

# **ASIFA-SF NEWSLETTER - APRIL 2024**

**Issue also contains ANIMATION ABOUT THE  
HOLOCAUST AND OTHER ATROSITIES,**

**Part 2 by Karl Cohen**



**ELI NOYES, A LIFE FULL OF REREMARKABLE  
ANIMATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS, DIES AT 81**

**By Karl Cohen**

Eli Noyes was a multi-talented individual who excelled as both an experimental and commercial animator, a successful documentary film maker, the creator of several interactive books, an accomplished musician and a wonderful person. He even helped shape the look and spirit of Nickelodeon and MTV.



Eliot Noyes Jr's father, was recognized in the art world and media as a modern architect (he was one of the "Harvard five" architects) and his mother, Molly Duncan Weed, was an interior designer. He grew up in an environment emersed with art and music and he graduated from Harvard. His undergraduate film, *Clay or the Origin of Species*, received an Oscar nomination (1965), and it helped established clay as a medium. It is said to have inspired independent animators Will Vinton and Nick Park to create their award-winning films that were animated with clay. <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x8i92jb>

Animator Caroline Leaf, who received an Oscar nomination for *The Street*, 40 major international festival prizes and 4 lifetime achievement awards, wrote me after I told her of Eli's passing. She said, "I'm sad. Shocked. Eli was the golden boy from Harvard's animation class that was taught by Derek Lamb, and he was a couple year ahead of me. Because his outstanding direct animation film that was called *Clay or the Origin of Species*, (he) went to work at the National Film Board of Canada a year before I got a job there. But I stayed in Montreal and Eli went west." She also called him a "trail blazer."

At the Film Board Eli produced the short *Alphabet*, 1966, that has been described as, "An amusing and energetic romp

through the letters of the alphabet, wittily animated by Eliot Noyes Junior. Each letter has its own objects, animals or actions to suggest words it begins - A for Apple, Z for Zebra. None, however, retains the expected form for long, fading, changing at the artist's whimsy. For anyone at the reading-readiness stage, young or old, this is a language film to sharpen words and humor." Unfortunately, the NFB does not have the film posted online. This was the first of series of *Sand Letters* shorts he would create for *Sesame Street* (1974–1991).

While Eli was establishing his name as an animator, he also formed a partnership in 1970 with Claudia Weill. They worked together as Cyclops Films to make documentaries. Their film *This Is the Home of Mrs. Levant Graham* (1970) is a thoughtful and emotional story of a poor black family's life in a slum apartment in Washington, D.C. To make their film *Aspen: 1970*, Eli accompanied his father to the Aspen Design Conference where Noyes and Weill documented the confrontation between established professionals and a new generation of socially conscious young talents who saw design as a political commitment, one that should be socially and environmentally responsible. The film is online at <https://vimeo.com/59495003>

Returning to animation Eli created several whimsical works in the 1970s using unusual techniques. *Sandman* (1973) shows that this hard to control material can be used to create a fun work of art.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GfNVCNIR19w>

In his *Peanut Butter & Jelly* (1976) he created an outrageous humorous work made using pixilation (single frame stop motion of humans) and a silly soundtrack.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jaY2xiy9nYE>

Ralph Guggenheim, the producer of Pixar's *Toy Story*, worked with Eli for over 20 years. Ralph provided me with a lot of information about Eli's later career including how Eli brought his playful spirit and talents to TV.

Eli created a great number of films for *Sesame Street* and then in the early days of cable TV his spirit influenced the look of the Nickelodeon network. He was one of the first creative contributors to Nickelodeon. That network's first show, *Pinwheel*, featured Noyes' animated pinwheels that were made with sand.

In 1983, Eli and Kit Laybourne started Noyes & Laybourne Enterprises, an independent studio located in NYC's Soho. They created a lot of material for Nickelodeon, starting in the early '80's as the network needed to buy content. That result in the network having a variety of styles and looks.

Noyes & Laybourne became experts at creating unique packaging to express a personality and look for Nickelodeon and Nick at Nite. They developed playful network IDs. They subsequently created the original shows *Eureeka's Castle* and

## ***Gullah Gullah Island.***

MTV also needed material, so they produced network graphics for them. They created ***Liquid Television***. It was a showcase for independent animation and it launching a few successful series including Mike Judge's ***Beavis and Butthead*** and Peter Chung's ***Aeon Flux***. Noyes & Laybourne also had other clients included HBO, IBM, Scholastic, ABC Sports, Reebok, and Xerox.

Much of the artwork Noyes & Laybourne Enterprises needed for ***Liquid Television*** was produced outside of their limited staff and studio space. That resulted in the company merging with Colossal Pictures in San Francisco which was well-known for their special effects and animation. The New York office became Colossal East. Eli and other directors worked out of both offices.

At first Eli commuted to SF when he was needed to direct work that had to be produced with larger crews. Then in 1991 Eli Noyes and family moved to San Francisco. Now he could direct animation projects close to his home.



It has been said that Eli was often early to embrace new technology. One example was his creating *Ruff's Bone* (1994) at Colossal, a ground breaking interactive CD-ROM product for Broderbund Software.

**[Living Books: Ruff's Bone Full Playthrough \(youtube.com\)](#)**

Then he moved on to work on interactive projects at Pixar, and with programmers at the Disney Channel. He worked with The Disney Imagineers to create ZOOG Disney, one of the first afternoon program blocks that combined TV and the internet (1998-2002). Eli subsequently brought that experience to the first “convergence network” Oxygen (founded in 1998). Eli was one of their Creative Directors and Kit Laybourne’s wife, Geraldine Laybourne, was co-created Oxygen Media.

