



LONDON INTERNATIONAL  
**ANIMATION**  
**FESTIVAL 2019**

CELEBRATING THE WHOLE SPECTRUM OF ANIMATION

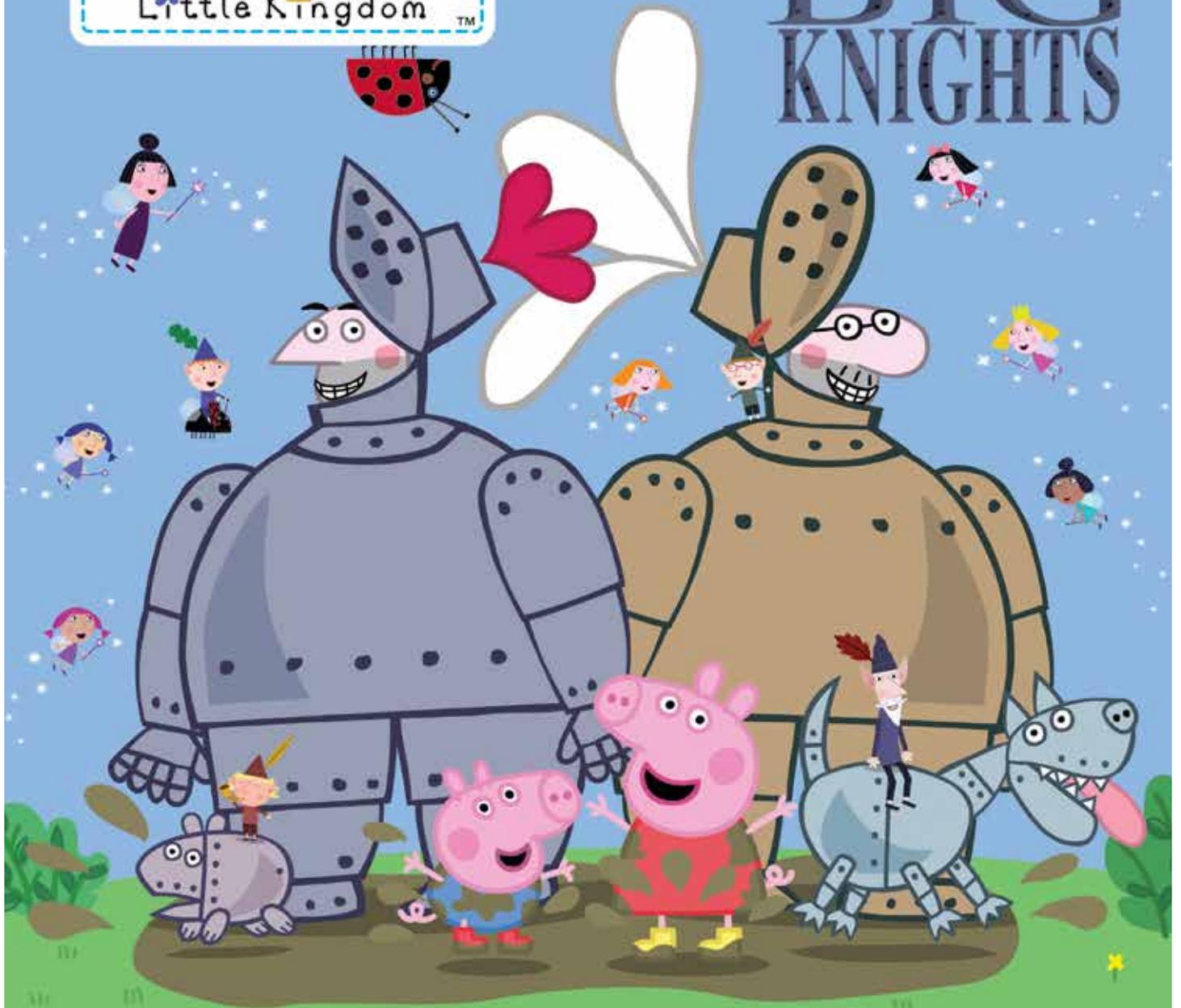
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# Crew & Credits

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

Programmer **Nag Vladermersky**  
Programmer Female Figures Programme  
**Abigail Addison**  
Programmer Edge of Frame Programmes  
**Edwin Rostron**

Digital Compiling **Claude Trollope**  
Website **Mandy Smith & Matt Smith**  
Social Media **Mandy Smith**  
Industry Event project co-ordinator **Anna Gregory**  
Industry Event Chair **Saint John Walker**  
Industry Event/UJEL liaison **Will Bishop-Stevens**  
Animation workshop leader **Elizabeth Hobbs**  
Festival Trailers **Izabela Barszcz (National Film and TV School) and Stephen Quenet (Middlesex University)**  
Design **Mandy Smith**  
Catalogue notes **Malcolm Turner & Nag Vladermersky**  
Catalogue Notes - Female Figures and Happiness Machine **Abigail Addison**  
Catalogue Notes - Edge of Frame **Edwin Rostron**

Festival Judges/International Competition **Daisy Jacobs, Jez Stewart, Lilly Husbands**  
Festival Judges/Abstract Showcase **Robert Bradbrook, Matt Abbiss, Gina Kamentsky**  
Festival Judges/Late Night Bizarre **John Higgs, Felix Massie**  
Festival Judges/Music Video Programme  
**Abigail Addison, Chris Shepherd, Shaun Clark**  
Festival Judges/Childrens screenings **Lilith Silver, Reuben Carter**

Cinema Co-ordinator (Barbican) **Alex Davidson**  
Marketing (Barbican) **Daniela Fetta**  
Publicity (Barbican) **Ian Cuthbert, Sarah Harvey**  
And all the amazing **LIAF Volunteers**

## Special Thanks

**Pia Lundberg** (Embassy of Sweden), **Roger and Sholto** (The Horse Hospital), **Simon Oatley** (The Film and Video Workshop), **Robert Bradbrook** and **Rebecca Havers** (the National Film and TV School), **Jonathan Hodgson** (Middlesex University), **Phil Davies**, **Abigail Addison**, **Liz Hobbs**, **Edwin Rostron**, **Mami Furukawa**, **Gints Zilbalodis**, **Tiffany Kilgore**, **Niki Lindroth von Bahr**

...and everybody who gave their time or ideas, shared their work or their expertise. So many people have helped LIAF 2019 come together. Thank you all!!!

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# Festival Schedule

|            |       |   |  |
|------------|-------|---|--|
| Fri 29 Nov | 18:30 | 🎤 | Opening Night Gala: Female Figures ... To Boldly Go + Q&A                                      |
|            | 21:00 | 🎤 | British Showcase + Filmmakers Introduction   |
| Sat 30 Nov | 11:00 | 🎤 | Barbican Framed Film Club: Amazing Animations for 0-7 yr olds                                  |
|            | 17:00 | 🎤 | International Competition Programme 1: Abstract Showcase                                       |
|            | 18:45 | 🎤 | International Competition Programme 2: From Absurd to Zany                                     |
|            | 20:45 | 🎤 | International Competition Programme 3: Playing with Emotion                                    |
| Sun 1 Dec  | 14:00 | 🎤 | Marvellous Animations for 8-15 year olds   |
|            | 16:00 | 🎤 | International Competition Programme 4: Being Human   |
|            | 18:00 | 🎤 | The Darkly Humorous Worlds of Niki Lindroth von Bahr: a retrospective screening and screentalk |
| Sun 1 Dec  | 20:30 | 🎤 | International Competition Programme 5: Into the Dark   |
|            | 18:30 | 🎤 | International Competition Programme 6: Animated Documentaries + panel discussion               |
| Mon 2 Dec  | 20:45 | 🎤 | International Competition Programme 7: Looking for Answers                                     |
| Tue 3 Dec  | 18:30 | 🎤 | Happiness Machine + panel discussion   |
|            | 20:45 | 🎤 | International Competition Programme 8: Long Shorts   |
| Wed 4 Dec  | 18:45 | 🎬 | Away FEATURE   |
| Thu 5 Dec  | 18:45 | 🎬 | On-Gaku: Our Sound FEATURE   |
| Fri 6 Dec  | 19:30 | 🎤 | Best of the Next 1   |
|            | 21:00 | 🎤 | Best of the Next 2   |
| Sat 7 Dec  | 10:00 | 🎤 | Lizzy Hobbs: Under the Rostrum, A Collage Animation Workshop                                   |
|            | 10:00 | 🎤 | Industry Event 1: We Need to Talk about Skills - One Year On                                   |
|            | 11:30 | 🎤 | Industry Event 2: The Animated Women Panel   |
|            | 13:30 | 🎤 | Industry Event 3: The Kids Are All Right?  |
|            | 15:00 | 🎤 | Industry Event 4: Animating in the New Spaces of VR, AR and XR                                 |
|            | 16:30 | 🎤 | Industry Event 5: British Showcase + Animators in Attendance                                   |
|            | 18:00 | 🎤 | Edge of Frame: Brushwork - The Painted Animation + Q&A   |
|            | 19:30 | 🎤 | Music Video Session  |
|            | 20:30 | 🎬 | Edge of Frame: Memento Stella FEATURE  |
|            | 21:00 | 🎤 | Late Night Bizarre   |
| Sun 8 Dec  | 15:30 | 🎤 | Closing Gala: Best of the Fest   |
|            | 18:00 | 🎬 | Edge of Frame: Surface Memory  |
|            | 18:00 | 🎤 | Closing Gala: The Best of the Fest REPEAT  |
| Sun 8 Dec  | 20:30 | 🎬 | Edge of Frame: Potamkin FEATURE  |

# Director's Message

**Greetings fellow animation fans and a hearty welcome to the 16th London International Animation Festival. Writing this Directors Message for the catalogue is one of my favourite parts of the whole process in putting together the festival. Once the catalogue is done and dusted, proof-read and sent away to the printers, in reality it's just a couple of weeks of more problem-solving until we get the opening night underway. And once opening night is underway it's just a case of keeping this ship afloat for 10 days. The real hard work is the 11 months leading up to those 10 days.**

And so, bear with me whilst I pour a glass of wine and get myself in the right frame of mind to gather a few slightly scrambled, but always heartfelt, thoughts for you.

As I probably say each year, each successive LIAF seems to come round faster and faster - a cliché for sure, but there must be some truth in there - surely! It's not really necessary for you, our humble, loyal and devoted audience, to know TOO much about the nuts and bolts of getting this monster of a festival together each year - but it might have come to your attention that some years we have an industry component and some years we don't. Being brutally honest it's to do with the money. Some years we are lucky to have more funders on board who believe in our project and some years we don't. And this year, thanks to the generosity of the Arts Council, alongside the enthusiasm of the good folk at the University of East London (UEL) and the boundless energy of Saint John Walker and the hard graft put in by Anna Gregory, we have been able to put together a wonderful event taking place at UEL on Saturday December 7th. And so 'The UK Animation Industry Event' has been resurrected (first time since 2015) and we have 20 movers and shakers from the industry speaking on 4 panels who, I am certain, will send the audience away with much food for thought with their perceptive and impassioned thoughts about the state of the industry. For us at LIAF this event is the icing on the cake and something that anyone with a passing curiosity in the state of where we're at and how we are trying to get there should make sure they get along to and find out.

As well as being more than a little excited about the industry event, at LIAF we pride ourselves on the quality of the films we screen. And the quality just gets better! We screen more animated films than any other animation festival in the UK and I'd like to think that we are the most diverse of those festivals. The numbers of films that come our way increase each year - well over 2,600 were watched for this festival and 157 were chosen for various competition screenings with another 77 making up the rest of the festival. Those numbers are staggering!

Our tagline is "something for everyone" and that is why certain genres that may be sidelined at other festivals are given centre-stage at LIAF (such as abstract films, music videos, student films). Whatever genre they are and whoever they are made by, whether first-time filmmakers or veterans, if they're good enough we will screen them and we will screen them alongside all of the other great films in the festival.

Without wanting to make a huge song and dance about it, this year's festival celebrates female filmmakers past and present who have provided us with some of the most joyous, awe-inspiring, thought-provoking films we have screened at LIAF over the years. And so - yes, it's about time they took centre-stage. The opening gala night is their night this year and we've handed the mantle to Abigail Addison and her wonderful curation skills for the Female Figures 'To Boldly Go...' programme, a collection of sci-fi inspired shorts made by women. This is the third year that Abigail has put together a Female Figures event at LIAF, the previous two were fun, raucous and insightful. Not only do we get to see a programme of films where women are at the heart of the narrative but we get to hear a panel of the filmmakers discuss the films afterwards. Flora Anna Buda is one of those filmmakers whose film 'Entropia' is in the programme and she is travelling from Budapest to LIAF thanks to the assistance of the Balassi Institute: Hungarian Cultural Centre. Also taking part are Katerina Athanasopoulou, Chiara Sgatti and Lilly Husbands. Flora is just one of many filmmakers, too many to mention in total, making their way to LIAF this year, and we look forward to many introductions, Q&As and panel discussions with them.

But one guest we are especially excited about is Niki Lindroth von Bahr who has been on our radar to invite to LIAF for a few years, ever since she scooped the best of LIAF award in 2017 for her incredible stop-motion existential musical short 'The Burden'. It has gone on to win 80+ awards at festivals worldwide over the years. Niki will be with us at the Barbican on Sunday December 1st, chatting about her own films and the music videos and other short films she has worked on as props and costume designer.

And finally, I'd like to mention something else related to LIAF here. One of our most-loved venues the Horse Hospital is under serious threat of closure at the end of the year due to their unscrupulous landlords proposing a rent increase of 333%! LIAF have been holding events at the Horse Hospital since 2010 and for those who don't know, the Horse Hospital is one of the longest-running, non-commercial, unfunded and 100% independent arts venues in the UK. They have introduced hundreds of obscure artists, performers, filmmakers and writers, who may otherwise have been denied a voice by more mainstream organisations, to an ever-growing, receptive and appreciative audience. It is vital that venues like the Horse Hospital are to survive so please consider donating to their Kickstarter campaign on their website at [www.thehorsehospital.com](http://www.thehorsehospital.com) to help pay for their legal fees. Keep the Horse Hospital open!

**Nag Vladermersky**

London International Animation Festival  
November 15, 2019

CULTURE UNDER ATTACK:



# STOP THE HORSE HOSPITAL CLOSING

**PROUD HOST OF LIAF SINCE 2011**

The Horse Hospital will be forced to close if we do not meet, or successfully contest, an excessive 333% rent increase from Jan 2020.

The Horse Hospital Gallery has provided vital support and accessible exhibition space for independent artists since 1993 and is home to The Contemporary Wardrobe Collection, one of the world's most important collections of subcultural clothing, established in 1978.

After 26 years of operating as an independent art space, the Horse Hospital is once again under serious threat of closure if it doesn't meet the excessive 333% rent increase proposed by the owners of the building by 31st December 2019 when a Notice under Section 25 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 issued by the landlords brings our Tenancy to an End. As an unfunded not for profit organisation clearly any increase will be a struggle without outside help. If we are unable to negotiate a realistic rent, we shall have no alternative but to close down.

All we ask for is a fair affordable rent and a secure lease so we can continue to support our artists community and its

activities and preserve this unique much loved building for future generations. In a climate where any grassroots, alternative or independent endeavours are being swept away into the dust of history, it is vital that the spirit and ethos that we wholeheartedly embrace as an organization is given a chance to survive in these ever more capitalist, corporate and homogenous times. Therefore, we shall not cease in our efforts to save this small sanctuary and make sure it is preserved as part of Bloomsbury's rich cultural heritage.

**We thank you for your continuing support.**



Please donate and follow our campaign online at:  
[thehorsehospital.com/stop-the-horse-hospital-from-closing](http://thehorsehospital.com/stop-the-horse-hospital-from-closing) Thank you

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# International <sup>(12)</sup> **1** Competition Programme: Abstract Showcase

at Barbican Sat 30 Nov 17:00

**Welcome, one and all, to the 2019 London International Animation Festival. Let's start with the basics. Or more accurately, let's explore the fundamental essence of the artform of animation.**

That purer essence, the display of animation's 'basics' is best explored through an appreciation of abstract animation. It is a term much debated, routinely misunderstood and most definitely underappreciated.

If the battle to build an audience and a greater awareness of the types of more representational films that tend to fill out the programmes of a festival like LIAF point to 'auteur' animation being a niche artform then, friends, abstract animation is la niche a la niche.

Still, we persevere. If not us, then who? Few animation festivals dedicate an entire section to this elemental form which is interesting because there is a lot of it being made. We had to consider nearly 2,700 films in building LIAF 2019 and the number that were considered 'abstract' rivalled (and probably exceeded) those deemed to be documentary and it buried the amount of Kids animation that was made last year.

Abstract animation is also a field of endeavour that is studied in surprising depth and breadth around the world. Tertiary institutions strive to dissect it, essayists and philosophers embrace it and every year several new books and exhibition catalogues emerge on the subject. A curated sampling of a few of these might help build a scaffold of interpretation from which to get a clearer, more illuminating view of the colourful corpus of films that fill 'International Competition Programme 1'.

"Abstraction is, above all, a semiotic process. It is used to produce signs ideas, words, figures, images, etc. that, like all signs, have the advantage of being more easily handled than the things to which they refer."

That is writer and director Olivier Asselin introducing a collection of the abstract animated films of French-Canadian animator Pierre Hebert, restored and released in a beautiful box-set by the National Film Board of Canada some time ago.

"Generally, it [abstraction] is a mental or physical transformation which, as the word's etymology indicates, involves a separation, selection, exclusion and extraction," he continues, trying to break down the defining elements of the genre.<sup>1</sup>

In *Animation - Process, Cognition And Actuality*, his thorough and thought provoking book that breaks down animation of all kinds into its component parts, Australian academic Dan Torre goes a little deeper into the mystery.

Reflecting on the 'narrative strategies' proposed by renowned UK animation scholar Paul Wells, Torre uses these as an inverting mirror from which to form a view of how to interpret abstract animation.

**"We can identify three key movement strategies that can be found in nearly all intentionally abstract animations, and represent an effective practical approach (in terms of motion) to creating and structuring abstract animation."**

Torre names them as 'evolution', 'deconstruction' and 'patterned movement' strategies.

"The strategy of evolutionary movement comprises all types of growth, change and metamorphosis. Thus when such movement is applied to forms, they may become bigger or smaller, they may change shape or perhaps completely transmute in shape,

colour, texture and overall quality.

"The strategy of deconstructive movement is partially related to evolutionary movement as it involves forms changing; however, rather than the more organic movement the term 'evolution' suggests, this aspect tends to exemplify the breaking apart and the process of elemental construction.

"Patterned movement involves a choreographed manipulation of repetitions of similar forms. Together, these repetitive forms no longer represent their singular identity, but a larger collective - an amorphous mass."<sup>2</sup>

Back to Asselin for a moment. "Some modern artists - in particular Kandinsky, Mondrian, Malevitch and Eggeling - understood abstraction to be the reduction of art - of painting mainly, but also of sculpture, music, film - to its essence, to the elementary materials and shapes specific to it, thus to the physical properties of the medium."

Indeed. Here is Kandinsky quoted in Maureen Furniss' essential book *Art In Motion: Animation Aesthetics*<sup>3</sup> Speaking before World War I, Kandinsky observed, "... the spectator is too ready to look for a meaning in a picture - i.e. some outward connection between its various parts. Our materialistic age has produced a type of spectator or 'connoisseur', who is not content to put himself opposite a picture and let it say its own message.

"His eye does not probe the outer expression to arrive at an inner meaning."

Quite! And then some.

Battalions of abstract artists march on across the decades.

<sup>2</sup> *Animation - Process, Cognition And Actuality* Dan Torre - (Bloomsbury) 2017

<sup>3</sup> *Art In Motion: Animation Aesthetics* Maureen Furniss - (John Libby) 1998

<sup>1</sup> *Abstraction And Iconoclasm* Olivier Asselin - (National Film Board of Canada) 2007

In the astonishing, almost other-worldly catalogue that accompanied the massive 2006 retrospective of works by the ground-breaking digital artist Charles Csuri<sup>4</sup> contributor Karla Loring offers an introduction and some context.

"In the great tradition of Giotto, Cezanne and Duchamp, Charles Csuri has become one of the most influential figures in the art of the twenty-first century. Art has evolved and advanced through a variety of tools and techniques with each new generation of artists, but Csuri's work, culminating in his most recent series, is fundamentally revolutionising the way one thinks about art.

"The Italian Renaissance was defined by the synthesis of art with science and mathematics, resulting in the mastery of three-dimensional perspective, made possible by Euclid's geometry.

Stay with us!

"Csuri recognised that the visual language of mathematics and technology held new possibilities for the creation of art, especially three-dimensional works. The development of n-dimensional geometry, vector graphics, and theoretical spaces enabled Csuri to use the computer much like a creative search engine to produce works that he might never have initially imagined.

"Csuri, often referred to as the father of digital art, shares with Cezanne the ability to compose a new order that transforms the visual language of art."

These are all utterly natural impulses for artists working in the abstract space, whatever their medium. Examples are myriad upon the landscape. Here is American artist Robert Breer captured in an interview featured in one of the 'bibles' of abstract animation *Experimental Animation: Origins Of A New Art* by Robert Russett and Cecile Starr.<sup>5</sup>

"I think that the reproduction of the semblance of natural movement is but one of the many possibilities of cinema," he is quoted as saying. "It seems to me that in animation, particularly, the search for the reproduction of natural movements plays far too big a role. Whether stylised or not, I don't think one needs to conceive of movements as related directly to those

observed in reality."

In a world where the overwhelming expectation of the general audience is that 'animation' is purely a medium for kids and family entertainment, trying to breach the barrier of representationalism that is even the expectation of most of those brave few who step beyond that saccharine mass assumption is a challenge. En masse, at almost every entrance point of consumption, we have been acculturated to expect - to need - a narrative pathway.

Furniss herself sums it up well in *Art In Motion: Animation Aesthetics*.<sup>6</sup>

**"As Kandinsky suggested, many people find that an appreciation of abstraction requires a re-alignment of one's process of interpretation. Rather than following the story or assessing the rendering of representational figures, a viewer of abstract work typically must assume a much more intuitive and contemplative approach to the material."**

Do we not know how to do this? Do we not trust ourselves to do it? When does the wiring in our brains oxidise to the extent that power cannot flow down those circuits? Answering these questions might help break down the barriers - barriers that vibrate with a latent passion to collapse under their weight - to a wider audience.

We live in hope.

*Malcolm Turner*

<sup>6</sup> *Art In Motion: Animation Aesthetics*  
Maureen Furniss - (John Libby) 1998

<sup>4</sup> Charles A. Csuri: *Beyond Boundaries, 1963 - Present* Janice M. Glowski (Ed.) - (College Of The Arts, The Ohio State University) 2006

<sup>5</sup> *Experimental Animation: Origins Of A New Art* Robert Russett, & Cecille Starr - (Da Capo) 1976



**4:3**

UK 2019 5min

Animated projections combine to develop a rhythmic dialogue exploring the intrinsic relationship between sound and image using 16mm film, paint and a projector.

