Up present: The Films of Jodie Mack: Programme 1 - Posthaste Perennial Patterns + Q&A
	19:30	🎬	Music Video Session
	20:00	🎬	Edge of Frame & Close-Up present: The Films of Jodie Mack: Programme 2 The Grand Bizarre FEATURE + Q&A
	21:00	🎬	Late Night Bizarre
Sun 9 Dec	16:00	🎬	Closing Gala: Best of the Fest
	18:00	🎬	Edge of Frame presents: Material Fragments
	18:00	🎬	Closing Gala: Best of the Fest REPEAT

Director's Message

Greetings and welcome to the 15th edition of the London International Animation Festival. Since our last festival we've been zipping around the world, visiting several other festivals, scouring archives, watching many animated gems and chewing the fat with several wonderful filmmakers, festival directors and other impassioned people involved in animation. All in a day's work of course, and all designed to make sure we stay as up-to-date as possible with the amazing possibilities that this one-of-a-kind artform can conjure up. What a long, strange trip it's been!

In the last year we've been to Bucharest, Romania for Anim'est, Poznan, Poland for the Animator Festival, Zagreb, Croatia for Animafest and the Punto Y Raya Festival which took place in Wroclaw, Poland. All four are wonderful festivals run by small teams of inspiring, enthusiastic and knowledgeable people who consistently go that extra mile to produce their world-class events. For those people who have attended any of these festivals or anything similar (many countries have at least one animation festival these days and some countries have several) you know what I mean. You, the audience, don't really need to know what happens behind the scenes in the run-up to putting on a festival, and you don't really need to know about the toil, the challenges, the blood, sweat and tears – but I can guarantee that the people who run these events really care about what they do and what they bring to you, the audience, to experience. I myself am part of this club of course and count myself to be very lucky to be included in it. And what a great experience it is to be part of!

In many respects animation is still regarded as a niche artform and yet it has never been more prevalent. It is all around us – in TV commercials, gaming, music videos, scientific visualisations, architecture, police procedurals, medical surgery, education, VR and AR and a myriad other areas. However the animation we mainly deal with at LIAF – the telling of personal stories (be they funny, sad, scary, loopy, poignant etc.) still rarely gets the attention it deserves. So that is where film festivals come in.

In this day and age it is possible to watch as many films as you like on a huge choice of platforms, devices and mediums. There has never been as much choice as now (for those who can afford it or who want to seek out those choices) and yet several new film and animation festivals pop up around the world every year, cinema admissions are in general steadily rising and new cinemas of every size continue to appear in towns all over the UK. The death of cinema? I don't think so!

This goes a long way towards confirming the theory that you just can't beat being in a darkened room with an audience watching a film on the big screen. Ask any filmmaker and they will tell you that this is how they would prefer their films to be seen – communally, a shared experience. There is something to be said for the buzz that surrounds seeing a film with a group of people this way and even better, then hearing a filmmaker onstage talking about their process, their thoughts and ideas which made them want to create their films and bring them to you. It works both ways too – filmmakers love having an audience. It's a form of acknowledgement, particularly when in the world of animation most filmmakers have invariably been locked away in a dark, often isolated, space for months, maybe even years making their films. Let me out of here!

This is what festivals are for and this is why we need to support festivals such as LIAF and the many hundreds of similar events worldwide – to keep independent animation alive, to support our wonderful animators and to feed them so that they can continue to feed us with these tasty nuggets of animated joy.

This year's festival contains a hefty amount of animated documentary films. It wasn't exactly planned that way but as the 2,600 plus entries started making their way to us we noticed a theme happening. So much so that when it got to the hardcore decision making process (what to keep in, what had to make way) we realised that a good 20% of the films chosen for screening in competition were animated documentaries and so the choice was made to run two animated documentary competition programmes this year.

These screenings are complemented by several other special programmes at LIAF containing animated documentaries including a well-overdue look at the remarkable documentary work of one of the UK's most beloved animators Jonathan Hodgson. There are also several other films in this genre in two insightful and thought-provoking programmes put together by Abigail Addison and Liz Hobbs for LIAF – 'Aftermath' (exploring the First World War) and 'Female Figures' (championing female talent in animation).

And finally there are also a few very short but funny documentary films (of the more observational kind) from our opening night special guests – the inimitable and bonkers Scottish duo Will Anderson and Ainslie Henderson. Observational comedy as seen through the eyes of two crazy pigeons!

We hope you get a chance to see some of these programmes and films with us – along with many of the other wonderful programmes that we have been cooking up for you over the last twelve months. As ever, independent animation is alive and kicking and there are hundreds of talented people out there making these magnificent films of every style, genre and technique for you to experience. We hope you enjoy them with us.

Nag Vladermersky

London International Animation Festival
November 18 2018







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International ⁽¹⁵⁾ Competition Programme: **1** From Absurd to Zany

at Barbican Sat 1 Dec 19:00

They say that truth is stranger than fiction. That particular “they” have obviously never been to LIAF. In a world that – admittedly – is getting stranger by the day, the kind of fiction that fills our tanks here at LIAF HQ doesn’t so much attempt to mimic a tricked-up pretend truth so much as establish a whole new universe with different rules and alternative physics, gleefully shredding the various logics established by the usual moribund peddlers of truth and fiction.

We try to encourage them in - these poor deprived souls - for a glimpse of what they are missing but often our entreaties of assistance are spurned or ignored.

It can be hard to describe this stuff to the uninitiated though. Trying to write a literal synopsis of most of these films produces something akin to a quasi-literary Rorschach Test which as often as not acts as a barrier to first time imbibers. The thing is, most people actually want a fair bit of truth woven into their fiction. But for those prepared to actually inhale, a whole new dimension of fiction awaits – a dimension which ironically often shines a more focused beam on the truths that lurk in the shadows.

“Think like an animator;” is a mantra that any good animation teacher will drill into the brain stems of their charges. “Use the unique properties of animation as the very DNA for the structure and narrative of your film.”

Every single film in this programme is a full blown, chrome plated, turbo-charged, wood-fired, card-carrying, loud’n’proud envoy for exactly this kind of reality rebuild.

Herein lies an altogether more attractive, fundamentally superior alternative to the post-reality world we are being sucked backwards into. step right up and feel the warm embrace of a couple of hundred utterly alternative realities. Welcome to LIAF 2018.

Animation is an artform exquisitely suited

for burrowing into this and iconic British animation duo Alison Snowden and David Fine are just the animators for the task. OK, they spent a little time in Canada and, sure, they made one of their three Oscar nominated films *George And Rosemary* (1987) there but for fifteen years their Carnaby St studio produced some wonderfully memorable, quintessentially British animation. Enduring films such as *Bob’s Birthday* (1993) and a stream of outstanding ads and development work on TV series’ such as *Shaun The Sheep* and *Peppa Pig*, their daughter Lily Snowden-Fine getting the gig as Peppa’s voice for more than 50 of the first episodes.

Their latest film *Animal Behaviour* is an absolute gem that quivers precariously on the artistic highwire, wobbling unpredictably between the comically restrained clinical ‘group-speak’ of self-help groups and the barely restrained, equally comical kinetic reactionism that often threatens to break loose in these contrived scenarios. Wisely – perhaps predictably – Snowden and Fine have substituted in a motley cast of animals and insects grappling with varying states of anxiety and denial. All in all, a perfect film to open our ‘Absurd To Zany’ programme.

One of the most dramatic and perhaps polarising films on the festival circuit last year was Nikita Diakur’s *Ugly*. It brought to the fore Diakur’s embrace with exploring what he calls a ‘glitch aesthetic’ in his animation. While to some extent the glitching is exacted by the mysterious, often random digital mechanics of his computers, it is Diakur who unleashes and controls those computers albeit as a rodeo rider masters a bucking bronco. Check out *Ugly* in International Programme 8.

His brand new film *Fest* takes up where *Ugly* left off. The experiment continues. At its core it is based on a number of tangible inspirations. At some point Diakur had developed something of a macro-obsession with Russian stunt bungee-diving videos.

Often set amidst the harsh, whispering

dystopias of contemporary Russian suburbia, these acts of insane thrill-seeking have to be seen to be believed. But they resonated with Diakur who confesses to more than a few experiences of extreme urban exploration, climbing out on to buildings and construction sites when he lived in Russia.

Mash these influences together with Diakur’s passion for the extraordinary glitch animation style he is making all his own and the resultant film that births carries the intimidating genetic make-up of Spiderman and a car thief. This film explains why Absurd and Zany both start with capitals.

Have you noticed that we here at LIAF are big Estonian animation fans? Just saying – just in case you missed it. This is probably not the place to wax lyrical about the depths, complexities, trajectories and uniqueness of the work produced in the little big land of auteur animation. But this is a good place to make the point that one of the more recent developments in Estonian animation, the formation and solidification of the animation course at the Estonian Academy of Arts, is rapidly becoming one of the most accomplished, complex, diverse and entertaining graduate reels we receive (and we work our way through 50 or 60 of them each year).

The course has experienced a few bumps and hurdles in the recent past but the influence of Prit and Olga Parn can be felt in the standard of not just the animation being produced but the very ethos that underpins the ingredients that are used to develop the idea in the first place. Increasingly the course seems to be attracting and admitting students from across Europe. Aggie Pak Yee Lee is a soaring example of where all this is heading. Born in Hong Kong before initially studying animation in Zagreb and Budapest, she completed her new film *Museum* at the Academy. Sumptuously coloured and channelling a more pan-internationalist aesthetic than more classically Estonian drawn animation, it overfills its quotient of Aburdist Zany Estonianess less with its

overall narrative structure and more with bewildering and unpredictable narrative transitions.

The National Film & Television School (NFTS) seems to be encouraging some sort of semi-renaissance in 'hybrid' live-action/animation filmmaking. Last year NFTS graduate Natasha Tonkin produced *Tete A Tete*, a knowingly mature but subtle and understated commentary on family dysfunction in our digital age. And this year we have Sam Gainsborough dissecting a not dissimilar theme with *Facing It*.

Gainsborough's film uses live action actors onto which the most astonishing claymation faces have been viscerally grafted. The texture and the emotive power of what he has been able to wring from coloured clay here has to be seen to be believed.

His early love of the form was borne from a childhood immersed in Wallace and Gromit but this is claymation with a wholly different lineage and agenda. Gainsborough admits to certain frustrations in working with a range of live-action actors as readily as he concedes that a few of them brought their own improvisational edge to the film which saw him adapt certain scenes to absorb those unexpected gifts.

One of the most visually remarkable films we spotted at the Ottawa International Animation Festival earlier this year was Paulina Ziolkowska's ocular tsunami *Bless You*. Made at the Polish National Film, Television and Theatre School in the city of Lodz under the knowing eye of master animator Piotr Dumala, Ziolkowska got the idea for her film when she fell ill and assumed that this was caused by her contact with other people.

That is a simple enough idea but when it is blended in with her almost supernatural passion for colour you begin to grasp an appreciation of the core inspiration that produced this 'moving painting'. Impossible to storyboard, Ziolkowska had to rely on her ability to organically generate this animated ballet and she had to convince Dumala to trust her to pull it off. In all, it was completed in just three months which makes this remarkable young animator one to definitely watch.

Malcolm Turner



Animal Behaviour

Canada 2018 14min

Dealing with what comes naturally isn't easy, especially for animals. These animals reveal their inner angst in a group therapy session, with unexpected results.

Directors Alison Snowden & David Fine



Fest

Germany 2018 3min

Puppets on strings rave, eat and fly.

Director Nikita Diakur

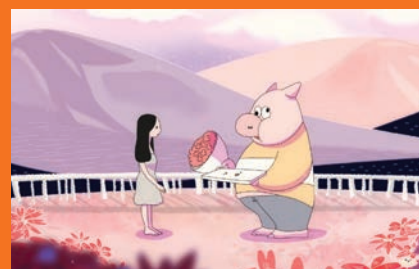


Muteum

Estonia 2017 4min

A visit to the art museum produces lessons aplenty for mind, body and especially all the little souls.

Director Aggie Pak Yee Lee



Manimals

South Korea 2017 5min

A woman remembers her former boyfriends as animals.

Director Jihyeon Oh

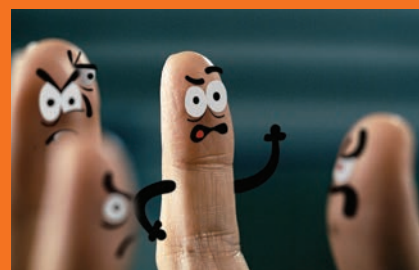


Cuckoo

Switzerland 2017 3min

What if you had an animal living inside your body? And what if it made day-to-day life impossible because it was disruptive at all hours of the day?

Director Aline Hochli



Heroes

Argentina 2018 3min

Glory is at our fingertips!

Director Juan Pablo Zaramella



Rabbit's Blood

UK/Japan 2017 5min

Two rival groups battle for survival underground – sinister cloaked men and neutralist rabbits.

Director Sarina Nihei

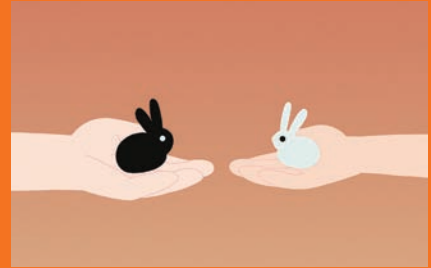


Facing it

UK 2018 7min

As Sean waits anxiously in the local pub, he is forced to explore his own unhappy memories and relationships in an evening that will leave him changed forever.

Director Sam Gainsborough



Two For Two

Croatia 2018 8min

This home is a fragile home. Milk and honey. Cocoa and hell. Everyone pets their own bunny. The feeling is lovely.

Director Jelena Oroz



The Hunt

France 2017 6min

The disappointment of a harmless hunter and his compatriot – a rabbit.

Director Alexey Alekseev



Bless You!

Poland 2018 5min

Contagion spreads at a breakneck speed through the crowded and vibrant city streets, recklessly infecting lovers, strangers, everyone.

Director Paulina Ziolkowska



Living Like Heta

Switzerland 2017 6min

Heta lives with her pet seal in her highly peculiar house full of curious rooms and endless corridors.

Directors Bianca Caderas, Isabella Luu & Kerstin Zemp



Eden

France 2017 5min

E and A live in The Garden of Eden with God, a dinosaur and a mountain of burgers.

Director Julie Caty

International ⁽¹⁵⁾ 2 Competition Programme: Animated Documentaries 1

at Barbican Sat 1 Dec 20:45

We have always had a special passion around here for documentary animation. LIAF probably shows more of this kind of work than any other animation festival. It varies year to year of course but this year we have wound up with not one but two programmes dedicated to the form.

It can be surprising to encounter resistance to the idea that there could even be such a thing as documentary animation. Surprising not just because animation is an obvious way to tell any kind of story but because documentary animation has been around from the earliest days of cinema.

Animation pioneer Winsor McCay is probably most famous for creating the early animation classic *Gertie The Dinosaur* in 1914, a film which played to his strengths as a popular cartoonist and charismatic vaudeville performer. But his 1918 film *The Sinking Of The Lusitania* set a new benchmark for animation and introduced audiences to the power of animation to portray real life events. In 1915 a German U-Boat fired two torpedos into the passenger liner Lusitania off the coast of Ireland, killing eleven hundred people, most of them American and many of them prominent in the fields of American business and politics.

The German Embassy in the United States had actually taken out full page ads warning Americans not to travel to Europe by sea as their navy would be targeting the shipping lanes but these warnings went unheeded. Outraged, McCay spent more than two years creating upwards of 10,000 drawings bringing to stark focus the atrocity that had been committed – all the more powerful for the fact that there were no cameras there to record the events as it unfolded. It was an epic production by the standards of the time, and used most of its 12+ minutes to show the stealthy, quiet ferocity of the act and the helplessness of those caught up in it.

In fact, so effective was its portrayal of the attack that it is credited with helping to change the minds of many Americans who were still dubious about joining the war

raging in Europe. One person who was not for changing however was McCay's employer William Randolph Hearst, the most powerful media baron of his age (think Rupert Murdoch with a better haircut).

Hearst was philosophically and economically opposed to America's participation in the fighting and insisted that McCay focus entirely on his 'day job' which was creating wildly successful cartoons for the stable of Hearst's newspapers across the USA. This effectively ended McCay's career as an animator but remember the name – we will be revisiting this film in the second of our two animated documentary programmes.

It is not much of a spoiler to note that Chis Shepherd's latest film *Brexicated* stakes out its position on the Remain vs. Leave axis pretty early on. We have been happily screening Shepherd's work since LIAF was launched. He is a pivotal and important British filmmaker that seldom hesitates investigating the lesser travelled recesses of human misanthropy, despite the fact that Shepherd himself is a lovely bloke, good natured down to the bone.

It is a little hard not to – just perhaps – suspect he might have taken a bit of artistic licence with some of the immediate post-Brexit vote interviews that are the skeleton this film is built upon. And while it inevitably spirals into a chaotically, explosive, over-the-top carnival of floods, mangled aeroplanes and cartoony violence, this time around the message seems to be less about the dark-side potential latent in so many humans and more just the daft gullibility of these slack-jawed, can-kicking, slow-drooling bipeds.

What is red? How would a drop of water be described? The shape of a feather? We all recognise red, water drops and feathers when we see them but are we all actually seeing the same thing when we see them? Not a new question, of course, and probably one that will never (and can never) be definitively resolved - until the robots take over at least. Imagine, however, suffering a condition in which your brain's ability to process visual input into the instantly

recognisable minutiae of everyday life is degraded to the point where you have little idea of whether you are seeing what you are seeing even though you know exactly what you are looking at.

Do I See What You See (Simon Ball) tracks a rare form of dementia in which this becomes the progressively lived reality of its sufferers. It can be the little things in life such as 'seeing' your PIN number disintegrate before your very eyes as you are putting it in or losing track of where you are in the process of making a cup of tea. But it can be big things too – imagine realising you were losing the ability to position yourself in relation to a set of oncoming car headlights!

This is exactly where the animated documentary really comes into its own as an incredibly powerful tool for communicating an 'invisible' yet very visual reality. It might be ironic to use one of the most powerfully visual tools imaginable to depict the deconstruction and loss of vision but in *Do I See What You See* Ball has brought the condition these people are experiencing to the fore in a way that any audience member can immediately grasp, and certainly in much sharper relief than the testimony of experts or heartfelt live-to-camera interviews could ever muster.

A not dissimilar path is being trodden in *Music And Clowns* by Alex Widdowson. Centred around a young man with Down Syndrome, it is more about the way his parents have come to realise the beauty of their son's world and the richness it brings to their own. There is some very subtle storytelling being employed beneath the surface here to minimise the potential for a sympathy vote whilst at the same time portray much of the potential fragility of his world. Testament to the complexity the Royal College of the Arts (RCA) seems to continually endow into so many of its graduates, Widdowson rolls out a shrewd, quiet fearlessness via a considerable range of techniques. Each is carefully calibrated to the vibration of the scene in which they are deployed, starting with the pitch-perfect infant visual styling at the beginning which is

as good an example of that particular form as any we have seen around here for a while.

Tom Schroeder's brand new film *Bike Trip* was an easy one to programme. Stylistically it has pretty much everything in common with his earlier collection of films that explore bike rides, dating back to the 2001 classic *Bike Ride*. There is the beautifully drawn white-on-black imagery, a visuality that blends a kind of expansive modern cycling zen with a fairly personal story and the more esoteric values of modern dance. And there's the beyond-cool drum/life beat of long-time musical collaborator Dave King whose contribution brings a pulse and a rhythm to the film that is part virtual roadmap, part virtual narrator.

If you thought we wouldn't close this programme with a little darkly opulent homage to one man's experience with the Velvet Underground then you are probably new to LIAF..... but welcome! *The Velvet Underground Played At My High School* by Anthony Jannelli and Robert Pietri is pretty much what it says on the box. The film recalls a moment back in the 1960s when, pining for a night out taking in schlocky local one-hit wonder band 'The Myddle Class', this high school audience first had to endure the full brooding electric menace of the Velvet Underground. Boom, Bang, Goodbye.... three songs about deviant sex and heavy drug use straight from the heart of the underground into a hall full of kids who wouldn't recognise an underground if they were standing on top of it. The overall effect must have been a little like having an early, uncut Tarantino excerpt opening for a Cliff Richard classic. Captured mostly in atmospherically bifurcating black and white, it swirls these two tonally polar opposite worlds together in a way that perfectly captures the confused awe of one of the few people who stuck out the whole set.

And probably the only one there that night who came away with the raw material for a great indie animation.

Malcolm Turner



Brexicated

UK 2018 6min

A variety of British characters, interviewed the day after the UK voted to leave the EU, speak about what motivated their decision.

Director Chris Shepherd



That Yorkshire Sound

UK 2017 3min

The sounds of Yorkshire from its bustling cities to the delicate sounds of the countryside and the hypnotic rhythm of the motorways and train tracks.

Director Marcus Armitage



Do I See What You See?

UK 2018 8min

Dementia, disconnection and seeing the world differently.

Director Simon Ball



The Story of Warfarin – Nature

UK 2018 3min

Blood, rats and anticoagulants.

Director Ed Prosser



Music and Clowns

UK 2018 7min

A moving, humorous and sensitive depiction about caring for someone with Downs Syndrome.

Director Alex Widdowson



Colorscape Black

UK 2017 1min

A short history of the colour black encapsulating its origins, black holes and a fashion statement.

Director Matt Abbiss



Conan O'Brien discusses "We're Going to be Friends" by the White Stripes

UK 2017 3min

An account of a friendship with Jack White and what this timeless song means to children and adults around the world.

Directors Moth Collective



Egg

France/Denmark 2018 12min

A woman is locked in her home with an egg. She eats the egg. She repents. She kills it. She lets the egg die of hunger. A brave account of overcoming anorexia.

Director Martina Scarpelli



Bike Trip

USA 2018 10 min

Two bikers travel 500 miles to ask a question about beer.

Director Tom Schroeder



Las Del Diente

Spain/USA 2018 5min

Girls are weird. Babies are weird. Bodies are extra weird. A film about now, a time when women are tired of choosing between having kids and their careers.

Director Ana Perez Lopez



The Velvet Underground Played at my High School

USA 2018 7min

In their first performance in 1965, the Velvet Underground changed music and one young person's life forever.

Directors Anthony Jannelli & Robert Pietri

International **3** (15) Competition Programme: **Being Human**

at Barbican Sun 2 Dec 19:00

Funny things, humans.....when you think about it. Actually, probably less funny the more you think about it if you are thinking jocularly funny rather than 'ants-under-a-microscope' funny. Surely something out there in the cosmos has their microscope on us and in utter consternation is muttering their equivalent of "what the hell are these insects on about and how come the other bigger animals don't just eat them?"

But histories – large, small, tiny or tenuous – are awash with the multitudinous actions of people embarking on a superabundance of utterly inscrutable acts, many of which make absolutely no sense to the casual observer but all of which have some contribution to make to the grand lego-like labyrinth of the life and times of whichever individual unfurled them. We all do all the things we do for some sort of reason; there's always a plan, a pathway, an outcome being pursued. Apart from giving us something to do it is also one of the quintessential foundations of Being Human.

Animators – by and large generally human themselves – are among the most observant of our species. They have to be. A live-action filmmaker needs some working knowledge of the human condition but the camera and the actor(s) do a fair bit of the heavy lifting as well. But an animator is both rider and jockey in the gallop to make a film. They have to be able to think up the idea and create the characters – every single pixel of the characters – to bring it home.

This ability to deeply observe is just how animators are wired in the first place. It gives them not just the ability to recreate a character in a visual sense but to actually reconstitute the psyche and inner world of that character in the physical way they act within their world.

Some animators are happy to add in enough road signs on these little journeys to help us all get in on the act while others don't feel the same need to share the plot or the intellectual and emotional gristle that

underpins why their characters do what they do. We can be a bit like that ourselves here at LIAF and this programme is where we really get to run our fingers – metaphorically – through all those creative sinews.

We open with a master-dissector of the human condition, Estonian Riho Unt. Enigmatic would be one word to describe Unt who tends towards a preference for letting his films speak for themselves. The good news is they say a lot. *Lili* (2008) and *The Master* (2015) were a form of psychological precision surgery on a dark register of human motivations, even if *The Master* had a cast made up entirely of animals..... sometimes animation just works best that way.

His latest film *Mary And The 7 Dwarfs* has a similarly mysterious cross-stitching to its make-up but is leavened by some pretty adroit threads of understated humour. For starters, it is simply first-class stop-motion animation and that always gets our attention. Animating material blowing in the wind and crafting a film with close-ups on the facial expressions of a puppet character are the hallmarks of an expert such as Unt. Weaving a wispy pseudo eroticism into a story based on a classic fairy tale but starring a nun who blows off steam with a lawnmower whilst fetishising spark plugs into avatars of a multiplicity of frustrations is the kind of work that only an observer of humanness at its most spectral can pull off and here we are in the hands of a master virtuoso storyteller.

There is nothing more human than a longing for home and family. In the wade-through-treacle race towards adulthood we all undertake it is often the case that we gradually build a more complete picture of our parents. For those who get to experience this, it comes from differing directions, at differing velocities and creates differing dimensions. This multi-faceted experience is sublimely captured in the exquisite animation of *The Call* by Romanian animator Anca Damian. The warmth of this film is felt through the beautiful artistry deployed by Damian across a range of techniques, each one matched perfectly

with a specific emotional perspective and delivering a trailing edge of skilfully balanced nuance and complexity in its wake. It is not just a film that provokes thinking but is in so many ways really about thinking.

Untravel by Ana Nedeljkovic and Nikola Majdak, on the other hand, leaves a vapour trail of an entirely different composition. If you saw their last film *Rabbitland* (2013) you will instantly recall the unique style of character and scenery design this duo bring to the screen.

Much of the same jagged visual charm abounds here, as does an underlying taste for dystopia but in *Untravel* Nedeljkovic and Majdak have veered towards a more documentary narrative encompassing, no doubt, an accumulation of experiences lived by young women trapped in broken countries dreaming of a better world on the other side of a border.

This dream, this search and as often as not the failed journeys to find that better 'other place' is, sadly, an all too common addition to the repertoire of Being Human. Somehow this film consolidates the normally insoluble mists of fear, hope and quiet resignation into a story that underpins a fairly simple truth – which is that many of life's situations do not necessarily stumble upon a definitive resolution, such as those often demanded of stories and films. It's a more difficult trick to pull off than you might think.

Whale strandings evoke a human reaction that is as hard/easy to define as it is new. For most of our shared history, once humans got the machinery together to go out and hunt these creatures we did it with an alacrity that saw them nearly wiped from the oceans. Strandings were viewed as either a source of food or an intrusion. When a whale strands it is – in the first instance – a mostly physical phenomena. They are big and they are hard to help no matter the will and the dedication of those who turn up. But an emotional component to a stranding quickly emerges as the initial physical connection morphs into something more complex, more proto-communicative across the species divide.

Human strandings often spark these same synapses in those trying to reach out to the marooned but come with a certain weightlessness that only increases the complexity of the rescue attempt. Belgian animator Wouter Bongaerts brings a pin-point humanity to this in *Panta Rhei*, a film charting the heroic attempts of Stefaan to contextualise and deal with the aftermath of a whale stranding as he himself spirals into the most dangerous of shallows.

“We don’t know why they strand here, sometimes they are just lost,” says Stefaan as his world crumbles before our very eyes. This is – as is so often the case – a stranding happening and hiding in plain view and – is also so often the case – an everyday line-item on the roster of Being Human.

The delicate, often colourfully kinetic ballet that informs the mother-daughter relationship sits in the middle of the style and the action of Kim Noce’s latest film *Your Mothers Are Mine*. A veritable trove of gloriously, defiantly hand-drawn artwork, this captivating flipbook of imagery conjoins female experiences in the most fundamental of ways. There’s an almost primordial ambience to what’s being breathed into vivid life here.

In part, it is a reminder that the things that connect us – figuratively and in this case, literally – are more important and seductively simpler than those which divide us. Luckily, on a good day, we have the ability to understand and embrace all of that.

On a good day.

Malcolm Turner



Mary and the 7 Dwarfs

Estonia 2018 12min

Having spent her entire life behind the convent walls, Maria, an old and dignified nun decides to fulfil her childhood dream.

Director Riho Unt



The Call

Romania 2018 10min

A phone call, a bathroom and a woman are at the intersection of different worlds.

Director Anca Damian



Untravel

Serbia/Slovakia 2018 9min

A girl lives in a grey, isolated country, enclosed by a huge wall. She has never travelled anywhere, but all her life she has been dreaming of leaving for a perfect world called Abroad.