Noyes partnered with Ralph Guggenheim and Colossal Pictures alumni Alan Buder and Tim Boxell in 2003 to form the company Alligator Planet. They create film, print and media works including short films, animated segments for documentary films. Noyes was animation director on the Oscar-nominated documentary *The Most Dangerous Man in America: Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers* (2009).

Alligator Planet’s principals have been honored with a wide variety of awards including CLIO's, Cable ACE awards, LA Film Critic's Award, Producers Guild of America awards as well as Emmy and Academy Award nominations. Alligator Planet’s principals have been founders and senior managers of animation companies (Pixar Animation Studios) and production companies (Colossal Pictures, Noyes & Laybourne).





### Eli's 2011 "Go Green" stamps

The US Postal Service featured simple actions everyone can take to conserve natural resources and promote the health of the environment on a set of 16 stamps in honor of Earth Day. Before the stamps were released the article *Artist draws on S.F. living for 'Go Green' stamps*, by Nellie Bowles, Chronicle Staff Writer appeared. It ran April 11, 2011. Bowles reported that when Eli's sister, an arts commissioner at the U.S. Postal Service called him and said, "Congratulations, you've been accepted to design the new green stamps," he laughed and said, "I hadn't even applied."

The stamps show people making everyday choices to go green. He told Bowles "You don't have to spend money, you



just have to be conscientious." That idea came from Noyes' life. "I'm a San Franciscan - I go to the farmers' market. OK, farmers' market stamp. I compost. Compost stamp."

The stamps show influences from Noyes' work as a designer, animator and producer for children's cartoons and corporate commercials. He said, "What I do is *edutainment* - seduce people with images in calm, subtle ways... Environmentalists can get shrill. If we get in a panic, it's hard to show that little changes make a difference."

Bowles wrote that behind the Noyes environmentally friendly house in Noe Valley, Noyes and his wife, Augusta, grow peppers, quince and roses alongside worm bins. The roof is coated in solar panels. Inside in Eli's home office, he showed her six months of drafts that he created before he reached the final designs for the stamps. He told Bowles that a sheet of stamps "needs to ripple," to be pleasing as a collection, able to reduce very small and blowup poster-size. "Stamps are gentle, subliminal fundamentally political art," he said. "They're also immensely fun."

## **Memories of Eli**

**Lidia Przuluska and Drew Takahashi** (Drew was a founder of Colossal and Lidia directed segments of *Liquid Television*) They wrote," Eli Noyes was curiosity in human form delighting in whatever came before him. Clay? Why not tell a story with it and, incidentally, get recognition from the Academy of Motion Pictures. Sand? Why not? Interactive books? Cable branding? Puppet shows? Blendo commercials?

Postage stamps? Eli became a media polyglot playing with whatever tools, vintage or bleeding edge, that seemed to make sense. He spread his attentions across media, music, art, technology, friends and family bringing his infectious enthusiasm for all to share.

Back in 1988 Colossal Pictures and Noyes and Laybourne recognized each other as kindred spirits on each coast and we merged. Now the businesses are long gone but our friendships have endured and grown. We are grateful to have shared so much life with Eli and Augusta.”



***Are You my Friend?* illustrated by Eli Noyes for Apple Books**

**Japhet Asher**, creator, executive producer and creative director of *Liquid Television* shared with us, “Eli’s masterpiece was *Art School Girls of Doom*, one of my favorite segments from *Liquid Television*. He also directed the early mo cap experiment *The Blockheads* with Pete Bagge. Eli was an incredibly good man, and willing to play with ideas in great ways with no resources but art and heart to make innovative work.”

Ralph Guggenheim told me. “Eli was a great spirit, creator and partner to me for the past 21 years at Alligator Planet... I will miss his warmth and generosity, as well as his ideas and suggestions on projects we worked on together and separately.”

**George Evelyn** who was an animation director at Colossal, wrote me, “Oh! Sad news! Eli was such a splendid human being.”

**Kevin Coffey**, who runs Cartoonland and was an animator at ILM and Colossal, said, “I worked with Eli Noyes on a couple of spots at Colossal Pictures. He had a serious look about him but he was a lot of fun to work with and never took HIMSELF too seriously.”

**Betsy De Fries**, who is a partner at Little Fluffy Clouds, said, “Devastating news. I worked closely with Eli at (C)olossal Pictures. He was working on, *Liquid Television* for MTV at the time. People talked about his famous father, but he didn't.

Eli was warm, funny and gracious not to mention talented.

Our industry has been through many downturns and each time Eli opened his lovely house and studio in Noe Valley to a raggle tag mob of us for Brown Bag Lunches (AKA Losers Lunch) where we could continue to see each other and swap news and maybe even job leads! A free space to brainstorm ideas or just shoot the breeze. What a life line!

Eli played in the Mill Valley Philharmonic and always tried to get anyone, whether good or not, to join. ‘I've got a maraca for you!’ said he, with a twinkle in his eye.

Eli Noyes, you will be missed on this planet. I'm sorry to see you go.”

### **For the record**

Eli Noyes was born Eliot Fette Noyes Jr. on October 18, 1942, in Alexandria, Virginia. He died Sunday, March 23, he was 81 and he died of complications from prostate cancer. He is survived by his wife Augusta Talbot, daughter Abigail, son Isaac and wife Anastasia Holland, and granddaughter Esme; siblings Fred Noyes, MaryD Brust and Derry Craig. Donations in his memory can be made to [International Rivers](#) or the [Coalition of Natives and Allies](#).

Eli loved music. He mastered playing the oboe, accordion and most of all jazz piano.