**Director** Ross Hogg



**Sonolumin**

USA 2018 5min

A stop-frame animated 360° exploration of the relationships between light, sound and space.

**Director** Diana Reichenbach

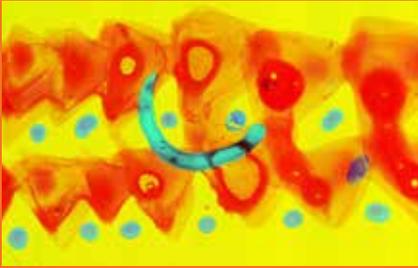


**Erodium Thunk**

Canada 2018 3min

Magazine cutouts, TV commercials and other mass-media detritus are stitched together, pulled apart, and recombined producing an unsettling Dadaist world.

**Director** Winston Hacking

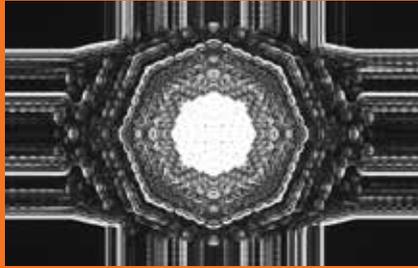


### Under the Canopy

France 2019 7min

Birds of paradise, displaying beautiful plumage, sing and dance in the tropical forests.

**Director** Bastien Dupriez

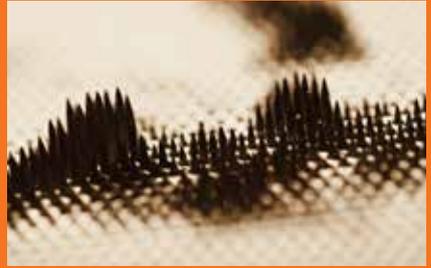


+

Hong Kong/Germany/UK 2019 3min

A symmetrical matrix of generative synthetic growth iterations of varying frequency intensities.

**Director** Max Hattler



### Jim Zipper

Canada/Switzerland 2018 2min

A musical exploration inspired by various pictorial movements from the first half of the 20th century using the awesome pinscreen animation technique.

**Director** Alexandre Roy



### Quiet

Germany 2019 6min

Slowing down time, a journey through an ever-changing landscape of shapes in motion, with a sumptuous soundscape by Nils Frahm.

**Director** Sonja Rohleder



### Aperture

Italy 2018 2min

The filmmaker connects with his roots as he walks the streets of his hometown in North East Italy.

**Director** Emanuel Kabu

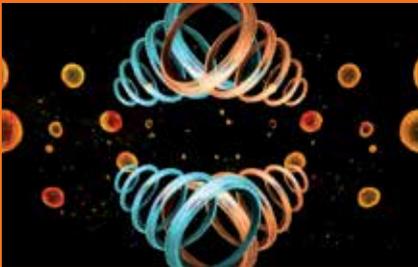


### Pattern Cognition

Germany 2019 7min

When you stare at a screen for too long, the screen stares back at you.

**Director** Thorsten Fleisch

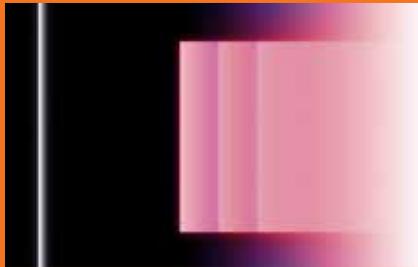


### Catgot

Hong Kong 2019 3min

Water droplets, bubble smashes and rain dripping. The sound and image of a fountain.

**Director** Ho Tsz Wing



### Matter and Motion

Hong Kong/Germany 2018 2min

Motion creation, energy transmission, kinetic combustion.

**Director** Max Hattler



### Specimens Of Ephemeral Worlds

USA 2018 4min

A jarring immersion in fleeting worlds of dynamic sound and mystifying forms.

**Director** Rachel Wagner



### VIVALdi Winter

Canada 2018 10min

A dive into a snowstorm inspired by the 'Winter' section of Vivaldi's 'Four Seasons.'

**Director** Theodore Ushev



### Down Escalation

Japan 2018 7min

Falling down, deep into the layers of itself, until the form is no more.

**Director** Shunsaku Hayashi



### The Dawn of Ape

Japan 2019 4min

The world's first animation made to be watched by chimpanzees. For the first time ever, humans are allowed to look as well.

**Director** Mirai Mizue



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# International <sup>(18)</sup> 2

## Competition Programme: From Absurd to Zany

at Barbican Sat 30 Nov 18:45

**“Everything we see hides another thing, we always want to see what is hidden by what we see. There is an interest in that which is hidden and which the visible does not show us.”**

That is surrealist artist Rene Magritte talking about his work. It was bolted to a prominent wall near the front of a major exhibition of his works staged at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art that caught our eye last year on a soul-inspiring, wallet-draining dry-by flit-through of that little one-of-a-kind city last year. A number of his best known paintings feature characters whose faces are obstructed by another object. An apple obscures much of the face of the only character in *The Son Of Man* (1946) and a dove similarly masks our view of the only protagonist in *Man In A Bowler Hat* (1964). If these paintings contain a narrative message it is that these obstructions may very well just be a fleeting moment in time captured precisely as their trajectory intersected the ‘main’ subject of the painting.

The spirit of Magritte permeates the fabric of *I’m Going Out For Cigarettes*, Osman Cerfon’s much discussed new film which is a perfect opening film for this year’s ‘Absurd To Zany’ programme. Missing faces, partly covered faces, mysterious dichotomies between subject and scenery are some of the core images in many of Magritte’s most famous paintings. Facsimiles of these masterworks generously adorn the walls of the unusual apartment the film is based in, a dwelling that seems to swing precipitously between urban accommodation and a portal to a place in which identity hides in waiting, coiled and ready to assault a fragile psyche. It is a film which most definitely also patrols the often brittle outer fences of Cerfon’s sense of personal identity.

Built around a story of a boy who never knew his father, Cerfon drew on his own experiences of not knowing his own father. In *I’m Going Out For Cigarettes* this notion of

the missing father’s identity is simultaneously omnipresent and painfully absent. It is the kind of emotional ‘house of mirrors’ that can only really be constructed in animation.

That same emotional house of mirrors is viscerally apparent in Jenny Jokela’s new film *Live A Little*. Made on the slimmest of budgets and the tightest of timeframes, it carries her trademark supercharged, hand-painted style. This bold, unashamedly rough aesthetic empowers the message at the passionate centre of the film. Full to the brim of blink-and-you-miss-them moments, to a removed outside observer it can read as a Millennialist pageant of knowledge; a window into a world in which the goals remain the same, the options have exploded and the prize hovers beyond reach, as elusive as it has ever been.

Easy to say if that’s not your world. If this energy, these people and these collisions of souls happen to fill the theme park of your life, this stuff is all too real. Her RCA graduate film *Barbeque* was a jolt to the senses and Jokela admits she was wanting to tackle something more light-hearted. In collaborating with her good friend Celia Hillo on the script, she says she wanted to create a film that would make her laugh.

“I tend to see the film as a celebration of our late teens or young adulthood,” she said in a recent interview:

**“Struggling with feelings of loneliness. Not always fitting in with the social norms of how a ‘good woman’ should behave.”**

If you have ever wondered at the sincerity expressed by an animator who stumbles to the stage as their film is announced the winner, you only needed to be in attendance at the Awards Ceremony of the most recent Ottawa International Animation Festival one particularly crisp September Sunday evening.

Austrian artist Thomas Renoldner’s mask of complete shock would have been pretty

hard to fake. It would be fair to say he was not the only one in the room who was surprised when his most recent film *Don’t Know What* took out the top prize.

It can be hard to pin down what Renoldner puts on his tax return in the space marked ‘Occupation’. He sometimes hints that his work is that of an avant-garde artist and yet he is equally quick to point out that he feels the notion of avant-garde art (particularly in film) purposely askews the potential to entertain an audience, something he actually strives to do.

Is the rapid-fire editing process that he employs to generate the conceptual progression of the imagery in his films pixilation? Stop-motion? Is it even animation? Renoldner seems more concerned that people enjoyed it or at least were drawn into the experience he offers of manipulating his own body in the commission of creating the film.

Although unscripted, *Don’t Know What* is definitely not created without some very specific technical and creative rules. The outcomes of applying these rules are ‘felt’ rather than writ large for critical analysis. But do not let the title fool you - Renoldner knows exactly what he is doing.

Y2K! Remember that bad-boy? From our shriven, mouldering vantage point now it looks like the simplest, most innocent and naïve of all apocalypses... the kind of poorly thought through apocalypse-lite that might be waxed up by a lazy, work-experience apocalypse God who was struggling to come up with a good idea for a mid-term exam.

Deep down, we may know something is coming to destroy us but whatever it is it won’t be that silly little bug. And if it is to go down in history as a real apocalypse it will have to wipe out our history, scrubbing all record of our existence. That would really have to be something.

Word is that ants will survive even nuclear Armageddon should some maniacal

overlord decide that is how they want to fill in a quiet weekend. So the hope is that even if the apocalypse turns out to be a ferocious data eater, a decimator of all things digital, some cockroach technology will likely escape the rapture. Cassettes maybe? What if the story of our meagre existence could - in millennia to come - only be recreated from what is gleaned off surviving cassettes?

Rory Waudby-Tolley's new film *New Year* takes a pretty funny stroll down this particular lane. "Re-evolution" never seemed so funny as a future civilisation weaves together a new religion from the disparate, not always particularly considered thoughts of a young boy and his grandmother who commit a stream of random dissertations to an unconsidered posterity via the medium of a deity future generations would only know as "Sony". Rory has a particular talent for making films using these sort of 'bendy' ideas and it is a delight to be able to add this flavour to the programme here.

We here at LIAF are BIG fans of Gina Kamentsky's films. There would not be very many LIAF's that have not featured one. In terms of technique, her work immaculately channels the 'direct-to-film' or cameraless animation lessons passed down to us by the likes of Len Lye and Norman McLaren. However, she brings a beguiling and playful representational visuality to a space that is often the domain of the purely abstract. She doubles down on that pathway with soundtracks that offer more definitive meanings to the whole than many of her predecessors (and contemporaries) advance.

Her latest film *Trauma Collection* turns all of this up to 11. In this film we see the advent of sustained narration come into play. A clever, whip-smart sustained oration blending a pure love of the sound of words with a more sophisticated and considered narrative roadmap of interconnected though hardly linear language. This is the perfect travelling companion for Kamentsky's well-documented love and mastery of rapidly changing imagery.

It does not take long at all for *Trauma Collection* to swell to a kind of multi-dimensional experience built on a complimentary swirl of purely visual imagery, the uninterrupted joy of the sound of words and the creative stepping-off points of the way that words look when put up on the screen.

All in all, it is a multi-sensory, creative Venn diagram of a film and right there in that single sweet spot where all the circles cross-over is an important, though illusory, message about what makes animation so unique.

Malcolm Turner



## I'm Going Out For Cigarettes

France 2018 13min

Jonathan, twelve years old, lives with his sister, his mother and also some men. They all have the same face and nest in closets, drawers, TV set.

Director Osman Cerfon



## I'm Not A Robot

USA 2019 2min

Should we fear technology or own morally challenged and violent behaviour?

Director Sean Buckelew



## Live A Little

UK/Germany/Finland 2018 4min

Acting a fool convinced you're a queen. A surreal depiction of the pressure and self-control that is necessary in being a 'good woman' in a patriarchal society.

Director Jenny Jokela



### Don't Know What

Austria 2019 8min

How much entertainment is possible in avant-garde film and how much experimentation in animation?

**Director** Thomas Renoldner



### New Year

UK 2019 9min

In 1999 a boy becomes obsessed with the Y2K bug. In the future a girl is learning to be a priest in a religion based upon the artifacts left behind by the boy.

**Director** Rory Waudby-Tolley & Diana Gradinaru



### Sh\*t Happens

Czech Republic/Slovakia/France 2019 13min

An exhausted caretaker and his sexually frustrated wife, a widowed deer drowning his sorrows in loads of alcohol. An absurd triangle of events.

**Directors** Michaela Mihályi & David Štumpf



### Under the Ribcage

Belgium/France 2018 13min

A profound and moving story about a neurotic guy who's gonna' die. Maybe.

**Director** Bruno Tondeur

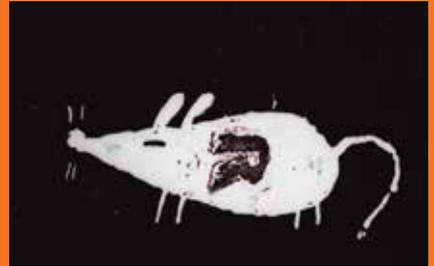


### The Levers

South Korea 2018 9min

A man accepts a job offer from a stranger on the street. But where are those strange sounds coming from and what's going on behind the curtains?

**Director** Boyoung Kim



### Trauma Chameleon

USA 2019 3min

An escaped laboratory rat navigates through a sea of punctuation.

**Director** Gina Kamentsky



### Hot and Tasty

UK 2019 4min

Two drunken girls accidentally stumble into a chicken shop crime-scene.

**Director** Laura Jayne Hodkin



### This is Pig Meat

Canada/UK 2019 4min

Peter used to be a vegetarian. Pigs used to be his friends. Now he eats them quite a lot.

**Director** Peter Millard



### Tony the Tiny Pony

New Zealand 2019 4min

Listen up cowboys, cowgirls and cow-everybody else too: gather round to hear the story of a tiny pony named Tony.

**Director** Ned Wenlock



# FMX2020

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# International **3** (18) Competition Programme: Playing with Emotion

at Barbican Sat 30 Nov 20:45

**The environmental case for doing things like eating less meat is a pretty watertight kind of deal. When somebody laid out before us the evidence that sticking cutlery into wall sockets kills people, we mostly stopped doing it. We shrugged our shoulders in quiet resignation, realised the good times were over and turned to other stimulants to get us through our days.**

The reaction to the perfectly simple, abundantly evidenced case regarding the damage that gnawing on the planet's tastiest critters is doing to the leaky vessel we are sailing through space on often draws a different reaction altogether. Far from quiet acceptance, begrudging resignation or even mute indifference, it often sparks an entirely hostile emotional response that frequently flies in the face of the facts.

That is the great thing about emotional responses. They don't need to be researched, carefully considered or withheld until an exam is passed. Quickly blend the raw ingredients, turn up the temperature and serve them still steaming - with relish.

The Vulcans would have never let things come to this environmental impasse. Sadly, we are more of a "live long and prosper" kind of crew and some of our chickens are now coming home to roost. We should probably be heading those chickens but we're eating them instead... which makes room for more chickens and round and round we go.

All of this unstable turbulence is captured in superbly elegant fashion in the opening film *Fridge* by Eugene Kolb who these days hails from Brooklyn in New York but was originally from Ukraine. Although *Fridge* is only his second independent film, Kolb is proving to be an adept chronicler of emotional experiences and reactions through the medium of animation.

*Fridge* is a cleverly constructed flyover of the facts and consequences of unchecked meat consumption by humans on the one hand and the emotional counter-

productive responses (and their subsequent consequences) to the bad news that we shouldn't allow pigs on the table on the other. This uncanny ability to utterly understand the facts of a situation but emotionally react to it in a way that actually hurts our own interests is so intractably human that it will likely be one of the tests we employ to differentiate the humans from the replicants when that time comes.

Something is definitely happening at MOME. The Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design is the premier animation school in Hungary and one of the finest in Europe. Named after the iconic Hungarian artist László Moholy-Nagy, MOME just recently opened a brand new, imposing twin building campus that stands as one of the best and most modern animation training facilities in the world.

For all of that though, grand buildings don't create great animation. The rising tide of Hungarian animators that have been making their presence felt in recent years suggests a renaissance of sorts is under way. Last year at Animateka, Ljubljana's animation festival, the Hungarian National Film Archive presented a series of five screenings of historical Hungarian animation. It was something of a revelation seeing all of this work in one place. One of the many things that stood out was the rich vein of surrealism and psychedelia (OK, that is two things) that has run through Hungarian animation for decades. While this was especially evident in the films of the state operated Pannonia Studio, it was a tangible element in much of the work showcased in those programmes.

None of this seems to be escaping the current generation of Hungarian animators. In fact, *Entropia* by Flora Anna Buda opens up the top of your head and pours it in like a concrete truck at quitting time. It is a work that operates at full aesthetic volume, taking a generous dose of Dali vapours and spraying them into the carburettor to crash start the machinery of our more modern (if not enlightened) times. Spectacular in its conception, it is a magic carpet ride of ideas and imagery.

The arrival of a new Roberto Catani film is always an occasion. One of animation's greatest party tricks is its ability to conjure 'the morph'. Moving from one place to another, very different place with a seamless eye-popping, imagination-defying metamorphosis is one of the properties that make animation such a wonderful and unique artform. To be able to do this requires artistic skills aplenty BUT being able to imagine it in the first place is what really defines the artist as an animator.

Every Catani film is nothing short of a supremely stylish masterclass in animation morphing. His beautifully artful drawn pastel style definitely burnishes this with a glowing patina that sometimes disguises how visually sophisticated these progressions, changes and swirling reformations are. They are films that amply reward multiple viewings.

His latest *Per Tutta La Vita* is all this and more. What it is all about is anybody's guess but what it undeniably IS is a visual poem of astonishing virtuosity. And that tag, my friends, is a licence to enjoy it on any level that you like!

If the programme has a show-stopper it is *Girl In The Hallway*. Animated by Valerie Barnhart, it is a wrenching visualisation of a spoken word performance written and given by Jamie DeWolf as part of an incredible podcast series called *Snap Judgement*, a San Francisco based organisation that strives to bring real and affecting stories of real and affected people out into the open.

Living is a full time job. Finding yourself responsible for another pushes you into overtime. Like any job, a side effect on focusing on the big goals can mean that things on the peripheral - even important things - just bleed into a homogenous blur. Things we should have said, hands we should have extended, questions we should have asked and corners we should have looked round all make up the soft-focus grey of this blur. We forget we are a pixel or two in that blur for so many people whose paths we cross. If we are doing our job well, for our own sakes and for the sake of anybody

we have decided to take on board our journey, that probably doesn't really matter that much. But not everybody is, and not everybody gets an allocated seat, even if they are travelling in the economy section.

*Girl In The Hallway* powerfully delivers a reminder that the blur is made up of flesh and soul in so many cases. It is a reminder that we sometimes do not see because we sub-contract prioritising the deluge of information our eyes gather to the section of our subconscious we put on auto-pilot a long time ago. We are little creatures in a big world and we can't do everything but maybe every once in a while a performance review and an update of the job description wouldn't go amiss.

At the end of one of the most emotionally diverse programmes we have probably ever pulled together at LIAF comes a film that might be able to sum it all up. #21xoxo by Sine Özbilge was made under the auspices of Belgium's masterful animation studio, Lunanime.

It is a packed catalogue of 21st Centuria. Built on a skeleton made up of nearly 70 different pieces of found and creative commons footage, it is a swipe right/left/up/down compendium of emotional questions, quandaries and equations.

If the world it depicts is not the one you live in, it is tempting to (mis)interpret its machinations as shallow and fleeting transactions. Doing so should be a reminder that every generation faces its own emotional expeditions and simply utilises the tools that have been made available to them to navigate the terrain they have parachuted into.

In that sense, nothing has changed.

*Malcolm Turner*



### **Fridge**

USA 2019 3min

A woman is overcome by her carnivorous desires.

**Director** Eugene Kolb



### **Entropia**

Hungary 2019 10min

Three parallel universes, three girls living in different circumstances. A glitch in the system causes the universes to collapse.

**Director** Flora Anna Buda



### **Alba's Memories**

Italy/Germany 2019 6min

A heartfelt story from the perspective of an elderly woman about the beginnings of a relationship and a youthful infatuation.

**Directors** Maria Steinmetz & Andrea Martignoni



### Per Tutta la Vita

France/Italy 2018 5min

During a journey to the origins of their memory, a woman and a man retrace the most important moments of their story of love.

**Director** Roberto Catani



### Girl in the Hallway

Canada 2018 10min

Why does 'Little Red Riding hood' give Jamie nightmares? It's been 15 years, and the girl in the hallway haunts him still.

**Director** Valerie Barnhart



### Memorable

France 2019 12min

Recently Louis, a painter, and his wife have been experiencing strange events. The world around them seems to be mutating - objects and people are losing their realism.

**Director** Bruno Collet



### Symbiosis

France/Hungary 2019 13min

A betrayed wife starts to investigate her husband's mistresses. Her jealousy is gradually replaced by curiosity.

**Director** Nadja Andrasev



### Emily

Netherlands 2018 8min

Looking back at her lifetime devoted to a botanical life, Emily reminisces about the people she's met and the choices she's made.

**Director** Marlies van der Wel



### #21xoxo

Belgium 2019 10min

A girl's online search for love in times of social media, speed dating, cyberlove, hipster culture and post-net attitudes.

**Directors** Sine Özbilge & Imge Özbilge

# International <sup>(15)</sup>4 Competition Programme: Being Human

at Barbican Sun 1 Dec 16:00

**What is there to say? Another splendid film from Elizabeth Hobbs. *The Flounder* is nothing short of a marvel, really. The amount of work that must go into these films is astonishing. And yet, they are coming at fairly regular intervals nowadays. An entirely independent production, it was finished not long after her previous National Film Board of Canada (NFB) co-production *I'm OK* had begun wowing audiences on the festival circuit last year.**

Her films are just a fiesta of colour and energy. A joy to just look at, every single frame could be isolated as a work of art. In fact, every single frame IS a work of art, bringing Hobbs' vibrant, powerful, utterly evocative hand-painted style on to the big screen.

Hobbs has a knack for mining an almost surrealist edge out of an historical moment. Some of her earlier films have delivered odd takes on people as diverse as Napoleon, the oldest person who ever lived in the UK and a renowned, though little known, troubled abstractionist artist from the early 20th century.

*The Flounder* is Hobbs' take on *A Fisherman And His Wife* an 18th century Brothers Grimm story which pursues the nature of greed and what some people are prepared to destroy in their pursuit of more. Part of a retrospective of her work at the Ottawa International Animation Festival earlier this year, the audience reaction to this rich drenching of visual imagery was absolutely palpable.

It also features in *Remodelling The Happiness Machine*, (also screening at LIAF 2019), a collection of ten animated shorts all made by female animators, each working in partnership with female composers. The music created by German composer Carola Bauckholt breathes a sense of 'classical whimsy' into the early scenes of *The Flounder*. Almost imperceptibly, but relentlessly and within plain view, it builds to a kind of electric chaos as the message in the heart of the tale crescendos.

Was Darwin right? A lot of people think that his Theory of Evolution espouses a mantra of survival of the fittest. Perhaps that is what his theory boiled down to but what it actually posits is that the species best able to adapt are the ones who will see more new dawns than others.

Now, you can slog through museums or impressively detailed natural history books and convince yourself that the gradual adaptation of scales to feathers, fins to feet or potatoes to chips is proof of this. But if you seek an insight into a more rapid progression of this adaptive ability conjured up in a misguided effort to save the innocent, then look no further than the measures being undertaken to protect the veritable conga line of insufficients who insist on risking their ability to steal oxygen from the rest of us in the quest for a picture of them doing something daft, meaningless or dangerous.

