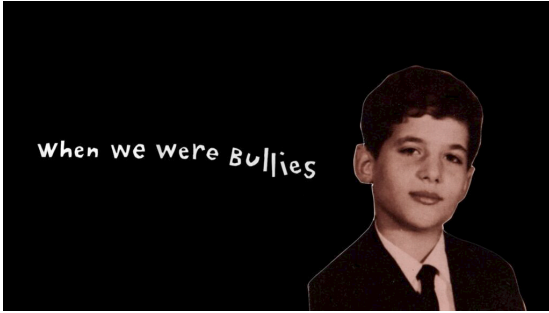


APRIL 2022



JAY ROSENBLATT'S OSCAR NOMINATED SHORT 'WHEN WE WERE BULLIES' INCLUDES ANIMATION BY JEREMY ROURKE The Oscar nominated documentary was made by a graduate from San Francisco State, Jay Rosenblatt, MA in film, 1988. Now he is an award winning independent filmmaker who has taught at SF State, Stanford and the Art Institute. Jeremy Rourke, the film's animator, is an experimental artist who used cutout animation in this work.

Steve Kovaks, professor emeritus from SF State School of Cinema and Hollywood producer, said *When We Were Bullies* "is truly a gem--original, unpredictable, personal, psychological, philosophical. I saw it with the four other nominees at the Roxie. In my mind his is by far the most riveting." It premiered at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival where it was nominated for a jury prize.

The film begins with a mind boggling coincidence that ultimately led Rosenblatt to track down members of his fifth grade class to see what they remember about a bullying incident that occurred 50 years ago. Weaving together a collage of archival material, found footage, stop-motion animation and interviews with classmates and a teacher from that time, the film is a highly personal look back at a Brooklyn schoolyard incident. <https://thestreamable.com/movies/when-we-were-bullies-2021> It is premiering on HBO on March 30.

Jeremy Rourke, who creates music and stop-motion films, made his contributions to the film using vintage photographs and other ephemera. He enjoys working with hands-on techniques and was named "Best New Animator/Musician" by *SF Weekly* in 2011. He recently was an artist-in-residence at Recology SF. Greta Snider, a cinema professor at SF State told us, "Jeremy is amazing - he did a Visiting Artist Master Class at SFSU in Cinema. He also created a feature length animated

site-specific musical at Other Cinema, about gentrification, which was mind-blowing. He's fantastic and I'm glad to see him get recognized."



ANTIQUA TOYS OF FELIX THE CAT ARE EXPECTED TO SELL AT AN AUCTION FOR ABSURD PRICES The estimated auction price for the boxed '*Felix the Movie Cat*,' an 8 inch high, wood jointed figure made by Schoenhut, is between \$1,500 - \$2,500.



The auction house claims the *Felix Frolic* toy by Chein from 1926-27, is the largest lithographed comic character toy ever made, standing 11 inches tall on a 13 by 4-inch platform. The Felix Frolic was also the first tin windup comic strip character toy to be licensed for manufacture in the United States. "Fewer than a handful are known to exist." They estimate it to sell between \$12,000 - \$18,000.

"Many other wonderful comic character toys will join the Felix Frolic on March 11 and 12, including a Gunthermann Felix the Cat Merry-Go-Round, \$15,000-\$25,000; a Tippco Mickey and Minnie Motorcycle (ex-Donald Kaufman collection), \$25,000-\$45,000; and three other Mickey Mouse favorites: a Slate Dancer, \$4,000-\$6,000; Distler Hurdy Gurdy, \$4,000-\$7,000; and a Mickey Pushing a Pram (England), \$3,000-\$5,000."

I have about 20 Felix cartoons on 16mm films and I never paid more than \$20 for a print. Good used prints are still inexpensive. Why is a toy so overpriced when owning prints of actual films is inexpensive? The same is true of films of Mickey Mouse, Popeye and other cartoon characters.



DISCOVER THE OUTRAGEOUS WORK OF BARRIE KOSKY (IF YOU DARE) by Karl Cohen
 Australian producer/director Barrie Kosky worked with English animator Paul Barritt and the rest of his 1927 team for three years to create a bizarre, award winning production of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* (2012). The sets and much of the action were animated and projected onto an unusual white wall. The wall had revolving panels like the revolving doors used by some department stores, but his panels allowed a singer to appear and disappear. The man with the tall black hat in the photo was standing on such a platform. What you don't see is he wears a safety harness to prevent him from falling off the tiny platform. Take a look at the trailer to get an idea of what Barritt and Barrie created. <https://vimeo.com/94387045>



The production of *The Magic Flute* was 1927's first work on an opera. It was also their first large scale production and the first time they tackled a preexisting work. This version of the opera was co-conceived by 1927's co-artistic directors Paul Barritt and Suzanne Andrade in collaboration with Barrie Kosky, the Artistic Director of The Komische Opera in Berlin.



Kosky's production of *The Magic Flute* premiered in Berlin at the Komische Opera in 2012 and it not only continues to play in repertoire there, productions of it have been staged using the same visuals worldwide. In an interview Kosky said most opera companies still do a more or less standard version of the opera, but he wanted to stage something totally different. (And he did).



Theo Hoffman as Papageno and Zuzana Marková as Pamina in LA Opera's 2019 of *The Magic Flute*. *The LA Times* called the LA presentation the most successful staging in the company's history!

When Kosky's version of the opera was presented in LA, a review in the *LA Times* pointed out that the production consciously acknowledged that Mozart's opera is dominated by a sexist male point of view. Some women are mindless chatterboxes, while others are bitches or sex objects. The reviewer said the sexist elements were intentionally blatant enough to produce groans from the audience. Kosky said in a different article that he and his co-director Suzanne Andrade felt it was time to point out that the values of 18th Century polite society can now be seen as appalling at times.