**See a nice selection of Eli's shorts at:**

<https://www.cartoonbrew.com/rip/eli-noyes-stop-motion-animation-pioneer-and-liquid-television-director-dies-at-81-239312.html>

## **A MESSAGE FROM A FOUNDER OF ASIFA**

**“Animation is not a religion; neither is it a political movement in any sense. It remains a true contemporary art form which has been unrecognized for what it can achieve... we consider animation as a universal expression which is capable of immense contribution if given a chance.” - John Halas, ASIFA President's Letter (1979)**

ASIFA (Association Internationale du Film d'Animation) was founded in 1960 in Annecy, France.

Renowned Canadian animator Norman McLaren (*Neighbors*, et al) was elected its first president.

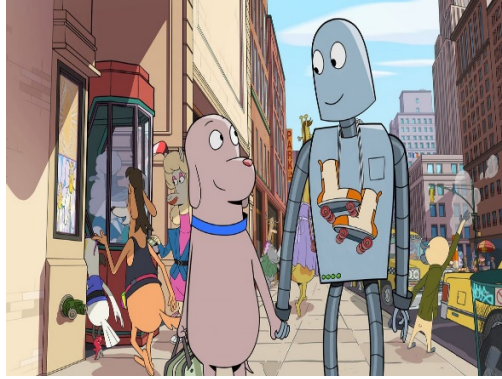
McLaren, John Halas and other founding members envisioned a world of peace and dialogue to settle international differences, with the art of animation serving as a bridge between different cultures and ideologies. ASIFA promotes progress toward peace and mutual understanding through the unified interest of the art of animation with workshops, gatherings, and worldwide projects.

## **THE 2024 ANNIE WINNERS**





**WAR IS OVER! INSPIRED BY THE MUSIC OF JOHN & YOKO - BEST SHORT SUBJECT (Also Oscar for Best Animated Short)** The story takes place on a battle field at the end of WWI. An American and German soldier are playing a game of chess using a carrier pigeon to forward the next move to each other. Suddenly they are confronted with the reality of what war is when they are ordered into action. This nicely animated short ends with the song John Lennon was working on when he was killed.



## **ROBOT DREAMS - BEST INDEPENDENT FEATURE**

a bitter sweet adventure between a lonely dog living alone in a studio apartment and a mail order robot. It is a charming and meaningful essay about friendship and loss. It's a sensitive work set in New York City's East Village in the 1980s. It won the Best Independent Animated Feature award at the 2024 Annie Award, has received an Oscar nomination, and it premiered at the 2023 Cannes Film Festival.

Part of my fascination with the film is the playful switching between dreams and reality. The switches come as surprises, resulting in the film moving in unexpected directions. The film becomes a series creative story arcs that move the film forward towards the unexpected but satisfying ending.

**[Robot Dreams - Official Trailer \(youtube.com\)](#)**

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**SPIDER-MAN: ACROSS THE SPIDER-VERSE - BEST FEATURE** This isn't a lucid, intelligent feature, it is an intense 140-minute audio-visual trip that vibrates through your mind and body as it takes you on a journey through the wide variety of experiences that was created by highly talented artists. The sound design is quite complex and the visuals can get mind boggling at times. There are multiple split-screen images and spoken fragments of ideas rather than complete sentences. Much of the non-spoken sounds are noises to enhance moods of excitement. The editor didn't use much soothing music to calm the savage beast. The movie is designed to safely take you to the edge of sensory overload experiences without pushing you over it. Much is incomprehensible, but you somehow manage to survive. Hopefully it was a fun trip and you leave with a smile on your face.

My reactions to the experience of going on this adventure



with Peter Parker, aka Spiderman, were a series of memories that took me back to the late 1960s and the aesthetics of the psychedelic era. Both the feature and some of the rock concerts with light shows were created to have prolonged periods of enhanced trippy excitement. The experiences were so full of over-the-top sounds and visuals rushing at you that your mind gets caught up in the moment and you are there instead of relaxing and rationally watching and making sense of the colorful eye-candy.



### **BLUE EYED SAMAURI - BEST TV/MEDIA – MATURE**

is a sophisticated anime produced for adult TV audiences who watch Netflix. I thoroughly enjoyed the first hour long episode of this eight-hour series (a second season is planned). It has enough of the expected action in it to satisfy anime fans, but it also has an intelligent script, handsome character design and excellent art direction, plus it is well acted.

The plot is driven by a young female warrior who seeks revenge. Her objective is to kill the white Englishman who seduced or raped her mother. She has blue eyes. That makes her a half-breed, a social outcast in Japan in the Edo-period,

so she dreams of killing her father, if she can find him. There are moments of bloody violence that are presented rather tastefully. The character is supposedly based to some degree on an Englishman outcast who had a somewhat similar life during the 17th century.

**THE BOY AND THE HERON** -*Best Character Animation in a Feature* It also won the **Oscar for Best Animated Feature**. A lot of people were surprised when Hayao Miyazaki's *The Boy and the Heron* triumphed over predicted winner *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*. *Boy and the Heron* is the first hand-drawn animated feature to win the Oscar in 21 years. It also marks the first time that a PG-13 film has won the category.

The Oscar-winning animated film will join 22 other films from the acclaimed Japanese studio on the streaming service Max.

**ANIMATION AT THE OSCARS** *The Oscar ceremony is fancy, but it only gives two awards to animation, the best feature, which went to **The Boy and the Heron** and the best short, **War is Over**. What was a surprise this year was the best visual effects award went to **Godzilla Minus One** which beat out the big-budget blockbusters *The Creator*, *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3*, *Mission Impossible Mission: Impossible – Dead Reckoning Part One*, and *Napoleon*. Also Wes Anderson, who has directed animated features, won his first Oscar for his Roald Dahl adaptation *The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar*. On the big night the*



team behind *Godzilla Minus One* walked the red carpet in shoes adorned with Godzilla sculptures gripping their heels, and they were seen holding figurines of the monster inside the theater.

