

STOPTRIK NEWSPAPER

by Intensive Workshop of Festival Journalism
with Nancy Denney-Phelps



The Dream Team - people who made this magic happen: Arman Fatić, Sofia Papatsimpa, Daniel Šuljić, Nancy Denny-Phelps, Coline Laboulais, Maja Bernik, Kaja Vidovič, Špela Sabati. Photo: GT22

An Inside Perspective On Luis

By Maja Bernik

Luis is the second part of a two-part stop motion animation series, *Lucia, Luis y el lobo*, created by *Colectivo Diluvio*, a Chilean audiovisual arts and film production company formed by artists: Niles Attalah, Joaquín Cocifía and Cristóbal León.

The two parts are connected, but they can be watched and understood separately. Both revolve around the same story, it's the narrator that changes. So what we get is, first Lucia's and then Luis' view on what was, or is, happening. I'm going to focus on the latter, since it was projected at the festival as part of *Latin American stop motion 1: Inside perspective*.

In the first few seconds there is nothing but darkness. Then a voice appears. A gammy, hoarse voice, seeming to come from down below. It's Luis' perfectly low pitched voice spoken by Paula Florencia Navarrete. Soon after, the protagonist's world comes alive in front of us. Materials the artists used to create this morbidly beautiful scenery fit perfectly with the narrative – charcoal, dirt, flowers, found objects and cardboard.

As Luis is talking, there are a lot of things calling our attention towards the screen. We are now moving around what could be a living room, that seems to have just survived a horrific earthquake. While the objects are being cleaned and reorganised, room's walls are turning into canvases for charcoal illustrations through which Luis presents himself to us.

The movements create an anxious atmosphere which is accompanied by fear we can hear coming from the main character's voice. What we feel is a longing for its release. One's need to free himself completely, to become an entity separate from what he's feeling.

His way of speaking is indulged with emotions. The intensity and spectrum of his feelings increase as we're moving along the narration. From seeming to be lonesomely naive, as a child would be at the beginning, we follow his fear-filled state of mind being pushed to the limit, right up to the violently whispered set of ending curse words that can be translated as a psychotic cry for help.



A portrait of Luis, Colectivo Diluvio, 2008, Chile

Even with all that has occurred, the viewer cannot help but see the innocent child that's hiding under an animal's corpse and is in great need of a helping hand. There might be a visual cause of it.

We can split animation's aesthetics into two segments:

1. The room, representing the here and now, the reality and the outsides of the protagonist
2. The drawings on the walls uncovering the protagonist's insides

Coming out of his hiding place, he immediately starts organising the chaos he is surrounded by in his everyday life. He's literally trying to put things in perspective by putting objects on places where they belong. Maybe that will help him make sense of the physical world he's living in. The charcoal illustrations show us his experience. They are his story, thoughts and feelings. The grey and white of the medium used indirectly show us his sadness, innocence, his yearning for love and, most of all, fear. These beautiful illustrations make us aware of the child's vulnerability.

Fear, being one of the basic emotions found in humans and animals, is something we are collectively familiar with. It is our basic survival mechanism that has been following us throughout evolution. Not many emotions affect us as severely as fear does. When afraid we will make radical decisions, we will do just about anything to protect ourselves.

Even cover ourselves with wolf's skin.

My initial thoughts while watching the film were: Oh, here comes another ghost story! But *Luis* is much more than that. He is a real boy with ghosts living inside of him, and that's the magic of this animation. We all have ghosts, even demons, escorting us from within, and at times, influencing our actions. At the end of the day we have no choice but to clean our space in hopes that it will make everything bad and unwanted vanish into the darkness for good. For a brief moment in time, seeing the room in order gives us peace.

I strongly recommend watching *Lucia*. Her relation to the story gives another perspective on Luis and a whole lot of new things to think about.

An interview with Miha Šubic About missing Humor in Animated Films

By Špela Sabati

Stoptrik festival made a lovely calm and artistic atmosphere in the past four days in Maribor, Slovenia. When I had the chance to speak to one of the guests, Miha Šubic, a young artist and animator, we started to talk about different genres that stop motion or 3d animation films depicts in general. He enjoyed the Stoptrik atmosphere and said that animation festivals are always filled with calm, relaxed vibes and he prefers to attend animation festivals to film festivals, but he also enjoys visiting both kind of festivals Miha Šubic is a stop motion appreciator that makes computer animated films.