I discovered this unusual part-animated opera in a *Guardian*, well-illustrated article titled *Crystal vaginas, giant noses and 'vaudeville on acid': Barrie Kosky on his most outrageous shows*. I was also fascinated to learn about many of his other accomplishments. If you want to discover why the *LA Times* heralded him as “Europe’s hottest opera director” read this well - illustrated article: <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2022/mar/04/crystal-vaginas-giant-noses-and-vaudeville-on-acid-barrie-kosky-on-his-most-outrageous-shows>



DISCOVER THE UNUSUAL CAREER OF ANIMATOR PAUL BARRITT by Karl Cohen

The man who created the animation for Kosky’s version of *The Magic Flute* was Paul Barritt who in his youth had studied illustration and philosophy at Middlesex University. In 2005 he teamed up with writer and performer Suzanne Andrade and founded an experimental performance company called 1927. Two years later with the addition of another performer and a composer/pianist, they developed a cabaret act that combined animation with live performers. They called it *The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*.

Their show unexpectedly won five awards at the international Edinburgh Fringe Festival, resulting in their getting numerous offers to perform it elsewhere. They ended up presenting the show throughout the UK and internationally.

The successful tour lasted three years and it included performances in the Sidney Opera House and “sell out” shows in London for two seasons. The show won a rather strange sounding award, the Peter Brook Empty Space Award for Best Ensemble. A two minute trailer gives you a taste of 1927’s show. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7mBtaW1096g>



In 2009 they premiered their second award winning show, *The Animals and Children Took to the Streets*. It ended up being presented at over 80 venues across the globe. The UK tour included playing at the National Theatre in London. A two minute TV clip shows they were using multiple projectors to present the animation. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6H80OnmrDeY> A good minute long promotion for the show is at <https://vimeo.com/42388381> The clips suggest 1927 was improving their production skills enough to interest Kosky in hiring them to work on *The Marriage of Figaro*.



From 1927’s production of *Golem*, 2014

After working on the Mozart opera they premiered two shows in 2014, *Golem* and *Krazy Kat*. Again both were animated theatre shows. *Krazy Kat* was presented in Germany while *Golem* was first performed in Salzburg. *Golem* was later performed in London, Paris, Moscow and in other international venues. See a slick promotion for it on BBC 4 at <https://www.facebook.com/1927theatre/videos/golem-on-bbc4-sunday-18-nov-1030pm/2036967756358036/> Also see <https://www.19-27.co.uk/krazy-kat>

The *New York Times* said “the setting is fantastical, although at the same time recognizably the workaday urban world in which people toil away in service to the ever-shifting digital future...”

The integration of Mr. Barritt's animation and the work of the cast is the show's most singular and bewitching achievement. The animation draws on various modern art movements, from outsider art to Surrealism to Dada, while managing to achieve its own peculiar individuality. In its ingenious mixture of styles and woolly comic tone, it often pays homage to, or at least recalls, the animation of Terry Gilliam for 'Monty Python's Flying Circus,' with its ample use of antique imagery."

"The moral of *Golem* isn't drawn in particularly subtle strokes. But its tart critique of a modern world increasingly homogenized, and individuals shorn of individuality through their reliance on devices sold by the millions, has been imbued with such hallucinatory visual allure that your attention is held fast throughout its 90-minute running time."

Paul Barritt's career also includes his teaching at Middlesex University (2005 to present), his being a member of the Electronic and Digital Arts Research Cluster and he has a busy freelance career working as an animator and illustrator on more projects that combine animation with live performance. Also, in 2013 one of his short personal animated films, *White Morning*, was shown at the Sundance Film Festival and the London Short Film Festival.



ANIMATORS FOR PEACE by Nancy Denney-Phelps The news from the Ukraine and Russia gets worse every day and it is obvious that Putin is totally crazy. It seems that the steroids have finally gotten to him. Civilians are being killed and millions of women and children have crossed the border into safer countries. My friends in the

Republic of Georgia are worried that they are next as Putin vows to "reunite" more of Russia.

A group of Russian animators have publically come out supporting the Ukraine. They published a petition signed by many Russian animators which they posted on their web site. The fear of Putin's wrath isn't paranoia as the signers said that Facebook and several other social media sites have been shut down in Russia along with their website! Some people thought ASIFA shouldn't run their signed statement on the ASIFA website for fear of Putin's retaliation on the Russian animators. The government already knows who they are so they want others to know what their feelings are about the war.



AN OPEN LETTER FROM RUSSIAN AND UKRAINIAN ANIMATORS We're convinced that war brings nothing but death, pain and destruction. And nothing can justify it. The animation community of Ukrainian and Russian animation filmmakers is united and inseparable; we have been working together, watching each other's films for many years. The art of animation is also an art that helps people to feel human. Not to kill, not to destroy. To unite.

And today our children, our brothers are sent to kill those with whom they recently played in the same yard and watched the same cartoons, without distinguishing whether they are Russian or Ukrainian ones.

Animation and art in general have always been imbued with anti-war spirit. We believe that the current military actions are directed not just at our Ukrainian friends and colleagues, but against all people and humanity.

We are against war. We want the words about the brotherly people not to turn into a bloody nightmare.



There is no justification for bombing and killing!



THE ALAMEDA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL by Steve Segal Alameda's festival was held on the little island south of Oakland from Feb 18-20 in the elegant art deco-styled Alameda theatre. It was a well-run festival with lots of opportunities to meet other filmmakers and to schmooze with film fans. My film *Misfit* was included and it was a pleasure to be in attendance for all 3 days.

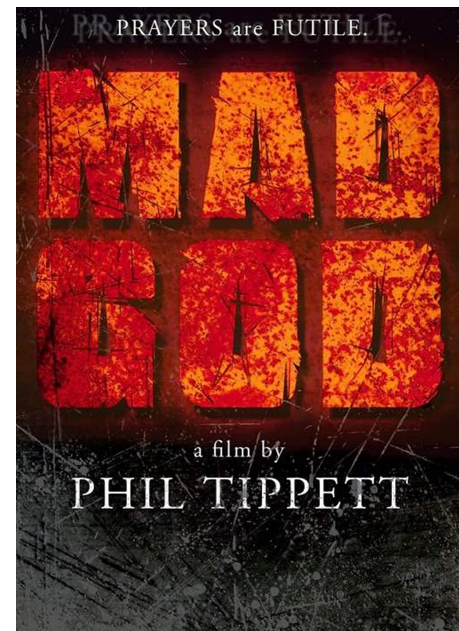
The opening night film was *Café Americano*, a very funny comedy about a clueless wannabe director trying

to make a serious film. It was the work of Alex Scheinman, a member of the LA comedy improv group The Groundlings. Writer- director-star Scheinman was in attendance and was very affable and easy to talk to.