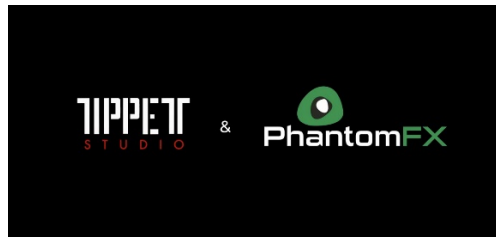
**THE ACADEMY MAKES ANIMATED AND LIVE ACTION SHORTS A SEPARATE BRANCH FROM FEATURES** Most Academy members welcome making them separate branches, but others see things could go wrong for the shorts division. A few years ago there was an effort to shorten the Oscar telecast by removing ten awards from the live program. Best animated short was one of them. After lots of protests that idea was vetoed, but it could be proposed again.

*The Super Mario Bros. Movie* and *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* made lot of money last year. They were the number two and three champions at the domestic box office. Meanwhile the animated shorts were released in a package of Oscar nominated shorts. It has made over \$3 million since the it was released February 16 and its distribution ended in March. While the exposure and income are great for the people who made the shorts, the money is chicken feed for the powerful studios and Academy executives.

The rational for the change in the Academy divisions is, “As both the Academy’s shorts and animation communities have grown, and to ensure they continue to thrive, the need for two individual branches became increasingly apparent.” Others note that while the Animation branch has around 700

members, if the split occurs, only about 200 of the members will oversee the shorts division. Will they have strong leadership that can keep the awarding of the Oscar for Best Animated Short on the air?

Top of Form  
Bottom of Form



**PHIL TIPPETT'S ANIMATION STUDIO MERGES WITH PHANTOM FX IN INDIA** The merger means Tippet will probably work on major productions with other major studios as part of a team that could involve 250-300 employees scattered across the globe (in India, the U.S., and Canada). The Tippet show reel, put together as part of the announcement of the merger, is full of amazing work.

<https://www.cartoonbrew.com/business/iconic-vfx-house-tippet-studio-acquired-by-indias-phantom-fx-238970.html>

**ELECTRONIC ARTS AND SONY INTERACTIVE ANNOUNCES MAJOR JOB CUTS** Two video game giants with headquarters in the Bay Area have slashed their workforce. EA in Redwood City has announced that their restructuring plan includes ending development on a *Star Wars* single person shooter game. They are cutting more than

650 jobs around the world (about 5 percent of its workforce). Disney is going full speed ahead in game development and they own *Star Wars*. Sony Interactive in San Mateo is cutting 900 jobs, about 6% of their workforce. Sony has announced they will cut about 900 jobs in their PlayStation unit.

### **DISNEY'S BATTLE WITH CORPORATE RAIDERS WILL TAKE PLACE APRIL 3 AT THEIR ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS MEETING**

A group of stockholders who want a greater share of the profits, and who are critical of for Bob Iger's management, want to put several of their friends on the board. Those friends include two hedge fund managers whose job is to maximize profits for themselves and the shareholders. At worst we have seen hedge funds buy up newspapers, sell off the assets (buildings and equipment), and fire most of the staff in order to maximize profits and eventually force the company to go out of business.

The last time Disney faced a full-fledged proxy fight was 20 years ago. More than 40 percent of shareholders voted against the Disney board. This time the Disney family members have unified around Iger, including Roy P. Disney, as well as Abigail Disney, who once compared Iger to Ebenezer Scrooge. They have signed a letter calling the opposition "wolves in sheep's clothing, just waiting to tear Disney apart if they can trick shareholders into opening the door for them."

The letter goes on to say Bob Iger, his management team, and the Board of Directors are faithful to the Disney magic, while the raiders' "I alone can fix it mentality makes clear that they

are not interested in preserving the Disney magic, but stripping it to the bone to make a quick profit for themselves.”

Disney produced a slick video asking shareholders to oppose the attempt to gain control of the stock. At one point the video attacks Peltz and Rasulo personally, with the narrator saying of Peltz, “His quest also seems more about vanity than a belief in Disney. Why else would he sell 500,000 Disney shares over the past six months in the middle of his proxy fight?” It also includes a clip of Peltz on CNBC saying that he does not claim to have any media experience.

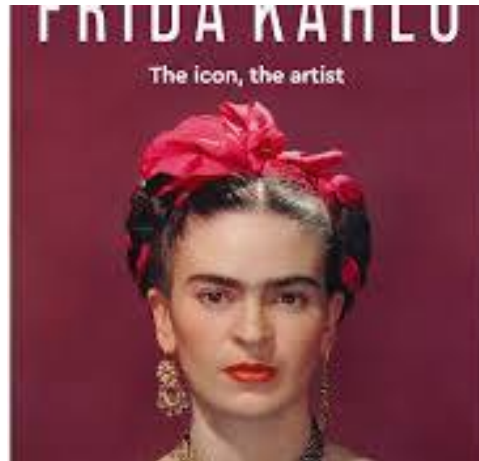
As for Rasulo, the video calls him “a former Disney employee who was passed over for a promotion nearly a decade ago ... he hasn’t been employed since leaving Disney, and the last board he joined, the stock tanked.” It also says he holds a grudge against Iger.

The video ends shifting the ominous soundtrack to a cheerful one and the announcer saying. “The Walt Disney Company has turned a corner and is focused on creating lasting, long-term value.” It concludes, “The choice is clear. Vote Disney.”

Michael Eisner, Iger’s predecessor as CEO of the company, says, "bringing in someone who doesn't have experience in the company or the industry to disrupt Bob and his eventual successor is playing not only with fire but earthquakes and hurricanes as well."

