

ASIFA
THE INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION ASSOCIATION
Nov 2019



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THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA CONTINUES TO PRODUCE EXCEPTIONAL WORKS THAT EXPLORE NEW DIRECTIONS IN ANIMATION Each year there are several memorable animated shorts released that are charming and well executed, but what is extremely rare is the film that presents a new concept of what a great work of animation can be. People who attended the Oct. 1 National Film Board show at San Francisco State were treated to not one, but two such films. Making the evening more exceptional was having two of the directors present to discuss their works and to show earlier examples of their art.

The two new films shown are unique works of art. Unlike most animation, the two works focus on the thoughts and memories of common men. There are no heroes or villains endowed with magic powers or characters present to create comic moments. Instead the two directors created wonderful compelling stories about rather ordinary people in situations that are not that unusual.



Regina Pessoa's *Uncle Thomas: Accounting for the Days*, 2019, focuses on the person who taught her the joy of drawing. She grew up in rural Portugal and her uncle showed her how to turn a stick into charcoal. They then proceeded to draw on the wall of the house he lived in. That proved to be an important moment in her life as it encouraged her to be an artist.

Another memorable moment she shares with us is Thomas taking her for a motorcycle ride. They drive

through the village and through the countryside. After driving through a forest they go off-road across a field full of red flowers. Again this might not be an important memory for many people, but for Regina it was a simple joyful experience and she shares with us that pleasure in her artwork.

There are also elements in the film that add a sense of discord. The uncle quietly recites numbers and writes them down in ledger books. We don't understand Thomas' obsession with numbers, but in the Q and A Pessoa explained he ran the family business, carving stonework for buildings, and at some point it went bankrupt. She speculated her uncle was obsessed with trying to figure out where he went wrong running it.

The film not only depicts an uncle I wanted to know more about, but her art is fascinating to watch. She creates drawings and textures in a style unlike the art of past and present animators. Her images appear to be black and white engravings; however, they are created with a computer. Her sharp thin lines are precise and they blend nicely with solid or textured masses of shaded grays and blacks.



While she developed her engraved look in earlier works, her new film explores for the first time adding "real materials, the real objects that I kept from my uncle." In the sequence where he carves a sharp point on a stick before he burns it to create a drawing tool, she worked into the composition one of his actual pen knives. In other sequences we see his pocket comb and other personal objects that she saved. Presumably some of the math notations in the film are his. Although the significance of the personal mementoes of the man most likely will not mean anything to the audience, to the animator it is a lovely, touching, private tribute to Uncle Thomas.

Pessoa's new film is so subtle that many viewers may not even be aware of her combining different materials in this work. She writes, "I can say that I'm pretty happy with the result, I really used a lot of techniques and they fuse well together. From my point of view, I'm satisfied."

As for the animation community's reaction to the film, at Annecy 2019 the jury awarded it their top award for a short. They described the film as "a testament to her love for this eccentric, who was an

artistic inspiration and played a key role in her becoming a filmmaker. A moving tribute to a poet of the everyday.” The film was also awarded the prize for Best Original Music for a Short Film: The score was by Normand Roger.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCRgw6tq098>



Tragic Story with Happy Ending (2005) by Regina Pessoa was also shown. Wikipedia says it is the most awarded Portuguese film ever. It is the second film in a trilogy about childhood, between *A Noite* (1999) and *Kali the Little Vampire*.

https://www.nfb.ca/film/tragic_story_with_happy_ending



The second new work shown was Theodore Ushev's *Physics of Sorrow*. It is a rich literary work of art about a nameless man's fleeting memories of his past. He was perhaps born in 1944 in Bulgaria, or was it 1968? It really doesn't matter as the work is fictional, a composite of images based on moments in the lives of several people. What is important is one should become absorbed by the story so you feel his joy as he recalls visiting a small traveling circus where he becomes enamored of a teenage girl working in it. They become friends, they have fun together and she gives him his first kiss. Then he shares with us his feelings of loss as the circus moves away and he never sees her again.