The centerpiece film was the Bay Area premiere of *Mad God*, an epic stop-motion film by famous Bay Area animator Phil Tippett that was in production for 35 years. It's unnecessary for me to review this film as the most likely viewers are going to be his legion of fans. Nothing I say would dissuade them from watching it, which is as it should be.

If you are not familiar with Tippett, he gained his fame from animating stop motion figures for the first three *Star Wars* films and for many other wonderful works (*Starship Troopers*, *RoboCop*, *Jurassic Park*).

Mad God depicts a dystopian world in which people lead wretched, dehumanized, fearful lives. For the casual moviegoer this film may be a bit difficult to follow as there is no discernible story. It's difficult to know what's going on. There are human puppet characters, one main character is searching around for something, but the story veers away from him. With all the innovative composites and animated moving lights and shadows the film is fascinating looking, but not really compelling. That said, if you're a fan of stop motion you definitely will want to see this film.



The rest of the festival was devoted entirely to shorts broken up in easy to digest packages. There was one show of animated shorts. The collection in order of screening was: *Misfit*, my film about a piece of a jigsaw puzzle who gets separated from the puzzle's other pieces. It was the only work in CG.

Liv & Bell's Long Thin Friend by Natsuki Kida of Japan is a thoroughly charming kid-friendly stop-motion story about a girl with a curious red polka dot ribbon and a hedgehog. The most memorable thing was the scenery unfolding like a pop-up book.

Deep Fears by Ryan Chu about a sea otter that is afraid of water, was the only hand drawn work shown. *A Change of Song* is about two stop-motion animals who work together to find the right record to play on their turntable. Animator Gordon LePage came all the way from Maine to attend the festival. He told us that the records used were ones in his personal collection. *The Secret of Mr. Nostoc* by Patrice Seiler & Maxime Marion of France tells the story of a guy who refuses to let the pressure of the city stress him out. It is a stop-motion film made with found or discarded materials.



Everybody Goes to the Hospital by Tiffany Kimmel is a stop-motion film based on a story that was told to the filmmaker by her grandmother. It deservedly won the animation award. The heartbreaking story is about a little girl neglected and mistreated by her parents. It is not appropriate for children (and probably not that great to hear as an impressionable child). Ms. Kimmel was in attendance and brought her whole entourage, husband & composer, producer, and principal animator Eric Oxford. Oxford was presented the Phil Tippett Animation Award by Mr Tippett following the screening of *Mad God*.

The Festival creators and directors Mark Farrell and Colin Blake have put together a thoroughly well run and entertaining festival. It is held in a wonderful venue. Independent film fans should enjoy attending future festivals here and if you make live action films or animation, consider entering it.

Awards

- Grand Jury Prize - *Café Americano*
- Phil Tippett Animation Award - **Eric Oxford**
- Richard Beggs Sound Design Award - **Erich Rettermayer**
- The Lisa Runnels Shelton Emerging Artist Award - **Alba Mejia**
- Jury Prize - *The Speed of Time*
- Best Short Award - *Oleander*
- Best Foreign Short Award - *The Accursed (Las Malditas)*
- Best Documentary Short Award - *Lead Change*
- Best Animation Short Award - *Everybody Goes to the Hospital*
- Best Student Short Award - *Iron Head*

Best Cinematography Award - **Caitlin Machak, *The Tale of the Daughter***

Best Actor Award - **Jazlyn Yoder, *The Tale of the Daughter***

Best Newcomer Award - **Altar+Cation, *The Musical***

Audience Favorite Award - **Altar+Cation, *The Musical***

IS PIXAR USING HYPER-COLORS TO HACK YOUR BRAIN?

Wired Magazine ran an article that discusses how animators are using new high tech technology that can create psychological reactions that our conscious brains might not notice, but our subconscious mind may react to. It may affect the mood on a scene.

The author reports Pixar has a special theatre next to their main screening space that is equipped with Dolby's latest advanced theatrical projection systems. He claims the system can do that. The article by Adam Rodgers first appeared in the May, 2021 issue of *Wired*.

<https://www.wired.com/story/how-pixar-uses-hyper-colors-to-hack-your-brain/>



DISNEY HAS 100 YEARS OF MISTAKES, MISSTEPS AND CONTROVERSIES BEHIND IT AND THEIR NEW CEO IS ADDING TO THAT HISTORY

Bob Chapek remained silent on speaking out about Florida's Don't Say Gay bill, even after the company's outgoing CEO, Robert Iger, had already done so on Twitter. That suggests Chapek has a lot to learn about rectifying ugly public relations situations before they get out of hand.

The bill basically censors teachers, subjects them to being fined if a parent objects to the content of their lesson, and it could unfairly target members of the LGTBQ and other communities. His initial silence on the bill offended a lot of people including

some of his employees. Now he is accused of saying too little too late.

Disney offered to end the controversy over Chapek remaining silent for too long by offering to donate \$5 million to LGBTQ organizations. Much to the surprise of a lot of people, the donation was temporarily rejected until Chapek demonstrates he sincerely supports gay communities and his gay employees.

Disney replied they will suspend making donations to all Florida politicians. That was met with people saying fund the good politicians who didn't vote to pass the "Don't Say Gay" bill. One activist said the Disney offer "is a step in the right direction."

