

**INDEPENDENT  
MOTION**



**Twelve Animated Films from  
Around the World**

# **INDEPENDENT MOTION**

**Curated by Yvonne Grzenkowicz**

**Cathy and Jesse Marion Art Gallery  
State University of New York at Fredonia**





Jie Weng, still from *The Quintet of the Sunset*, 2019, stop-motion animated film

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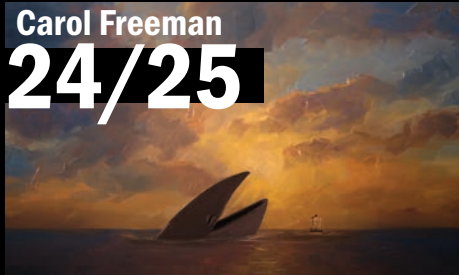
Curator's Statement by Yvonne Grzenkovicz





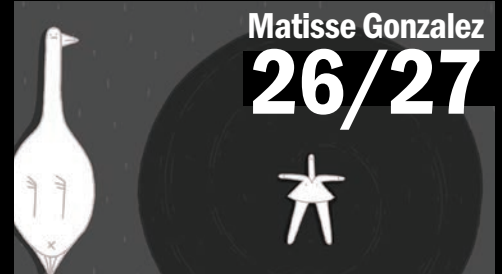
Nelson Fernandes

22/23



Carol Freeman

24/25



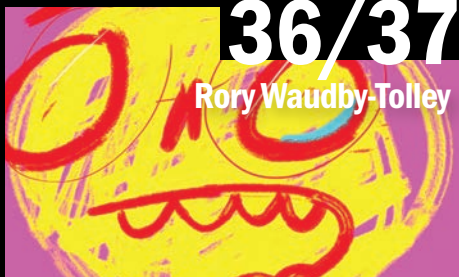
Matisse Gonzalez

26/27



Carol Silverman

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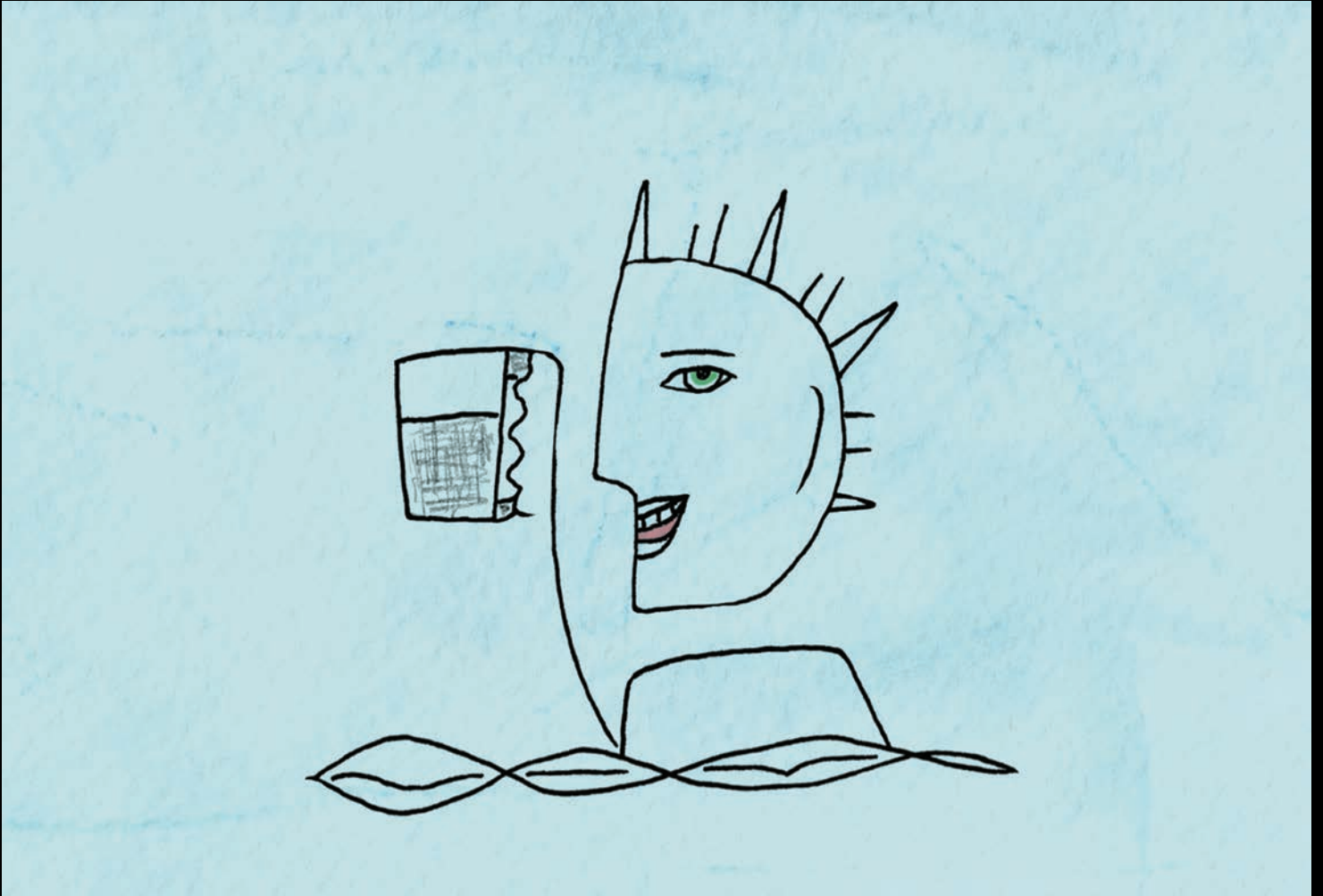
36/37

