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Letter From The President

In the past the board has been comprised almost entirely of folks in the Chicago area. Since we are the chapter of ASIFA which represents the midwestern section of the United States we would like to encourage folks in other areas of the midwest region to consider membership on the board. We will be having an open board meeting at the retreat. Any interested folks are welcome to attend. We would like to develop more activities which are region-wide in addition to the events which happen locally in Chicago. Come to the board meeting and share your ideas for ASIFA Central. What would you like to see happen? What other activities would appeal to you and others you know? This is your chance to participate in and influence the future directions of ASIFA Central.

In the last letter from the president, I indicated that I might be replaced. However, I still seem to be president. If any of you have aspirations to be the president or just to be on the board, please make yourselves known. I look forward to seeing many of you at the upcoming retreat.

That's all for now. See you soon.

Marla Schweppe

Letter From the Treasurer

Dear Fellow ASIFA Member:
It's slightly past that time again....
JANUARY ASIFA CENTRAL
MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL.! Please
look at your mailing label. The code
after your name tells you the type of
membership you now have and when
it is up for renewal. If it is January,
94, you should have received your
renewal notice. Please mail it back
as soon as possible. You can send it
directly to me for faster processing.

ASIFA Central
c/o Marie Cenkner
1463 Glencoe Ave.
Highland Park, IL 60035

Looking forward to seeing you at the
retreat,

Marie Cenkner
Treasurer/member



"GREETINGS
EARTHLINGS"

Board Of Directors Elections

The success or failure of any not-for-profit organization is dependent on the dedication and enthusiasm of its Board of Directors. The Board is responsible for developing and implementing the programs and services of the group. Each director is expected to take an active role in a committee, project or program that fulfills the stated mission of the not-for-profit. Board members are expected to share their resources and talents with the organization and solicit the financial support of others. The Board of Directors appoints the President and officers of the organization, and monitors the organizations financial status.

ASIFA Central is a not-for-profit arts organization chartered in the State of Illinois. Our corporate structure calls for not-less-than 3 members of a Board of Directors to legally operate. The directors serve for a period of one year, and are elected by vote of the general membership at the annual meeting. The current board term expires on April 30, and letters of application are being accepted from interested members wishing to serve on the board.

Any ASIFA Central member can serve on the board. While the traditional focus of the organization's programs have been in the Chicago area, our membership has grown to encompass a larger geographical area. We especially encourage those members who are not from the Chicago area to consider running for the board. It is our hope that these individuals will plan and coordinate programs in their regions to further enhance ASIFA's mission.

Deadline for letters of application is March 15, 1994. Following this deadline, a list of candidates will be sent to all members. Members may vote either by mailing in their ballot, or attending the Annual Meeting and voting in person. The date and location of the annual meeting will be announced in the near future, and it may coincide with ASIFA's annual retreat.

Information kits are available to interested individuals by calling David Daruszka, 312-233-8788. Leave a message, including your phone number.

Letters

Get the word out about ASIFA-Central and animation in general by way of computer bulletin boards. I've looked into an amateur BBS network called FIDONET and found out that there are three echoes (discussion areas) on the system related to animation. They are AMIGA_VIDEO (Amiga computer video and animation), ANIME (Japanese/general animation), and TOONS (general animation discussion). I've enclosed some information about FIDONET that might be useful.

I also think the commercial services should be looked into (GEnie, Prodigy, Delphi, etc.) as there may either be something already in place relating to animation or the opportunity to start a conference. I think it might be a good way of reaching a lot of people who might not find out about ASIFA otherwise. Thank you.

Sincerely,
David Thrasher

After months of preparation, planning, and excitement, the 10th Anniversary Chicago International Children's Film Festival is now over. We're so happy to report that the Festival was a smashing success - we had enthusiastic press coverage, record-breaking attendance, and artistic participation from over 25 visiting filmmakers. It was one of the largest festivals even, featuring 125 films from 30 countries.

None of this would have been possible if not for the many kind and generous donations of time, resources, and expertise from Chicago business, organizations and individuals. You have helped us immensely in realizing the goal of providing children with quality, non-violent, humanistic film and video programs.

Thank you so much for helping us turn the dream of this kind of festival into a reality. And be sure to mark your calendars for the 1994 Chicago International Children's Film Festival - October 7 through 16!

Best regards, and thank you, again.

Elizabeth Shepherd, Director
Chicago International Children's Film Festival

Milos Stehlik, Director
Facets Multimedia

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

ASIFA CENTRAL FIRST ANNUAL FAX-A-TROPE EXHIBITION

Multi-site exhibition of
electronically transmitted
ZOETROPE strips

Strips will be shown April 8th-10th
at the ASIFA Spring Retreat at
Straved Rock Park, Illinois and at
participating sites (to be announced)

FAX your strip NOW!

Send your zoetrope strip and directions
on how to assemble it, if needed, via
FAX to (815) 753-7701 addressed to
ASIFA c/o Byron Grush. Include your
name and return address.

Wanna be a site? Contact Byron Grush
by FAX at (815) 753-7701
or E-mail at byron@art.niu.edu

ASIFA Midwest Animator's Retreat

Friday April 8 through Sunday April 10th
1994 at the Starved Rock Lodge in Starved
Rock State Park, Utica, Illinois

Last year's retreat was such a hit that we decided to do it again! Come get to know other midwest ASIFA animators and their work. Last year animators of many varieties (cel, stop motion, computer, etc.) came together to share work and fun. This year Steve Stofflet, a director at the distribution company, Picture Start, will share inside information about film and video distribution. Steve has been involved in film distribution for 15 years. Picture Start distributes over 1000 films. Steve also purchases videos for Blockbuster Video.

We're waiting for a final commitment from another presenter (or two). Hint: the potential presenter(s) comes from a state(s) that start(s) with the letter K.

Marla Schweppe will be bringing tapes of student animation from the Rochester Institute of Technology. The animations include award winners at the Hiroshima Film Festival, SMPTE, etc.

Once again, a computer will be available at this years retreat for those interested in experimenting. We will also provide a 16mm projector and 3/4' and VHS video decks and monitors, so bring your tapes and films along with you. We should also encourage you to bring any other animation materials or information which you fell other animators might enjoy seeing or learning about. If you have any particular questions which you would like other animators to answer, send them with your retreat application and we will include a discussion time to share information. These questions could be technical or philosophical in nature.

Starved Rock provides lots of opportunity for relaxation. There's an indoor pool, whirlpool and saunas. The state park is located in a beautiful natural area near the Fox River waterway. You can watch barge traffic go through the locks or hike along a variety of trails.

