



Welcome to ASIFA Central! We are the Midwest-US chapter of ASIFA, the oldest organization of animators in the world. Our chapter was established in 1975. Because we are volunteers, we ask our board members to take on some of the responsibilities such as social media coordinator, retreat co-organizer, doing web updates, ani-jam facilitator, party planners and more. Board members are the front line for our Midwest animation chapter and are in touch with the international board.

ASIFA Central Board



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Deanna Morse

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Christopher Sagovac

Interlocutor of Projects, Feline Friskiness,
and Virtual Cupcakes (*nom nom nom*)
Gretchen Vinnedge

Award Winning, Best-Dressed Digital
Director and ASIFA Central Website
Commando **WITH THE NEATEST
BASEMENT IN THE MIDWEST**
Julie Goldstein

Molder of Youthful Minds and Keeper of
Esoteric Knowledge of Toasted
Engravings
Steven Leeper

Tallest Human Ever to Animate
Bob Swieringa

Stop-Motionator, Rocket launch monitor,
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Gary Schwartz

THE 2021 ASIFA CENTRAL SUMMER RETREAT

July 16 -18 - a Virtual Experience

from the dog-eared notebooks of **Bob Swieringa** and **Jim Middleton**



Gretchen Vinnedge provided the most delicious of virtual cakes for this year's retreat

Friday, 7/16:

That collection of shorts from OIAF. Great, varied collection of shorts, all interesting to view. Brought to us via the persistent generosity of the Polly Wolly Doodlers. Once the link to the films became available, attendees retired to watch them independently. A lively discussion followed that as participants reconvened to share reactions and ideas. It was a wonderful beginning for the Retreat, immersing us collectively even though we were geographically separate. The event set the tone well for the weekend.

The Ottawa International Animation Festival generously provided us with ten "best of" examples from their 2020 selections, in addition to making virtual attendance at this year's festival available to ASIFA members at a discount. These films ran the spectrum of brief whimsy (*Ma Mer à Boire*, a stop-motion dream where the bed becomes a living beach), absolute surrealism (*Pà kis Panelom!*) surrounding an apartment complex, to life-sized styrofoam (*KKUM*). *Mor*

Visste Ingenting ("Mother Didn't Know") was part of a larger project that made use of five-foot sets and elaborate puppetry. All of the films possessed some level of aesthetic uniqueness.



ASIFA discounts await members!



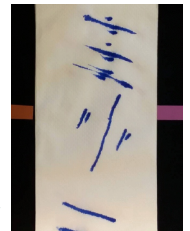
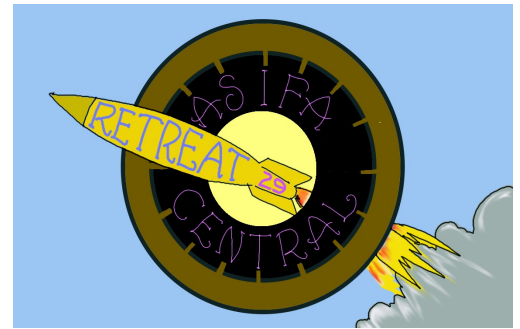
This composite can be created during a brief workshop? Astounding. (Photo by Deanna Morse)

Saturday, 7/17:

Retreaters regathered resoundingly on Saturday for the main day of the Retreat.

And resounding it was! Julie Goldstein was able to, within an hour, walk us through the mysteries of Adobe Aero and Character Animator, with a taste of Miximo, and had us using this suite of products to create real-time visual integration which can then be adjusted in Premiere or as a motion capture tool to create character movement from a massive library of examples. *(I had just experienced some VR games before the retreat, and I gladly profess that making these environments is a whole lot more fun than merely playing in them!)* The Adobe suite of programs is definitely robust and expanding with several of the products being extremely sophisticated even in beta mode. *(And it gave me the opportunity to split an infinitive! Mrs. Rutledge would be soooo disappointed!)*

For more info on the software – <https://www.adobe.com/products/aero.html>



With enough TP, you're never out of scratch pads

The second workshop, “TP Animation,” was hosted by Michael Long and Melissa Bouwman. This was a lively workshop presenting techniques and ideas for animating all that excess tissue gathered during the previous year. After examples and guidelines (additionally provided on a handy handout), participants each set to work on our own “masTPerpiece.” When completed, we uploaded our shorts and Melissa tirelessly wove them together for our later viewing. It was a wonderful and inventive workshop, helping to get creative electricity sparking among us – a superb outcome and goal for the annual Retreat.

The “how to” portion of the TP workshop, with the emphasis on “Stop Motion Studio” is a supplement to this newsletter!

After a break, the sparks continued with a series of Lightning Talks from participants who volunteered to share their current and future creative work, their various projects with students and communities, and their discoveries of animation material that helped to fuel them during these isolating days of the pandemic. It was great to behold the ideas, activities, and creativity being undertaken by members, even under very limiting circumstances. Again, this reminded me of the importance of our chapter, and the involvement of its members in myriad manners.