Swiss animator Claudius Gentinetta unleashes a pointy visual tirade aimed at this recently emergent evolutionary capacity within the Hopeless Sapiens species in his new film *Selfies*. Every shot in his film is based on an actual photograph he found digitally pinned to some ether wall. The ones of people acting like dorks on steroids are just annoying, the ones of people who seem on the cusp of being dispatched to the next world are something else and pictures of people determined to document their happy memento of the moment they had a close encounter with refugee rafts are probably enough to encourage Nostradamus to bail.

Proving all hope is not lost, however, comes immediately after in the form of Lithuanian animator Skirmanta Jakaite's *The Juggler*. It's a Rubic's Cube of a film, twisting the viewer through rapidly rotating dimensions. The dismantled physics of the worlds she creates are a constant in her work. It takes an especially vivid imagination to conjure up the blueprints for these types of films in the first place. To some extent, the imagery they are manufactured of are the kissing cousins of the artwork of MC Escher. But getting them to morph and move and getting characters to populate and navigate within

them is the next dimension of the kind of crafted reality that animation was born to depict.

Quiet and thoughtful in person, Jakaite brings a mathematician's mindset to the entire endeavour. It has always been thus. Her previous film *Non-Euclidean Geometry* is a beautifully conceived, fascinatingly rendered tribute to ..... non-euclidean geometry. It's a thing! Look it up. It's a wellspring source that, in its native form, is capable of emptying classrooms but in Jakaite's hands becomes the artistic equivalent of an MRI scan or a DNA chart from which to build art. Her ability to sustain these illusory axis' for the duration of her films is equally remarkable. They are tours into unique places.

Tackling the tyrannies of perspective and spatial physics from a different angle is Switzerland's Michael Frei in the form of his latest mind-bender *Kids*. There is an almost joyful - if not gleeful - malevolence to this raucously balletic essay on group dynamics.

This investigation works both sides of the street, documenting both psychical and psychological power displays within collectives. Like a magician, Frei uses the latent potential of a plain background as a tool to mess with our perspective, fool our eye and enlarge the space for him to hide or expose his rabbits.

Animation Festival juries are funny things. Sometimes they are funny like Robin Williams, sometimes funny like an inexplicable run of bad luck or hard to explain blisters. On the best of occasions they bring together a collection of divergent but like-minded souls that are genuinely interested in the thoughts and reactions of their temporary colleagues-in-crime. The jury for the recent Kuandu International Animation Festival in Taiwan was most definitely a single malt example of the latter. For no more than offering up his own stunted thoughts on any given film, your humble LIAF correspondent was able to absorb the wisdom and insights of master animators Raimund Krümme and Koji

Yamamura whilst enjoying the All-Access privileges of the behind the scenes buffet.

Do the best films rise to the top through this process? Of course. Of course not. Consensus is seldom a purebred creature compared to the more colourful mutt that often emerges victorious. Or perhaps all those unawarded purebreds were really just the pets of individual judges. As the wise man said, it's a funny process.

Unannointed but much discussed was *Movements* by South Korea's Dahee Jeong, the closing film of 'Being Human'. Not a comedy, it was hilarious in a way that evades attempts at explanation. The audience laughed, throughout. We, the 'seen-it-all-before' judges laughed right along. It was probably the only film we did laugh at. It was much funnier than the actual funny films.

The process of dissection took some time and went down some pretty funny laneways. For some reason, there was a desire to understand what this film was about. This is not a universal impulse amongst the animated literati. Films with unimpeded, spot-lit linear narrative pathways seldom make it to the screen in an event that celebrates the complex capabilities of animation as an artform. And of course, a generous proportion of the films we love to show at LIAF are fully abstract and offer a platform for interpretation rather than a user manual for the extraction of specific lessons. But there was something buried right in the middle of a happily strange, wilfully merry, eccentrically playful heart of *Movements* that we wanted to put our finger on.

Like many complicated things it was pretty simple. It's about movement. All kinds of movement. Movement operating at wildly varying speeds and in directions that resist an intellectual reality. *Movements* possessed of inner mechanisms that defy the paradigms they are supposed to be inextricably chained too. *Movements* that slice their own dimensions and channel their inner smart-kid to create their own reasons for being.

Really amazing stuff.

In fact, somebody should set up a festival to show this kind of stuff! If there was any justice, it would win a prize.

*Malcolm Turner*



## **The Flounder**

UK 2019 6min

One day a humble fisherman catches an enchanted fish. Can the fish help him and his wife improve their lot?

**Director** Elizabeth Hobbs



## **Something Happened**

France 2018 8min

The last day of the holidays. A siren sounds in the distance, the beach is emptying. Everyone is gone... almost.

**Director** Anne Larricq



## **Selfies**

Switzerland 2018 4min

Embarrassing, disturbing, grinning people lose themselves in the abyss of human existence.

**Director** Claudius Gentinetta



### The Juggler

Lithuania/France 2018 11min

The other side of life – the scary, unknown side we never fully grasp, but we know is there, somewhere near, so close.

**Director** Skirmanta Jakaite



### Accents

Australia 2018 2min

An ode to her mother's Puerto Rican accent. A spoken word piece written and performed by Denice Frohman.

**Director** Robertino Zambrano



### The Lonely Orbit

Switzerland 2019 9min

A satellite technicians inability to cope with his solitude causes a chain reaction in space and in his own mind.

**Directors** Frederic Siegel & Benjamin Morard



### Winter in the Rainforest

Estonia/Lithuania/Mexico 2019 9min

In the tropical rainforests of Mexico and Peru, animals, birds, insects and flowers are fragile and resilient at the same time.

**Director** Anu-Laura Tuttelberg



### Five Minutes to Sea

Russia 2018 7min

For this little girl, five minutes are an ocean of boredom that stretches on and on forever and ever.

**Director** Natalia Mirzoyan



### Kids

Switzerland 2019 9min

A bunch of faceless people make decisions based on no real logic at all.

**Director** Michael Frei



### What Else Needs To Happen?

France 2018 6min

A tribute to the victims of terrorist attacks, a message of hope and light against the darkness roaming around us.

**Director** Marie Lavis



### Movements

South Korea 2019 10min

In the space of 10 minutes the African baobab tree grows 0.008 mm, the fastest dog in the world can run 12 km, and the Earth travels 18,000 km around the Sun.

**Director** Dahee Jeong

# International **5** <sup>(18)</sup> Competition Programme: Into the Dark

at Barbican Sun 1 Dec 20:30

**Did you catch Martin Scorsese poking the blockbuster bear with a stick back in October? Perhaps he thought nobody would notice, or that nobody would particularly care or perhaps he himself didn't care. But in an interview with 'Empire Magazine' he said (among other things) that he didn't think Marvel films were cinema.**

Shazam! The reaction was immediate, often vitriolic, and in a lot of cases missed the finer nuances of the points he tried to make in the interview. For the most part he was trying to paint a picture that films that are the product of committee reviews, consumer testing and an adherence to formulas are not art in the same way that a work that is the resulting singular vision of a director intent on telling their specific story is.

Spleen ruptures aside, one of the problems he encountered (but did not address) is that the language surrounding all of this is devilishly inadequate for the conversation being undertaken. If you run animation festivals, you fly through the same linguistic air pockets.

Scorsese didn't even really go in that hard, he was just making the point that, to him, cinema means art. And he is right, at least in his world. But it is also true that a cinema is the word we employ to describe a big black box that stinks of nuked popcorn and over-salted insouciance showing anything that can be projected.

"Cinema was about revelation," he wrote in a considered response to the brouhaha.

**"Aesthetic, emotional and spiritual revelation. It was about characters - the complexity of people and their contradictory and sometimes paradoxical natures, the way they can hurt one another and love one another and suddenly come face to**

**face with themselves. It was about confronting the unexpected on the screen and in the life it dramatised and interpreted, and enlarging the sense of what was possible in the art form. And that was the key for us: it was an art form."**

That seems like a pretty decent definition of the kind of films some people try to make. It holds true, more or less, for a type of book some people want to write or the kind of theatre some people want to produce.

As a definition, it also holds enough water to describe the kind of animation some people want to create. This programme might be a bit short on monsters destroying cities, wizards pretending to ignore puberty or characters expending apparently inexhaustible reservoirs of calories whilst involving themselves in an orchestrated chase but it has other, subtler charms and speaks to the kind of animation Mr Scorsese might think of as cinema.

*Imbued Life* is a new film from the Croatian production and distribution company Bonobo Studio. Co-directed by Ivana Bosnjak and Thomas Johnson the pair last worked together on the 2014 film *Simulcra*.

They seem to specialise in intense, yet restrained, character driven films utilising a kind of timeless stop-motion animation style. One of the essentials of this form of animation is to somehow get these little puppet characters - really just collections of cloth, foam and wire in the real world - to act and emote. Achieving this is all about paying attention to the little things; inflections of body language, the pacing of the way the characters move and interact, the minutiae of the reactions their actions provoke.

*Imbued Life* delivers all of this and more in every single frame and sets the bar high for the programme to come.

Phil Mulloy has never been bothered by bars, low or high. By any measure his films are most certainly singularly unique visions of his alone. Set a bar and he will go over it, under it, around it or through it. On the right day, he might just tell you where you can store your bar.

*Now I Think I'm Happy* is his latest film. To some extent it evokes memories of his 'Zog' characters which featured in his 'Intolerance Trilogy' back in the late 1990's and early 2000's. The machine-voice bears some resemblance to the narration that punctuated *The Christies* shorts and feature. But the theme is vintage Mulloy, commentating upon the darker side of our social natures and the almost pre-ordained capacity for authority to exert its power through a familiar strategy of inducing fear, mistrust and an indifference to inquiry.

Fine-line brushwork and restrained prose is not Mulloy's style. His artistic impulses are to come out swinging and *Now I Think I'm Happy* certainly does that. In his primary role of wrangler of principles and conscience-provocateur, Mulloy has lost none of his power or energy. There was never a doubt that this film would screen in LIAF, it was just always a matter of where best to put a film that is so 'cinematic' on so many levels.

An unexpected bonus of a visit to the Dun Laoghaire campus of Dublin's Institute Of Art Design + Technology a couple of years ago was a chance meeting and a decent chat with Irish animator Jack O'Shea. He has an ability to craft odd stories that often centre around the very dark, not always clearly articulated motivations of flawed characters that present themselves to us more as human jigsaws than complete entities.

Hot off the press, his latest work *The Dream Report* takes all of this to another level. Created at a residency in Birr, which he credits with allowing him the "sustained focus" to complete it, the first thing you notice about *The Dream Report* is its utterly unique look. A kind of granular, sandpapered-glass pastel drawn procession of artwork greets the eye, appearing a little

like it has been shot with a night vision camera.

In common with his earlier work, is the intriguing fragmentation of his characters, their predicaments and their narrative trajectories. Part psychological sci-fi, part mundane road-trip laundry list, it is a film that lives without boundaries and is all the more fascinating a tale for it.

"In my live-action films, I need a certain credibility to make them work. Whereas in animation, credibility is unimportant; in fact, incredibility is better."

Regular attendees of LIAF will need no introduction to British animator Robert Morgan. And any wandering souls who are thus far unfamiliar with his work will, from this day on, have no problems summoning up the memory after this viewing.

Master of the macabre, Morgan piles in his latest distorted dystopia in the form of *Tomorrow I Will Be Dirt*. This menage-de-mutilation is a film that is impossible to follow. Starting with the dial set at dark, Morgan's deliciously scabrous puppets go darker, fast. Black on black, his thoughtful allocation of an intermission to allow a moment to catch the breath, gather the thoughts and brace for what could possibly be next is little more than a sliding pause on an otherwise slippery pathway over the edge.

The film itself though is a short, animated sequel of sorts to a German arthouse horror film titled *Schramm* by German director, writer and self-described punk poet Jorg Buttgerit. By all accounts Buttgerit likes Morgan's film so much that he has adopted it as something of an additional or alternative ending to his original work.

Screening orders in festival line-ups such as LIAF are part art, part science. Organising and ordering the flow of a programme is a wilful exercise in manipulating how an audience will experience each individual film and the programme as an entire collection. Opening films are particularly important for kicking things off and setting the mood, style and pace of the screening. Final films, it barely needs to be said, are the last word in what it was the programme hoped to achieve.

We try to send you all out into the night singing the praises of animation and generally thinking happy thoughts. But there are not many films that could follow *Tomorrow I Will Be Dirt* (and probably quite a few that would not want to) so this one had to go last.

If it helps, Morgan reports that his films

don't give him nightmares. In fact he says most of his dreams are really boring. Maybe making these is how he gets it out of his system. The rest of us just have to take our chances in the dark.

Whether or not Scorsese would call this art we may never know, but it's a safe bet he wouldn't mistake it for a new Marvel film.

*Malcolm Turner*



## **Imbued Life**

Croatia 2019 12min

A taxidermist carefully restores and returns deceased animals to their natural habitat. Before doing so she removes a roll of film from their heads.

**Directors** Ivana Bosnjak & Thomas Johnson



## **Now I Think I'm Happy**

UK 2019 5min

Or am I.....?

**Director** Phil Mulloy



## **Song Sparrow**

Iran/Denmark 2019 12min

The horrific journey of a group of refugees trying to reach a safe country in search of a better life.

**Director** Farzaneh Omidvarnia



### Drive

Argentina/France 2019 7min

Dark feelings harvested during a boy's childhood erupt into violence after his mother dies. An exploration of abuse and dysfunctional family environments.

**Director** Pedro Casavecchia



### Nettle Head

France 2019 14min

Bastien and his two buddies enter the forbidden zone. In the midst of ruins bathed in a toxic fog, something lies in wait.

**Director** Paul Cabon



### Mr Deer

Iran 2018 9min

In an abandoned train station, just like any other European train station, all humanity is lost.

**Director** Mojtaba Mousavi



### Food Chain

Estonia 2018 8min

On the one hand it's dirty work and on the other hand gorgeous product. Eat up! Yum! Yum!

**Directors** Liis Kokk & Mari Kivi



### The Dream Report

Ireland 2019 7min

A deadpan sci-fi tale interweaving moments of familiar routine with esoteric messages from deep space.

**Director** Jack O'Shea



### Tomorrow I Will Be Dirt

UK 2019 8min

Inside the twisted, deranged mind of Lothar Schramm, serial killer, lurk many sick thoughts.

**Director** Robert Morgan

# International <sup>(15)</sup>6 Competition Programme: Animated Documentaries

at Barbican Mon 2 Dec 18:30

**Last year (July 20th to be precise) was the centenary of the release of what is regarded as the first animated documentary, 'The Sinking Of The Lusitania' by Winsor McCay. Many of you will be familiar with it, we have screened it at LIAF in the past and the odd mention of it will have popped up in previous LIAF catalogues.**

Still, it is hard to overstate the importance of this film to the history of animation in general and the history of the animated documentary in particular. In précis, New York cartoonist extraordinaire, Winsor McCay became outraged at the sinking of the unarmed passenger liner the MV Lusitania off the Irish coast in 1915. Torpedoed by a German U-Boat, it sank in a matter of minutes with the loss of 1150 lives.

McCay was extraordinarily famous at the time. His elegant cartoons were printed across the United States and around the world. He was one of the first newspaper cartoonists to have his work published in colour. The chief protagonist of his most successful strip, *Little Nemo*, was as well known to the American public as Mickey Mouse would be years hence.

McCay had also created several widely seen animated films, the most famous of which by far was, of course, *Gertie The Dinosaur*. The version we see nowadays is an adaptation created specifically for screening in cinemas. The original did not have the "intertitle" sequences (those interruptions when a character's spoken words appear as text on the screen). It did not need to because originally it was screened in conjunction with the live stage performances McCay gave in which he appeared to talk to and command Gertie.

As an interesting aside to this aside, when the original *Gertie* was edited with a view to adding those intertitles, instead of simply cutting the film and inserting the intertitle, the original editor cut out and removed entire sequences of the film similar in length to each intertitle that was added. Editing was still an emerging art. Last year, Canadian

animator and good friend of LIAF, Luc Chamberland, sat down and re-animated all those missing sequences by hand, thus restoring this film to its original form and length. Thanks Luc!

McCay immediately struck the same problem all animated documentarians encounter. In a visual medium in which absolutely every piece of imagery is an act of wilful creation, how does a filmmaker strike a balance between the objectivity they presumably want their film to possess and the subjectivity of the way they create it.

One way is to wrangle in as many independent voices as possible. That is exactly what Rory Waudby-Tolley did in the making of his film *There's Something In The Water* which opens this programme.

Who knew there was only one natural lake in Texas? It's not even that big. And it's really only half in Texas anyway. But the problem Texas has (well, ONE of the problems Texas has) is that there is a species of floating fern that is spreading across lakes in the southern USA choking the life out of them. The scale of this spread is almost beyond imagination. Using the properties of animation to help the audience get their heads around this scale is part of the success of this film. But it is the style that Waudby-Tolley brings to animating the characters that, between them, provide the narration for the film that is really the key to its success. It is hard to really put a finger on but there is something about animating these people that gives them a more 'universal' attraction. It helps to capture and guide our attention and in the process perhaps prevent the film and its message from becoming just another cautionary tale, jostling for attention in an increasingly crowded field. If there is a singular thread that runs through the entire programme, it really is this.

A story given emotional weight by the voice of a person or people who lived it is woven seamlessly into an all-encompassing narrative by the animation which delivers layer upon layer of that story that no other

medium could bring to life.

Some of these voices resonate with hope and defiance in the face of tragedy or adversity. In the space of less than two minutes, British animator - and Paralympic athlete - Sophie Kamlish manages to list more things about the realities of dealing with a prosthetic limb than most of us would accumulate in a lifetime in her gem of a film, *Amputee Undefined*. It is all done with a very beguiling combination of understated matter-of-factness and candid humour. The use of animation builds on her abundantly positive personality and magnifies, in rapid sequentiality, every single point she makes. The animation, in other words, helps it all make more sense.

The capacity that the unique properties of animation possess to expand on the words of strangers telling their stories is equally as powerful and effective when those stories plumb the darker side of the human experience. A clutch of films within this programme stand as formidable evidence of exactly that.

Never is this more so than when it comes to trying to discuss mental illness, its effects and what life from behind that illness looks and feels like.

*My Troubled Mind - Jack* by UK animator Salvador Maldonado is a film of just simply beautiful visuals. This helps as we follow Jack through a series of life-changing events which lead increasingly to isolation, low self-esteem and eventually to potentially fatal anorexia.

The visual style of the artwork deployed by Maldonado throughout the film provides the extra axis that an audience really needs to better understand the internal world that Jack is describing. Eloquent and lucid as that verbal portrayal is, it is the animation that brings home the inner reality of the sliding doors realm that Jack has found himself entangled within.

Taking a completely different tack is Switzerland's Marcel Barelli. He decides

that a thick coating of humour is the only hope he has to avoid a family showdown when he turns to animating a documentary exploring the obsession virtually every male in his extended family has with hunting. Every male, that is, except him. By cleverly involving many of them, but particularly his clearly bemused father, Barelli ingeniously hedged his bets. On the one hand he has created a documentary of sorts that shares his bewilderment with the attraction of hunting with anybody who wants to receive it that way. But on the other, it might just be a funny cartoon about hunting. Nothing worth disowning a son over - probably.

The closing film in this year's Animated Documentaries programme is a grand example of just why we love to dedicate an entire session to the genre. *Bloomers* was made by the UK's own Samantha Moore who has been making animated documentaries for the best part of 20 years.

*Bloomers* is a testament to authenticity of process at all levels. In part, it is a film that questions the validity of the economic model that seems to have snuck up on so many of us. But the core subject matter is a group of British workers who are still designing and producing underwear in the UK.

Moore seems to have embedded herself within this group and come away with a great deal more than just the surface story. The finished film itself is actually animated with cloth. This was achieved by hand-drawing thousands of the images required to make the animation and then printing those images - ALL of those images - onto the materials used for making the garments.

One of the things Moore discovered is that all of these different materials have very different properties. Silk, in particular is more slippery than other fabrics and is much more prone to moving and distorting when being handled. It turns out that, amongst the skilled craftspeople at the factory her film focuses on, silk and its troublesome properties was such a polarising subject that it warranted a dedicated scene in her film. Moore learned first-hand what a difficult material it is to handle when she decided to print that particular scene onto silk and then try and photograph all those little silk panels to create the animation. It looks great though!

These are the kinds of lengths animated documentarians – the good ones – go to in ensuring that their films are as complete as possible. The story can only say so much, it is the power of animation that builds a sub-narrative texture into these films, helping say what words cannot.

*Malcolm Turner*



## **There's Something in the Water**

UK 2019 8min

Caddo Lake is the only natural lake in Texas, but its delicate eco-system is threatened by a seemingly unstoppable invasive species of floating fern: Giant Salvinia.

**Director** Rory Waudby-Tolley



## **Amputee Undefined**

UK 2019 2min

The troublesome aspects of being an amputee. However, having one foot can actually create more opportunities than it takes away.

**Director** Sophie Kamlish

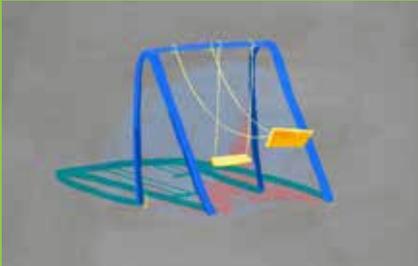


## **My Dad's Name was Huw. He was an Alcoholic Poet.**

UK 2019 8min

An attempt to unravel the state of mind of the filmmakers late alcoholic father, through the poems he left behind.

**Director** Freddie Griffiths



### Conception - Why I Won't Teach My Son Black Codes

UK 2018 4min

Her child is just 1, but she knows soon he will be perceived as a "big black boy." Can she overcome the systems she feels are in place to oppress her young son?

**Director** Jocie Juritz



### My Troubled Mind - Jack

UK 2019 6min

A teenager, Jack, talks about his eating disorder and how it affects his mental health and relationships with friends and family at home and at school.

**Director** Salvador Maldonado



### You are at the Bottom of my Mind

UK 2018 6min

For 100 years the communities of Lewis and Harris have suffered a silent grief. 100 years since HMV Iolaire hit the infamous rocks, the Beasts of Holm, on its way in to Stornoway Harbour.

**Director** Catriona Black



### A Strange Trial

Switzerland 2018 10min

A film about hunting that is against hunting - even though the filmmaker comes from a family of hunters!

**Director** Marcel Barelli



### Umbilical

USA 2019 7min

An intimate and honest conversation between mother and daughter reflecting on the impact of abusive parental relationships and being a woman growing up in China.

**Director** Danski Tang



### Apart

Czech Republic 2018 10min

A portrait of three young people who had to grown up too soon. They have all shared the same experience - when they were teenagers, one of their parents died.