Directors Ana Nedeljkovic & Nikola Majdak



Circuit

Switzerland 2018 9min

A small planet, a complex little ecosystem, an endless loop of poetically surreal actions.

Director Delia Hess



Panta Rhei

Belgium 2018 10min

Like the beached whales he studies, an introverted marine biologist flees the ocean. But floods, leaking faucets and endless rain keep seeping into his life, and he can't keep the water out.

Director Wouter Bongaerts

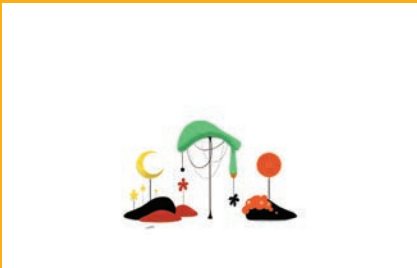


Sister

China 2018 8min

A man remembers his childhood memories of growing up with an annoying little sister in 1990s China. How would his life have been if things had gone differently?

Director Siqi Song



How To Paint Your Rainbow

USA/South Korea 2018 2min

A man dies and a red flower blossoms. Reincarnation depicted as a beautiful rainbow.

Director Erick Oh



Hybrids

France 2017 6min

When marine wildlife has to adapt to pollution, the food chain changes.

Directors Florian Brauch, Kim Tallhades, Matthieu Pujol, Yohan Thireau & Romain Thirion



Spermaceti

Belgium 2018 12min

Sailors kill time under a blistering sun, awaiting a sign of their prey. After bloodshed, a strong arm offers a moment of shelter. A boy gets his first tattoo.

Director Jacky de Groen



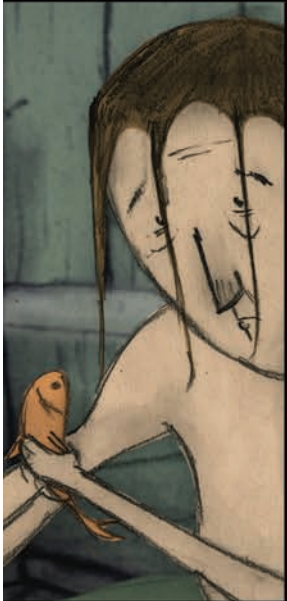
Your Mothers Are Mine!

UK 2018 3min

The complexities of a mother-daughter relationship.

Director Kim Noce

Made by **NFTS Animation**



**Sleeping with
the Fishes**
2014



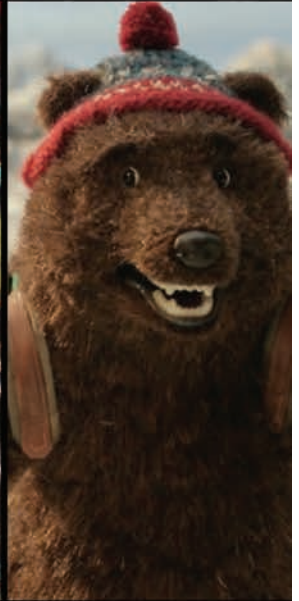
**The Bigger
Picture**
2015



Edmond
2016



A Love Story
2017



Poles Apart
2018

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**NATIONAL
FILM AND
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International ⁽¹⁵⁾ 4 Competition Programme: Playing With Emotion

at Barbican Sun 2 Dec 21:00

Book of the year (I hear you ask)? Walter Isaacson's astonishing biography on Leonardo da Vinci. A serial biographer of certified genius', Isaacson has previously produced the goods on Benjamin Franklin, Albert Einstein, Henry Kissinger (you don't have to be a nice guy to be a genius) and, of course, Steve Jobs. One of the things other than the man's sheer facility with the English language is his uncanny ability to really introduce us to a character we thought we knew. This is something that goes beyond the normal intellectual hi-fives borne of the fruits of extensive research and more in to the tangentially ethereal zone of recreating a character based on an investigation of their soul and imagination – a talent not uncommon in the world of animation by the way (auteur animation, at least).

In the various courts within which he mingled, da Vinci was a rare bird primarily because he was one of the very few who was not a 'man of letters'; he had not studied at university nor under the tutelage of a master. Painting was but one of the things da Vinci became accomplished in but painting was only an after-thought on the CV he offered to the first benefactor whose indulgence he sought. In fact he posited himself as an engineer, builder of theatre sets and designer of military weapons.... who could also paint if called upon.

It turns out that da Vinci possessed an industrial scale sense of curiosity. In some cases, it was directly related to one or another of the artistic projects he was employed to create but page after page of his journals are filled with 'notes-to-self' demanding inquiries into such things as the dimensions of a cuckoo's tongue. His instincts were to almost always turn to science to create a platform onto which a creative outcome could be more fully constructed. Da Vinci knew that the most accurate portrayal of a human subject relied not just on the shape, curves and lines of that subject but upon being capable of pouring emotion into that creation.

The problem here, as you can imagine, is that emotion is not just difficult to portray, it is difficult to grasp in the first place and it is vastly more interpretable than – say – the length of an arm or the dimensions of a raised sword.

So, not every artist can be Leonardo da Vinci. Indeed in some ways who would want to be – his royalty cheques never came, his bosses were often horrible and by all accounts his boyfriend was a drunken trouble magnet.

But striving to capture and portray emotion is one of the key takeaways from all that da Vinci passed down and artists of all types know that challenge. It is perhaps no surprise therefore that a number of films in this 'Playing With Emotion' programme either directly draw from or were clearly influenced by notable artists working in a range of forms. Other films in the line-up choose to drill straight into the molten centre of the human emotional theatrescape.

We open with one of those. *Between The Shadows* by Portuguese duo Alice Guimaraes and Monica Santos crafts an elegant, deco-enfused, noirish panorama treating the universal experience of lost love and forsaken passion. Shot entirely in black and white it evokes the sense of something akin to an 'emotional archive' and was originally inspired by old photo novels and the power of theatrical love stories.

Created and shot in Portugal, Guimaraes and Santos credit Portuguese producer extraordinaire Abi Feijo as being responsible for ensuring much of the film's weight. Doing all of the post production (sound, vision and narration) at Film Bilder in Stuttgart meant the pair spent a lot of time on trains, planes and automobiles getting it finished.

Shot entirely in pixilation, it was a physically punishing film for the actors to make and the directors confess to struggling with the decision between hiring actors (who know how to move and emote but don't necessarily understand the unique demands of shooting pixilation) or animators who

would instinctively understand exactly what the directors need but not necessarily possess those other skills. In the end they decided it was easier to teach actors about animation than animators about acting.

It is time for another splendid film from UK animator Liz Hobbs. The emotional impacts of love sit in the middle of this film too. Her new film *I'm OK*, an explosively colourful visual essay par-excellence, takes us through the literal and metaphorical battlefields that erupted in the aftermath of the fracturing of the relationship between master Expressionist painter, poet and writer Oskar Kokoschka and his lover and muse Alma Mahler, wife of noted composer Gustav Mahler.

Replete with explosions, the twisting choreography of creating and extricating casualties and the tearing asunder of identities real and emotional, *It's OK* is emotion writ large, loud and wide. By all accounts Mahler was the one who ended the relationship claiming she was afraid of being "overcome by the emotion" that the incendiary relationship generated. In response, Kokoschka's response was a flurry of emotionally charged art including the intensely wrought painting *The Bride Of The Wind* (1913), a poem titled *Allos Makar* (1913) and a – errrr – sex doll which he (apparently) never used and destroyed at a party. Perhaps most dangerous of all was his decision to enlist as a Austrian army cavalryman in World War I, a choice which almost cost him his life when he was seriously wounded in 1915.

Where on earth does the emotional power that fuels every Ines Sedan film come from? Intensely painterly with a focus on the passionate short circuits that threaten immolation at every turn, her films are always powerful, effecting interrogations of dark human potential.

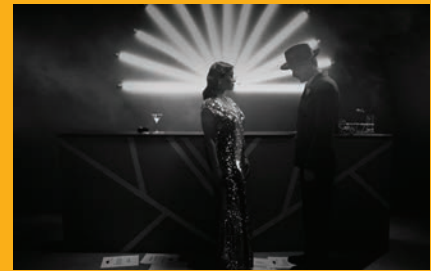
In her new film *Love He Said* she turns her attention to one of the 20th centuries voraciously emotional derelicts, Charles Bukowski. Other than Poe, probably no other poet has inspired so many animated

films. This is a mixed blessing. There is nothing intrinsically wrong (discomforting perhaps but not wrong) with creating ugly, angry even violent art but the trouble in dealing with a soul as bashed as Bukowski's is it is difficult to define the line between where the anger and ugliness drives the art and where the increasingly contrived persona takes over.

Even taking into account Bukowski's dark-sage capacity to time and again wrench assault from the jaws of intimacy, it's hard to know which iteration of Bukowski Sedan has captured in this animated rendition of a rambling 1973 performance. Clearly loaded and playing to an equally primed audience, there are none-the-less moments of almost heart-breaking Bukowskian self-awareness on naked display here, lost on the audience who simply want a slice of bad to take home. But slow down, look, listen, trust in the judgement of a truly great contemporary animator. Not to shy from the ministrations of a good/bad man trapped in the husk of a pay-to-play monster, perhaps through some of the cracks in the disintegrating outer skin we might just be catching a flash or two of a self-inflicted, emotional destruction.

Aaannnd we can't sign out without a shout-out to the one-of-a-kind Japanese animator Sawako Kabuki. There's probably no better pure emotional vernacular than that which emits from a baby. With no words and no use for nuance, babies have no problem callin' it as they feel it. It's nothing but emotion. In *Waaah*, Kabuki takes that classic one word, eight octave aural symphony and transplants it into the emoting souls of adults in various states of undress and distress. The result is.....playing with emotion.

Malcolm Turner



Between the Shadows

Portugal 2018 13min

In a surreal world where hearts can be deposited in banks so people can avoid falling in love, Natalia sets out an adventure with a man to help him find his stolen heart.

Directors Alice Guimaraes & Monica Santos



I'm OK

UK/Canada 2018 6min

In 1917, Austrian artist Oskar Kokoschka was in hospital, injured and shell-shocked from World War I, and heartbroken from the end of a famous love affair.

Director Elizabeth Hobbs



Bloeistraat 11

Belgium/Netherlands 2018 10min

A summer friendship is tested when puberty knocks on the door, bodies start to change and an awkwardness descends.

Director Nienke Deutz



Simbiosis Carnal

Belgium 2017 10min

A poetic journey through the history of desire and sexuality where female pleasure, long ignored and repressed, takes pride of place.

Director Rocio Alvarez



Love He Said

France 2018 6min

San Francisco, 1973. Underground poet Charles Bukowski reads his poem 'Love' to a wild audience. They witness a broken man searching for love.

Director Ines Sedan



Him & Her

Germany 2018 8min

This long-distance relationship is kept on track by the power of imagination and the fantasy of a magical treehouse.

Director Nathalie Lamb



Cyclists

Croatia 2018 7min

The cycling season is nearing its grand finale. During the final race, two men are competing for more than the Grand Trophy; they are fighting for the affection of a lady and fulfilment of their erotic fantasies.

Director Veljko Popovic



Double Portrait

UK 2018 6min

A gorgeously hand-painted romantic picture of everlasting love, loss, separation and worldwide adventures.

Director Ian Bruce



Impossible Figures and Other Stories 111

Poland 2018 12min

A middle-aged woman and man meet in a waiting room. He helps her take off her black fur coat that covers her naked body. The game of seduction begins.

Director Marta Pajek



Waaah

Japan 2018 1min

A baby cries and cries and cries. And then what? There is no substitute for the ultimate pacifier.

Director Sawako Kabuki



26.
INTERNATIONALES
TRICKFILM FESTIVAL
FESTIVAL OF ANIMATED FILM
STUTTGART '19
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International ⁽¹⁵⁾5 Competition Programme: Long Shorts

at Barbican Mon 3 Dec 18:30

The rationale for this programme has always been about ensuring we don't create a curatorial structure that accidentally pushes a small number of longer films out of screening contention in return for being able to squeeze in a larger number of shorter films. In a festival such as LIAF there are a fixed number of screening slots and each one of those screenings slots has a very specific, non-negotiable maximum run-time. And when we have to sift through 2,600+ entries there is always a point arrived at when the elimination process really begins to bite into films we would love to show. It is at that point that it can seem like a good idea to cut one 20-minute film so that 5 four minute films get their single chance at screen-time glory. Long Shorts, therefore, is something akin to a safety net to make sure the jaws on that particular trap don't snap shut around our ankles as we race (or limp) towards finalising the programme line-ups.

But what a year! The films in Long Shorts this year are not just strong, they are utterly compelling.

May as well start with Exhibit A – *Solar Walk* by Hungarian animator Reka Buksi. Among a slew of awards it has already received, it took out Grand Prize at the Ottawa International Animation Festival earlier this year – a choice that received pretty much universal acclaim from those attending the festival and was doubly obvious when Buksi discussed the film with a clearly enthralled OIAF Director, Chris Robinson.

Calling Buksi to the stage for her turn at OIAF's 'Meet The Filmmakers' Robinson started by saying that for once he didn't really want to talk about her film, he just wanted to "let it be". What he was saying, and what most people agreed with, was that the film defies credible description. It goes beyond the bounds of 'stream of consciousness' to occupy a creative space that hasn't really been tagged yet. It's not abstract but is a floating palace of beautiful abstract imagery. And it might have elements

of some sort of 'narrative trajectory' but one hits a wall at terms such as 'post narrative' or 'alt narrative' while *Solar Walk* just glides right past and keeps going to wherever it's going.

Buksi herself gives the impression of understanding she has created something special and unique but is not interested in the adulation. At heart, she says, she really wanted to create a kaleidoscope and while she has certainly done that she acknowledges the visual and structural diversity of her film. "It's 'scattered' visually," she said at Ottawa. "It has a lot of abstraction but is also really character based."

The production of the film has an interesting backstory though, one which helps explain its flow, patterns and endless ebbs and flows. It started life as a much longer piece. It was originally commissioned specifically to accompany a 47-minute piece of jazz music. The jazz band's producer approached her, offered her the commission, gave her the soundtrack and let her take control from there. The catch, however, was that there was less than three months to create 47 minutes of animation.

"This is why I took a very improvisational approach to making the film," she says, and the penny begins to drop. "I just locked myself in a room and went crazy. I had three animators, a 3D guy and a couple of interns."

Solar Walk is a distillation of that original commissioned 47-minute piece created to accompany a live jazz opus. As a piece of cinematic art the film is simply extraordinary.

Portuguese animation is having a good year. Portuguese producers and directors also appear to be becoming adept at harnessing European co-funding sources. *Augur* by David Doutel and Vasco Sa is one of a number of Portuguese/European co-productions screening in LIAF this year.

'Haunting' is maybe a place to start when discussing it; 'Haunted' is probably a better way to think about it. Technically it stands as an outstanding piece of oil-on-glass animation, beautifully realised and brought to life through a well thought through combination of vividly rendered and subtly delivered visuals. But seeping out through the layers of paint is a misted aura that batches together human tension, animal power and the bone-cold weight of the environment the film is set in. The chilling, pitch-perfect solo stringed soundtrack bolts down this mood ensuring a prolonged but understated presence throughout.

The sheer emotional and psychological weight that *Augur* carries as it moves forward belies the fact that Doutel and Sa are relative newcomers to the world of auteur animation, probably best known for their 2014 work *Soot*. Watch these names – these two fellows clearly know what they are doing.

The Death, Dad & Son by Winshluss and Denis Walgenwitz is a chance to lighten the programme up a little. Winshluss – aka Vincent Paronnaud – is best known as a co-director on *Persepolis* which is where he met Walgenwitz who served as an assistant director on that film. The film instantly creates its own immersive world. Death is the family business and Dad puts in solid working days floating around overseeing his allotted list of persons slated for deceasing on any given day. It's honest work and it puts a good roof over the head of his family. Clearly the plan is that his son will follow in his footsteps but family dynamics don't always flow so smoothly. The son has another plan but comes up short on the skillset to carry it out.

It is a film that tries to address some of the 'gaps' the directors see emerging that are caused by the criteria, priorities and demands imposed by funders. They were frustrated that this makes it hard to create shorts for children unless they depict 'serious' stories. So they looked to create a work that embedded important 'life lessons' within a kind of comedic horror style.

"When it's time for tenderness, be very

tender,” Winshluss offers when discussing their guidelines in creating their film.

“When it’s time for reality, be pragmatic. When it’s time to die, be fun. Do your best to make your horror film beautiful.”

Finity Calling by Jasper Kuipers plunges us into an utterly different dimension. The immense ‘visual volume’ of that world is astonishing and offers a lot to try and take in at first. The attention to detail is extraordinary with costumes, headwear and masks made up of hundreds of beads, stones and sequins. All the tiles that pave every surface of the set were handmade. The construction of the punkish cuisine is impossible to describe.

A mention of the defunct NIAf (Netherlands Institute of Animation film) in the opening credits piqued our interest given the amount of time that has passed since its closing. But a list of ‘script development coaches’ in the credits that includes Paul Driessen, Igor Kovalyov, Paul Wells and Jerzy Kucia suggests that Kuipers put in the hours during a NIAf ‘apprenticeship’ when all of these animation legends would have offered masterclasses (in the true sense of the word) at the Institute. If nothing else, it is a reminder of what was lost when NIAf was shut down.

Kuipers quickly draws us into a world electric with a claustrophobically sinister ambiance. In time this spirals in (or out) to a Hitchcockian atmosphere of alarm and chaos and this is where the film really uses its extra time to offer up a payoff exponentially larger than the sum of all its parts. This is exactly what Long Shorts was created to allow to screen. Taking the time and space it needs to allow this cloistered little world to be steadily blacked down to its darkest hue allows it to transcend a tale involving mere mortal danger to one depicting a physical end through the process of emotional destruction.

Equally character driven but exploding in a diametrically different direction is Viktoria Traub’s *Mermaids And Rhinos*. Sitting somewhere on a scale between the grotesque edge of some of Igor Kovalyov’s work and the surrealist centre of Estonian drawn animation (admittedly that’s not an especially wide Point A to Point B gap), Traub describes the bizarre narrative arc of her film as “parallel dramaturgy”.

“I didn’t only want to tell a story, but I wanted to show my impressions of emotional dependences through human relationships,” Traub is quoted in *Animation Magazine* as saying.

“Because of that I chose parallel storytelling. The parallel - and not linear - storyline was

a very interesting experiment to concentrate on an emotional gesture. The reason why someone transforms into a rhino is heartache, jealousy and offence.”

All up, it is a film with a two year development and production cycle. And while its narrative platform is the age-old investigation of emotional dependence, the transformations of personal relationships through sexuality, betrayal and conflicting needs, the key to translating the gloriously tangential energy that powers this work is probably to approach it as a visual essay on spiritual transformations. Dive in.

Driven and with an audaciously broad panoramic artistic vision, Rosto is one of the most powerful, gifted and interesting animators of our age. In fact, Rosto’s life and his art are inextricably comingled. He lives inside the creative zone in which he imagines his films and, in turn, his films drive the way he lives and how he imagines the zone he lives within.

His latest film *Reruns*, the fourth of a tetralogy sees him at the peak of his powers – so far at least. Set almost entirely in a world submerged in water, it is a potent and intense realisation of what Rosto describes as his Dream City. Inspired “100%” by his dreams and memories, Rosto’s Dream City is “a real place, it is growing but it also has a big ring road around it and on the other side of that ring there is absolutely nothing.”

The intention of the film is to invite us in to his Dream City, despite the various and obvious limitations standing in the way of this ambition. In the process of trying, Rosto discovered corruption of different kinds, not the least of which were with memories which are easy targets for distortion: “There is no such thing as a factual memory,” he concludes.

There are however ‘objective memories’ such as photo albums and old film footage and much of the fission generated by the core of this film is built around repeating, depleting and decomposing imagery of Rosto as a five year old at his Grandmother’s house.

Setting so much of this in a submerged, but otherwise functioning world gives the whole work a distinctly dreamlike feel.

“The water became the big symbol of the past,” he said at the Clermont Ferrand festival earlier this year.

“The deeper you go the longer ago it is. For me it was almost like worlds that have disappeared and you can only visit them by diving in very deeply.”

This is a perfect descriptor for Rosto’s approach to not just being an animator but

living as one. This man will create one of the most interesting bodies of animation ever made.

It is all but impossible to conceive of the amount of work that must have been involved in creating *La Chute* by French animator Boris Labbé. Although fine-tuned and finished with After Effects, it is a film made with more than 4,000 drawings drafted in india ink and water colour paint. The scale of the undertaking is truly mind boggling.

Pulling splintered inspiration from sources as complex as Bosch’s *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, Bruegel’s *The Fall of the Rebel Angels*, Botticelli’s illustration of Dante, Goya’s *The Disasters of War* and Henry Darger’s *In the Realms of the Unreal* it was Dante’s *Divine Comedy* that most powerfully drove Labbé’s vision for *La Chute*.

In teaming up with Paris based producers Sacrebleu, Labbé has found a home from which to research and develop his obsession with metamorphosis, degeneration and regeneration. These phenomena are among animation’s most beguiling and distinctive party tricks and Labbé is intent on pushing them beyond all previously known limits. Doing this is a process requiring the imagination to conceive it, a grasp of the unique properties of animation to empower it. and the time to let it build, blossom and evolve.

And time is what this programme is all about.

Malcolm Turner



Solar Walk

Hungary 2018 21min

Chaos is beautiful. Chaos is cosmic. A remarkable journey through time and space.

Director Reka Buksi



Augur

Portugal/France 2018 15min

During a harsh winter, a river by the house of two cousins freezes over. In the cold wind, their relationship grows bitter, reaching its limits.

Directors David Doutel & Vasco Sa



The Death, Dad and Son

France 2017 13min

Death's son does not wish to follow in his father's footsteps and take over the family business. Instead he dreams of becoming a guardian angel, which leads to unexpected events.

Directors Denis Walgenwitz & Winshluss



Finity Calling

Netherlands/Belgium 2018 15min

Five people are seated at a table, their withered bodies adorned with lush fabrics and jewellery. Tense and unsettling, soon the fragile atmosphere within the group is broken.

Director Jasper Kuipers



Mermaids and Rhinos

Hungary 2017 15min

A surreal navigation of family memories, mermaid grandmothers, and grotesque and bizarre characters hungry for love.

Director Viktoria Traub



Reruns

Netherlands 2017 14min

Everything's different but nothing has changed. A trip through a sunken maze of memories and dreams.

Director Rosto



La Chute

France 2018 14min

When otherworldly residents come to Earth, the world order is completely overturned. It is the start of a tragic chain of events involving hell and paradise.

Director Boris Labbe

International ⁽¹⁵⁾6 Competition Programme: Animated Documentaries 2

at Barbican Mon 3 Dec 21:00

Physiologically there is almost nothing that separates me from you nor both of us from somebody of an utterly different race, gender or culture. We are both virtually identical – in our physiology – to mass murderers, prime ministers or living saints. What makes each of us so utterly unique are the experiences we have had, the choices we have made, the actions we take and the reactions we choose to tender. It is the metadata of our souls, is the thing that is as unique to us as our DNA and is the robust, ever developing exoskeleton of our identities. And it turns out it is the most valuable commodity on the planet – it's why it is being bought, sold, copied and studied by the most powerful commercial organisations that humankind ever constructed.

Most of the films in this programme weave their own routes through varied topographies of personal identity. For the most part, these films are expressions of one topic or another that is being interrogated via the pathway of how it builds, breaks or impacts the identity of the filmmaker or the narrator.

A fascination with music is a pretty broad subject to use as a kicking off point for a stream of consciousness joyride on life, love and the universe. It needs some focus to make it personal and give us an "in" that enables us to get to know the person behind the tutorial. Patrolling the border that spans the lawless terrain between quantum physics and occultism with a view to apprehending Edward Witten's explosive treatise on String Theory as it tries to sneak across is a segue to the zen of guitar music that reeks of either philosophical genius or stoner Americana at peak lucidity.

Either way, settle in for the opening film *One After Another* (Nicolas Pegon) and decide for yourself. Although it has a packed personal agenda, it rolls out at a leisurely enough rate giving passengers every chance to keep up. This is a well commented journey; open, honest, complex and packed but never overwhelming, condescending or demanding of uncritical affirmation. It is a

pathway through a number of lives and through landscapes (real and metaphorical) that describe the slow decay and the relentless reinventive potential of America.

At heart though it is an essay on the power and the value of the blues. And it nails it! The fact that it is made by a French animator and production company (Miyu Productions) makes this all the more interesting. The blues is an extraordinarily diverse form and much of that diversity is driven by the socio-geography of the USA. To my ear, the music that emerges out of *One After Another* most closely resembles the kind of music that emerged from the Soulard area of St Louis that formed the backdrop to a significant chunk of a vivid though more-or-less misspent youth. The Soulard is a melting pot of black and white, a concentrated cluster of numerous small blues bars that were cheap to get into and with the potential for food and hangout space aplenty til sunrise. The film ends with a great piece of white-boy blues that could have come out of just about every second bar in the Soulard any night of the week back in the day.

It goes without saying that our faces are an integral part of our identity. More than just a physical manifestation of who we are, we rely on them to provide a kind of punctuation and contextualisation to what we say. We live lives built on an assumption that they will be among the first things we are judged upon when we meet somebody for the first time. We adorn them, adjust them, manipulate them, surgically change them, hide and display them as ways of taking control of how we impose our identity on the world. We use them as shield and billboard.

Imagine if you were 'face blind' though. Imagine you could not recognise your own face. It's a condition explored in Valentin Riedl and Frédéric Schulz's film *Carlotta's Face*. As the film rolls, it begins with tilling the rich, well-fertilised soils of personal identities being torn apart in that sticky microcosm of the human bear-pit known as the school playground. Carlotta's escalating awareness that she can't recognise faces metamorphosises into a passion for learning

to make self portraits by touching her own face and feeling what it 'looks' like. The resulting artworks have to be seen to be believed and the fact she went on to create in excess of 1400 of them speaks for the obsessive and restorative power of this attempt to reclaim some leverage over her otherwise unknowable personal identity.

Estonian animator Ulo Pikkov is emerging as one of the more focused thinkers on animation working in the world today. In particular, much of his writing is making a significant contribution to a growing field that could best be described as the 'philosophy of animation'. Invariably his films are about the most fundamental elements of animation as a uniquely expressive process capable of exploring a gamut of emotional motivations and the internalised – often hardily protected – inner worlds of their subjects. Skill alone does not get these types of films made; the director must be a surveyor extraordinaire of the complexities of humanness and must be capable of extracting that private, pulsing centre and translating it to the screen, a format often at sharp discordance to its genesis.

Pikkov's film *Letting Go* is an affecting example of all of this and more. His wife had decided to make a documentary about women who had become very young mothers and it was in the course of that work that they met Agnes, the subject and subsequently co-animator of *Letting Go*.

"I first met Agnes when she was in a very broken and sad place," says Pikkov. "An orphan and very alone. I showed her the studio and a way of working and just let her go freely because she liked to build puppets and somehow, much later, without realising it we started to make these puppets and what would become this film."

"Improvisation was at the heart of this film," he adds. "The process was so important to be improvised."

In common with many of his recent films it synthesised the complex emotional plasma of a real story into something more

narratively abstract but simultaneously more expressively visible. Perhaps counter-intuitively a lot of it is not actually animated. In addition to a number of overtly live-action scenes, many of the ‘brush puppet’ sequences are also shot live to camera. These sequences – hiding in plain view – blend seamlessly with prolonged scenes of subtle though complex stop-motion animation and extended moments of complete stillness. All bear a similar speckled wintery-white camouflage which potentially reads as a challenge to what constitutes an animated film as well as to a plethora of markers to help the viewer form a connection for what the flow of the film could mean to them.

Back on page 13 we opened this little fireside chat about animated documentaries with mention of where it all started, Winsor McCay’s 1918 classic *The Sinking Of The Lusitania*. More or less 100 years since that was made, a group of seven animators came together under the auspices of Denmark’s AniDox Collective housed in and overseen by The Animation Workshop. Under the expert eyes of Michelle and Uri Kranot they created *Sinking Of The Truth*.

It remakes the McCay original without fear or favour. Like irradiated tracer injected into the veins of a patient who just stumbled in complaining of chest pain, it charts arteries that might suggest outbreaks of fake news and the unashamed blink-and-ya’-miss-‘em reconstruction of new realities.