❖ Chris Sagovac gave us a walk down memory lane with his 16-bit *PISKEL* demo. These bouncing balls have edge.

❖ Jorgelina Orfila gave a presentation on *Animation as Therapeutic Practice* through the *Animation Research Gang* (<http://www.animationduo.com/arg.html>), where stop-motion animation facilitates art therapy, using tactile experiences with available material to express personal narratives in one-minute personal masterpieces. Their program in Lubbock, Texas, continues to grow annually.



Frame from “Time Passing : Passing Time”

❖ Deanna Morse, Gretchen Vinnedge, Suzanne Zack, and Jim Middleton, the “Polly Wolly Doodlers” discussed their animated ArtPrize project, *Time Passing : Passing Time*, appearing at Grand Rapids’ Water Colors Aquarium from September 16 - October 3. (Entry 70766)

❖ Christine Veras described her *Experimental Animation Lab*, with the credo, “Come Experiment with us!” - and be *experimena.l* ! WWW.aggie.io was presented as an online, collaborative painting.

❖ Michael Long gave a progress report on his dreamy, aquatic short film, *Island Hopping*, a metaphor for life being the journey, not the destination.

❖ Deanna Morse gave a breathlessly paced overview of the concept of *The Exquisite Corpse*, how Renga begat Haiku, and her recent series of projects inspired by the endless number of Zoom meetings being held during the pandemic. *Anizoomation* has absorbed large portions of her bandwidth time, creating fun images with fellow animator Melissa Bouwman.

❖ Chris Scott (<https://orrinscott.blogspot.com/>) had *Stuff to Share*, from Spike and Mike, to the Orange Years at Nickelodeon, to *Tommy Stathes Cartoon Carnival*. His library is a phenomenon unto itself.

❖ Jim Middleton showed the progress on his short film, *Seule Töd*, stitching together about seven minutes of the 80% completed film. Christine Veras noted that, assembled, it’s “making sense now.” Jim asked her to “please explain it to me, someday.”





Gretchen Vinnedge

We broke for dinner, a virtual “going out” compared to previous Retreats when we have gathered in 3D. But there was plenty more online for us in the evening to anticipate. Evidently forgoing sustenance, Melissa stitched together our TP animations into one film for us to enjoy. It was wild! Colors, shapes, movement in such varied energy on what can be seen as such a humble medium. A wonderful reminder that the life animation brings to us is limitless in form and presentation.

With our eyeballs primed, we turned to the last event, one that truly emphasized to me the “family” nature of this year’s Retreat: an evening of members sharing animation that they love, are amazed by, are creating, find impactful, - in short, that somehow stands out and connects to each who spoke. It was a true mix highlighting the personal links we create with animation; a joy to hear among our colleagues.

- ❖ Christine Veras shared her thoughts on “persistence of vision” through Dana Sink’s *Power* from 2018
- ❖ Michael Long produced the UPA classic, *Rootie Toot Toot* from 1951 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EE8_ddz0XvI) definitely not an animation for the matinee crowd, as an example of innovation with limited resources
- ❖ Bob Swieringa chose the found-foam production miracle from 2010, *The Eagleman Stag* (<https://vimeo.com/41756240>) for his moving animation moment
- ❖ Deanna Morse directed us to a few moments from the fastidiously created short, *Circular*, by Páraic McGloughlin, featured recently at the AAFF. McGloughlin must have external hard drives stuffed with visual material.
- ❖ Brianna Yarhouse chose the striking graphic design of Julia Pott’s *Belly* as a personal favorite, a Sundance festival choice as well from 2012
- ❖ Jim Middleton expressed his appreciation to John Canemaker, Elfrieda Fischinger, and William Moritz for their 1977 appearance on *Camera Three* - restoring his enthusiasm for animation through Fischinger’s *Studies* and showing him that, even with spatula in hand, there is a reason to get up and be thankful for every day. (John Canemaker archive article at <https://www.awn.com/mag/issue2.4/awn2.4pages/2.4canemakernyu.html>) (Fischinger appreciation at https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com/2007/02/oskar-fischinger-saved-my-life_04.html)
- ❖ Gretchen Vinnedge championed Chelsea Manifold’s stop-motion film, *View O Rama*, from 2004 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s5QBsyY-RbU>) - a former area student, she recently appeared at Kendall in Grand Rapids as a visiting artist
- ❖ Julie Goldstein found *Springtime in CoVid Land*, a work in progress using motion capture from Adobe’s *Character Animator*. Again, this Adobe suite of programs is very impressive.
- ❖ David Baker wrapped up this “sense of community with our peeps” with *The Poetry Project*, where students must come up with a script and create visual assets from scratch.



Gretchen Vinnedge



And, having told each other these sweet bedtime stories, we tucked ourselves in and slid off to pleasant dreams - ending the 29th ASIFA Central Summer Retreat



FESTIVAL NEWS - Coming Up - The Ottawa International Animation Festival (OIAF)

notes by Charles Wilson, Forensic Animator and ASIFA Central Membership Coordinator

Founded in 1976, the Ottawa International Animation Festival has become the second largest animation festival in the world and the largest in the Western Hemisphere. Every September, animators from all over the world migrate to Ottawa, Ontario, Canada for five days of screenings, retrospectives, workshops, panel discussions, and parties--all about animation!