The work is a collection of poetic fragments of memories carefully constructed to share with us personal

moments of his past. His discussion of his military service focuses on his learning to get over barbed wire fences. Why? To escape the barracks at night so he could go to local bars where he enjoyed meeting women. He also shares with us his sorrow caused by his leaving his family in Bulgaria when he migrates to Montreal. I was fascinated that he learned to read English by reading inscriptions on tombstones. The structure of this work was inspired by a best-selling book of the same name by Bulgarian writer Georgi Gospodinov.

Most of the film's images are dreamlike, slightly blurred or soft focus. To render his soft blurred memories Ushev painted his art on illustration boards using heated beeswax with ground color pigments. To animate a movement he simply painted the new movements over the previous ones. As a result the area where action takes place becomes thicker, built up as one movement is painted over the previous one.

Ushev told his audience that he found that it was hard to paint tiny details so the art of the film was created with broad brush strokes. Often his backgrounds are quite painterly and abstract. He also noted the heated wax dries quickly so you have to paint fast.



The technique he used is called encaustic and it dates back to in late Egyptian dynasties. It was used to create funerary portraits of the deceased (Google "Fayum portraits"). Ushev's father taught him how to use it. The Film Board's promotions for the film says it is the first animated short made using the encaustic technique. ASIFA-SF showed the film again at De Anza in Oct. <https://www.awn.com/news/theodore-ushevs-new-short-physics-sorrow-premiere-tiff-2019>

Ushev also showed *Tower Bawher* (2005), the first film he made for the NFB of Canada. The Russian hard edge, abstract, constructivist images are set to a dramatic and dynamic score, *Time, Forward* by Russian composer Georgy Sviridov. Ushev was familiar with the music as it was used on Soviet TV news shows. This visually exciting work can be seen at:

https://www.nfb.ca/film/tower_bawher



The evening was already quite special, and to top it off the Film Board gave their guests a state of the art flipbook that contained eight long sequences from *Uncle Thomas*.



The creators of *South Park* will go all out to offend you, and they do!

CHINA'S AUTHORITARIAN GOVERNMENT HAS BANNED 'SOUTH PARK' AND HAS REMOVED IT AND ALL REFERENCES TO IT FROM THE INTERNET! BY KARL COHEN A few months ago China's censors aggressively banned *Winnie the Pooh* when some internet users compared the character to Chinese president Xi Jinping. The censors were concerned people might adopt Winnie the Pooh as a nickname for Xi.

Now, after the *South Park* episode "Band in China" (show #299) aired in early October, Beijing decided they can no longer tolerate that show's humor - it sometimes pokes fun at China. Their response was to immediately remove all episodes and references to the show on the internet. Now, if you search for the show in China you get a notice that reads, "According to the relevant law and regulation, this section is temporarily not open."

Why is there an international controversy over an animated comedy show? The episode calls attention to issues that embarrass China including their treatment of Muslims. The show is also critical of Hollywood's practice of shaping films to please Chinese censors since there are enormous profits to be made having a hit feature shown in that country. Disney's *Avengers*:

Endgame grossed about \$614 million in China. In 2018 American movies earned \$3.2 billion in China with Disney accounting for nearly a quarter of that (\$700 million).

In "Band in China" Randy gets caught attempting to sell weed in China. He is sent to a work camp similar to those Beijing has been using in Xinjiang Province. They house an estimated one million Chinese Muslims. They are supposedly being held for political indoctrination and reeducation. While Randy is a prisoner at the work camp he runs into another prisoner, Winnie the Pooh.

At another point in the episode Stan, Jimmy, Kenny and Butters form a metal band, which becomes popular and attracts the attention of a manager who wants to make a film about them. Unfortunately the script keeps changing (censorship problems) so that the film can safely be distributed in China.



Mickey Mouse shows up to remind everybody to make sure they are nice to Chinese authorities.

After the show's creators, Trey Parker and Matt Stone, heard about the controversy about their show, they issued a mock apology. It read, "Like the NBA, we welcome Chinese censors into our homes and into our hearts. We too love money more than freedom and democracy. Xi doesn't look just like Winnie the Pooh at all. Tune into our 300th episode this Wednesday. Long live the Great Communist Party of China! May this autumn's sorghum harvest be bountiful. We good now China?" Was that an apology or a plug for an upcoming show (#300)? Also, before episode #300 aired the guys from *South Park* tweeted "You gotta lower your ideals of freedom if you wanna suck on the warm teat of China."