**THE NATION’S LARGEST VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY UNION HAS BEEN FORMED AT ACTIVISION**

**PUBLISHING** About 600 quality assurance workers have formed a union connected with the Communications Workers of America (CWA).



**FRIDA KAHLO DOCUMENTARY IS NOW ON NETFLIX - THE TRAILER SHOWS THE FILM HAS A MINIMAL AMOUNT OF ANIMATION IN IT** The film has gotten good reviews and much of the soundtrack is taken from Frida's diary and letters to her friends. It gives new insight into her life and paintings. Rotten Tomatoes gives it a 90 from the critics and 100 from the audience. It was a winner at Sundance. [Frida | Rotten Tomatoes](#)





## **'CHICKEN FOR LINDA!,' ANNECY, CÉSAR-WINNING FEATURE,' OPENS IN U.S. APRIL**

**TRAILER** The film has won the French Academy César award, Annecy's Cristal for best feature film, the top honors at the Manchester Animation Festival, and L.A.'s Animation is Film. It also screened in competition at Ottawa and Torino, and it premiered at last year's Cannes Festival.

In the film, Paulette feels guilty after unjustly punishing her daughter Linda and would do anything to make it up to her. Linda immediately asks for a meal of chicken with peppers, which reminds her of the dish her father used to make. But with a general strike closing stores all across town and pushing people into the streets, this innocent request quickly leads to an outrageous series of events that spirals out of control, as Paulette does everything she can to keep her promise and find a chicken for Linda.

Note the different style of outlining the figures. Subtitled trailer. [Chicken for Linda! | Official Trailer \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)



**'INSIDE OUT 2' TRAILER, FEATURE ARRIVES JUNE 14** Things are getting messy with brand new emotions inside

Riley's head.

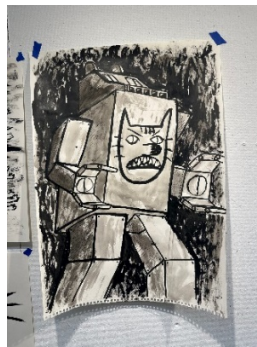
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uKFB\\_NoPKu0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uKFB_NoPKu0)

**DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU** In 1998, a Pixar employee accidentally typed a fatal command function, instructing the computer system to delete *Toy Story 2*, which was then almost complete. Luckily, a supervising technical director who'd been working from home (she'd just had a baby) had a 2-week-old backup file.

**ANNECY HAS FOUR SHORTS FROM THE U.S. IN THEIR COMPETITION PROGRAMS** In the Official Shorts competition *Gina Kamentsky's Pinocchio in 70MM*, Gina Kamentsky (U.S.) and *Tennis, Oranges*, Sean Pecknold (U.S.). [TENNIS, ORANGES \(2024\) TEASER on Vimeo](#) In the Off Limits competition *Crash-huang.xi.hu.xi*, Dale Zhou, Hongxiang Zhou (U.S.) made the cut. In the Perspectives competition they are showing *This Is a Story Without a Plan*, Cassie Shao (U.S.). I was surprised that there isn't a film from the U.S. in the **Young Audiences** contest.



**DISCOVER THE WORK OF ANIMATOR/KINETIC SCULPTURE ARTIST GINA KAMENSKY** She has a work made on 70mm film in the upcoming Anney competition so I wanted to know more about her. It turns out she is drawing and painting on 70mm film stock, has been making short films that have been shown at the Ann Arbor Film Festival, GLAS, and lots of other festivals for many years and she teaches at Rhode Island School of Design (RISD).. Google her as there are several earlier works online.



**THE “GUZZLE BLOOD” MUSIC VIDEO BY RISD**

**ALUMNI** This is the latest war footage between cats and robots. The music is by the post-hardcore band Les Savy Fav.

<https://www.cartoonbrew.com/interviews/christy-karacas-guzzle-blood-music-video-les-savy-fav-239037.html>

**CURIOUS TO SEE A TRAILER FOR A UKRANIAN ANIMATED FILM?** The work is by Animagrad Animation Studio

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izQA8C3emt4> Their showreel 2003 is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rt8R1wKld5k>

**GAMES INDUSTRY HAS BEEN HIT BY MASSIVE LAYOFFS** Roughly 8,000 workers have been laid off from the game industry since the start of 2024. If the cuts continue, this year could surpass 2023 when about 10,500 people lost their jobs. The job loss affects California as roughly 40% of the game industry is headquartered in our state.

**DREAMWORKS' 'KUNG FU PANDA 4' IS OFF TO A GREAT START** It is turning out to be their most successful film in over a decade. In its second week it had a total domestic income of over 100 million dollars. It has made slightly more than *Dune 2* so it remained as the top grossing film for two weeks in a row. As of March 29, the film has grossed \$291 million worldwide. Unfortunately, the animators who worked on the feature are on unpaid vacation until they get rehired for work on the next project.



**Anne Frank, 1941**

**ANIMATION ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST AND OTHER  
ATROSCITIES,  
Part 2 by Karl Cohen**

After publishing part one of *Discover the Power of Serious Animation: Rarely seen films about the Holocaust*, Piotr Kardas from Poland sent information on five films made in his country.

It appears that Polish animators, having seen the horrors of WWII close up, chose to vent their feelings by showing the world how savage, and disgusting the Germans were towards the citizens of their country. What's missing from their work is the optimistic feeling of hope for a better life.

**The films**

**LATER FOR SURE** directed by Ryszard Kuziemski, Poland, 1969, 7:20. A protest against fascist genocide. Drastic scenes of the Second World War are intertwined with people's cruelty. Phrases carved in walls are supposed to give

people hope. (The film's title *Potem na Pewno* has also been translated as *Definitely Later*, and it is not online.)