Each animator created a one-minute sequence in their own style and pursuing their own take on ‘mashing’ up the legacy of this iconic film. The resultant animated conflagration is a mental steeplechase that turns the notion of ‘documentary’ inside out.

And by the look of it, animation is an artform perfectly suited to chasing that crafty fox.

Malcolm Turner



One After the Other

France 2018 13min

Wandering around his house, Grant, a young American musician, looks for inspiration in his memories, foraging through things from the past scattered here and there.

Director Nicolas Pegon



Carlotta’s Face

Germany 2018 5min

When Carlotta looks in the mirror, she doesn’t recognise the image reflected back at her. A moving exploration of the confusion that face blindness causes for a young child trying to make sense of her world.

Directors Valentin Riedl & Frédéric Schulz



Conception: Catie and Jen

2018 UK 4min

Two sisters struggle with infertility, an unexpected pregnancy and difficult life decisions. Sisterhood and motherhood meet in this powerful story of love, fear and trust.

Directors Moth Collective

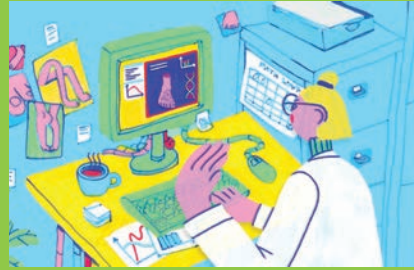


Letting Go

Estonia 2017 11min

A layered, complex film channelling the elegant, brittle austerity that sits at the heart of what it can mean to be an orphan.

Director Ulo Pikkov



Better Humans

UK 2018 3min

Sexy yetis, scientists and neon colours collide in a kaleidoscopic romp through the possibilities of gene editing and body augmentation.

Directors Moth Collective



Sinking of the Truth

Denmark 2017 7min

A remake of 'The Sinking Of The Lusitania' (1918) the world's first animated documentary, made by 7 animators setting out to unearth the truth in this age of fake news.

Directors Tobias Gundorff Boesen, Denis Chapon, Marie-Jose Saint-Pierre, Tynesha Foreman, Wiep Teeuwisse, Sander Joon & Philip Piaget

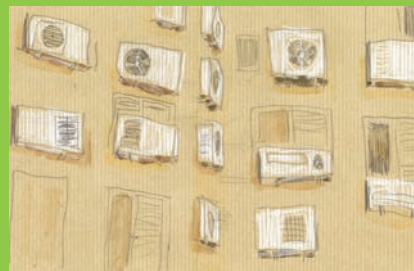


Obon

Germany 2018 15min

Akiko Takakura, one of the last remaining survivors of the atomic bomb attack on Hiroshima, tells how amidst the terror, she found a moment of rare closeness with her father.

Directors Anna Bergmann (Samo) & Andre Hormann



Travelogue Tel Aviv

Switzerland 2017 6min

A young Swiss art student arrives for six months in Tel Aviv. Through drawing he learns to analyse, understand and free himself from this environment and its contradictions.

Director Samuel Pathey



Musical Traumas

Croatia 2018 10min

A rhythmic compilation of traumatic, but amusing, confessions of former music students and an attempt to visualise music with scrumptious, hand-drawn, psychedelic animation.

Director Milos Tomic

International **7** (15) Competition Programme: Into the Dark

at Barbican Tue 4 Dec 21:00

Art, film and poetry rely on rivers of black to keep their biggest ships afloat. So many of art's most fabulous creatures can only live in the dark. The blackest of motivations and the darkest of intentions are the ones you can most probably trust when you encounter them on life's sparsely lit pathway. Bringing somebody in from the cold is usually the stuff of high adventure, bringing them in from the dark seldom gets a mention in despatches. You can go to your happy space all you want but it's probably pretty dark on the other side of the wall you have your back to. The sun might provide all our light but you go through a helluva' lot of blackness to get there. The dark is where sound becomes simultaneously essential and exponentially more frightening. Step in, take a seat, let's turn out the light.

Welcome to our annual deep-dive into the dark heart of animation. In truth, candidates abound for this little tango of the shadows. Like absolutely any artform carefree happiness is not a particularly ample nutrient stream for the creative process – not nearly enough protein nor roughage. Replete with an abundance of raw material, darkness, on the other hand is positively Einsteinian in its dimensional capacity for inspiration.

So let's stick our hand into the void and pull out the first thing we wrap our fingers around and hold on to long enough to pull into the light.

That would be Patrick Bouchard's *The Subject*. Blood and oil, muscle and flesh, skin and steel.....man and machine. Birth vs butchery. The anvil that is our hearts. Bouchard made this sinister yet somehow intensely tender paean to the search for humanity at the National Film Board of Canada. Its production started with a more real world blackness than his script had intended..... he got his head stuck in the mould he was casting to create a life-size replica of himself to disembowel through the course of the film.

Working on what amounted to a life-sized model of his own body came with a whole range of production challenges. But it also resulted in a film that is able to marshal a truly extraordinary degree of detail that scabrously blends with a real sense of weight and density in the main character as it undergoes an extraordinary transformation of exquisitely subtle and yet almost operatically poetic violence.

Violence of an altogether more delicate nature propels us into the highly choreographed world of *Riot* by Frank Ternier. At its heart is an overtly political statement about the increasing social dislocation caused by the growing gap between rich and poor. Beyond that, it depicts a manifesto of sorts describing the smothering emotional smog that forms and lingers when societies slowly burn and the fires – rather than being doused - are fed with the incendiary fuel of prejudice and wilful neglect.

The hybrid nature of *Riot* and the prolonged live-action physical theatre sequences embedded in it only add to the intensity. Ternier admits that finding the balance between the animation and the live physical performance – a form of street dancing known as 'krumping' – was one of the most challenging facets of making this film. The result, though, is that *Riot* is so well crafted its veins pulse as much with the essential creative blood of a documentary voice as with anything else; a voice that will be ignored at the peril of those who should probably be paying the most attention.

If Jacques Tati and Dennis Hopper collaborated on an animated short they would have probably come up with something a bit like *Caterpillarplasty*. That union never happened so we have to reply on Canadian David Barlow-Krelina to come through with this piece of sparkling grand-elegant-grotesquerie. Coming across as a spear-gun in the solar plexus of the beauty industry, it started out as what even Barlow-Krelina admits was "a clichéd metaphor for beauty – the metamorphosis from the caterpillar to the butterfly."

It quickly veered off that road, careening down an altogether bumpier trail.

"I guess art is sometimes about the pursuit of beauty on many levels," Barlow-Krelina suggested at the Ottawa festival earlier this year.

"But I wanted a film about beauty that is really gross. I might have gone overboard in the level of detail but that's what gives it its intensity."

"Positioning the lights just right was so important to ensure all the reflections would show up and all the sparkly points on the metal and the skin of the characters would be perfect."

You will not see another film like this for a fair while we predict and although it's true of every film that screens in a festival such as LIAF, this one really has to be seen on the big screen to be properly appreciated. And believed.

Horrors of an altogether different stripe roll out in *Augenblicke - A Blink Of An Eye* by Kiana Naghshineh from Germany. This film depicts the thousand split second intricacies of a single moment of an attack and is based on a terrifying experience Naghshineh had several years earlier.

Walking along a lit but otherwise empty street one night she encountered a man intent on attacking and assaulting a woman. During a presentation she describes the graphic nature of her memories leading up to the attack and the rapidly rising fear of the inevitable.

"I could see my shadow and I could see his shadow get closer and closer and the shadows touched," she begins. "And I thought I hope he goes past but he grabbed me, ripped my clothes off but ran away. I realised that he ran because a woman was watching," she continued. "But that part was kind of worse because she did nothing and

just looked at me and I felt ashamed or that I was being a bother to her.”

This element of the experience – in part - fuelled Naghshineh’s growing sense that the story was more complex and contained a number of differing perspectives that she initially assumed. Attempting to understand and then portray these perspectives absorbed nearly a year of pre-production time before she even started drawing. In turn, that also saw sense of the attack transform into something with different facets, some of them cut with fairly blunt instruments.

“Over the years it sort of got worse every time I told the story,” she recalls. “The story became just about me. He was gone and it was just me having to deal with it.”

Trying to include all of these elements into a single linear narrative also butted up against her desire to ensure her finished film was “watchable” and would not alienate an audience. In part, this desire informed some of the animation styling and certainly was a significant influence in the choice of music as a way of keeping her audience inside the film.

Talk about pedigree. Jonathan Hodgson would have to be one of the UK’s most screened and awarded independent animators. He has been producing much loved films for more than 35 years. In addition to establishing two studios (Sherbert and Hodgson Films) he has also contributed to or produced animated films under some of our most innovative funds and production companies, and he somehow finds the time to fit in his day job as Senior Lecturer in Animation at Middlesex University.

His latest film *Roughhouse* sees him joining forces with one of our favourite French production Co-ops (Papy3D) as well as roping in some incredibly well credentialed French and British animating talent to help get the job done. He even managed to convince Chris Shepherd to provide a voice-over for a train announcer (must have been hanging around the office at just the right time).

Ostensibly a yarn about some rough-around-the-edges college kids, it ripples with the unpredictable electricity of a situation that could erupt into avoidable tragedy at almost any moment. Although this threat ebbs and flows, the sense of its potential is sustained and felt throughout the film like a fifth character. This is masterful and controlled storytelling of the type that Hodgson does so well. And when the film delivers a little break from the black we decided this was the best way to close the programme and send you all Out Of The Dark.

You’re welcome.

Malcolm Turner

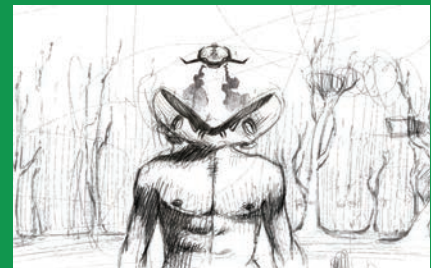


The Subject

Canada 2018 10min

The body of a man lies on an autopsy table. The dark workshop, packed with various instruments, evokes a torture chamber. The animator’s scalpel penetrates the skin.

Director Patrick Bouchard



Robhot

Italy 2017 6min

A domestic dispute like any other turns into a surreal confrontation between two humanoid robots capable of the most incredible transformations.

Director Donato Sansone



RIOT

France 2017 13min

A young black man is killed in an altercation with a neighbour and the police. An indignant crowd gathers. The feeling of injustice is high. Emotion engenders riot. In the absence of words, can the body take its revenge?

Director Frank Ternier



Caterpillarplasty

Canada 2018 5min

An unsettling and seductive dream world where clients submit to dark and mysterious procedures at the hands of a gaunt surgeon with murky intentions and a sphinx-like smile.

Director David Barlow-Krelina

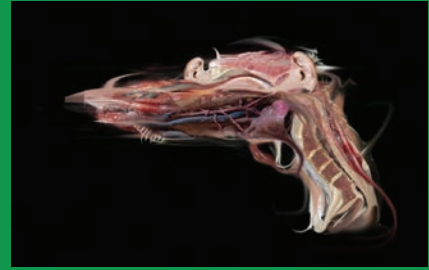


Ceva

Czech Republic/Romania 2018 9min

The forests, the birds, the snow and even the road itself block your path on the journey to self-discovery. Beware – you could be trapped in Purgatory forever.

Director Paul Muresan



Bavure

France/Italy 2018 5min

In the beginning was the Stain. A paintbrush reveals a being made of gouache, transforms him, twists him, completes him.

Director Donato Sansone



Augenblicke – A Blink of an Eye

Germany 2018 4min

Three perceptions of only one truth – hers, his and ours.

Director Kiana Naghshineh



Pure White

Germany 2018 3min

An anatomy model wakes up in a seemingly perfect world. The fact that she must live as a 'damaged' being in such an ideal environment amplifies her pain. She questions her creator in an attempt to find answers.

Director Sven Windszus



The Sounds From the Drawers

Portugal 2017 8min

Turn, turn, turn. Can there be rhythms without patterns? Can it be said one thing leads to another when the links defy logic?

Director Vitor Hugo



Roughhouse

UK/France 2018 15min

Three teenage friends embark on a new adventure in a northern town, but when a charismatic stranger joins their gang, their loyalty is torn apart with terrifying consequences.

Director Jonathan Hodgson

International **8** (15) Competition Programme: Looking For Answers

at Barbican **Wed 5 Dec 21:00**

We're all looking for answers. To something. About ourselves. An explanation of the universe's infinities. Why are we so confused in a world of information overload? How do we short circuit Trump's power pack? Is Elvis still alive?

Sometimes the question is a heartfelt plea for specific information. Sometimes it's just "Hahhh??" But that's OK, coz sometimes that's the answer as well... and anyway, it's all about the journey, right?

There have never been more places to turn to to get answers. There have never been more people to turn to to get answers. There have never been more hard drives, screens and archives to turn to to get answers.

The problem is there have never been more bloody questions. Nor more fog. Nor more pools of monkeys banging away on typewriters chancing their hairy arms on accidentally generating the master answers.

Solutions aren't really our forte here at LIAF HQ. But we certainly know some people that are asking some pretty strange questions and who might just be able to help all of us find what we're looking for.

The programme kicks off with a wonderful, universally recognisable animation trope – the minimalist animation guy. Minimalist animation (or 'Cartoon Moderne', a term coined and defined by animation historian Amid Amidi) was borne in the aftermath of the bitter Disney strike in 1941. Fed up with what they saw as either the limitations, mono-culturalism or just the sheer stifling ubiquity of Disney's 'pictorial realism' style and in many cases being unwelcome to return to a post-strike Disney Studio, they branched out on their own and opened up new animation terrain.

The most famous and successful of these, of course, was the crew who established the UPA Studio which gave us decades of outstanding cartoons and characters. Mr Magoo, Gerald McBoing Boing and Rooty Toot Toot were high water marks but there

were hundreds of films and characters that UPA gifted us. And there were so many others... think Ernest Pintof (especially his 1957 classic *Flebus*) or Dusan Vukotic who was the first non-American to win an Oscar for a short animated film with *Surogat* (1961).

The squat little guy, kind of a loser, bumbling through his environment, oblivious or perplexed and always on the lookout for something or trying – but failing – to resolve the simplest of quandaries. Lucky enough to survive but not lucky enough to sort out anything else.

It's an aesthetic that Royal College of the Arts (RCA) graduate Dan Castro completely nails in *Herman Brown is Feeling Down*. Even more impressively he actually brings something entirely new and fresh to the whole shebang. He started by creating a series of vibrant backgrounds by painting abstract imagery directly on to 35mm film stock. In turn, that sparked a more intuitive 'just go with it' approach to the digital animating of the lead character. Melding this character to these backgrounds has produced a finished film of remarkable invigorating luminosity which is exactly what Castro was chasing. While the spark to create this film came from his own concerns with what he felt was a certain mounting anxiousness in his life, he definitely didn't want to give the appearance he was discussing more specific mental health issues that he had no direct experience of.

Out there beyond the ring road that encapsulates the little world LIAF lives in is a big scary place that is saddled with the sub-conscious expectation that animation is supposed to be bright, beautiful, appealing. I am all for that when that's the animator's intention but I definitely don't think it should be a rule and we're happy to go out on a limb to showcase animated films that aspire to break all the windows in that particular house.

The work of Chris Sullivan and Laura Harrison readily spring to mind as contemporary examples of this kind of

wilful animated barbarity. Their films walk a tightrope made of barbed wire and tend to receive all the less applause for their singular vision and creative courage. Further poisoning the well, the very thing that makes them strong and unique equally makes them easy targets for utterly substandard rip-offs.

This – hopefully – is where humble little festivals like LIAF come in. Spotting the difference between an ugly masterpiece and crap artwork doesn't strike one as being that tricky. But the complicating factor at play is that wider expectation of what animation should be and should look like.

A lot of people probably wouldn't turn to commissioning Ralph Steadman to come up with a flattering portrait of their precious children, but most people can readily spot the quality and the genius of his work. And so many of the things that contribute to that appreciation ring true – in their own way – for appreciating 'ugly' animation. A core energy that is best celebrated by the visual style, artistic consistency and a sense of the artist's commitment to that style, a voice that is all the clearer (if not louder) as a result of the visuals and an internal logic made all the more powerful by the way the film looks are some of the keys to looking into the core of this sub-genre and feeling the heat rather than the burn.

Case in point is the audacious new film *Ugly* by Nikita Diakur who has also given us *Fest* which is screening in International Programme #1. A truly leviathan piece of CG animation, it tackles the concept head-on and took out the Grand Prix prize at the Ottawa International Animation Festival last year for its considerable explorative exertions.

Ruth Lingford is no stranger to using animation to explore the almost endless iterations of human violence. Her 1997 classic *Death And The Mother* continues to be a benchmark film whenever the topic of man's inhumanity to man arises within the context of animation. Her latest film, *Trump Dreams*, comes to us in her trademark roiling black and white style and continues

her occasional practice of building films around the micro-narrations of others. In this instance, a number of people who contribute absurdist snippets of dreams they'd had inspired or infected by our Orange Overlord. Cleverly edited together and curated into a specific order, this cluster of narrations produces a kind of pseudo-narrative feel to the film but it is Lingford's convoy of accompanying animation that brings these dreamt thought bubbles to life. Apart from bringing a certain real-world sense to the spoken interpretations of the dreams, her animation also captures the various facets of Trump as a walking, talking, tweeting brand from his weird hair to the full range of his aggro/defensive mannerisms to which we are all becoming acculturated like so many slowly boiling frogs.

Sometimes there are not really any answers at the end of the rainbow. Sometimes life is just about asking the questions and undertaking the search. And sometimes that search is drama enough. Dublin based animator and writer Rory Byrne captures this in dramatic fullness in his film *An Island*.

This film soars through a variety of states presumably commenting on the physical and external search it is overtly portraying as well as bringing into the light an iteration of the inner search most of us encounter in a more fractured, less linear sense at different times in our lives. That there is, or may not ever be, any tangible end game to this particular type of searching doesn't reduce or delegitimise that incredible human appetite for the search.

Sometimes just finding great animation on the way up the hill is reward enough and that's fine by us.

Malcolm Turner



Herman Brown is Feeling Down

UK 2018 6min

Herman's quiet, colourful world is suddenly interrupted by something loud and stressy.

Director Dan Castro



Ride

Portugal 2018 6min

A masterful stop-frame homage to the iconic motorcycle design and culture of the 1950s and 60s.

Director Paul Bush

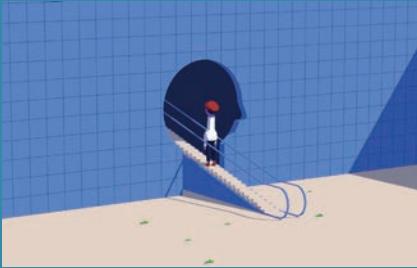


Ugly

Germany 2017 12min

A broken animation about kindness, respect and coexistence.

Director Nikita Diakur



Looking For Something

UK 2018 4min

A man snoozes at his desk during working hours. He is wondering about the meaning of life and looking for answers.

Director Cesar Pelizer



Good Intentions

UK 2018 8min

After a young woman is responsible for a hit and run, strange and spooky things start to happen.

Director Anna Mantzaris



Trump Dreams

USA/UK 2017 4min

Strange but true! Images, words and ideas collected from dreams about Donald Trump from people all around the world.

Director Ruth Lingford



Contact

Spain 2017 8min

Somewhere between reality and fantasy, a woman's consciousness is awoken through her inner journey that reflects the world around her.

Director Alessandro Novelli



Agua Viva

USA 2018 7min

A Chinese manicurist in a Miami salon attempts to describe her feelings in the little English she knows.

Director Alexa Lim Haas



Tears of Chiwen

China 2017 9min

Tradition and mythology explored in this glorious explosion of cascading imagery.

Director Sun Xun



Yellow

Slovakia 2017 6min

A young opera singer Viola is scared of everything yellow, sunny and spontaneous. She hides herself in the shadows but will she find her way out?

Director Ivana Šebestová



An Island

Ireland 2018 13min

The physical and emotional journey undertaken by a lone explorer as he attempts to reach the summit of a remote island.

Director Rory Byrne

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**ESPINHO
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Abstract (15) Showcase

at Barbican Sat 1 Dec 14:00

After nearly fifteen years of deliberately seeking out and incorporating abstract animation to screen in LIAF perhaps we can spare you all the annual cri de coeur that writing this particular programme introduction usually triggers.

Or maybe not.

LIAF and its sister festival MIAF (Melbourne) are among the few 'generalist' animation festivals to specifically showcase abstract animation. We both appreciate that this form of animation is – to put it mildly – something of a niche. But the extent to which a sometimes open antipathy is directed at abstract animation can be fairly bracing.

Complicating any attempt at analysing this situation is the fact that there is a LOT of abstract animation being made. Something approaching a quarter of all our submissions are classified 'abstract' during the entry process. That stands in stark contrast to – say – kids films, which might total 5%.

Age is not the demarcation line for producing this type of work. In this year's Abstract Showcase two of the films were made by animation students and another four were made by animation teachers.

Neither is it remotely true to say that the world of abstract animation provides a last bolt-hole for technophobe artists-of-yesteryear to ply a dying craft. Far from it. In fact, there is literally more of this kind of work being produced now than ever before. Equally, the digital/handmade divide holds more or less the same ratio in the abstract realm as it does in the other animation genres.

StoryStoryStory is the persistently pounding backbeat offered to so many developing animators. That is a good idea (it is the BEST idea) for those who want to make those sorts of films. But the

metronome that enforces this particular rhythm is often set by those more familiar with the conventions of narrative-driven live action 'cinema' and thus lack the insight to appreciate the particular visual vocabulary that only abstract animation can offer as a unique moving image artform.

The big wide world of auteur animation is a waaaay broader church than that, and I wonder how many unique talents are being denied an opportunity to develop and reach their potential as artists because of this fixation on one narrow pathway through the animation universe.

Let's dive a little deeper – since we're here.

"The question is not what you look at - but what you see."

That is Henry David Thoreau trying to put in a nutshell not so much his philosophy on life but a philosophical approach to life that allowed him to take in what was before his eyes and translate that alpha version of the information into something of much greater meaning. This is a man that (among a LOT of other things) was writing about the natural environment in early 1800's America and turning those observations into astonishing essays on the need for a form of social environmentalism that is only becoming understood now.

He applied a similar abstractionist pursuit to understanding and explaining politics – everybody should read the text he is probably best known for "Civil Disobedience" (sometimes published as "Resistance To Civil Government") published in 1849.... But we digress.

Let's regress.

"Art cannot be real without a little of the unreal. I have always sensed that the

beauty is double-sided. I do not know how to explain it to you... Remember how our planet looks? We are hovering in space but not falling. What is it? A dream?"

That is Marc Chagall talking about how his ability to properly interpret the visual world he must move through cannot adequately function for him without running it through some sort of 'art translator' of the imagination. It is not so much that it would not make sense to him per se, but that it would not make enough sense to be valuable or even of particular use.

Case study? Me. I'm cheap and I turned up for the analysis.

I am not generally a 'look-out-the-window' traveller when I fly. Partly, I don't especially enjoy being hemmed in against the wall but I also usually find the entirety of the view on offer oddly non-descript, weirdly one-dimensional and lacking in detail most of the time.

For all of that, I've been exceptionally fortunate to experience some incredible views through those little bent, distorting plastic eyeholes. An hours-long encounter with Halley's Comet one night over the Pacific in the 1980's made it look so close it could have been hitching a lift by holding onto the wing tip probably tops the list. I also saw the smoke and flames of the hell-on-earth that Saddam Hussein created when he set fire to more than 600 oil wells when he was being pushed back from Kuwait in 1991. And by pure chance I happened to notice four German jet-fighters practicing dog-fighting several thousand feet below a plane I was on flying from the UK to Estonia one bright, sunny winter's afternoon. It was like watching eagles play.

That said, there are three routes I'll sometimes opt for a window seat on if the conditions are going to be right. The route that most airlines take from

Singapore to Melbourne often tracks across the burned, baking interior of Australia ahead of overtopping the truly magical emerald green, sepia blues and snaking vibrant reds of the Arnhem Land. Likewise, the Arctic route on a clear day can be spellbinding even as a kind of optical illusion kicks in making it increasingly difficult to discern height, perspective and detail. Settle in and lock your eyes onto that terrain and on the right day it re-coagulates as a bottomless three dimensional picture deep enough to tumble into.

But perhaps the most evocative is the flight over what used to be Persia on a generously moonlit night. This kicks in connections to a lot of the lessons I've drawn from abstract animated films. Under the right conditions, coastlines are shimmering, indistinct lines discerned by the phosphorescence of waves hitting landfall. Occasional city-sized clusters of lighting come and go – as opposed to the near carpeting of municipal lighting one sees crossing Europe or the US at night. But the true beauty of the view that spans roughly from West India to more or less Eastern Turkey is the tapestry of disparately flung pin-prick lights defiantly puncturing a weightless ocean of black void - that empty/infinite space Chagall mentions.

This firefly patchwork does not have the obvious, awe-inspiring grandeur of the Australian outback or the elegant majesty of the Arctic landscape but somehow – to me - radiates an elemental essence of Persia's breath through the skin of the airplane that is invisible to the naked eye or any camera.

So, the thesis here is that appreciating abstract animation helps you recalibrate how you look at things. It changes the permission path inside your mind so that your imagination can process the raw data provided by your eyes in a far, far more diverse, creatively kaleidoscopic way. It provides you with a kind of interpretive radar that is only partially reliant on the visual manifestation of what came in through your eyes. It changes your brain, is what we're saying!

"Why is it that we depend so much upon art? Is it a form of escape, of stimulation? If you watch the movement of a bird on the wing, see the beauty of every movement of the sky, watch the shadows on the hills or the beauty on the face of another, do you think you will want to go to any museum to look at any picture?" - Jiddu Krishnamurti, noted philosopher.

Good point Jiddu! So, you've just seen a summary of the best new abstract animation. Take what you will from that

and walk out into the night.

What do you see now?

And if you happen to be a filmmaker who either is or knows deep down they have to be making this kind of work..... well, if this programme serves as a beacon – even a fragile and flickering one – indicating the potential of abstract animation to somebody who has a headful of this particular melange of imagery then all the better. If you can imagine it, in animation you can create it. And if you create it goooooood, my friend, we will show it.

That's what we do.

Malcolm Turner

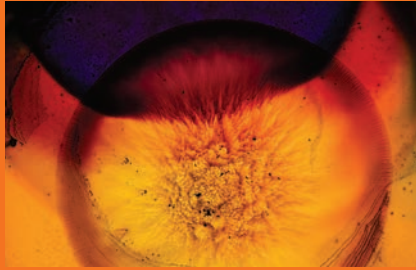


Until we Coleidescape

Austria 2017 4min

Harmonic oscillations, created hand in hand with sound and diffraction glasses. A colourful kaleidoscope of abstract animation loops.

Director Reinhold Bidner



Bird Milk

Canada 2018 4min

The magnified details of inks, stencils, and printed media.

Director Christopher Strickler



String of Sound

USA 2017 1min

Human mouth noises and a single piece of string.

Director John Morena



Sun Zoom Spark

USA 2017 2min

The magnetic sun looms over lonely water towers and hidden spaces under a highway overpass. Inspired by the song 'Sun Zoom Spark' by Captain Beefheart.

Director Gina Kamensky



Max Planck

UK 2017 3min

Dilate your eyes and enjoy. A pulsating cornucopia of visual delights.

Director Jonathan Gillie



Not My Type

Switzerland 2017 3min

The history of typography, print media and a mosquito.

Director Gerd Gockell



Aerobie

France 2017 4min

On the track of a velodrome, a cyclist starts his race.

Director Bastien Dupriez



Kajtek

Poland 2017 3min

Serene objects, shapes and spheres gently collide in a celestial world.

Director Aga Jarzab

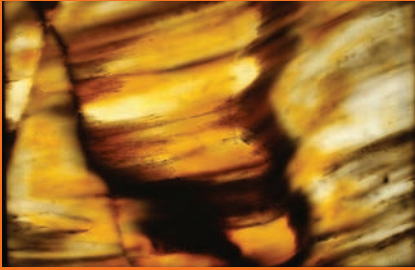


Twilight

Canada 2018 2min

Exploring the relationship between sound and picture, and the two lights (twi-light) found inside of film projectors.

Director Richard Reeves



Elegy

Switzerland/UK 2017 6min

A film of stone and light – just stone and light.