Those guys are excellent at promoting their show, so it came as no surprise that show #300 was well planned. They must have expected China to react in some negative way to show #299, as the message in their 300th show was four bold words, "Fuck the Chinese government!"

In the episode, Randy, who did time for selling pot in China, tells his former business partner, Towelie, how he now feels about doing business in China. At first he mumbles something that can't be clearly

understood. Then to make himself clearly understood he yells “fuck the Chinese government.” The episode is titled “SHOT!!!”

Parker and Stone thrive on controversy so their “Band in China” and “SHOT!!!” episodes hopefully succeed in making the world aware of China’s deplorable history of human rights violations, along with Hollywood’s pandering to China’s censorship rules. Disney and DreamWorks have tailored several projects so they will not include anything that Chinese censors will question.

The bigger picture

The media coverage that this controversy has gotten (*Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, etc.) was impressive and it demonstrates that film today can go beyond just being popular entertainment. The topics *South Park* explores raise moral and ethical questions about the values and beliefs of different societies. China’s reaction to the opinions of the creators of this show suggest to me that artistic freedom and free speech in our democracy are precious values, values not fully shared by their government.



MARTIN SCORSESE SAYS CINEMAS ARE BEING “INVADED BY THEME PARK FILMS” He expressed this opinion in at least two speeches given in London and it appears he considers Marvel films as theme park attractions. He argues, “It’s not cinema, it’s something else. We shouldn’t be invaded by it.”

“Theaters have become amusement parks. That is all fine and good but don’t invade everything else in that sense,” he said. “That is fine and good for those who enjoy that type of film and, by the way, knowing what goes into them now, I admire what they do. It’s not my kind of thing, it simply is not. It’s creating another kind of audience that thinks cinema is that.”

VIETNAM PULLS ‘ABOMINABLE’ FROM CINEMAS OVER TERRITORIAL DISPUTE WITH CHINA A scene in the DreamWorks film shows a map that includes the disputed islands in the S. China Sea as belonging to China. Since part of the feature was created by DreamWorks’ Shanghai studio named Pearl Studio, the showing of that map was probably deliberate

as the Chinese government has a financial interest in the studio.

ESPN has also upset countries recently when it showed a map in their coverage of the controversy between the NBA and China. It showed a map with the disputed islands along with the nation of Taiwan as belonging to China. Taiwan is an independent and democratically governed nation. It is not under the control of the Chinese Communist Party.

When I was a kid my mother told me that a map in her high school classroom left the world’s largest nation, the USSR, unnamed. At the time the US government refused to recognize the USSR as a sovereign nation. Was that a more tactful solution?

THE BRAINWASH DRIVE-IN MOVIE FESTIVAL HAS ANNOUNCED THEIR AWARDS The winning animation short is *I Am He Who Created Himself* by Emma Penaz Eisner.

BOB WEINSTEIN, HARVEY’S BROTHER, HAS STARTED A NEW COMPANY It is making an animated feature, *Endangered*, a family adventure film based on a 2017 book of animal photography by UK-based Tim Flach.



BONE WILL BECOME AN ANIMATED SHOW Netflix has acquired rights to turn the award-winning international comic strip into an animated series. The first adventure will be a journey into a vast, uncharted desert and into a mysterious valley filled with “wonderful and terrifying creatures.” Jeff Smith created the character when he was 10. Since then he has published 55 issues of *Bone* (1991 – 2004). The comic book series has won 10 Eisner Awards and 11 Harvey Awards.

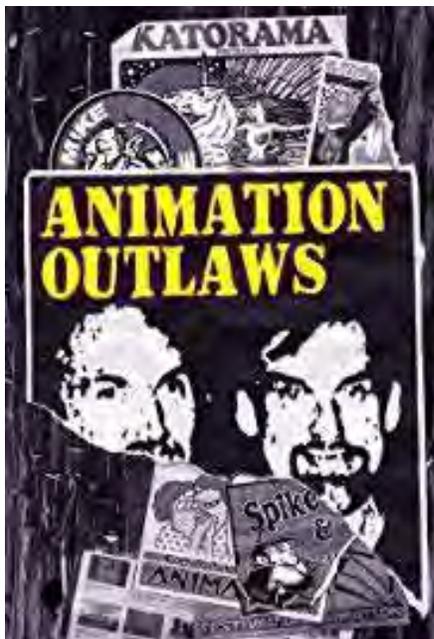
In case you haven’t noticed, Disney and Netflix are at war with each other and the prize will be domination of the streaming marketplace. Hopefully some of the work that will result from this competition will be excellent animation.