Rory Waudby-Tolley



Jie Weng

38/39



Emily Hubley, still from *Hail*, 2011, 2D animated film



Art leads the advancement of civilization. From the torch-lit, split-action images of the Lascaux Cave to multi-user worlds traversed with head-mounted displays, animation has been used for explanation and entertainment. It is an expression of the human experience and not just for kids. This exhibition of high caliber animation for adults from Animation Nights New York (ANNY) is a sample of storytelling in diverse styles and mediums from all around the world.

The music video created by Emily Hubley (United States) for the song *Hail* by Hamell on Trial tells the story of three hate crime victims who meet in the afterlife. The director uses intentional lines and image transmogrification to express the ephemeral, the heartbreaking, and the passage of time. It is a perfect partnership for a song which uses a fantastic scenario to express a gutting reality. This is a successful example of how animation has the unique

ability, much like music, to handle the most difficult subject matter in the most relatable way.

The documentary style 2D animation *Mr Madila* by Rory Waudby-Tolley was an ANNY Best of Fest Grand Prize Winner. The film is created with hand-drawn motion graphics and live-action elements. The film dives deep into a profound message about metaphysics and human behavior with large doses of humor and fantastic voice acting. The animation poses are brilliant.



Remus Buznea & Kyriaki Kyriakou, still from *Night Falls on Loserville*, 2015, 2D animated film

The pace of the beautifully designed and animated short film *Night Falls on Loserville* by Remus and Kiki (United Kingdom) captures the pace and vibe of teenage parties and coming of age before the dawn of cell phones. We watch a group of friends hang out through the course of an evening. The 2D animation depicts one evening in one town, somewhere.

In *Passage* by Igor Ćorić (Serbia), the sounds of fire and battle in the first few frames give a glimpse of the horrors about to unfold. Using hand-drawn backgrounds and simple shapes, this beautiful 2D animated short film depicts genocide as a means of control and the ungovernable turn of the tide.

*The History of Ukraine in 5 Minutes* is a timely, informative, and delightful animated music video for Ukrainian rap group TNMK. The director Sashko Danylenko (Ukraine / United States) takes cues from the lyrics, but the work takes flight in character animation and hand-crafted design in this 2D puppet animation of hand-drawn characters and backgrounds.

*The Punishment* by Nelson Fernandes (Portugal / Spain) is created in cardboard. The gorgeous animation of this stop-motion film touches on pain

in the depths of sadness and speaks to what might happen if we live in that space for too long.