**APEL**, by Ryszard Czekala, Poland, 1971, 8 min. A somber, disturbing work about resisting the orders of the camp guards. The guards are shown responding as savages. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nz\\_zQg7k7rw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nz_zQg7k7rw)

**ANNA**, by Andrzej Warchał, Poland, 1979, 7 min. In *Anna* the words "My beloved Anna..." appear on a piece of paper. "Later, only a flickering flame of a candle is visible and the subtle vocals of Ola Maurer can be heard. This music constitutes a background for the reading of an affectionate love letter to a beloved person. All of a sudden, we hear the noise of a post-office clerk stamping documents. When it is taken away from the paper, the circumstances in which the letter was written become clear: the stamp has a form of the characteristic Nazi eagle with a swastika in its talons and the sign below says – 'Konzentrationslager Auschwitz' (concentration camp)." Comments are by Janusz R. Kowalczyk, March 2011. It doesn't appear to be posted online.

**THE FABLE OF HANSEL AND GRETEL** by Daniel Zagórski, Poland, 2012, 17:39. The film is set in a dark, somber surreal environments. The music is weary and there are guards with whips or evil looking weapons in their hands. They are overseeing children with joyless facial expressions performing boring, often repetitive tasks. Zagórski's film create moods and his depiction of child labor in a prison camp



is quite depressing. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OWQqZtTs3WM>

**SHIELDING THE FLAME**, directed by Artur Mikulski, 2023, Poland, 19 min. A retired medical doctor is being interviewed about having witnessed in the past inhabitants of the Warsaw Ghetto boarding the trains to the death camps. They walked like sheep going to the slaughter house, but he says they go with dignity. He also talks about the armed resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto including the Nazis deciding to destroy the buildings with fire in order to kill those who were hiding in them after the final trains left. He shares his philosophical thought about those who chose to stay and were willing to die as heroes. He ponders how one can think about the life and the death of 140,000 people. He also has thoughts about his being a heart surgeon whose job is to save lives. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wsjvwgMPDCK>

The doctor's observations are similar to ones declared in a "Ghetto Manifesto," dated January 1, 1942, and written by Abba Kovner when he was 23 and a member of Jewish resistance group in Vilna, Lithuania. He wrote, "Doubters! Cast off all illusions. Your children, your husbands, and your wives are no longer alive... They shall not take us like sheep to the slaughter...It is true that we are weak and defenseless, but resistance is the only reply to the enemy! It is better to fall as free fighters than to live by the grace of the murderers. Resist! To the last breath."

## **Other Holocausts/AtrocitiEks**



*After reading part one of my study on Holocaust films, Nancy Phelps sent me a link to **Body Memory**, a remarkable, really impressive film using puppets wrapped in twine. At first, I thought it was about the Germans shipping humans in cattle cars to the slaughter houses, but upon researching information about the film and its director Ulo Pikkov, it turns out that Stalin used the same mode of transportation to ship his “enemies” in Estonia to work camps (gulags) in Siberia and to other locations.*

**BODY MEMORY**, Ulo Pikkov, Estonia, 2011, 9:36. Ulf Pikkov’s powerful *Body Memory* captures the horrific drama of being in a in a cattle car that is headed towards a concentration camp. Without using human voices on the soundtrack, it conveys what the people might have been thinking (I’m sure the smell must have been awful as well). The tensions and drama in this work builds until it explodes.

**<https://www.meetyoolee.com/post/body-memory-2011>**

When I thanked Nancy Phelps for introducing me to this film she said, “If I remember correctly, he told me that he filmed the brief segments of twisted forests on the actual train route that was used to take people from Estonian to the gulags in Siberia. He has a PhD and this year he and his family are living in the states while he is teaching at the Rhode Island School of Art and Design.”

**VOICES FROM KAW THOO LEI**, Martha Gorzycki, 2015, 11 min. is a very important story that the public knows very little or nothing about it. Martha’s short is an impressive experimental documentary that weaves fragments of interviews together that she recorded with members of the Karen People of Burma (now Myanmar) into a powerful, disturbing film. It hints at what they experienced including ordeals they witnessed and events that were inflicted on them before they fled their country.

The film is a powerful experience where the animated visuals create a somber mood rather than depicts actions described in the soundtrack. It becomes a meditation where you have the opportunity to concentrate on the message. It has won awards at over 20 film festivals for its excellence. **<https://vimeo.com/marthagorzycki>**

I spoke with Martha Gorzycki, who heads the animation program at San Francisco State University, about why she

made her remarkable film about the plight of the Karen people of Burma. She is not of Asian decent, nor has she ever been to Burma (now named Myanmar). I asked her why she spent several years developing this work of art.

She told me she first heard about the Karen people several years ago from an animator whose wife is Karen. Although the story of their plight is horrific, she was told that nobody was listening to their tragic story and their plea for help. Later, when she met other Karen refugees in Minnesota (a relative was helping them to adjust to living in America), she again heard similar statements that nobody is listening to them or was willing to provide the much-needed humanitarian assistance.

Martha responded by recording interviews about the horrific experiences they were subjected to by government soldiers. The hatred is based on ugly prejudices; a hatred between different ethnic-based groups, and a complex mixture of religious, political and social beliefs.