Stop motion is the kind of animation that can feel raw or harsh. Films made with this technique are often made into more serious or darker stories. However, Miha Šubic pointed out that there is a void inside of the animation movie genres. "I miss more comedy animations," he said. An assumption exists that animated films are made for children, even though that is not always the case. Especially in stop motion animation there is a variety of genres, from children story to horror films.

He said that the majority of the movies are of the drama genre. "It often happens that dramas

turn into some sort of surrealistic film that portrays fears in a morbid or depressive narration. Maybe it is easier for people to sympathize with such themes or that humor is less universal and more specific. When the movie is funny, the targeted audience is usually children."

He pointed out the importance of story, saying that he enjoyed narrative films most. "Sometimes there is too much stress on technique, scenography and puppets, but the story is missing."

Miha Šubic is also a founder of the Film Factory, a society and studio that grew out of the wish to make movies and that organizes workshops for students and shoots films. Their latest movie *Verjetno te nikoli več ne bom videl* (I think I will never see you again) by Mitja Mlakar was recently released.

Miha Šubic made a comment about stop motion that I think hits home with a lot of people. "It looks like a small version of the real world, that is happening both now and also 150 years ago." I think it is worth mentioning that stop motion gives an artist an option to use any material that they want, yet they put a lot of nostalgic materials and feelings into it. The festival scene was perfect in this sense. The festival was held mostly in Salon Uporabnih Umetnosti and Wetrinsky. The two places had nostalgic feelings and stimulated some sense of daydreaming and longing.

Miha Šubic is currently working on a 3d animation *Honey Can You Take My Human For A Walk*, with which he sets himself to do a satire movie and to put comedy animation to justice.



Salon uporabnih umetnosti/Salon of Applied Arts. Photo: Daniel Šuljić

CUTTING TO THE CHASE OF THE CREATIVE PROCESS

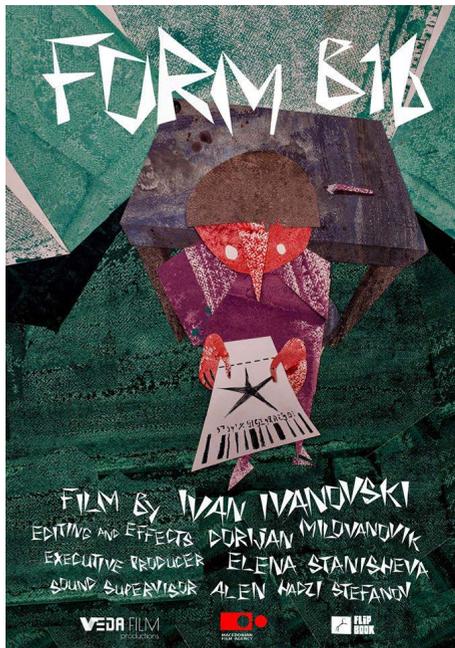
By Sofia Papatsimpa

Transition, transformation, fragmentation, development... A cluster of words that are wandering in my mind after getting the chance to talk with Ivan Ivanovski, Macedonian artist, one of the guests at this year's 7th edition of StopTrik animation festival in Maribor.

I found myself discovering with him the conscious or unconscious process behind the creation of his films. His technique is distinct and expressive. He pays attention to the atmosphere of the context – as he told me, it is essential to “keep things small, to stick to the initial story-board – you have to have one, otherwise you will end up wasting too much material for nothing – and from that moment, just to see how you can get this thing done”. His input on the creative process could really echo the experiential path and aesthetic approach that he employs in his works. It is a long procedure, it takes a bunch of cut-outs, floating ideas, improvisation, stream-of-consciousness thought and self-challenge. But the distinct feature of all these provoking creative steps is his urge and craving to say something important, not just something visually stimulating, set-up in nice artwork. We also talked

about the importance of the narrative, as seen in his last output, a stop-motion short which we had the chance to watch in its premiere, here on the 1st day of the festival. *Form B16* flirts with the inter-connection of different stories, with fragmentation and transition, a grotesque insight into characters who get to have the “smallest piece of the pie – which is basically the case for 98% of the people”. Watching four of his works, I found some recurring themes; a conscious and personal critique on corruption, a personal naivety of characters, a simplicity, a strive for resolution and surpassing of inner-conflicts, a “quest” - as Ivan stated – of the characters, seen from every possible angle.