*The Bird and the Whale* by Carol Freeman (Ireland) is a masterful animated short film that uses a paint-on-glass technique to spin an underwater tale of a young whale who is lost and then found through kinship. The musical score and gorgeous palette work together depicting helplessness, loss, change, and acceptance in this outstanding work of art.

*Girl and Robot* by Joe Loftus (Ireland) is a 2D animation set in a futuristic post-apocalyptic landscape with robots as constant companions. We follow the adventures of a young woman who is running from the law. The director's use of tension and darkness in the story, coupled with appealing design, creates an unsettling but compelling contrast of elements.

The life of a woman is measured in a timeline of her many pet cats in the incredibly charming and expertly animated stop-motion film *The Quintet of the Sunset* by Jie Weng (China). Reflecting the special relationship between pets and their guardians, while playing with the notion of the flow of time, this piece uses entertaining anthropomorphic scenarios to



Igor Ćorić, still from *Prelazak* (*Passage*), 2019, mixed media animated film



Sashko Danylenko, still from *TNMK - The History of Ukraine in 5 Minutes*, 2019, cutout stop-motion animated film

describe the varied feline cast of characters and their loving caretaker.

The surreal first shot of *Gravedad* by Matisse Gonzalez (Bolivia / Germany) opens with calm acoustics and mellow tones which build into a message of light and heavy days, longing and necessity, dreams and wishes, and the importance of finding a way to follow your own path to keep hope alive for yourself and others. The director uses a limited visual palette and makes use of weight in 2D animation to visually emphasize the depth of feeling.

*Belongings* by Carol Silverman (United States) is a Virtual Reality 6DoF immersive piece which is historical fiction rooted in biography. The story of a young girl sent to a Nazi internment camp and later brought to safety is told through a narrative triggered by interactions with personal objects. Items are picked up, held close, and experienced. The story deeply resonates, built piece by piece through intimate artifacts, while the environment shifts forward in time.

Set in the distant future, *Artificial World* by Bas Jansen (Netherlands) is a Virtual Reality 3DoF 360 piece that lets the viewer consider what might

happen if an artificial intelligence took stock of the impact humans have had on the environment. *Artificial World* was a past ANNY Best of Fest Grand Prize Winner for VR 360. The 360-background design is an integral part of the story.

In every style and medium, successful animation brings together motion, clarity, timing, and design to create the illusion of life. It can entertain, inform, and even inspire us to consider our own place in the universe. Animation is about the study of humanity as much as it is a study of technique. It is about both observation and keyframe. These twelve animated pieces each contain moments of reflection on elements of the human condition while simultaneously sweeping us away with artistry.