Director Paul Bush

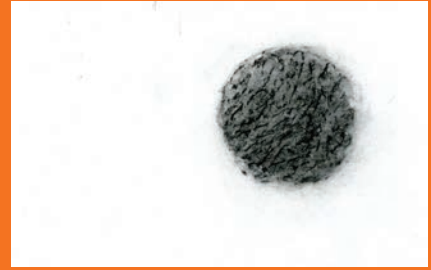


Divisional Articulations

Hong Kong 2017 4min

Fuzzy analogue music and geometric digital animation collide in an electronic feedback loop spawning arrays of divisional articulations in time and space.

Director Max Hattler

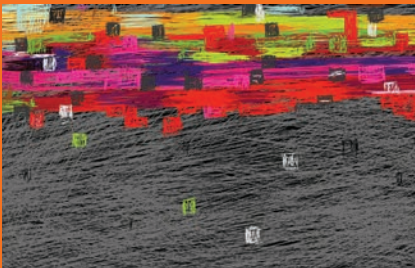


Cosmopolite

Japan 2017 4min

A subtle and softened x-ray tinted journey through an opaque, undescrivable stratosphere.

Director Rina Okada

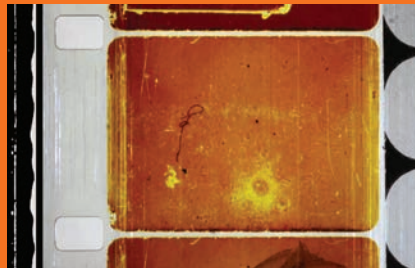


A One-Minute History of Image Distortions

Germany 2017 1min

We see the machinery of image projection fail all the time. What happens when art steps in and takes over the process?

Director Betina Kuntzsch

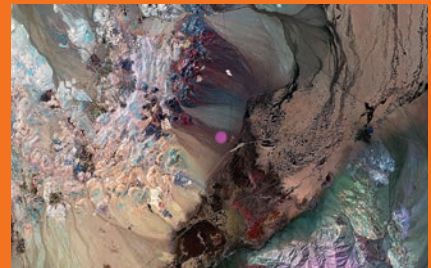


Chante en Couleur

Australia 2017 4min

A caravan of experimental imagery created from reaching deep in the soundtrack area of analogue film stock.

Director Dirk de Bruyn



Via

USA 2017 6min

An increasingly astounding patchwork quilt unfolds as the earth from the air provides more and more creative inspiration.

Director Maria Ferreira

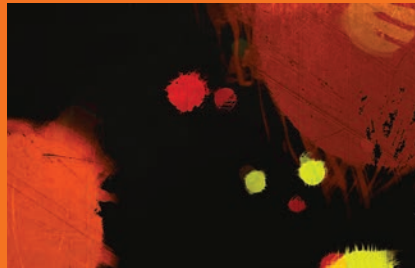


Small Things Moving in Unison

UK 2018 5min

Perforations made directly into 16mm black leader –the effect of retarding motion.

Director Vicky Smith

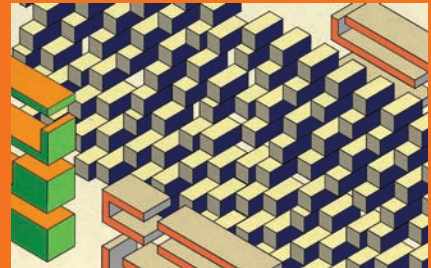


Home (A Portrait of New York City)

USA 2017 2min

A portrait of New York City in three parts.

Director John Morena



Dreamland

France 2017 5min

Retro-futuristic structures proliferate and pulsate to synthetic baroque music. Geometric grandeur with maximum opulence.

Director Mirai Mizue

British⁽¹⁵⁾ Showcase

at the Barbican **Fri 30 Nov 20:45**

barbican

at the Barbican **Fri 30 Nov 20:45**

Welcome to our annual British showcase which continues to build on previous years to pull out all the stops and bring as much new British animation to the big screen as possible. This is an exceptional opportunity to see what British animators are doing, how they're doing it and how the art form is travelling.

As ever we've a mix of the best graduate filmmakers alongside some veterans who continue to swim against the tide. They all show a tenacity and steely resolve to get their stories on screen and out to an audience. For many, this is the start of their festival lives – and good luck to them as they set off to voyage around the world. For others it is a continuation of a journey they set off on several years ago.

Alongside this British Showcase there's a generous sprinkling of British films in the International Competition Programmes with the latest works from veteran filmmakers Chris Shepherd, Matt Abbiss, Kim Noce, Liz Hobbs, Jonathan Hodgson, Ruth Lingford, Paul Bush and Vicky Smith as well as spectacular graduate work from newcomers Sam Gainsborough, Alex Widdowson, Dan Castro and Ian Bruce.

It's also heartwarming to see new films from relative newcomers Sarina Nihei, Marcus Armitage, Simon Ball, Ed Prosser, Jonathan Gillie and the Moth Collective – who's work we have championed at previous LIAFs.

Also returning to LIAF this year with in-depth retrospectives and talks we have special guests Jonathan Hodgson and the Scottish duo Will Anderson and Ainslie Henderson.

And finally there are several British filmmakers who's works are sprinkled through the rest of the festival in the kids programmes, music video session, Late Night Bizarre and Best of the Next programmes.

The British Showcase is one of our most beloved sessions at LIAF. It gives us the chance to see ourselves on screen and to see how we think. We get to see who has been active in the last year or so and see how we compare with the films made by our international counterparts. As ever this is one of the most eclectic screenings of British animation we have seen at LIAF in years. A good reason to feel excited.

Nag Vladermersky



Enough

UK 2017 2min

The stressed inhabitants of a city have had enough and start acting on their dark impulses.

Director Anna Mantzaris



Haley and Joanna

UK 2018 3min

Boys, beers and bras.

Director Laura Hodkin



Anna Mantzaris is a Swedish Animator who recently animated on Wes Andersons *Isle of Dogs*. Her short film *But Milk is*

***Important* has won over 20 international awards. Her first year film at the RCA *Enough* has so far received 21 international awards. Anna is represented as a Director by Passion Pictures.**

What made you make the film?

I made it during my first year at the RCA. We only had a short time to make the films, I wanted to make something quite funny and also explore a different style of storytelling than what I had done before.

Is there something you can tell us about the production process?

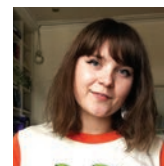
I didn't have a script, I just had all the different "moments" on post-it notes that I swapped around and chose from to find the right order. It was all very fast. I just had a few puppets that I swapped around their heads and gave them new hairstyles, it was the only way I could get it done in time and still have so many characters in stop motion.

Where do you get your ideas from?

My main idea for this film was from moving to London. There were so many people on the morning tube, looking a bit stressed out and I started to think what they actually wanted to do, if they could. And what things people would like to do if there were no social rules or consequences to their actions.

What are you working on now or planning on working next?

At the moment I'm directing my first commission with Passion Pictures. But I hope to also start thinking about new personal projects. And my graduate film *Good Intentions* is going to start being in festivals soon as well.



Laura Jayne Hodkin is a London based animator and artist. Her work mainly consists of drawing funny female

characters through expressive lines and garish colours. She is currently working towards her MA in Animation at the Royal College of Art.

What made you make the film?

I was listening to the podcast 'Friday Night In', in which real life friends Haley and Joanna talk about boys, dating, work and life in general. I really enjoyed the way these girls talked to each other in such an open and comfortable way because it reminded me of my own female friendships. I wanted to animate a snippet of their conversation to exaggerate their intimacy, but also create something humorous.

Is there something you can tell us about the production process?

During my first year at the RCA we were introduced to a lip sync workshop and asked to animate a conversation between characters by selecting a piece of spoken audio. I wanted to work with contemporary female voices and developed this into Haley and Joanna.

Where do you get your ideas from?

The American sitcom *Broad City* was an inspiration in showing how a realistic female friendship can be portrayed onscreen. The show is created by two real life friends as they try navigating life in New York. It holds true to the themes of what I wanted to express within my own work - a female friendship portrayed in a funny and unapologetically crude way.

What are you working on now or planning on working next?

I am in the storyboarding stage of my graduation film at the RCA. Like Haley and Joanna, it will feature funny female leads, getting drunk together and having a good time.



Togetherness

UK 2017 4min

A story of disillusioned body parts which separate, believing they are better off alone. But as they scatter, they soon realise they are better off together.

Shaun Clark & Kim Noce



The Woman Who Turns Into A Castle

UK/Austria 2018 4min

An animated documentary about a woman who turns into a castle based on an Oliver Sacks case study.

Kathrin Steinbacher



Tend

UK 2018 8min

A father and daughter live peacefully in the forest until one day their familiar routine begins to fall apart. As he struggles to keep the fire burning he spirals into an obsession with the flames.

Directors Tom Judd & Ed Barrett



Shaun Clark and Kim Noce are MEW LAB: award-winning London-based animation directors. They are both author

animators with filmmaking and art backgrounds and their online presence is at www.mewlab.com

What made you make the film?

The film was made in conjunction with BEEE Creative who approached us to create a film with more than 80 non-professionals and 55 dancers across Hertfordshire.

Is there something you can tell us about the production process?

We began by creating a number of still images which explored the theme of fragmentation through the use of pixilation. We knew we could not film all the dancers together in one space so we wanted to embrace the distance and separation of bodies. We gave the still images to writer Sarah Woolner Farinha who wrote a script based on the theme. We then recorded the script voiceover with Penelope McGhie and composer Hutch Demouliplied created the soundtrack in response to the script. The soundtrack was then separated into 5 parts and given to each dance group to rehearse to. We shot across 5 locations, filming a group of dancers in each space. The pixilation footage was then cut to the soundtrack.

Where do you get your ideas from?

We tend to be inspired by life! And we love to collaborate with writers and other artists.

What are you working on now or planning on working next?

Shaun has just completed a short children's film commissioned by The Royal Opera House and is about to start work on a film inspired by a Catalan poem. Kim is currently developing a political poetic 2D VR and an animated documentary about freedom and sexuality.



Kathrin Steinbacher (born 1989 in Salzburg) is an Austrian Illustrator/ Animator currently based in London.

She graduated with a First Class Honours Degree in Illustration Animation at Kingston University London. Her graduation film *Freedom* (2017) has been screened at festivals around the world. She is currently studying MA Animation at the Royal College of Art London.

What made you make the film?

It was a collaborative project with the Wellcome Collection. While researching, I found out about a disease called Encephalitis Lethargica (sleepy disease) and got really interested.

Is there something you can tell us about the production process?

It is all hand-drawn on paper with charcoal, and I worked with layers.

I scanned the different layers, changed the colours in After Effects to make it look like a print.

Where do you get your ideas from?

From everyday life.

What are you working on now or planning on working next?

I am working on a film about my grandmother's hiking shoes and an animated documentary which I am co-directing with my friend Emily Downe about Women in Animation.



Tom Judd & Ed Barrett are part of Animade an award-winning animation studio. They

believe in the power of character to bring a story to life and make characterful animations that inspire and delight.

What made you make the film?

Making a relatable, narratively driven film had been on our bucket list for a long time. The film was funded by WePresent - the creative content strand of WeTransfer. This investment gave us the opportunity to clear our schedules and turn our ideas into reality.

Is there something you can tell us about the production process?

Our entire studio worked to produce the film which required a meticulous level of planning but it was also a great exercise in realising our potential to produce longer form content.

Where do you get your ideas from?

The early narrative for *Tend* was centred around an entity that would cater to your every need in an abstract way. As we moved into scripting, we imagined fire as a metaphor for the best thing in the world owing to its ability to provide warmth, protection, sustenance and light - fire essentially provides everything you need. We then fed our own experiences of being new fathers into the narrative, but the story is open to interpretation by design.

What are you working on now or planning on working next?

Right now we're looking into new technologies and how animation sits within them. We're currently having fun playing around with shorter form content designed for social media. However working on *Tend* we really noticed the power and reach of longer form narrative-led content, so that's something we're keen explore again in the near future.

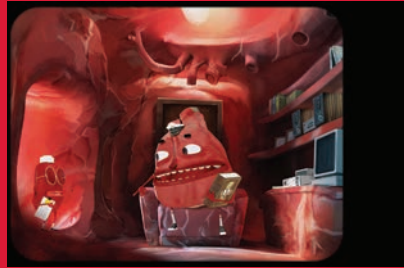


The Strongest of the Strange

UK 2018 3min

A stunning visualisation of Charles Bukowski's poem exploring abstract notions of elusiveness, creative expression and fleeting artistry.

Director James Merritt

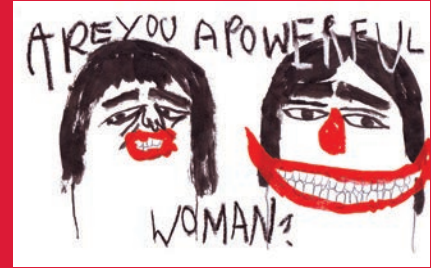


The Brave Heart

UK 2018 10min

A brave heart takes a wild journey inside the body to try to sort out the problems of a hungover morning.

Directors Luca Schenato & Sinem Vardarli



Women & Power

UK 2017 2min

An exploration of the relationship between women and power and the female form, based on the Mary Beard book 'Women & Power: A Manifesto'.

Director Meg Earls



James Merritt is an illustrator and animator, from Cornwall, living in London. In 2017, he graduated from

Goldsmiths, University of London with a degree in Media and Communications. This was his introduction to animation, illustration and the creative field as a whole, within which he now work as a freelancer.

What made you make the film?

I was searching and struggling to find material to base my film around, so when I eventually stumbled upon this poem, it seemed like a perfect fit. I knew that I'd need something to act as my inspiration and jumping-off point.

Is there something you can tell us about the production process?

I never completed a full storyboard or animatic. I had most of my ideas sketched out but there was no structure to them. I regret this - it made visualising the film as a whole much harder, and meant that a lot of transitions between scenes were overlooked.

Where do you get your ideas from?

Predominantly the material that I'm working around. I also find that deciding on colour early in the process influenced the direction the film went in.

What are you working on now or planning on working next?

I'm working on a couple of freelance illustration projects, and also doing some work as a colourist on an animated project. Hopefully I can find the time to begin a personal animation project soon - this time a properly planned one.



Born in North Italy in 1978, Luca Schenato and Italian/Turkish director Sinem Vardarli, both developed

their filmmaking skills at the NABA Academy in Milan. Their short films A Pistol Against My Head and Fingers Tale have received critical acclaim having screened at major festivals around the world.

What made you make the film?

We wanted to challenge ourselves with this animated comedy. First we decided to not use any dialogue. We chose a quirky topic but approached it with a bold visual style taking care not to make the audience feel nauseous! We also tried to make the whole thing a bit lyrical and an epic heroic journey.

Is there something you can tell us about the production process?

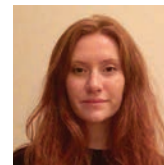
It's an independent film self financed by us, made in our spare time and taking some time off from commercial work, produced in one and a half years. We first worked out their look of the characters - they needed to be simple but also appealing. The entire film is 3D animation with the help of 2D digitally painted backgrounds.

Where do you get your ideas from?

Usually our ideas are coming from our own life experiences, books, art and travels. For this film we were thinking about 60's sci-fi movies such as Incredible Voyage and to make the film like a war submarine adventure style comedy.

What are you working on now or planning on working next?

Our next short film is currently in production and it's a tale of an Australian aborigine medicine man.



Meg Earls is a traditional hand drawn 2D animator, currently in her final year of studying animation at the University for the

Creative Arts in Farnham, Surrey.

What made you make the film?

I was in a bookshop in Dublin about this time last year and I saw Mary Beard's book on the best seller's shelf. At this point I was just discovering feminism and I'd been a big fan of Mary's for a while as I studied classics at school. The two subject matters just clicked. When I started reading it, everything she wrote was so inspiring and I remember thinking "everyone needs to hear this". When a thought like that crosses your mind you know you need to make a film.

Is there something you can tell us about the production process?

It's all traditionally hand drawn 2D on paper, straight ahead animation. Every single frame is redrawn too which was extra time consuming!

Where do you get your ideas from?

Mainly from things I feel strongly about that are currently happening or that I feel directly affected by. Also from other artists or animators, for instance Peter Millard heavily inspired this film, as did the artists Rose Wylie and Faye Moorhouse.

What are you working on now or planning on working next?

At the moment I'm working on a very cheery film about the decriminalizing of the abortion laws in Northern Ireland. As a woman from Belfast this is a very important issue for me, especially after the south of Ireland has now decriminalised abortion. We need to remind people that this is still a very real issue the women of Northern Ireland face.



Marfa

UK 2018 8min

An evocative and atmospheric depiction of a town on the borderlines of Texas. – a place out of time.

Director Greg McLeod

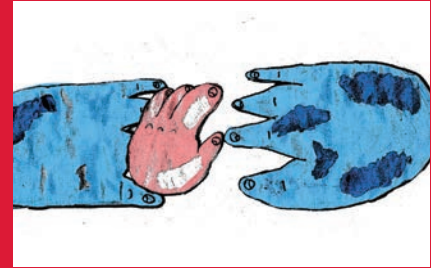


Anna

UK 2018 5min

A loving look at the world of dementia-stricken Gus; a former gardener who lives with his granddaughter and struggles to reconcile reality with an increasingly present past.

Director Jessica Mountfield



Blue Hands

UK 2017 3min

Sitting alone on a night bus, a young woman is forced to face the ghosts of her past.

Director Diyala Muir



Greg McLeod is an award-winning illustrator and animation director and one half of The Brothers McLeod.

He has worked with Disney, Aardman Animations, the BBC and the Royal Shakespeare Company. His films have screened extensively at prestigious animation festivals worldwide and **Marfa** received its world premiere at the Sundance Film Festival.

What made you make the film?

I was interested in making a documentary and when a trip to Marfa Texas presented itself it seemed the perfect subject.

Is there something you can tell us about the production process?

All animated on paper using ink and watercolour to mirror the sketches I did while on my travels.

Where do you get your ideas from?

Disrupting thought processes and a great deal of daydreaming.

What are you working on now or planning on working next?

An exhibition of some recent artworks and a new short film project.



Jess Mountfield is a graduate from the Arts University Bournemouth, currently working as a character animator

in London. She has a love for all things stop-motion, especially if they're made from felt or wearing woolly jumpers.

What made you make the film?

Influenced by a gardening Grandad, Anna aims to explore the horror of dementia, which leaves sufferers disconnected from their lives, families and eventually themselves. Anna therefore explores the subjective perception of a man with dementia as he copes with the loss of his wife - to bring the viewer into the mind of someone afflicted with the disease.

Through this, it hopes to humanise those struggling with it, and individualise the mass statistic of the afflicted elderly.

Is there something you can tell us about the production process?

We tried to blend stop-motion and 2D during the production to the best advantage of each medium. The best part about the production process was the focus on natural materials - we loved using wood, felt, paper and fabric to craft the props, sets and puppets. Through this focus on texture we hoped to really highlight the physical, tangible nature of stop-motion animation that is one of its most appealing assets. We also tried to be free, experimental and bold where possible during production, for example taking risks with physically destroying the set for a shot.

Where do you get your ideas from?

Ideas are everywhere! There's no shortage, it's just how you use them that's the tricky part!

What are you working on now or planning on working next?

I'm currently working as a character animator on children's TV show, while developing a commercial for a charity and a new short film.



Diyala Muir is an animation artist based in London. During her Masters degree at the Royal College of Art, she focused on

creating abstract narratives that reflect the chaotic inner world of her protagonists in a darkly comic and naive style.

What made you make the film?

I wanted to make this film as part of my grieving process following the passing of my close friend on Christmas Day 2016. This film helped rationalise a very chaotic, painful time in my life. Although the idea stems from a very personal place it was my intention to make the film more abstract, so that hopefully more people can relate to it.

Is there something you can tell us about the production process?

Everything happened very quickly - I wrote the treatment in a day, storyboarded it, and then started animating straight from that. The aesthetic and compositions came together as I went along, so it was all very organic. The stage I enjoyed the most was painting the intimate hand sequence.

Where do you get your ideas from?

My ideas usually come from personal experience and inner emotions that I need to work out. I enjoy weaving these elements with my observations of the external world so that my films are a blend of reality and fantasy. Recently I've been incredibly influenced by horror films and want to move more into that direction.

What are you working on now or planning on working next?

I've just started working on the sequel to Blue Hands so that's coming together slowly. The film will follow on from the ending so we will see the character try to make her way home from the forest. I'm also developing a short animated series.



Lint

UK 2018 3min

The aftermath of a breakup and one person's bizarre attempt at regaining some semblance of normality.

Director Lisa O'Sullivan



Cleaning in Progress

UK 2018 7min

The bristly relationship between a cleaner and his talking brush.

Director Grant Holden



Queen of the Forest

UK 2018 3min

Losing someone close can be devastating. This film explores how to come to terms with that loss.

Director Gabriela Sibilska



Lisa O'Sullivan is an Irish animator. She studied her BDes in Textile Design in NCAD Dublin, before completing her MA

in Character Animation in Central Saint Martins, London in June 2018. These combined practices lead to a tactile sensitivity and love for the hand crafted that is evident throughout her work.

What made you make the film?

Lint was made as my graduation film for my MA in Character Animation at Central Saint Martins. We had to work within a 3-minute timeframe which I found enabled me to condense my narrative and concentrate on telling an engaging, emotive story in a very simplistic, accessible way.

Is there something you can tell us about the production process?

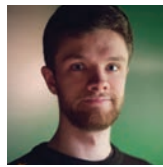
It's my first film and so it was a massive learning curve from start to finish. The whole thing is drawn digitally frame by frame, apart from the stomach sequence in which I hand-cut every frame from paper. I was really lucky to work with a fantastic sound designer & composer Alex James, whose creativity really brought the film to life.

Where do you get your ideas from?

I've always been interested in the internal invisible conflicts we carry around with us; I think my work is emotionally driven. I find the medium of paper an integral part of my practice - the qualities of the material itself reflect the fragility and impermanence of a state of mind. I'm just interested in people, their relationships and their interior dialogues.

What are you working on now or planning on working next?

I'm trying to balance freelancing with personal work, and hopefully will start to cook up another self-driven film soon.



Grant Holden is a Scottish filmmaker specialising in stop-motion character animation. His work has been

shown locally in Edinburgh, publicised nationally on BBC Radio 5 Live's 'Kermode and Mayo's Film Review Show', and screened internationally at several animation festivals.

Cleaning in Progress is my graduate film from Edinburgh College of Art where the Animation programme allows students to have free rein to basically do whatever they like within reason. I chose to create a character-driven narrative where not a great deal of 'action' happens but instead focus on the relationship between a cleaner and his talking brush. I've always had an interest in the mundanity of things; having made films about waiting rooms and bus stops, car parks seemed a natural choice. Seeing the janitors around the art college got me thinking about the cracking stories they must have about all the weird stuff they've seen come and go, but it was from occasionally seeing a pair of litter-pickers in high-vis jackets with their brush-loaded wheelbarrows during my morning commute that got me thinking about basing the film on a cleaner. The film was animated within a green-screen setup that would later be composited against background photos taken in a local underground car park. Now that the film is complete, I'm currently having the pleasure of getting to attend some of the festivals where the film is being screened and trying to establish connections to help make a more informed decision on where to go next for stop-motion work. In the meantime, I'm collaborating on some local projects within Edinburgh and have (almost) caught up on all the sleep I missed out on when working on the film...



Gabriela Sibilska was born and raised in Warsaw. She recently graduated from Goldsmiths, University of London

and is now based in New York pursuing a Master's degree in Media Studies at Pratt Institute and continuing her animation work.

What made you make the film?

I made this film in one of the hardest points in my life, following the loss of my sister. I simply wanted to pay homage to her, because she was my greatest friend and most important person in my life. I wanted to express my feelings in the most authentic and raw way possible, with no artificial pathos or cliché themes often surrounding grief, hence the naïve, childlike style of drawings and narration.

Is there something you can tell us about the production process?

This is the first time I've ever done animation! I really wanted to work on paper, because it felt most suitable for my style, and for this project. I started by animating fragmented memories and different images that came to me... The words came later, somehow tying it all together.

Where do you get your ideas from?

There are many real life experiences in my work. In terms of putting my ideas into images, I often simply think: "what would I like to draw?" and follow that instinct. Aesthetically, I am strongly influenced by old Polish cartoons, children's books and Slavic folklore.

What are you working on now or planning on working next?

I've been experimenting with camera-less animation, painting directly on 35 mm film. I am in love with all the new, interesting textures I've been able to produce that way. So far my work has been mostly abstract, but I am planning to start working on a more traditional narrative piece.



West Question, East Answer

UK 2018 6min

Communication can be difficult when cultural and historical backgrounds are so distanced. A Korean grandmother and her German granddaughter try to work it out.

Director Dal Park



Via

UK 2018 3min

The journey of life, the good and the bad.

Director Izzy Burton

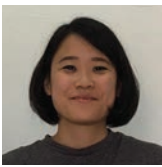


Silent London

UK 2017 3min

A visual ode to the grabbed, found and overheard sounds of London, delivered in an intensely rendered water-coloured canvas.

Director Ivelina Ivanova



Dal Park was born in Germany. She studied communication design at Munich University of Applied

Sciences. After her graduation she accidentally interned and worked as a motion designer in several studios in Berlin before applying for an animation MA at Royal College of Art.

What made you make the film?

I wanted to get to know my grandmother better.

Is there something you can tell us about the production process?

My process for this film was very experimental. I knew the story I wanted to tell from the beginning. I didn't work with a storyboard but instead started with key moments, memories or scenes I wanted to have in the film. During the entire process I would keep editing the scenes together, rewrite the text around it with my scriptwriter and choose original recordings from my grandmother. With time I slowly molded the story together which I had in my head.

Where do you get your ideas from?

During my first year at RCA we had a workshop with Jonathan Hodgson where he did free writing exercises with us. I found the exercises to be extremely helpful. They helped me to freely put all my running thoughts on paper. The written text later served as brainstorm or pool of ideas.

What are you working on now or planning on working next?

I am currently working on a new film idea which is closer to my first year RCA animation *Prey*. It's a more serious topic about death, loss and mourning.



Izzy Burton is an artist and director currently working at Blue Zoo Animation. She was named one of Animation

Magazine's Rising Stars of Animation 2018. She graduated from Bournemouth University with a degree in Animation in 2015.

What made you make the film?

I wanted to make a short film that had environment art as it's focus, to see if I could tell an emotional, character driven story with tiny characters in epic landscapes. It formed from my personal love of environment artwork.

Is there something you can tell us about the production process?

Via was made with 2D layered environments and 3D animated characters. I tried to do as much of the process myself, with my colleagues creating the 3D elements.

Where do you get your ideas from?

Nature is a huge inspiration for me. I grew up in the Cotswolds, and didn't realise that not everyone knew the name of every bird and butterfly and plant like I did. I think it's really influenced my work and my love for the detail in environments and how nature can take over them.

What are you working on now or planning on working next?

I'm currently putting together an idea for an IOS game and also illustrating a children's book - I just want to tell stories in any medium I can. I'll be back to film soon I'm sure!



Ivelina Ivanova is a Sofia-based experimental animator. Her films are inspired by urban spaces and their

sociological and psychological impact. Her aim is to melt the border between digital and analogue aesthetics to achieve alternative modes of representation.

What made you make the film?

The film was made at the University of Westminster. The task was to document the decline of London nightlife. However, my artistic impulses converted the project into more of an expression of my perception of the importance and role of nightlife in a metropolis.

Is there something you can tell us about the production process?

The main aim was to deliver messages through mood instead of a classic narrative construction. The two conflicting forces depicted: the intensity and coldness of the big city versus the liberation, the frivolousness and creativity of the clubbing world demanded two different approaches. The central stylistic decisions undertaken to build this contrast were based on colour, compositions, rhythm and sound design.

Where do you get your ideas from?

I am mostly interested in the architectural/spatial context: the relationship between a city's environment and an individual's psychology. I start off the brainstorming process through analysing the locations where the film is set.

What are you working on now or planning on working next?

Most of the projects I've been involved with throughout the year are projection-art based rather than film-based. However, I do have an idea for a new film project which will be an experimental documentary on Bulgarian high school proms and will potentially develop into a project that is more than a film.

*Providing space for underground and
avantgarde media since 1993.*



‘BY ANY OTHER NAME’

an exhibition celebrating 25 years of Horse Hospital goings on..!

