

CHANGES AND AWARDS FROM GLAS 2021

Look for the excellent Glas Festival review by Marty McNamara at the end of this newsletter.



LOCAL ANIMATOR GEOFF CLARK'S 'TRAGIC MAGIC' IS DOING WELL AT FILM FESTIVALS

Tragic Magic is a stop motion film that was completed in 2019. It tells the story of Greygaunt the wizard and his apprentice. Their day is interrupted when Death arrives. Will their combined magic skills be enough to defeat him? Geoff made the film in his home studio and it has been shown in ten festivals. He says, "The most notable being Montreal's Animaze International Film Festival. It has won awards at the New York Animated Film Awards and the Los Angeles Animation Festival. It will be shown at FilmQuest in Provo, UT, during May 21-29th." He also told us, "The film showed at Animation Chico in 2019. I had a blast at that show. The organizers are really great." ASIFA-SF will show it once we can hold in-person screenings again.

DAN AND RON'S VIRTUAL PRE-OSCAR PARTY WAS QUITE A CELEBRATION

by Karl Cohen

Ron Diamond of Acme Filmworks and Animation Show of Shows along with AWN.com partner of 26 years, Dan Sarto, held their annual pre-Oscar party, usually held in-person at the home of Ron and his wife Lisa, on March 23 that brought together 100+ members of the animation community in a series of Zoom free flowing breakout rooms. I arrived when the party was in full swing so I headed for Dan's room. (AWN has published lots of my articles over the last 25 years) Just as I anticipated, I enjoyed listening to several lively discussions about how the virus has changed the current state of the industry and other interesting topics. I also got to listen to Oscar® nominee Gisli Darri Halldórsson from Iceland who directed *Yes People* and to several people who worked on *Opera* while Director nominee Erik Oh was hanging out in another room as were *Yes People* nominated Producer Arnar Gunnarsson and Maryann Garger, Producer and crew of *If Anything Happens I*

Love You. Also present was *Feast* Academy Award® winner Patrick Osborne, who occasionally morphed into an Aardman'esque blue puppet sitting inside a space capsule thanks to a real-time software program he was developing.

A major discussion topic was the impact the virus has had on the entertainment industry. Will it be realistic to spend enormous amounts of money in the future to produce blockbusters when sales of tickets to theatrical productions may never recover from the recent slump in the business? What impact will new forms of entertainment using streaming and other technology have on America's love for entertainment? The general consensus from the speakers is that we could be headed into an exciting period of change where lots of new creatives and new technology will get a chance to prosper.

The attendees included former Oscar® nominee Ash Brannon for *Surf's Up*, Oscar® nominee Paul Kewley, Aardman Animation's Producer for *A Shaun the Sheep Movie: Farmageddon* and I found out that I just missed seeing an old friend, John Canemaker who won an Academy Award® in 2005 for his *The Moon and the Son: an Imagined Conversation*. The most festively dressed person there was one of the original *Simpson* directors David Silverman wearing a large, outrageous patterned top hat, probably made of leather. He was once an Oscar® nominee for *Maggie Simpson in The Longest Daycare*. The least outrageous looking person in the room was former AWN Editor and current IndieWire reporter Bill Desowitz, quietly sitting still and occasionally writing a note to himself or asking an intelligent question.

Ron told me there were lots of annual regulars there including Carolyn and Nick Bates, Chris Casady, Cinzia Angelini, Jeff Kleiser, Kate Isenberg, Andreas Wessel-Therhorn, Angela Lepito, David Derks and far too many more to mention. They came and went and hung out in the various breakout rooms. Each breakout room was warmly and inclusively hosted by high profile animation people including Marlon West, Bill Kroyer, Deanna Morse, Jerry Beck, Tom Sito, Brooke Keesling, and newlyweds Christi and Rick Farmiloe. Ron and Dan had invited the who's who of international animation community. Some were even a bit bleary-eyed, but still enthusiastic including Swiss director Jonas Raeber (it was 3:00AM in Switzerland when he zoomed in), Denmark based Claus Toksvig Kjaer, Vani Balam visiting from Mumbai and former Oscar® nominee Janet Perlman who created *The Tender Tale of Cinderella Penguin*. She was zooming in from Montreal.



It really was a pleasure to see lots of Academy members as the party included some of the brightest and best creative talents in animation. Why even the creator of *Bambi Meets Godzilla*, Marv Newland, was there.

I later found out that a special treat for Ron was the arrival of the 1985-1999 President of Walt Disney Feature Animation, Peter Schneider. He got an hour alone with Ron before the whole thing kicked off!



NY TIMES PAID A TRIBUTE TO THE EXCEPTIONAL TALENTS OF ANIMATOR JOHN R. DILLWORTH, THE PROUD CREATOR OF 'COURAGE THE COWARDLY DOG' In Maya Phillips' article *Comfort Viewing: 3 Reasons I Love 'Courage the Cowardly Dog'* she sings praise to John's "bizarre animated series that creatively blended the beautiful with the grotesque, pop culture with pathos" in her 1,000 word essay that was published March 5, 2021. She notes, "HBO Max added *Courage* to its streaming roster, and I'm grateful for the distraction. Revisiting *Courage* now, decades later, I can better appreciate all the ways the series distinguished itself in my childhood TV lineup, and the emotional depth beneath its gothic absurdity.

She notes that in this Cartoon Network's show that first aired over 20 years ago, Courage is an easily frightened dog that was put into scary situations, "but

unlike Scooby, Courage doesn't need to be bribed to do the brave thing. He does it out of empathy and love." The show mixed horror with dark absurdist humor, giving it an eclectic appeal for preteen and teen viewers.

She recalls her first memory of the show "wasn't love at first sight." She was about 5 and was terrified by an episode when Courage "tries to alert his owners that they are under attack by a red-eyed, laser-gun-toting alien chicken." To make matters worse things didn't go well for the farmer."

Today she loves the show as she recognizes it as a good parody that "ripped off themes, characters and story lines from various regions in the cultural landscape: horror movies, mythology, classic literature and Broadway. The character Benton Tarantella was a jeering satire of Quentin Tarantino in the episode "Demon in the Mattress." He is "obsessed with capturing the horrors of humanity with a crude, sensationalist flair."

She is still fond of a parody of the *Exorcist* and an episode that is based on *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Now she realizes Dillworth was also having fun referencing Sondheim in a rhyming episode about a crazy barber. She also recognizes his use of the Greek myth of Leda and the Swan in an episode about an amorous goose god and his playing with Herman Melville in an episode about searching for a "sand whale."