We also discussed about the animators' community in his hometown, Skopje and the possible improvement or development he sees in the horizon. The Macedonian animation scene is getting bigger and bigger, especially since the establishment of the National Film Agency in 2008. It appears that artists were really in need of this funding vessel, since, as Ivan told me, even if it is an entity closely related and connected with the state - meaning that issues of state involvement and control could emerge in the creative process - it is still the only chance of getting the proper funds for a Macedonian emerging artist. The agency has done a great job in supporting the endeavors of many newcomers to the field during the last 9 years.



Ivan's new film, *Form B16*

Right before the screening of his selected films, Ivan presented a new book called *The Illustrated Biblical Ethics*, a collaboration by him and 7 fellow Macedonian illustrators who tried to visualize their personal perspective on a series of Bible verses, taken from a pocket book that he found at one of his friend's home who is also a contributor to the illustrations. The discussion that accompanied the presentation filled me up with questions concerning the objectives of animation, in terms of controversial topics, such as religion and politics. So, I kept wondering what was the thought process during the making-of the book? Could it be seen as a provocation on organized religion? A challenging of the established and obsolete Biblical values? A personal critique on the inseparability of state and church? If something else, then what? Ivan gave me a simple but realistic and honest answer: "there are 8 of us, so apparently there are 8 different ways to see it. Some of us may indeed try to criticize religion, some may not. But the core of all this accumulates to an attempt to figure out how the conscious grew though the time". Although this might not be seen as a direct comment on religion or the nature of religion as such, we both could not help but see the explicit irony when you come across Biblical quotes such as "do not steal", where in reality the government, clearly connected with organized religion, is quite corrupted in Macedonia. A connection that really seems to be the case in my home country, Greece, as well.

"Critique on religion may be modern but necessary at the end of the day" Ivan says and this is actually quite true. It is also true that we like to see the development of animators who can see their art as a way of filtering their anxieties and who can honestly critique their disturbing surroundings.



Ivan Ivanovski & Sofia. Photo: Janez Klenovšek

IMPRESSIONS FROM THE 1ST AND 2ND COMPETITIVE PARTS OF STOPTRIK

By Sofia Papatsimpa

On Saturday evening we finally had the chance to watch the first 2 competitive parts of this year's edition of the festival. 17 films in total, many afterthoughts with the ending titles.

Peeping at the short summary of the films in the festival catalogue, I wasn't really sure of what to expect, but I was more than confident that I would be probably engaged into new questions concerning my so-far-short but exciting acquaintance with the world of stop-motion animation. And I was right. What I found the most striking and fascinating after both screenings was the variety of techniques employed by the animators. I found myself wondering at the creative process as such and the innumerable possibilities behind the making-of. The diversity of genres is also worth mentioning, since I could trace a vast variety of thematic approaches, some of them more psychological, others more aesthetic, some grotesque, others more funny and satirical, some creepy and wicked, others horrific and scary. This element also contributed to transforming the night into a multidimensional animation journey.

Among the films, I singled out a bunch of them, either inspired by the story or the technique used to make them, other times by both.



Ginevra, Tess Martin (Monticello Park Productions), 2017, NLD/USA



Frog Song, Violaine Pasquet (Studio d'Animation La Fabule), 2016, FRA



Framed, Marco Jemolo (Grey Ladder), 2017, ITA

I would like to specially mention Tess Martin's short *Ginevra*, which captured me with its aesthetic plurality and narrative approach. Based on Percy Shelley's lyrical poem *The Dirge*, the narration describes a young woman's murder scene. We had the chance to meet with the Tess, who guided us through the creative steps and the difficulties of transforming such distinct and challenging literary genre into a stop-motion project. It was interesting to realize that with simple materials, such as paper cuts, you can create almost multi-dimensional and realistic figures. Knowing how to manipulate the light and shadows properly is the key.

Frog song by Violaine Pasquet kept me going with its musicality and sensible approach. Inspired by New Orleans' jazz heritage. It gives a powerful message about how a community that is phenomenally weak, connected with music, tradition, heritage and determination can fight against every kind of oppressive monster, real or fictional. I could detect the political oeuvre of the short, which was elaborately and discretely channeled through a simple, subtle and touching story. Violaine was there giving us an insight into her voyage through the creative process of the piece.