Yvonne Grzenkowicz



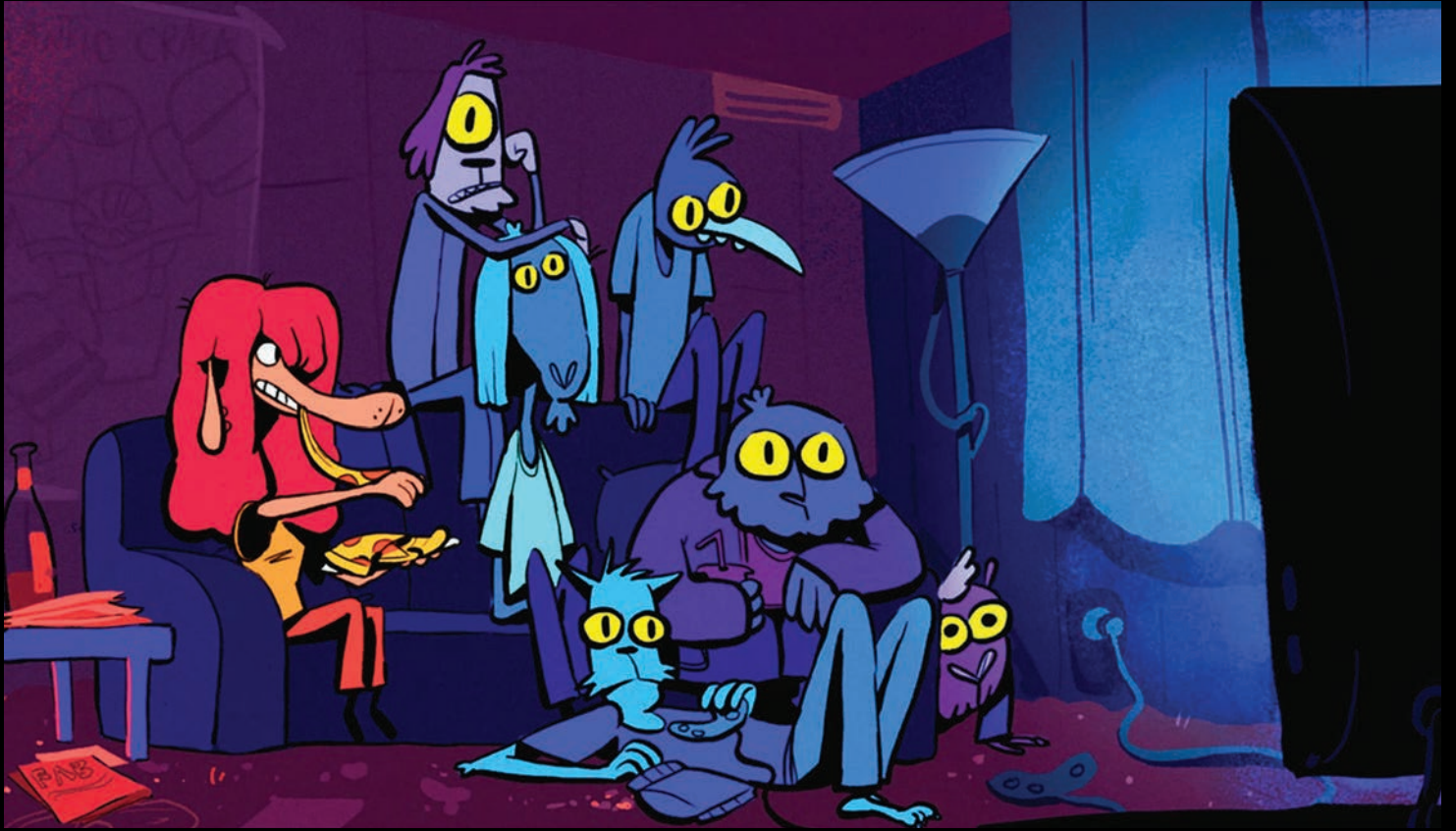
Bas Jansen, *Artificial World*, 2017, virtual reality 3DoF 360 animated film



Rory Waudby-Tolley, still from *Mr Madila*, 2015, mixed media animated film



**Yvonne Grzenkowicz** is Founder and Executive Director of Animation Nights New York (ANNY). Founded in 2015, ANNY is a curated monthly screening event and annual festival in New York City which presents animated short films, virtual reality animation experiences, and games from around the world. Grzenkowicz is a New York City based animator and interactive designer with experience in short film, feature film, advertising, music videos, digital publishing, video games, live visuals, and interactive websites. She has extensive training in character animation and a background in fine art. Grzenkowicz is also co-owner of *Animation for Adults*, a US/UK based podcast and website for animation aficionados. She attended the University of Georgia and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University in Boston for painting and drawing, and Animation Mentor for character animation and creature animation.



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# *Night Falls on Loserville*

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**Remus Buznea & Kyriaki Kyriakou** (United Kingdom)

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2015, 2D animated film, 4:29

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Three friends go for a night out in their small slice of sweet suburban paradise.

Remus & Kiki are a London based animation duo. Their creative collaboration began in a humble student flat, where they completed the Royal Television Society award-winning short *Dateless* in 2014.

The weird and wonderful 2D animations Remus & Kiki create and illustrate, have been seen around the world, winning audience choice at Animation Nights New York, Cartoon Brew's Short Pick of the Day, and Vimeo Staff Pick, to name a few. They have been able to create a variety of projects for commercial clients such as Adult Swim, Coachella, Warner Bros, and TED-Ed. From abstract, humorous worlds, to wonderfully observed caricatures, the duo is seamlessly designing for any genre or medium.