If you have questions or need further information contact Marla Schweppe at 716-271-1121 or Marie Cenkner at 708-432-7834.

ROOMS

Rooms should be reserved through the retreat, not through the lodge. Rooms are available for Friday night only OR for Friday and Saturday night [The lodge will not allow a room to be reserved for Saturday night only]. Please specify whether you would like a single room (**approx. \$110 for two nights**) or would like to share with another person (**approx. \$55 each for two nights**). Since there are a limited number of rooms available in the lodge, these rooms will be assigned on a *first come first serve* basis. If there are more people than rooms, other accommodations are available nearby.

Room fees are payable upon arrival directly to the lodge.

The conference fee is \$40.00. Mail registrations to:

=====

Marla Schweppe
ASIFA Midwest Animator's Retreat
762 Elmwood Terrace
Rochester, New York 14620-3716

Make checks payable to: ASIFA Central

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Questions/Comments _____

Single Room _____

Double sharing with _____

Friday only _____

Friday and Saturday _____

Marla Schweppe
Coordinator for Computer Animation
Rochester Institute of Technology
mkspph@ritvax.isc.rit.edu

Art and Design Show: SIGGRAPH '94

Overview Statement

The **SIGGRAPH '94** Art and Design Show will be a juried, media inclusive show, exhibited at the Orlando Convention Center July 24 - 29, 1994. The Art and Design show presents the world's leading exhibit of creativity inspired by the interaction of technology and esthetic expression. The show explores the limits and opportunities of the human-machine relationship, sparks discussion, and generates controversy as it extends the boundaries of imagination in a broad range of formats: performance, animation, interactive media, 2D and 3D display, design, and other emerging areas.

The jury is especially interested in works that:

- o Approach artistic creation and design in original ways
- o Use computing as language and a means of discovery rather than a production tool
- o Could not have been created without the use of a computer
- o Are critically related to computer graphics technology and possess strong esthetic value
- o Comment on the role of technology in society, (for example works that consider implications for the artist or the user, the culture, the present or future)

The accepted entries will be exhibited at SIGGRAPH '94, documented in the Visual Proceedings, and on a CD Rom. Selected works will be included on a slide set.

To receive a Call for Participation:

Conference Management: SIGGRAPH '94
Smith Bucklin and Associates
401 North Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611 USA
tel. 312.321.6830

Categories and Deadlines

5 January 1994 (enter with The Edge)

- o Alternate media and performance
- Computer graphics technology must be a significant part of these entries, which may include one or more of the following categories:
- Multimedia
 - Performance
 - Audience participation
 - Interactive
 - New media

12 January 1994

- o Critical essays
Essays that address the role of the computer in art and design and the effect or impact of computer generated or computer delivered imagery on society.
- o Interactive installations
Visual, spatial, and temporal works requiring user interaction and a live computer graphics system.

2 March 1994

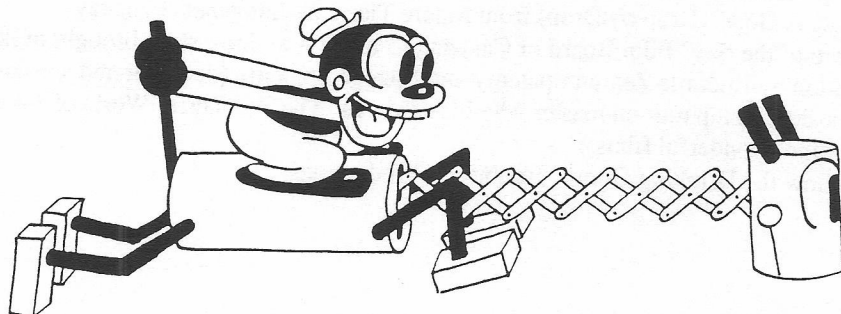
- o 2D works
Flat art and design pieces.
- o 3D works
Sculpture, installation environments or static art.

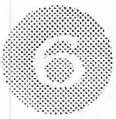
20 April 1994 (enter with Electronic Theater)

- o Film and video
Fine art animation intended for gallery viewing.

For more information on the SIGGRAPH '94 Art and Design show:

Deanna Morse
Associate Professor
School of Communications
Grand Valley State University
Allendale, MI 49401
tel 616-895-3101 morse@siggraph.org
616-895-3106 (fax)





Tenth Annual Chicago International Children's Film Festival

by Marie Cenkner

One of the advantages of living in Chicago is the yearly opportunity to view the many children's films entered in the Chicago International Children's Film Festival. This festival has been presented for the last ten years by Facets Multimedia at 1517 Fullerton Parkway, Chicago.

I have had the pleasure of being on the animation jury for the last two years. This entails spending five or six evenings during the summer viewing about sixty-five pre-screened (thank goodness) entries from around the world. The festival takes place in early October. Shorts through features are accepted. The animation jury consists of educators (college, museum), publishers, distributors, film professionals and animators -- people with different knowledge of and perspective on animation and children. This mix guaranteed some "stimulating" discussions, one of the by-products I enjoy most about "jury duty."

Since the awards list closely resembles my personal list of films that animators might find interesting, I will high-light those films here.

Special Festival Award for Global Awareness:

"To See the World" National Film Board of Canada (35 min. total) -- one segment from "Rights From the Heart," a series of animations illustrating the United Nations Rights of Children Declaration. This film combines live motion with animation in a serious view of what is happening in the world today.

Special Festival Award for High Artistic Standards:

"Madre Tierra" Imagenes, Uruguay (36 min. total) -- a series of nine short films, each with an original story about our relationship to Mother Earth. They show a creative, original combining of different animation techniques (stop motion, object animation, drawn animation). While the slick smoothness we are used to seeing in US animation is missing, the stories and artistic vigor help us overcome our bias. One of the young animators, Javier Peraza, was able to attend the ASIFA reception and he gave us interesting insights into filmmaking in Uruguay.

Special Festival Award for Individual Creativity:

"TV Tango" Film Board of Canada (36 min. total) -- another of the segments from "Rights From the Heart," very nicely designed and executed cel animation with a highly original story showing the ill effects of TV on kids.

Special Festival Award for the Elevation of the Technique of Motion Graphics:

"John Henry" (30 min.) and "Follow the Drinking Gourd" (30 min.) Rabbit Ear Productions. Both films use beautiful camera work, illustrations and sound tracks to tell their stories. "John Henry," with narration by Denzel Washington, also uses interesting multiplane effects to tell this non-traditional version of the tale. "Follow the Drinking Gourd," narrated by Morgan Freeman, beautifully illustrates the story of a slave family's escape via the underground railroad by following the drinking gourd (big dipper) north.