The following week employees issued a bigger surprise, they are organizing a walkout! Their proclamation read, "The recent statements by The Walt Disney Company (TWDC) leadership regarding the Florida legislature's recent 'Don't Say Gay' bill have utterly failed to match the magnitude of the threat to LGBTQIA+ safety represented by this legislation... Primarily, those statements have indicated that leadership still does not truly understand the impact this legislation is having not only on cast members in the state of Florida, but on all members of the LGBTQIA+ community in the company and beyond. While we certainly appreciate Bob Chapek's apology note, there is still more work



to be done... We must now take action to convince TWDC to protect employees and their families in the face of such open and unapologetic bigotry." Disney has in the past made monetary contributions to every politician who had supported the Don't Say Gay Bill.

The walkout began as 15 minute breaks each workday from March 15 - 21. On Tuesday, March 22, organizers held a successful "full-scale walkout" at several Disney owned companies (Pixar, ILM, etc.). The *Hollywood Reporter* said employees were allowed take off to participate "no questions asked." The bill was passed by the state's legislators, but has not yet been signed into law.

Heading a major corporation is a complex job and hopefully Iger chose the right person for the position. According to the *Wall Street Journal* Chapek's decision to stay out of politics in 2022 backfired. He will be faced with many more difficult decisions. He has to deal with other problems including one or more Pixar employees alleging "Disney corporate executives have censored scenes with same-sex affection in its films."

A few days later a source close to the production of Pixar's next feature film, *Lightyear* said such a cut was made to that film, but due to news of that censorship being made public the same sex kiss has been restored! It was between a female character who is in a "meaningful relationship" with another woman.

While that kiss was never questioned at Pixar, someone at Disney ordered the cut. It isn't known at this point if other "overtly gay affection" has been cut in other Pixar films by Disney.

Will the resolutions of the corporation's current issues lead to a more tolerant institution or will the reactionary influence of Trump and friends cause Disney to backtrack? Apparently some worker fear Chapek isn't as liberal as Iger. But one writer for the *LA Times* felt Chapek will keep his job as long as Disney+, the parks and the stocks are profitable.

DISNEY HAS HAD A MIXED HISTORY OF RUNNING A COMPANY OVER THE LAST 100 YEARS by KC

Disney has come a long way learning how best to run a company, but they sometimes get it wrong. In the 1920s Ub Iwerks, Walt and Roy Disney faced bankruptcy and being swindled. Then they had to learn not to offend people of different races, religions, ethnic backgrounds, in their films and in their workplace.

More recently they have had to deal with sexual orientation and other issues.

Employee relations became a thorny issue in the 1930s and it continues to be a controversial issue. Walt promised bonus payments to his workers after



Snow White was completed in place of giving raises and paying full overtime pay while it was in production. Instead of coming through with the bonus checks he chose to use that money to build a new studio in Burbank. That soured employee relations and was a factor that led to an ugly strike in 1941. Walt lost that strike. His workers won the right to unionize, something that has protected many of Disney employees since then, but not all of them.

Today Abigale Disney, a granddaughter of Walt's brother Roy, has become an outspoken champion of the corporation paying Disney workers a livable wage, not just a lousy minimum wage. Florida is a right-to-work state so Disneyland in Orlando has both union and non-union workers working together, contributing to it not being the happiest place on earth. The situation in Anaheim is just as bad as the cost of living is higher than what many employees are paid.

Perhaps the ugliest situation for Disney was learning to avoid condemning people with different political beliefs. After the strike Walt became a staunch anti-Communist. In his mind he was certain the strike leaders were either Communist or influenced by them.

When he testified before Congress in 1947 he named four individuals he believed were

Communists. The men he named were blacklisted for possibly having unpopular beliefs. There was never any discussion about their creating subversive films or trying to overthrow our government. They simply may have had unpopular beliefs.

What is somewhat ironic is that since Disney died in 1966, the corporation has been attacked and boycotted by conservative Christians for violating traditional family values. Some of the most offensive issues for them appeared to have been Disney offering medical insurance to partners of gay employees and allowing Gay Day at Disneyland, a tradition that began in 1990, but was not organized or sponsored by Disney.

In 1996 Donald Wildmon, a Methodist minister who had a long history of attacking TV shows, adult magazines and other things he considered sinful, added Disney/Disneyland to his list of degenerate places to boycott in 1995. His group, The American Family Association (AFA) was joined by the Southern Baptist Convention and other groups in a 9 year long boycott. It got a lot of press, but most people didn't take them seriously. Wildmon said when he ended the boycott, "We have made our point." (It turns out Wildmon overstated the number of AFA chapters, the number of followers, etc.)

Today most Americans are aware that not everybody has the same sexual orientation, but that doesn't mean everyone accepts that.



DISNEY HAS CREATED A UNIQUE FORM OF ENTERTAINMENT, BUT HAVE THEY OVERESTIMATED WHAT THE PUBLIC WILL PAY TO ENJOY IT? Disney in Florida has just opened the Galactic Starcruiser complex, a billion dollar resort that took six years to build. It gives



Are you willing to spend over \$6000 for a two night stay for a family of 4 in a fancy windowless mockup of a spaceship cabin.

guests an immersive hotel and theme park experience of being in a Star Wars fantasy. While other parts of the theme park are passive rides and experiences, here you can be an active participant to make the magic happen.

Would you pay \$6,000 for a family of 4 (or up to \$20,000 for a super deluxe suite) to pretend to be an inhabitant of the *Star Wars* universe for two days? Disney was sure enough people would answer “yes” to that question that they created **Star Wars: Galactic Starcruiser**, a two-day resort stay at Disney World that opened March 1.

Unfortunately when the first previews of this exciting new experience were released on YouTube many Disney fans were underwhelmed. Disney reacted by pulling the video and doing a major edit of it. People had dared to make fun of the corporation charging too much for the pleasure of walking around “what appeared to be a setting similar to their ‘Star Tours’ line queue area.”

To combat the mixed buzz they had received in advance of the opening, they invited journalists, fan site operators, and travel bloggers to see how wonderful the experience was going to be. One reviewer said he wouldn’t have paid to see it, “but when presented with the opportunity to do it for free, I certainly didn’t say no.” Was it worth it? He said, “The short answer? No, but it really is incredibly cool.”