Saturday 1st December 2018
till Saturday 26th January 2019

www.thehorsehospital.com

Late Night Bizarre ⁽¹⁸⁾

at The Horse Hospital **Sat 8 Dec 21:00**

This is LIAF's annual walk on the wild side - screening the most twisted films to emerge this year. The ever-popular Late Night Bizarre programme is a bunch of anti-classics guaranteed to be as far away from Disney as it's possible to get. A dirty fistful of 16 of the weirdest, wildest, most demented films hand-picked from the 2,600 entered.

Animation is such an unbridled artform and it unleashes some of the most unleashable imaginations on the planet. The temptation to 'go wide' is played out time and time again by these animators as they bring to the screen barely imaginable scenarios, crazy battling juxtapositions and boil- your-eyes imagery.

You know what we mean and we know what you want.

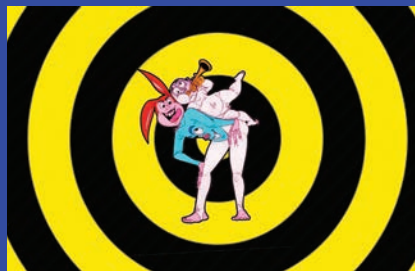


More

Canada 2017 1min

A beautiful ode to a simple donkey that gave his all – his ALL – for the sake of the children.

Director Ben Meinhardt



1st Day and Next Minute

Denmark 2017 2min

Beware the giant tongued rabbit – unless, of course, giant tongue is what you seek.

Director Sara Koppel



Sunscapades

UK/Canada 2018 5min

A beach outing takes a gruesome turn when triplets play a prank on their father.

Director Ben Mitchell



Death Van

Canada 2017 6min

A space-rock musical duo performs in a miniature world inhabited by surreal critters and a menacing and mischievous being. Truly bonkers!

Director Michael Enzbrunner



Those Progressive Meats

Japan 2017 4min

An oozing, miscued slither towards a dubious enlightenment.

Director Minoru Karasube

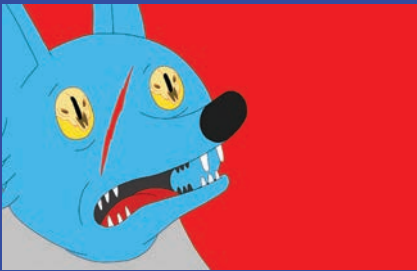


Food For Fraught

Australia 2017 2min

Breakfast as the ultimate hellishly hilarious freak show spectacle!

Director Reid McManus



Coyote

Switzerland 2018 10min

A coyote loses his family to a vicious attack by wolves. Tormented by fear, anger and grief, he sees a chance to avenge his family.

Director Lorenz Wunderle



Parasitic Endeavours

Austria 2017 2min

Computationally simulated transformations and mutations of the human body.

Director Simon Christoph Krenn



Wank Sock

Australia 2017 5min

There's a time to squeeze and there's a time to just wait and see what will pop out.

Director Annie Murray

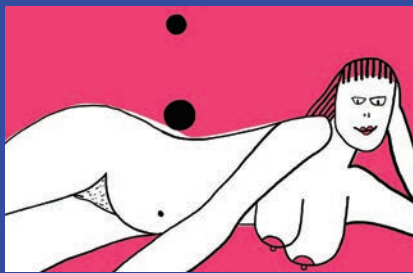


Tennessee

USA 2017 9min

A young woman explores a dating app in the future

Director Jack Wedge



Lavo

Russia/Estonia 2017 2min

Love and sex the Svirsky way. In other words very rude, explicit and weird!

Director Sasha Svirsky



Hunter

Japan 2017 9min

The haunting and haunted hunter is searching for something that he may never find. A twisted jazz soundtrack sets the scene for this neo-noir mystery.

Director Ryoji Yamada



Perfect Town

Switzerland 2017 4min

Everybody aspires to be a good citizen in this Perfect Town – but if you're not quite right you go back to the end of the line.

Director Anais Voirol

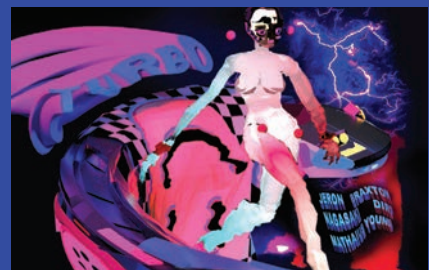


Adorable

UK 2018 6min

A surreal observation of modern queer society.

Director Cheng Hsu-Chung

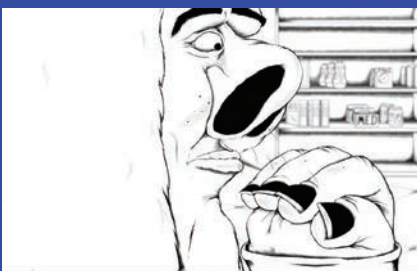


Octane

USA 2018 6min

Unlike anything you've seen before! A man must race through hell and back.

Director Jeron Braxton



Total Eclipse

USA 2017 4min

The first twinges of a sweet and simple love borne out of shared physical mutations.

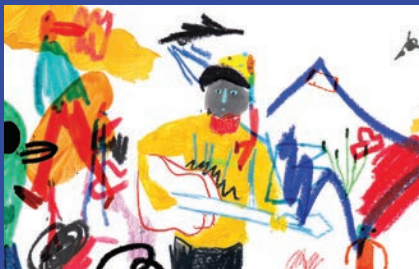
Director Noah Malone

Music Video ⁽¹⁸⁾ Session

at The Horse Hospital **Sat 8 Dec 19:30**

LIAF's annual collection of the hottest music videos from all over the world. Animation is an integral element in many of the best music videos. Making them also provides a commercially viable way for animators to earn a living and produce work they can be proud of. Here are 20 of the world's best and most innovative music videos produced in the last 12 months, providing a visual mash-up of styles, techniques and genres.

Music videos have surged in popularity since the rise of portable screens, and filmmakers are increasingly using them as an experimental form with which to test out their artistic ideas. After the screening four of the filmmakers featured in this programme (Katy Wang, Jean-Marie Marbach, Joseph Wallace and Robert Strange) will take to the stage for a lively discussion on this subject.



Tall Juan - Parking Attendant
Argentina/Germany 2min 2018
Director Dante Zabella



Mr. Jukes feat. De la Soul & Horace Andy - Leap of Faith
New Zealand 3min 2017
Director Parallel Teeth



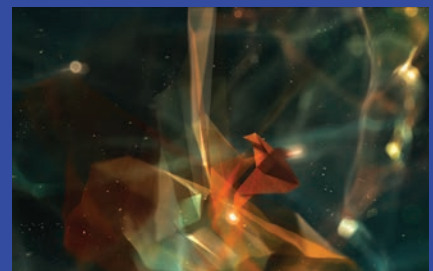
Father John Misty - Date Night
USA 3min 2018
Director Chad Van Gaalen



Flying Lotus - Post Requisite
USA 2min 2017
Director Winston Hacking



LSD - Genius
USA 4min 2018
Director Ben Jones



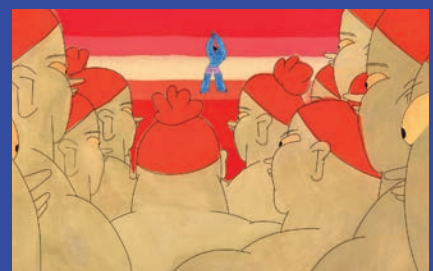
Tennyson - L'oiseau qui Danse
France 2min 2018
Director Jean-Marie Marbach



Toto Bona Lokua - Ma Mama
UK 4min 2017
Director Katy Wang



Sparks - Edith Piaf (Said it Better than Me)
UK 4min 2018
Director Joseph Wallace



Renata Zeiguer - Wayside
USA 3min 2018
Director Angela Stempel



Machine Translations - Sola

Australia 3min 2017

Director Jonathan Nix



Keita Sano - Mad Love

Japan 3min 2017

Director Ryoji Yamada



Sophie - Faceshopping

Argentina 4min 2018

Director Sophie/Aaron Chan



Tom Rosenthal - Fenn

Japan 2min 2017

Director Sarina Nihei



Nitai Hershkovits - Flyin' Bamboo feat. MNDSGN

Australia 3min 2018

Director Felix Colgrave



Mark Stoermer - Filthy Apes and Lions

UK 4min 2017

Director Lee Hardcastle



General Elektriks - Au Tir a la Carabine

USA 3min 2018

Director Zachary Zezima



Superorganism - Everybody Wants to be Famous

USA 3min 2018

Director Robert Strange



Akwaur - Lone Love

Russia 4min 2018

Director Dasha Chukhrova



Gorillaz - Tranz

UK 3min 2018

Director Jamie Hewlett

Co-director Nicos Livesey, France



Courtney Barnett - Nameless, Faceless

Australia 3min 2018

Director Lucy Dyson

Amazing ^(U) Animations 0-7 yr olds

at Barbican Sat 1 Dec 11:00

Like childhood, animation is full of wonder and simple pleasures. This programme carefully chosen for our littlest and most special audience strips away all the soft-sell toy ads and the over-the-top blockbuster-style special effects and delivers up a selection of wonderful films full of joy. There'll be talking animals, seriously fun adventures and wondrous tales to spark those little imaginations.

Animation is the most imaginative and engaging of all artforms and is the perfect platform to enthrall and inspire the wide-open visions of the future generation of film-going children.

These films are in competition and will be judged by our childrens jury. The winning films will be announced on the final night of the festival along with all of the other films in competition.

Thanks to Phil Davies and the Elf Factory for providing the winning prize of £250 for the best film.



Bibimbap

UK 2017 2min

A delightful stop-motion music video set to the Nat King Cole song 'Bibimbap'.

Director Heather Colbert



Sloth

Germany 2018 4min

A slow groove just may be the answer when your energy is low.

Director Julia Ocker



The Swimming Lesson

Russia 2017 3min

On a busy beach day, a little boy is captivated by the aquatic adventure stories he hears, but soon has to put his own swimming skills to the test.

Director Tatyana Okruzhnova



Between the Lines

Russia 2017 4min

A Zebra thinks she is completely alone in a world where everyone has a partner, until she finds another Zebra.

Director Maria Koneva



I Want to Live in the Zoo

UK 2017 6min

Sasha doesn't like the rules at home, so she decides to move to the zoo.

Director Evgenia Golubeva



Water Colors

Japan 2017 2min

When the room is empty tiny watercolour paints jump onto the canvas.

Director Takashi Yoneoka



Ant

Germany 2017 4min

An anthill is no simple thing. Each ant has their task and it's hard to imagine what would happen if one of them rebelled and decided to do things differently...

Director Julia Ocker



Konigiri-Kun: Music Box

Japan 2017 5min

Konigiri-Kun eats a super-sour pickled plum to wake himself up, then grabs his music box to show his friends.

Director Mari Miyazawa

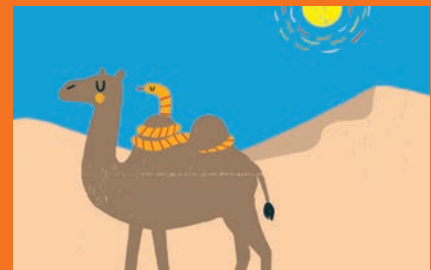


Crab Story

Russia/Australia 2017 4min

What happens when a crab finds a pineapple on the beach.

Directors Filippo Rivetti & Tatiana Poliektova



Jazzoo

Sweden 2017 9min

Koalas, hippos, elephants, and fish find their own groove in this melodic menagerie of a film.

Director Adam Marko-Nord



Koyaa: Naughty Toy Car

Slovenia/Croatia 2017 3min

On a rainy day, Koyaa decides to tidy up his room. He steps on a toy car, taking a crazy ride. The toy starts acting naughty but Koyaa manages to outsmart it.

Director Kolja Saksida



Mogu and Perol

Japan 2018 8min

Two friends live on Yummy Island, where delicious food can be found everywhere!

Director Tsuneo Goda



Mister Paper Goes For A Walk

Belgium 2018 9min

Mister Paper goes for a walk. He finds old newspapers, takes out his scissors and starts cutting what he needs for the stroll: a hat for the sun and a dog for company.

Director Ben Tesseur & Steven De Beul



Penguin

Germany 2018 4min

A timid penguin waiter with a red bow tie goes out of his way to perform his job to perfection.

Director Julia Ocker

Marvellous ^(PG) Animations 8-15 yr olds

at Barbican Sun 2 Dec 14:00

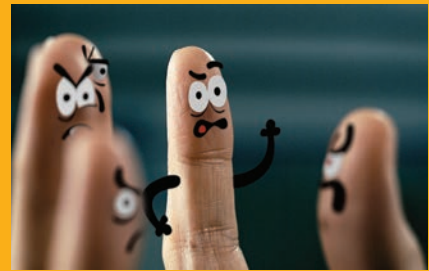
These twelve films from ten different countries have been chosen especially for children aged 8 and upwards – but adults are allowed in as long as you are accompanied by a child.

Here you will meet charismatic characters and encounter amazing tales such as the man who's job it is to make sure each new day starts on time, a Japanese boy Jiro who unexpectedly catches cat flu, a troupe of snails performing incredible aerial choreography and how you should never take gravity for granted.

Animation is the most imaginative and engaging of all artforms and is the perfect platform to enthrall and inspire the wide-open visions of our future generation of film-going children.

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Heroes

Argentina 2018 3min

Glory is at our fingertips!

Director Juan Pablo Zaramella

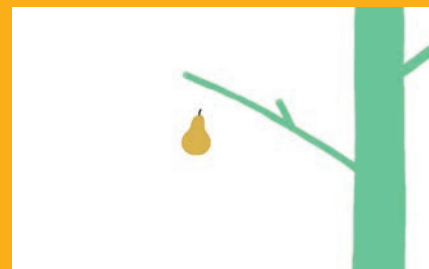


1 metre/heure

France 2018 9min

At an airport, on the wing of an airplane, before our eyes, a troupe of snails performs a magnificent choreographed dance.

Director Nicolas Deveaux



Pearfall

Estonia 2017 3min

Beware of pearfall. It happens suddenly so you have to be prepared.

Director Leonid Schmelkov



The Hunt

France 2017 6min

The disappointment of a harmless hunter and his compatriot – a rabbit.

Director Alexey Alekseev



Kuap

Switzerland 2018 8min

A tadpole somehow misses out on becoming a frog and is left behind, alone. A little story about growing up.

Director Nils Hedinger



Rules of Play

Germany 2018 8min

A group of tired playground visitors meet at night for a last contest.

Director Merlin Flugel



Vivat Musketeers!

Russia 2017 5min

The world is on the verge of abyss and there is no hope until the musketeers arrive. Long live the musketeers!

Director Anton Dyakov



Cat Days

Germany/Japan 2018 11min

Jiro, a little boy, feels sick. His father takes him to the doctor. She diagnoses a harmless condition, but it shakes the core of the boy's identity.

Director Jon Frickey



Mind Games

USA 2018 2min

The adventures of a wandering mind.

Director Jiaqi Yan



Flipped

UK 2018 5min

The absurdity of a world where the roles of kids and adults are switched.

Director Hend Esmat & Lamiaa Diab



The Theory of Sunset

Russia 2017 9min

Deep at night, a dedicated cyclist traverses the wintry forest. The challenge: make sure this new day gets off to a fresh, timely start.

Director Roman Sokolov



Herman Brown is Feeling Down

UK 2018 6min

Herman's quiet, colourful world is suddenly interrupted by something loud and stressful.

Director Dan Castro

Best of the Next

Programme 1 ⁽¹⁵⁾

at The Horse Hospital **Thu 6 Dec 19:30**

Selected from 60 graduate showreels and 30 countries this is a look at the best student work from all around the world – the first step on the animation ladder for these talented filmmakers, and the first time their wild and wonderful imaginations have been unleashed.

Stop-motion, drawn animation, collage, cut-out, CGI, clay, screenprinting, ink and almost every other technique these animators can dream up are all on display here. 23 wondrous films in 2 screenings from the future stars of our animation universe.



Inanimate

National Film and TV School
UK 2018 9min

Katrine leads an ordinary life, with a regular job and a happy relationship until one day she wakes up and begins to see her world for what it really is.

Director Lucia Bulgheroni



The Other

Polish National Film School
Poland 2017 5min

A crowd of people are waiting for the arrival of a mysterious newcomer to their village. Tensions build as they try to guess who he will be.

Director Marta Magnuska



Love me, Fear Me

Babelsberg Konrad Wolf
Germany 2018 6min

What would you be willing to do to be loved? A metaphor about the roles we play and the shapes we take, interpreted through the medium of dance and some incredibly expressive clay.

Director Veronica Solomon



Pulse

Supinfocom Valenciennes
France 2018 7min

Jonas comes across a huge dead whale on a beach, harpooned from every side. From now on his vision of the world can never be the same.

Directors Sarah Forest, Cécile Floucat, Pauline Javelot, Juliette Gales, Thibaut Wambre & Kevin De Garidel

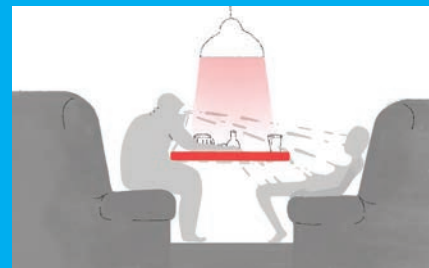


Wilted

Middlesex University
UK 2018 3min

An intimate autobiographical film documenting the filmmakers battle with the anxiety disorder body dysmorphia.

Director Eve Travers



If You Can

Marie Curie University
Ukraine 2017 1min

A simple, clear road map to becoming a superior lifeform.

Director Hanna Rybak



The NorthEast Kingdom

Calarts
USA 2018 8min

A small tight knit New England community is shaken by the arrival of a newcomer. Meanwhile, a mystical creature quietly affects the lives of the locals.

Director Alan Jennings



Phototaxis

Calarts
USA 2017 7min

Rooted in nonfiction, "Phototaxis" connects Mothman, a prophetic demon in West Virginia folklore, and Narcotics Anonymous, the primary treatment programme in West Virginia's addiction epidemic.

Director Melissa Ferrari



Laugh Lines

Hochschule Luzern
Switzerland 2018 6min

Eight short interwoven stories about friendship, bravery, trust and most important of all – laughing.

Director Patricia Wenger



Log Boy

Ringling College of Art
USA 2018 2min

A woodsman who loves to chop wood with his axe is pestered mercilessly by a boy made out of logs.

Director Fernando Puig



A Love Letter To The One I Made Up

Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design
Israel 2017 6min

A luscious screen-printed story about a lonely walk home, an underwater fantasy world and a love letter addressed to an imaginary "perfect" man.

Director Rachel Gutgarts



Ooze

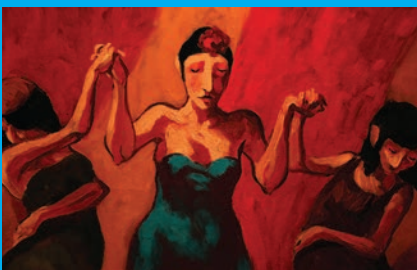
Hochschule Luzern
Switzerland 2017 5min

A lonely lift operator brings his unappreciative passengers to their destination day in, day out. Little by little, it drives him out of his mind. A lift ride to hell.

Director Kilian Vilim

Programme 2 ⁽¹⁵⁾

at The Horse Hospital **Thu 6 Dec 21:00**



Tango of Longing

Polish National Film School
Poland 2018 5min

A stunning hand-painted depiction of the nature of tango – passionate, erotic but tinged with melancholy and a longing for satisfaction that may never be fulfilled.

Director Marta Szymanska



Sog

HFG Offenbach
Germany 2017 10min

After a flood, some fish are stuck in the trees. They scream for help. Awakened by the noise, the inhabitants of a neighbouring cave do not appreciate this unexpected encounter. Winner 30+ awards at festivals worldwide

Director Jonatan Schwenk



Little Star

La Poudriere
France 2017 4min

Nine-year-old Alexis is going to travel on a train by himself for the first time. At the same moment, thousands of miles away, a space probe is preparing to wake up.

Director Etienne Bailleu



Once in the Fields of Boredom

Estonian Academy of the Arts
Estonia 2017 5min

Boredom, existential void and the yearning for something different permeate the lives of a couple who are reaching an end of sorts.

Director Teele Strauss



Red Garage

La Poudriere
France 2017 4min

It's safer inside, less crazy too. But when you do have to go out, go in a crowd and go in a rush. It's the only way.

Director Max Litvinov

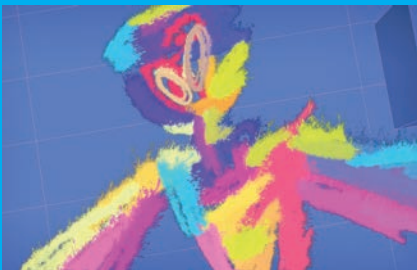


Ice Pepper

ESMA
France 2017 6min

Roger and Billy, two penguins, wander around the sea ice. Within a hidden ice cave, they discover crates full of chilli peppers with an unusual property.

Directors Maïilly Boulin, Guillaume Escots, Alicia Journet, Soizic Lefeuvre, Clément Malargé & Eddy Martinez



Synched

University of Southern California
USA 2017 2min

A chaotic world. A man flees to the other side but there is no escape.

Director Cassie Shao



Oh Mother!

Polish National Film School
Poland 2017 12min

A playful game of constant change for an overprotective mother and her son.

Director Paulina Ziolkowska



Squaring the Circle

Polish National Film School
Poland 2018 5min

Repetition is a form of change. A beautifully abstract look at pattern, chaos and endless movement.

Director Karolina Specht

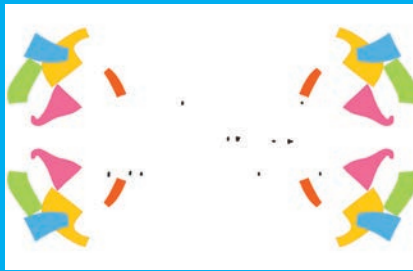


Cat Noir

Zurich School of Art and Design
Switzerland 2018 6min

A letter, a broken heart. The sound of the rain. A black cat, a plan.

Director O'Neil Burgi



Am I Origt?

National Taiwan University of the Arts
Taiwan 2017 4min

A fun, playful and loopy film based around sound performance.

Director Yen Liang Chen

The Wolf House (La Casa Lobo) ⁽¹⁵⁾

at Barbican Sat 1 Dec 17:00

Centuries of children have dreamed of ominous woods, threatening wolves and other fearsome fictional creations, but with their feature debut Cristóbal León and Joaquín Cociña have drawn upon their own folklore and fairy tales to craft this visually stunning stop-motion animated film out of paint, paper, tape and furniture.

In a picture-perfect valley of the Andes, a rural colony is home to German immigrants and their offspring. At first *The Wolf House* cleverly pretends to be an archival film singing the praises of 'Colonia Dignidad', but the film soon turns out to be a perverted and disturbing tale, feeding on familiar children's stories – from Little Red Riding Hood to The Three Little Pigs – bringing out the darkness of the events it relates to.

The Wolf House is the place where Maria takes refuge after she has escaped from the colony. The wolf is Paul Schaeffer, a former SS Officer, who has moved to Chile, a notorious paedophile and a zealous torturer working for Pinochet and the head of the Colony. As if in a dream the house reacts to Maria's feelings and transforms her stay into a nightmarish experience.

Sometimes reminiscent of an *Eraserhead*-style Lynchian nightmare turned into sculpture, paintings and stop-motion, beasts become human, a body forms out of a head like something out of science fiction, and inside every constrained girl is an eager bird desperate to fly free.

Directors Biographies

Cristóbal León and Joaquín Cociña have been working together since 2007. Their films have been selected for many international film festivals and their work has been shown at museums and biennial exhibitions in Latin America, as well as in spaces worldwide including the Whitechapel Gallery, the Guggenheim Museum New York, the AJG Gallery in Seville (2012) and the Venice Biennial (2013). *The Wolf House (La Casa Lobo)* is their first feature film. It premiered in the Forum at the last Berlinale, where it received the Caligari Award. It also received a Special Jury Mention at the Annecy Festival.



Directors Cristobal Leon & Joaquin Cocina
Chile 73mins 2017.



A FILM BY LEÓN & COCIÑA

PRODUCED BY DILUVIO EXECUTIVE PRODUCTION CATALINA VERGARA, NILES ATALLAH
PRODUCTION CATALINA VERGARA, JOAQUÍN COCIÑA, CRISTÓBAL LEÓN
VOICES AMALIA KASSAI, RAINER KRAUSSE
SCRIPT JOAQUÍN COCIÑA, CRISTÓBAL LEÓN, ALEJANDRA MOFFAT
ART DIRECTION NATALIA GEISSE, JOAQUÍN COCIÑA, CRISTÓBAL LEÓN
STAGE DESIGN NATALIA GEISSE ANIMATION JOAQUÍN COCIÑA, CRISTÓBAL LEÓN
SOUND DESIGN CLAUDIO VARGAS SOUND MIX ROBERTO ESPINOZA, SONAMOS
IMAGE POSTPRODUCTION CARLOS VASQUEZ, NILES ATALLAH, CRISTÓBAL LEÓN
DIRECTION CRISTÓBAL LEÓN & JOAQUÍN COCIÑA



GLOBOROJO

CORFO



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animación

FONTEVRAUD



La Casa Lobo

barbican



Special Guests



Will Anderson & Ainslie Henderson

Will Anderson & Ainslie Henderson (15)

The Playful Worlds of Scotland's Most Dynamic Animated Duo

at Barbican Fri 30 Nov 18:30

Insane pigeons, a misguided monkey, the existential crisis of an animated GIF, stifled musicians, the poetry of Robert Burns and fracking are just some of the characters and subjects tackled in the animated worlds of Scotland's most dynamic double-act: Will Anderson and Ainslie Henderson.

Graduates from Edinburgh College of Art's animation degree course in 2011 and 2012, Will and Ainslie's worldwide reputation has a bulging awards cabinet as testament to their talent, including two BAFTAs, two McLaren Awards a British Academy Award, a nomination for the Cartoon D'Or and almost 50 awards at festivals around the world.

Under the guise of whiterobot.co.uk they work together as freelance writers, directors and animators on film, television, music video, web & interactive projects. Always on the lookout to diversify their work, for the last 3 years they have been working on a feature produced by the Scottish Documentary Institute called *Dom* about a small animated cat that manifests out of a cancer scare - a grassroots story about cancer, how it shakes a family, how you can internalise your feelings, and how art is used as a form of escapism.

The London International Animation Festival is proud to present a career-spanning retrospective of their inventive, emotional, hilarious and fundamentally entertaining collective of work. For this very special LIAF 2018 event, Will and Ainslie will join us onstage to discuss the many facets of their award-winning careers in animation and screen many of their most celebrated films including a sneak peak of their forthcoming feature *Dom*. I caught up with Will and Ainslie for a wee chat prior to their LIAF appearance.

Nag: Where did your interest in animation come from? Have you always had an interest in animation prior to

joining the course at the Edinburgh College of Art?

Will: I've been into animation since I was a young boy. The big obvious shows like the Simpsons and South Park were, and still are, influential to me. Although I think the thing that excited me more than anything were the stories. Those shows seemed less about the animation, and more about the ideas that were thrown at them. That's a thing that I feel with my work. I think I certainly let things slide a bit. Although, the more I make things move the better I'm getting. It's a strange one.

Ainslie: I came to it late, in an odd way, almost by accident. I was a musician until I was 30, and I took night classes in pottery to learn to make promotional mugs for an album I'd recorded. I fell in love with clay first, then making models, sculptures, and then characters. In the back of my head was always this nesting plan to one day go to art school and study stop-motion, probably from watching Aardman stuff, and *Trap Door* as a kid. One day I watched a friend's short stop-motion graduation film (Joseph Feltus's *Solo Duets*) and I couldn't resist it any longer.

Humour obviously plays a massive part in your films. Do you have specific comedic influences you take your ideas from?

W: Ainslie.

A: That's obviously a joke, but its kind of true the other way round too. I don't tend to make funny stuff without Will.

Any other influences?

A: Although I also liked *South Park* and *The Simpsons* growing up, I think as influences, maybe we should give a nod to the likes of Ricky Gervais and the *The Mighty Boosh*. I think there's often an edge of something slightly tragic, sad or pathetic in our characters that is part of a British tradition much older than them, but I'd guess we both watched those shows and absorbed a bit of tone from them. Strangely, we've never even talked about this, so it's definitely not a conscious decision.

How do the two of you work as a team? I'm thinking specifically of your short films where the dialogue seems almost improvised. Is that the case? Do you bounce ideas off each other and record loads of dialogue until you find the right nuggets to work on as a voice track, then animate along to the words?