Festival Awards for Intercultural Understanding: (3 awards)

1. "Gota A Gota" (Drop by Drop) from Madre Tierra by Imogenes, Uruguay
2. "Lord of the Sky" Film Board of Canada (13 min.) -- an Inuit story brought to life via cut paper animation by Ludmila Zeman Spalemy and Eugene Spalemy (daughter and son-in-law of Karl Zeman, the Czechoslovak stop motion master who brought you "The Wonderful World of Jules Vern" (1958) and many other wonderful films.)
3. "Follow the Drinking Gourd" Rabbit Ear Productions.

Picture Perfect: Working on "The Nightmare Before Christmas"

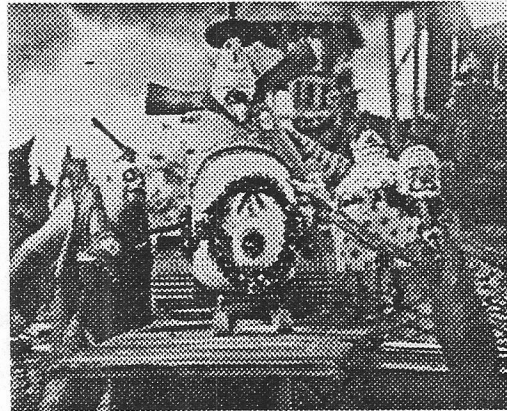
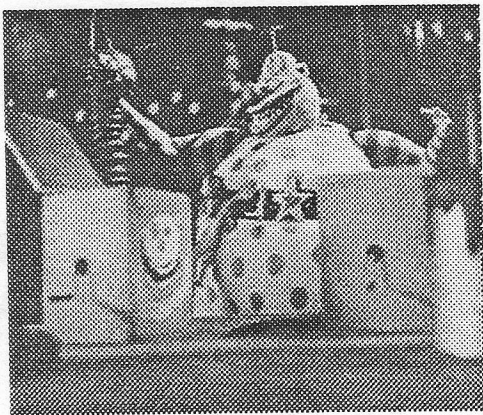
by Paul Jessel

(Paul Jessel, director of Animasaur Productions in Highland Park, Illinois, worked at Skellington Productions in San Francisco between December 1992 and March 1993, where he animated eight scenes for "Nightmare Before Christmas.")

Tim Burton's "Nightmare Before Christmas" is the first time that a feature length stop motion animated film has been treated with the same level of technical commitment and money as feature length animated films have been, and by no less than the Walt Disney Company! The film represents a high water mark in the art of stop motion, both for its art direction and its smoothly executed and ambitious character animation.

I was one of the lucky few who was asked to work on the project. Unfortunately, I could not join the crew full time because of my commitments to Animasaur Productions in Chicago, but I was called in to help out for a few months when production fell behind.

In past stop motion special effects features and often commercials I have worked on, you got one chance to shoot a scene with little or no prior testing, and the results went into the film, good or bad. For "Nightmare" a tremendous amount of effort went into perfecting each scene. First one of five two-man camera crews lit the set and worked out motion control camera moves (if needed) using wire stand puppets. The animator assigned to the scene started by picking up the animation timing sheets from the sound track department (the same as used in cel animation.) Dialogue for lip sync was handled in two ways: if the puppet had replaceable heads, the lip sync was worked out on a computer, using something like Quick-time software. The puppet would have 25 to 30 sculpted heads-- one head for each vowel and consonant. Front and side views of each head were entered into the computer along with the sound track. The heads were then picked to match the sound and played back in real time to be checked, all in the



computer. The track reader then put numbers on the timing sheets that identified at what frame each head was used. In this way all the lip sync was worked out for the animator ahead of time. Puppets that had jointed mouths could not be done this way. The lip sync for these puppets was the animator's responsibility to work out.

The animator started filming his scene every 10th frame with the puppet to check for staging and lighting. Upon evaluation of this test, the lighting was refined by the camera crew. Then the animator did a rough full animation test of the scene, usually on ones.

Some time during this testing period, before the final shoot, it was the animator's responsibility to make sure the puppet's ball-socket skeleton armature was adjusted to his liking, and that the puppet was clean and its paint retouched. There was an armature crew and a puppet fabrication crew for each of these tasks that the animator took his "patient" to.

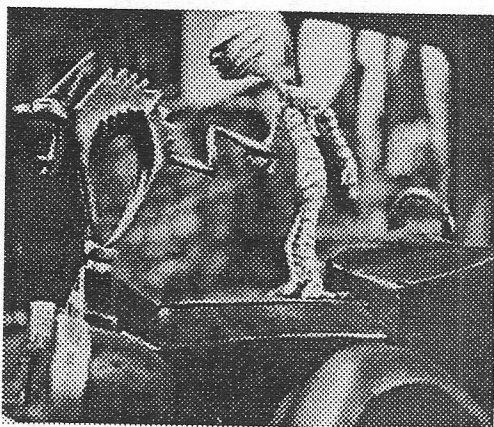
Prior to the final shoot, a special model crew cleaned up the set, retouched paint, positioned props, and glued them down. Everything on a stop motion set had to be solidly anchored and glued down because if you bumped a prop during the shoot, and it moved, it would cause an unwanted jump in the action. The animator then shot the final scene using the traditional surface gauges and a digital video frame grabber to assist him in manually moving the puppet 24 times for each second of action. Photography was done with a vintage 35 mm Mitchell camera identical to those used to photograph King Kong in 1933.

For non-stop motion aficionados, a surface gauge is simply a metal pointer that is set on the trailing edge of the body or limb of a puppet. That part is then animated away from the touching pointer and the resulting gap between the pointer and the

puppet allows you to see how far you have moved the puppet. The video frame grabber is a relatively new device that was used to help the stop motion animator. Through a small TV camera set next to the motion picture camera it allowed you to capture a puppet's position before you photographed it, and compare it with two previously grabbed positions in the puppet's action. This gadget eliminated forgetting to move something, or allowed repositioning the puppet if you accidentally bumped it. It also helped you get a better feeling for the acting, when you flipped through the positions in sequence. Apart from these devices used by the animator, there were also alarms set on the lights that would go off if a bulb blew.

Each scene's final take and its prior testing stages were scrutinized each day at the screening of the dailies, which began at 8:00 AM. Attending these often nerve-wracking sessions were all the animators, the heads of the puppet fabrication department, photography, set construction, and production design, along with Henry Selick, the director. Tests in each scene were analyzed to be made completely picture perfect. Props and sets were repainted and repositioned and lighting finessed to meet this goal. And yes, the worst did happen. Despite all the precautions, scenes occasionally had to be reshot. We all suffered in empathy with those animators who were unfortunate enough to have to reshoot because of bad acting or motion that wasn't smooth.