My final mention goes for Marco Jemolo's *Framed*. I found this animation quite special since it offers us a study into the nature of the stop-motion technique. The puppet doll is oppressed, he seems to suffer without being aware of the origins of his oppression. The help that he aspires to is not fully achieved. This is a question for the author of animation, how far can you go into manipulating the puppets even if they do not have their own will? How easy is it to project emotions, psychological states and attitudes to a manufactured object? It is also a reminder; a reminder of how much patience, creativity, restlessness and hard work it takes to finish a work.

WHERE IS HOME?

By Arman Fatić

If there is one thing that I learned in my first year of visiting festivals as a film critic it is that every film festival is a world of its own. Therefore to visit some festival for the first time always brings with it a lot of scepticism. How will it compare to the experiences I had on other festivals and I am afraid of how will I as an individual find myself in this festival/world. StopTriK has succeeded just in four days to take a position of a festival that I can call home.

It is really a new and different experience to be at a festival where the director meets and greets the guests in person. It was an absolutely shocking experience, for me. Also that film presenters (directors, producers etc.) were opened for interaction with the guests, as much during the official festival discussions as afterwards in the festival space. Maybe the highlight of this interaction could be best described by a case of Podlasie Attacks crew which ended their presentation by serving the festival guests with their traditional local drinks from the Podlasie region.

Another really great moment for me was a discussion I had with the presenter of a Latin American Animation Culture, where we somehow always started talking about animation, then went to film in general and then we ended up talking about different philosophies of life.

Maybe the best proof that this was not just a lucky coincidence, that I met these people was the festival programme. This year StopTriK has somewhere around 150 films from all around the world and there was at least twice as much diversity when it came to the festival guests.

In the wide range of film there were some first animation works as well as works of fully established authors, and they ranged from conventional to extremely experimental. If I really had to chose three films that I really liked I think they would be: "Ježeva kućica" (Eva Cvijanović), Frog Song (Violaine Pasquet) and animation from Koyaa series (Koja Saksida).

An important thing to mention is that a few months ago a last art house cinema (Cinema Udarnik) closed its doors thanks to the city council that didn't have enough interest in promoting the culture. Even without "real cinema" organisers of the StopTriK did an amazing job of making this festival happen in alternative artistic places such as gallery GT22, Pekarna, Salon of Applied Arts etc. In Maribor art is stronger than politics, it is speaking its own language understandable to anyone with a free spirit, it is removing barriers and building love as a liberal lifestyle, StopTriK festival is definitely the best place to experience all this firsthand, or at least I did, and now I call this city my new home.



Discussion on StopTriK festival. Photo: Daniel Šuljić

PS: One more thing for parents that want to watch some animated films and not to be bothered by their children, StopTriK festival thought about you, so as a part of festival they offered to babysit your children while you enjoy your "cartoons".

TAFF TURKU ANIMATED FILM FESTIVAL – SCREENING

By *Spela Sabati*

The best of TAFF Turku's film festival was presented in Friday's afternoon screening. TAFF Turku festival is international animated film festival in Finland.

One of the screenings in Friday's program was a combination of eight selected stop motion animated films.

The opening animation titled *The Country Doctor/Maalaistohtori* (Katariina Lillqvist 1996) was a 15 minutes long film based on a short story by Franz Kafka. This animation shows a distinctive feature of stop motion animation, that is its rawness and its potential to show dark and scary scenes, capturing Kafkaesque nightmarish humor. It portrays the difference between 3d and stop motion animation, where the raw, stammering impression of puppets doesn't depict the cuteness of the 3d animated characters.

The first film also signaled the viewers to expect darker or more serious stories and dark humor. However, the genres were diverse.

The crowd seemed to be drawn the most to *Treevil* (Aiju Salminen, Aino Ovaskainen, Christer Lindström, 2002) that tells the story about a lumberjack, who is experiencing weird troubles with cutting trees, since they simply mock him and run away as soon as he chops them off. But he doesn't give up until the very end.

Another animation that got the audience laughing was *The Night Shift/Yövuoro* (Samppa Kukkonen, Sara Wahl, Simo Koivunen, 2004). The animation tells a lyrical story about a bat and a family of woodpeckers, trying to make their coexistence on the same tree bearable for them all, while their different lifestyles don't make it any easier. I particularly enjoyed the way this animation used colors, sound and facial expressions. The bat was shown in darker tones and only the prey that he neatly caught were exposed with shining tones. The woodpeckers, which were active in daylight, were shown in strong and bright colors and they seemed joyful just as much as the bat seemed annoyed when they didn't let him sleep. Woodpeckers communicated with loud, guffawed voices and the bat with his red, annoyed-revealing eyes.