CHINA HAS ENTERED 'NE ZHA,' AN ANIMATED FEATURE, IN THE OSCAR COMPETITION FOR BEST FOREIGN FEATURE

It is the country's second highest grossing feature of all time (\$694 million so far). It was directed by Yang Yu and is described as, "An innovative take on a well-known work of classical Chinese mythology. The 3D animated film follows a boy born of the gods who finds himself a feared outcast because of a divine prophecy that says he will bring destruction to the world. The young boy stares down a choice between good and evil before ultimately deciding to overcome his fate and become a hero."

Yang, who is 38, dropped out of pharmacy school to pursue becoming a self-taught animator. He spent 3 ½ years studying animation techniques in his mother's home. His breakthrough short, *See Through* (2009), won a special jury prize at the Berlin International Film Festival. That led to the Chinese studio Beijing Enlight approaching him and offering to finance a feature that became *Ne Zha*.



'ANIMATION OUTLAWS' IS AN IMPRESSIVE TRIBUTE TO SPIKE AND MIKE'S CONTRIBUTION TO INDEPENDENT

ANIMATION. IT STARS THE ANIMATORS WHO MADE MANY OF THE ANIMATED SHORTS I'VE LOVED FOR THE LAST THIRTY OR FORTY YEARS by KC I don't know how the general public will relate to this feature, but I was delighted to see a film honoring some of the world's most creative film artists. It is full of great clips of their work and it brought back so many wonderful memories that I can't give you an objective review of it. Just before the movie started I was talking to Tim Hittle. When the film started one of the first images was a wonderful shot from one of Tim's films. I knew this was likely going to be a fun film experience, and it was for me.

This fast moving film is full of short interviews with people whose work I respect and admire. Perhaps at the top of that list is Nick Park. Nick appears several times in the documentary telling us things like how important it was to his career to have people actually see his Oscar winning short *Creature Comforts* (1989). If it were not for Spike and Mike and Landmark Theatres, the public in the final years of the last century would not have had much of a chance to discover the amazing animated world that exists beyond Disney and what commercial TV had to offer. (I'm biased as Nick created the 2004 ASIFA lifetime achievement award that was presented to me at the Ottawa International Film Festival. It hangs in my kitchen so I see it daily.)

Animation Outlaws offers a wide range of artistic approaches and content. Director/producer Kat Alioshin goes out of her way to include interviews with some of the most creative women making award winning animation. While I've known their work for many years, now I've seen and heard them talk about their work, making thinking about their films a richer experience.

The feature acknowledges that after Mike died, Spike went on to create and exploit *Sick and Twisted Animation*. There are clips from *Bambi meets Godzilla* and *Lupo the Butcher*, but it doesn't dwell on the genre. Instead it promotes quality animation that we still rarely, if ever, get to experience in theatres or on TV.

What is missing from this film is the chance to see complete gems created by independent animators. While the film educates the public that these films exist, where can people see them? I hope the feature's eventual distributor will address that problem by including a selection of shorts that can be run as a double feature, as a DVD (or DVD set) that you can buy, or by telling the audience on the film's website where you can see amazing masterpieces online.

Luckily, 17 editions of the Spike and Mike Festival of Animation are online along with their Sick and Twisted shows. Animationoutlaws.com



SEE THE FIRST TRAILER FOR 'ONWARD,' PIXAR'S NEXT FEATURE Disney and Pixar's *Onward* will open March 6, 2020. It introduces two teenage elf brothers, voiced by Tom Holland and Chris Pratt, who embark on an extraordinary quest to discover if there is still a little magic left in the world. The cast also includes Julia Louis-Dreyfus as Ian and Barley's mom, and Octavia Spencer as the voice of the Manticore. The film's director is Dan Scanlon and the producer is Kori Rae, the team behind *Monsters University*.