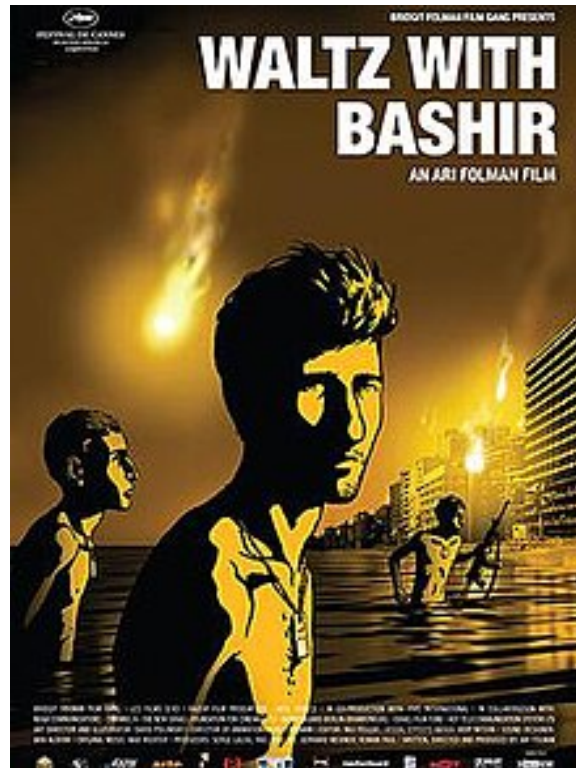
Her next step was to edit together her soundtrack and to figure out how to illustrate it without using images that would distract from the spoken words. The end result is an impressive cry for help that calls attention to their tragic humanitarian crisis that is still unresolved.

The Karen migrated to Burma over two thousand years ago, but other groups who arrived earlier had different religious and cultural beliefs. Each claimed parts of the country as their

land.

The present troubles arose when Burma became an independent nation in 1948. The new government wanted to unify the nation. That resulted in a civil war with the government's military slaughtering civilians, an ethnic cleansing that has been going on and off since 1948.

The Karen people Martha interviewed had once lived in Eastern Burma near the border of Thailand. They are a different cultural group than the better known Rohingya who lived in western Burma. Most of them fled in the second decade of this century to fields in Bangladesh when the army burnt down their villages. Unfortunately, the fields they settled in flood each monsoon season, destroying property and drowning people. Both the Karen and Rohingya have been subjected to horrendous terrorist experiences that have led to the genocide of both groups. The perpetrator was and still is the Burmese military government.



**WALTZ WITH BASHIR**, Ari Folman. 2008, Israel, 90 min. The film takes place during the 1982 Lebanon War and it includes the Sabra and Shatila massacre. A former soldier is trying to recall his repressed memories of his experiences during that war. During the massacre that took place in the refugee camps, his unit fired flares into the night sky to help the Israeli-allied Lebanese Christian Phalange militia carry out their mission. The massacre was in retaliation for the assassination of Bachir Gemayel a popular general who had just been elected president of Lebanon. While the Jewish soldiers did not know what the right wing Christian Phalangists militia was up to until after the massacre was over, the soldier in the film concludes that the gaps in his repressed memory were his defense mechanism. He now questions to what degree he was responsible for the massacre



as he indirectly assisted those who carried it out. The Phalangists killed between 762 and 3,500 civilians (the number is disputed). The massacre was briefly a major international news story.

Much of the film depicts war as hell. For soldiers in the war zone their stress level is elevated twenty-four seven by their fear of being killed. Tension is sensed from little things happening including soldiers being trigger happy and shooting in the direction of unseen noises and at plants moving unexpectedly due to a gust of wind. As tension builds up, people's irrational behavior becomes more pronounced, suggesting to some people in the audience that we are witnessing signs of serious mental issues developing.

When I interviewed Ari Folman a few days before the film was to be shown in San Francisco, I asked what he hoped to achieve by making the film. He replied that his target audience was Israeli youths of draft age and he wanted to dispel the beliefs that we see in the media, images that glorify being a soldier. By showing them war is nerve-racking for a person on the ground in a war zone, they might have second thoughts about being drafted. He was disappointed that box office reports indicated the film's actual audience was an older, more mature audience.

*Waltz with Bashir* grossed over \$11 million (worldwide, an impressive amount for an animated documentary). It was the first animated feature to be nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Film. It won several top awards at major

international festivals (Zagreb, France's César, and several others). It was also banned from being screened in Lebanon and in several other Middle Eastern (Arab) nations.

### **Final comments**

When writing this study, I discovered there are many approaches to discussing Holocaust stories. When I saw *Body Memory* and researched the story behind it, I contemplated how ruthless humans have been over the centuries. I also realized there will probably be countless numbers of films yet to be made about other mass killings of the past, present and future.

The films are not happy or amusing uses of animation, they serve a nobler purpose, educating people about the sad reality of life. I've been aware for most of my life that about 6 million Jews died in Hitler's concentration camps, but I knew a lot less about the other groups that the Fascists exterminated. I knew the Nazis murdered other people for a wide variety of reasons (religious, mentally impaired, homosexuals, and claims they were inferior in other ways), but since not much is said about those killings, I had assumed they numbered in the thousands. I recently read an estimate that around five million non-Jewish individuals were slaughtered!

As for Stalin, he was about as ruthless as Hitler. One estimate is that he murdered about five million people in his gulags and millions more died of famine in the 1930s. Then there were

the Killing Fields in Cambodia where more than two million men, women and children were murdered by Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge (1975 – '79). In the 1970s I met an elderly Armenian woman who told me about her ordeal surviving the Armenian Genocide when around 1.2 million Christians living in the Ottoman Empire were slaughtered (spring 1915 through autumn 1916). Unfortunately, there have been lots of other mass killing sprees of people including the U.S. Army and bounty hunters killing thousands of Native Americans in our country.

Society needs to make people aware that the traditional ways of dealing with hate needs to be changed. Our weapons are far too powerful and efficient now and the proliferation of them could lead to the destruction of civilizations. That is presently happening in Gaza. Why not give peace a chance?

We also need to work harder as a society to take seriously the problems raised with global warming, our polluting the land and seas, the rights of women, minorities, LBGTQ, public health issues, and other important problems. We need persuasive works to call attention to them and hopefully to present positive ideas on how to improve the world.