The closing animation titled *The Last Elephant/Viimeinen elefantti* (Antti Laasko, 2008) told an emotional story about a baby elephant, living a happy childhood life with his crocodile dad. But the little elephant sees a picture of other elephants and he wants answers his crocodile father is not completely willing to share. This animation is a story about childhood ignorance of the outside world, about growing up and finally about realizing that parents aren't always perfect. But growing up is also realizing that they are doing what they can and what they think is best and sometimes that means trying to hide the ugliness of the world from their children or showing them the nicer gaze of the reality that is not really truthful.



Treevil, Aiju Salminen, Aino Ovaskainen, Christer Lindström (Turku Arts Academy), 2002, FIN



The Night Shift, Samppa Kukkonen, Sara Wahl, Simo Koivunen (Turku Arts Academy), 2004, FIN



The Last Elephant, Antti Laasko (Turku Arts Academy), 2008, FIN

OUT AND ABOUT THE FESTIVAL

By Daniel Šuljić



21:00. DEPARTURE FOR BUENOS AIRES

By Coline Laboulais



Vlasta Veselko & Anton Volkov. Photo: Janez Klenovšek

We're indeed in Slovenia, a little country of the Balkans, outdoor the winter is smoothly settling in and however we feel like travelling way farther than Atlantic Ocean. Landing place: South America and its infinite warmth. First we made ourselves comfortable in the spacious ballroom of the Salon, ancient Decorative Art then Casino building of Maribor. The furniture seems to be from another era: Renaissance is flirting with rococo, and the melting pot of patterns and lamps from all styles are creating a kind of a cotton bubble where it feels good to be. During four days, this cafe will be the place for discovering, getting amazed, debating and experiencing everything that stop motion animation has to offer us. But right now, the dance floor has been cleared and candles are creating a cosy atmosphere: it's tango time.

Finally, we hear the first notes of the bandoneon, its vibrant tones soon opposed to the grave strings of the contrabass. The piano makes its entrance, introducing the rhythm of tango with lights and joyful notes, then it's the guitar's turn: You have to lend an ear to hear its discreet accompaniment. Finally, the violin joins the dance, bringing a unique timbre to the Quintet. The Piazzolleky are about to make us dream. Between milongas and waltzes, music heats our heart and the singer's jokes are bringing smiles to every faces. Suddenly, at the end of a song, a feminine voice make herself heard, the audience turns around and discover a splendid lady, with dream legs and angelic face, here is Vlasta Veselko. Her partner, Anton Volkov, a Russian strong man, appears at her side. With her slit up dress on, she gets closer from the dance floor while he joins her. Even from far, we already see their connection, and with few steps, they break the distance that split them. The entire audience freeze, amazed by their agility and by the speed of their legs. Something sensual is in the air, and an invisible link has been created between the two dancers. The musicians become even more intense, and it seems we are now out of time. The dancers perform their last movement, and leave the stage. Welcome back on earth, you're indeed at StopTrik.

UDARNIK – THE LOST BATTLE FOR CULTURE

By Arman Fatić



Kino Udarnik. Photo: Dino Kusanović

Kino Udarnik was a Maribor home of animated and documentary as well as feature films. It was the place that welcomed in its programmes for feminist and LGBTQ films. Tarkovski, Fellini, Ozu, Truffaut, Kurosawa, Antonini, Suleman, Sodenberg Melies, are just some of the big film names that were shown in this cinema. There were always some guests. Udarnik even organised open air cinema during the summer. There were times they were thinking to add a third film on a daily schedule because of the interest of the public. So why was cinema Udarnik closed?

When the city, state and private sector couldn't agree, the art was the one that paid a price. At the beginning there were ownership problems, the state had cinema ownership but coffee space that was a part of cinema had four private owners. Of course all of them wanted a fair rent for their space. Funny isn't it, a city of Maribor gives volunteers money for a cinema and they then spend it to rent a space from the state.