The concept for the experience is what is called *Star Wars* LARP (live action role playing). As a passenger on the luxury starship *Halcyon*, (it has been a passenger ship celebrating its 275th year in space like the *QE2*, but with droids) you are

invited to relax, take advantage of the shipboard amenities, enjoy some fine food, and be serenaded at dinner by galactic pop superstars. Unfortunately, your peaceful journey will be interrupted by a visit from the First Order, investigating rumors of Resistance activity onboard. You will meet up with lots of costumed *Star Wars* archetype characters along the way.

When you board the Galactic Starcruiser you are handed your “datapad” which looks a lot like a mini iPhone 12. It is needed as it gives you much of the narrative you will partake in. You will get chats from various characters onboard the ship that have roles to perform. There will be the captain, the “cruise director,” a First Order officer investigating rumors of Resistance activity onboard, a smuggler and other characters. Depending on how you respond to the messages, something like playing a video game, your responses will determine what direction your experience will follow.

You may be directed to go to the engine room “to help a hapless new recruit keep all systems operational, or help spring a Wookiee from the brig.” You may be needed do other important things such as taking control of the bridge and working as a team to thwart an Imperial attack. And gosh, as you walk about you will probably walk past genuine Stormtroopers or Chewbacca.

If you get bored by this you can go on rides or go to the gift shop. Your two-night stay also includes a visit to Galaxy’s Edge, the *Star Wars* theme park (within a theme park) that Disney opened in 2019. (You get an express pass so you don’t have to stand in a long line.) You also get a supper club performance by a Twi’lek diva; and surprise appearances by characters like Yoda, Rey and Kylo Ren.



Stormtroopers stopping by tables in the Sublight Lounge.

One possible thrill is to get to sit at the captain's table (unfortunately they charge you \$30 for the honor). A space transport simulator is used to travel to and from the Halcyon star cruiser and you can take advantage of your express access to "Star Wars" rides in other parts of the park.

One review of this attraction said "a trip on the *Halcyon* is more of a Disney experience than a *Star Wars* one. Disney knows how to make guests of all ages and backgrounds feel welcome." The writer concluded that the Galactic Starcruiser universe is really just another theme park attraction.

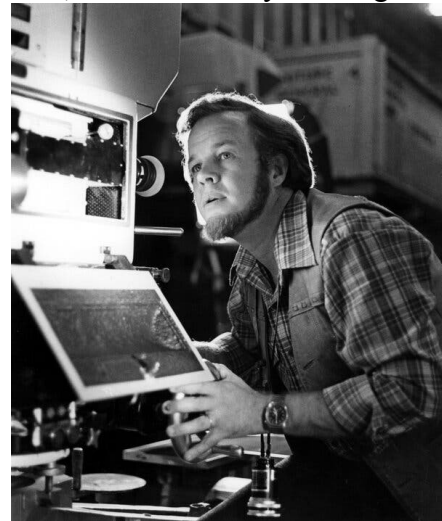
Another review concluded, "Everything onboard the Starcruiser is perhaps a little too bright and shiny, a little too quippy and self-aware, to truly feel anything close to real. Disney's "cast members" are rigorously trained to please guests, and it's hard to imagine the denizens of a galaxy far, far away brightly saying "good journey!" to you every time you accidentally make eye contact with them. There was rarely a moment I wasn't hyper aware of the fact that everyone I talked to was not only playing a role, but was being paid a very small slice of that \$6,000 booking fee to show us a good time."

A third writer said, "If you can conquer your internal critic you will almost definitely be swept up in the experience, because that's what Disney has designed it to do. It is definitely not a passive undertaking; you don't have to take on a persona and craft your character's backstory, or even interact with any of the cast members or your fellow guests all that much, but you do have to be willing to participate, to wander the ship and perk up your ears when you hear kids shouting that they just saw Chewbacca, and toggle switches on the bridge, and actually go to lightsaber training even if you think it sounds incredibly childish (it was a lot cooler than I was expecting, admittedly)." Other comments that I found on the internet included that the experience is quite expensive and that drinks with alcohol are overpriced.



IS FLYING AT HYPER-SPEED WITHOUT WEARING SEAT BELTS SAFE?

Will Disney turn this attraction into a success? One writer cautioned, "It's easy to get 'Star Wars' wrong, as we've seen with their last three movies." A second person asked, "Will this be 'Disney's biggest flop?'" A third said "it's one of the coolest things I've ever seen." The *Washington Post* reported, "Some fans say the magic's gone."



DOUGLAS TRUMBULL, VISUAL EFFECTS WIZARD, DIES AT 79 His technical savvy was on display in films like *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Star Trek: the Motion Picture*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and *Blade Runner*. He died on Feb. 7 at a hospital in Albany, N.Y. He was 79 and the cause was complications of mesothelioma, a nasty, aggressive cancer.

One of his most amazing sequences was the space corridor sequence made using slit scan technology in *2001* (1968). He conceived how to film this amazing sequence in which the astronaut soars at hyper-speed in his pod through a cosmic passageway in the universe.

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2022/feb/11/douglas-trumbull-obituary>

Another technique he developed was injected white tempera paint into an aquarium filled with a mixture of fresh and salt water to create the ominous clouds that announced the coming of the extraterrestrial mother ship in Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977).

He received three Academy Award nominations for features he had worked on: *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *Blade Runner* and *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*. In 2012 Trumbull received the George Sawyer Award from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for his technological contributions to the film industry. The Visual Effects Society presented him with their Georges Méliès Award.

In reading the obituaries about his life I was fascinated on how he got started as a special effects artist. Douglas Hunt Trumbull was born in Los Angeles on April 8, 1942. His mother, Marcia (Hunt) Trumbull, was an artist; his father, Don, worked had worked in visual and special effects, most notably on *The Wizard of Oz*. However, when Douglas was born his father had a different occupation, he was working as an engineer in the aircraft industry.

His father "never mentioned much about *The Wizard of Oz*, except that he had something to do with the lion's tail, the apple tree and rigging the flying monkeys," Douglas told *VFXV*, a magazine devoted to visual effects, in 2018.