**Director** Diana Cam Van Nguyen



### Esperanca

France 2019 5min

Fifteen-year-old Esperança has just arrived from Angola with her mother. At Amiens railway station, they don't know where to sleep and try to find someone to help them.

**Directors** Cécile Rousset, Benjamin Serero & Jeanne Paturle



### Bloomers

UK 2019 10min

The story of a lingerie factory in Manchester. Workers recount the history of Headen & Quarmby, UK manufacturing, and traditions of making.

**Director** Samantha Moore

# International **7** (15) Competition Programme: Looking for Answers

at Barbican **Mon 2 Dec 20:45**

**In a world where no one is unique, what makes me special? What makes me stand out? What makes me one of a kind? That is the opening refrain of *Deepness Of The Fry* by Danish animator August Niclasen.**

They are good questions. And a lot of people are looking for the answers.

In a world of billions, surely no one is utterly unique. If our new world of hyper-connectivity taught us nothing else (and it pretty much hasn't) it has taught us this. Or at least, it seems to be imposing this hollowing perception into the hearts and minds of so many people that appear determined to waste so much of their time proving - mostly to themselves - that they are.

Ironically, the very process of trying to document a fake, or at least a curated, uniqueness probably robs the questor of their truly human essence. Physiologically there is not that much that separates your average person from a banana. They are both 80% water for starters. Using that metric there is almost nothing that separates a - say - Canadian man from a Japanese woman. What actually defines the overwhelming bulk of their 'uniqueness' is actually the decisions they make, the way they choose to react to what life throws at them or the passions they elect to pursue. How and how much of their inner selves they choose to reveal and to whom is probably the most important trait of all. The grid that empowers and connects all the devices that so many people use to chase this amorphous goal uses our every utterance against them. It automatically logs some assumption about the kind of person it thinks we are and then uses that burgeoning profile to shape the information about the world we receive and sell us stuff.

And yet, connecting with other people is one of the most fundamental yearnings we have. Most of us would not last long without it. And all of that bonding and bouncing off others must also, surely, help us develop and grow into ever more unique creatures.

This revolving cause-and-effect is what sits right in the middle of *Deepness Of The Fry*. In a programme entitled 'Looking For Answers', it certainly does sterling service in at least posing this, the biggest of all the questions. In the end, it makes the point that it is all the little things we choose to do that, collectively, give us each a unique make-up. Everybody, it suggests, is made out of the same pieces, it is the way we each arrange them that makes us all a bit different from the person on the next table who is tackling the same jigsaw puzzle.

It is a theme that, somehow, is picked up and carried forward by the following film, an astonishing piece of moving image art titled *My Generation*. Animated by French animator Ludovic Houplain, it is crafted from an original idea by Mirwais, a songwriter, producer and leading light in the French electronic music scene.

It is a provocative work that uses a single, eight-minute tracking shot that takes us through an encyclopaedic inventory of cultural, sporting, social, political and religious markers, challenging us to understand the links and the dangers - and whether these things are making us emptier vessels than we realise.

It will come as no surprise to learn that Houplain is a co-founder of the French animation and design studio H5 which, among a long list of achievements, made the Academy Award winning *Logorama* in 2009.

The intellectual gymnastics that it takes to conceive of this rolling bundle of imagery borders on the unimaginable. So much work!! It is simply not possible to take it all in as the journey speeds down the motorway. The relationship of every single totem has a relationship or connection to those that preceded and will proceed it. The questions it poses may not be specific nor the answers to them the same for every viewer. But it is one hell of a message.

*Muedra* by Cesar Diaz Melendez of Spain must have been a fearsome thing to work on as well. Making any animated film is a lot

of work but this production is next level stuff. This type of stop-motion animation is such an elemental form of filmmaking. It is nothing but hands-on, hand-made work right from frame one until the closing credits roll.

Taking the whole carnival outside and animating everything in and against a real-world terrain opens up a thousand possibilities and a million problems. Clouds move and change shapes, the wind and tides ebb and flow, the sun roams across the sky dragging the shadows with it. The stop-motion animator must understand the rhythm of these elements and factor them into the pacing of the film, especially in relation to the way the characters in the film move about.

In *Muedra* this is handled flawlessly. It is easy to just surrender to the sheer quirky cuteness of the characters. But in stop-motion, a key consideration is the number of different pieces (be they characters or bits of the environment) that are being made to move at any given time. Each additional component multiplies the complexity of the animation and the potential for mistakes exponentially.

Working outside, particularly on the scale evident in *Muedra* multiplies that multiplication. Inside, a couple of puppets are set up on a benchtop and the process boils down to being a matter of lean in, move the puppet, lean out, shoot the frame, repeat, repeat. Outside, the filmmaker may have to retreat several metres to be out of the frame and in many cases the characters are down on the ground or up a tree. In a number of shots, the characters walk across sand or soft dirt and the animator has to be mindful of leaving traces of their own footfalls in an environment in which they are not meant to exist. All in all, *Muedra* stands as a remarkable feat of stop-motion animating.

New York animator Patrick Smith returns to LIAF with his new film *Candy Shop* which, as usual, totally hits the mark. In a world awash with medication, much of it sold in the pursuit of finding answers to questions that may not really exist, it is bracing to

see so much of this medicinal bounty in the galloping parade in which Smith has arranged it all.

Although a talented artist who has drawn many of his earlier animated films, Smith has more recently been creating a catalogue of work that uses rapid-fire montages of real, physical materials that tweak his curious nature. Guns and skateboards featured among his earlier fascinations but for now he has turned his mind to the unholy torrent of pills and syringes that are supposed to fix all that ails us.

The concept of the technique is a pretty simple one in theory. The way the films are made is clearly visible before us. But there are several knacks to making these sorts of works. Pure logistics is the first. You have to be able to marshal all the cast members of your film. Just how does one actually obtain possession (however temporary) of nearly 3,000 pieces of (presumably restricted) medication?

From there, the real art is to arrange this plethora of objects into some sort of order that allows the film to flow exactly the way you want it. Each item has its own distinct shape, colour and dimensions. Some have markings or indentations. Somehow, some way each must lead to the next. Unless this is done with an artist's eye, the result will be little more than a visual blancmange that almost immediately bleaches any power to offer an interpretable point. But Patrick Smith has completely nailed it, and nailed it with precision.

*Malcolm Turner*



## Deepness of the Fry

Denmark 2019 4min

An existential crisis disguised as a collage film. In a world where it's all been said, felt and done before, can anyone truly be unique?

**Director** August Niclasen



## My Generation

France 2018 8min

A vehicle reverses down a highway through every great plague of our time: art, data, sports, religion, sex, politics and finance.

**Director** Ludovic Houplain



## Castle

Japan 2019 5min

During the period of the 'Provinces of War' many lives were lost. A castle architect discovers the possible role of a tearoom as a place for warriors to regain humanity.

**Director** Ryotaro Miyajima



## Blieschow

Germany 2019 10min

Vast plains that seem to reach into the sky, colourful scenery and a red dog. This is how Tom experiences summer in Blieschow, his grandfather's farm.

**Director** Christoph Sarow



### The Opposites Game

USA 2019 5min

A classroom erupts into a war of words as students grapple with a seemingly simple prompt: what is the opposite of a gun?

**Director** Anna Samo



### The Six

China 2019 5min

A man, a woman and a crane, in six repeating scenes.

**Directors** Xi Chen & Xu An



### The Flood is Coming

Switzerland/UK 2018 9min

A forest hermit tries to prepare for a flood, but he becomes distracted by his noisy neighbour - the hermit's left eye.

**Director** Gabriel Bohmer



### Ratio Between Two Volumes

Portugal 2018 8min

Everything in Mr Full's days he finds fulfilling. He never forgets a memory or an emotion. On the contrary Mr Empty finds nothing to satisfy him, so he decides to go on a journey.

**Director** Catarina Sobral



### There Were Four of Us

USA 2019 7min

Four characters are trapped in a room as they try to figure out the reason behind a death.

**Director** Cassie Shao



### The Coin

USA/China 2019 7min

In the Chinese New Year, finding the hidden coin inside of dumplings means having a blessed year ahead. When a woman loses her years worth of coins on a train, her life in a new country begins with a search to find them.

**Director** Siqi Song



### Muedra

Spain 2018 9min

Life can spring from anywhere, nature can behave strangely and days can last for minutes. Although everything is familiar to us, nothing is what it seems in this place.

**Director** Cesar Diaz Melendez



### Albatross Soup

USA 2018 7min

A man gets off a boat. He walks into a restaurant and orders albatross soup. He takes one sip, pulls out a gun and shoots himself to death. So why did he kill himself?

**Director** Winnie Cheung



### Candy Shop

USA 2019 3min

Pills and capsules are choreographed into a cacophony of shape, colour and size, resulting in a satirical commentary about our infatuation with prescription drugs.

**Director** Patrick Smith

# International **8** (15) Competition Programme: Long Shorts

at Barbican Tue 3 Dec 20:45

**It takes time to think. Reflection tends to work best at a slower tempo. Joining dots for oneself can be a longer process than being catapulted along the shortest path from A to B. 'Long Shorts' is the programme that allows these types of films to stand on their merits.**

Previous introductions to this programme have talked about the need to ensure we have a programming structure that does not set up an unholy trade-off in which one great 20-minute film is ditched for no other reason than to allow a clutch of shorter films to play. 'Long Shorts' certainly helps curb that impulse. But it also carves out a space in which these often intensely thoughtful films can find a more natural resting place as they journey through our festival.

Theodore Ushev's latest film *The Physics Of Sorrow* is a fine example of all this and more. Ushev seldom does things by halves. Made at the National Film Board of Canada in Montreal, it is none-the-less based on a unique novel of the same name by Bulgarian writer Georgi Gospodinov. Released to international acclaim in 2012, it was translated into more than a dozen languages and made Gospodinov an international name in literary circles.

This is not the first time Ushev has translated Gospodinov's work from page to screen. LIAF regulars (and anybody with even a passing passion for auteur animation) will recall Ushev's 2016 film *Blind Vaysha* which was based on a Gospodinov short story. It went on to receive a nomination for an Academy Award, although it missed out to Pixar's *Piper*.

To animate *The Physics Of Sorrow*, Ushev had to more or less (re)invent the technique known as Encaustic Painting. Although thousands of years old, it has never been used to make an animated film. It involves melting down beeswax, mixing it with colour pigments and then applying it in much the same way one applies paint.

It is a technique with an extraordinary history, having been used by the early Egyptians to

paint portraits of the deceased onto their internment capsules when they died. When archaeologists began discovering these treasures in the early 1900's they were stunned at how well preserved the artworks were.

In applying this beeswax 'paint' to paper Ushev creates paintings rich in texture imbued with a kind of restrained vibrancy that gives him the ability to depict the exact sense of movement he wanted his film to subtly radiate.

It turns out that it is a highly manipulable technique. Once painted, the wax mixture dries very quickly. But it is easy to warm up again (Ushev uses a common, garden-variety hairdryer) and this process allows for multiple chances to change and craft the picture. Additionally, when it has dried, it is also possible to carve the wax which provides abundant opportunities for creating the unusual shading and undulating finesse that is such a captivating feature of *The Physics Of Sorrow*.

**"It is a very physical technique because it demands a lot of physical effort,"**

Ushev says. "And you have to be very fast because the liquid hot wax dries very fast."

Fast is what Ushev does. It's his party trick. He is renowned for the pace he can animate at when he gets on a roll. At nearly 30 minutes *The Physics Of Sorrow* required thousands of these encaustic paintings to be completed. At his peak, Ushev was turning out up to 50 a day. There are few animators capable of matching this.

Regina Pessoa's new film *Uncle Thomas: Accounting For The Days* is just ravishingly, handsomely, beautiful. One of the judges at a festival in Taiwan earlier this year was asked to write the paragraph outlining why it was being awarded a Special Commendation. He penned:

"This film is a wonderful mix of classic styling

perfectly blended with the superb personal art that is so recognisable as Pessoa's. It is a film with a simple, yet authentic emotional centre and is a fine example of how, so often, the best art comes from the simplest and most individual of motivations." Could not have said it better myself.

Pessoa's Uncle Thomas would never lead armies, conquer mountains or defeat tyranny, but his little eccentricities would be the first pulses of light that would begin to define the path that would lead her to a career in animation. Beyond the inspiration to begin drawing, the film's greatest charm is really an unspoken, undefined sense that somehow it was her Uncle Thomas that opened the way for her to think like an artist.

The messages and inspirations bound up within Lia Bertels' *Dear Night* do not reveal themselves as readily. That is by design. Bertels, a graduate of Belgium's La Cambre animation school, thinks of herself as a writer as much as an animator. Her passion is to "represent the invisible in each one of us, the hidden gesture that betrays us all in our fairest character, leaving behind a profound humanism."

Viewed through this prism, the introspectively complex little collection of animal characters that populate *Dear Night* are avatars for a range of the often unvoiced emotional enigmas that sometimes threaten to puncture our facades.

A similar thing is happening in *Daughter*, the film Daria Kashcheeva made at the FAMU animation school in Prague. Rather than dialogue, Kashcheeva relies on the directly expressive capacity of her characters eyes to build the emotional landscape her two protagonists populate.

By hand drawing every eye movement directly on to the face of her puppets, she confers a conduit of simmering personal sovereignty and almost immeasurable vulnerability in equal measure. This extraordinarily deceptive property is what gives *Daughter* its remarkable potency. Different people will take away different

lessons from it but nobody will wonder what it is the film is trying to explore.

The programme closes with a roaring, visually saturated shout-out to the early Eastern European rave scene in all its gory glory. *Acid Rain* by Polish animator Tomek Popakul is about as different as it is possible to be from his previous films, including the acclaimed *Ziegenort* (2013), which was a quieter, more inward looking surrealist black and white film. *Acid Rain*, on the other hand is a veritable drenching of noise, colour and often confronting sensations.

In an interview with 'It's Nice That', Popakul aptly describes the psychedelic infused colour palette he employed as "a mix of Eastern European landscape-melancholy plus the UV and new age colours of early raves from the '90s and maybe more contemporary Goa trance parties too," .....if that gives you an idea.

What Popakul was chasing was a visceral sense of the chaotic and conflicting energies unleashed on and by a social group of young people experiencing a culture and a panorama of freedom they had long been denied.

"I didn't want to pay a naïve tribute to the period. I wanted to show the dark side, too. I was intrigued by the contradictions: the feelings of family-like community and alienation in the crowd, the attempts to build a modern hippie utopia, drug-related problems and crime. I wanted to make a spiritual movie with both light and darkness. You can choose your path, but you will pay the price"

This is captured brilliantly in the prolonged dance scene upon which much of the film turns. Visually it is a stunning, powerfully rendered set piece that brings together the dangerously electric energy of the era and unleashes the emotionally distorted nature of many of its participants. Popakul spent a sizeable chunk of the film's €50,000 budget on hiring a fully kitted out motion-capture studio and a team of professional dancers to create this part of the film. It was money well spent, and in the end, much quicker (and probably cheaper) than the more laborious methods he had been employing, to limited effect.

"It's OK to be lost and it's important that you are constantly searching," he muses.

True enough, but it can take time to find that spot and making that kind of time is exactly what Long Shorts was built for.

Malcolm Turner



## The Physics of Sorrow

Canada 2019 27min

A man sifts through memories from his youth in Bulgaria through his increasingly rootless adult years in Canada.

Director Theodore Ushev

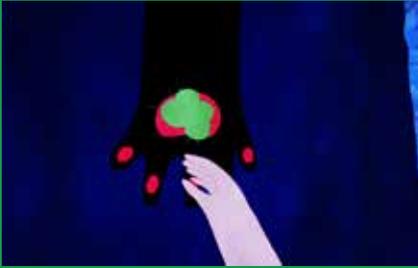


## Uncle Thomas: Accounting for the Days

Portugal/France/Canada 2019 13min

From the filmmakers' childhood memories, this film pays tribute to her Uncle Thomas, a humble but eccentric man, who had a simple and ordinary life.

Director Regina Pessoa

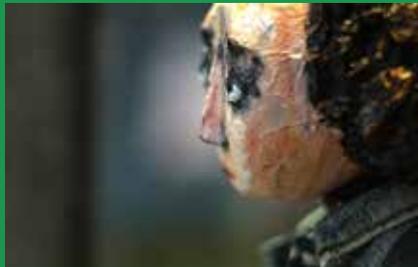


### Sweet Night

Belgium 2019 14min

During the Himalayan winter, a bear struggles to sleep. When a white monkey suggests they go to eat some honey at his aunts, a beautiful winter night surrounds them.

Director Lia Bertels



### Daughter

Czech Republic 2019 15min

Should you hide your pain? Withdraw into your inner world, full of longing for your father's demonstrative love? Or should you be understanding and forgive before it is too late?

Director Daria Kashcheeva



### Acid Rain

Poland 2019 26min

A young female hitchhiker meets up with a drug dealer and they head off in his van on a drug-fuelled trip to nowhere in particular.

Director Tomek Popakul

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**barbican**

**British** <sup>(15)</sup>  
**Showcase**

at the Barbican **Fri 29 Nov 21:00**

**A comprehensive screening of the very best recently released British animation, including several world premieres. Check the pulse of the British animation scene, meet many of the filmmakers and see the films that will take British animation to the world. Nobody in the world screens more British animation than LIAF and this snapshot of the state of British animation paints a vibrant picture of a spirited and imaginative animation nation. Before the screening there is a chance to meet many of the animators, hear them talk about their films and ask them questions about their work.**

This screening is a mix of several LIAF regulars whose films have screened at the festival over the years - Will Anderson, Anna Ginsburg, Phil Mulloy and Kate Jessop - alongside some of the most promising filmschool graduates and first-time filmmakers. 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 renowned filmmakers Peter Millard, Liz Hobbs, Robert Morgan, Rory Waudby-Tolley, Salvador Maldonado, Samantha Moore and Jocie Juritz as well as spectacular graduate work from Laura Jayne Hodkin, Sophie Kamlish and Freddie Griffiths.

It's also heartwarming to see new films from relative newcomers Jenny Jokela, Catriona Black and Gabriel Bohmer whose work we have championed at previous LIAFs.

And finally there are several British filmmakers whose works are sprinkled through the rest of the festival in the 'Female Figures' programme, Edge of Frame, kids programmes, 'Music Video Session', 'Late Night Bizarre' and the 'Best of the Next'.

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 Vlademersky*



## **Where's The Butter, Betty?**

UK 2018 3min

I'm being serious now, Betty. Where IS the butter?

**Director** Will Anderson



**Will is a BAFTA winning Writer/ Director from the Scottish Highlands. Will's first short film *The Making***

***of Longbird* won over 30 awards internationally at film festivals & received a British Academy Award in 2013. Since then he has written and directed other shorts films including *Monkey Love Experiments* with co-director, Ainslie Henderson, and is currently developing a feature project. Will also works as a freelance writer, director & animator on film, television, web & interactive projects.**

### ***What made you make the film?***

My girlfriend at the time kept moving the butter in the kitchen, so I made a film about it to try to make sure she stopped doing that.

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

The film was made very quickly, maybe in around 2 days. I like to work as fast as possible with character animation to keep it dynamic and interesting. It feels like improvising through animation generates something really exciting for me, and gives the opportunity to have the characters make up their own minds about who they are.

### ***Where do you get your ideas from?***

I come up with most of my ideas in the shower.

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

I'm making a game with Niall Tessier-Lavigne. And I've been making a longer film for some time. Both will hopefully be available soon ;)



### One Liner

UK 2019 7min

A has-been comedian attempts to make his comeback on board a cruise liner, but he's only used to performing with a partner, and now he's on stage alone.

**Director** Matthew Lee



### Grandad Was A Romantic

UK 2019 5min

My grandad was a romantic man. He once saw a picture of my granny and realised she was the love of his life. So he decided to go and meet her.

**Director** Maryam Mohajer



### //-Sleeper

UK 2018 7min

In a dying industrial town a recluse wakes each day to a strange anomaly on the horizon.

**Director** Jordan Buckner



**Matthew is an award winning animation director working in a range of disciplines including stop motion and 2D drawn**

**animation. His films have been shown in many different festivals picking up a host of awards along the way. He recently graduated from the National Film and Television School (NFTS).**

#### **What made you make the film?**

I made *One Liner* as I wanted to pay tribute to a very British bygone era of entertainment. I'm fascinated by classic British Comedy and also the tragic elements and pathos that come with the persona of an entertainer past their prime, resigned to cruise ship seasons.

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

The film is my graduation film from the NFTS and was a collaborative effort across many different departments. For the animation itself I combined stop motion puppet animation with 2D drawn line work traced over the top for facial expressions.

#### **Where do you get your ideas from?**

In this case watching too many old sitcoms and classic comedy programmes! I was also taken on a Norwegian cruise a few years ago that was filled with characters that aren't dissimilar to the ones found in *One Liner*. In general with making films I like to start with an idea that makes me laugh and work forward from there.

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

I am currently developing a new film with a decidedly darker although still comedic tone. The basic premise is of an agoraphobic who is forced to confront their fears when their house starts to shrink.



**Maryam is an award-winning animator-director who was born in Tehran just before living through revolution, war and**

**immigration. Originally a painter, she discovered animation after moving to the UK in 2000 and got her MA in animation from the RCA. Her short films have been screened at many festivals. She lives and works as an animator, writer and director in London.**

#### **What made you make the film?**

To begin with, it was based on my own grandparents interesting relationship. Then I started thinking about love stories, fairytales and how sweet they are and how we tend to ignore what really happens during the happily ever after.

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

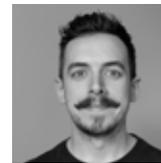
First of all the story has to work. When I'm finally happy with the script then I get on with the visuals. It's a bit experimental; my painting background kicks in and I start with a certain image in my mind, then lots of layers and drawings and textures later. I usually finish with something quite different from the original concept.

#### **Where do you get your ideas from?**

People I've known. People I've met. People I've heard about. People I see on the train or on the bus. I love people watching and listening to other people's stories.

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

I've finished my new script for another short animation. Got my team ready. Just about to start sound recording and storyboarding.



**Jordan is an artist and filmmaker born in the dead parts of England making work about what that means. His current work explores**

**grief, mental health and modern Britain through film, animation and painting. Outside of his practice, Jordan lectures at the University of Portsmouth.**

#### **What made you make the film?**

The primary inspiration was the small, industrial towns like the one I grew up in. These places felt troubled, lost and dying, and although these landscapes seem harsh, they still have their share of romance and poetry. I wanted to explore the beguiling nature of those places in Britain.

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

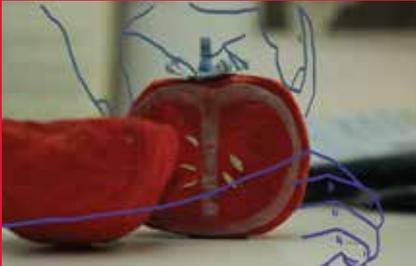
It's a black and white, indie CG animation made in a basement in Kent. That sounds depressing, but I feel like those elements give the film a certain tone. There are no big-budget effects or crew, just me hacking stuff together in Autodesk Maya.