But that was just the beginning of the problems for Udarnik. They managed for some time to pay the rent and all the costs of cinema rentals, electricity and other bills but than two years ago the European Commission decided that there is no space for analogue films in cinemas anymore. So the Udarnik crew had to buy a DCP (*Digital Cinema Package*) or end their cinema journey. 35mm and 70mm films in the EU only have place in cinema museums.

So where is art house cinema culture now in Maribor? The city though that the best thing for these kind of films was in a local multiplex. Art films in entertainment centre that sells cotton candy, coca cola, popcorn and nachos? To play works of Melies at a place that lives from shiny commercials? How could someone even for a second think that these people would be capable of promoting this culture.

Maybe the easiest way to explain situation with this multiplex is to say that I went to the premiere of the new Blade Runner there a few nights ago. So at the premiere of the film I was sitting in this huge cinema (probably somewhere around 300 seats) and there were only 9 other people that came to see this film. This is the Multiplex that hardly promotes their big flashy blockbusters so it is hard to imagine that they would put some posters for their art programme around city (and they actually don't).

All in all the story of cinema Udarnik is not something new and unknown, kino Tuškanac in Zagreb Croatia few months ago got into situation similar to Udarnik, and Art House Cinema Kriteiron in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina has needed to reduce its film programme in last two years to pay off debts caused by false promises of the city council and greedy owners. This is not a question of one cinema, it is the question of film culture in general, because if we lose these places, how will we get next generation of cinephiles, critics and people who will organise festivals and why would someone want to make films if we don't have a place to show them.

THEY WERE 4 (DAYS) AND THEY WERE GREAT!

By Sofia Papatsimpa



Olga Bobrowska and Michał Bobrowski. Photo: Daniel Šuljić

This was my 1st stop-motion animation festival. And certainly not my last.

There is a lot to say about these 4 days. StopTrik is not the biggest festival out there, however it engulfs a unique charm and a captivating atmosphere. But the most important for me is the story behind.

Olga Bobrowska, co-director of the festival, was explaining to me how everything started more or less 6 years ago and I was impressed to discover the great development of the festival which is getting bigger and bigger every year. The 1st edition was done with minimum municipality funds but it was more than enough for Olga and her husband Michał as well as for the rest of the involved team to realize that this was something they really wanted to invest in the future. If I could say something about this festival, it would definitely be the passion, zest and knowledge of its main contributors. These are ingredients that always make a good recipe for a successful and fully absorbing content.

This year's subject and area of focus was Latin America, which made me wonder what this could possibly mean for the development of the festival. But all my questions were answered as we were going through the days, the presentations, the films and the discussions with the makers. What I cherished from this intercultural patchwork were thoughts mostly dealing with the "language" of stop-motion animation. What I mean by language in this case are the common influences, background, context, techniques and how or if we can trace similarities between these two distinct geographical regions (Europe/Central-South America), which manipulate the same film techniques. Surprisingly, this common language talked loud and clear to me, a language that can be transformative, distinct, unique and complementary at the same time, irrespective of the distance.

What I also noticed was that fundamental issues such as culture, society, politics, history and religion will always concern the artists and will always be filtered in their works. But the surprising touch this time was the enormous variety of techniques and methods that can be used and manipulated to achieve this purpose. Stop-motion animators really know how to do that. During Trik-Show, the technical part of the festival, we all had the chance to follow the makers into the creative process behind their presented works. Sometimes I tend to forget how much time, effort, patience, creativity, imagination and passion it takes to have a final film, varying from 2 to 15 minutes more or less. But it seems to me that despite the difficulties, the disappointments and the frustration that might occur in some stages of the creative process, no one can deny the excitement, relief, and pride of the artists when they see their works being presented to an audience that seems to appreciate and enjoy their art.

So, it is also time for us, the spectators, the enthusiasts, the curious and excited to go out there and support inspiring and promising cultural movements like StopTrik, as this is the only way to keep this common language alive and to create a fertile ground for evolving and improving it.

Choosing the imperfection

By Coline Laboulais

In Cleo's word, frogs are singing, plants are in silicon and kids' heads are rounds as balloon: I immediately have a crush on it. It has something juvenile, innocent and full of life: "I like puppets animation because there can be some imperfections, it brings a kind of poetry". And she's right: aren't we much more demanding when it comes to a jump cut a 3D movie? It looks unprofessional whereas in stop motion, it's part of the charm.

But who is really Cleo, or should I call her by her real name (quite far from her artist one): Violaine Pasquet ? When the organizer tries to call her during Trikshow, I get why: abroad, this name is unpronounceable!