There was a close camaraderie among the animators and artists working on the film. The work was physically and emotionally taxing, with 12 hour days, six times a week not uncommon. Everyone knew that the picture was something special and unique in the history of stop motion animation. Tim Burton's vision, director Henry Selick's unswerving perfectionism, and the Skellington Productions' highly talented crew proved that stop motion animation can still be a viable and exciting technique in this age of hi-tech computers.



All pictures taken by Paul Jessel who worked on the set.
Property of Touch Stone Pictures.

New on video tape and videodisk

Animation on Videodisk

Lumivision, a laser disc company specializing in classic, foreign, educational, music and independent and Japanese animation titles is releasing Felix!, an unprecedented collection of historic Felix the Cat shorts, and Animation Legend: Windsor McCay, a comprehensive look at the films that made McCay an animation pioneer.

Lumivision
1490 Lafayette Street, Suite 305
Denver, Colorado 80218
Phone: (303) 860-0400 FAX: (303) 860-0425

Past Masters series available on Video

The Cameraman's Revenge and Other Fantastic Tales: The Amazing Puppet Animation of Ladislav Starewicz, 1912-1958, 80 minutes; The Lost World, 1925, 102 minutes; Animation Legend Windsor McCay, 1911-1921, 100 minutes are three new tapes of the works of master animators recently released and available through Milestone videos. For a catalog:

Milestone Videos
275 W. 96th Street, Suite 28C
New York, NY 10025
Phone: (212) 865-7449

also: Movies Unlimited (800) 523-0823

Pixar Animation reel available

The works of John Lassiter and the Pixar RenderMan crew including Luxo, Jr., Red's Dream, Tin Toy and Knickknack are being distributed by Expanded Entertainment. Their catalog includes several of the International Tournee of Animation volumes and the Animation Celebration Video Collections. For a catalog:

Expanded Entertainment
P.O. Box 25547
Los Angeles, CA 90025
Phone: (800) 966-TOON

And don't forget...
FACETS Multimedia has a truly amazing catalog of hard to find films on video for sale and rent. They have an extensive collection on animation, both classic, contemporary and experimental.

FACETS Multimedia
1517 West Fullerton Avenue
Chicago, IL 60614
Phone (312) 281-9075

FESTIVAL S

CALL FOR ENTRIES

32nd Ann Arbor Film Festival

March 15-20, 1994

Michigan Theater, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Postmark entry deadline: Tuesday, February 15th, 1994

Format: 16mm -- no video accepted for prescreening

Entry fees: \$30.00 U.S., \$35 Canadian and foreign per entry

All categories & genre in independent filmmaking are eligible:
documentary, animation, experimental, narrative

Awards: \$7,000 in cash prizes, eight named awards totaling \$5,750, with the remaining \$1,250 distributed at the Awards Jury's discretion.

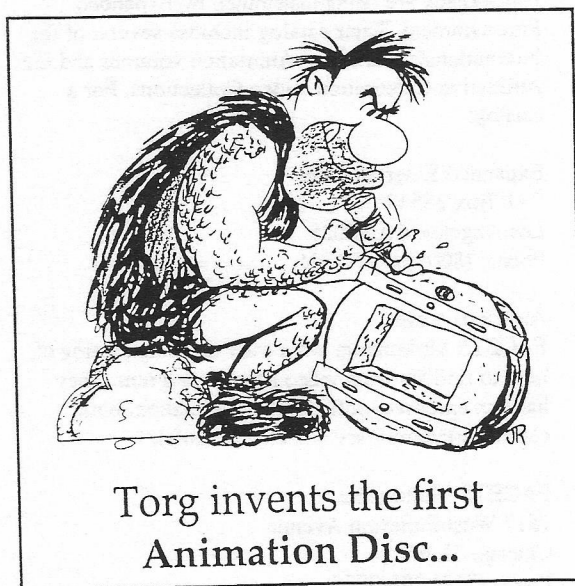
Awards jury:

Jules Engel, Barbara Sternberg, Zack Stiglicz

Festival Tour: Four hours of films tour colleges and film showplaces across the U.S. for four months following the festival; rental fee of \$1 per minute per tour stop is paid to the filmmakers participating in the tour.

Write or call for entry form:

Ann Arbor Film Festival
P.O. Box 8232
Ann Arbor, MI 48107 USA
(313) 995-5356



Torg invents the first
Animation Disc...

16th Annual Big Muddy Film Festival

Feb. 27-March 6

Department of Cinema & Photography
Southern Illinois University at Carbondale
Carbondale, Illinois 62901

Postmark entry deadline: February 1st, 1994

Format: 16mm Film, 1/2" VHS (NTSC), or 3/4" Umatic

Video copies of 16mm films acceptable for preview only.

All categories welcome: animation, experimental, narrative, documentary. However, industrial, educational or promotional works are discouraged.

Entry fee: \$30 for each work under 20 minutes. \$35 between 20 and 50 minutes. \$40 over 50 minutes. Return shipping included in fee.

Jurors: Craig Baldwin, Dalida Maria Benfield, Phil Solomon.

Awards: Over \$1000 in cash prizes

Mail entries and inquiries to Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Department of Cinema and Photography, Attn: Big Muddy Film Festival, Carbondale, IL 62901

Phone: (618) 453-1482 FAX: (618) 453-7714

7th International Festival of Animated Film:

Stuttgart '94

March 25-30th, 1994

Six days of the festival are to present animated films from all over the world. Awards to a total of DM 90,000 are available to those productions elected best films by the international jury. The Stuttgart Festival is a central and singular event dedicated to the international animated film. Its declared target is to provide a platform for the artistic animated film.

For Festival information:

Internationales Trickfilm-Festival Stuttgarte. e.V.
Teckstrafse 56 (Kulturpark Berg), D-70190
Stuttgart

phone: (49) 711-2 62 26 99 FAX: (049) 711-2 62
49 80 TELEX: 723212 itfs d

For visits to Stuttgart, the Festival in connection with Hotel Maritim are offering a festival package, including hotel accommodations, attendance at the festival and the surrounding events. For details please contact:

Hotel Maritim, Forststrafse 2, D-70174 Stuttgart
phone: (49) 711-9 42-0 FAX: (49) 711-942-1000

**5th International Animation Film Festival in
Japan: Hiroshima '94
August 25-29th, 1994**

Categories include: promotional works, debut works, works for children, works for educational purposes, shorter than 5 minutes, 5 minutes to 15 minutes, 15 minutes to 30 minutes.