As an adult she recognizes Dillworth's unpredictable mix of animation techniques and his fondness for assortments of unusual characters including conniving French ducks, butcher pigs and sneaky cats along with his unusual cast. She notes that while Courage often fights supernatural creatures in his little desert town, he also ventures out to the ocean, into space, and even in to Manhattan. She also hints that Tex Avery and Looney Tune gags may suddenly appear. <https://www.nytimes.com / 2021 / 03 / 05 / arts / television / courage-cowardly-dog-hbo...> -



BEN RIDGWAY HAS JUST COMPLETED ANOTHER EXQUISIT WORK OF ANIMATED ART He tells us, "I just finished my latest film *Formless Form*, posted at:

<https://vimeo.com/538497088>

and

https://youtu.be/ynEbT_tV1hw

Hope you enjoy watching it!"

GOLDEN GATE AWARDS FOR ANIMATION The SF International Film Festival chose *In the Shadow of the Pines* by Anne Koizumi (Canada) to receive their \$750 cash prize. In awarding the animated short prize the jury writes the director "creates a memorable tribute to her father with unique animation, effective writing, and a moving use of mixed media, leaving the audience with a lasting connection to the film."

A VIDEO ABOUT GIVING A 3D LOOK TO A 2D PAGE TO CREATE 2.5D ANIMATION The short video titled "Adding 3d look to a 2D film results 2.5D page" uses great footage from *Wolfwalkers*. You might enjoy seeing the layers needed to create the finished look. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rOU4K4cV-Dk&ab_channel=Insider

A VIDEO ON COMPUTER LIGHTING IN 2.5D ANIMATION It uses *Over the Moon* footage. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bcT0w8jEESw>



PIXAR'S NEW SHORT '22 VS. EARTH' It is premiering on Disney Plus. It tells us more about the skeptical soul in *Soul* and why she isn't anxious to go down to Earth. It is set before her encounter with Joe Gardiner. Tina Fey provides her voice.

'JURASSIC WORLD SESSION 3' TRAILER Will you get scared? It opens May 21. <https://www.animationscoop.com/season-three-full-trailer-jurassic-world-camp-cretaceous/>

SONY HAS RELEASED A NEW SHORT 'HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA: MONSTER PETS' <https://www.animationscoop.com/new-short-and-new-release>

DISNEY HAS A NEW KIDS PROGRAM 'CHICKEN SQUAD' Probably for kids under 5.

<https://www.animationscoop.com/first-look-disney-juniors-the-chicken-squad/>

NETFLIX HAS A LONG TRAILER OUT FOR 'THE MITCHELLS VS THE MACHINES' It demonstrates how to wear a running joke thin.

<https://www.animationscoop.com/trailer-sonys-the-mitchells-vs-the-machines/>

AT THE ANNIE AWARDS 'SOUL' AND 'WOLFWALKERS' WON THE TOP HONORS *Soul* won seven Annies and *Wolfwalkers* six. *Soul* also took top honors at the Golden Globes, PGAs and the British BAFTAs, while numerous critics groups chose *Wolfwalkers* as their top pick. Annie awards were presented in 31 categories plus there were several honorary, special and lifetime awards.

THE TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL IS HOLDING THE WORLD PREMIERE OF 'NO STRAIGHT LINES: THE RISE OF QUEER COMICS' The documentary was directed by Vivian Kleiman, produced by Vivian Kleiman and Justin Hall. The feature length documentary takes a lively look at five LGBTQ+ comic book artists whose careers go from the underground scene to the cover of *Time Magazine* and the international stage. They are Alison Bechdel (*Fun Home*), Jennifer Camper, Howard Cruse, Rupert Kinnard and Mary Wings. A conversation with Alison Bechdel, Justin Hall, Rupert Kinnard and Vivian Kleiman was held after the screening.



AZARIA APOLOGIZES 'TO EVERY INDIAN PERSON' FOR VOICING APU IN 'THE SIMPSONS' He has been paid well for playing that role since 1989, but now that he is being criticized for being politically incorrect he says he is sorry (not to you, but to people who are from India who watch the show). The *Guardian* reports the actor has apologized "to every single Indian person" for his portrayal of Apu in *The Simpsons*. Azaria, who is white, voiced the role of Apu, an Indian-American shopkeeper. The character has now been terminated from the show amid criticism of racial

stereotyping. Azaria accepts accountable for any “negative consequences.” He also said that though he believed the show was founded on good intentions, it contributed to “structural racism” in the US.

When he accepted the role, “I really didn’t know any better, I didn’t think about it. I was unaware how much relative advantage I had received in this country as a white kid from Queens. Just because there were good intentions it doesn’t mean there weren’t real negative consequences to the thing that I am accountable for.”

Awareness that the character was an insensitive and offensive portrayal was stressed in the 2017 documentary, *The Problem with Apu*, made by the Indian American comedian Hari Kondabolu as a look at “how western culture depicts south-east Asian communities.”

Matt Groening, creator of *The Simpsons*, told the BBC the show was striving for inclusivity. Last year he announced that non-white characters would no longer be voiced by white actors, and in February he said the Black actor Kevin Michael Richardson would assume the role of Julius Hibbert, an African American doctor, from Harry Shearer, who voices characters including Mr Burns. “Bigotry and racism are still an incredible problem and it’s good to finally go for more equality and representation,” says Groening. “There was no intention to sideline or offend ethnic minorities.”

PETE DOCTER WINS ANOTHER OSCAR, THIS TIME FOR CREATING PIXAR’S ‘SOUL’ It also won an Oscar for best original score, 70 Annie Awards, a Golden Globe Award and other honors. Congratulations!



THE OSCAR FOR BEST ANIMATED SHORT GOES TO *If Anything Happens I Love You* directed by Will McCormack and Michael Govier. It follows two grieving parents as they struggle to confront the death of their daughter. It is being shown on Netflix.



WHAT IS GOING ON IN ERIK OH'S 'OPERA'???

This film fascinates me (KC) because it is so complex, but I have seen it 3 or 4 times and I still find it hard to understand its content. I found Bill Desowitz’s article on *Indiewire* ‘*Opera*’: *A Provocative Animated Short Confronts Never-Ending Polarization* a good explanation of it, but do we need complex detailed information to understand and appreciate a work of art? In some cases it is needed.

BILL’S ARTICLE

Erick Oh’s *Opera* is an outlier in the race for Best Animated Short. Inspired by Bosch, Michelangelo, Botticelli, and Renaissance fresco mural paintings, it consists of a giant pyramid with cyclical activities revolving around human conflict. “There are a lot of things happening,” he said, “but it’s about polarization: division, discrimination, and conflict caused by... religion, politics, racism, ideologies and contests.”