"After this catastrophic speech, I really need a glass of wine..." says Cleo to me, comfortably settled in one of the vintage sofa of the Salon. I don't get it, did we see the same speech? I had the impression of seeing a confident woman, proud of her work, and it personally gave me big curiosity to discover more about her achievements. "I hate talking in public" she confesses to me. But at the sight of "frog song", she seems to know her stuffs, and I guess she studied it for a long time! But I was wrong: after few years working on 3D animation (because she is "a very bad drawer"), she went to Paris, realizing that "computer work was boring". While looking for job offers, she was proposed to teach stop motion to



Cleo and I trying to pose as model (and failing)

Photo: Daniel Šuljić

some kids: at this time, she had no idea of how it worked, but Cleo decided to take her chance. That's how everything started: step by step, she tried herself as different tasks until becoming a film director and realizer, here and there. She even created her own animation studio in Nantes: "la Fabule". If the topics are various: depth, animals, musicals, the atmosphere stays light and joyful, even while dealing with serious issues. "That's the thing when you work out of big studios: you don't have the tips, so you have to try, fail, try again and again." Cleo then has to be surrounded by a team, but not too big, otherwise she loses the handcraft work: her little pleasure. As a film producer, she can choose the angle, and lead the project where she wishes, something she would have liked to do more on her last movie, Frog song "I wanted it more dark, punk and dirty instead of having an happy ending". But that's one of the thing about learning on the job: you're constantly learning, discovering. On the other hand, this kind of musical seems to be a success in USA, since it has been selected in New Orleans film festival! The next adventure for our franchise...

Well, I was thinking that in this specialized field, you had to go to a certain path to study, practice with the best to finally produce a project, but once again creative world proved to me that curiosity and polyvalence are leading to much more than we think!



Cleo showing me the wild path of Creative world
Frog Song, Violaine Pasquet (Studio d'Animation La Fabule), 2016, FRA

IN THE FOREST OF YUGOSLAVS

By Arman Fatić



Hedgehog's home, Eva Cvijanović (NFB, Bonobostudio), 2017, CAN/CRO

*Say what you want about my home.
I am safe and happy under its dome.
Simple and modest but it is all mine.
I am free here and I feel fine.*

There is this old and really interesting tradition in education that was common in Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia and survived its fall. That is the choice of the first book that is read in primary schools. The honour to be the first book that shapes the young minds of Yugoslavian children was the “Ježeva kućica” fairytale poem with animals of novelist Branko Ćopić. 60 years after the poem was published, a Croatian director Eva Cvijanović decided to adapt it to film.

“Ježeva Kućica” follows hedgehog Ježurko who was invited by a fox to her luxurious home for a lunch. After lunch the fox extends her invitation for hedgehog to stay and sleep over at her house, and after he declines the invitation, all the animals in the forest start asking themselves in what kind of home does the hedgehog live that he declines foxes offer.

The whole film smells like it was Yugoslavian made, so in every aspect it really could have been made 30-40 years ago as today. It all starts with music made by Darko Rundek, a Croatian New Wave musician, best known for his band Haustor. It has an amazing voice over done by Rade Šerbedžija, probably the best known actor of the former republic. It is all summed up in the film aesthetics, or to be precise in set design. Sets that reimagine the fairytale were designed

the way they actually looked like something that would be displayed in primary schools.

Because it is a line by line adaptation of a poem, there is no need to criticise this part of a film, but the thing that really occupied my attention in the film was the camera. While most stop motion animations use a static camera or in the best case a camera on a rail, Eva Cvijanović decided to make a brave step forward and to freely move camera across the film set.

I came to the film because of childhood nostalgia, I went out full of emotions and with lots of questions, I have no answers to. How do people around the world comprehend this film, when “Hedgehogs Home” is not the first book they read in schools? Do they understand the poem? Do they understand the cleverly implemented background message? Will the film take over the position of literature in education any time soon? But maybe the most important question is the work of Branko Ćopić still relevant, now, in the time of a refugee crisis and when more and younger people from ex Yugoslavian countries are leaving their homes because of the bad social-political situation in their countries. After 60 years, I guess lines from the beginning of this text, are not really relevant anymore.