The story has the brothers seeking an ancient map from the Manticore, a creature who is part lion, part bat and part scorpion. The Manticore was once a fearless warrior whose tavern served as a waystation for travelers embarking on epic quests.

GREAT PROGRAMS OF INDEPENDENT ANIMATION SHORTS BEGIN LONG BEFORE SPIKE AND MIKE by KC Many in the US cartoon industry first discovered European animation in 1962 when *Ersatz* from Yugoslavia won the Oscar for best animated short. Then in 1964 Pierre Barbin, director on the Annecy Animation Festival, visited the US as a guest of the State Department. The films he brought with him had been shown at Annecy '63 and when some members of ASIFA-Hollywood saw them they knew they wanted to discover a different approach to the art.

In 1965 a group interested in seeing more serious animation made for adults for adults was formed. Members included Les Goldman, June Foray, Bill Scott and Bill Littlejohn from ASIFA working with Bill Shull from USC and Disney legend Ward Kimball, who had been a judge at Annecy. They put together the first *Tournee of Animation*, a compilation program, and they

arranged for it to be shown in 1966 at the newly opened Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

The screening was well received and it was the beginning of an annual event. Herb Kosower, who taught animation and film graphics at USC, was the director of the 2nd – 4th festival.

Dave Hilberman, who was teaching animation at SF State was one of the first animation teachers to request a screening of the films outside of LA. Kosower didn't want to become a distributor so Prescott Wright, who was with the American Film Institute and had joined the animation selection committee in 1969, was hired in 1970 to distribute the show to museums, schools and theatres around the nation.

In the 1970s and in the first half of the 1980s *The Tournee of Animation* became quite successful in presenting animation as a great form of fine and commercial art. Prescott, who moved to San Francisco in 1970, traveled to international festivals to seek out fine works that audiences in the US would enjoy discovering. The works ranged from handsome TV commercials by Richard Williams, and others, to shorts by Bruno Bozetto, Will Vinton, Marv Newland, John Whitney, and dozens of other exceptional animators.

For most of the *Tournee's* history each new edition premiered at the L.A. County Museum of Art. From there it was seen across the country on college campuses, in museums, independent theatres and in other spaces with 16 mm projection facilities.

By the mid-1980s the market for Prescott's shows was shrinking as fewer theatres were showing 16mm films. He knew that in order to continue producing the program the films needed to be transferred to 35mm, an expense he couldn't afford. He ended up selling the rights to the *Tournee* to Landmark Theatres in 1985. They retained his services as an advisor. The 24th edition of the show was in 35mm and it played in over 250 cities.. Due to rising production costs and growing competition from the home video market there was no 25th program.

While Landmark continues to run a chain of 35mm and now digital theatres they also created Expanded Entertainment to focus on video releases of animation after the programs were released in 35mm to theatres. They also held European style animation festivals with guests flying in from around the world.

Among the shows they released first in 35mm and then on tape were the *Puppetoon Movie*, *Futurepolis* (Steve Segal's film plus other shorts including Phil Tippet's *Prehistoric Beast*), *Will Vinton's Festival of Claymation*, *Outrageous Animation*, *British Animation Invasion*, and several other shows.

While the *Tournee* was the most important program, as it was a long running annual event that people looked forward to seeing, there were other excellent packages of animated shorts. Besides Spike and Mike's shows that were a lot of silly fun including tossing balloons into the audience to bat around, Dean Berkow produced *The Fantastic Animation Festival* in 1977. I also recall two programs that introduced the public to computer animation before *Toy Story* was released.

Other memorable programs of independent animated shorts have included Ron Diamond's *Animation Show of Shows* (now in its 21st edition) and *The Animation Show* produced by Don Hertzfeldt and Mike Judd (*Beavis and Butt-Head*). They released editions in 2003, 2005, and 2007.

Locally, excellent programs of animation were organized by individual theatres including several in San Francisco (Intersection on Union, the Red Vic on Haight and the Roxie on 16th St.). The U.C. in Berkeley on University Ave. had an exceptional record of presenting great shows as did the Pacific Film Archive. ASIFA-SF has also presented many fine events along with the S.F. International Film Festival and the Mill Valley Festival.