Oh, who was an animator at Pixar (*Finding Dory*, *Inside Out*) before joining the anime-influenced Tonko House (*Pig: The Dam Keeper Poems*), made *Opera* as an 8K installation before adapting it into a nine-minute 2D short as one continuous motion. It took four years to complete with a team of 34 volunteer animators, and nearly a year was devoted to the intricate design and world building. “It was almost like making an old-fashioned clock,” he said, “planning every action with different story lines that represent humanity [based on cause and effect].”



It's almost entirely drawn in 2D except for CG-enhanced water, steam, and fire effects. But the most complicated part was the compositing. "There are so many broken-down segments that it took three teams of compositors to pull this puzzle piece together."

Opera contains 24 activities in a continuous loop, with thousands of tiny characters. The range of activities encompasses order and chaos, hope and despair. One of the conflicts concerns conformity and rebellion: "And where there's rebellion, they start their own community and begin the same cycle of killing at night in the name of what they believe in," Oh said.

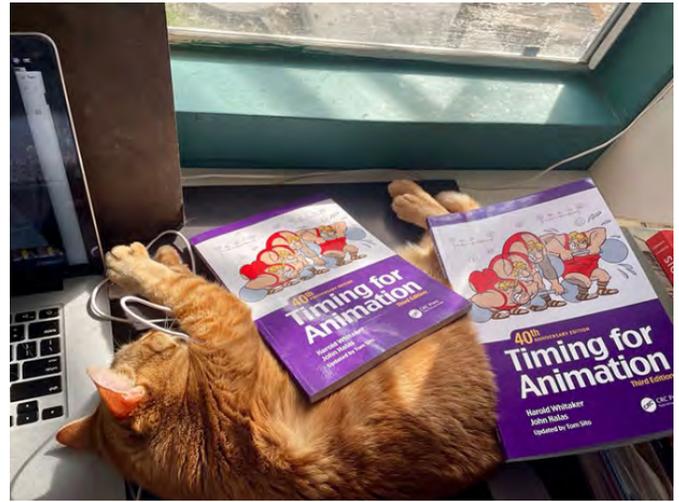
On top of the pyramid, there is a historian who chronicles the events of the civilization on a long, winding scroll. "They often say that human history is written by the winner's perspective, so the history we learn might not be based on fact," added Oh. "This singular history dominates all facets of society: education, politics, and philosophy, science, and art."

Another activity concerns discrimination and racism, including Asian hate crimes that have risen during the pandemic. "The color of the head represents different thoughts," Oh continued, "and there is imprisonment and torture based on having different ideologies. And there's one section where prisoners get a death sentence and their heads are chopped off by the guillotine because they have different colored heads [including yellow, red, and blue]."

Oh utilized the symmetrical design of the pyramid to contrast cycles of life and death along the left and right sides. For example, there is a wedding ceremony and the birth of a child in contrast to a funeral and war. In addition, Oh explores ecological abuse through the story of a giant fish. During the day, people feast on the fish but at night, when war dominates the action, the fish comes out of the pond and eats people. "This stands for Mother Nature, which nurtures life but at the same time is being harmed when we cross the line," he said. "And then, ironically, they eat the fish again the next day."

The rudimentary characters are associated with class struggle, in which the monarchy occupies the top level and the lower class and disabled (signified by partially formed faces) live in shanty towns on the bottom. It's all part of the division and tribalism that have intensified in recent years, compelling Oh to make something meaningful and provocative through animation. And the pandemic has provided yet another timely backdrop from which to view "Opera."

"At the end of the day, it's not about picking your side, or right or wrong, or good or evil," Oh said. "But, in modern times, are we making ourselves better or are we stuck in a continuous loop?"



'TIMING FOR ANIMATION' 3RD EDITION BY HAROLD WHITAKER, JOHN HALAS'

UPDATED BY TOM SITO

A BOOK REVIEW BY NANCY DENNEY-PHELPS

The original edition of *Timing for Animation* by Harold Whitaker and John Halas has remained a classic tool for every animator since it was first published in 1981. The principles that it illustrates are still as relevant today as they were when it was first published. For the 40th-anniversary edition animator, educator, and animation historian Tom Sito has brought the book up to date with the addition of timing for digital works along with new illustrations to demonstrate the digital principles.

Tom has left much of the original work intact while incorporating his own insights and experience into timing for digital animation and games. The 184-page book breaks down the general principles of timing into six different sections that thoroughly cover timing for broadcast media, movement and caricature, timing for oscillating movement, repeat movement of inanimate objects, and timing for lip sync. Each of these headings covers a myriad of situations to lead you through the key techniques like stretch and squash, animated cycles, overlapping, anticipation, and more. Tom's additions blend in smoothly and do not alter the original focus of the book.

The tried and true techniques in *Timing for Animation* explore the fundamentals of timing, physics, and animation with detailed illustrations and clear directions to give your film maximum dramatic effect.

The original authors, John Halas and Harold Whitaker, along with Tom Sito, are familiar names in the world of animation. Halas, known as "the Father of British Animation," was co-founder of the legendary Halas and Batchelor Animation Studio. He produced over 2,000 animated films, including the legendary *Animal Farm* and *Automania 2000* which was the first

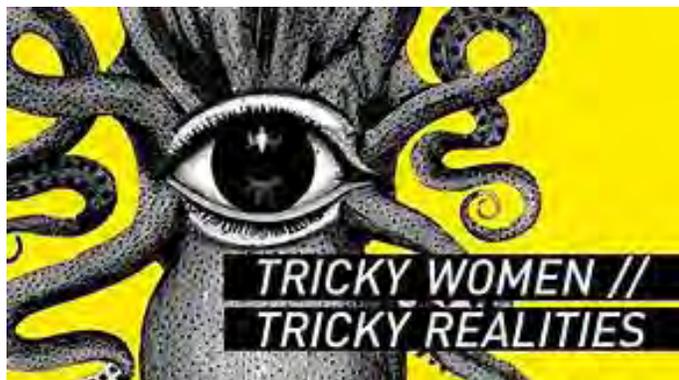
British short animation nominated for an Oscar in 1964. John was also one of the first people to write serious instructional books on creating animation. He was also one of the founders of ASIFA and chairman of the British Federation of Film Societies.

Harold Whitaker created the vast majority of the drawings for the first and second editions of the book and his drawings are also found throughout this new edition. He worked at Halas and Batchelor for many years on such films as *Animal farm*, the first feature film made in Britain, where he was responsible for drawing Farmer Jones. Harold was also a recognized lecturer.