CELEBRATING THE INFINITE POSSIBILITY OF HUMAN HANDCRAFTING

By Coline Laboulais

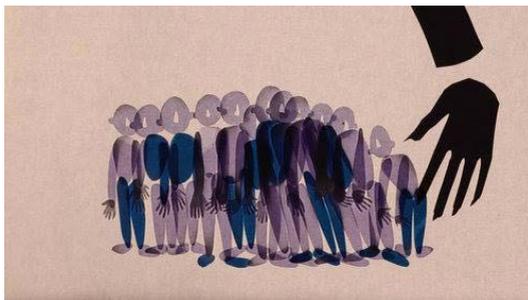
Singing moustaches, men chasing trees and dolls realizing their manipulated life : here is part of what was waiting for me at the 7th edition of StopTriK animation festival in Maribor, Slovenia. In the four days of the festival there were more than 200 movies, talented artist from all Europe, and of course many different programs: A numerous variety of films for all tastes!

As an amateur in stop motion animation, I just had a blurry preview of the many different available techniques and processes, but no concrete idea of the time needed to produce a movie or about the community it gathered. This edition allowed me to answer all my questions. After discovering the scene of a country during the panorama, we were able to understand the making of thanks to TriKShow: We ended the night by watching Mexican horror movies (fortunately, tequila shots helped us to stay in the mood).



Me after the tequila shot
Down to the Bone, René Castillo (IMCINE), 2001, MEX

When it comes to cultural events in Maribor, we can generally notice a lack of curiosity, and the participants are generally the same, most of them being invested for ages in one of the nice cultural places this town has to offer. It's really a challenge to get people out of their home for something they're not familiar with, and this mission was for me accomplished during this edition. Stop motion animation is a niche, where a few people spend infinite hours working on few minutes of films. After few days, I realize that artists are sharing their fabrication secrets as FBI agents, and I get why if we consider a 7 min movie can take 7 years of your life! Every tip is good to take, can help you to make a successful scene, save a bit of your precious time or improve a realistic effect. "That's a geek world baby!" tells Tess Martin when she realizes it's my first Stop Motion festival. But all this little community is full of passionate people, having creativity as a mantra, and spending time with each of them will bring you unexpected knowledge. It has been great to hang around, sharing a glass of wine between a famous journalist, a puppet maker and a festival director. It was for me a real inspiration of how culture can survive if we all go on celebrating it, and stay united to be stronger.



Maribor's culture lover trying to stay strong while winter is coming
Hate for sale, Anna Eijsbouts (Anna Eijsbouts Animation), 2017, NLD

I was also surprised by how humble and approachable the artists were, always open to a chitchat or to share their point of view on the last competition. If Salon, the theatre screening site, had some air of Titanic during some openings with its stained glass windows and luxury fabrics, this festival kept the atmosphere of a NGO event : The meal was a perfect example: After delicious homemade food, volunteers and artist went to clean their own dishes, without differences or hierarchy. "Animation artist are not rich enough or famous enough to be puff: If Nick Park would walk down the street here, I don't think anyone would recognise him!" express the journalist Nancy Denney-Phelps in a laugh after I ask her if she's not impressed to ask for interview. And even if I wish these people were more famous, I hope they will keep this casual and open-minded attitude. It's great to see that a festival can have talented people and interesting content without searching to be fancy.



The kind of person you won't find in StopTrik
Banquet, Julia Orlik (Film School Łódź), 2016, POL

Talking about interesting people, I wish we had more time for each session to discuss and debate more, but the intensive programming didn't allow us this freedom. However, this speed had the benefit of showing different visions and a huge variety of techniques from all parts of the world. I realize now that these little minutes of movies impress me much more than any regular movie, because stop motion allows every kind of creativity.

"In stop motion, we manipulate the time, we play with it and spin it around" Tess Martin explained to me. It seems really hard to me to get the perfect combination between esthetic, story, animation in itself and time handling (it doesn't seem so, but 10 min can be very long time if you don't get it...). However, clay, paper, wool combined together can transmit strong ideas, bring out our feelings and let us be totally amazed by the infinite possibilities that handcrafting can offer to us. StopTrik, or how to have a shot of talent and be fulfilled with a fresh creative energy for a long time!



Me leaving stoptrick with head full with ideas
Hedgehog's home, Eva Cvijanović (NFB, Bonobostudio), 2017, CAN/CRO



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Thank you StopTrik from the Intensive Workshop of Festival Journalism!