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# **Prelazak** (*Passage*)

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**Igor Ćorić** (Serbia)

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2019, mixed media animated film, 6:50

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After our hero, a young boy, is left alone to die in the midst of war and destruction, the last members of his tribe are dismantled to basic geometric forms under enemy fire. Taken by the feeling of sorrow and loss, the boy builds a totem out of their remains. Armed with this new structure, he continues towards another confrontation, with an unexpected twist.

Igor Ćorić is an animator, film director, and author of inexorable energy. Since he graduated from the painting program at the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Arts in Belgrade sixteen years ago, he created over two hundred animated shorts, which have been screened and awarded at numerous animation and short film festivals around the world. He has worked as the director, animator and storyboard artist on most of Ted-Ed riddles and Astra Nova School's *Conundrum* series. Ćorić runs Artrake, an animation studio in Belgrade, Serbia.





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# ***TNMK - The History of Ukraine in 5 Minutes***

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**Sashko Danylenko** (Ukraine / United States)

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2019, cutout stop-motion animated film, 5:43

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Tanok na Maidani Kongo (Dance on Kongo Square or TNMK) presents a new video in which the entire history of Ukraine is taught in just five minutes, from the big bang to the present, in transit through the most significant events in our history. Ukrainians have something to be proud of! What happens next is up to you. The short film features rap by Ukrainian hip-hop group TNMK and lyrics by the activist poet Artem Polezhaka.

experiments as a hobby until the band Ocheretyani Kit found his style of animation interesting for a music video to the song *Zishla zorya* in 2011. Since then he has created animated music videos for other Ukrainian bands—DakhaBrakha, MORJ, and TNMK—which were selected and honored by many festivals.

In 2013, Danylenko moved to Kyiv where he started working closely with the Institut Français and began his international collaborations. His first international project was the animation film *Swan* with Kwoon, a French post-rock band. In 2015 he decided to travel to the United States to broaden his horizons and seek new experiences and inspiration, while working as a freelance illustrator for Ukrainian publishing companies and developing new animation projects. In 2016 Danylenko presented his project *Bike Portraits* in a TED Residency Talk.

Sashko Danylenko is a multi-media visual storyteller and filmmaker from Ukraine whose unique style joins folk and contemporary aesthetics. He creates magic worlds with colorful characters and extraordinary allegories. Born in Ukraine, Danylenko went to the industrial city of Kharkiv in 2006 to study thermal physics but there discovered animation. He created short animation

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# ***El Castigo*** *(The Punishment)*

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**Nelson Fernandes** (Portugal / Spain)

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2012, stop-motion animated film, 3:30

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Lisa, a lonely girl, has been punished by her mother and she confines herself to her bedroom, where she feeds with her own tears her only friend, a plant.

Award-winning Portuguese artist Nelson Fernandes, aka Zina Caramelo, was born in Marvão, Portugal. Since 2000 he has been developing his work in a series of fields such as video, animation, photography, painting, and illustration.

From 2002 to 2009, Fernandes collaborated with young artists, as a production assistant, programmer and film selector, at Imago International Young Film and Video Festival in Fundão, Portugal. His compulsive creativity has continually challenged him to work in a variety of mediums, be it in directing animated short films such as *Paths of Light*, *The Big-Headed Boy*, and the recent *Us*; or exploring *old* new materials, techniques and chemicals, in painting (chemigrams), etching, analogue photography (pinhole and solargraphy), and printmaking.







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# ***The Bird and the Whale***

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**Carol Freeman** (Ireland)

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2018, paint-on-glass animated film, 7:03

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*The Bird and the Whale* is a story about a young whale struggling to find his voice. After straying too far from his family to explore a shipwreck, he discovers its sole survivor, a caged songbird. Together they struggle to survive lost at sea.

Carol Freeman is an award-winning director and art director best known for her Irish Film and Television Academy nominated and Cannes Young Director Award winning short, *The Bird and the Whale*. She is the Founder and Creative Director of the Dublin based stop-motion studio Paper Panther. She loves experimental animation of any kind, from felt puppets and paper cut-out to charcoal and paint-on-glass. Her debut stop-motion feature *The Lost Queen* is currently in development. Freeman is also a voting member of the Irish Film and Television Academy.