Tom Sito is Professor of Animation at the University of Southern California's Cinematic Arts Department and has written numerous books and articles on animation. His screen credits include *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* (1988), *The Little Mermaid* (1989), and *The Lion King* (1998) to name but a few. In 1998, Tom was named by *Animation Magazine* as one of the 100 Most Important People in Animation.

A special bonus in this edition is a forward by renowned animator Joanna Quinn, who has just completed her latest Beryl film *Affairs of the Art*. In the forward Joanna reveals that she came across *Timing for Animation* while a student and still uses the principles she learned from the book.

Timing for Animation 3rd edition is a must-have book for anyone who is serious about creating animation. It is published by CRC Press, and can be ordered from: <https://www.routledge.com/Timing-for-Animation-40th-Anniversary-Edition/...> 184 pages 100 color and 250 Black & White illustrations, Paperback, e-book - €39.48/\$47.28/£34.39 Hardcover - £92



**20th TRICKY WOMEN INTERNATIONAL
ANIMATION FESTIVAL
10 – 14 March 2021 Vienna, Austria via online**

By Nancy Denney-Phelps

I have always wanted to visit the Tricky Women Festival so when I was invited this year, I was happy to accept the invitation even if only attending from my

living room. For 20 years the festival has been exploring social and political issues from a feminist and artistic perspective and has shined a light on inequality in new and surprising ways. All of the more than 140 films that I watched over the five days of the festival were made by women.

The short opening of the festival featured puppet artist Manuela Linshalm and her life-sized puppet Miss Gretta, who acted as MC. Following the half-hour opening, viewers had two choices: the first competition program or the first Up and Coming selection that featured the best Student and young talents films. Since all programs ran for forty-eight hours after their initial screening, I had ample time opportunity to see both programs.



Just when I thought that I had seen every animated film made in the last two years, up popped *MOM- The Worst Punishment* on my screen in Competition 1. In a crosswalk on a distant planet Nonnonyani murders the mother of an annoying child that won't stop throwing a loud temper tantrum. When she is brought up before the intergalactic court, Nonnonyani is sentenced to the worst punishment in the galaxy - to be transported back to Earth and become a mom in Korea.

Why? After giving birth she has to endure a nightmare of ridiculous expectations and rigorous pressures put on women and mothers in a patriarchal society. Although set in the patriarchal society of Korea, it is a universal subject since most women everywhere are expected to run a household, raise "perfect" children, and hold down full-time jobs.

Su-Kyoung Kim and Kyeong-Wook Ja from Korea used a graphic art style for their 7-minute film that made me laugh and wince in alternate moments.



Another favorite film was Anastazja Naumenko's *We Hope You Won't Need to Come Back*. These are the words spoken by the parents of a young woman immigrating to the west in search of a better life. The 9-minute film explores what it is like to deal with day-to-day life in an entirely new culture in a foreign language. The woman is now dealing with the expectations she brought with her as well as those that other people have of her. As her new life begins to unravel it takes a physical as well as a mental toll on her and her body literally begins to come apart until she finally returns to the comfort and safety of home and family.



The Exploring Realities Animated Documentary program was especially strong. Katarzyna Warzecha's 11-minute film *We Have One Heart* is about a young man discovering the father that he never knew while growing up. After his mother's death, Adam finds letters written by his Iraqi Kurdish father to his Polish mother. Before Adam's birth, his father was forced to leave Poland and return to Iraq to renew his visa and they both assumed that he would just be gone a short time. While he was in Iraq the Iran/Iraq War broke out, he could not leave the country, and was conscripted into the army. After a while letters from his wife stopped arriving and his mother told Adam that his father was dead.

Using animation and archival material we follow Adam on his search for his father and their eventual meeting after forty years. Adam, like his father, is a musician, and he created the soundtrack for the film.

Katarzyna has known Adam for a long time and when he told her his story, she knew it would make a compelling film.

The Same Skin challenges the viewer to think about how our first impressions influence our judgments about people. In this personal film, John, the filmmaker Nina Hopf's twin, talks about identity, body, and gender. In summing up his life he says "I don't have to say I'm John, I used to be a woman. I just want to be seen as who I am today". To create this 5-minute experimental animated documentary Nina used over five hundred photos and prints that belong to her and her brother.



Catcalls by Laura Stewart and Anna Berezowsky, is a film every woman can relate to. New York artist Sophie Sandberg collects stories of harassment on her city's streets and writes the offensive words in chalk where they were spoken. The dialogue in the Canadian animators' film was selected from Sandberg's stories, and the stop motion animation represents women as cats and men as dogs to address a serious issue that women do not find complimentary or humorous. The filmmakers used cat and dog puppets because cats are a bit afraid of dogs and many women are afraid of being out alone in a big city. Men never call another man to tell him they got home safely after a night out, but women often do call the friend they were out with to let them know that they arrived home safely.

I was extremely moved by *Mizuko/Water Child*. In Japanese there is a special word, Mizuko, which translates as water child, to refer to a miscarried or aborted pregnancy. Through a Buddhist ritual of grief called Mizuko kuyo, parents are able to spiritually return their water children to the sea and come to terms with their grief. There is no word in English for this ritual.

The film by Kira Dane and Katelyn Rebelo focuses on the unexpected grief filmmaker Kira felt after terminating an unwanted pregnancy. Kira, who is Japanese American, and Katelyn used two distinct styles to tell the story. The filmmakers said that "the English sections of the film were meant to evoke the numb shock of discovering and choosing to end a pregnancy as well as the kind of detachment of the mind from the body that not only comes from having an abortion but also from growing up and living in a city as large and impersonal

as New York City. To do this we wanted the visuals to be gritty, dry, and almost unnerving at times”.

The Japanese segments of the film represent Kira’s childhood memories of spending time by the ocean in Japan. Those childhood recollections represent the kind of assurance your body has when you are a child in nature.

The film is neither pro nor anti-abortion. It is about coming to terms with an action that, no matter how prepared you think that you are for it, still leaves a strong emotional impact.



As befits a 20th birthday, three special programs traced fifty years of animation history done by women. The oldest film in the programs was Maria Lassnig’s 1971 *Self Portrait*. Better known as a painter, Lassnig created the film using her own drawings which ran the gamut from realistic and surrealistic to abstract. She drew her moods, fears, thoughts, and parts of her life story that she then animated. She also did all of her own camera work as well as creating the soundtrack for the film.