#### **Where do you get your ideas from?**

I like to lock into a certain mood before I put anything down on paper. The tone of the film is inspired by what is around me - the strangeness of the British landscape, the films of Tarkovsky or Lynn Ramsey, the short stories of Raymond Carver - all of those weird places and pieces of art that seem to communicate with you via some emotive language.

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

I recently finished work on a short film called *When the Tides Went Down*. It explores climate change, the British countryside and our different responses to these turbulent times. Next, I've got some ideas for a film about a man who kicks his dog.



## Margot

UK 2019 2min

Margot worked as a nurse in Africa during 1958-1978. Her letters home to her parents tell the story of her life.

**Director** Sara Spanghagen



## Sent Away

UK 2019 6min

How to survive life in a boarding school.

**Director** Rosa Fisher



## Ada

UK 2019 11min

Stranded in the Arctic with a dying man, a seamstress must find the strength to survive if she ever hopes to return home to her son.

**Director** Dane Winn



**Sara is a Swedish illustrator and animator recently graduated from Kingston School of Art. Her work focuses**

**mainly on narrative and storytelling. The process often starts by researching real-life stories, which she believe gives meaning and depth to her work.**

### **What made you make the film?**

I have always been interested in my great aunts life and her stories. When my mum inherited all of her letters I decided that I wanted to dig deeper into them and to research what she actually experienced.

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

My process is often very different depending on the project but in general I sketch a lot, make mind maps and try to play around with different materials until I find something I like. I also need to talk through my work with other people and get their feedback throughout the process.

### **Where do you get your ideas from?**

I like to take inspiration from real life. Other peoples experiences and stories inspire me and it's usually where I get my ideas from. It can be small details about the world that I didn't know or it can be bigger social issues that I think need addressing. After that I like to adapt it to what I want to say.

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

Right now I'm working as a junior animator at Local Hero in London. In the future I would like to make animated feature films and work with model-making.



**Rosa is an award winning animator using observation from everyday life to tell stories which are playful and engaging,**

**but have underlying social criticisms. She aims for a deceptive simplicity, communicated through expressive drawing, visual metaphor and sound.**

### **What made you make the film?**

The film is about the impact that boarding schools have on children and how it affects them as adults. My Dad was really impacted by his experience with being sent away to school and so I wanted to tell his story. Boarding schools force children to suppress their vulnerabilities in order to cope with the sense of abandonment it brings. This has wider consequences when you realise that the majority of the people leading the UK have been educated in boarding schools. This political link was another reason for me wanting to draw attention to this through a film.

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

I went through everything my dad had that was connected to the time he was at the boarding school, looking through his school reports, letters and photographs. I ended up with 3 hours of recorded interview and then went through a long process of deciding how much of the interview to include and how much to let the narrative lead the film.

### **Where do you get your ideas from?**

My films most often stem from observation and from things that have happened to me. I feel so much more invested in it if I have experienced what has influenced it.

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

I am currently freelancing as an animator, but really want to make another film exploring similar ideas of masculinity.



**Dane works as a Director and 3D Generalist in the Commercials department of Blue Zoo. Over the years**

**he has directed several award-winning short films producing animated content in a variety of styles.**

### **What made you make the film?**

I pitched the film to Blue Zoo for the summer short film brief. I was interested in the theme of woman versus nature and researched many stories in history, but it was Ada Blackjack's experience in the Arctic that really grabbed me. It seemed to be fairly unknown so seemed like a good story to bring to light.

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

We used Unreal Engine to render the film in realtime. We hadn't tried it before so there was a big learning curve, but once we got going we found there were lots of clever tools we could program to help us achieve the unique look we wanted.

### **Where do you get your ideas from?**

This film was inspired by true events, but I get a lot of my ideas from subjects that fascinate me and asking 'what if' questions about them. Sometimes simpler ideas just spring to mind, but for bigger stories, it begins with a notion that I then start developing and it can turn into something else entirely.

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

I'm currently working on a commercial project at Blue Zoo. I'm also taking some time to write short stories as literary pieces, then see if any would be suitable for a short film or something bigger.



## Heatwave

UK 2019 7min

In the midst of a searing heatwave two little children find a way to cool everyone down.

**Director** Fokion Xenos



## In the Future

UK 2019 5min

The Future is bright and everyone is going to be happy.

**Director** Phil Mulloy



## Queerer Than Thou

UK 2019 2min

Who is the queerest of them all? This queer off will reveal all!

**Director** Kate Jessop



**Fokion is a Director/ Designer from Athens, Greece currently based in the UK. He has a BA from TEI of Athens**

**and an MA in Directing Animation from the National Film and Television School.**

### **What made you make the film?**

*Heatwave* is a film about the summertime of my childhood back in the Greek islands. We wanted to make a film that was bright, colourful and fun. Nowadays we tend to lose focus of what is truly important in life so we aimed to make a film that not only comments on that but also brings everyone together!

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

The claymation / cutout hybrid technique was conceived to create puppets that are flexible enough to emphasise the physical humour of the narrative. I wanted to explore the distance between the flexibility of 2D animation with the material textures and craftyness of stop-frame. For the crowd shots more than 800 individual characters were created.

### **Where do you get your ideas from?**

We focused a lot on the pacing to take each audience member on a rollercoaster ride through a story that everyone could understand and relate to. I am a big fan of the animation mediums past and I always enjoy combining old-fashioned techniques with new technologies. This film is very much inspired by the often overlooked work of George Pal.

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

I am finishing a stop-motion music video that will come out at the beginning of the year alongside more freelance work. In addition I am part of KinoLab, a European Script Lab forum between 6 countries, where I am developing a children/Teenager series.



**Phil's visual style is distinctive in its use of primitive, often skeletal figures and minimalist backgrounds. His**

**animations have been described as "satirical grotesque" and often portray the dark side of human nature and contemporary social, political, and religious values in a humorous and at times, shocking way.**

He has made over 30 animated films many of which are in themed groupings based on Hollywood genres. He has won many international awards for his work and has conducted several workshops for young animators.



**Kate is an award-winning filmmaker whose work spans across animated shorts, promos and artist's film and video.**

**She has exhibited extensively in national and international festivals and touring programmes such as the Best of Birds Eye View, LIAF and Tricky Women. She is the founder of Animation Girl Band and is the creator of comedy web series Tales From Pussy Willow.**

### **What made you make the film?**

*Queerer Than Thou* is taken from the former web series *Tales From Pussy Willow*. It was crowd funded by the fans as I took the series into the Berlinale Talent Lab. This particular episode comments on the pointless inter-fighting and judgement that can happen within the queer community.

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

The actors are shot against green screen wearing green swim caps. This allows me to composite them into specially designed hairdos which turns them into their characters. They are then united with their animated body and composited into the animated world of *Pussy Willow*! You can check out all the behind the scenes stuff on Instagram and on the Facebook page #TalesFromPussyWillow

### **Where do you get your ideas from?**

With my comedy writing I work with satire as cultural commentary. So just my day-to-day existence usually make it into a *Pussy Willow* episode!

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

After the series was selected for development in the Berlinale Talent Lab it was picked up for production by Hipster Films. It's now been developed into a 20-minute sketch comedy format so watch this space!



### **Nigel**

UK 2019 9min

A true story of Nigel the gannet who fell in love with a concrete statue.

**Director** Natasza Cetner



### **Better**

UK 2019 5min

A fantasy jungle acts as a portal for idealised worlds to become external.

**Director** Emily Downe



### **2.3 x 2.6 x 3.2**

UK 2019 4min

The certainty of hope and the uncertainty of disease.

**Director** Jiaqi Wang



**Natasza is a London based Animator and Illustrator. She is a graduate from the RCA in MA Animation and has**

**a BA in Animation from University of Westminster.**

#### ***What made you make the film?***

I came across the life story of Nigel, a bird. Since the 80's New Zealand conservationists were trying to bring back gannets to a small island called Mana. They put in dozens of statues and speakers emitting bird sounds and finally after 40 years one bird came and fell in love with one of the statues. Weeks before he died he still preferred the company of his statue rather than freshly arrived new birds.

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

I animated the whole film roughly in TvPaint, then all the rough frames were printed out, traced on the other side and cleaned up with crayons and soft pencils. Finally, all the frames had to be scanned in and composited digitally.

#### ***Where do you get your ideas from?***

I took inspiration from the stories I keep reading about in various online magazines that cover weird things that are happening around us. A seal that slapped a man with an octopus or countless bizarre bird romance stories such as a blind goose called Thomas who became an LGBT icon.

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

I am preparing concept art and script for a new film - a bizarre story of *Headless Mike*, a chicken that lived for 18 months after his head was cut off in 1940s. The film talks about how animal cruelty is used for a personal financial gain and the unfortunate culture of circus freak shows.



**Emily is an animation director predominantly working in documentary. Her short films take research-based**

**topics in science, philosophy and the human story into compelling experimental and narrative structures.**

#### ***What made you make the film?***

At the start I became really interested in the rise of anxiety and depression amongst millennials, and how technology and social media are often the catalysts. They were the opposite of the ideal images portrayed on social media. This led me to think about how the rainforest jungle is often fantasised even though it is completely wild, unknown and uncontrolled.

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

I started to visually explore two concepts: one process focused on quick observational sketches translated into animation in charcoal and the other was completely stylised and exaggerated by imagination. The challenge was how to fit the two contrasting worlds together, but as I began experimenting with sound and placing my designs and sketches onto a timeline, the contrasting elements began to fit together. Then it was just a process of animating large, digital environments and a very intense colouring process.

#### ***Where do you get your ideas from?***

My ideas usually start with observation and research. I enjoy getting really into a subject I don't know much about, to explore through visual metaphor and imagination.

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

I am currently working on some exciting animation/illustration work in the documentary and research realm, whilst fleshing out the beginning stages of a couple of new films!



**Jiaqi is a filmmaker from Beijing. She is studying Animation at the Royal College of Art.**

#### ***What made you make the film?***

This film is for my aunt - she had breast cancer last year. I was depressed and did not know how to help her. When I went to the Wellcome Collection Museum in London I found this wooden figure in the centre of the room, and I was interested in it's healing power for the people living on the Nicobar Islands.

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

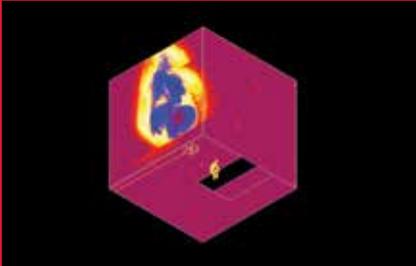
I interviewed my aunt and wrote a monologue based on her speaking. Then I sent it back to her, and she changed some words to make it more encouraging. Then I decided to use her script version and used her voice in my film. And I also used linocuts in my film.

#### ***Where do you get your ideas from?***

I got the idea from the healing figure (Kareau) in the Wellcome Collection Museum.

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

I'm working on a story about a dead dragon, who was killed and become a symbol of the kingdom. I'm going to discuss the reality of the symbol and how people reject the ideal creature created by nature.



## Exit

UK 2019 3min

How do you escape when the everyday is everything, and the way out is also the way in? Spooky!

**Director** Luke Ramsay



## Ugly

UK 2019 2min

A stunning collaboration with painter Melissa Kitty Jarram released for World Refugee Day 2019. Based on the poem narrated by Warsan Shire.

**Director** Anna Ginsburg



## No, I Don't Want to Dance

UK 2019 3min

These are dark times and the one critical issue yet to be addressed is how dangerous dancing can be.

**Director** Andrea Vinciguerra



**Luke is an Animation student from London, studying at Middlesex University with an interest in sci-fi and surrealist**

**films. He creates his own soundscapes and music, enjoys experimenting and trying new techniques.**

### **What made you make the film?**

I wanted to make a simple film about repetition in everyday life that was surrealist but graphically clear. I love films and shows like *Moon*, *The Twilight Zone* and *Twin Peaks*, where simple scenarios are stretched into bizarre and intense situations.

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

Most of the time was spent in pre-production finalising ideas. The film was made in Photoshop and After Effects. The animation and planning took the longest time, as I learnt along the way what I was making. The sound design was a lot of trial and error, feeling my way through as I went.

### **Where do you get your ideas from?**

It started as a film about decisions, with two doors, and a character trapped in a series of identical rooms. The idea then evolved into one that seems to speak about surveillance and modern life cycles. I usually think of fun scenarios in quiet moments and write them down for later.

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

I'm currently in my 3rd year of University, and my graduation film is about memory, time and the feeling of numbness to the present. I have been taking memories that I have recorded on my camcorder for the past few years and printing it onto acetate, trying to make my own 16mm film to deteriorate, melt and or destroy. Really fun, and it's looking neat.



**Born and raised in London, Anna is a filmmaker with a diverse range of talents. Her first music video for Bombay**

**Bicycle Club won a BAFTA. Most recently she has directed two films for Selfridges and a film *What is Beauty?* released for International Women's Day, which has received over 15 million hits.**

### **What made you make the film?**

I had just finished a wretched advert for a bank. I felt totally burnt out and when I found Melissa Kitty Jaram's paintings I knew I wanted to make them move. Her sublime use of colour and surreal powerful female figures in strange other worldly landscapes gave me that fire in the belly feeling. We met up and discussed the ways I could start making her work move and got extremely excited!

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

It was the most labour-intensive production process of my career. Melissa made paintings on board with acrylic. I recreated her aesthetic and mark making as closely as possible using Photoshop brushes and a graphic tablet. We painted each frame individually to achieve the irregular textures you would get if creating each painting on board. It took 12 hours to colour a single second!

### **Where do you get your ideas from?**

The beauty of Melissa's work inspired the movement and transitions. Warsan Shire's words inspired the action and imagery. The poem is about the experience of being a Refugee, an experience which is not my own and I hope I did Shire's words justice.

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

I'm currently directing a commercial job and I may have a role as animation director on a new TV series which is totally up my street.



**Andrea is an Italian film director working in London making commercial clips and short films. His work has been awarded**

**in many different festivals worldwide. *'No, I Don't Want to Dance'* is his first animated short.**

### **What made you make the film?**

I came from a live action background but always wanted to explore stop-motion because I felt it embraced my strongest skills. I particularly enjoy the freedom and control it gives you in terms of design, and how everything has to be made from scratch. This was an idea I pitched several times in live-action but being a big fan of animation and with the desire to jump into this world, I finally decided to assemble a team and bring this idea to life.

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

It was a quite long but rewarding process. I'm saying that probably because it was my first proper stop-motion experience but for me, it's still hard to believe that we created from scratch everything you can see in the film. It's an incredible sensation. It's like being little Gods and creating life in a world full of quirky details.

### **Where do you get your ideas from?**

Pretty much from everywhere. Photography, illustrations, people, movies, books, everything that catches my attention ends up inside a big inspiration folder on my computer.

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

I'm currently writing my third live-action short film which I hope to shoot in Sicily this summer. I'm also about to start pre production for a 2D animated TV series pilot that I can't wait to bring to life.

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# Late Night Bizarre <sup>(18)</sup>

at The Horse Hospital **Sat 7 Dec 21:00**

It's back. LIAF's annual walk on the wild side featuring the most twisted films to emerge this year. We dug deep to find the best and this is what you find when you go down that far. This 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 12 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.

Expect period blood stories, unexpected violence, manic depressed alcoholics, giant slugs, extraterrestrials, octopus balls, a search for God, very wet nether regions and a whole lot more.

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



## Very Animated People-Peaches

USA 2018 4min

Canadian singer Peaches tells a sordid tale about living in a shared household with some very disturbing housemates.

**Director** Leah Shore



## Top 5 Animation Containers

UK 2019 6min

A countdown of the most beloved Animation Containers of all time including Helioblox Man, Mertie and Equinox Head.

**Director** Ben Wheele



## Flood

Germany 2018 10min

A dirty lake bursts its banks and begins to flood the town. Mother tries to keep son inside.

**Director** Malte Stein



### Animals

Denmark 2019 6min

Nine people on a train get naked, piss everywhere and beat the crap out of each other. An explosion of jaw-dropping hilarity and bad, bad taste.

**Director** Tue Sanggaard

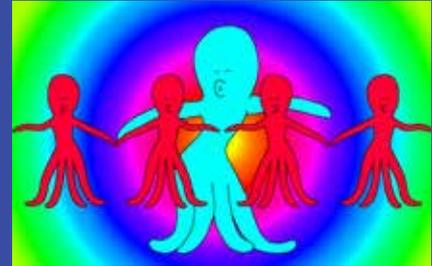


### The Inner Turmoils of Someone Who's Definitely Not Me

UK 2019 4min

Jimmy, a manic depressed alcoholic, explores his own mind as he spirals into depression and ends up in an Alice Coltrane record.

**Director** James Cheetham



### Takoyaki Story

Japan 2019 2min

The story of a girl addicted to octopus balls.

**Director** Sawako Kabuki



### Slug Life

UK 2018 7min

A day in the life of Tanya, a curious woman who has developed a taste for a beautiful giant slug.

**Director** Sophie Koko Gate



### Goodbye Mommy

USA 2019 13min

A magical, surrealist neo-noir sci-fi film about a heartbroken detective who gets caught up in a mysterious case involving extraterrestrials and a giant, old king who has gone missing.

**Director** Jack Wedge



### Tom Has a Plant

Denmark 2019 6min

Tom has a plant. He just wants to give it to the one he loves.

**Director** Thinh Nguyen



### It's Wet

France 2018 7min

A narcissistic woman lives without worrying about the world around her and ignorant of the natural cycle she is part of.

**Directors** Alexis Godard & Nan Huang

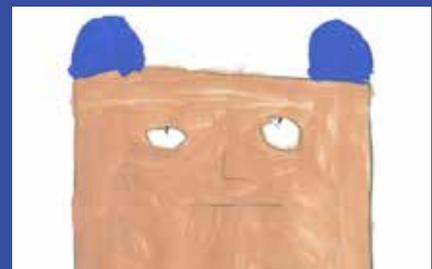


### Reneepoptosis

USA/Japan 2018 10min

Three Renees go on a quest to find God, who is also Renee. As they traverse the mountains and valleys of Renee, they discover all the great joys, sorrows, and mysteries of being Renee.

**Director** Renee Zhan



### Egg Touching

UK 2018 2min

A group of 4 friends get together and discuss how they want to touch an egg.

**Director** Peter Millard

# Music Video <sup>(15)</sup>

## Session

at The Horse Hospital **Sat 7 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. Producing 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. We will also be announcing the award for Best Music Video at LIAF 2019 selected from the 20 clips screened here as judged by our panel of industry specialists - Chris Shepherd, Abigail Addison and Shaun Clark.



**Lightning Bolt - Blow to the Head**

USA 3'10 2019

**Director** Caleb Wood



**Nicola Cruz - Okami**

USA/Ecuador 4'30 2019

**Director** Motomichi Nakamura



**Weval - Someday**

Ireland 4'25 2019

**Director** Paraic McGloughlin



**Sabrina and Samantha - Saba**

France 3'45 2019

**Directors** Marie Larrivé & Lucas Malbrun



**Juana Molina - Paraguaya Punk**

Argentina 2'15 2019

**Director** Dante Zabella



**Gelbart - March of the Thinking Machines**

Germany 3'40 2019

**Director** Adi Gelbart



**Tom Rosenthal - Love Loosens Limbs**

Spain 2'50 2019

**Directors** Magali García & Nacho Velasco



**Charles Amblard - La Rage**

France 3'55 2018

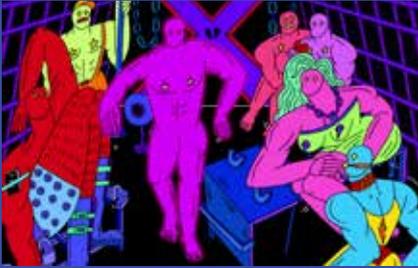
**Director** Alice Saey



**Lee Ann Womack - Hollywood**

UK 4'50 2019

**Director** Chris Ullens



**Chk Chk Chk - Couldn't Have Known**

UK/USA 3'45 2019

**Director** Cheng-Hsu Chung



**Piroshka - What's Next**

UK 3'50 2019

**Director** Bunny Schendler



**Mashrou' Leila - Radio Romance**

France 3'40 2019

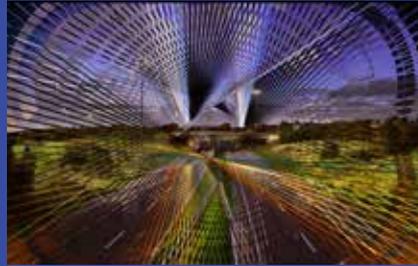
**Director** Vladimir Mavounia-Kouka



**Diogal - Reer**

France 4'10 2018

**Director** Francois Vogel



**Max Cooper - Platonic**

Ireland 4'45 2018

**Director** Paraic McGloughlin



**Divino Nino - Foam**

France 3'00 2019

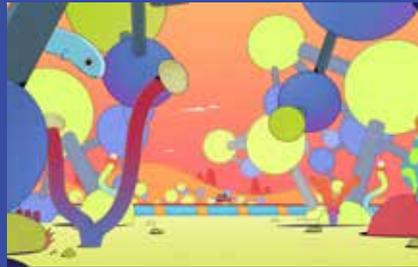
**Director** Thami Nabil



**Mac Demarco - Here Comes The Cowboy**

Canada 3'00 2019

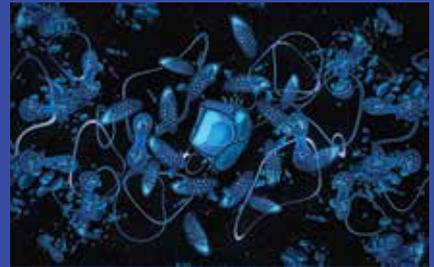
**Director** Cole Kush



**La Fine Equipe and Fakear - 5th Season**

France 4'20 2019

**Directors** Valère Amirault & Lili Des Bellons



**Canigou - Tape**

Sweden/Japan 5'30 2019

**Director** Hideki Inaba



**Stephen Malkmus - Rushing the Acid Frat**

UK 2'25 2019

**Directors** James Papper & Robert Strange



**The Beatles - Glass Onion**

UK 2'30 2018

**Directors** Alasdair Brotherston & Jock Mooney

barbican

# Amazing <sup>(U)</sup> Animations 0-7 yr olds

at Barbican Sat 30 Nov 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. This programme contains several cheeky, loveable animals in all sorts of mad adventures. Percy Cat is looking forward to a holiday in 'Cat Lake City', a mouse dreams of wanting to fly with birds, a small tiger goes on a long journey to find his stripes and neighbours Pig and Duck learn that friendship is the most important thing to cherish.

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.



## Animanimals Collection - Fly

Germany 2018 4min

Three singing frogs and a fly play a mischievous game.

**Director** Julia Ocker



## Matilda

Spain 2018 7min

Matilda can't get to sleep so she starts to explore her room in a new light with the magic of her torch.

**Director** Irene Iborra



## Nest

Germany 2019 4min

A lovesick bird of paradise dances through the night, doing it's best to attract a mate.