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# ***Gravedad*** *(Gravity)*

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**Matisse Gonzalez** (Bolivia / Germany)

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2019, 2D animated film, 10:30

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There are easy days and there are hard days. *Gravedad* represents the ups and downs we all experience in life. Some people can handle them better than others can. Further, people like Rosa, the protagonist, learn to respect them and see them as an advantage.

Gonzalez's shorts explore deep emotions and feelings, expressing them in tangible ways. Coming from Bolivia and living in Germany, she connects the best of both worlds creating films which are chaotic yet structured, tragic yet funny, and outgoing yet intimate. Gonzalez is developing a pilot episode for Cartoon Network Latinoamérica as part of the *Girl Power* program for Pixelatl while also working on her new film as part of ASF (Animation Sans Frontières).

Matisse Gonzalez Jordán is a Bolivian animator, illustrator and director who graduated in 2019 from the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg. Her graduation film *Gravedad* has been shown in several international animation festivals, won multiple awards, and was nominated for a 2020 Annie Award and the Premios Quirino Award.





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# *Hail*

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**Emily Hubley** (United States)

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2011, 2D animated film, 3:06

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Commissioned by Victor Campos of Creative Outlet Productions, *Hail* tells the story of three hate-crime victims who meet up in heaven.

Emily Hubley has been making short animated films for almost four decades. She has also provided animation for various films including *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *Danny Says*, and *Blue Vinyl*. Her 2009 feature, *The Toe Tactic* premiered theatrically at the Museum of Modern Art in NYC. Recent projects include the shorts *Faithy, hey* and *Brainworm Billy*, made in collaboration with her son, Max Rosenthal; animated segments for the documentaries *Vessel* by Diana Whitten and *Motian in Motion* by Michael Patrick Kelly; and *Dear Trump Voter*, for Inequality Media. Among recent awards is a 2022 Fellowship from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. Emily Hubley is a daughter of animated filmmakers Faith and John Hubley, and has presented their work at numerous museums and festivals.

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# *Artificial World*

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**Bas Jansen** (Netherlands)

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2017, virtual reality 3DoF 360 animated film, 4:00

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In a world in which humans destroyed the planet, thereby killing almost all living organisms, the humans that are still left decide to create an artificial intelligence computer to restore the balance on earth. The purpose of the computer is to create a new world. The computer gets more power and is acting like a creator. Do we want this? Is there still a place for humans? Do we trust the judgment of a machine?

Amsterdam artist Bas Jansen is a storyteller and world builder with a passion for science fiction and philosophy. He is focused on speculative design and building futuristic worlds that let viewers dream away, but also encourage them to think critically about our world. He investigates the limits of being human and the relation between humans, nature, and technology.

*Artificial World* was an official selection by twenty-four international film festivals and won numerous awards including: Best of Fest VR Grand Prize at Animation Nights New York, Best VR Technical Performance at Riga Digital Forum, and Best Immersive Animation at ANIMA (Córdoba International Animation Festival). Among other projects by Jansen are the animated short film *Lifeless* (collaboration with Fokke Mars and Max van der Ree) that played at festivals around the world and character modeling for a zoetrope sponsored by Efteling theme park and Coca Cola. In 2021 Jansen worked at Submarine, a production company in the Amsterdam, as a lighting and shading artist for the 3D feature film *Twee Kleine Kleutertjes*.







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# *Girl and Robot*

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**Joe Loftus** (Ireland)

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2020, 2D animated film, 11:55

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*Girl and Robot* follows the story of a traumatized young girl who is chased across the desert by officers of the state. On her way, she meets a robot who is afraid of being left alone. As the pursuers catch up, the girl and the robot must work together to survive.

Joe Loftus is a filmmaker, writer, and director based in Dublin; he has been making short animated films since 2014. He has worked as an animator and director on shows for Disney, BBC, and Hasbro. Among the awards Loftus received for *Girl and Robot* are: Best Animation Film, Europe Film Festival; Award of Excellence, One-Reeler Short Film Competition; Best Sci-Fi, Reale Film Festival; and Award of Excellence, Best Shorts Competition.