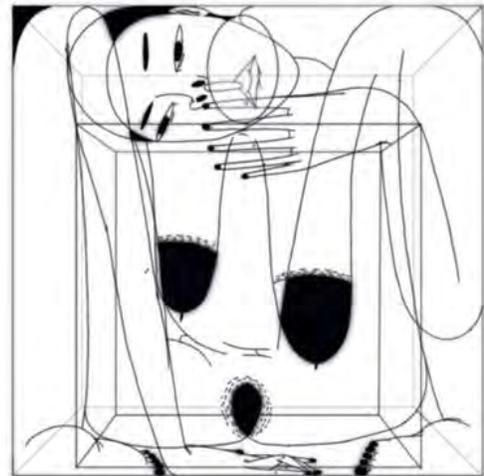
No retrospective of women animators would be complete without a film by Susan Pitt. Her 1979 film *Asparagus* about searching and discovery, desire and contact was selected and is a feast for the eyes. There is so much detail that even though I have seen *Asparagus* many times I still discover new little details in Pitt’s beautiful film.



It was a delight to see a pristine print of Monique Renault and Gerrit van Dijk’s *Pas a deux*.

Although Monique is one of the premier ladies of French animation, she has lived in the Netherlands for many years, where she made this film with van Dijk, her brother-in-law. Drawn on paper with colored pencils, the 5-minute film, made in 1988, sparkles with music that evolves from jive to tango to rock and roll to break dancing as celebrities from movies, politics, religion and art dance across the screen morphing one into another. Mickey Mouse dances with Betty Boop, who turns into Eve and he then becomes Fred Astaire. Liza Minnelli and John Wayne dance into a phone booth and Liza comes out the other side dancing with Superman. My favorite pairing was Miss Piggy with Charlie Chaplin.

The male dance partners were drawn by Gerrit and the female figures by Monique. *Pas a deux* won the 1998 Golden Bear, the top award at the Berlin International Film Festival, and it still stands the test of time. It is always fun to pick out the dancing duos as they progress.



Italian animator Martina Scarpelli’s *Egg* is a highly personal film about a woman attempting and ultimately failing to take control of her fears, in this case, her body and anorexia. She repeatedly tries to eat a hardboiled egg, ultimately fails and lets the egg die of starvation. The beautiful 2D/3D film is in stark black-and-white that accentuates the gaunt lines of the woman’s face and body. *Egg* won over forty awards, including the 2019 Tricky Women/Tricky Realities Audience Award.

Bringing us up to 2020, Martina’s official music video for Canadian singer/songwriter Kai, *A Little Too Much*, is the antithesis of *Egg*. Also in black and white, Scarpelli’s film depicts a woman letting go of herself and overcoming the fear of her own power.

Two films from Irushi Tennekoon’s *Animate Her* series were screened in the Work Affairs program. The series features individual short films about exceptional women living and working in Sri Lanka. The films use stop motion and experimental animation techniques to illustrate stories told by women using their

own words. Renowned architect Amila de Mel spoke about spaces, architecture and her biography; marine biologist Asha de Vos talked about the blue whale skeleton that fascinated her as a child and inspired her career and also related the challenges of being a South Asian woman in the field of science.

Irushi said that she was inspired to create her ongoing project so that, “Through my work I hope to show that here in Sri Lanka we have our own heroines, with brown skin and dark hair, going to great lengths to excel at what they do. I was influenced by Western books and animations which featured largely white heroes and heroines. . . I want to challenge this by telling stories of real-life heroines and showing a group of women that I would have loved to have seen on screens as a child”.

Just as the animated poetry project has become international in scope, I think that this would be a wonderful concept to be taken up worldwide. Too many “box office” animated films still promote the white princess image and it would be wonderful for young girls all over the world to see heroines from their own cultures.

In the same vein, Ugandan Naseeba Bagalaaliwo’s *Scalp Deep* is an exploration into “what is femininity” and “how does hair define a woman in Africa.” The film was prompted by reactions from family and friends when the filmmaker had her own hair cut very short - comments ranged from “how could you do that” to “you used to be so pretty.” This film is a good example of how animation can address cultural issues and customs.

The sole feature-length film at the festival was *My Favorite War* about director Ilze Burkovska-Jacobsen’s childhood memories of growing up in a small Latvian town during the totalitarian Soviet occupation from 1970 to 1990. At one time, Ilze was a proud leader in her local Soviet youth organization. From playing war games on her grandfather’s farm to facing the reality of frightening air raid drills at school, she slowly came to the realization that the Soviet Union was not the happiest



country in the world, as the people of Latvia were constantly told.

The film uses cutout animation with family photos and archival footage to tell Ilze’s story. She felt that this mix allowed her to approach reality from both sides. The film’s title, *My Favorite War*, is an ironic nod to the many war films that children growing up in Soviet-era Latvia were forced to watch in school.

The Latvian/Norwegian co-production took nine years to complete. During an interview at the festival, Ilze said that the film took so long to make because it took her a while to realize that it had to be a personal film. She was encouraged to make it about herself when she saw Marjane Satrapi’s *Persepolis* and realized that a great story can be told from a personal perspective.

Lest the film sound too serious, as in any life, there are many humorous moments, but the core of the film tells of a very tragic period of history. The film won both the *Feature Film Contrechamp Award* and the *Prix du Jury Senscritique* at Annecy in 2020 as well as Latvia’s National Film Award *Lielais Kristaps for Best Animated Film* as well as the *Best Animation Director* award. I wholeheartedly recommend this film for the entire family.

Ilze, who lives in Norway now, is known for her live action documentary films. This is her first animated documentary. She is currently working on a short documentary about three teenage girls whose mothers left to work in the West, leaving the children with their grandmothers.

While preparing for the 20th Birthday edition, the festival asked people what film they would most like to see and over half of them mentioned Caroline Leaf’s *Two Sisters*. The short animation is about the intimate relationship of two people who are connected, not romantically, but through family ties, and what happens when this relationship is disturbed by a third person. It is the story of light and dark, inside and out. Caroline made the sensitive film on 70mm IMAX film because she needed a large frame to scratch on the surface of the film.

Along with the screening of *Two Sisters*, the award-winning animator gave a masterclass and held a separate interview. Caroline began animating in 1968 when she enrolled in the one-year animation class taught by Derek Lamb at Harvard. While a student she made her first sand animation, *Sand or Peter and the Wolf*. Following her graduation, she made her second film, *The Owl Who Married a Goose* at the National Film Board of Canada.

Caroline revealed that she has always struggled with writing stories and so turned to folk legends and books for her inspiration. She also didn’t storyboard or make animatics because she worked alone and said that by working alone so much in a dark room, she developed a love/hate relationship with that room.