**Director** Sonja Rohleder

LONDON INTERNATIONAL  
**ANIMATION  
FESTIVAL 2019**



### Cat Lake City

Germany 2019 7min

Percy Cat is looking forward to a relaxing day in "Cat Lake City" – the cats' holiday paradise.

**Director** Antje Heyn



### Sam's Dream

France 2018 7min

A little mouse wants to make his dream come true - to fly with the swallows.

**Director** Nölwenn Roberts



### The Pig on the Hill

USA 2018 6min

When Pig's free-spirited new neighbour Duck plunges himself into Pig's quiet, orderly life, Pig learns that having friends is what he has been missing all along.

**Directors** Jamy Wheless & John Helms



### Ray's Great Escape

China 2018 7min

Ray is a little monster who lives on the edge of a volcano about to erupt so he has to move out of his house.

**Director** Jie Weng



### A Tiger With No Stripes

France/Switzerland 2018 8min

A little tiger takes a long journey to look for his stripes.

**Director** Raul 'Robin' Morales Reyes



### Fussel

Germany 2019 5min

What's on the end of the red string?

**Director** Alex Berweck



### Koyaa - Elusive Paper

Slovenia 2019 3min

Koyaa wants to paint a picture but the paper he is using is being very elusive.

**Director** Kolja Saksida



### Animanimals Collection - Slug

Germany 2018 4min

Slug struggles with her new house.

**Director** Julia Ocker



### Monsters Don't Exist

Italy 2018 3min

Two longtime rivals engage in an epic battle for monster supremacy.

**Directors** Ilaria Angelini, Luca Barberis Organista & Nicola Bernardi

# Marvellous (PG) Animations 8-15 yr olds

at Barbican **Sun 1 Dec 14:00**

**These twelve films from eleven different countries have been chosen especially for children aged 8 years-old and upwards - but adults are allowed in as long as you are accompanied by a child. They are films for the young but also the young at heart including several films that tug at the heart-strings.**

Here you will meet charismatic characters and encounter amazing tales such as a knitted toy dinosaur who has to unravel himself to save the love of his life, an elephant who's expert at basketball and a seven year-old boy who's dreams, hopes and fears are brought to life by a dazzling series of images created entirely by matchsticks.

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.

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.



## Tony the Tiny Pony

New Zealand 2019 4min

Listen up cowboys, cowgirls and cow-everybody else too: gather round to hear the story of a tiny pony named Tony.

**Director** Ned Wenlock



## Matches

Hungary 2019 11min

A lonely boy is playing with his colourful matchsticks. While he is talking about his dreams, fears and hopes, the matchsticks bring his visions to life.

**Director** Geza M. Toth



## Hedgehog

France 2018 5min

A young boy, obsessed with hedgehogs, shares his love for them all the time with everybody.

**Directors** Vaibhav Keswani, Jeanne Laureau, Colombine Majou, Morgane Mattard, Kaisa Pirttinen & Jong-ha Yoon



### Maestro

France 2019 2min

Frogs, hedgehogs, turtles, fish and many other forest animals belt out a stirring rendition of a Vincenzo Bellini war opera.

**Directors** The Illogic Collective



### Home Sweet Home

France/Switzerland 2018 13min

A series of stories bind a granddaughter and grandmother despite time and distance.

**Director** Chaitane Conversat



### Saturdays Apartment

South Korea 2018 7min

In this apartment five different family members struggle with the noises from the other floors.

**Director** Jeon Seungbae



### Lost and Found

Australia 2018 8min

A knitted toy dinosaur has to unravel itself to save the love of its life.

**Directors** Andrew Goldsmith & Bradley Slabe



### Gunpowder

France 2019 5min

It's teatime! Unfortunately for Phileas all his teaboxes are empty so he decides to get some from China.

**Directors** Romane Faure, Nathanael Perron, Léa Detrain, Benoît de Geyer d'Orth, Pei-Hsuan Lin & Anne-Lise Kubiak



### The Kite

Czech Rep/Slovakia/Poland 2019 13min

A touching tale of a boy and his grandfather as they spend the day flying a kite.

**Director** Martin Smatana



### Good Heart

Russia 2018 5min

In a primeval forest lives a primitive family. Mum is strict, crazy and grumpy. All she wants is that everyone eats well and is healthy.

**Director** Evgeniya Jirkova



### Hansel and Gretel

UK 2019 6min

Hansel and Gretel's parents have fallen on hard times. The mother sends them out into the forest to find strawberries for supper, not realising that it is a dangerous place after dark.

**Directors** Shaun Clark & Magid El-Bushra



### Athleticus - Gym Keeper

France 2018 2min

An elephant shows off his basketball skills to a group of watching giraffes.

**Director** Nicolas Deveaux

# Best of the Next

## Programme 1 <sup>(15)</sup>

at The Horse Hospital **Fri 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. 28 wondrous films in 2 screenings from the future stars of our animation universe.



### 400MPH

Supinfocom  
France 2019 5min

In the Bonneville salt flats, a chimpanzee named Icarus tries to reach the ultimate speed of 400 MPH, thought to be impossible for land vehicles.

**Directors** Paul-Eugène Dannaud, Julia Chaix, Lorraine Desserre, Alice Lefort, Natacha Pianeti & Quentin Tireloque



### My Mother's Eyes

Central St Martins  
UK 2018 5min

A story about motherhood and loss in an abstracted world of childhood memory.

**Director** Jenny Wright



### Medium Rare

CalArts  
USA/Italy 2018 5min

Functional and aesthetic values in recurrent, yet questionable domestic scenarios.

**Director** Luca Cioci



### Mr Wolf

East China Normal University  
China 2018 5min

What's the time Mr. Wolf?

**Director** Jincao Li

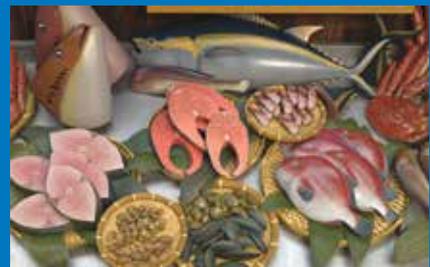


### I Am Here

Kingston University  
UK 2019 2min

Four women talk about their experiences of dealing with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in this heartfelt, moving documentary.

**Director** Sorrel Milne



### Selfish

Sheridan College  
Canada/Taiwan 2019 2min

A chef notices a group of special guests. He decides to serve them a variety of signature dishes.

**Director** Po-Chien Chen



### Gravity

Baden Württemberg  
Germany/Bolivia 2019 10min

In a tiny town gravity is constantly changing. Rosa, being pulled up and down by the light and the heavy days, has to find something to grab on to.

**Director** Matisse Gonzalez



### In Memory

RISD  
USA 2018 3min

A slowly undulating and moving depiction of the loss of a parent as told by three children.

**Director** Amit Miretzky



### Nestor

Royal College of the Arts  
UK 2019 6min

Nestor, a man with several obsessive-compulsive behaviours, lives in an unstable houseboat which never stops oscillating.

**Director** Joao Gonzalez



### Forget-me-Not

The Animation Workshop  
Denmark 2019 7min

When a lifelong friend departs, a stubborn old man has to face his inner fears in order to restore peace to his mind.

**Director** Katarina Lundquist



### Cha

Goldsmiths  
2019 2min UK

A power struggle between mother and daughter. Should she drink tea or something else?

**Director** Lok Tsoi



### Trois Francs Six Sous

Supinfocom  
France 2019 7min

During World War 2 a French Farmer hopes to see life again in the eyes of his mother who has been in a vegetative state since her eldest son disappeared.

**Directors** Clémence Ottevaere, Florence Blain, Louise Leblond, Varoon Indalkar, Morgane Ladjel & Hugo Valdelièvre-Rattier,



### Synchronicity

Royal College of the Arts  
UK 2018 4min

People come, people go – Yet everyone is moving in the same direction. By sharing time, space and movement, we overlap and create a bigger picture.

**Director** Michelle Brand



### Critical Update

Central St Martins  
UK 2019 6min

In a future world where everyone is constantly plugged in via AR visors the lines between what is real and what is not have become blurred.

**Director** Brogan Jones



### In Her Boots

Royal College of the Arts  
UK/Austria 2019 6min

While her granddaughter is visiting, Hedi embarks on a hiking journey to the Alps, revealing the reason for her devoted attachment to her hiking shoes.

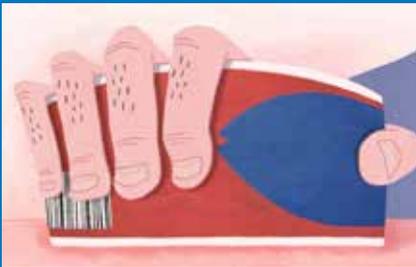
**Director** Kathrin Steinbacher

# Best of the Next

## Programme 2 <sup>(15)</sup>

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

The second of 2 programmes from the future stars of tomorrow. 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.



### Tuna

National Film School IADT  
Ireland 2019 6min

A late-night supermarket cashier with a strange obsession is visited by a mysterious customer.

**Director** Cliona Noonan



### The Ostrich Politic

Gobelins  
France 2018 6min

Ostriches carry on their daily activities burying their heads, believing it's instinctive behavior. However, research proves otherwise.

**Director** Mohamad Houhou



### Hole

Emily Carr University of Art and Design  
Canada 2018 6min

Mo is an adult with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Mo spends a lot of time in their brain. Today, a hole started following them.

**Director** Gil Goletski



### Shadow Passage

Royal College of the Arts  
UK 2019 4min

A woman explores her own psyche through its manifestation in a sequence of identical, yet progressively smaller, rooms inhabited by multiple selves.

**Director** Ali Aschman



### A Gong

Gobelins  
France 2018 6min

A seven year-old boy slowly comes to terms with his grandpa's death during a traditional Taiwanese funeral.

**Directors** Zozo Jhen, Tena Galovic, Marine Varguy, Yen-Chen Liu & Ellis Ka-yin Chan



### Bubbles

National Film School IADT  
Ireland 2019 3min

A puppet grows frustrated with her puppeteer's bad habit.

**Director** Rachel Fitzgerald



## Hounds

Bezalel  
Israel 2018 6min

The life of a dog, trained to act as human, changes when a pack of wild dogs gathers around his house.

**Directors** Ido Shapira & Amit Cohen



## Cosmos Express

School of Visual Arts  
USA 2019 7min

A girl decides to leave this world. Her body and soul have a last conversation as she walks down the path of her life, one last time.

**Director** Mocong Yuan



## You Used to Bring Me Flowers

Bezalel  
Israel 2018 5min

Male and female relations are examined through the gesture of giving flowers.

**Director** Nofar Schweitzer



## Grand Bassin

ENSI  
France 2018 6min

An afternoon at the swimming pool.

**Directors** Héloïse Courtois, Chloe Plat, Victori Jalabert & Adele Raigneau



## Parasite

Pratt Institute  
USA 2018 2min

A stunning depiction of the conflict between human development and nature using abstract shapes and movement.

**Director** Yajun Shi



## Somewhere In-Between

Bournemouth University  
UK 2019 3min

An animator struggling to draw after the loss of her mum begins to see the frames of her own movements.

**Director** Luca Tagliarini



## Now 2

CalArts  
USA 2019 9min

Who's grooming whom? Scenes of puzzling new truths piercing through the foam veil.

**Director** Kevin Eskew

# ITFS



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 animation  
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# Features

# Away (15)

at Rio Cinema **Wed 4 Dec 18:45**

**The chase is on. A boy wakes up in a parachute in a desert. Running from a spectral giant, he finds an oasis. Alone on his quest, save a yellow bird, the boy makes the brave decision to follow a map to safety. With the deathly creature calmly following behind, the boy and his bird make their way across the island. With the brilliant score accompanying the high stakes of the journey, no words are necessary to connect you to the boy's thoughts as he takes risks and pushes himself to his limits.**

Told in four chapters, the young boy travels across a mysterious land, crossing barren deserts and beautiful forests, all the while being pursued by a relentless dark spirit. Along the way he makes a series of connections with different animals and reflects on the possible ways he ended up on the island. Part dream, part reality, and in a way, the storyline is a reflection of the creative process of the making of the film itself. The main idea of *Away* is our common, universal need to find a connection.

*Away* is a gripping story in a lusciously animated world. A huge labour of love, Gints Zilbalodis worked on the film for three and a half years, handling all aspects of production including writing, designing, animating, post-production and composing the musical score.

*Away* is breathtaking in scale, and minimalist in its bare essentials. Destined to be an animated classic, and a major inspiration for many up-and-coming

student animators, Zilbalodis' work ethic and consistent understanding and dedication to his own project, is an admirable feat of solo artistic expression. Be prepared for a transcendent experience.

**“I wanted to create an immersive experience where people can forget themselves for 75 minutes. To be transported to this different place and be immersed. I want people to experience the different moods and atmospheres that animation has to offer.”**

**Gints Zilbalodis**

## Director's Biography

Gints Zilbalodis (born 1994) is a Latvian filmmaker and animator. His fascination for filmmaking began at an early age watching classic films and making shorts and commercials. He has made 7 short films in various mediums including hand-drawn animation, 3D animation and live-action and often mixing their characteristic aesthetics.



Director Gints Zilbalodis  
Latvia 75mins 2019

# On-Gaku: Our Sound (15)

at Rio Cinema Thu 5 Dec 18:45

**A summer day. Three outsider high school students who haven't touched an instrument in their lives decide to form a band to express their inner angst and impress girls. Does it matter that Kenji and his friends have never played an instrument before? Of course not – he's got a guitar at home and his friends have a bass guitar and drums so with a mixture of their manic punk ethos and sheer teenage confidence, with absolutely minimal effort they start to make friends and influence people. And yes, the girls are interested.**

Produced for a micro-budget of \$40,000 US dollars, Kenji Iwaisawa and his crew have put together one hell of an entertaining feature. A wildly original, trailblazing anime based on the Manga by Hiroyuki Ohashi, Iwaisawa adds his own style and visually appealing flair to the original source material. Created a decade after the first volume was published in Japan, this cinematic depiction has been warmly welcomed by both observant fans of the original material, and newcomers, who will not be disappointed by this cult-classic in the making. As the story progresses the film's animation technique evolves as well, culminating in a rock 'n' roll spectacle for the ears and the eyes.

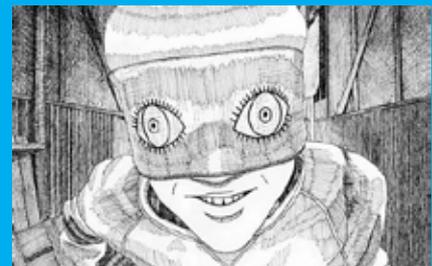
*On-Gaku: Our Sound* was the official winner of the Best Feature Film at the Ottawa International Animation Festival and is arguably the most risky, bold, and eccentric anime to come out of Japan for several years.

## Director's Biography

Kenji Iwaisawa (born 1981) originally studied feature film production with the director Teruo Ishii, before moving onto animation. His first short film *Fukurai-cho, Tunnel Alley Man* was completed in 2008. He has worked on several other short films since then. *On-Gaku: Our Sound* is his first feature which has taken 7 years to reach completion and will be released theatrically in Japan in 2020.



**Director Kenji Iwaisawa**  
Japan 68 min 2019



This feature is supported by:  
**Fukurai-cho, Tunnel Alley Man**

Japan 2008 5min

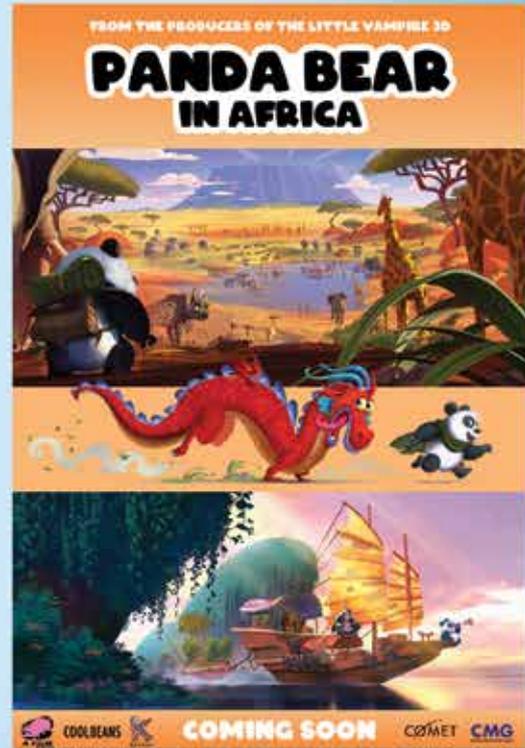
What's that falling from the sky? And what is Tunnel Alley Man plugged into?

**Director Kenji Iwaisawa**

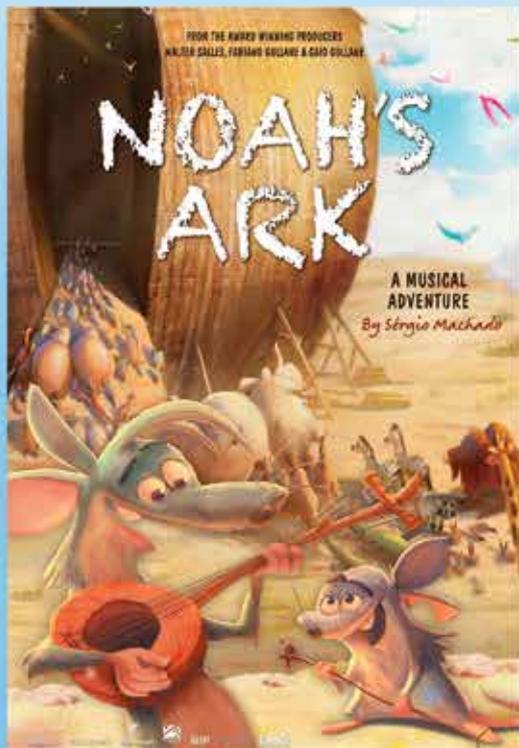
# EXCITING ANIMATIONS FROM CMG!



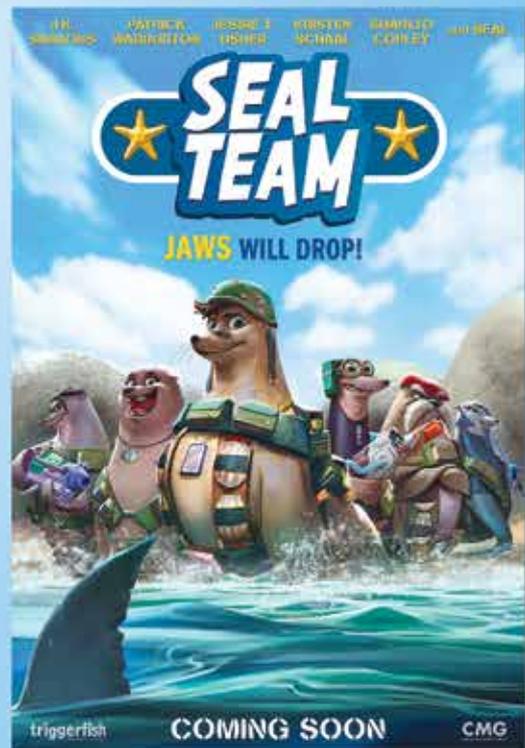
A young boy travels across a mysterious land of barren deserts and beautiful forests, all the while being pursued by a relentless dark spirit.



A young, fun, adventurous Panda travels from China to Africa to rescue his best friend, Jielong the Dragon, who has been kidnapped.



A musical comedy adventure about two bohemian mice embarking on the quest to secure their place on Noah's iconic Ark.



An action-packed family comedy from the makers of ZAMBEZIA and KHUMBA follows a team of int'l seals who defend their island from mobster sharks.

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# Special Guests



Niki Lindroth von Bahr

# The Darkly Humorous Worlds of Niki Lindroth von Bahr <sup>(15)</sup>

at Barbican Sun 1 Dec 18:00

**“I think I want to use animals, partly because I like to see my films almost like modern fables, like traditional fables that seem to be about one thing but are actually about something moral or political” - Niki Lindroth von Bahr**

Niki Lindroth von Bahr's films have been creating a buzz on the festival circuit for several years now. Between them, her 3 films, *The Burden* (2017), *Bath House* (2014) and *Tord and Tord* (2010), have won almost 100 awards at many of the world's most prestigious festivals including the Cristal for Best Short Film in Annecy, Best International Short Film in Toronto and nominated for the Prize for Best Short Film in the Directors' Fortnight at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival. *The Burden* was also voted the best film of the 2017 London International Animation Festival.

As well as being a virtuoso artist, writer and animation director, Niki is also a master craftswoman and artist who loves making puppets and sets by hand, bringing her characters to life through the techniques of stop motion and puppetry.

Her immensely engaging stories are darkly humorous tales, often with a vaguely surreal filter. Her first film *Tord and Tord* dealt with loneliness and mental illness, while *Bath House* took the festival world by storm with its eerie calmness depicting six characters who meet in a bathhouse alongside a gang with shady intentions.

*The Burden*, an existential musical, has been described as Terry Gilliam meets Ingmar

Bergman, due to the centrepiece – a song and dance routine performed by an office of monkeys. Niki says she was greatly inspired by the work of Busby Berkeley, a Broadway choreographer who worked on 36 Hollywood musicals throughout the '30s and '40s. The films cast of animals are working dead-end jobs and struggling with the banality of existence, the difficulty of relationships and the dehumanising pressures of office life. Niki has said she sees herself in her characters.

When not making her own films Niki has held exhibitions of her artworks, sculptures and puppets in several galleries and has worked as a props and costume designer for artists like Fever Ray and David Bowie, designing Bowie's costume for his last ever music video, *Blackstar* in 2015.

We are extremely grateful to the Embassy of Sweden for their support in helping to bring the remarkable stop-motion animation director and artist Niki Lindroth von Bahr to LIAF 2019.

## Niki Lindroth von Bahr - In Her Own Words...

**“I started out with making my first animated film *Tord and Tord* in 2010. I had studied prop making and set design and wanted to use my interest in building stuff while making my own work. I can't say that I've been that into animation from the beginning; it**

**kind of grew on me over time when travelling to animation festivals with my own films. My inspiration for *Bath House* is ... hard to say! I watched a lot of Michael Haneke films and listened to Philip Glass at the time. I also re-discovered Jan Svankmajer's early live-action film *The Garden* and was really inspired by the strange atmosphere.’**

**“When working with a new film, I always start with an atmosphere. The overall feeling is equally important for my films as the actual story. When making *Bath House* I was very interested in silence, especially uncomfortable silence. I wanted to tell a story where the relations between the characters were often expressed in the silence. I also chose to not have any music, hoping to leave the audience confused about what to feel. Like, is this funny or scary?”**

**“All of the characters are actually inspired by extinct animal species that I picked out from sad, dusty stuffed**

creatures at natural history museums. The zebra is a dawn horse - it's a very tiny horse that has paws instead of hooves."

"Hans Appelqvist, a great artist and composer, made the music for *The Burden* according to my descriptions of the atmosphere in the film's different episodes. Many old Busby Berkeley clips were sent back and forth. We also decided to really kill the budget from day one by recording the songs live with an orchestra of 15 musicians, but it was worth it."