W: I would say that's a pretty good guess.

We certainly try to keep as much of the work we collaborate on as lively and conversational as possible. As a lot of our digital shorts are comedy led, I guess it makes a lot of sense to have very natural, lively, believable dialogue to grab people. Personally I think the more we allow ourselves to improvise the more exciting everything is. I'm a strong believer in the characters telling the animator what to do, so loosening up the dialogue goes some way to enabling that.

A: Yes, ideas are often gestating between us as kind of silly 'in jokes' that we make each other laugh with for a while, then they eventually find a way to become a sketch. We'll start with that and riff on it until we find a dynamic, or a moment that makes one, or both of us laugh, then work back from there.

Will, I've heard that the Edinburgh College of Art tutors tried to discourage you from making a long student film (*The Making of Longbird*) because they thought it would inhibit the chances of getting screened at festivals. In fact it was a great success, winning multiple awards. Did you have a big battle to make it the way you wanted to? And can you talk a bit about the process of making it?

W: I wouldn't say they discouraged it, actually (might have to retract that statement if I said that somewhere else!). They were very supportive. What is true is I didn't genuinely think it would travel well due to its length, therefore not screen particularly well at festivals. *The Making Of Longbird* was made with the same approach I still use, which

is one that builds in room for improvisation within the narrative, as well as in its production. I'm a big fan of problem solving, therefore not knowing exactly where the story is going keeps me guessing right the way through. This ideology has continued through to newer shorts of mine, like *Have Heart*, which was made chronologically without a storyboard or animatic. In summary I'd say that a huge part of the work I make is led by discovery, no matter how big or small... maybe it's a quirk an animated character develops out of being allowed to play around, or maybe it's an edit that comes in at the end that changes everything.

A: But what you're implying is absolutely right Nag, despite all the awards, the film is terribly self indulgent, and clearly far, far too long.

Ainslie, with Stems and Will (to a lesser extent with *The Making of Longbird*) you like to show the process of making animation in your films, by making the puppets and figures come alive and the animator (yourselves) having a conversation with your characters. It's almost like your characters have a mind of their own. What's the rationale behind this? Are you just having fun with your audience?

W: I think all good films have characters with minds of their own. Why should animated characters be any different?

A: Maybe housing the characters in the real world as 'animated characters' almost makes them feel more 'real', or by exposing the artifice of it, we can enjoy the illusion of their aliveness even more. Plus, I get to avoid making backgrounds. A distaste for making backgrounds is something else I know Will and I share.

What interests you about the documentary form? And why do you think animation is a good medium to use with documentary?

W: The things about documentary are the same things that I've mentioned about improvisation and discovery. To add to that, generally speaking, I find documentary films to be much more meaningful and important to me... like they are directly searching for some kind of truth in the world. I'd like my films to do that, and as interests cover both fictitious and non-fictitious worlds, it makes sense to merge them together to discover something else.

Your forthcoming feature *A Cat Called Dom* sounds like a difficult subject to tackle, but also a personal autobiographical one. Can you tell us more about it?

W: Our first feature is a film that blends documentary footage with a fictitious character, a curious little cat called Dom. He is a small animated cat that manifests out of a cancer scare. It's a grassroots story talking about cancer, how it shakes a family, how you can internalise your feelings, and how art can be used as a form of escapism.

Nag Vlademersky



It's About Spending Time Together

UK 2010 3min

A very moving and long-overdue apology to Ainslie's brother Oliver. **Winner of the BAFTA New Talent Award**

Director Ainslie Henderson



The Pigeons' Tour of Scotland - Hawick

UK 2016 3min

Pigeons', Ainslie & Will, are taking in Scotland's sights and seeking inspiration. Ains teaches Will the Hawick tongue.

Directors Will Anderson & Ainslie Henderson



The Making of Longbird

UK 2011 15min

A behind-the-scenes look at the battle of all battles raging between an animator and a character that just won't do what it is commanded to. **Winner of multiple international awards including a BAFTA**

Director Will Anderson



I Am Tom Moody

UK 2012 7min

A surreal trip through the subconscious of a stifled musician, wracked with self-doubt, as he struggles to sing.

Director Ainslie Henderson



Scroogin on a Greg

UK 2012 1min

Pigeon pushing smoking.

Director Will Anderson



Monkey Love Experiments

UK 2014 9min

A misguided monkey believes he is destined for the moon.

Directors Will Anderson & Ainslie Henderson



The Infinity Project

UK 2015 3min

Please support independent animation. Help save these forgotten, malformed drawings.

Director Will Anderson

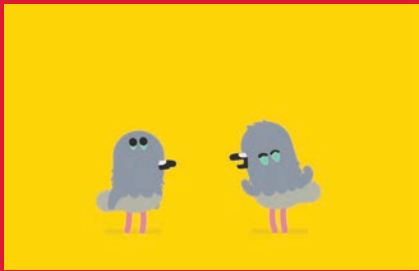


Fracking. It's Fucking Brilliant

UK 2014 2min

Scotland's smartest pro-Fracking campaigner tells it like it is.

Directors Will Anderson & Ainslie Henderson



The Pigeons' Tour of Scotland - Ayr

UK 2017 2min

Pigeons', Ainslie & Will, are taking in Scotland's sights and seeking inspiration. This time, they land on Robert Burns house.

Directors Will Anderson & Ainslie Henderson



James 'Moving On'

UK 2014 4min

Death as a birth in a world of string. Music video for the band 'James'.

Director Ainslie Henderson



My Best Friend 'Explodes'

UK 2018 1min

Two reflexive characters cling to sanity inside the changing parameters of their world. The third of three shorts for 'Adult Swim'.

Directors Will Anderson & Ainslie Henderson



Have Heart

UK 2017 12min

A looped animated GIF has an existential crisis. **BAFTA nominated 2017**

Director Will Anderson,



My Best Friend 'Rewinds'

UK 2018 1min

Two reflexive characters cling to sanity inside the changing parameters of their world. The second of three shorts for 'Adult Swim'.

Directors Will Anderson & Ainslie Henderson



Dom (feature film trailer)

UK 2018 2min

Cancer strikes a young animator's mother, propelling him into finding emotional solace in a curious cat called Dom.

Directors Will Anderson & Ainslie Henderson



Stems

UK 2015 2min

A eulogy to the short life span of stop-motion animation puppets.

BAFTA Scotland winner 2015

Director Ainslie Henderson



Work-in-Progress: Shackle (clip) and Betty (clip)

UK 2018 5min

Clips from two 'work-in-progress' films.

Directors Will Anderson & Ainslie Henderson



My Best Friend 'Ends'

UK 2018 1min

Two reflexive characters cling to sanity inside the changing parameters of their world. The last of three shorts for 'Adult Swim'.

Directors Will Anderson & Ainslie Henderson



Chintis Lundgren

The Mad, Bad Anthropomorphic World of Chintis Lundgren ⁽¹⁵⁾

at The Horse Hospital Fri 7 Dec 19:30

When Chintis Lundgren was three years old, her mother visited a fortune teller. When her mother returned home, she informed her daughter “one day you will be a famous artist, the fortune teller has told me” in a tone as certain and assured as if pointing to a table and saying, “this is a table”. Both mother and daughter accepted this without question and so it came to be.

Animation probably wasn't the artform she had in mind but nonetheless Chintis Lundgren is making a big impression on the international animation stage. Her sensibilities are Estonian, her outlook international, her aspirations boundless, her energy bottomless - and she can draw.

In fact, she draws a LOT!

“All my films are hand drawn. It's actually faster than digital,” she says.

“I draw on A5, really small paper, so I barely move my hands. On a computer you're zooming in and getting into details. It just takes less time on paper. I should try drawing on post-it notes! The smaller the paper, the quicker the film.”

Chintis burst on to the animation scene in 2008 and has hasn't looked back, creating a sensational roster of more than 30 short animated films, trailers and “other nonsense”. And that adds up to a lot of drawings.

Apart from the determinedly hand-drawn aesthetic, one of the other common threads that drives all her films is an ingrained love of minimalistic humour. It doesn't take much to get her talking about it.

“You don't get a huge set up,” she begins.

“In American films, you get ‘here, this is supposed to be funny’ and then you laugh. My work is more dark and cynical and people don't act very wildly. I don't like so much, especially in animation, over-animated characters.”

How does this minimalistic humour flow through into her character design?

“Well, with facial expressions for instance,” she offers. “In my films I can use the same shot to depict different emotions, because when the character's face is so emotionless you construct it in your own head - you think that this is what he must be feeling. You

attribute the meaning yourself, it's not told to you. It makes it more interactive in a way. It allows the audience to laugh more.”

The time is absolutely right to stage a showcase of Lundgren's work to date. Right now is the moment we are witnessing the significant maturing of her work as it transitions from the short, sharp, absurdist pieces that she animated more instinctively, almost on the fly. Emerging are much longer, more intensely constructed works that are the result of serious periods of consultation and development.

It is also work that is attracting not just increasingly lavish amounts of attention on the international festival circuit (although there is no shortage of that) but international co-production funding support. Her latest film *Manivald* was co-produced in conjunction with the National Film Board of Canada. Votes of confidence don't come much stronger than that.

In many ways, the gear-change came with the 2015 film *Life With Herman H. Rott*. The drawing style, to those of us who had been loving these crazy, chirpy little pieces of animated nuttiness for a while, was all still there and utterly recognisable. But something under the hood had been tuned up. There was an intangible, yet completely unmissable, extra density to “Herman” that hadn't been there previously.

The message noted by many who had been keeping up with the steady output up to that point was that Lundgren had decided to really become an animator. This was next level stuff - more thought going into the fabric of the films, more people involved in their construction, more facets to the worlds she was creating. And more drawings.

One of the most interesting aspects to this period of intensification was the emergence of a fascinating portrayal of a multiplicity of sexualities within the structure of her films. Neither prurient nor sensationalist but instead nuanced and confidently central to the motivational life-force of the main characters, this 'discussion' of complicated and varied sexualities is a rare thing in animated films by female directors, even in our apparently modern, #MeToo liberated - or at least supposedly enlightened - times.

It arrived as a kind of humming undercurrent in *Life With Herman H. Rott*, perhaps held in check by an already apparent set of unspoken complications surrounding the cross-species divide that helps to fine-tune the conflict between the two main protagonists.

But with the arrival of her latest film *Manivald* last year it was front and centre; both fuel and driver for characters and plot. Simple and unvarnished desire share uneasy space with unabashed voyeurism/exhibitionism and the bringing to a head the fracturing of an already strained Mother/Son relationship.

Building this complex web around a broken down washing machine brings - simultaneously - an element of absurdity and depth that can take a lot of thinking through to get right.

For much of her time as an animator, Lundgren had been used to animating short pieces more or less as they came to her. These newer films demanded more thought - much more. For *Manivald*, she repeatedly 'pitched' increasingly refined iterations of the script to her life/filmmaking partner, Drasko Ivezić.

Together Lundgren and Ivezić have formed their own Croatian-based studio, Adriatic Animation. Beyond that, his contribution to her films is a key component both in the planning and production stages.

With all of that though, the script of *Manivald* took a lot of ironing out. Lundgren and Ivezić readily credit bursts of focused input from Priit Pärn during the development phase as making the critical difference.

"Priit Pärn was very good, he was giving advice," Lundgren told a filmmakers forum at Animateka Festival in Ljubljana last year. "It was very concentrated. We had only three or four meetings with him, each of about ten

minutes or so but he said 'this is wrong and this is wrong and this is wrong or not logical.'

"Priit is, I think, one of the best editors in the world," continues Ivezić, picking up the thread.

"He helps you to edit your story to help it become clearer to the audience. But also he helps you to add elements which enhance whatever it is you want to tell. He helped us with at least two elements which gave a totally other meaning to our story."

Around the time Lundgren felt she was finally ready to start animating, she met Jelena Popovic, a producer at the National Film Board of Canada in Montreal. Embarking on a co-production with the NFB to get *Manivald* made, Popovic felt the script still needed some polishing. By the time it was finally deemed ready to go it had been in development of one kind or another for more than nine months.

"It's the first time I spent more time on the script than on animating," Lundgren reflects, putting the experience in perspective. "And in the end, the story is still the same, but a lot less confusing and much more focused."

The completed film is a triumph and is one of the most successful and widely screened films on the international animation festival circuit in recent times.

At LIAF's screening we will get a sneak peek at *Toomas Beneath the Valley of the Wild Wolves*, her next project currently in development. However the hope is that *Manivald* will be adapted into a TV series and go on to have a life on the small screen. Its original creative impetus came from an extended series of single panel drawn cartoons titled *Manivald And The Absinthe Rabbits* which Lundgren continually posted online. These in turn provided the inspiration for a series of very short animated snippets which, in turn, grew into the animated short. In that context, retro-adapting the idea and the characters 'back' to screenable episodes isn't that big of a stretch. As always, it will come down to capturing that most elusive of prey - funding.

The world, they say, is a small place. True enough, but it's round, it keeps spinning and finding a place to meet somebody can be tricky. In the end, a chance to sit down for a face-to-face chat with Lundgren and Ivezić didn't come together; too many paths that didn't cross. So thanks to the modern marvels of airborne wi-fi, somewhere

between Tel Aviv and Tbilisi a small but insightful Q&A of one of contemporary animation's true rising stars got underway. At LIAF, we like to give the filmmakers the last word.

How has being Estonian impacted on your career as an animator?

"Being a kid in the Soviet Union, I didn't get to see many Western cartoons. I spent my childhood watching Priit Pärn and other Eastern European animations that often were not even made for children - sometimes even abstract and experimental stuff. I'm sure it influenced me a lot, especially the way I see animation but also my sense of humour.

From another perspective, living in the shadow of Priit Pärn can also be tough, people always want to compare you to him and often see you as just not such a good copy of him - even when your films are maybe not that similar to his at all. But I guess it forces you to look deeper and find what's different in you and do your best not to be that copy."

Where is your animation heading and what's next?

"As a teenager I was into Balzac a lot and read many of his books. I especially liked the way he created a world that seemed real around the characters. A side character from one book would be the main hero in another and a lot of characters reappeared again and again in different books and situations."

"I'm trying to create something similar with my films. All the animal characters I have created in the past few years are part of the same universe and will keep popping up in different films. For example, I'm now making a film starring a side character from my previous work *Manivald*. And as an even bigger extension to that universe me and my co-writer Draško Ivezić are also trying to develop a TV-series featuring all those characters and more."

When you reflect on the films in the LIAF showcase screening what comes to mind about your career as an animator so far?

"I got into animation almost accidentally. I never planned to stay with it at first. I considered myself a painter and animation

was just a phase. So my earlier works are done without putting too much concern into them. I never spent more than one day on the script and in general just animated what came to mind."

"As I started to realise that the animation world is so much cooler than the fine arts world and decided to stay with animation, my films started to make more sense. On my last films (the longer ones at least) I often spent more than half a year refining the script. I sometimes miss those early days of not going too deep into details and just having fun with it."

"Another thing that comes to mind is that in the little world of animation (at least the festival side of business) everything is possible. I never studied animation or film, didn't know anyone who did animation, didn't know anything about the technical or even storytelling part of it. But I tried anyway and no-one ever rejected my films because I didn't come from a certain school or studio. People around me (not animators) didn't believe that I'd ever get anywhere just jumping out of a bush like that but I did."

"What it taught to me is that you shouldn't always listen to reason but just do what you want and if you have enough passion it'll take you somewhere."

Malcolm Turner & Annie Murray

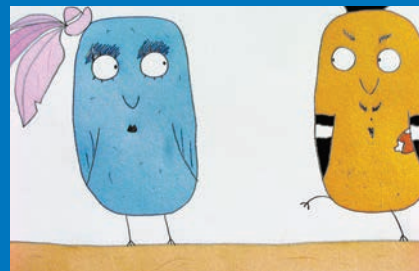


Unexpected Waltz

Estonia 2008 5min

A man goes to disco.

Director Chintis Lundgren



Birds and Beer Collection: Bats, Egg, Pirate, Cannibal

Estonia 2011 2min

Birds being creative about getting their hands on some delicious beer.

Director Chintis Lundgren



The Great Grey Shrike

Estonia 2009 6min

The Great Grey Shrike is a strange wildlife-story about the very peculiar manners of the great grey shrike, the common cuckoo, starlings and other birds.

Director Chintis Lundgren



Dangerous Migration Route

Estonia 2011 1min

A film for the Estonian Ornithological Society. Anything can go wrong on the way to Africa.

Director Chintis Lundgren

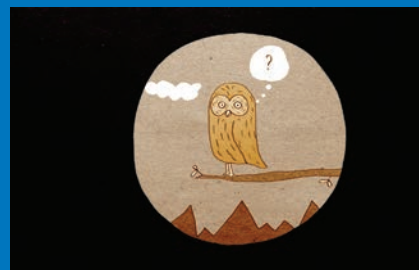


Birthday

Estonia 2011 1min

It's the Estonian Ornithological Societies 90th birthday and the birds know exactly how to celebrate it.

Director Chintis Lundgren



Birdwatching

Estonia 2011 1min

A film for the Estonian Ornithological Society. Birdwatching is fun! If you can see the birds.

Director Chintis Lundgren



I Love your Face

Estonia 2012 3min

A sensitive and slightly neurotic bird gets hit with a stone and has an encounter with a small annoying and very adorable bird.

Director Chintis Lundgren



Animated Dreams

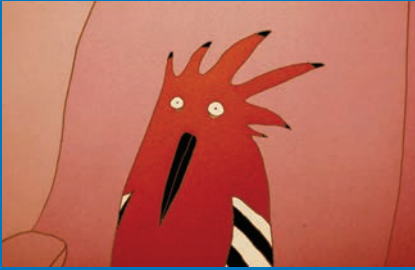
Estonia 2012 1min

Birds are having a concert and a frog is really confused to find some of the band in his bed. Is this a dream?

Director Chintis Lundgren



EMBASSY OF ESTONIA
LONDON



Anilogue

Estonia 2012 1min

A man comes home after work and finds a strangely scary bird in his living room.

Director Chintis Lundgren



Fox in the Boat

Estonia 2013 2min

Rabbits singing and drinking absinthe.

Director Chintis Lundgren



Musical Interlude with Manivald and the Absinthe Rabbits

Estonia 2015 1min

Manivald and the rabbits play some music.

Director Chintis Lundgren



Life with Herman H. Rott

Estonia 2015 11min

Herman is a rat who lives alone in a messy apartment. One day a very tidy cat shows up at his doorstep. With everything she owns.

Director Chintis Lundgren



Horror with Rabbits

Estonia 2015 1min

The Absinthe Rabbits get an unexpected visitor. Advertising for one Estonian Cultural Newspaper.

Director Chintis Lundgren



#merrychristmas

Estonia 2015 1min

Santa Claus has had a very long day....

Director Chintis Lundgren



Manivald

Estonia 2017 13min

A hot young plumber Toomas breaks into the harmonious life of Manivald and his retired mother.

Director Chintis Lundgren

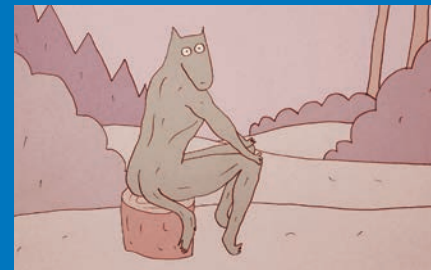


Manivald Goes to Woolfywood

Estonia 2017 2min

Manivald goes to look for his love, a plumber named Toomas. He gets lost on the way and meets some interesting wolves.

Director Chintis Lundgren



OIAF 2018 Signal Film

Estonia 2018 1min

The owl sees stuff that disturbs him.

Director Chintis Lundgren



OIAF 2018 Signal Film - cookies version

Estonia 2018 1min

A prudent owl sees bunnies eating tasty cookies.

Director Chintis Lundgren



Teaser for Toomas Beneath the Valley of the Wild Wolves

Estonia 2018 1min

Toomas loses his job

Director Chintis Lundgren

barbican

Animated Documentaries ⁽¹⁵⁾

Truth, Lies, Love and Sex: the films of Jonathan Hodgson

at Barbican Sun 2 Dec 17:00

London based animation director Jonathan Hodgson has been making award winning animated films since the early 1980s and is probably best known for his BAFTA winning adaptation of Charles Bukowski's poem 'The Man with the Beautiful Eyes'. As well as making short films he has made a name for himself as a commercials director and has explored almost every technique of animation from pencil to stop frame to CGI – his films being diverse in style with serious and thought provoking subject matter.

Born in Oxford in 1960, Jonathan trained at Liverpool School of Art and the Royal College of Art before working as an animation director at several London animation companies. Alongside producer Jonathan Bairstow he set up the production company Sherbet in 1996, which became hugely successful before Jonathan left to set up his very own Hodgson films in 2003.

His short films have won many international awards, including a BAFTA in 2000 for Best short animation. He has directed dozens of television commercials and has created motion graphics for several television series. In addition to animation direction, he has worked as art director on the children's animated series *Charlie and Lola*, was a mentor for the Channel 4 funded MESH and A.I.R schemes and is currently Senior Lecturer and Programme Leader of the BA Animation Course at Middlesex University.

Most of Jonathan's work is in 2D animation but he also works with live-action. His films fall somewhere between documentary and experimental animation and usually avoid conventional narrative. Much of the content in his work is drawn directly from

personal experience and from watching and commenting on the world around him. In recent years he has worked increasingly in the area of documentary animation.

LIAF is very proud to present an evening with Jonathan Hodgson focusing specifically on his documentary work where he will present highlights from his early sketchbook based animation to his documentary feature work and including an onstage Q&A after the screening.

“The work of UK animator Jonathan Hodgson is consistently inconsistent in the sense that you know each film will be unique, thoughtful, and yet, unlike his previous work.”

“When *Feeling My Way* (1997) was first released it felt like a smack of fresh air. On the surface, it's just about a guy walking to a friend's house, but in Hodgson's deft mind it becomes a portrait of our congested conscious and unconscious mind as a jam of thoughts, feelings, observations, distractions, judgements, worries all cram for a split second of acknowledgement. It's a celebration of walking or our 'weirdness' and obsessions...and really of the experience of just being in the world.” *Chris Robinson (Ottawa International Animation Festival Director)*

Nag Vladermersky



Rug

UK 2015 1min

The relationship between a Persian rug and a cat.

Director Jonathan Hodgson



What Comes After Religion

UK 2015 3min

The debate between believers and atheists usually goes nowhere. The real issue is: what should fill the gaps created by the end of widespread belief?

Director Jonathan Hodgson



Guantanamo Bay: The Hunger Strikes

UK 2014 6min

The daily brutality of life inside Guantanamo Bay, the US detention camp in Cuba.

Director Jonathan Hodgson



The Banana Massacre

UK 2013 3min

A depiction of the mass killing that occurred in 1928 in Colombia when innocent people went on strike for better working conditions.

Director Jonathan Hodgson



Mostafaei: End the Death Penalty

UK 2012 6min

The extraordinary story of Mohammad Mostafaei who has saved 20 of the 40 juveniles he has defended from execution in Iran.

Director Jonathan Hodgson



Wonderland: The Trouble with Love and Sex

UK 2011 3min

Inside the counselling rooms of Relate, as clients wrestle with champagne soaked fantasies, impotence, dark family secrets and shocking confessions of infidelity. Can Relate counselling help any of them?

Director Jonathan Hodgson



The Age of Stupid: War for Resources

UK 2009 2min

The history of wars fought over resources from prehistory to the present day. A sequence from 'The Age of Stupid', Franny Armstrong's feature length documentary about climate change.

Director Jonathan Hodgson



Forest Murmurs

UK 2006 13min

An animated exploration of Epping Forest's sinister past sparks off a journey into the dark side of the filmmaker's mind.

Director Jonathan Hodgson

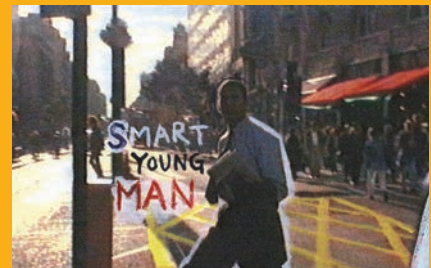


Camouflage

UK 2001 8min

A sensitive depiction of the experience of children growing up with schizophrenic parents.

Director Jonathan Hodgson



Feeling My Way

UK 1997 6min

A journey from home to work as seen through the filter of the conscious and subconscious mind.

Director Jonathan Hodgson



Nightclub

UK 1983 6min

An observation of human behaviour in a social situation, hinting at the loneliness felt by the individual lost in the crowd.

Director Jonathan Hodgson

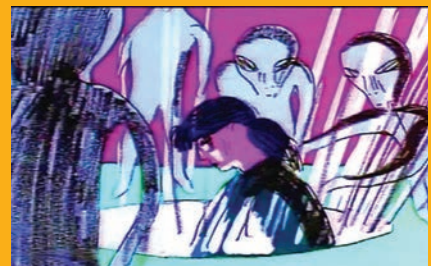


Dogs

UK 1981 7min

A man takes his dog for a walk in the park where they encounter other dogs and their owners. The film explores the relationship between a man and his dog highlighting their contrasting approaches to life.

Director Jonathan Hodgson



Abductees

UK 1995 11min

Sublime and terrifying depictions of alien abductions, narrated by hypnotised, memory-recovering abductees. Directed by Paul Vester and animated by 17 animators including Jonathan Hodgson.

Director Paul Vester

barbican

CLOSE-UP



Special Programmes

Female⁽¹⁵⁾

Figures

at Barbican **Wed 5 Dec 18:30**

Female Figures was born from a desire to present an alternate view of women's bodies and women's stories to counter the misogynistic representations that persist in animation today. In recognition of the under-representation of female animators within the independent animation sector, the programme spotlights some of the incredible work crafted by contemporary animators and their predecessors, both here in the UK and internationally.

The Female Figures programme returns to LIAF for a second year, sharing a host of extraordinary works that present a range of perspectives on the female body and female sexuality. The films revel in fantasy, lust, intimacy, desire, and pleasure, as well as portraying painful experiences of sexual abuse and trauma.

In many of the films the female characters have agency over their sexual desire and their bodies, and are shown to own their sexual experiences rather than be the object of desire for others. In Rocio Alvarez's *Simbiosis Carnal*, the opening film, a woman navigates a history of sexual repression to eventually reclaim her sexuality and decide on how to fulfill her desires.

In Élodie Dermange's *Intimacy*, an internet personality speaks about her journey to body positivity through becoming a photographic model and porn performer, whilst she goes through the intimate daily routine of showering and dressing. And in Bogna Kowalczyk's *Vanilla Whip* members from the BDSM community in Poland talk about their relationships and fetishes.

Several films have a confessional, and in some cases autobiographical, bent to them. Alys Scott Hawkins narrates *Crying and Wanking* and Gabriela Escovar employs an artist to relate her story in *How to Make a Ghost* - both films reflect on past relationships: the joy, the sorrow, the affection, the pain, and the acceptance of the need to move on. Visually we are presented with the speakers' bodies within

their domestic spaces, enhancing the sense of intimacy that the viewer shares in with these private narratives. And with *Crying and Wanking* we are presented with animation unfolding on the surface of a naked female body, echoing the intimacy the animator once shared with her partner.

The female form is under scrutiny in many of the films. Part of the power of Ruth Lingford's *What She Wants* lays in its self-portraiture and the revelation of the naked body of the protagonist as she exposes her unconscious desires whilst going about her daily life. Her body is portrayed as natural and vulnerable, and as monstrously aching with desire. In Martina Scarpelli's *Egg*, the maker's obsession with her physical body whilst overcoming anorexia is beautifully depicted in her monochrome drawings, particularly in the sequences where she conjures up a sexualised interior landscape, whilst she experiences a mix of pleasure and disgust as the egg journeys through her body.

Whilst all have personal stories at their heart, some share a viewpoint of collective experience, creating 'Everywoman' characters. With Hanomi Yano's *Chromosome Sweetheart* the characters are drawn in a similar style, are purposefully ordinary in their appearance, and voiced by the same woman, in order to represent a multiplicity of feelings and experiences from the queer female experience. A figure is seen to be endlessly running, snippets of conversations are heard, there's an underlying anxiety bubbling away in amongst the more tender moments. Similarly in Jenny Jokela's *Barbeque* the women characters are painted to look alike, and in this way present a collective feeling of the variety of ways of coping with trauma.