Awards include first and second prize in each category and a Grand Prize, a Hiroshima Prize and a Debut Prize. The international jury may also award a special prize(s) for outstanding work(s).

Final date for entry forms: March 21st, 1994
Period for films/videotapes is: March 1-April 21, 1994

Entry forms and inquiries to:
Hiroshima '94 Festival Office
4-17, Kako-machi, Naka-ku
Hiroshima 730 JAPAN
Phone: 81-81-245-0245
Facsimile: 81-82-245-0246
Cable: HIROANIMA Telex: 653765 HIRANI J

Send films/video to:
Nippon Express Co., Ltd.
Hiroshima Air Service Branch
(HIROSHIMA '94)
1-50, Ujimanishi 4-chrome
Minami-ku, Hiroshima 734 JAPAN
Phone: 81-82-256-2900

**International Animation Festival 1994:
Cardiff
May 16-22, 1994**

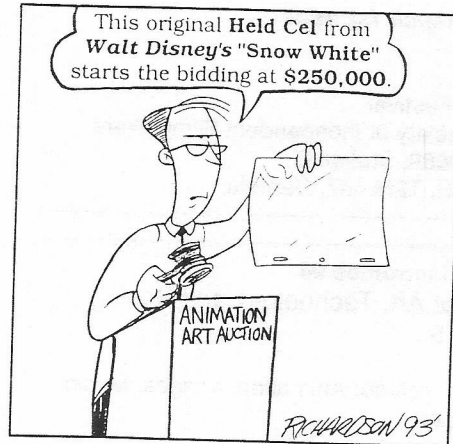
New films completed since January, 1992

Deadline: Monday, February 7th, 1994

Preview tapes to:
The Festival Director
International Animation Festival
c/o British Film Institute
21 Stephen Street
London W1P 1PL, UK
Phone: 071 255 1444 FAX: 071 255 2315

**Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival
February 4-12, 1994**

For details contact:
Festival du Court-Metragé de Clermont-Ferrand
26 Rue des Jacobins
63000 Clermont-Ferrand, France
FAX: 33 73 92 11 93



**Ottawa 94 International Animation
Festival
September 28-October 2, 1994**

Ottawa 94 invites all filmmakers, production companies, students, critics and interested parties to take part. If you are not already on our mailing list, please send us your name and address. Send ideas for programs, retrospectives or workshops.

Entry forms mailed in January, 1994.

Entry deadline: July 15th, 1994

Ottawa 94
2 Daly
Ottawa, (Ontario)
Canada K1N 6E2
Phone: (613) 232-6727
FAX: (613) 232-6315

**14th Annual Film and Video Festival: Council
on Foundations, N.Y.
May 2-4, 1994**

Nominations accepted for film and video projects that have received full or partial funding for either production or distribution from a private, community or corporate grantmaker. Festival will showcase outstanding productions that were funded in the last 10 years. Submissions must reflect the theme "Our Cities, Ourselves."

Contact:
Robin Hettleman 202-466-6512

CSIF \$100 Film Festival

Seeking Super-8 films made for less than \$100. Winning entries will be screened and included in the touring film program.

Deadline: March 1st, 1994

Contact:
\$100 Film Festival
Calgary Society of Independent Filmmakers
PO Box 30089, Station B
Calgary, AB, T2M 4n7, Canada

Prix Ars Electronica 94
Festival for Art, Technology and Society
June 21-25

Categories include: Animation, Images, Music,
Interactive Art

Awards: Computer Animation--- \$24,000 Golden
Nica, 2 \$8,300 Distinctions and similar awards in
other categories

Jury: Computer Animation--- Michael Tolson,
Rolf Herken, Matt Mullican, Lucy Petrovich,
Peter Weibel

Contact:
Gabriele Strutzenberger (organization)
Christine Schopf (animation, graphics,
interactive art)
Wolfgang Winkler (music)

Entry deadline: February 28th, 1994

ORF
Landesstudio Oberosterreich
Prix Ars Electronica
Europaplatz 3
A-4010 Linz/Austria

Phone: ++43(732)6900-218 (Christine Schopf)

19th Festival of Illinois Film & Video Artists
Columbia College Chicago

Works directed or produced for instruction,
promotion, education, information or advertising
will not be considered. Entries judged on the
basis of originality, entertainment value and
production quality without regard to cost or
subject matter. Limited to residents of Illinois.
Preview and screening formats are 3/4" and 1/2"
video and/or 16mm film. Limited to 30 minutes.

Deadline: entries must be received by 5:00 PM
on Friday, March 11th, 1994

Mail or hand-deliver to:
Festival of Illinois
Attn: Lisa M. R. Formosa
Columbia College Chicago
Department of Film & Video -- 9th Floor
600 South Michigan

Chicago, IL 60605-1996
Phone: (312) 663-1600 x434

Fifth Annual Medicine Wheel Animation
Festival
Medicine Wheel Artists' Retreat

The festival is a non-competitive event. Instead,
filmmakers are given 20% of the net ticket sales.
Each filmmaker is paid a minimum of \$50 and
receives more depending on the length of the
film and the amount of ticket sales. The festival
is distributed from March 1994 to March 1995
and plays at universities and art theaters all over
the United States and Canada. No films of
commercial nature considered.

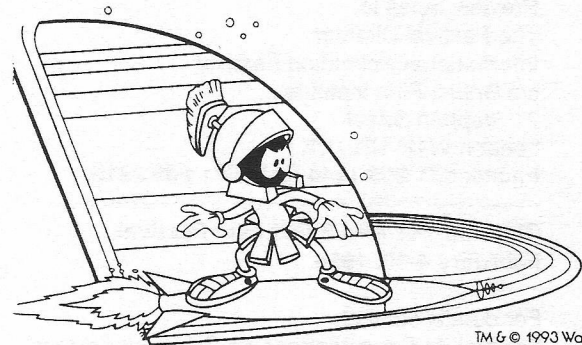
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Josko Marusic, Artistic Director
11. SVJETSKI Festival Animiranih Filmova
Zagreb, Croatia



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Space, Oskar Fischinger, and Desktop Computer Animation

by Byron Grush

Recently, my animation class at Northern Illinois University screened some of the work of the pioneer animator, Oskar Fischinger. We watched films from the videodisk series which includes *Optical Poem*, *Composition in Blue*, *Radio Dynamics*, some of the *Film Studies*, the *Murrati Cigarette Commercials*, and the marvelous cut-out animations, *Spiritual Constructions*. I've been interested in the work of Oskar Fischinger for years, feeling a strong "spiritual" connection to the magical quality of his abstractions.