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# Belongings

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**Carol Silverman** (United States)

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2020, mixed media virtual reality 6DoF animated film, 5:00

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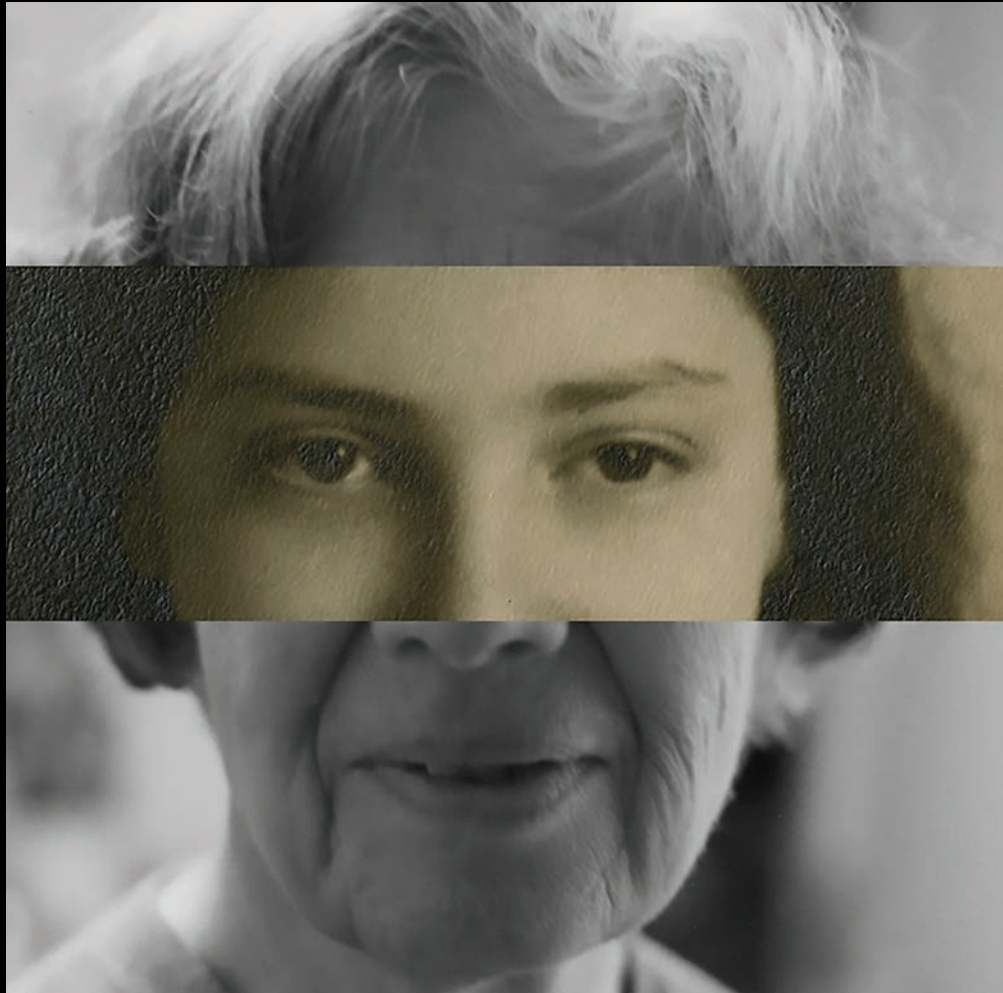
Every day, across the world, survivors are left with the possessions of a loved one who has passed away, a lifetime of objects holding their secrets. What if sorting through those objects revealed a person different from the one you knew? You can never ask them why. Never know the truth.

After my mother's death, among her things, I found photographs and documents that revealed a past she had kept secret my whole life. No one will ever be closer to me than she was. I thought I knew her. The more information I found, the more the mystery deepened.

In *Belongings* the objects left behind step forward to tell the story. A whole person is discovered from bits and pieces, little details, out of order. It is as true a history of this person, this character, this protagonist of her own life, as anyone will ever know. The story progresses in real time by way of interaction with Ellen's artifacts inside a changing world of color and music. It is up to the viewer which items to pick up and listen to. In *Belongings*, as in life, the participant chooses their own actions, but they cannot control the passage of time.