Several films foreground the power of the image; their silence giving space for the viewer to bring their own experiences and interpretation to the work. Much like *Barbeque*, Michele Cournèyer's *The Hat* presents the memory of a traumatic event through powerful visual symbols, and the traditional technique of animating directly

ahead using ink on paper creates a physical relationship between the animator and the work, and rawness to the image. In both films traumatic memories continue to transform and transition, suggesting the endless pain that the original event has triggered, whilst the character's get on with living their lives.

Humour is employed in many films as a way of diffusing the tension of the subject or in making it easier to share personal feeling and taboo subjects. In Thalma Goldman Cohen's *Green Men*, *Yellow Woman*, diminutive and seemingly respectable green men repeatedly harass the titular woman, attempting to grab at and possess the flower between her legs. Whilst somewhat amusing in the way it is depicted, with the woman presented as much larger and stronger than the men and some wonderful sequences with Cary Grant, it highlights a frustration with the objectification of the female form that feels as poignant now as it did more than 40 years ago.

In Kate Jessop's *Coming Into the Station* from her *Tales from Pussy Willow* web series, a comical discussion about female masturbation technique ensues in a public train carriage between a man and two women in a refreshing and uninhibited, if unlikely scenario. With both films there is an element that only a medium like animation can truly bring to life.

Women animators are increasingly giving voice to issues concerning their sexuality, and through sharing the films are opening up discussion about representation. With *Tales from the Pussy Willow* Kate Jessop presents humorous feminist and queer stories, Gabriela Escovar presents the experience of a queer, Latino artist, and Hanomi Yano explores being a queer person in Japanese culture. There is a need for more experiences like these to be celebrated, offering an alternative to the heteronormative representations that proliferate in the animation community. In searching out these films for Female Figures, it is apparent that there is an under-representation of queer women's stories on screen currently and a

hope that this will change.

There also persists a worrying trend with female student filmmakers continuing to default to gendering their protagonists as male in their films. To make something universal it needn't be presented as the male point of view. As this programme shows, women filmmakers can present universal, human experiences from a female perspective, and that this can be appreciated by everyone - these are not just women's stories for women audiences.

With thanks to all of the featured filmmakers, and their producers and distributors, Jez Stewart, Kate Jessop, Jenny Jokela, Thalma Goldman-Cohen, Waltraud Grausgruber, Birgitt Wagner, Jayne Pilling, Nag Vladermersky, Gary Thomas, Kate Anderson, Elizabeth Hobbs, Samantha Moore, and Ellie Land.

Abigail Addison

Q&A Panellists

Abigail Addison

Abigail Addison is a Producer, and is a Director of animation agency Animate Projects. She has produced many experimental moving image projects, including two slates of shorts for Channel 4's Random Acts, and Silent Signal, an ambitious touring art & science project. She also co-produced Chris Shepherd's multi award winning short, Johnno's Dead, and his latest film, Brexicated. Abigail sits on the Boards of Underwire Festival and Animation Alliance UK. abigailaddison.com

Kate Jessop

Kate Jessop is an award winning animation filmmaker whose work spans across animated shorts, promos and artists' film and video. She has exhibited extensively internationally, being selected for numerous festivals and touring programmes, including The Best of Birds Eye View, Raindance and Tricky Women. She is the founder of Animation Girl Band and creator of comedy web series 'Tales from Pussy Willow'.

Jenny Jokela

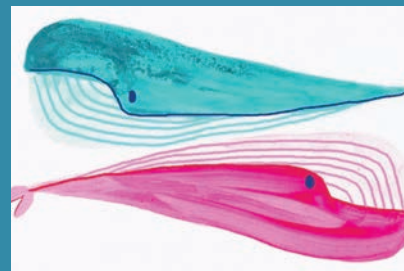
Jenny Jokela is a Finnish-Swedish animation director with a background in fashion. Based in London since 2009, Jenny predominately animates by hand, painting with acrylics. Jenny's film are highly visceral and emotional, often exploring themes of shame and guilt within the scope of female sexuality.

Thalma Goldman Cohen

Thalma Goldman Cohen is an award winning artist from Israel, who lives in London. She came to Britain to study art and animation, graduating from the London Film School and Central Saint Martins in animation in the 1970s. Throughout the seventies she released a series of cartoons brimming with vitality that offered unconventional and challenging perspectives on sex and gender.

Jez Stewart

Jez Stewart is a curator at the BFI National Archive, responsible for the animation collection. His research into the history of animation in Britain has produced a number of programme outcomes in 2018, in cinemas and online. He often points to such things on twitter @stewjeez.



Simbiosis Carnal

Belgium 2017 10min

A poetic journey through the history of desire and sexuality where the female pleasure, long ignored and repressed, takes pride of place.

Director Rocio Alvarez



Crying and Wanking

UK 2002 6min

A woman chews over the end of a relationship: a film about sex, shame and spending too much time indoors.

Director Alys Scott Hawkins



The Hat

Canada 1999 6min

A young woman works as an exotic dancer in a bar. She recalls a painful incident from her childhood bringing back painful memories.

Director Michele Courneyer

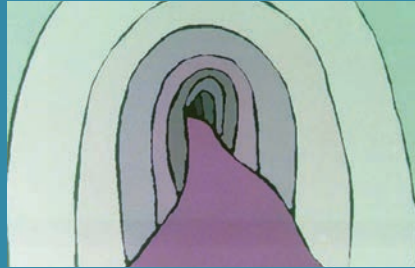


How to Make a Ghost

USA 2018 2min

The importance of remembering the things that shape us, especially painful memories we're told we should forget.

Director Gabriela Escovar



What She Wants

UK 1994 5min

A woman travelling on the underground is be-devilled with images of desire.

Director Ruth Lingford

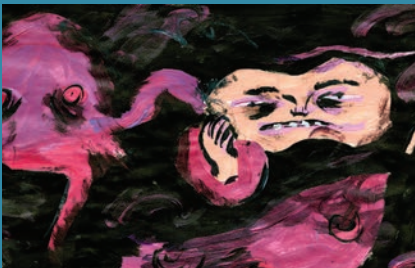


Vanilla Whip

Poland 2016 16min

Four people with different approaches to BDSM and visions of themselves. In this world anonymity meets self-awareness and safety confronts riding on the edge.

Director Bogna Kowalczyk

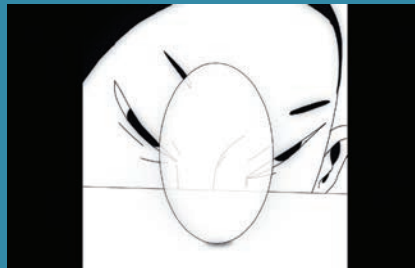


Barbeque

UK 2017 6min

A visceral journey about coping with post-traumatic stress disorder, exploring notions of shame and feelings of disembodiment.

Director Jenny Jokela



Egg

France 2018 11min

A woman is locked in her home with an egg, which she is both attracted to and scared of. She eats the egg then repents. She kills it. She lets the egg die of hunger.

Director Martina Scarpelli



Green Men, Yellow Woman

UK 1973 4min

Men might not be from Mars, but the pathetic or insincere attentions of these little green men offer nothing to this yellow woman. Even Clark Gable doesn't live up to his image.

Director Thalma Goldman Cohen



Tales from Pussy Willow: Coming Into the Station

UK 2017 3min

An eventful train journey arises in Pussy Willow. A resident needs assistance to help his girlfriend – luckily his fellow train passengers are at hand to help.

Director Kate Jessop

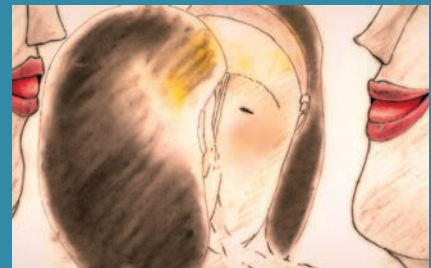


Intimty

Switzerland 2017 5min

As she is showering, dressing, putting on her make-up, a woman bares her soul. She speaks of her fears and the process of accepting – even loving – herself.

Director Elodie Dermange



Chromosome Sweetheart

Japan 2017 5min

An ex-couple in a café, a girl sucking on her girlfriend's hair, a running woman, a little girl walking along the river. In this world, there are as many forms of love as there are people.

Director Hanomi Yano

Aftermath (15)

at Barbican Tue 4 Dec 18:30

'Aftermath' is a programme of short animations exploring themes relating to the Great War at its centenary. Abigail Addison and I chose to curate a programme of animated films to show alongside my new film *I'm OK*, which is about the Expressionist artist Oskar Kokoschka, and his experiences as a soldier in the First World War. In curating this programme, I was looking for resonances between the films around the narratives created about war, about the effects of conflict on families and loved ones, and the paintings, prints, music and poetry created around the time of the First World War.

The programme includes some favourite works that will be well known to animation fans. *Silence* by Sylvie Bringas and Orly Vadin and *The Queen's Monastery* by Emma Calder, both from 1998, are sturdy, beautifully crafted films that are firmly in the canon. *Silence* was made in collaboration with Tana Ross, a holocaust survivor who reflects on her experiences as a child in a concentration camp, and the resulting learned and self-imposed silences. The film employs two styles of animation, the black and white sequences used to express Tana's fragmented memories of the camps were created by Ruth Lingford and influenced by the work of the expressionist Käthe Kollwitz. The colour scenes animated by Tim Webb, are inspired by Charlotte Salomon's book *Life? or Theater? The Queen's Monastery* is structured around the orchestral work *The Sinfonietta* by Leoš Janáček, which was written just after the end of the First World War. Janáček had been commissioned to write the music for a festival of gymnastics, to be held in

Brno town square. Emma Calder's film is dramatic and beautiful, and the theme of a broken soldier coming home applies to any war.

Some of the animations in the programme use humour to address the darkness of war and conflict. *Red Dress. No Straps* directed by Maryam Mohajer is set in 1985 in Tehran during the Iran-Iraq war. We are encouraged to think about war from the funny perspective of a small girl in the centre of the war. She is inside the cosy home of her grandparents where the sewing machine is busy, a red dress is being made, her ears are pierced, relatives visit. Life goes on, or does it? Vera Neubauer's *Cannon Fodder* from 1971 is fast and bawdy. The blunt message that war is absurd comes across like a ball from a cannon, whilst also making you smile. I think the same can be said of Max Hattler's film *Spin*, a 'multi-award winning war musical'. The hypnotic visual compositions, inspired by the musical choreographies of Busby Berkeley and the zoetrope might have you clicking your fingers and smiling. Not for long.

Chatear-Me-la Morrer Tão Joveeeeeem (It Would Piss Me Off To Die So Yoooooung...) by Filipe Abranches, and *Uncanny Valley* by Paul Menninger are two substantial films with a longer duration that both plunge you into the visceral experience of war in a way that only animation can. *It Would Piss Me Off To Die So Yoooooung...* follows a Portuguese soldier who is sent to battle in Flanders. The film recreates the lonely experience of being in a gas mask, fully immersed in the oozing mud and swirling morphing mustard gas by a certain use of line, framing and the close, panicky first person sound. The twitchily pixilated *Uncanny Valley* is like a piece of

theatre, we are watching two soldiers, slithering and sliding in the dark, illuminated by flashes from grenades and enemy fire. Even when the soldiers are warm and their wounds dressed, they still spasm convulsively, the hellish war is still present for them.

There are three films in the programme that tell the stories of soldiers and war through poetry or song. The film *Mario* by Tess Martin sprung from an Italian playground song 'Everybody Calls Me Mario', originally a folk song from the First World War. The song has a moment of jealous madness at its heart, that could perhaps have been caused by the soldiers' lack of perspective on his return from the war. Layla Atkinson has animated Siegfried Sassoon's poem *Aftermath* from 1919 in her film of the same name. The poem is narrated by Julian Rhind-Tutt with both warmth and gravity and the layered and visual aesthetic is inspired by works such as Juan Gris's *The Bottle of Banyuls* from 1914. *The Big Push* by Laurie Harris and Xin Lee uses the work of poet John Glenday, who was commissioned to write a poem in response to the 1916 Herbert James Gunn painting 'The Eve of the Battle of the Somme', the poem is skilfully animated using paint on glass.

1925 aka Hell by Max Hattler and my film *I'm OK* are both based on the work of artists. *1925 aka Hell* is inspired by 'A Symbolic Composition of the Spiritual World', the work of French outsider artist Augustin Lesage (1876-1954). Lesage's paintings are highly symmetrical and detailed and reminiscent of architectural forms. Hattler's animation represents a journey through Lesage's paintings in 3D which can be looped continuously. In *I'm OK* I used paint and ink

on A5 paper, each image inspired by a print, painting, play or diary entry of Kokoschka's from the period 1912-15. The frames were captured under the rostrum camera while the paint was still wet, so it's really a record of the moment that I made it. I animated a lot more than I needed, and edited the work together to Gluck's opera 'Orfeo and Eurydice'.

“I wanted to bring to life the dramatic period from when he was injured on the Russian front and the journey to the hospital by train, and combine it with his passionate and fated relationship with Alma Mahler.”

Commemorating the Centenary of The Great War by Shelly Wain and John Harmer was commissioned by The Tower of London, and is the result of a collaboration with a group of thoughtful young people. The film offers the chance to look to the future. The intelligent voices and drawings of young people both frames the past within their experience and gives rise to optimism for the future.

It has been a great privilege to be able to present these films together and to be a part of the commemorations and conversations marking the centenary of the Great War.

The programme has also toured to the German Expressionist Gallery in the New Walk Museum Leicester, Centrala in Birmingham and Tate St Ives.

Elizabeth Hobbs



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



The Big Push

UK 2015 4min

An evocative paint-on-glass film commemorating the Centenary of the Battle of the Somme with original verse by renowned Scottish Poet John Glenday.

Directors Laurie Harris & Xin Lee



The Queen's Monastery

UK 1998 6min

A woman's lover, a former acrobat, returns from war a changed man.

Director Emma Calder



Cannon Fodder

UK 1971 1min

The absurdity of war.

Director Vera Neubauer



Uncanny Valley

Austria/France 2015 13min

A stop-motion tour-de-force. Two lone soldiers fight their way out of the trenches of World War I. There is terror on their faces – explosions, chaos, fog.

Director Paul Wenninger

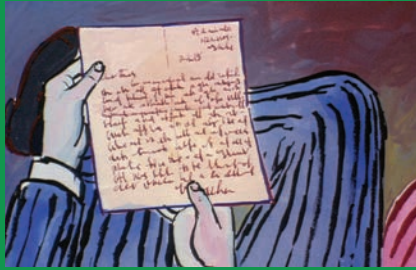


1925 aka Hell

France/UK 2010 2min

A strangely hypnotic, mesmerising animated loop inspired by the work of French outsider artist Augustin Lesage.

Director Max Hattler



Silence

UK 1998 11min

5 year-old Tana learns to keep silent after surviving the concentration camps. The true story of Holocaust survivor Tana Ross.

Director Orly Yadin & Sylvie Bringas



Spin

France/UK 2010 3min

Toy soldiers marching and moving in harmony, spinning, erupting and exploding. When conflict becomes a spectacle, the lines between destruction and entertainment get blurred.

Director Max Hattler

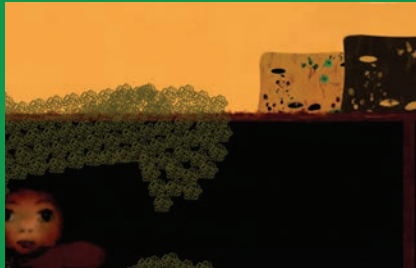


Mario

USA/Netherlands 2014 3min

In Italian playgrounds a song is chanted that dates back to World War I. A dark tale of a soldier who returns home from war to find his girlfriend has left him.

Director Tess Martin



Red Dress. No Straps

UK 2018 8min

1985, Tehran. The Iran-Iraq war. For Marmar it is another ordinary afternoon at the Grandparents. 'Death to America' chants from school mixes with Grandad's favourite programme 'The Voice of America' on the radio.

Director Maryam Mohajer

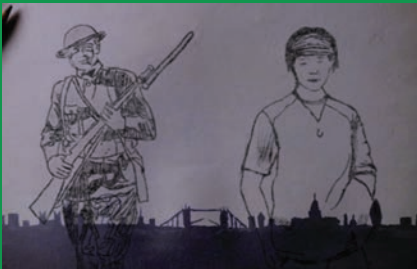


It Would Piss Me Off To Die So Yoooooung...

Portugal 2016 16min

The muddy trenches and filthy fields. The desolation of war.

Director Filipe Abranches



The Great War

UK 2013 4min

Through a series of thoughtful reflections the students of The Grey Coat Hospital explore the significance of the centenary of the First World War.

Directors Shelly Wain & John Harmer



Aftermath

UK 2016 2min

An adaptation of a war poem by Siegfried Sassoon. 'Aftermath' was broadcast on every Armistice Day for many years after the war.

Director Layla Atkinson



I'm OK

UK/Canada 2018 6min

In 1917, Austrian artist Oskar Kokoschka was in hospital, injured and shell-shocked from World War I, and heartbroken from the end of a famous love affair.

Director Elizabeth Hobbs

The Films of Jodie Mack ⁽¹⁵⁾

Programme 1: Posthaste Perennial Patterns

at Close-Up Film Centre Sat 8 Dec 18:30

Following the sell-out success of our partnership with Edge of Frame during LIAF 2016 and 2017, EOF returns for the third year with three curated programmes of work at the intersection of animation, experimental film and artists' moving image. Specially curated by Edwin Rostron – the London-based Artist, Animator, Writer, Curator, Editor of Edge of Frame blog and Festival Juror this trio of programmes seeks to celebrate this incredibly rich and vibrant, yet often marginalised and hard to define artform.

The first of this two-part programme showcases the short films of highly acclaimed experimental animator Jodie Mack. Using domestic and recycled materials, these shorts illuminate formal and cursory elements shared between fine-art abstraction and mass-produced graphic design. Questioning the role of decoration in daily life, the works unleash the kinetic energy of overlooked and wasted objects. Expanding upon notions of anti-animation set forth by experimental practitioners like Paul Sharits and Robert Breer, the studies in this programme apply formal principles of abstract cinema while pursuing an interest in found materials, evolving modes of production, and forms of labour.

Jodie Mack's 16mm films have screened at a variety of venues including the Ann Arbor Film Festival, Edinburgh International Film Festival, Images Festival, Projections at the New York Film Festival, and the Viennale. She has presented solo programmes internationally at institutions including the 25FPS Festival, Anthology Film Archives, BFI London Film Festival, Harvard Film Archive, REDCAT, and the International Film Festival Rotterdam. Her work has been featured in publications like Artforum, CinemaScope, Senses of Cinema, and the New York Times. She currently works as an Associate Professor of Animation at Dartmouth College, where she co-organizes an experimental media series, EYEWASH. She is a 2017/18 Film Study Center Fellow and Roberta and David Logie Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University.

Edwin Rostron



Posthaste Perennial Pattern

USA 2010 4min

Rapid-fire florals

and morning birdsongs bridge interior and exterior, design and nature.

Director Jodie Mack



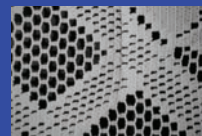
Rad Plaid

USA 2010 6min

A series of chromatic intersections.

Audience members form teams who respond to vertical lines by shouting "plaid" and to horizontal lines by shouting "rad".

Director Jodie Mack



Point de Gaze

USA 2012 4min

Named after a type of Belgian lace, this

spectral study investigates intricate illusion and optical arrest.

Director Jodie Mack

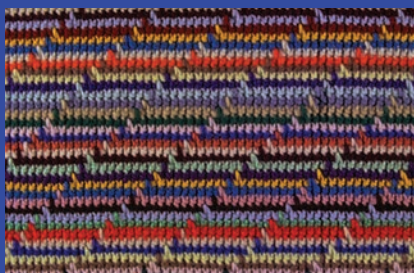


Persian Pickles

USA 2012 3min

Fractile phonics accompany a delicate study of paisley patterns.

Director Jodie Mack



Blanket Statement #1: Home is Where the Heart is

USA 2012 3min

Discordant dysfunction down to the nitty griddy.

Director Jodie Mack



Blanket Statement #2: It's All or Nothing

USA 2013 5min

A quilted call and response, a battle of extreme extremes.

Director Jodie Mack



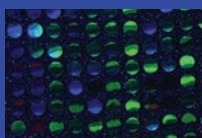
Undertone Overture

USA 2013 11min

An abyssal, aquatic abstraction cruising

out to the cosmos and back to coast.

Director Jodie Mack



Razzle Dazzle

USA 2014 5min

Tacky threads luminesce at a

firefly's pace, twinkling through remnants of chintzy opulence and gaudy glamour.

Director Jodie Mack

Edge of Frame &
Close-Up Film Centre

The Films of Jodie Mack⁽¹⁵⁾

Programme 2: The Grand Bizarre

at Close-Up Film Centre **Sat 8 Dec 20:00**

LIAF 2018 in partnership with Edge of Frame and Close-Up are proud to present the UK premiere of *The Grand Bizarre*, the extraordinary new feature by highly acclaimed experimental animator Jodie Mack. One of the most exciting, inspiring and prolific artist animators working today it is a real honour to welcome experimental animator Jodie Mack to London for two programmes of her incredible works. Jodie will be present to introduce and participate in a Q&A following the screening.

A postcard from an imploded society. Bringing mundane objects to life to interpret place through materials, *The Grand Bizarre* transcribes an experience of pattern, labour, and alien[-]nation[s]. A pattern parade in pop music pairs figure and landscape to trip through the topologies of codification. Following components, systems, and samples in a collage of textiles, tourism, language, and music, the film investigates recurring motifs and how their metamorphoses function within a global economy.

“Shot in a dozen countries, the film finds Mack’s trademark, colour-coordinated textiles dancing across a variety of exotic locales (India, Mexico, Holland, Morocco, and Turkey represent just a partial itinerary) through a meticulous process of frame-by-frame photography and practical

production magic. Playful and propulsive, Mack’s animations conjure an array of visual patterns, which in turn generate a multitude of motifs that together speak in potent shorthand to the economic and industrial development of fabric manufacturing the world over.

“In Mack’s dazzling montage, everyday sources – maps, globes, plane tickets, even back tattoos – reveal both cross-cultural codes and universal truths, bringing this eclectic cinematic travelogue into seamless dialogue with each viewer’s unique worldview”.

“Driven by a homemade soundtrack that locates a heretofore unrealized intersection between hip-hop, chiptune, and synth-pop, *The Grand Bizarre* tackles lofty themes at an intimate scale, imbuing familiar forms with a subtle but incisive sociopolitical force.”

Jordan Cronk

***The Grand Bizarre* received the Caligari Award. It also received a Special Jury Mention at the Annecy Festival.**



Director Jodie Mack
USA 61mins 2018

Material Fragments ⁽¹⁵⁾

at Close-Up Film Centre **Sun 9 Dec 18:00**

This programme features a variety of approaches to collage and cut-out animation. Materials such as clothing, found photographs, books, maps, plants and off cuts of film footage are recontextualised and seen anew through tactile processes of animation, sometimes combining with drawn and painted animation, to reveal hidden stories, new connections and dazzling patterns. Dating from 1959 to 2018, these works forefront the surfaces and physicality of the materials in front of (and sometimes within) the camera, yet take us into the speculative zones of the imagination, unlocking memories, reveries and dreams, from the highly personal to the purely abstract.



For All Audiences

USA 2018 3min

A trailer of an experiment searches for meaning in a mouldy montage. The detritus of the movie industry swims in organic material.

Director Josh Weissbach



Giardini (Gardens)

France 2018 2min

Thinking about the gardens I've been in.

Director Ira Vicari



Winners Bitch

USA 2018 7min

Inspired by a found archive on a doyenne of the dog competition world, a rumination on the many sacrifices it can take to be a woman of distinction.

Director Sam Gurry



Vera

USA 2017 7min

Vera is a character created over the time of animating

the cobweb and thinking about Bix Beiderbecke's song, Mississippi Mud.

Director Karen Yasinsky



Black Long Skirt

Japan 2010 9min

A woman passes through the body of a man on a day when it is about to rain.

Director Hoji Tsuchiya



Mom's Clothes

USA 2018 6min

A non-fiction reflection on being out of the closet.

Director Jordan Wong



Miroir dans un pré (A Mirror in the Grass)

France 2017 3min

Sun was beating, I saw myself in a mirror.

Director Ira Vicari



Look and Learn

USA 2017 12min

A visual construct mimicking maps in their hope of directing us to something, or somewhere, perhaps to a better understanding of our world.

Director Janie Gleiser



Eyewash

USA 1959 3min

Organised confusion of live footage and animation. Colour of original added to by hand on each print.

Director Robert Breer



Odds and Ends

USA 1959 4min

Made from discarded footage from a local film lab and Shimane's own animation sequences, using direct, painted-on-film techniques and stop-motion animation using cut-out paper.

Director Jane Conger Belson Shimane



Speak

UK 1962 10min

A brilliant example of animated abstraction - burns its way directly into the brain.

Director John Latham



Estonian Animation: ⁽¹⁵⁾ A Centenary Celebration

at The Horse Hospital Fri 7 Dec 21:00

It is hard to define – let alone explain – how and why Estonian animation is so utterly unique. And unique it most certainly is. To the extent that the profile of Estonian animation has broadened in contemporary times much of the credit must go to Chris Robinson, the Artistic Director of the Ottawa International Animation Festival who in 2003 published “Estonian Animation: Between Genius And Utter Illiteracy” which stands as the definitive history of Estonian animation. He followed this with a substantial series of programmes at the Ottawa festival that year which opened the eyes of many animation fans (your LIAF crew included) to the matchless wonder of the work that was being produced there – and had been for a good long while.

Although individual animated films were produced in Estonia intermittently in the 1930s, it was not until Elbert Tuganov established a specific puppet-film department within the larger Tallinn Film Studio that anything like a contemporary history of Estonian animation begins.

The Estonian word for ‘puppet’ is ‘nuku’ and so Tuganov named his division Nuku Film. It is difficult to overstate the importance of puppets in Estonian culture. Puppets appear time and again in all manner of broader Estonian cultural contexts. Indeed, to this day Estonia has one of the very few full time professional multi-stage puppet theatres in the world. Nuku Theatre nurtures a community of professional and aspiring Estonian puppet theatre makers, hosts travelling international puppet theatre productions and is home to a fascinating puppet theatre museum.

The Tartu Toy Museum, housed in a tardis-like building in the eastern Estonian town of Tartu not far from the Russian border is one of the most comprehensive and spellbinding toy museums in the world. It pays to lower your head if you are tall when you wander

through various doorways though – painful lessons learned and passed on for your benefit should you visit..... and you should visit.

In time the Nuku Film division became a stand-alone, independent puppet animation studio. It will soon celebrate 60 years in existence. These days it is housed in an imposing stone building just outside the walls of Tallinn’s Old Town not far from the central train station and main produce market. The lower foyer area is loaded with sets, characters and props from some of its productions. It contains an incredible workshop facility capable of making all its own puppets and sets. This sits at one end of their building beyond spaces that can be home to up to a dozen ‘hot sets’ – complete rigs that are going through the slow-motion excitement of creating the thousands of frames that will cumulatively screen as the magical thing that is a puppet animation film.

The other significant studio that has played a significant role in the history of Estonian animation is Eesti Joonisfilm. This studio focuses almost entirely on drawn animation although it is also gradually building a 3D capability. Theoretically, the iteration of Joonisfilm that we know and love today begins in late 1993.

Eesti Joonisfilm had also long been a department of the Tallinn Film which was financially supported by Moscow. When Estonia gained its independence from Russia in 1991, these threads of support rapidly unravelled and two years later when the inevitable happened and Moscow withdrew all financial support (and control) of Tallinn Film, the obvious (the ONLY) decision was to establish Eesti Joonisfilm as a standalone, independent animation studio. These days it inhabits what – from the outside – appears to be a normal house in a suburban street.

However, various incarnations of a dedicated hand-drawn/2D animation department

had existed – indeed thrived to some extent – within the state sanctioned Tallinn Film for at least 20 years prior to its formal establishment.

In 1971 legendary Estonian animation pioneer Rein Raamat established a cel animation department within Tallinn Film and from that point the kind of drawn animation that Estonia has become synonymous with never really looked back. Raamat had worked under Tuganov in the puppet department since its inception in 1958 so knew the corridors of Tallinn Film well. Along with Avo Paistik and Prit Parn, he set about creating a whole new strata of Estonian animation when word arrived that Eesti Joonisfilm had been given the nod to set up.

Drawn ‘cartoons’ quickly flowed from Raamat’s department with *Vari Ja Tee (The Shadow And The Road)* and *Veekandja (The Water Bearer)* achieving releases within months of Raamat and his team getting started.