Caroline told the audience that she is burned out with under-the-camera animation so she now paints,

primarily abstract pictures. Interestingly, she primarily works standing up; with the painting on the floor. She uses a long-handled brush and walks around the canvas, painting so that it looks good on all sides. Originally Leaf took a year off from animating and rented a house in Ireland. It was there that she decided to take more time off from animation to paint.



Interviews with Signe Baumann are always entertaining. For her Tricky Women interview, she was joined by her producer, lighting designer, and real-life partner Sturgis Warner to talk about their current project *My Love Affair with Marriage* which is nearing completion after six years in the making. It is a musical with 23 songs. Signe said that the main character Zelma IS her. You can learn more about the making of the feature film on the *My Love Affair with Marriage* website: www.myloveaffairwithmarriagemovie.com. You can also become a part of the movie by making a financial contribution to the project. Signe still needs post-production money and every little contribution, no matter how small, is a help. I am looking forward to seeing this film.

Signe feels strongly that we all need to work together to change the perception that animation is for children. She has adult stories to tell and is not interested in telling children's stories. I, for one, am very glad that she makes meaningful, beautifully animated films for adults.

When asked how she got into animation, the Latvian-born animator told the audience that it was quite by accident. She studied philosophy for five years at Moscow University, learning how to brainwash people. After completing her studies, she was supposed to go back to Riga and teach Marxist/Leninism but ultimately, she didn't want to impose her authority on anyone else. She said that five minutes after graduation in Russia, you have to have a job and she didn't know what she was going to do. A girl sitting next to her in a class looked at her doodles and told her she should make them move. Signe started organizing these doodles and made an animatic and it was love at first sight.

When people ask Signe "Why do you animate?" She replies "Why do birds fly?"

The festival trailer was created by Renee Zhan. She describes her work as dark, internal images that explore the ugliness of beauty. The visuals for the trailer came from her 2018 short film *Reneepoptosis*, which is about a world built out of Renee's tears. She also wrote the poem that accompanies the trailer. She explained that "I wrote this brief poem hoping to capture the idea of renewal or rebirth after the difficult year 2020 we have all just experienced. I wanted to convey a hope for the future and brighter times ahead".

The five days that I watched films at the Tricky Women/Tricky Realities Festival was time well-spent. The programs were beautifully curated and the live presentations entertaining and insightful.

I would like to thank Waltraud Grausgruber, co-founder and director of the festival, for inviting me to tune in to the Tricky Women/Tricky Realities Festival. It was great fun and I am sure it is even more fun if you can be there in person. If you are invited to be part of the 2022 festival, when hopefully we can all travel again, I urge you to accept the invitation. You can find out all about the festival and check out what films were shown in the 2021 edition at: www.trickywomen.at

LAST MINUTE ITEMS

THE LEGACY FILM FESTIVAL ON AGING WILL BE SHOWING 'TO: GERARD' The 7 minute short from DreamWorks by director Taylor Meacham, USA, 2020 is "A sprightly older man brightens the day of a little girl through magic." It was a SFFILM 2021 Golden Gate Award winner for family films. The virtual online festival run May 24 – 31. For more information and tickets, visit www.legacyfilmfestivalonaging.org.

A NOTE TO ASIFA-SF MEMBERS FROM THE FOUNDER/DIRECTOR OF THE HIROSHIMA INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FESTIVAL

Dear ASIFA Board Members, Dear Chapter Members, Dear Individual Members,

I hope all of you are well and safe. Please kindly excuse me for this delay to write you concerning the progress of the Petition "**Save the Hiroshima Festival**".

I would like to thank you very, very much for signing and sharing the petition, and for placing supportive comments as well. Also, I am very grateful that many members kindly sent letters directly to the Mayor of Hiroshima.

Early this month, Corrie kindly compiled all the signatures and comments together into one file, 243 pages in total, and on April 9th, Vesna kindly dispatched them to the Mayor via courier, and also via e-mails to the Mayor and to the City Council.

I very much appreciate that we received 7,372 signatures in total from 80 countries/regions - at the petition site 6,369, at ASIFA-China's WeChat 689, and on PDF/paper version 314 - and 110 comments, as of April 2nd. The petition site is still open, and we have received 6,452 signatures so far.

Although we have not yet heard any response from the Mayor nor from the Hiroshima city officers, I am sure that all of your international voices and thoughts have reached safely to give them a great impact and effect. I really feel very encouraged and reassured by your strong support. Thank you very much!!!

In the meantime, I have to inform you that the Hiroshima city has been preparing their new "general arts and culture event" continuously, and on April 22nd, they revealed their basic plans on the city's website; however, in Japanese language only, It seems their new event will be consisted of music and media art (including animation, manga, live-action films, etc.), and they seem to hold animation competition(s) as well.

More to my regret, I have to inform you that two ASIFA-Japan members are appointed to serve as the Producer and Director of the event's animation/media art section; however, I, as the President of ASIFA and ASIFA-Japan, have to confirm that the Hiroshima city's new event has nothing to do with ASIFA and ASIFA-Japan, and that they will be a completely different event.

Also, as we ASIFA-Japan are not informed of their new event at all, we are not able to guarantee the quality of their animation competition and related programs. Hope you kindly understand.

Speaking of ASIFA-Japan, we are most pleased with your strong support, and we are making every effort to realize an "International Animation Festival in Japan" to succeed the spirit and quality of Hiroshima Festival. I truly hope that we will be able to announce good news in near future!

Dear Board Members, please kindly forward this message to your Chapter Members,

Thank you for your continued cooperation!

Very warm regards,

Sayoko

IT ISN'T TOO LATE TO HELP SAVE THE HIROSHIMA INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FESTIVAL Please send a note to Sayoko asking to add your name to her petition, or even better yet send her a note say why you believe the festival played an important role in uniting animator from around the world, was a major cultural asset for the city of Hiroshima, that watering it down will turn it into an event that has lost its prestige, or... She needs your support, so please help! **Email** Sayoko Kinoshita at sayoko@t3.rim.or.