"I've worked with different animal themes for all of my films. For *The Burden*, I only used animal species that are common in medical experiments, such as rhesus monkeys, beagle dogs, and banstickle fish."

"The film took me more than two years to make and there were a lot of challenges - making puppets tap dance, for example. We also had a very small budget, which made everything much harder than it already was. I'm very proud of the end scene, starring a huge model that measures 2.5 meters in all directions. It turned out just the way I wanted."



### Stranger Than Kindness - Fever Ray

Sweden 2008 5min

A spooky as hell music video featuring animal skulls, shamans and lots and lots of lasers.

**Costume, Props, Makeup** Niki Lindroth von Bahr

**Director** Andreas Nilsson



### Las Palmas

Sweden 2011 13min

A tragicomic version of Easy Rider starring the Director's demented baby girl in the combined roles of Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper.

**Puppets** Niki Lindroth von Bahr

**Director** Johannes Nyholm



### Blackstar - David Bowie

USA/Sweden 2015 10min

Bowie's last music video. A woman with a tail discovers a dead astronaut and takes his jewel-encrusted skull to an ancient, otherworldly town.

**Costumes** Niki Lindroth von Bahr.

**Director** Johan Renck



### Tord and Tord

Sweden 2010 11min

One day, Tord accidentally walks into the apartment next to his own. Another person named Tord lives there, he has just moved in.

**Director** Niki Lindroth von Bahr



### Bath House

Sweden 2014 14min

Six characters meet in a bathhouse. The pedant bathhouse manager, a couple with a strange way of communicating and a gang with shady intentions. Something goes wrong.

**Director** Niki Lindroth von Bahr



### The Burden

Sweden 2017 14min

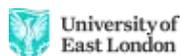
A motel, a self-service restaurant, a call centre and a supermarket on the motorway are the setting for this apocalyptic musical. The songs tell of freedom, of the empty promises of the consumer world, and of the desire for an existence without worry.

**Director** Niki Lindroth von Bahr



**barbican**

**CLOSE-UP**



# Special Programmes



# Female Figures <sup>(15)</sup>

## To Boldly Go...

at Barbican **Fri 29 Nov 18:30**

**For the third edition of Female Figures our gaze has landed on women making science fiction inspired, animated shorts. In this selection, these intrepid animators from across the planet imagine brave new worlds whilst placing women at the heart of their speculative stories.**

Given the tumultuous times we find ourselves in, Sci-Fi is a perfect medium to consider the anxieties of the modern age. Its popularity can be seen in the recent successes of ambitious, provocative, and aesthetically innovative media, including the *Love, Death & Robots* anthology, *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *Black Mirror*.

Sci-Fi is still however marketed as a 'male' genre, with its exploration of scientific innovation and action-packed adventure. There are nonetheless many women artists who are as equally excited by the potential of technological advancement and moreover excel at using cutting-edge technology in the creation of their work. At a time when only 3% of animated features are directed by women (USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative Study 2019) seeing Sony Pictures Animation attach Asian American story artist Emily Dean to direct Sci-Fi themed feature *Tao* feels like a positive step - though there's still a long way to go before parity is achieved.

In this programme, the animators take their protagonists on interstellar travel, imagine the impact of an alien presence on our world or merge parallel universes, as a way in which to reflect on how we navigate our own world. With *Entropia*, Flóra Anna Buda presents a fragmented self in three contrasting characters inhabiting different universes: the animalistic creature; the present consumerist; and the future worker drone. These three women are brought together through a glitch in the system, uniting in an erotic moment as the universe collapses around them. *Spacedogs* by Sophia Schönborn features a pack of intergalactic hounds exploring a planet, who find themselves forced to battle their combative environment. This fun film is

beautifully rendered in vibrant felt tip pen, evoking the feeling of a comic strip drawn in a sketchbook brought to life. In *Burn Out*, Cécile Carre presents a charming time shifting story in a hand drawn style reminiscent of early Disney features. A space mechanic finds herself uncannily in conversation with her younger self, who serves as a reminder of her childhood ambitions and reignites her desire to literally reach for the stars. And in Laura Højberg Kunov's 3D feast for the eyes, *Stellar*, a mundane urban world is shaken up by invasion of an alien technology. At the end we are left with the sense that the people have been somehow transformed and now view their world with fresh eyes.

Across the globe we are witnessing women's rights being eroded, so it comes as no surprise that in several fantastical and satirical works we are presented with future scenarios where the more sinister side of authority, political ideology and surveillance are being challenged. *Ursa Minor* by Yearin Lee is a bold tale of fighting back against authority and accepted conventions. With a nod to Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* the young protagonist questions her role in society and uncovers an uncomfortable truth in the process. Patricia Luna's *Toxic* similarly references a classic piece of speculative fiction - *Don Delillo's White Noise*. Luna's use of framing heightens the sense that we are observing the characters as they survive a mysterious ecological disaster and the interventions of the authorities.

*The Law of Celly* by Mariola Brillowska is a sardonic and anarchic portrayal of a didactic public service announcement by the 'Leader of the Universe'. In this bizarre PSA the concept of profiting from the sale of your data is presented in an exaggerated and lucid form. The film was made more than 10 years ago, yet the theme resonates at a time where we are increasingly more vigilant about how our privacy and our data is treated in the digital realm. Likewise, Danna Grace (Dan G) Windsor's *Vicarious* considers a scenario where the government provides suits in the prevention of skin disease that

harvest human sensations and bodily data. The ethics of capitalising on our most intimate experiences is touched upon in this disquieting tale.

Anxieties around how we are controlled and the role that artificial intelligence, smart technology and synthetic biology might play in our futures, is considered in several of these perceptive and playful shorts. *The Thing I Left Behind* by Chiara Sgatti centres on an isolated athlete coping with physical injury, in considering the ways our lives are improved or augmented by advances in technology and medicine. Here Sgatti suggests that the AI might not be up to the job. The character's choice to reject the robot and the drugs, allows her to return to her former, freer, more rebellious self. Ruini Shi considers the perils of love in the modern age with *Desire Line*, a wry film told from the point of view of an unemotional machine. The machine appears to assist a betrayed woman to murder her partner in the most effective way possible.

With *Slug Life*, Sophie Koko Gate portrays a muscular woman designing her perfect partner. Cloning, AI, genetic modification, and 3D printing are all touched upon in this modern-day version of Mary Shelley's sensational *Frankenstein*. Given how creepy the protagonist's flatmate is, the idea to craft a hybrid creature lover, doesn't seem quite so horrific. And finally, with *Her Voice*, a collaboration between artists Katerina Athanasopoulou and Eleni Ikonidou, we are presented with the ghost in the machine. In a vivid 3D portrait, a ghostly female avatar reminisces. Voiced in Russian, the setting suggests a Cold War military outpost, where drones fly about the abandoned space in an uncanny and hallucinatory exploration of sentient technology and intelligent design. As with several of the works it asks us to consider our responsibility to what we craft and what we bring into being in the world.

Female Figures was devised in 2017, 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, both in the UK and internationally.

With thanks to Katerina Athanasopoulou, Flóra Anna Buda, Chiara Sgatti, Lilly Husbands, Waltraud Grausgruber, Birgitt Wagner, Jayne Pilling, Nag Vladermersky, Gary Thomas, Kate Anderson, Elizabeth Hobbs, Samantha Moore, Ellie Land, all of the featured filmmakers, their producers and distributors, and the Balassi Institute: Hungarian Cultural Centre.

Abigail Addison

# Speakers

## Abigail Addison Lilly Husbands

Abigail is a Producer, and is a Director of arts agency Animate Projects that works at the intersection of animation, film and art. She has produced many innovative projects and was nominated for the BAFTA British Short Animation 2019 for Elizabeth Hobbs' experimental short, *I'm OK*. She also independently produces films, and co-produced Chris Shepherd's multi award winning *Johnno's Dead*.

Lilly Husbands is a Lecturer in Animation and Visual Culture at Middlesex University. Her research is broadly concerned with the legacy and evolution of experimental animation in the context of contemporary multimedia practice. She is an associate editor of 'Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal' and has published numerous book chapters and articles on experimental animation. She is the co-editor of the book *Experimental Animation: From Analogue to Digital*.

## Katerina Athanasopoulou Chiara Sgatti

Katerina Athanasopoulou is a Greek-born artist living in London who creates animation for the cinema and gallery space. She studied Fine Art at Aristotle University in Greece and Animation at the Royal College of Art. Her films have been shown internationally at film festivals and galleries worldwide. Katerina is currently a PhD candidate within Plymouth University, researching the affective affordances of VR animated documentaries.

Chiara Sgatti was born in Italy and came to study animation in the UK. She has an MA in Animation from the Royal College of Art. She loves telling stories and creating imaginary worlds, but most of all, she loves drawing. For the past few years, Chiara has been working as a 2D animator in London for companies including the BBC, Nexus, Passion Pictures, Mummu, Amnesty International, Blinkink and The Royal British Legion. She has screened her shorts at Sundance, Raindance, Annecy and Pictoplasma.

## Flóra Anna Buda

Hungarian Animation Director Flóra Anna Buda graduated with an MA in Animation from MOME (Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design) in Budapest in 2018. One of her main goals is to keep searching for new ways of creating universes and telling stories. She is deeply interested in dreams and science, and she likes to twist her stories with personal content.



### Slug Life

UK 2018 7min

A day in the life of Tanya, a curious woman who has developed a taste for a beautiful giant slug.

**Director** Sophie Koko Gate



### Desire Line

UK 2018 7min

When a tragedy occurs one Valentine's Day, we turn to a bot for answers.

**Director** Ruini Shi



### Vicarious

USA 2016 6min

Two grieving friends, a subway ride, a funeral and a skin suit.

**Director** Danna Grace (Dan G) Windsor



### The Thing I Left Behind

UK 2018 8min

A former baseball player, forced to quit her career due to multiple sclerosis, is taken care of by a robot and a smart house.

**Director** Chiara Sgatti



### Burn Out

France 2017 4min

A space mechanic on a desert planet meets a little girl. The strange encounter reminds her of the dreams she has left behind.

**Director** Cécile Carre

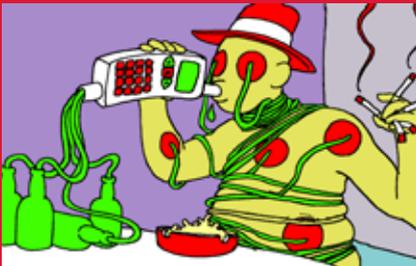


### Stellar

Denmark 2017 4min

A bleak, monotone city is brought to life by the appearance of some floating, liquid orbs, soaring towards the skies.

**Director** Laura Højberg Kunov



### The Law of Celly

Germany 2011 4min

In the future, jobless people will become their own entrepreneurs because they have to market their spare time.

**Director** Mariola Brillowska



### Ursa Minor

UK 2018 8min

A girl raised in a religious group finds out the truth about religion while following the bear.

**Director** Yearin Lee



### Toxic

USA 2015 6min

A toxic cloud leads a middle class family to evacuation. Inspired by Don DeLillo's novel 'White Noise'.

**Director** Patricia Luna



### Spacedogs

Germany 2017 6min

On a weird planet, dogs live as they please, although they must contend with their surreal and occasionally belligerent surroundings.

**Director** Sophia Schönborn



### Entropia

Hungary 2018 10min

Three parallel universes, three girls living in different circumstances. A glitch in the system causes the universes to collapse.

**Director** Flóra Anna Buda



### Her Voice

UK 2019 6min

"Most grandmothers read fairytales to their grandchildren. Mine put me to bed with stories about unidentified audio events and facts about auditory perception."

**Directors** Katerina Athanasopoulou & Eleni Ikoniadou

# Happiness Machine <sup>(15)</sup>

at Barbican **Tue 3 Dec 18:30**

**With the Happiness Machine, twenty female, European artists question our current economic system. As an innovative, Pan European project, ten women animators and ten women composers have been brought together to crafting of new work. Invited to participate by Austrian music ensemble Klangforum Wien and Tricky Women Animation Festival, the contributors were asked to consider our current economic system in light of the Economy for the Common Good social movement, which was founded by Austrian Economist Christian Felber in 2010. The films reflect on various aspects of this movement - its opportunities and challenges, and its theory and practice.**

Here are the resulting ten animations and original compositions. They explore themes of consumption, greed, solidarity, equality, responsibility, and revolt. They consider how the machine we operate within can be destroyed and rebuilt. Ranging from the abstract and experimental, to fairy tales, documentary approaches, and the satirising of society, this collection brings together an incredible variety of voices and techniques.

The projects were completed in spring 2019 with the ambition to tour internationally as music concert performances or as film screening events. Happiness Machine premiered as part of a live performance by Klangforum Wien at the ECLAT Festival of Contemporary Music in Stuttgart, followed by a cinema screening at Tricky Women Animation Festival 2019.

The project's overarching title references the term coined by in 1928 by US President Herbert Hoover in an address to advertising and PR executives where he said: "You have taken over the job of creating desire and have transformed people into constantly

moving happiness machines. Machines which have become the key to economic progress."

In the Economy for the Common Good, the emphasis is on democracy and value - placing human dignity, cooperation, sustainability, social justice and transparency as a priority over profitability. The negative impacts of our current economic system, as embodied by the quote from President Hoover, is a theme that runs through many of the works in the programme.

The programme begins with *The Flounder*, a collaboration between British Director Elizabeth Hobbs and German Composer Carola Bauckholt. Inspired by the Brothers Grimm's classic fairytale *The Fisherman and his Wife*, the film is a cautionary tale of greed and ensuing environmental destruction. Elizabeth Hobbs' employs ink and paint to great effect in creating an everyman and everywoman grotesquely transformed by their avarice and a dazzling underwater world contaminated by the toll of consumerism.

In *The Happiness Machine* by Serbian Director Ana Nedeljković and her partner Nikola Majdak Jr, made in collaboration with Swedish Composer Hanna Hartmann, the machine is evoked through the simulation of a vivid video game where we as the viewer appear to be controlling the workers in a generic office. With every choice we appear to make to increase our profits the workers suffering magnifies and their happiness levels decrease. In this dystopian Claymation universe, as the misery increases a sinister black substance pervades into every element of the world. The film demonstrates how a relentless pursuit of wealth can often be to the detriment of those being exploited in the process, and asks us to reassess this way of working.

*Pantopos* by Austrian Director Eni Brandner and Japanese born/France based Composer Misato Mochizuki also takes a wry look at excessive consumption and the need to change the way we live. Pixelation, photogrammetry, 3D and 2D graphics are employed to create two very different worlds, where the main protagonist much like Alice in Wonderland steps from a world of decadence into a more altruistic alternate world that seems to be within his conscience. Having experienced a world of collaboration, can Mr Everhungry now resist his life of excess?

Cooperation, equality, employment, and care for our fellow humans is very much at the heart of *Bloomers* by British Director Samantha Moore and Swedish Composer Malin Bång. A portrait of the workers at Manchester based lingerie factory Headen & Quarmby, the piece combines their voices, a score inspired by the sounds of the sewing room, and observational drawings of the workroom are brought to life through a process of printing images onto various materials that the workers handle on a daily basis. The film ends with the provocation "what do you pay for your knickers?", asking us to consider on how we champion our local economy and look to support more ethically minded companies that treat their employees with respect.

In *Measuring the Distance* by Austrian Director Susanne Jirkuff and Germany based, British Composer Joanna Bailie, the subject focuses on the more marginalised members of society. Isolating and imposing urban housing estates that are found on the outskirts of major cities are rendered in stark black and white drawings, creating a sense of dislocation and isolation for those who are not seen to fit within the ideals of capitalist society.

Denmark based Director Michelle Kranot

working with her partner Uri Kranot and German Composer Iris ter Schiphorst, have collaborated to create *Suggestion of Least Resistance*, a poetic piece that manipulates archive material depicting the July Revolt of 1927 that took place in Vienna, Austria's capital city. The vibrant, rhythmic animation presents both a memorial to an iconic historical moment where inequality led to rioting and many people were gunned down in the street, and the more abstract suggestion that human life can be compared to burning paper cascading from broken windows in the breeze. The individual needs to be valued and properly cared for within a society, else history repeats itself.

Questioning how people and the environment can be controlled is evident in surreal and satirical *Lickalike* by German Director Rebecca Blöcher and Austrian Composer Eva Reiter. The characters are corralled or rewarded by disembodied hands as they try to move about their ever changing, ever reorganised world. We see how everything in the world is connected, the need for everyone to cooperate to keep the system moving and to keep everything in balance, else we will all fall down.

*Music Box* by Slovakian Director Joanna Kozuch and Germany based, Chinese Composer Ying Wang similarly shows the idea of the external controls societal groups are subject to in its representation of how one can deal with an impaired person. In the film when one acrobat in a human pyramid is injured and can no longer perform three different solutions are presented. Here again the controlling force is seen to be manipulating the subjects, and we are asked to consider which is the best way of dealing with a situation so that everyone is able to cooperate to the best of their ability.

*Generator/Operator* by Swiss Director Andrea Schneider and Germany based, Greek Composer Marianthi Papalexandri-Alexandri, is an abstract representation of the principles at the heart of the Economy for the Common Good - the need for cooperation, trust, sharing and solidarity. Each principle is shown operating in an unceasing loop of collaged mechanical elements, natural materials and disembodied hands. For the soundtrack, the composer made special instrumental devices that create a sound that drives forward the movement of the piece.

And finally, in *Hierarchy Glitch* by Bulgarian Director Vessela Dantcheva and Austrian Composer Electric Indigo, the idea of subverting the hierarchy of the current economic system is shown through an abstract visual pattern of hand drawn shapes. The shapes are at first constrained

by the hierarchical structure they are within, but a glitch in the system causes disorder and connections are lost leading the individual components to autonomously chose to connect and to create a more resilient collective. It gives hope that change can come from chaos.

Together the ten films are designed to be provocations. Take the Happiness Machine as a starting point for discussions around what could make our world a better place for us all and a first step to improving society.

For more information on the Happiness Machine project: [happiness-machine.de](http://happiness-machine.de)

by Abigail Addison

austrian+ cultural forum<sup>lon</sup>

klangforum Wien



Fabian&Fred

/P Animate Projects



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## The Flounder

UK 2019 6min

One day a humble fisherman catches an enchanted fish. Can the fish help him and his wife improve their lot?

**Director** Elizabeth Hobbs



## Hierarchy Glitch

Bulgaria 2019 6min

Visual patterns are tied up in hierarchical behaviour that restrains the full potential and mobility of each individual element until the matrix collapses.

**Director** Vessela Dantcheva



## Music Box

Slovakia 2019 6min

An ensemble of acrobats tries to create a perfect pyramid. However, one of them has problems with his hand so that the pyramid collapses.

**Director** Joanna Kozuch



### **Pantopos**

Austria 2019 8min

A journey to a surreal place where nothing is as it used to be.

**Director** Eni Brandner



### **Bloomers**

UK 2019 10min

The story of a lingerie factory in Manchester. Workers recount the history of Headen & Quarmby, UK manufacturing, and traditions of making.

**Director** Samantha Moore



### **Generator/Operator**

Switzerland 2019 6min

Translating the ideas of cooperation, trust, sharing and solidarity into separate working microcosms that run in an endless loop.

**Director** Andrea Schneider



### **The Happiness Machine**

Serbia 2019 7min

A simulation of a non-existent video game concerned with the business practices of a company which at first sight seems ideal.

**Director** Ana Nedeljković



### **Lickalike**

Germany 2019 8min

Someone disappears and a tree is upside down. In search of the roots, people are torn from their usual order and reassembled.

**Director** Rebecca Blöcher

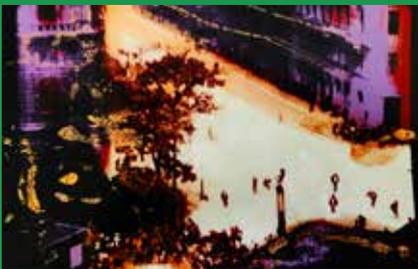


### **Measuring the Distance**

Austria 2019 7 min

Exploring urban edges as they correspond with the marginality of the social groups who inhabit them.

**Director** Susanne Jirkuff



### **Suggestion of Least Resistance**

Denmark 2019 5min

A depiction of the July Revolt of 1927 (Der Brand des Wiener Justizpalastes), a monumental episode that is still acutely relevant.

**Director** Michelle Kranot

# Edge of Frame <sup>(15)</sup>

**CLOSE-UP**

at Close-Up Cinema Sat 7 Dec & Sun 8 Dec

**It is with great pleasure that Edge of Frame returns to LIAF for the fourth year in a row. This year we have two feature presentations and two programmes of shorts. As always the focus is on experimental animation and work at the fertile intersection of animation, experimental film and artists' moving image. These programmes feature work from some of the most exciting and original artists to engage with processes of animation, with brand new and recent films showing alongside classic and historical work, from the UK and around the world.**

We are really thrilled to be presenting two extraordinary and highly acclaimed experimental features this year, both of which are showing in London for the first time. *Memento Stella* by Makino Takashi is presented in partnership with Open City Documentary Festival, and *Potamkin*, by Stephen Broomer is presented in partnership with ALT/KINO. Both films exemplify Edge of Frame's commitment to showing exhilarating, challenging and formally adventurous cinema, and it is with great pleasure that we bring you these films in collaboration with such inspirational screening partners. OCDF and ALT/KINO are truly kindred spirits to Edge of Frame, as is the unique and invaluable Close-Up, where all four programmes will take place.

Our two programmes of shorts bring together works from many countries and from artists working in a number of different areas of practice. Across both of these programmes and the two features there is something of a unifying theme uniting all of this year's Edge of Frame programmes. This is the idea of the surface in relation to the moving image, and to animation specifically. The artists featured in these programmes explore the idea of the surface through myriad inspired and innovative approaches. From sensual and visceral celebrations of physical material to investigations into rich personal and social histories, spiritual quests and conceptual enquiries, these works relate to this overarching theme of surface in highly individual and varied ways. What is fascinating is the unexpected connections between films that emerge over the four programmes.

Three works by the pioneering UK animator Clive Walley feature in our first programme 'Brushwork: The Painted Animation'. His 1992 classic *Brush Work* (which gives the programme its title) is a continuous movement through multiple planes of animated imagery rendered on glass in slick, juicy paint. Made using a modified multi-plane rostrum rig, the film is a great example of Walley's visual and technical virtuosity. Many miles away and 26 years later, the Japanese experimental filmmaker Makino Takashi's *Memento Stella* (showing after the Brushwork programme) employs hundreds of layers of video, stacked up in a virtual space in a way that clearly recalls Walley's multiplane. The effects of each film are markedly different but this echo of process links them together, opening up both works to unexpected contextual connections. Illuminating such links is central to the ethos of Edge of Frame, which aims to stimulate discussion around experimental animation in all its varied forms, revealing connections whilst celebrating diversity.