Within two years they would achieve international success with films such as Raamat’s own 1973 classic *Lend (Flight)* which staked its claim early by taking out the Special Jury Award at the Zagreb festival the following year.

The arrival of this 2D department also marked a divergence in the style of storytelling that Estonian animation was presenting. Puppet animation had, in many cases, undertaken a more linear narrative approach to making animated films with the underlying tone of much of the work reflecting the fairytale-type stories and the kinds of actions associated with the ‘toys’ that many people subconsciously associated with puppets.

Drawn 2D animation, however, had very little of this type of baggage to carry. From the outset it was able to employ entirely different colour palettes, incorporate – however carefully – a variety of influences from various

art and cultural movements of the day and it's very tone and style allowed it to veer off narratively into all manner of strange and discordant directions.

To some extent this suited the mood of many of the artists involved. Chafing for greater freedom of expression than generally allowed by the Moscow based cultural controllers at the time, the very esoteric potential of drawn animation allowed a certain 'licence' for what could be depicted. And what the authorities would tolerate... or could understand.

The desire to travel more freely, to discuss the notion of Estonia's relationship with the wider world, to explore the underlying sadnesses and frustrations of so many aspects of life in Estonia all informed much of this animation. Hiding in plain view, the messages were mostly lost on the Moscow masters, a blindness that simply added fuel to the tanks of those making these films.

For all of that though there is – and always has been – a level of complexity in the way Estonians express, consume and digest anything that has a cultural component to it. This virtually unparalleled level of 'cultural connection' may just be Estonia's secret sauce..... the reason a tiny country of less than 1.5 million people can so consistently and persistently produce an utterly unique cultural output across so many strata. It is something you have to spend a little bit of time immersed in to fully understand the extent of its reach. Combine this with a preternatural willingness (bordering on compulsion) to socially self-critique and you have a glimmer of where the power, the willingness and the sheer societal emotion intelligence to pursue and support art-making at this level and intensity comes from.

It might be possible to introduce Estonian animation without particular mention of Priit Parn but it wouldn't be credible. A household name in Estonia itself, he is also the animator whose name is the most likely (which is to say ... not very) to be recognised by the animatedly uninitiated. For those of us on the inside, little introduction is surely needed and yet his presence in the history has to be recorded.

Let's aim for tribute over biography in this instance.

It is not an exaggeration of any magnitude to describe Parn as a living master and one of the true greats of the artform. Beyond – well beyond – what his body of work means in the context of animation, many of his films are just simply among the best, most interesting, most challenging and most complex pieces of animation ever created. Beyond an incredible library of films, he is responsible for teaching generations of Estonian – and indeed, European –

animators not just how to animate but how to think like an animator before they draw the first line. The ripples in the pond that he created continue to travel outwards and have infused the entire auteur animation realm with a depth and dimension that it would not have had without his contribution. He is one of a handful of animators that has pushed us all to understand the unique properties of animation as an artform and a form of complex expression.

The goal here this time is not to create an "Estonia's Greatest Animated Hits". Instead the idea is to corral a collection of old and new films that speak to the uniqueness of the Estonian animated vision. And we have opted to take the path less travelled a couple of times, including with the inclusion of Parn's film *Some Exercises In Preparation Of An Independent Life* (1980).

This was only Parn's third film but is a prime – if sometimes overlooked – example of his genius for using animation to discuss the Estonian experience of the era. The film subtly reverberates with the contradictions of trying to live peacefully and happily in an occupied society whilst dreaming of a kind of freedom that exists as some sort of illusory veil just in front of one's eyes but just beyond the reach of the fingertips. Parn, of course, is far from the first filmmaker to paint this picture, but "Exercises", as with many of his later films, simultaneously explores the suspicion or perhaps even the fear that this ghost of independence might also be imperfect and unable to deliver on every expectation heaped upon it. And in this we see the emergence of the depth and complexity that Parn would bring to the field of animation to this day.

As that stands as an early example of the brilliance of 2D animation that would emerge from Eesti Joonisfilm, the programme opens with an acknowledged early classic from down the hall in the Nuku Film department.

Nail (1972) is, above all else, a deceptively simple yet stunning piece of stop-motion animation. The director/animator Heino Pars became fascinated with the secret life of nails when he was building his own house.

Think through what is happening here. The character is a nail. That's it! Contemplate how you could breathe life, emotion and a sense of character into a nail. Somehow Pars has managed this.

Think also about the purely practical challenges of animating this 'character'. Using an actual nail is out of the question – by definition, they are rigid, unbending objects. To give them life, Pars eventually settled on using nails made out of rubber. While this allowed for the flexibility and durability he needed for his 'puppets' to move, it created a whole new set of

problems to contend with.

These were the days well before computer assisted post-production which allows for such things as the removal of hang wires to keep characters standing. Pars and his cinematographer wound up using complicated rigs of mirrors to reflect backgrounds against nails that were lying horizontally. Shot with the camera on its side, the finished film gave the impression of a vertical, dancing character. Even this solution – genius in its own way – provoked secondary problems with portraying accurate shadows for the character. So, look carefully.... *Nail* is a far more complicated piece of puppet animation than you might suspect.

Early in the programme it is also important to shine a light on the particular peculiarities of the way some Estonian animators have developed a style of pixilation. Although a master of many techniques, Rao Heidmet's 1994 film *The Living Room* is a darkly sensational benchmark of this form. Shot in black and white (as is so often the case), it obliquely explores both the sense of invisible entrapment and the uncertainties of semi-imaginable freedoms that forms the viscera of so many Estonian films. Haunting this film is an aura of faux Hollywood circa 1930s which carries with it, unstated but siren-clear, so many messages about fake dreams, suppressed realities and the raw fragility of the narrative on offer.

Mont Blanc (2001) by Priit Tender ushers the programme into the 2000s. By this point Estonia is now truly independent. Officially so in 1991, independence in Estonia was a somewhat more gradual process than the sudden 'overnight' events experienced by other nations who strove to break free from the Soviet Union.

By now budget airlines arrive every day, people come and go as they wish, citizens speak their minds. Progress, structurally and socially, is undeniable and on display for all to see. And yet the sense of where they fit in and how they relate to the rest of the world continues to permeate so much Estonian animation. It's fascinating and without the need to create a meaning to be hidden from censors, it often bubbles up as an appetite to turn up the surrealism dial.

Tender was and is an absolute master of this. Clearly influenced by the lessons passed down from Parn, his earlier films such as *Mont Blanc* (and *Gravitation* from 1996) are critically important markers in this bridging period of Estonia's political, social and cultural history. Long journeys, uncertain destinations, conflicted characters and motivations, an ambiguous sense of 'place' all seep from this film with every passing frame.

As Estonia emerged into full independence, some in the world of auteur animation wondered if the creeping combination of a changing resource landscape and the removal of the dark motivations provided by living under Soviet rule might somehow conspire to undermine the capacity of the next generation of Estonian animators to take the baton.

They needn't have worried.

Jelena Gírlin and Mari-Liis Bassovskaja are a formidable duo who demonstrate that none of the uniqueness is leaving Hotel Estonia any day soon. Anybody who happened upon their 2009 scatologically monumental *Oranus* would not have forgotten it in a hurry, even if they had wanted to. And tempting as it was to polish that one up for inclusion here, we opted for *The Dress* (2007), a film that has screened just about everywhere it could screen.

Graduates of the increasingly impressive animation course at the Estonia Academy of Arts, Gírlin and Bassovskaja's *The Dress* is a top-shelf example of how the power of Estonian animation is being trained on to explorations of personal identity and that absurdly impossible quest for connection to something bigger than the little visions of ordinary everyday lives suggest is the sum of our parts.

Martinus Klemet is one of Estonia's most eclectic explorers. Klemet happily navigates avenues that take in the worlds of illustration, graphic novels and the aesthetics of online video games. His work is difficult to categorise other than, perhaps, to suggest that a persistent strain of playfulness seems to just about always find its way in.

In The Air (2009) unleashes Klemet's considerable talents as a creator of hand-drawn animation. With a plot bordering on the Dadaist, it serves up an often hilarious cacophony of pandemonium which cumulatively seems to offer up a commentary on the dangerous mis-focus modern day media (as it was in 2009 at least) can bring to our lives and the world we must physically travel through. There are not many animators who can translate this disparate list of ingredients into the five star course-de-chaos that Klemet concocts here – and it sits at mysterious odds to the man himself, one of the most laid-back of animators you will encounter.

Thoughtful, thorough and a perfectionist. Ulo Pikkov is gradually stamping a singular mark on the terrain of animation that transcends the ability to simply create accomplished animated films. He is among the most skilful at finding the utterly central personal kernel in the middle of whatever narrative he seeks to delve into. Likewise, he brings a professorial level of thought and erudition to

the understanding of animation's value as an artform through his writing. And his skills as a stop-motion animator (although he animates in a number of techniques) are astonishing.

One of his most affecting films is surely *Body Memory* (2011). The sense of confinement and containment, of loss of control, of the unknown and the unseen persecutor just beyond the wall is palpable. Eschewing any focus on the 'individual', it creates a collection of the faceless, the nameless, the unidentified and the unidentifiable. The animation itself conjures a savage ballet of disintegration and human erasure while the imagery cannot help but summon reflections on some of the visions that still resonate as shameful horrors from a history that might not be entirely closed. This is a lot of meaning to be wrung from some wood, wire and strands of yarn.

One of the most popular Estonian films of recent times would have to be Anu-Laura Tuttelberg's *On The Other Side Of The Woods* (2014). On one level, it is an incredibly interesting exploration of the most fundamental of stop-motion animation's various ingredients.

Tuttelberg's main character is sculpted out of simple, basic damp clay. This is made deliberately obvious in the film with the imprints and deformations of the animator's hands purposely and inevitably evident on its surface. Much of the creative motivation that underpins the structure and style of the film is Tuttelberg's determination to use it as a prolonged experiment to research her fascination with a wide variety of raw materials with which it is possible to craft an animated film of this type.

But its most fascinating component is also its most elemental – light. *On The Other Side Of The Woods* was shot using the natural light that streamed through the windows of the studio in which she made the film. This introduces a randomness to the overall lighting of the film whilst at the same time creating a luminosity that pulses and ebbs to its own rhythm, almost as if it had a life and mind of its own.

And finally, how does one describe Kaspar Jancis? Some people just live by different rules. Some people see different colours and hear different noises than the rest of us. Some people observe a very different shortest path between the A's and B's of life. Jancis is all of these and more. His films make sense – they make a LOT of sense – but only as you're watching them. Try walking out of a cinema and describing one of his films to somebody in the bar. It's not easy. It's often barely possible.

His film *Piano* (2015) is a wonderful way to round out this special programme on Estonian animation. It helps makes the

point the programme itself is trying to make. It points strongly to a future for Estonian animation that is every bit as fascinating, captivating and unique as its past.

Embedded in *Piano* is a little world, complete in its own nearly inexplicable way, that could not be imagined anywhere else other than within the broad walls of the colourful garden of Estonian animation.

Piano is delicious – and welcome – conformation that Estonian animation is adapting to a changing world while holding fast and strong to the inimitable DNA that has long given it its vitality and dominion.

In short(s), there seems to be plenty more where all of that came from.

Malcolm Turner



EMBASSY OF ESTONIA
LONDON



Nail

Estonia 1972 9min

An exceptional display of fluid, graceful, stop-motion animation. Four short comical stories dealing with seduction, betrayal, drunkenness, and death.

Director Heino Pars



Some Exercises in Preparation of an Independent Life

Estonia 1980 9min

A sometimes harsh, sometimes goofy look at the routines that give our lives form.

Director Priit Parn



The Living Room

Estonia 1994 10min

A young girl is trapped in an ambiguous relationship with an old man. To escape she physically erases her world, replacing it with a new one, a better world.

Director Rao Heidmets



Mont Blanc

Estonia 2001 11min

An aging man leaves his wife and sets off on his way to Fujiyama, the mountain of his dreams.

Director Priit Tender

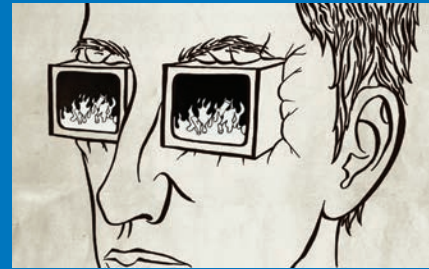


The Dress

Estonia 2007 6min

Dedicated to Marie Antoinette and housewives everywhere – a woman looks back at the highlights of her life.

Director Girlin Bassovskaja



In the Air

Estonia 2009 9min

A miscommunication between the wolf and the humans leads to a sudden shift in the laws of gravity.

Director Martinus Klemet



Body Memory

Estonia 2011 9min

Many memories dangle by the finest of threads, which are being pulled by forces out of sight and out of control.

Director Ülo Pikkov



On the other side of the Woods

Estonia 2014 10min

A girl made of clay comes to life. In a wildly overgrown house, she meets a wolf and an even worse monster: time.

Director Anu-Laura Tuttelberg



Piano

Estonia 2015 10min

Marta hauls a piano home from a used music shop. She almost succeeds. Albert tries for the thirtieth year to tell Paula that he loves her. He almost succeeds. Paula wants to respond to Albert in the same vein. She almost succeeds.

Director Kaspar Jancis

Film Index

1 metre/heure Nicolas Deveaux 55
1st day and next minute Sara Koppel 49
1925 aka Hell Max Hattler 78

A

A Love Letter To the One I Made Up Rachel Gutgarts 58
A Mirror in the Grass Ira Vicari 81
A One-Minute History of Image Distortions Betina Kuntzsch 40
Abductees Paul Vester 71
Adorable Cheng Hsu-Chung 50
Aerobie Bastien Dupriez 39
Aftermath Layla Atkinson 78
Age of Stupid: War For Resources Jonathan Hodgson 71
Agua Viva Alexa Lim Haas 35
Am I Origh? Yen Liang Chen 59
Anilogue Chintis Lundgren 69
Animal Behaviour Alison Snowden & David Fine 11
Animated Dreams Chintis Lundgren 68
An Island Rory Byrne 35
Anna Jessica Mountfield 45
Ant Julia Ocker 54
Augenblicke - A Blink of an Eye Kiana Naghshineh 32
Augur David Doutel & Vasco Sa 26
'Au Tir a la Carabine' - General Elektri Zachary Zezima 52

B

Barbecue Jenny Jokela 75
Bavure Donato Sansome 32
Better Humans Moth Collective 29
Between the Lines Maria Koneva 53
Between the Shadows Alice Guimaraes & Monica Santos 21
Bibimbap Heather Colbert 53
Bike Trip Tom Schroeder 15
Birds and Beer collection - Bats/ Egg/Pirate/Cannibal Chintis Lundgren 68
Bird Milk Christopher Strickler 39
Birdwatching Chintis Lundgren 68
Birthday Chintis Lundgren 68
Black Long Skirt Hoji Tsuchiya 81
Blanket Statement 1 - Home is Where the Heart is Jodie Mack 79
Blanket Statement 2 - It's All or Nothing Jodie Mack 79
Bless You! Paulina Ziolkowska 12
Bloeistraat 11 Nienke Deutz 21
Blue Hands Diyala Muir 45

Body Memory Ulo Pikkov 85
Brexicuted Chris Shepherd 14

C

Camouflage Jonathan Hodgson 71
Cannon Fodder Vera Neubauer 77
Carlotta's Face Valentin Riedl & Frédéric Schuld 28
Cat Days Jon Frickey 56
Cat Noir O'Neil Burgi 59
Caterpillarplasty David Barlow-Krelina 32
Ceva Paul Muresan 32
Chante en couleur Dirk de Bruyn 40
CHATEAR-ME-IA MORRER TÃO JOVEEEEEEM... (It would piss me off to die so yoooooung...) Filipe Abranches 78
Chromosome Sweetheart Hanomi Yano 75
Circuit Delia Hess 18
Cleaning in Progress Grant Holden 46
Colorscape Black Matt Abbiss 15
Conan O'Brien discusses "We're Going To Be Friends" by the White Stripes Moth Collective 15
Conception: Catie and Jen Moth Collective 28
Contact Alessandro Novelli 35
Cosmopolite Rina Okada 40
Coyote Lorenz Wunderle 50
Crab Story Filippo Rivetti & Tatiana Poliektova 54
Crying and Wanking Alys Scott Hawkins 74
Cuckoo Aline Hochli 11
Cyclists Veljko Popovic 22

D

Dangerous Migration Route Chintis Lundgren 68
'Date Night' - Father John Misty Chad Van Gaalen 51
Death Van Michael Enzbrunner 49
Divisional Articulations Max Hattler 40
Dogs Jonathan Hodgson 71
Do I See What You See? Simon Ball 14
Dom (Feature film trailer) Will Anderson & Ainslie Henderson 65
Double Portrait Ian Bruce 22
Dreamland Mirai Mizue 40

E

Eden Julie Caty 12
'Edith Piaf (Said It Better Than Me)' - Sparks Joseph Wallace 51
Egg Martina Scarpelli 15, 75
Elegy Paul Bush 40
Enough Anna Mantzaris 42
'Everybody Wants to be Famous' - Superorganism Robert Strange 52

Eyewash Robert Breer 81

F

'Faceshopping' - Sophie Sophie & Aaron Chan 52
Facing It Sam Gainsborough 12
Feeling My Way Jonathan Hodgson 71
'Fenn' - Tom Rosenthal Sarina Nihei 52
Fest Nikita Diakur 11
'Filthy Apes and Lions' - Mark Stoermer Lee Hardcastle 52
Finity Calling Jasper Kuipers 26
Flipped Hend Esmat & Lamiaa Diab 56
'Flyin' Bamboo' - Nitai Hershkovits featuring Mndsgn Felix Colgrave 52
Food For Fraught Reid McManus 49
For All Audiences Josh Weissbach 81
Forest Murmurs Jonathan Hodgson 71
Fox in the Boat Chintis Lundgren 69
Fracking. It's Fucking Brilliant Will Anderson & Ainslie Henderson 64

G

Gardens Ira Vicari 81
'Genius' - LSD Ben Jones 51
Good Intentions Anna Mantzaris 35
Green Men, Yellow Woman Thalma Goldman Cohen 75
Guantamano Bay: The Hunger strikes Jonathan Hodgson 70

H

Haley and Joanna Laura Hodkin 42
Have Heart Will Anderson 65
Herman Brown is Feeling Down Dan Castro 34, 56
Heroes Juan Pablo Zaramella 11, 55
Him & Her Nathalie Lamb 22
Home (A portrait of New York City) John Morena 40
Horror with Rabbits Chintis Lundgren 69
How to Make a Ghost Gabriela Escovar 75
How to Paint Your Rainbow Erick Oh 18
Hunter Ryoji Yamada 50
Hybrids Florian Brauch, Kim Tailhades, Matthieu Pujol, Yohan Thireau & Romain Thirion 18

I

I Am Tom Moody Ainslie Henderson 64
Ice Pepper Mailly Boulin, Guillaume Escots, Alicia Jourmet, Soizic Lefeuivre, Clément Malargé, Eddy Martinez 59

If You Can Hanna Rybak 57
I Love your Face Chintis Lundgren 68
I'm OK Elizabeth Hobbs 21, 78
Impossible Figures and other Stories 111 Marta Pajek 22
Inanimate Lucia Bulgheroni 57
In the Air Martinus Klemet 85
Intimty Élodie Dermange 75
It's About Spending Time Together Ainslie Henderson 65
I Want to Live in the Zoo Evgenia Golubeva 54

J

James 'Moving On' Ainslie Henderson 65
Jazzoo Adam Marko-Nord 54

K

Kajtek Aga Jarzab 39
Konigiri-Kun: Music Box Mari Miyazawa 54
Koyaa - Naughty Toy Car Kolja Saksida 54
Kuap Nils Hedinger 56

L

La Chute Boris Labbe 26
Las Del Diente Ana Perez Lopez 15
Laugh Lines Patricia Wenger 58
Lavo Sasha Svirsky 50
'Leap of Faith' - Mr Jukes featuring De la Soul, Horace Andy Parallel Teeth 51
Letting Go Ulo Pikkov 29
Life with Herman H. Rott Chintis Lundgren 69
Lint Lisa O'Sullivan 46
Little Star Etienne Bailleu 58
Living Like Heta Bianca Caderas, Isabella Luu & Kerstin Zemp 12
Log Boy Fernando Puig 58
'L'Oiseau qui Danse' - Tennyson Jean-Marie Marbach 51
'Lone Love' - Akwaur Dasha Chukhrova 52
Look and Learn Janie Geiser 81
Looking For Something Cesar Pelizer 35
Love He Said Ines Sedan 22
Love Me, Fear Me Veronica Solomon 57

M

'Ma Mama' - Toto Bona Lokua Katy Wang 51
'Mad Love' - Keita Sano Ryoji Yamada 52
Manimals Jihyeon Oh 11
Manivald Chintis Lundgren 69

Manivald Goes to Woolfywood Chintis Lundgren 69
Marfa Greg McLeod 45
Mario Tess Martin 78
Mary and the 7 Dwarfs Riho Unt 17
Max Planck Jonathan Gillie 39
Mermaids and Rhinos Viktoria Traub 26
#merrychristmas Chintis Lundgren 69
Mind Games Jiaqi Yan 56
Mister Paper Goes For A Walk Ben Tesseur 54
Mogu and Perol Tsuneo Goda 54
Mom's Clothes Jordan Wong 81
Monkey Love Experiments Ainslie Henderson 64
Mont Blanc Pritt Tender 85
More Ben Meinhardt 49
Mostafei: End the Death Penalty Jonathan Hodgson 71
Musical Interlude with Manivald and the Absinthe Rabbits Chintis Lundgren 69
Musical Traumas Milos Tomic 29
Music and Clowns Alex Widdowson 15
Muteum Aggie Pak Yee Lee 11
My Best Friend 'Ends' Will Anderson & Ainslie Henderson 65
My Best Friend 'Explodes' Will Anderson & Ainslie Henderson 65
My Best Friend 'Rewinds' Will Anderson & Ainslie Henderson 65

N

Nail Heino Pars 85
'Nameless, Faceless' - Courtney Barnett Lucy Dyson 52
Nightclub Jonathan Hodgson 71
Not My Type Gerd Gockell 39

O

Obon Anna Bergmann (Samo), Andre Hormann 29
Octane Jeron Braxton 50
Odds and Ends Jane Conger Belson Shimane 81
Oh Mother! Paulina Ziolkowska 59
Once in the Fields of Boredom Teele Strauss 59
One After the Other Nicolas Pegon 28
On the Other Side of the Woods Anu-Laura Tuttelberg 85
Ooze Kilian Vilim 58
Ottawa International Animation Festival 2018 Chintis Lundgren 69

P

Panta Rhei Wouter Bongaerts 18
Parasitic Endeavours Simon Christoph Krenn 50
'Parking Attendant' - Tall Juan

Dante Zabella 51

Pearfall Leonid Schmelkov 55
Penguin Julia Ocker 54
Perfect Town Anais Voirol 50
Persian Pickles Jodie Mack 79
Phototaxis Melissa Ferrari 58
Piano Kaspar Jancis 85
Point de Gaze Jodie Mack 79
Posthaste Perennial Pattern Jodie Mack 79
'Post Requisite' - Flying Lotus Winston Hacking 51
Pulse Sarah Forest, Cécile Floucat, Pauline Javelot, Juliette Gales, Thibaut Wambre & Kevin De Garidel 57
Pure White Sven Windszus 32

Q

Queen of the Forest Gabriela Sibilska 46

R

Rabbit's Blood Sarina Nihei 12
Rad Plaid Jodie Mack 79
Razzle Dazzle Jodie Mack 79
Red Dress. No Straps Maryam Mohajer 78
Red Garage Max Litvinov 59
Reruns Rosto 26
Ride Paul Bush 34
RIOT Frank Ternier 31
Robhot Donato Sansone 31
Roughhouse Jonathan Hodgson 32
Rug Jonathan Hodgson 70
Rules of Play Merlin Flugel 56

S

Scroogin on a Greg Will Anderson & Ainslie Henderson 64
Silence Orly Yadin & Sylvie Bringas 78
Silent London Ivelina Ivanova 47
Simbiosis Carnal Rocio Alvarez 22, 74
Sinking of the Truth Tobias Gundorff Boesen, Denise Chapon, Marie-Josée Saint-Pierre, Tynesha Foreman, Wiep Teeuwisse, Sander Joon & Philip Piaget 29
Sister Siqi Song 18
Sloth Julia Ocker 53
Small things moving in Unison Vicky Smith 40
Sog Jonatan Schwenk 58
'Sola' - Machine Translations Jonathan Nix 52
Solar Walk Reka Buksi 26
Some Exercises in Preparation of an Independent Life Pritt Parn 85
Speak John Latham 81
Spermaceti Jacky de Groen 18
Spin Max Hattler 78
Squaring the Circle Karolina Specht 59

Stems Ainslie Henderson 65
String of Sound John Morena 39
Sunscapades Ben Mitchell 49
Sun Zoom Spark Gina Kamentsky
39
Synched Cassie Shao 59

T

Tales from Pussy Willow: Coming Into the Station Kate Jessop 75
Tango of Longing Marta Szymanska 58
Tears of Chiwen Sun Xun 35
Teaser for Toomas Beneath the Valley of the Wild Wolves Chintis Lundgren 69
Tend Tom Judd & Ed Barrett 43
Tennessee Jack Wedge 50
That Yorkshire Sound Marcus Armitage 14
The Banana Massacre Jonathan Hodgson 70
The Big Push Laurie Harris & Xin Lee 77
The Braveheart Luca Schenato & Sinem Vardarli 44
The Call Anca Damian 17
The Death Dad and Son Winshluss, Denis Walgenwitz 26
The Dress Girlin Bassovskaja 85
The Grand Bizarre Jodie Mack 80
The Great Grey Shrike Chintis Lundgren 68
The Great War Shelly Wain & John Harmer 78
The Hat Michele Cournèyer 74
The Hunt Alexey Alekseev 12, 56
The Infinity Project Will Anderson 64
The Living Room Rao Heidmets 85
The Making of Longbird Will Anderson 64
The NorthEast Kingdom Alan Jennings 58
The Other Marta Magnuska 57
The Pigeons' Tour of Scotland - Ayr Will Anderson & Ainslie Henderson 65
The Pigeons' Tour of Scotland - Hawick Will Anderson & Ainslie Henderson 65
The Queens Monastery Emma Calder 77
The Sounds from the Drawers Vitor Hugo 32
The Story of Warfarin - Nature Ed Prosser 15
The Strongest of the Strange James Merritt 44
The Subject Patrick Bouchard 31
The Swimming Lesson Tatyana Okruzhnova 53
The Theory of Sunset Roman Sokolov 56
The Velvet Underground Played at my High School Anthony Jannelli & Robert Pietri 15
The Wolf Hous Cristobal Leon &

Joaquin Cocina 60
The Woman Who Turns Into A Castle Kathrin Steinbacher 43
Those Progressive Meats Minoru Karasube 49
Togetherness Shaun Clark & Kim Noce 43
Total Eclipse Noah Malone 50
'Tranz' – Gorillaz Nicos Livesey 52
Travelogue Tel Aviv Samuel Pathey 29
Trump Dreams Ruth Lingford 35
Twilight Richard Reeves 39
Two for Two Jelena Oroz 12

U

Ugly Nikita Diakur 34
Uncanny Valley Paul Wenninger 77
Undertone Overture Jodie Mack 79
Unexpected Waltz Chintis Lundgren 68
Until We Coleidescape Reinhold Bidner 39
Untravel Ana Nedeljkovic & Nikola Majdak 17

V

Vanilla Whip Bogna Kowalczyk 75
Vera Karen Yasinsky 81
Via Izzy Burton 47
Via Maria Ferreira 40
Vivat Musketeers! Anton Dyakov 56

W

Waaah Sawako Kabuki 22
Wank Sock Annie Murray 50
Water Colors Takashi Yoneoka 54
'Wayside' - Renata Zeiguer Angela Stempel 51
West Question, East Answer Dal Park 47
What Comes After Religion Jonathan Hodgson 70
What She Wants Ruth Lingford 75
Wilted Eve Travers 57
Winners Bitch Sam Gurry 81
Women & Power Meg Earls 44
Wonderland: The Trouble with Love and Sex Jonathan Hodgson 71

Y

Yellow Ivana Šebestová 35
Your Mothers Are Mine! Kim Noce 18

AGE
16 - 19?

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