This study shows that animation can do its part. One suggestion is to work with non-profits to develop script ideas for films that address serious issue and pitch them to groups that might be in a position to help. Another is to create personal shorts about issues that you feel are important. You might consider the advice of Bill Plympton, make it short,

make it inexpensively, and make it funny. It really is possible for you to do your part to help save the planet.

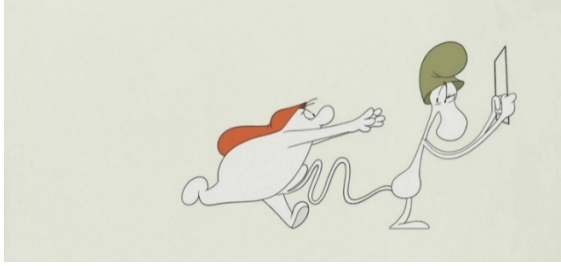
## Acknowledgements

**Tsvika Oren** who lives in Tel Aviv, Israel contributed very useful information to this study. He is an animation scholar who teaches in Israel, and he has published an animation magazine since 2006.

**Martha Gorzycki** heads the animation program at San Francisco State University, is an advocate of animated documentaries, and has worked on the animated feature *Popol Vuh: The Creation Myth of the Maya*, 1990, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities

**Nancy Denney-Phelps** live in Gent, Belgium and is Animation historian and journalist. She is a regular contributor to this newsletter, mainly covering the international world of animation.

**Piotr Kardas** from Poland is the author of *Great Animation Short Documentaries of 2023*, an informative illustrated article posted at: **Great Animation Short Documentaries of 2023 (Guest Article) (zippyframes.com)** He is director of O!PLA, Rising of Lusitania Animadoc Festival, and Craft Animation Festival. An interview with him is posted at **Video: Piotr Kardas Interview (zippyframes.com)**



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**DON'T MISS DISCOVERING 'SNIF & SNÜF', IT IS PURE FUN!** Michael Ruocco's new short film *Snif & Snüf* captures the joie de vie that is missing from most animation today. This short is totally delightful, charming, silly, wonderful, yes, pure fun!

**[www.cartoonbrew.com/shorts/michael-ruocco-takes-us-behind-the-scenes-of-his-short-snif-snuf-239157.html](http://www.cartoonbrew.com/shorts/michael-ruocco-takes-us-behind-the-scenes-of-his-short-snif-snuf-239157.html)**

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**THE DISNEY VS. DESANTIS BATTLE HAS ENDED IN A STALEMATE** It started over Florida's so-called "Don't Say Gay" law and became a two-year fight. Disney lost its control of the special tax district that encompasses the entertainment giant's 25,000-acre resort and a ruling endangered plans to invest billions in the future growth at

Walt Disney World. It probably contributed to Bob Chaprck's ouster, hurt the stocks value and led to a proxy battle that taked place April 3. DeSantis lost hundreds of millions of dollars in economic development when Disney yanked plans for an office complex in Orlando that would've added more than 2,000 high-paying jobs and faced the prospect of the company abandoning or delaying further investment in Florida. DeSantis also sacrificed the long-term economic interests of the state with his failed presidential campaign. On March 27, they agreed to a truce.

## LAST MINUTE NEWS



**SF INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL PRESENT 'PUFFIN ROCK AND THE NEW FRIENDS,' SUNDAY APRIL 28, 1 PM, AT THE WALT DISNEY FAMILY MUSEUM** with Director Jeremy Purcell in person presenting a workshop for kids after the screening. Cartoon Saloon, the renowned Irish studio known for their beautifully crafted hand-drawn animation, celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. **Puffin Rock and the New Friends** builds upon the world created in their award-winning preschool TV series of



the same name, and brings back family favorites Oona, Baba, May, and Mossy. With visually stunning designs and vibrant colors, capture the lush natural beauty of the Irish coast while also featuring powerful themes of belonging, friendship, and courage.

Director **Jeremy Purcell** will show behind-the-scenes artwork, answer questions, and lead the audience in the drawing of some fan-favorite Cartoon Saloon characters. Additional activities will celebrate the Irish culture the studio brings to life along with raffles for prizes and artwork.

Be sure to bring paper and pencils to draw along. Recommended for ages 4 and up. Total Program Runtime: 120 minutes

**Shorts 5: Family Films, *A Little Beagle Returns, Where do Ideas Come From, Yuck,* and 6 more. Over half are animated. Saturday April 27 at 10 am PT at Marina Theatre.**

For details <https://sffilm.org/2024-about-the-festival/>

## **ASIFA-SF IS A VOLUNTEER RUN ASSOCIATION**

*Newsletter Editor:* Karl Cohen

*Contributors* include Nancy Denney-Phelps, Paul Naas, Jim Middleton and other friends of ASIFA

*Special thanks* to Tsvika Oren from Tel Aviv for his help in researching the article on the Holocaust

*Proofreaders* Jim Middleton, Scott Kravitz and Paul Naas

*Special thanks* to Nancy Denney-Phelps who 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. Now that we are supposedly post-Covid we had hopes for a rebound with live events once more, but that isn't happening yet.

**TO KEEP OUR CHAPTER ALIVE WE NEED TO FIND  
VOLUNTEERS  
TO DEVELOP LIVE AND/OR ONLINE PROGRAMS  
UNTIL THAT HAPENS WE ARE OFFERING  
FREE MEMBERSHIPS  
NEW MEMBERS WANTED, TELL OTHERS TO SIGN  
UP TO GET FREE ISSUES OF OUR NEWSLETTER  
AND WHATEVER SCREENINGS THAT ASIFA-SF  
MEMBERS GET INVITED TO.**

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