Carol Silverman is a storyteller at the intersection of material culture and technology. Her work centers on the narrative power of objects. She believes that if we take a moment to listen, the worn, used, tactile things around us will tell us much about ourselves. Silverman thinks of her day job as a decorator of sets for film and television as an object-based storytelling lab.

Silverman has decorated projects ranging from parody commercials for *Saturday Night Live* to the feature film *The Hoax*, directed by Lasse Halström and starring Richard Gere, to the HBO series *Boardwalk Empire*, for which her set decoration team was recognized by the Television Academy with four Emmy Awards. *Belongings*, her room scale 6DoF narrative VR experience, was an Official Selection at Raindance Immersive, FIVARS Festival, and Animation Nights New York Best of Fest.





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# *Mr Madila*

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**Rory Waudby-Tolley** (United Kingdom)

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2015, mixed media animated film, 8:37

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Everything is mostly nothing. Look closely and you can see all the little bits and pieces, and all the gaps in between. *Mr Madila* or *The Colour of Nothing* documents a series of conversations between the filmmaker and a gifted spiritual healer, exploring the inner mind, the fabric of the universe, and the nature of reality itself, through the sacred art of animation.

residency at Pinsent Masons law firm where he created an animated documentary *Art for Lawyers*. In 2018 he made an award-winning environmental animated documentary about a lake in East Texas, *There's Something in the Water*. In 2019 he co-directed with Diana Gradinaru *New Year*, a BFI NETWORK funded sci-fi comedy short. His latest short animation *Powerwash (I Love You)* won the Taash Comedy Award at London Short Film Festival.

Waudby-Tolley has worked commercially for clients such as CBBC Channel, Snazaroo, *Nature* (journal), and Hasbro. As a freelance animator he has worked with several studios in London including Studio AKA, Blink Ink, Beakus, and Jelly. He is represented for film and television by Matimba Kabalika at B-Side Management.

Rory Waudby-Tolley is a writer, director and animator from London, whose films have played at many festivals around the world and been featured on Short of the Week, Cartoon Brew, It's Nice That, and Vimeo Staff Picks. His Royal College of Art graduation film *Mr Madila* has won prizes at Palm Springs Animation Festival; Fantoche International Animation Film Festival in Baden, Switzerland; Flickerfest in Sydney, Australia; and Premier Plans Festival in Angers, France. The film qualified for the Academy Award by winning the Royal Television Society Award for Best Post Grad Animation. Two new *Mr Madila* shorts were later commissioned by Adult Swim.

In 2017 Waudby-Tolley completed an arts

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# *The Quintet of the Sunset*

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**Jie Weng** (China)

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2019, stop-motion animated film, 8:00

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What we expect from the relationship with animals reveals how we want to be treated and respected. This film focuses on the evolution and changes in the human beings' life from the first-person perspective of an animal. In *The Quintet of the Sunset*, five cats with distinguished personalities live their healthy and happy lives thanks to the care and love of their owner Gina. When Gina reaches the end of her life, they watch over Gina forever in their own way and their hearts beat as one with Gina's heart.

Characters, scenes, and props are artworks that deliver delicacy and tenderness to the film. This is where stop-motion animation differentiates itself from other animation forms. *The Quintet of the Sunset* is directed by Jie Weng, produced by Realwood Studios, and represented worldwide by Yilisoo Films.

Jie Weng was born into an artistic family. Influenced by his father, an oil painter, he started to learn drawing from a very young age. He majored in sculpting in college, but he always felt that it was not something he was meant to do.

During his exchange study in the United States, Weng met Dan Krall, who was the character designer for *Coraline* by Henry Selick, and found his true passion, stop-motion. After that, he taught himself animation, produced two stop-motion shorts, and founded his own stop-motion studio, Realwood Studios in Hangzhou, which has grown to be one of the best stop-motion studios in China. Directed by Weng, the team has completed several animated shorts and won numerous awards from all over the world.





Cathy and Jesse Marion Art Gallery

***Independent Motion: Twelve Animated Films from Around the World***

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