Fine animation shows also existed briefly on PBS TV. They showed a wonderful British series called *The International Festival of Animation* (1977), hosted by actress Jean Marsh. Locally, Prescott Wright produced *Meet the Animators* (1982), an hour special with Jeff Hale, Bud Luckey, Rudy Zamora. Sally Cruikshank, and Marcy Page.

Alas, the internet, home video, streaming services, etc. have eroded the marketplaces for a lot of things including animation shows in theatres. The good news is that 17 editions of the Spike and Mike Festival of Animation are online along with Sick and Twisted shows.



BOLLYWOOD AT THE CASTRO WILL PRESENT THE ANIMATED 'BOMBAY ROSE' Castro Theatre, Sat. Nov, 9, 8:00 PM The promotion for this screening reads, "In this gorgeous and evocative hand-painted animated feature, a single red rose weaves together three fantastical tales of unsung heroes and impossible loves.

In the sensual animation, there is an ethereal brightness to the chaotic Mumbai streetscapes where Bollywood cinema is both satirized and romanticized. Fresh from rave reviews at the Venice and Toronto Film Festivals, this captivating jewel will entrance you and should not be missed."



'PRIMAL' IS A DIALOGUE-FREE LOOK AT THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN A CAVEMAN AND A DINOSAUR. A critic for the *Hollywood Reporter* wrote that after watching too many uninspired bits of visual storytelling he was delighted to see Adult Swim's five-part animated event *Primal*. It was created by Genndy Tartakovsky (*Samurai Jack, Clone Wars*). The paper's reviewer wrote, "*Primal* is awash in eye-popping imagery and if it looked as good as it did on a screener on my laptop, I assume the experience will only be boosted by the scope of your AV setup." He describes it as an unlikely bond between a caveman and a dinosaur after they experience parallel tragedies. "They definitely become simpatico in a way that ties back to the show's title." Their "primary objective never becomes more or less complicated than survival... The need to find food, the need to avoid being consumed by predators and a need to weather the harsh elements." Whatever intellect the two possess, they recognize that when it comes to these primal desires, they're better off together than separately, which doesn't mean that they don't occasionally (or frequently) want to devour each other."

ANIMATION PROFESSOR WANTED BY SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY. The San Jose State Animation and Illustration program is seeking to hire an additional full-time, tenure-track faculty member. The position is for an Assistant Professor and it starts August, 2020. They want a Foundations Generalist with "strong analog art skills across a wide range of foundational art topics," and with a track record of successful teaching and entertainment industry experience. For details visit: <http://www.sjsu.edu/design/employment/ANI%20PD.pdf>

DO YOU LOVE STUDIO GHIBLI FILMS? They can now be streamed exclusively on HBO Max.



LIPPY TURNS IT ON IN 'WHAT MAKES NEON GLOW,' A VR TED TALK SHORT

Lippy, who lives in Mill Valley, writes, "Some of you are in the online reviewing/publishing game. Let's arrange some promotional interviews with your site(s) as it's helpful for me to get as many eyeballs on this cartoon as possible. The making of this piece is a gripping tale of irrational expectations, massive black holes of failure, and finally, bright beacons of success! I think that your viewers/readers would be interested in hearing a nuts & bolts breakdown of how an independent studio like mine goes about cobbling together a team (which was a difficult process, BTW) and building a short and powerful VR cartoon as the tech ground constantly shifted beneath us. I'll also share the story of how our crack team of animation and video professionals - with no previous VR production experience - figured out a successful path for pushing hand drawn animation into a brave new world. Fun and exhilarating!"