Usually, the discussions about Fischinger's films center around comparisons: the conflicts between Fischinger's goals as an artist (Bill Moritz calls him the first "underground filmmaker"¹) and his encounters with Hollywood, or the contrast between Disney Studio's use of music to illustrate, set the mood, and provide temporal structure (sometimes called "Mickey Mousing") and Oskar's use of music as rhythmic counterpoint. During this screening, I was struck by the consistent development of 3-dimensional compositional space throughout all of the films.

The charcoal *Film Studies* from the early 30's, like almost all Fischinger's work, are composed of abstract, non-objective shapes. Because of the negative printing of the *Studies*, one might say the shapes appear as a multitude of comets flying through outer space. They move in groups, like a school of fish or a flock of birds, not exactly in unison -- but with slight variations of their flight path. They flow, float, swing, jerk, twirl, spin, jitter through a virtual

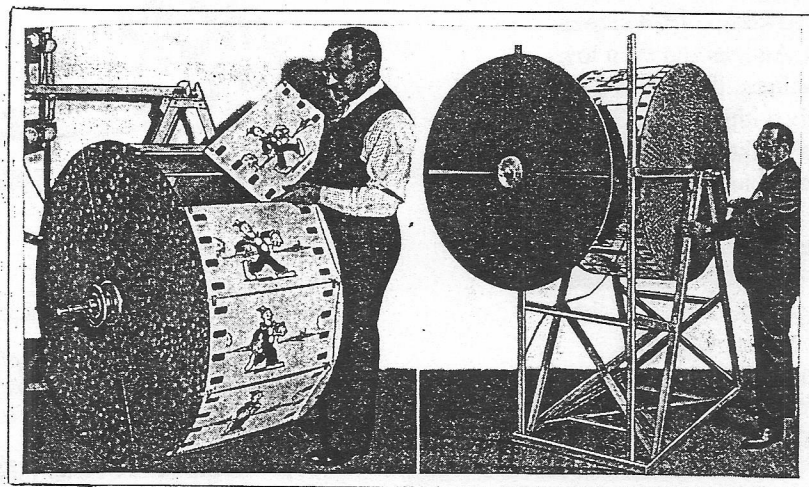
space which appears to extend beyond the limits of the flat projection screen. Curiously, there is no point of reference for this space: no perspective lines, no horizon, nothing to set the scale, no sense of lighting or camera. Yet we feel so strongly the height, width, and depth of Fischinger's space against which his forms fulfill their antic play. Few animators, particularly abstractionists, are able to create the feeling of 3-dimensional space so well.

To try to describe these shapes and their movement through space in figurative terms is to demote them to realm of interpretation. Fischinger preferred the terms, "concrete" and "absolute" in talking about his art² because, I suppose, the term "abstract" implies a source or origin for a form or object. The object is "abstracted" by being simplified, exaggerated or reduced to an essence, but it retains some connection, however obscure, to its origin; this connection providing a meaning for which Fischinger had little use.

One might as well interpret the music of Bach as so many bird chirpings or thundering rain (as Disney did in *Fantasia* -- after Fischinger had left the project!) The problem comes when we rely too heavily on verbal language to communicate our understanding of experience, particularly our experience of art. Verbal language is rich in metaphor -- dangerous, when attempting an analysis of the absolute!

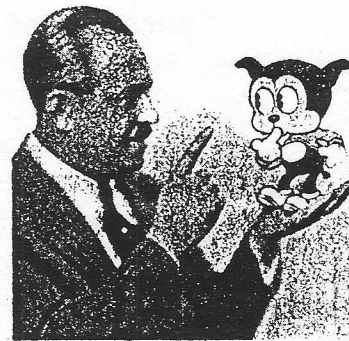
At any rate, at the risk slipping into an interpretative mode, I must confess that for me, the movement of shapes through space in Fischinger's *Film Studies* reminds me of the tracing of the tips of the fingers of some ethereal symphony conductor. Close your eyes and listen to Brahms. "Conduct" the music with your hands and try to visualize tiny sparkles of light emanating from your finger tips -- but, please, do not think of Mickey Mouse as the Sorcerer's Apprentice! This is as close to suggesting the origin of Oskar's absolute as I will venture.

continued on page



I once asked Elfrieda Fischinger if her husband would have used a computer if today's personal computers had been available to him. Her emphatic "NO!" shouldn't have surprised me. After all, the precision and accuracy with which he rendered his forms must have been an all-important element of his own experience of his art. Supplanting his hand skills with a computer would not have appealed to him. Yet when I begin to think of some of the technology he employed, such as the wax-slicing machine, early experimental color film techniques, or the structural wire supports in *Optical Poem*, I can't help but wonder if the computer might not have given Fischinger another dimension to explore.

reprogrammed to become many kinds of tools) or the technology but its impact on the art and artists of our era. I believe the Oskar Fischinger of 1920, could he be transported to the 1990s, would embrace the computer as a useful and necessary technology. I think the Oskar Fischinger of 1960 would have less interest in the computer as a way of producing animation, but might be intrigued with its other potentials, such as its ability to marry sound and image in a real-time environment.



- 1 William Moritz, *The Films of Oskar Fischinger*, *Film Culture*, No. 58-59-60, 1974, page 81
- 2 *ibid.*, page 51

Computers are really just fancy adding machines. The illusion of virtual space via computer imaging is just the rapid squeezing of data through algorithms based on principles of mathematics that date back to DeCartes -- even to Euclid! Only the technology which delivers the squeezing has changed over the years. The advent of the "personal computer" is to today's computer artists what the 16mm Bolex movie camera was to "experimental filmmakers" in the forties, fifties and sixties: access to technology that was previously the exclusive realm of the wealthy and powerful. IBM clones, Macintoshes, Amigas and even low-end Unix machines like the SGI Indy are financially within the reach of all of us. Software, like Autodesk's 3D Studio is affordable, reasonably "user-friendly" and powerful enough to produce rendered 3D animation of professional quality. A DOS-based 486 including 3D Studio costs about \$5000 -- less if you qualify for student or other educational discounts. Getting the images to tape or film -- well, that's another article to come!

So the issue is really not the tool (metatool: a device that can be

A HAPPY NEW YEAR '94



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HIROSHIMA '94

Quilt Material

Mary Beams
Northern Illinois University
School of Art
DeKalb, IL 60115-2883
Internet: mary@art.niu.edu

Where the studio system fosters collaboration and depends upon group support of individual roles to produce the animation, independent animation can be a solitary path. It can be almost a point of honor to do everything oneself. I come from the independent animation movement, so I never learned the studio system. The possibilities of group animation have long intrigued me. Lately, group creation has taken on more significance in my life, and I am returning to the animation structures with which I experimented in the 70's, only now the computer provides a new tool for experimenting.