Growing up, Douglas was a fan of science fiction movies, became fascinated with photography and built crystal radio sets. After high school he worked for an electrical contracting firm while studying technical illustration at El Camino College in Torrance, Calif.

He took a job with Graphic Films in Los Angeles where his paintings of space modules and lunar surfaces appeared in documentaries for NASA and the Air Force. One film, *To the Moon and Beyond* was produced in Cinerama 360 and exhibited at the 1964 -'65 New York World's Fair (1964-65).

Stanley Kubrick saw the short film about space travel and ended up hiring Trumbull as a \$400 a week artist. Doug was in his early 20s.

"He had this ability that I don't think most people have, to see a final image in his mind and

somehow figure out what was needed to get that image on film," said Gene Kozicki, a visual effects historian and archivist. "Sometimes those images were crazy, like a diaphanous cloud traveling through space heading toward the Enterprise," the spacecraft in *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (1979).

Trumbull resuscitated his father's film career by hiring him for *Silent Running*, *Close Encounters* and *Star Trek*. The senior Trumbull also worked on George Lucas's *Star Wars*, but his son was too busy for that one.

Douglas Trumbull was also able to help create better ways to shoot and exhibit film. He created Showscan, a cinematic process in which 70-millimeter film is projected at 60 frames per second (35-millimeter projection is usually at 24 frames per second).

He and his partners won a technical Oscar for developing the Showscan camera, but the film he was producing and directing for MGM, *Brainstorm*, 1983, wasn't completed in 70mm. There were not enough theatres in the US equipped to show it. Also one of the film's stars, Natalie Wood, died while the film was in production, but they were able to finish it. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NNiZP2G-nEM>

Showscan found a home in amusement parks. Trumbull shot high resolution ride films with it including *Back to the Future: The Ride* (1991) for Universal Studios Florida and *Secrets of the Luxor Pyramid* (1993) for Luxor Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas.



Trumbull returned to traditional movie production when the director Terrence Malick, a friend, asked him to help on his film *The Tree of Life* (2011). Working as a consultant, Trumbull helped conjure up the kaleidoscopic sequence that depicts the Big Bang and the creation of life on Earth. He said he used chemicals, paint, fluorescent dyes, carbon dioxide, flares, spin dishes, fluid

dynamics and high speed photography in a 2011 interview.

WELCOME PROFESSOR MIHAELA MIHAILOV TO THE BAY AREA She joined SF State's animation program in August in a full time tenured position. She has her PhD from Yale and is an excellent writer. *EatDrinkFilm* has just published her insightful review of the new anime feature film *Jujutsu Kaisen O* that opened in mid-March. Check out her impressive and quite knowledgeable article at <https://eatdrinkfilms.com/2022/03/14/jujutsu-kaisen-0-a-high-level-domain-expansion/>

WITH 'TURNING RED' PIXAR VENTURES AWAY FROM BOY FILMS Domee Shi is the first woman filmmaker to complete a Pixar feature. It was produced for females, another first! It stars a Chinese-Canadian teenager going through puberty. It brings up subjects largely avoided by Hollywood including references to horniness, swings in emotions and her period. It also includes animated surreal elements. When she is stressed out and overwhelmed she suddenly turns herself into a giant panda. The feature opened on Disney + in March.

In published interviews she explains, "I wanted Mei to go through a magical puberty transformation, and I couldn't get the image of a red panda out of my head because it's so cute and funny, especially if you blow it up to, like, eight feet tall," Shi said. "There's something about the color, too."



Red represents your period. It represents being angry, being embarrassed or being very lustful for someone." "It's a side of teen girls that you never

get to see," Shi said. "We are just as awkward and sweaty and lusty and excited as any boy."

Shi credits Pete Docter for helping her get the film approved by the front office. In spring 2018, the company gave her a budget of roughly \$175 million to tell her story, along with the backing of its merchandising and marketing divisions so expect red pandas in stores and online catalogs soon.

Shi began her career at Pixar as a storyboarding intern in 2011. She was 22. She became a staff artist who worked on *Inside Out* and *Incredibles 2* before being invited to be the first woman to direct a Pixar short. The film was *Bao*, 2018, about a dumpling that comes to life. It won an Oscar.



'RON'S GONE WRONG' WINS BEST FEATURE AT BRITISH ANIMATION AWARDS 2022 *Ron's Gone Wrong* is by Locksmith Animation, founded by Aardman Animation veterans Sarah Smith and Julie Lockhart. Other winners included Magic Light Pictures for their adaptations of Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler's *Zog and the Flying Doctors* and Scheffler's *Pip and Posy*. Menna Trussler who is 86 won the award for best voice performance, for her portrayal of Beryl in *Affairs of the Art*.

AMAZON HAS PURCHASED MGM FOR \$8.5 BILLION sale includes lots of great cartoons.



AT THE ANNIE AWARDS *The Mitchells vs. The Machines* won the Best Feature award and 7 other awards, *Flee* won the top Indie Prize and Netflix's *Arcane* was the top TV show.

Sony Animation/Netflix's *The Mitchells vs. The Machines* won the best feature, the best direction and writing (Mike Rianda, Jeff Rowe), best character design, production design, editorial, FX, and voice acting (Abbie Jacobson as Katie).

The Oscar-nominated animated documentary *Flee* won best indie feature honors. Disney's Oscar frontrunner, *Encanto*, won three awards: character animation, music (score by Oscar nominee Germaine Franco, song by Lin-Manuel Miranda), and storyboarding. Disney's other Oscar contender, *Raya and the Last Dragon*, was shut out after leading the pack with 10 nominations, as was Pixar's *Luca*, which had eight nominations.

The Best Short went to Oscar nominee *Bestia* from Chile. It is a chilling stop-motion drama by Hugo Covarrubias about the inner life of a woman who trained dogs for torture during the Chilean military dictatorship of the '70s.

Director Erick Oh and Baobab Studios won the Special Presentation award for *Namoo*, a personal virtual reality experience that captures both beautiful and heartbreaking moments in a painter's life. It is constructed around a symbolic tree.