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention eased its guidelines on wearing face masks outdoors and Gov. Gavin Newsom tweeted, "If you're fully vaccinated, outdoors, and not in a large crowd — you do not need to wear a mask." Art by Mark Fiore

TWO TEACHERS WANTED TO TEACH EXPERIMENTAL ANIMATION AT CAL ARTS Temporary one or two year full time openings. Details at:

<https://calarts.edu/work-for-calarts/employment-listing/visiting-faculty-in-experimental-animation-2-positions-3>

OTTAWA SETS DATES OF VIRTUAL FESTIVAL AND ENTRY DEADLINE The 45th edition of the Ottawa International Animation Festival will be held online again this year for an extended run from **September 22 to October 3**. The OIAF team has been hoping that an "in person" event might be possible in 2021, but the current forecast for the pandemic indicates that a safe and enjoyable event would be difficult to stage. Submission deadline is **May 31**. There is **no entry fee**. AnimationFestival.ca

STUTTGART IS A GREAT ONLINE FESTIVAL AND IT RUNS MAY 4 – 9 The International Festival had to cancel events in the cinemas so try to attend the virtual version. There are several free events. You can attend the entire event for a slight fee. For more information visit: <https://www.animation-festivals.com/festivals/stuttgart-festival-of-animated-film-itfs>

LOCAL ANIMATOR VINCE COLLINS IS HAVING HIS WORK BEING RESTORED BY THE ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURES ARTS AND SCIENCES Film preservationist Mark Toscano, in an interview in *Art in America* (April 29, 2021) on artistic

interpretation and digital accessibility said, "I've been able to continue the digital restoration of shorts by the psychedelic animator Vince Collins, who started making films in San Francisco in the early '70s." Mark also teaches experimental animation at Cal Arts.

JOIN/RENEW FOR ASIFA INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP! Support animation worldwide by joining the International Animated Film Association, <http://asifa.net>. You can join through ASIFA-SF and renew your local membership at the same time: <http://asifa-sf.org/join-asifa-2>

ASIFA-SF IS A VOLUNTEER RUN ASSOCIATION

Newsletter Editor: **Karl Cohen**

Contributors include **Nancy Denney-Phelps**

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Mailing Crew: **Denise McEvoy, Shirley Smith**

Special thanks to **Marty McNamara** for his article on festivals, **Nancy Denney-Phelps** for representing our chapter on the international ASIFA board and her monthly contributions to the newsletter, to **Emily Berk** our webmaster, and to **Eihway Su** who keeps our mailing 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. Let's hope it is a limited time offer. **We want to hold in-person events again.**

Our website and blog is: www.asifa-sf.org

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Changes and Awards from GLAS 2021

by Marty McNamara

Last month we alerted members that GLAS 2021 would feature a strong collection of award-winners from 2020 festivals, as well as several outstanding historical retrospectives. These proved to be the standouts in this year's festival, although there was interesting new work as well. All together there was simply too much good animation to absorb fully in just a week.

Midway through the online festival, team GLAS decided to extend the event's duration from seven days to twelve. This allowed participants to view a greater portion of the festival's competitions, workshops, retrospectives and interviews. It probably also prevented some pass-holders from being forced to choose between screenings and virtual parties.

Most online festivals have realized that the flexibility of longer availability will provide greater value and attract more participants with variable personal schedules. To this end GLAS also offered to reactivate expired 24-hour program viewing windows at a pass-holder's request. Starting with 72-hour windows or simply making all programs available to pass-holders VOD for the festival's duration would be even better. That would make planning less hectic and allow more time for networking.



KKum

Changes in the Festival Awards

At the very end of the festival GLAS also announced another last-minute change, a “new Simulation Award with the support and encouragement of David O’Reilly. This award is for filmmakers in competition that creatively use simulation, automation or algorithms in their filmmaking process. Our intention is to recognize and encourage the growing field of artistic expression enabled by code, GPU's and machine collaboration.” (Press release)

Unlike all other GLAS categories, this is a specific technique focus. There is some precedent for that at international festivals. In the 1980s and 90s many offered a separate Computer Animation Award to encourage the acceptance and utilization of 3D computer animation by independent animators. Bay Area studios like Pacific Data Images-DreamWorks or Pixar almost always won these, since hardly anyone else had the resources and many felt the aesthetics were unattractive.

GLAS' High Risk category seemed to be created initially to include abstract films or experimental techniques. Now this year's split allows GLAS to award a film of high-risk subject matter and experimental genre, yet still have the Simulation Award for another film with a different risk factor. Interestingly, this year's Simulation winner, Ismaël Joffroy Chandoutis, was last year's High Risk Award winner for "Swatted".

In other Closing Day changes, this year's jury ignored the recent tradition of having each juror bestow a Special Mention award on her/his favorite film that did not garner one of the three top prizes. Instead the jury chose a single film for Special Mention jointly.



KKum

The Official Awards

Later I will add personal favorites.

Grand Prix

KKum by Kangmin Kim

High Risk Award

Just a Guy by Shoko Hara

New Talent Award

Naked by Kirill Khachaturov

Simulation Award

Maalbeek by Ismaël Joffroy Chandoutis

Special Mention

Easter Eggs by Nicolas Keppens

Audience Award

1000 rêves : Zenti l'invisible by Jonathan Phansay-Chamson

US Competition Award

Opera by Erick Oh

Family Competition Award

Curious World of Animals by Dante Zaballa, Osian Efnisien



Kapaemahu

The Family Competition

Any parent or grandparent will tell you how much we search for the rare opportunities to share films with our children that are artistic, compassionate, exciting, informative and/or inspiring. Sadly we mostly have to choose from the sexist, materialistic, simplistic garbage on television and in animated Hollywood features.

The films in a Family program at an animation festival should not be leftovers from the main competition, naively re-categorized because they may contain some animal characters. That's why I was excited by the GLAS 2021 Family selection this year. There were actually three standout films that were award-worthy. Of course these should be eligible for all festival prizes, not relegated to a second-class status.

Surprisingly, in last year's GLAS 2020 no Family Competition prize was awarded. The jury just designated a special mention for a short made by young children in India. This missing award seemed quite unfair to several outstanding films for both general and family audiences, such as the extraordinary French student work **Sous la Glace (Under the Ice)**.

Equally surprising: as fine as the Family selection at GLAS was in 2020 and 2021, there were quite a few truly exceptional family films at international festivals that never surfaced at GLAS in either year, such as Sung-Ah Min's **Boriya**, Julien Bisaro's **Shoom's Odyssey**, Taylor Meacham's **To: Gerard**, or Eliran Peled and Mayan Engelman's **Cinema Rex**. These are the seldom-seen mixtures of artistry and positive values that parents alert each other to excitedly. Hopefully GLAS will soon be able to get within the radar of filmmakers such as these.



Mother Didn't Know

My Alternate GLAS 2021 Awards

Grand Prix

Mother Didn't Know by Anita Killi, Norway

Regardless of whether it was selected for the main competition, Killi's masterful creation was simply the finest new film in the entire festival. Her sensitive study of childhood depression is a textbook in innovative character modeling, effective set design, and subtle storytelling.