I'd like here to relate some of the games that I have played within group animation, and to suggest some possibilities for other approaches to group creation. ASIFA members have participated in an anijam recently; there might be more forms of collaboration suggested from this article.

Tuesday Animators

Boston in the 70's was blessed with a strong animation community, much of it centered around Harvard's Carpenter Center for the Arts, which happened to have one of the few Oxberry animation stands in the area. For a short period of time a group of us met once a week, with the commitment to produce an animation per week. Each week, someone would be in charge of the "assignment;" The evening's drawing was up to that person to organize. The other members were willing creators, ready to produce

anything requested. A different person was responsible for filming the drawings produced from the evening, and by the next week we would have another film ready to go. We did not keep up with our commitments entirely, but we did produce one film, *Cat Heaven*, which was shown at the Boston Cat Film Festival in 1976.

Among the "assignments" we shared were these:

Poses - individuals modeled animated sequences for gesture drawings, and the results were filmed in various combinations of cycles.

Still life - we all sat in a circle around an object and drew our particular view of that object, plus a zoom into an agreed-upon feature. The drawings were filmed in various combinations, resulting in the object seeming to spin in a loopy, loosely animated manner, and then to spiral in to the center of the object.

Rotoscoping - we began with a photocopied rotoscope cat cycle, which we colored and added animation to throughout the evening. We also made flipbooks using the theme of cats, which images became *Cat Heaven*.

Alphabets - each of us chose a letter, illustrated it, and inbetweened from our letter to the next.

Communal Material

Paul Revere Is Here is a rotoscoped record of a month spent in Paul Revere Mall in Boston, 1975. The sound track comes from comments recorded from tourists and local

residents who came to the drawing booth to see what was going on. The visitors were invited to rotoscope the shots of Paul Revere's statue, and while they were drawing they were asked various questions about the nature of history, memory, and their feelings about where they were just then.

Minneapolis Movies is a collection of rotoscoped self-portraits from the students of Minneapolis College of Art and Design (1977). The students had one week to film ten seconds of themselves making a characteristic gesture or comment, to rotoscope the images and to film, edit and cut the sound synchronous with the original film footage.

Soon after *Minneapolis Movies*, I got a job in an ad agency and set off on a computer career. Recent purchase of a 486 DOS machine allows me to work with Autodesk Animator as well as with fax and email art.

And Now I Am Pencil is an Autodesk Animator videosong, animated from the results of a writing group which meets regularly. In the writing sessions, we cycle and recycle seed phrases, writing together from a seed phrase and then reading our work, using phrases from each writing to seed new writings. Some of the writings are clearly animatable. *Pencil* is an example of taking something created individually from within group energy, and working with it as an individual piece.

Quilt Material

Within group activity, there are a variety of creative structures. One such structure uses a group to create something quickly; in this structure, individual cells are created simultaneously, then joined together into a single work. The video animation, *Kid Quilt*, is an example of this type.

Another structure is as a highly personal cell within the body of a more impersonal work; in this case the intensely personal statements by each cell member become less personal when one steps back to view the whole. *Kid Quilt* and the fax art piece, *Digital Quilt*, are examples of this. In both examples, a quilt provides rich metaphors for structuring group activity.

Kid Quilt is a piece made at a kid's camp over a two day period. The kids ranged in age from 3 to 14. The first day, they painted individual pieces of cloth; the next day they stitched them into quilt patterns while at the same time converting the digitized image of each square into Animator flic files. They had the opportunity to observe their works as painted pigment and as moving light. They had the chance to arrange their pieces into motion sequences, to tell stories, and to contribute on an original and personal level to a group whole. They had the opportunity to experience an enormous amount of creative work being finished in a short amount of time, as a result of each person's contribution.

Digital Quilt is not a video song, but a collection of images faxed and mailed by individual contributors. The black and white images are arranged into patterns on a wall. The concept of a digital quilt fits the collaborative potential of computer art: Binary information is the stitching which turns patterns of dark and light into words and images; individual patterns make

their unique contribution to the whole. Individual pieces are created and pieced together into one overall pattern. The piece involves a community of creators building according to a theme.

The *Digital Quilt* was originally a multi-site fax-art event presented during Women's History Month in March of 1993, curated by Byron Grush and myself. A call for entries involved more than 60 participants from as far away as Australia, who submitted images created on the computer or with electronic media of some sort, based on the theme, "Women and Spirituality." We received works by fax, USmail and email. Images were hand-drawn and photocopied, collages pasted or electronically composed, or created entirely on computers. Some images were down-loaded as image files, some were text. The technology generally transcended the wide variety of hardware and software used. The quilt was hung in several sites: Northern Illinois University, De Kalb; Columbia College, Chicago; College of New Rochelle, New York; Grand Valley State College, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Cleveland Institute of Art, Ohio. Each site had curatorial freedom in hanging the images. Since then the quilt was installed in Chicago - SIGGRAPH's Brave New Pixels show. This installation appeared last summer at the Northern Illinois University Art Museum Gallery in Chicago, and at the NIU Art Museum Gallery in De Kalb Altgeld Hall last autumn.

The advantages of creating a pool of collaborators are great. When you want to dip into the creative pool, there is always someone's work to build from; and if you truly collaborate there will always be someone eager to do things you may not want to do, while you prefer to cover those tasks others don't wish to do. Your creativity can feed each other to reach to areas you may not

have imagined. When you can contribute your piece and not worry about holding onto your territory, you are freed from constriction into the flow of creative impulses. You can work faster with group effort. To play with animation is one of the most stimulating qualities of the medium.



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The Hand Jiri Trnka
A Yan Lenica
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Call for Papers

ANIMATION JOURNAL is the only scholarly journal devoted to animation - with research representing the diversity of its production techniques and national origins. It is a refereed publication, edited by Maureen Furniss, Critical Studies Division, School of Cinema-Television, University of Southern California.

Deadlines for Animation Journal submissions are **January 15th** for the fall issues, and **July 1st** for the spring issue.

Manuscripts should be double spaced, following the Chicago Style manual. Because the editor receives many papers that deal with American classical animated features, she encourages research that

deals with other subjects. Experimental approaches, editorials, reviews, discussions of works-in-progress and other non-refereed submissions are also welcome. Of particular interest are graphic essays (draw panels with commentary) as well as historical documents.