The Annie Awards are presented by ASIFA-Hollywood to honor animation. The Oscars barely do that and this year the award for best short will not be televised live. For a full list on the Annie Awards and honorary awards visit <https://annieawards.org/winners>

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER JOHN KORTY HAS DIED, HE WAS 85 John was producing animation for *Sesame Street* in the 1970s and early 1980s at

his studio Korty Films, giving several young artists a chance to become professional animators. Two recent graduates, Drew Takahashi from UCLA and Gary Gutierrez from the SF Art Institute, went on to create Colossal Pictures. He also created the animated feature *Twice Upon a Time* (1983) with George Lucas as his executive producer. It was made using cut-out animation shot on a unique multi-plane animation stand. He called the technique Lumage which was short for Luminous image.

As a live action director he won an Oscar for the documentary *Who Are the DeBolts and Where Did They Get Nineteen Kids?* He also won an Emmy for *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*. His documentary short *Breaking the Habit* (1965), an antismoking production made with the American Cancer Society, was nominated for an Oscar.

Korty helmed the sci-fi chiller *The People* (1972), the anti-drug drama *Go Ask Alice* (1973) and, in 1980, the holiday tale *Christmas Without Snow*. He directed *Caravan of Courage: An Ewok Adventure*, a 1984 TV movie co-written and executive produced by Lucas. It was about the creatures of the Star Wars franchise.

Korty was proud that in the 1960s, when he met George Lucas he called Francis Ford Coppola to say "you are doing exactly what he (Lucas) says he wants to do — making films outside of Hollywood."



2022 GREEN FILM FESTIVAL OF SAN FRANCISCO WILL TAKE PLACE APRIL 14-24, ending on Earth Day 2022. They will show *Yellowstone 88*, *Song of Fire*, a short by Bay Area animators Jerry van de Beek and Betsy De Fries (Little Fluffy Clouds). In the summer of 1988 lightning sparked a fire in the parched and drought ridden landscape of Yellowstone Park, igniting a

blaze that would scorch over 1.5 million acres. That winter surviving fauna exhausted from fire and weakened by hunger died in greater numbers than those claimed by the fire. The cosmos turns from one season to another and another and life in the park begins anew.

Song of Fire just won Best Animation at the Boulder International Film Festival and will be featured at the International Wildlife Film Festival in Missoula in April. Betsy says, "We were also honored to be given a fellowship retreat to make a short film whilst there. *Yosemite 88* has now been featured in about 40 international film festivals and is slated to be shown at 5 more to date. We're so happy that people are getting to see this film and its role in bringing #ClimateAwareness to the attention of film festival goers."

Other animation in the local festival:

Blue Cooler, an animated short film, captures small moments of life in Hawaii. The animation is hand painted frame by frame using oil paints.

Hello, Are We In The Show? The film offers us a glimpse of daily life in the Sonian Forest near Brussels, and shows us the fauna and flora without disguising the influence of city and people.

This Mortal Plastik A personal dive into the world's most impersonal substance: plastics. A surprising journey across oceans to understand the havoc it has wrought. An experimental documentary playfully crafted with hand-drawn illustrations and poetic interludes.

Why I'm a Vegan, directed by Lindsay Hicks and stars his character named Moby [https://](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0BN1evdXqzU)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=0BN1evdXqzU



ZERO TO NINE is Little Fluffy Clouds (Jerry van de Beek and Betsy De Fries) latest music video animation for The Extravagants. It is a modern day dreamscape. www.stashmedia.tv/the-extravagants-zero-into-nine-music-video-by-little-fluffy-clouds/

OH NO! DISNEY DOESN'T NEED CRAP LIKE THIS (This is the AP news story)

Officials at Walt Disney World said Friday that a performance by a visiting Texas high school drill team that used American Indian stereotypes, including chants of "scalp them," doesn't reflect the Florida resort's values.

The performance this week in the Magic Kingdom by the "Indianettes" drill team from Port Neches-Grove High School "did not reflect our core values, and we regret it took place," Disney spokeswoman Jacquee Wahler said in an emailed statement.

An audition tape that the school had provided in order to be selected to perform at the theme park resort was inconsistent with the actual performance, the statement said.

Wahler said new measures have been implemented to prevent that from happening again. She did not elaborate.

In a video of the performance posted on Twitter, members of the drill team are seen tapping their hands over their mouths and whooping, as a drum pounds in the background, in what is stereotypically called a "war cry."

Port Neches-Groves school district Superintendent Mike Gonzales and Indianettes director Cortnie Schexnaider did not immediately return messages seeking comment. However, the district issued a statement to KFDM-TV in Beaumont in which district officials said they are "aware of the concern regarding the performance of our band and Indianettes at Disney World."

"We are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in our school district. Our district is nearing 100 years old, and our Board of Trustees is committed to always making the best decisions for our students, staff, and the communities of Port Neches and Groves," the district stated.

According to a PN-G spokesperson, this is the 8th time that PN-G performed the routine at Disney World. The spokesperson says Disney has never asked ahead of time about the planned performance.

Port Neches is a petrochemical refining center located near the Gulf Coast about 13 miles (20 kilometers) southeast of Beaumont, Texas. The Indianettes have been a fixture at Port Neches-

Groves High School for more than 50 years, according to the school district website.

UKRAINAIN ANIMATION

<https://webmail1.earthlink.net/folders/INBOX/messages/310564>

‘THE SECRET LIFE OF PETS’ a trailer for a sequel that is coming this summer

https://m.imdb.com/video/vi280934169/?ref_=vp_rv_ap_0



THE NEW MUSEUM IN HOLLYWOOD DEDICATED TO THE HISTORY OF THE FILM INDUSTRY WAS CRITICIZED FOR NOT HONORING THE INDUSTRY’S FATHERS! They say they are planning to get to that next year in a temporary exhibit. The director of the museum claims, “We want to ensure that we are taking an honest, inclusive and diverse look at our history, that we create a safe space for complicated, hard conversations. So why were the founding fathers of the industry being overlooked?”