High Risk Award

Just a Guy by Shoko Hara, Germany

Hara's study of women who were romantically involved with convicted psychopath Richard Ramirez, the deeply sadistic, racist and misogynist serial rapist and murderer, is as high risk a film subject as can be, particularly since she herself was one of those women. Yet, despite some clever animation, Hara skirts the issues she explores and we are left even more baffled by the women's attraction than before.

New Talent Award

To the Dusty Sea by Héloïse Ferlay, France

Ferlay is one of the best young European women contributing to the wave of fabric-based stop-motion. The mother in her fraught puppet family is particularly fragile and the art medium allows her unraveling to be subtle and visceral. Khachaturov's **Naked** is undeniably funny and weird, but its sci-fi plotline is riddled with absurd inconsistencies. Ferlay's film gets my award in this close race, for her technique is equally impressive and her message much more clear and relevant.

Simulation Award

Maalbeek by Ismaël Joffroy Chandoutis, France

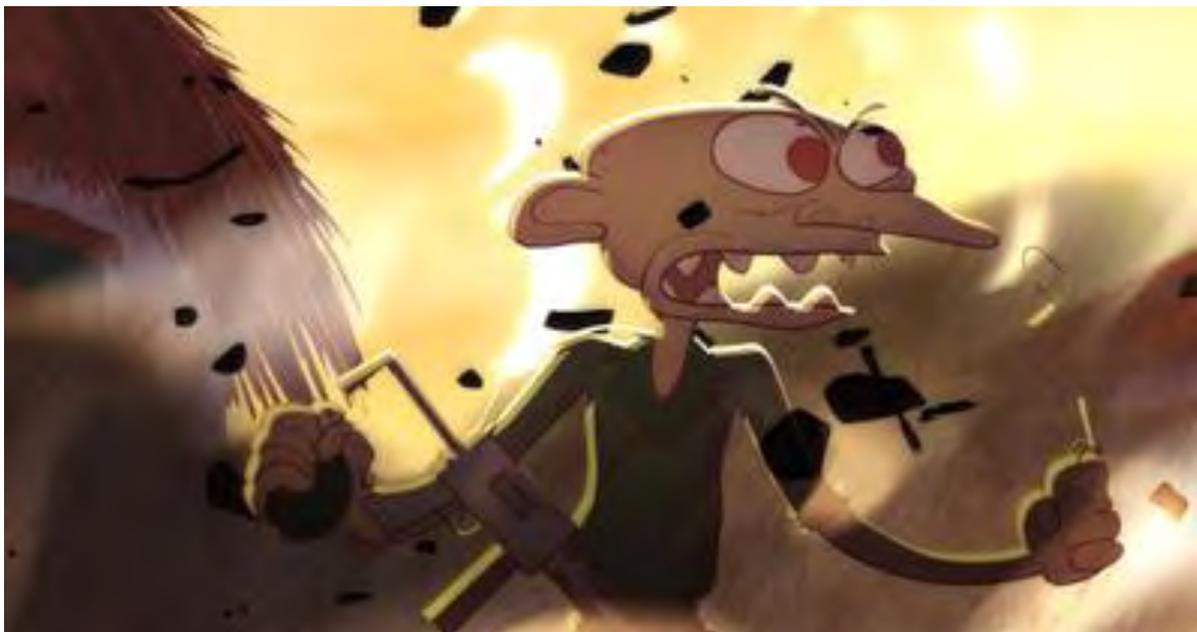
Well-meaning and sincere, reminiscent of Alain Resnais, this long film shares traits common to this category. Its exposition is completely verbal. Visuals, often interesting, are used to illustrate the voice over. In the anti-climax, haunted survivors of this famous subway bombing remark that the film's subject is better off not being able to remember her traumatic experience.

Special Mention **KKum** by Kangmin Kim, South Korea/US

A charming and witty film with brilliant usage of a novel stop-motion medium, that I considered as a contender for both the festival's Grand Prix and the US Competition Award, **KKum** and **Souvenir Souvenir** were the two best films in the Official Competition.

Audience Award **Souvenir Souvenir** by Bastien Dubois, France

During GLAS we were not allowed to vote for any film outside the Main Competition, narrowing my personal choice to either **KKum** or **Souvenir Souvenir**. I chose the latter for the social importance of its commentary on colonial Algeria. Elsewhere on GLAS' closing night, ASIFA-Hollywood gave **Souvenir Souvenir** its Annie Award for Best Short Film of 2020. Clearly many value this family memoir's intensity.



Souvenir Souvenir

US Competition Award **Kapaemahu** by Dean Hamer, Hialeimoana Wong-Kalu, Joe Wilson, US

Erick Oh's Oscar-nominated **Opera** was indeed the best film exiled to the single US program, but two American films in other categories were particularly impressive. Kim's **KKum** was made in Los Angeles, but is a predominately Korean story, whereas **Kapaemahu**'s skillful retelling of an ancient Hawaiian legend actually concerns the cultural identity of that American state. So I tried to give each of the three films the award that fit it best.

Family Competition Award **Gon, the Little Fox** by Takeshi Yashiro, Japan

Even though **Gon...** is a lengthy and slightly dark hunting narrative for the very young, it can be a valuable lesson in mutual empathy and foreign culture for older children. Both lead characters display kindness toward the other, but also damage the other irreparably and unintentionally. It is an unusual story, best experienced together by parent and child.



Gon, the Little Fox

Long Take Awards

I'm Here by Julia Orlik, Poland

Opera by Erick Oh, US

Two films consisting solely of a single extraordinary shot have the opposite effect. Orlik's static document of the final bedridden days of an elderly stroke victim conveys her inability to move and gradually makes us wonder how much she can understand the dialogue around her. This becomes profoundly sad and we empathize with the glimmer of humanity she clings to.

By contrast Oh packs as many tiny moving characters as possible into his self-contained world, revealing their cyclical interactions as we pull back and down. It may be the most complex animated long take in memory. Yet despite the high drama that ensues, we learn the same lesson that Welles, Jancso, Scorsese and other famous live-action directors all did: when the duration of a long take is combined with the distance of a long shot, character emotion is muted, particularly in motion.

And finally,

Historical Special Mentions

Strings by Wendy Tilby, Canada

Padre by Santiago Bou Grasso, Argentina

Dimensions of Dialogue by Jan Svankmajer, Czech Republic

The Empty by Dahee Jeong, South Korea



Darkness, Light, Darkness

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