For more information:
Maureen Furniss, Editor
AJ Press
2011 Kingsboro Circle
Tusin, CA 92680-6733
Phone/FAX: (714) 544-6255
E-mail: maureenf@aol.com

Mrs. Doubtfire and The Grinch to Appear at Stay Tooned Gallery

In the opening sequence of "Mrs. Doubtfire," Robin Williams does a voice over for a cartoon of Grunge The Cat and Pudge The Bird. This was animated by 80 year old Academy Award Winning Chuck Jones. Stay Tooned Animation Galleries has announced that the original Chuck Jones signed hand-painted production cels from "Mrs. Doubtfire" will be on display in all 3 Stay Tooned Galleries (Barrington and Lake Forest, Illinois, and Edina, Minnesota) beginning February 1st. Included in the exhibits will be a large offering of Chuck Jones signed hand-painted production cels of the Grinch from the 1966 prime time holiday classic, "How the Grinch Stole Christmas."

Also planned for February 18th is the Cabin Fever Champagne Reception for an all new vintage "Art of Disney Show." Additional information on these exhibits can be obtained by calling Jim or Tracy Lentz at (708) 234-3231. Stay Tooned Galleries

Woodbridge Square
220 S. Cook St.
Barrington, IL 60010
(708) 382-2357

The Arcade
272 E. Deerpath
Lake Forest, IL 60045
(708) 234-3231

50th and France
4944 France Ave. S.
Edina, MN 55410
(612) 927-8797

The program committee will meet on January 23 to discuss the coming year.

Planning is now underway for a **Russian Animation** program in late March at Columbia College. Flyers will be mailed when the plans are finalized.

The program committee is always open to ideas and suggestions for future programs, as well as volunteers to help with programs.

Please call Mary Haynes at 312-233-8788.

FUNDING, RESOURCES, and OPPORTUNITIES

Build Illinois Filmmakers: Equipment and Facility Access Grant

Sponsor by the Community Film Workshop

Designed to encourage production of independent films by offering grants to be applied to rentals of CFW's production and post-production equipment. Maximum individual grants \$5000. Applicants must currently be CFW members.

Deadline: January 31st, 1994

For information:
The Community Film Workshop
1130 S. Wabash, Suite 302
Chicago, IL 60605
Phone: (312) 427-1245

Regional Artists' Projects Grant Program

Funding for individual artists or collaborating artists whose projects challenge and extend cultural traditions and artistic expressions. New work in all media. Artists must reside in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri or Ohio.

Workshops will be held across the region to assist artist in their applications. One will be held in Chicago at the Randolph Street Gallery on Wednesday, Feb. 2nd from 7-9 PM.

Awards: A total of \$50,000 will be awarded in 1994.

Deadline: March 11th, 1994

For information:
Kapra Fleming
Randolph Street Gallery
756 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Chicago, IL 60622

New Visions, New Voices

Voyager Company sponsored competition seeking creative

works in any digital format for Macintosh and Windows personal computers. Independent panel of judges will evaluate works of fiction and non-fiction for adults and children. \$5000 cash prize.

Deadline: February 1st, 1994

Contact:
New Visions, New Voices
The Voyager Company
578 Broadway, Suite 460
New York, NY 10027
Phone: (212) 431-5199

Planet Central Television

Seeking broadcast quality films, video and animation censored by US. TV as too controversial or political. Bonus consideration for submissions that are smart, funny, sexy and exhibit an irreverent attitude.
Dana Saunders, Director of Program Acquisitions
Planet Central Television
20178 Rockfort Way

Malibu, CA 90265

Great Lakes Regional Fellowship

Grants to independent, non-commercial video and film

artists in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio. Call for entries will be mailed in February. Workshops will begin in March.

Deadline for applications: Friday, May 27th, 1994

For information contact:
Center for New Television
1440 N. Dayton St.
Chicago, IL 60622
Phone: (312) 951-6868 FAX: (312) 951-5717

Independent Film and Videomaker Program American Film Institute

IFVP offers grants of up to \$20,000 for experienced film and video artists whose work shows exceptional promise and who have demonstrated a commitment to the art of the moving image.

Deadline: September 15th, 1994

Applications are available after July 1st. To be placed on the mailing list, write to:
Cathy Phoenix, Grant Coordinator
American Film Institute and Videomaker Program
2021 North Western Avenue
PO Box 27999
Los Angeles, CA 90027
Phone: (213) 856-7787

NEA Grants for Film/Video Production

Artists may apply as individuals or through organizations. Grants are generally for production of single film or video projects that exemplify use of the media as art forms. Matching grants for organizations from \$20,000 to \$75,000. Non-matching grants to individuals from \$10,000 to \$35,000.

Contact:
Media Arts Program
Room 720
National Endowment for the Arts
Nancy Hanks Center
1100 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20506-0001
Phone: 2012-682-5452

National Educational Media Market

The eighth annual National Media Market, a leading international market for non-theatrical and educational film, video and multi-media programs, is now accepting submissions. Films, videos and interactive media are eligible. Works in progress are welcome. The market will take place May 18-20, 1994 at the Oakland Convention Center in Oakland, California, as part of the National Film and Video Festival.

Deadline: April 8, 1994

Entry forms;
National Educational Media Market Director
655 Thirteenth Street
Oakland, CA 94612-1220

Information contact:
Kate Spohr, Media Market Director
Phone: (510) 465-6885 FAX (510) 465-2835

Toontown Rats seeks independently produced animated shorts for a new animation and cartoonists' forum. Contact:

Keith Knight
Artists' Television Access
992 Valencia St.
San Francisco, CA 94110
Phone: (415) 752-4037

Video Broadcast Center for New Television Feedback

seeks 3/4, VHS or Hi-8 video for cable access show. Project is a collaboration of CNTV and NAME. Contact:

Center for New Television
1440 N. Dayton
Chicago, IL 60622

Walt Disney Pictures Feature Animation is looking for experienced professionals for upcoming theatrical animation productions: Pocahontas, The Hunchback of Notre Dame, Fantasia Continued. If you are available for relocation to California, Florida or Europe and are not under contractual obligations, please contact the Disney Feature department.

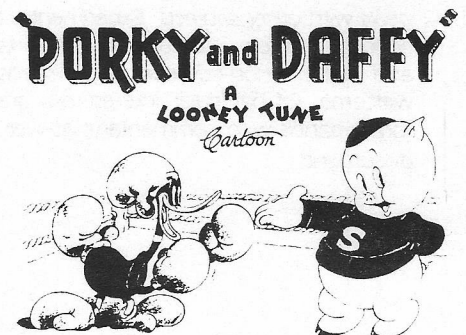
Call before submitting work for review: (818) 544-2130 (collect)

Send resume to:
Walt Disney Feature Animation
1326 Flower Street
Glendale, California 91221
FAX: (818) 544-2607

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