*Edwin Rostron*



# Brushwork: The Painted Animation <sup>(15)</sup>

at Close-Up Cinema Sat 7 Dec 18:00

This programme focuses on a fascinating subset of experimental animation, the painted animation, featuring a varied range of approaches to making this unruly substance move, including painting on glass, on canvas and on photographs, cut-out paintings on paper, painting with the body and more. The selection celebrates the fundamentally hybrid nature of animation, colliding and combining quite different mediums, in this case paint and film, to generate new and unexpected possibilities. Featuring narrative and abstract work, studio experiments and emotional landscapes, each film creates its own unique world borne out of paint and its material qualities.



## Stacking

UK 2006 7min

"I use a the straight ahead animation technique. The

continuous shifting and layering of painted animated scenes are equated to a sense of ecological instability and to emotions of uncertainty." - V.S.

Showing on a 16mm print.

Director Vicky Smith



## MOTH

USA 2019 3min

The film seeded and bloomed from the simple act of

a moth hitting the artist's studio window and continues as a wandering through the primal emotions of birth, motherhood, body, nature, metamorphosis and dance.

Director Allison Schulnik



## Brush Work

UK 1992 3min

The third in Clive's 'Divertimenti' series. The viewer is taken

on a journey into a four-dimensional abstract and painterly world, where animated brush strokes dance and dart across levels of glass.

Director Clive Walley



## I'm OK

UK 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



## Lost Islands of Philadelphia

USA 2018 10min

Once, there were

islands in the river beside Philadelphia. After reading about them in a library book, a girl sets out to find them as her mum follows frantically on roller skates.

Director Jennifer Levonian



## Valdediós

Spain 2019 3min

In Valdediós Gualterius built a monastery in the

13th Century. In Valdediós there is a wall, there is a horse, there is a road, there is the whole universe.

Director Elena Duque



## Slap Stick

UK 1993 3min

The fifth in Clive's 'Divertimenti' sequence. A journey

into a four-dimensional abstract and painterly world.

Director Clive Walley



## Tad's Nest

UK 2009 5min

Examining the way memories are held as sensations and

the ability of memory to invent people and places to perform the sensations.

Director Petra Freeman



## Flow

UK 2015 3min

An attempt to make animation by 'getting out of

the way' of materials - to let them animate themselves.

Director Jane Cheadle



## Apartment 6F

USA 2017 9min

While his wife is away on a trip, a depressed web

designer meets his new neighbours who invite him to their housewarming party.

Director Matt Bollinger



## Dark Matter

UK 1994 4min

The sixth in Clive's 'Divertimenti' sequence. A journey

into an abstract and painterly world, where animated brush strokes dance and dart across levels of glass in perfect synchrony with the music.

Director Clive Walley



## Álommalom (Dreammill)

Hungary 2009 4min

LIAF, London International

Animation Festival, Álommalom, Dreammill, Dóra Keresztes This four-minute animated "capriccio" mourns that disappearing world of the countryside, which soon you will only meet in your imagination, in your dreams.

Director Dóra Keresztes

## Edge of Frame

# Memento Stella <sup>(15)</sup>

at Close-Up Cinema **Sat 7 Dec 20:30**

**Makino Takashi's extraordinary new work *Memento Stella* is a dazzling journey into immersive abstraction. The film is made up of hundreds of layers of footage, blending into dense fields of imagery complemented by a highly effective soundtrack by Reinier Van Houdt.**

Makino Takashi is based in Tokyo and was educated in cinematography at the Nihon University College of Art in Japan. In 2001 he served an apprenticeship with the Quay Brothers in London, during which he mainly studied film music and lighting. He has collaborated with many leading experimental musicians such as Jim O'Rourke, Simon Fisher Turner and C Spencer Yeh. His working process involves the collection of a large volume of recorded material which he shoots himself, which is then selectively layered and superimposed into dense masses of pulsating abstract imagery. *Memento Stella* is Makino's first feature length work, and it premiered at International Film Festival Rotterdam in January. We are extremely pleased to partner with Open City Documentary Festival to present Makino's wonderful film and Oliver Wright, Director of OCDF's Film Programme, will introduce the screening.

Makino describes the background to his film:

**“Memento Stella is an original phrase I coined to remind me to ‘never forget that we too reside among the stars’. For several years I’ve travelled the world, screening my work. And throughout this dark, sad world, amid war and terrorism, countless lives lost to natural**

**cataclysms caused by humans, there hasn’t been a single day that death hasn’t been in my thoughts. At the same time, I do realise that it is not only death that binds us. We are also born and raised and living on this little planet, among the stars.**

**I pursue my work with the idea that if each day, we might be conscious of this truth for even a moment, then maybe perhaps somewhere deep in our hearts, we might find shared artistic expressions, keys to a place beyond the religions, politics, borders, languages, and personal desires which tear us apart.”**

**Makino Takashi**

*Memento Stella* will be introduced by Oliver Wright, Director of Film Programme, Open City Documentary Festival.

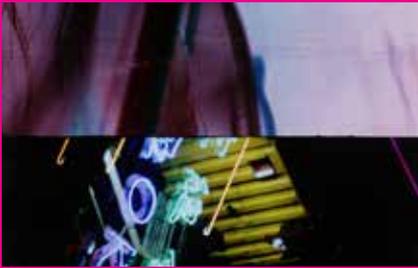


Director Makino Takashi  
Japan 2018 60min

# Surface Memory <sup>(15)</sup>

at Close-Up Cinema Sun 8 Dec 18:00

A programme of five recent works which share a concern with ideas of the surface in relation to the moving image, from the film negative to the computer screen, though each approaches the theme in markedly different ways. Covering considerable ground both geographically and formally, the works utilise film (Super8, 16mm and 35mm) and digital formats, often combining elements of the two to captivating effect. Beyond their often quite startling formal qualities these works delve into rich personal and social histories, spiritual quests and conceptual enquiries. From Hackney to Hong Kong, and from entrancing flicker to meditative spaces, these works offer a dynamic vision of contemporary practice.



## E-Ticket

Hong Kong/USA/UK 2019 13min

A film sixteen thousand splices in the making. 35mm photo negatives and moving pictures are obsessively cut apart, reshuffled then tape spliced together inch by inch in rigid increments.

**Director** Simon Liu



## A Ghost Eats Mud on the Mountain

UK 2018 27min

An abstract journey set against a backdrop of spaces in Hong Kong. Created utilising a combination of still photography and digital animation techniques.

**Director** Richard Forbes-Hamilton



## Please Step Out Of The Frame

USA 2018 4min

Using Super 8, a desk, and a laptop to create a playful and thoughtful visual study of the "frame-within-frame" concept and the choreography between body and screen.

**Director** Karissa Hahn



## PHX [X is for Xylonite]

UK 2019 13min

An exploration of the history and usage of plastic. Three-dimensional animations, distorted vocal recordings and the words of Roland Barthes connect the founding of the first plastics factory in 1866 and the development of cellulose nitrate, a key element in the creation of film stock.

**Director** Frances Scott



## Re-vue

Australia 2017 6min

A flicker-fest lamenting a lost relationship with narrative cinema, by which it is forever marked.

**Director** Dirk de Bruyn

**CLOSE-UP**

## Edge of Frame **Potamkin** (15)

at Close-Up Cinema **Sun 8 Dec 20:30**

**We are extremely proud to present the UK premiere of *Potamkin*, an astonishing experimental feature by Canadian filmmaker Stephen Broomer. This remarkable film-biography of film critic and poet Harry Alan Potamkin is made out of fragments of films that Potamkin reviewed, then distressed by Broomer using various photochemical processes.**

In 1933, at age 33, Harry Alan Potamkin died of complications related to starvation, at a time when he was one of the world's most respected film critics. In his writings, he advocated for a cinema that would simultaneously embrace the fractures and polyphony of modern life and the equitable social vision of left radical politics. This film-biography is assembled out of distorted fragments of films on which he had written, an impression of erupting consciousness.

Stephen Broomer is an interdisciplinary media artist working in the traditions of experimental film, photochemical abstraction and collage. Parallel to this, he has worked within the field of cinema as a preservationist, historian, educator, programmer and publisher. Broomer's 16mm films and digital videos have screened at festivals such as the San Francisco Cinematheque's Crossroads Festival, the Toronto International Film Festival, S8 Mostra de Cinema Periférico (Galicia), and the New York Film Festival.

This UK Premiere of *Potamkin* is presented in partnership with ALT/KINO, a space to explore alternative visions, voices, and perspectives in film and artists' moving image, and will be introduced by ALT/KINO's Ben Nicholson.

*Potamkin* will be introduced by Ben Nicholson, ALT/KINO



**Director** Makino Takashi  
Japan 2018 60min



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**University of  
East London**

# UK Animation Industry Event

**LIAF presents the UK Animation Industry Event at the University of East London (UEL), an all day event from 10:00 to 18:30 - four panels giving insider access to some of the hot topics of the year plus a screening of the LIAF British showcase.**

Animation doesn't stand still; and debates and discussions with animators and creative experts are the best way to get in touch with what's happening, whether it's how Virtual Reality will impact on animation, or why the gender and diversity of the animation industry is rapidly changing, or why kids animation has a new lease of life. Come and find out.

We've gathered together some of the most passionate, honest and insightful experts from a wide range of different areas and backgrounds who are ready to cover all manner of vital topics to give you much food for thought.

For anyone currently working in the film and animation industry, thinking of working in the industry or just plain curious, these four talks are indispensable.



# UK Animation Industry Event

# We Need to Talk

# About Skills

## One Year On

at University of East London Sat 7 Dec 10:00



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East London**

In November 2018 Animation UK released a major paper on skills 'We need to talk about skills - an Animation UK skills analysis'. What impact did it have and what developments are underway to get a better skilled up UK? How can young animators and students benefit from the new moves to develop new talent? Is recruitment fairer or is it all about who you know? What are the skills that are in demand, and how can new entrants fill demand? Do we rely too much on Europe and overseas talent, and are policy makers aware of the value of home-grown animation? Students, if you are interested in what animation skills are in demand right now, or in the near future, come to this session.



**Saint John Walker (Chair)**

**Leader for VFX at Norwich University of the Arts**

Saint is Course Leader for VFX at Norwich University of the Arts, and was previously Creative Skillset's Head of Development and Animation manager, authoring the Core Skills of VFX handbook. Recently he has been a columnist for 3D Artist magazine as well as working with industry group Access:VFX to promote diversity in Animation and VFX.



**Tom Box**

**Joint Managing Director of Blue Zoo Animation**

Tom is the co-founder and joint managing director of Blue Zoo Animation. Over the last 19 years, the studio has grown to become the biggest dedicated CG animation studio in the UK, picking up a few BAFTAs along the way. Tom has been the driving force behind the studio's continuous exploration of new technology, experimenting with cutting-edge tools to see how they can improve animation workflows and facilitate artists' creativity.



**Lucy Lee**

**Animation Producer and Trainer**

Lucy runs an animation production company Just Tell Stories specialising in handmade and traditional animation. She runs workshops for people of all ages and is a visiting lecturer at Herts University. She has an MA in Visual Communication, was trained at the National Film and TV School (UK) and the Sverdlovsk Film Studios in Russia and also runs a blog on animation at [www.JustMakeAnimation.com](http://www.JustMakeAnimation.com).



**Abigail Addison**

**Animation Production Liaison Executive at ScreenSkills**

Abigail is the Animation Production Liaison Executive at ScreenSkills, the industry-led skills body for the UK's screen-based creative industries. She is also a Director of agency Animate Projects that works at the intersection of animation, film and art. As a producer she was nominated for the BAFTA British Short Animation 2019 for Elizabeth Hobbs' *I'm OK*, and co-produced Chris Shepherd's *Johnno's Dead*, which won Best British Film at London International Animation Festival 2016. Abigail is also a member of the Advisory Board of Animation Alliance UK.



**Kate O'Connor**

**Chair of Animation UK**

Kate is the Executive Chair & Director of

Animation UK, now part of the newly formed UK Screen Alliance, the trade body for VFX, post-production and film studios. This involves representing the sector at government level and developing business, export and skills related policy to support growth. Building on over 20 year as a skills specialist, Kate also runs a consultancy practice for public and private sector clients in the creative industries and was also recently appointed Co-Director of XR Stories, a new R&D partnership between the University of York, Screen Yorkshire and the BFI, exploring approaches to storytelling for immersive and interactive content.



**Martin Bowman**

**Joint Programme Leader in Digital Animation at University of Herts**

Martin is the Joint Programme Leader of the Digital Animation department at the University of Hertfordshire, having taught there since 2003. Prior to working at Hertfordshire he was a Lead Artist in the Games Industry for five years, working on games for the GameBoy Advance, Playstation2 and PSone, Xbox and PC platforms at a number of developers in the UK and Sweden. He has also worked as an illustrator for the Times newspaper for and as an architectural visualiser.

# UK Animation Industry Event Is Everybody on Board?

## The Animated Women Panel

at University of East London Sat 7 Dec 11:30



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East London**

It's been shown that industries with more diverse workforces are happier and more productive, and recent surveys like the UK Screen Alliance findings into Inclusion and Diversity in Animation/VFX/Post Production have thrown up some surprising figures.

At LIAF we want to widen the conversation around inclusion. Women are well represented in senior creative production roles (55%) and creative artist roles (49%) which sounds like progress, but is that the whole story? Only 14% of technical support roles are held by women, and in comparison with VFX and Post-Production, animation is the least ethnically diverse with 14% BAME. Are there blocks to a more diverse workforce, and what can be done? What are the barriers, and what are the opportunities? Why are some creative industries so unrepresentative - is it an issue of school streaming, workplace attitudes or more complex? Hear some of the illuminating stories and discussions from diverse voices working in animation, and see the kind of work they do.



**Beth Parker  
(Chair)**

**Senior Manager  
Animation at Disney  
Channels and Co-**

**Chair of Animated Women UK**

From 2001, Beth worked at animation production houses Telemagination and TV Loonland as managing director and head of production, before going on to work for a major youth charity for three years. She then worked as consultant for both charities and animation companies including Hibbert Ralph Animation and Red Kite Animation. In 2014 Beth joined Disney to head up production for the Disney Channel network in Europe, Middle East and Africa. Beth is also the Co-Chair of Animated Women UK.



**Emma Calder**

**Independent  
Animator, Pearly  
Oyster Productions**

Emma studied Graphic design at The Royal College of Art. She has worked as an Animation Director, Artist, Graphic Designer and Lecturer and has written, designed and illustrated books for both adults and children. She co-founded Pearly Oyster Productions making many successful and award-winning animated films, including *The Queens Monastery* and *Roger Ballen's Theatre of Apparitions*. She is currently working on a nine-part series and a new short film.



**Lucy Cooper**

**Director at Union  
VFX and Animated  
Women UK**

After gaining a law degree from the University of Aberdeen and an MSc in Marketing from the University of Strathclyde, Lucy began her career at Scottish Television before a move to London and the world of post production. Her 20 years of experience spans a variety of creative companies across broadcast, film and television post production and physical special effects. Lucy is passionate about encouraging inclusion, diversity, awareness and opportunity within the VFX industry, and is a Director of Animated Women UK and Access: VFX. She most recently joined Union Visual Effects as Managing Director in 2016.



**Bimpe Alliu**

**Junior Concept  
Artist at Industrial  
Light & Magic**

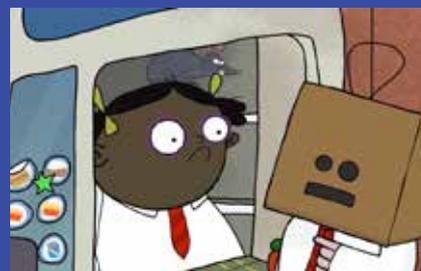
Bimpe is a Concept Artist and Illustrator currently working as a Junior Concept Artist at Industrial Light and Magic in London.

# UK Animation Industry Event

# The Kids are All Right?

## Meet the Movers and Shakers behind the Resurgence of Kids Animation on TV

at University of East London **Sat 7 Dec 13:30**



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**University of East London**

What makes a successful kids animation these days, and how do stories travel from pitch to screen? Panellists talk about the way ideas and character end up on TV, and what makes an engaging animation for kids. We'll also look at how trends, regulatory frameworks, merchandising and advertising might have changed and what responsibility animators and creators might have to their young audiences. Also, are certain animation styles more suitable for kids, and as an animation student is it a good idea to focus on this area?



**Saint John Walker (Chair)**

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**Leigh Hodgkinson**

**Director of Olobob Top**

Leigh is a renowned author-illustrator of children's picture books as well as art director for CBeebies TV series *Olobob Top*. She began her career as an animation director and her films include *Moo(n)* and *Stalk*. Her awards include a BAFTA, British Animation Award and Annecy Cristal. Leigh was also art director for the first series of *Charlie & Lola*. Leigh's work in picture books includes *Troll Swap* and *Pencil Dog*. Leigh has also been short-listed for the Roald Dahl Funny Prize twice and has been on the Kate Greenaway Prize long-list four times.



**Ed Foster**

**Creator and Director of 'Rubbish World of Dave Spud'**

Ed grew up in rural North Wales, then studied in Hull and the NFTS. He now works as an animation series director with a background that spans developing pilots, to writing for and directing commissioned series such as *Little Princess* a preschool series which is shown on Channel Five, and has sold to over 160 territories worldwide and been BAFTA nominated four times. In 2019 Ed's own original creation *The Rubbish World of Dave Spud* launched on CITV. Ed continues to make short independent films and has been a jury member for the BAA, BAFTA and RTS awards. He is also a visiting tutor at the RCA and NFTS animation courses.



**Steve Smith**

**Managing Director of Beakus, Director of 'Olobob Top'**

Steve Smith is the founder of Beakus, a UK animation studio based in Lewes. He is a graduate of the MA Animation course at the RCA, a filmmaker, director and producer. Over nearly two decades of animation creation and production Steve's work has won a BAFTA, a British Animation Award and Annecy Cristal. Alongside his short films his commercial clients include Nickelodeon, Google, Kindle, BBC and The Science Museum. In 2017 Steve co-created Beakus' first preschool animated show, 'Olobob Top'. Two series later and the Top-10 show is currently broadcasting around the world in the UK, Australia, Finland, Japan and beyond.



**Mic Graves**

**Executive Producer at Cartoon Network Europe, Director of The Amazing World of Gumball**

Mic has been the series director and writer on Cartoon Network's *The Amazing World of Gumball* since 2009. He is currently working as an Executive Producer at Cartoon Network Europe and on Cartoon Network's show *Elliott from Earth* on which he is also a writer. Mic was also creative director on the cult animated comedy show 'Monkey Dust'. He has been working in the UK animation industry for 25 years and been the recipient of multiple BAFTAs, BAA awards, International Emmy, Annie Award and an Oscar nomination.

# UK Animation Industry Event

# The 3 Rs:

## Animating in the New Spaces of VR, AR and XR

at University of East London Sat 7 Dec 15:00



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Is a new area ripe for innovation and experimentation opening up, and if so what might it mean for creatives? XR (Extended Reality) seems to offer new opportunities for Animators. Meet the animators, companies and policymakers at the forefront - hear how they think this emerging area will interface with animation and how this immersive industry might develop further, and what opportunities there might be for animators, content and brands.



**Saint John Walker (Chair)**

**Leader for VFX at Norwich University of the Arts**

Saint is Course Leader for VFX at Norwich University of the Arts, and was previously Creative Skillset's Head of Development and Animation manager, authoring the Core Skills of VFX handbook. Recently he has been a columnist for 3D Artist magazine as well as working with industry group Access:VFX to promote diversity in Animation and VFX.



**FX Goby**

**Award-Winning Animator and Film Director at Nexus Production**

FX Goby is an Emmy-Award nominated filmmaker and has directed Oscar and BAFTA qualified films, music videos, commercials, fashion and dance films as well as documentaries between Los Angeles, London and Paris. He has created several installations including *Back To The Moon* - a 360/VR homage to Georges Melies which was on the front page of Google worldwide. The film went viral and had more than 200 million views in 2 days. His Oscar-qualified short film *To Build a Fire* was shown at over 100 festivals around the world, winning 22 awards. He has also published three books in France as an illustrator and directed three documentaries for French broadcaster France Televisions.



**Asha Easton**

**Manager, Immerse UK**

Asha is currently the manager for Immerse UK, where she is responsible for helping to grow the immersive technology ecosystem for the United Kingdom. She works at the intersection of all innovation happening in the industry - between big corporations and SME's adopting the technology, the immersive start-up community, university research and development labs, and government. Asha is also a VR producer and an active member of several VR groups including: the London chapter of Women in Immersive Tech (WiiT), which helps to support women in the industry, and the VR Diversity Initiative (VRDI), where she has taught workshops to up-skill under-represented groups in media and technology.



**Robin Fuller**

**Animator/Artistic Director, Immersive Studios**

Robin is the Creative Director at Immersive Studios, a studio specialising in VR, AR, 360-film and beyond. He has over 10 years of industry experience working as an animator and director on a wide range of projects, from music videos and advertising to theatre and live performance. He also lectures at Norwich University of The Arts and his work has been screened at film festivals all over the world. Robin entered the world of immersive technology after realising the potential to take storytelling in new and exciting directions, and hasn't looked back.



**Steve Dann**

**Co-Founder/ Executive Chairman Medical Realities**

Steve is the co-founder and CEO of Medical Realities and is responsible for spearheading Medical Realities drive into the Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality sectors. The company specialises in 360° Filming, Artificial Intelligence, Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality to train doctors and medical students surgical procedures. Steve is also the CEO of award winning VR & AR studio Amplified Robot, a regular writer and contributor to media blogs, and a thought-leader in the realms of Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality. He is a regular speaker on the subject of AR, VR and new technology at conferences and events around the world and has presented keynote sessions at IBC, AWE, Apps World, Tech Expo and Google Campus.

# Under the Rostrum: A Collage Animation Workshop with Lizzy Hobbs

at University of East London Sat 7 Dec 10:00 - 16:00



We are very excited to be hosting an animation workshop with BAFTA-nominated animator Lizzy Hobbs at LIAF 2019. This workshop is for anyone who wants to experiment with the moving image and sound, get messy, have fun and make a film.

Over the course of a day Lizzy will help you to explore the creative potential of animating under a camera with simple materials, including paper, collage, plasticine and found objects. Lizzy will talk about animations that have inspired her practice and she'll show participants some simple techniques for animating under the camera. The animation software will be Dragonframe and Istopmotion and participants will make short animations in pairs. All you need is patience, imagination and a sense of fun.

This workshop is designed for beginners, people who want to take their first step into experimental animation and/or more experienced animators who want to explore, play and take risks with animation.



## Lizzy Hobbs

Filmmaker, Lecturer  
at Anglia Ruskin  
University, and  
University of The Arts

Lizzy Hobbs is an animated filmmaker based in East London. She has been making films for 20 years. Her films are experimental in form and often centred upon real life people or events. Her films often employ methods from her printmaking background, but always explore and stretch the material possibilities of the medium. Her films have travelled widely to international film festivals and won many awards including a BAFTA nomination for *I'm OK* in 2019. Elizabeth enjoys sharing her practice through workshops and collaboration with The Creative Research Collective, NIE Theatre and artist Emily Tracy. She is an associate lecturer at Anglia Ruskin University and University of The Arts, London.





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