It looks fine on my desktop flat screen, but for optimized viewing see it on a 3DoF VR headset like an Oculus Go (use the YouTubeVR app and search "TED Ed + 360"). It will also work on a phone with the YouTube app. or on your desktop (don't forget to drag the video around to see the whole 360° sphere). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ev4KHAToWM&feature=youtu.be>



NANCY PHELPS JUST RETURNED FROM A MONTH AWAY FROM GHENT. HER NEXT COLUMN WILL APPEAR IN THE DECEMBER NEWSLETTER Nancy and Nik began their September/October trip in Syros, Greece where Nancy was the pitching coach and Nik initiated his new performance for pitching workshop. After watching many animators struggle with nerves and inexperience with stage presence, Nik devised his new workshop and the positive results were evident at Anima Syros. From Syros the pair flew directly to Saint Petersburg to board the KROK boat. From Russia they traveled to Maribor, Slovenia for the StopTrick Animation Festival where Nancy delivered a paper titled *Breaking the Celluloid Ceiling* about the state of women in the Hollywood Studio system.

The final leg of the trip was to Lodz, Poland for ANIMARKT where Nancy and Nik spent two days coaching the pitching participants. Each of the presenters of the 18 projects received an hour long private session with her as well as a half hour with Nik. After Lodz the duo flew home for five days before heading off to the Republic of Georgia, where Nancy is on the jury and on to Cypress where both Nancy and Nik are on separate juries at the festival. In November Nancy will actually be home long enough to get back to writing. Her next articles will be on Annecy and then festivals in Kosovo, Vienna, Syros, Greece; KROK, the STOPTRIK Festival in Slovenia and ANIMARKET in Lodz, Poland.

Nik and Nancy, who lived in SF for many years, were made ANIMARKET Guardians which means that they have the honor of being on the board of directors. Nancy is frequently asked to be a festival jury member, pitching coach or both. Nik often travels with her. Along with serving on juries and his pitching coaching, he consults on soundtracks and is well-known for providing live music for festival parties (sometimes with David Silverman, a tuba player who helped create and sometimes directs a kid named Bart). Nik also has created dozens of soundtracks for animated shorts.

CANADA COLLEGE showed 3 animated student films with *Spider-Man: Into the Spideverse* for Halloween.



UBISOFT, THE FRENCH VIDEO GAME GIANT, IS PLANNING ANIMATED ADAPTATIONS OF THEIR HIT GAMES FOR TV The French company's *Rabbids Invasion* is now in its 4th season series on Netflix so they have decided to mine their games library for more family friendly offerings. Up next is *Hungry Shark Squad*, based on the mobile game *Hungry Shark*. Ubisoft is also toning down its M-rated *Watch Dogs* action-adventure franchise for a tamer "cyber mystery" aimed at tweens. The show centers on a teenaged super hacker who solves crimes in her high school. They also are developing a young-adult series *Captain Laserhawk: A Blood Dragon Vibe* based on their M-rated *Far Cry 3* expansion of *Blood Dragon* and an animated sketch comedy about the video game culture.



Bunuel in the Labyrinth of Turtles

ANIMATION AT THE EUROPEAN FILM AWARDS IS GETTING MORE ATTENTION The US press is slowly realizing intelligent animated films are being made in Europe. *Bunuel in the Labyrinth of Turtles*, from Spain, is about his making the documentary *Land Without Bread*.

It is competing with three French features. *I Lost My Body* by French director Jeremy Clapin premiered in Cannes' Critic's Week, where it won the top prize and was picked up by Netflix. It is the tale of a severed hand looking for its home.

Anca Damian from Romania and Belgian Brecht Evens directed *Marona's Fantastic Tale*. It focuses on

a puppy who never quite gets the love she deserves. It premiered at Annecy and GKIDS has the North American rights.

The final French production is *The Swallows of Kabul*, about life under the Taliban in Afghanistan. It was just shown by the Animation Is Film Festival in Los Angeles. The ceremony for the 32nd edition of the European Film Awards will be on Dec. 7 in Berlin.



32 ANIMATED FEATURES HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED IN THE OSCAR COMPETITION

Thirty-two features, a record number, have been submitted for consideration into the Animated Feature Film category for the 92nd Academy Awards. Several of the films have not yet met the requirement of screening in Los Angeles for a week. Aardman's *A Shaun the Sheep Movie: Farmagedon* was not submitted but Genndy Tartakovsky's *Primal*, a 5 part TV series, was submitted after it was edited into a feature format.