A promotion for the museum shown during the Oscars suggested it is full of fun lighthearted experiences and not a place where you will find much serious scholarship. The images were of film monster and other things kids will want to see. I assume that is their key audience, not serious film goers/fans.

THE ANIMATED OSCAR WINNERS It came as no surprise that the award for Best Animated Feature went to Disney’s *Encanto*, as it was the top choice of the critics, but *The Windshield Wiper* winning came as a complete surprise. It is an

attempt to create a serious film for adults about what is love using what looks like live action sets and rotoscope footage of people. (I’m told it was computer animation.)

I found a well written description of the film on IMDb. “Against the backdrop of a noisy, smoke-filled café, a modern philosopher is lost in thought. Pondering on life’s ups and downs, uncertain expectations, the mistakes of the past, and secret longings, the solitary man poses a puzzling existential question. Through a series of vivid poetic vignettes, the pensive man embarks on a journey of enlightenment, exploring the different phases of romance, the characteristics of human nature, and the future of dating and relationships. Indeed, we all want to love and be loved; however, has social media spawned a lazy generation? In the end, what is love in the 21st century?”

Frankly I don’t feel Alberto Mielgo, a Spanish-American, has created an important articulate mature essay on the subject, but it is a somewhat interesting and unusual work. The trailer is posted at <https://vimeo.com/568179562> The full film was online, but it was removed after it won the Oscar.

The film had its premiere during the Cannes Film Festival, 2021, where it won an award. It was also nominated for the best short film at the Valladolid International Film Festival. I suspect a lot of people who voted for it were live action members of the Academy.

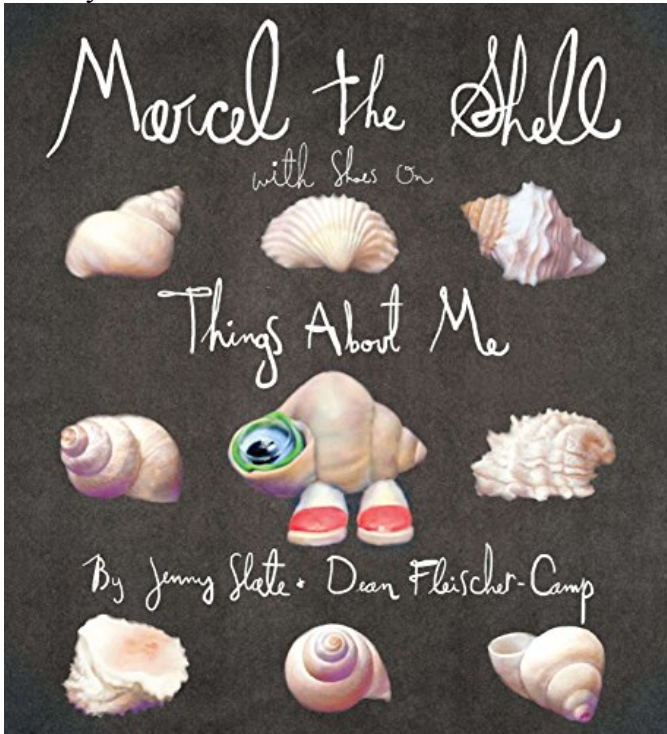


ON MARCH 28 DISNEY FINALLY SPEAKS OUT ABOUT DON’T SAY GAY On March 28 the governor of the state signed the bill into law. Disney immediately condemned the signing in a statement that said, “Florida’s HB 1557, also known as the ‘Don’t Say Gay’ bill, should never have passed and should never have been signed into law. Our goal as a company is for this law to be repealed

by the legislature or struck down in the courts, and we remain committed to supporting the national and state organizations working to achieve that. We are dedicated to standing up for the rights and safety of LGBTQ+ members of the Disney family, as well as the LGBTQ+ community in Florida and across the country.”

Governor DeSantis and Republicans say the measure is reasonable and parents, not teachers, should broach subjects of sexual orientation and gender identity with children.

Joe Biden hit back saying “Every student deserves to feel safe and welcome in the classroom. Our LGBTQI+ youth deserve to be affirmed and accepted just as they are. My Administration will continue to fight for dignity and opportunity for every student and family in Florida and around the country.”



ANIMATED FILMS COMING TO THE SF INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL APRIL 21 – MAY 1 *A Tribute to Jenny Slate* (writer/voice actor, former *Saturday Night Live* actor **in-person**) and her 60 minute film *Marcel the Shell with Shoes On*, plus short. The trailer for the animated film is at <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x22qarq>

The 60 minute feature is based on *Marcel the Shell with Shoes On*, a stop-motion short from 2010 and sequels. When the first short premiered at the American Film Institute Festival in 2010 it won

Best Animated Short. It was shown at Sundance and it won the Grand Jury and Audience Awards at the New York International Children’s Film Festival.

The Tribute to Jenny Slate is Fri, April 22 at 7:30 pm at the Castro Theatre

Also at the festival

Shorts program 6 includes *Mama Has a Mustache*, a whimsical short about identity and family outside the traditional gender binary as seen through children’s eyes. (Sally Rubin, USA 2021, 10 min) Sat, Apr 23 at 10:00 am, Castro Theatre.

The festival’s program guide came out the day the newsletter was ready to email out and it isn’t clear about what is animated or part-animated. My request to them a week earlier about what animation will be shown wasn’t answered. If they send me details we will email them to you.

ASIFA-SF IS A VOLUNTEER RUN ASSOCIATION

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Special thanks to **Nancy Denney-Phelps** who has been having a wonderful time once again going to festivals in Europe. She also represents our chapter on the international ASIFA board. **Emily Berk** is our webmaster, and **Eihway Su** keeps our email list and does a dozen other things.

ASIFA-SF is a chapter of: **Association Internationale du Film d’Animation** with over 40 chapters around the world. Membership is normally \$21 a year with the e-mailed newsletter, but right now we have a **COVID 19 SPECIAL OFFER**. **Due to the lockdown we are only asking \$11 a year while the virus lasts or \$26 if you wish to help the international association. Let’s hope it is a limited time offer. We want to hold in-person events again.**

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