The submitted features are: *Abominable*, *The Addams Family*, *The Angry Birds Movie 2*, *Another Day of Life*, *Away*, *Bunuel in the Labyrinth of the Turtles*, *Children of the Sea*, *Dilili in Paris*, *Frozen II*, *Funan*, *Primal – Tales of Savagery*, *How to Train Your Dragon*, *The Hidden World*, *I Lost My Body*, *Klaus*, *The Last Fiction*, *The Lego Movie 2*, *Marona's Fantastic Tale*, *Missing Link*, *Ne Zha*, *Okko's Inn*, *Pachamama*, *Promare*, *Rezo*, *The Secret Life of Pets 2*, *Spies in Disguise*, *The Swallows of Kabul*, *This Magnificent Cake!*, *The Tower*, *Toy Story 4*, *Upin & Ipin: The Lone Gibbon Kris*, *Weathering with You* and *White Snake*.

Submitted features must screen in LA for a week and meet other requirements. There will be 5 nominated films and all members of the Short Films and Feature Animation Branch will be eligible to vote in the category. Other Academy members can participate if they meet a minimum viewing requirement. (How many people will see all 32 films?) Nominations for the 92nd Academy Awards will be announced on Monday, January 13th, 2020, and the 92nd Oscars event will be held on Sunday, February 9th, 2020, at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood. The Oscars will be televised live in more than 225 countries and territories worldwide.



Illustration by Peter Kuper that ran in *The Nation*

WARNER BROS. IS MAKING A TOM AND JERRY FEATURE FOR CHRISTMAS 2020 It will be CG and live action. Yes, they used to be MGM characters.

DISNEY+ STARTS NOV. 12 People who subscribe to Verizon unlimited wireless data will get access to the new streaming service for free for a year. The new channel launches Nov. 12. You also get it free with their new “Fios Internet” and 5G home Internet service.

DISNEY TRIES TO STOP FEMALE WORKERS FROM JOINING TOGETHER TO CREATE A CLASS ACTION PAY BIAS LAWSUIT Disney claims the corporation is too big to sue in a class action suite so it will be impossible to resolve it in court. I guess they claim not all departments have the same standards in the way they discriminate against their female workforce. It is demanding that women suing them for allegedly violating California Fair Pay Act do so on an individual basis which means more money for lawyers.

The Hollywood Reporter says the “California Fair Pay Act dates back to 1949, but it has been largely toothless thanks to loopholes that allowed companies to justify a gender wage gap.”

Exploiting women remains a hot topic. Nancy Phelps recently delivered a paper in Maribot, Slovenia, titled “Breaking the Celluloid Ceiling” about the disparity of pay between men and women in the animation industry, from Disney’s ink and paint “girls” to the present day.

PLEASE NOTE THAT OUR SNAIL MAIL ADDRESS HAS JUST CHANGED Due to the rising costs of maintaining a post office box (our tiny box has gone up to \$140 a year) and the lack of mail received in it (about 1 piece of real mail a month plus a monthly ad from Comcast) our new address is my house address, **ASIFA-SF, c/o K. Cohen, 478 Frederick, SF, CA 94117**

**HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY
FELIX THE CAT
NOV. 9, 1919**



ASIFA-SF MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO SEE THE FOLLOWING FEATURES AT DE ANZA:

November 7: *The Swallows of Kabul*

November 21: *Funan*

December 5: *This Magnificent Cake*

Advanced Technology Center, 7 PM, room 120, free



ASIFA-SF MEMBERS CAN SEE NETFLIX’S ‘KLAUS’ SUNDAY, NOV. 17 IN SF AT THE CASTRO, 10 AM, RSVP

To RSVP for this free event the information will be posted around Nov. 4 on the SFFILM page at, <https://sffilm.org/calendar/> Director Sergio Pablos and Producer Jinko Gotoh are expected to attend. This is Netflix’s first original animated feature and it was produced in Spain by SPA Studios. Trailer at <https://vimeo.com/365429497>

ASIFA-SF IS A VOLUNTEER RUN ASSOCIATION

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ASIFA-SF is a chapter of: **Association Internationale du Film d’Animation** with almost 40 chapters around the world. Membership is \$26 a year with printed newsletter mailed to you or \$21 a year if you want the e-mailed version.

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