In 2020 and 2021, the festival organizers made a decision to move forward, business-as-usual, with one significant change: in lieu of holding the usual in-person festival, they extended the festival to two weeks and streamed the event online so folks all over the world could attend virtually--with the hopes to return to a physical in-person festival in the not too distant future.

The upcoming Ottawa festival will be held from September 22nd to October 3rd. *And as a member organization, ASIFA members in good standing have been offered a \$10 discount off of the normal pass price. That's right, if you want to attend the festival this year (from the comfort of your own home), it'll be \$50 instead of the \$60 price for non-members.* And this discount extends to those who would like to attend the Ottawa Festival's Television Animation Conference that occurs in the days leading up to the festival. For those who want to attend both the OIAF and the TAC, the price will be \$110 instead of the non-member price of \$120.

And if you're not a member or have let your membership lapse, please consider joining ASIFA Central to enjoy this special perk of membership. Lastly, if you don't know if your membership is current, please feel free to e-mail me at asifa@asifa.org and I can see if you're on the list of current members eligible for the discount, that I'll be sending to the Ottawa Festival next month.

The box office will go live near the end of July. And in order to buy a pass for the festival, you'll need to register an account with the festival portal "eventival.com", which you should do ahead of time. The festival director will have a list of ASIFA Central members and you will receive an email from me (Charles Wilson) with the password for the discount. Don't buy the pass before you receive the password - you won't get the discount!

Information about the OIAF itself can be read on their website at animationfestival.ca which includes things like the short and feature film selections.

One important notice before we get to the e-mail from the festival:

This discount is only available for ASIFA Central members at the International level who have paid their dues for the 2021 year. If you're not sure what your membership status is, please feel free to e-mail me at asifa@asifa.org to verify, as in the next week or so, I'll be sending a list of our current members to the festival so they can validate your discount when you order your pass. As new members join (or people re-up their membership), I'll be e-mailing those updates to the festival, so you still have time to get in on the action.

The Animapass 60\$ (50\$ with Association discount) features access to:

- All Screenings and Talks.
- The Animation Exposé Fair (featuring animation schools, recruiters, and more).
- The Virtual NightOwl Party.

The TAC Pass 120\$ (110 with association discount) features access to:

The Fast Track speed meeting sessions featuring buyers from around the world.

Exclusive TAC networking opportunities and the TAC Delegate Guide

- All Screenings and Talks.
- The Animation Exposé Fair (featuring animation schools, recruiters, and more).
- The Virtual NightOwl Party.
- Option to apply for inclusion in Artist Gallery (an opportunity for OIAF participants to showcase their work to studios and recruiters in attendance)

Next issue - "A Year of Lockdown Festivals, Covid Conventions, and Animation Fund-Raising - coming as soon as this archive drive finishes its backup!"



ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) Summertime (August) 2021 - see the updated website with more announcements **and an ever expanding newsletter archive** for ASIFA Central at - <https://asifa.org>

And then dive into more digital fun at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/asifacentral>

and for ASIFA International - <https://asifa.net> - be sure to check out the Facebook page on ANIZOOMATION

As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or recipes for zucchini bread, along with the usual castigations to yr hmb1 typist, at jim.middletonrx@gmail.com or, for dull bloggery, <https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com>

**BONUS FEATURE IN THIS EDITION OF THE ASIFA CENTRAL NEWSLETTER:
TP ANIMATION: PANDEMIC EDITION - with Melissa Bauwman**

WHEN ANIMATING YOUR TOILET PAPER:

You can keep the roll intact or separate the sheets and use a simple x-y axis guide to register your drawings. Abstract shapes and rhythms; color transitions; even simple narratives with objects or figures--all are possible. The invitation is to work rough and loose. Draw or paint with media that soak into the paper: water colors, sharpies, inks, etc. Rely on liquid accidents.

It's good to put something under the sheets to soak up any excess colors as you work and protect your drawing surface. You probably won't be able to stack the sheets for onion skin work or to flip them--but If you find a way, please share your technique! Trust in guessing at positioning colors, shapes, and figures and see what happens.

Other observations:

- Thicker TP is easier to work with, tears less.
- Using a "downshooter" method to capture is recommended, as shooting the animation on your toilet paper holder is very challenging and time consuming.

PRIOR TO THE WORKSHOP:

Please have your capture set-up figured out. If you don't have frame capture software, Stop Motion Studio (by Cateater) is our recommended app. It's easy, free, and it's available for both iPhones and Androids.

If you plan to use Stop Motion Studio, and it's your first time - please review the Capturing your Animation notes below for tips to set up your home capture station and to test the app.

CAPTURING YOUR ANIMATION - DIY Style:



Setting up a "Downshooter" with household materials:

You can use cans, water bottles to give your phone camera the vertical distance needed to frame up your TP. If you need just a little more height, padding with packs of sticky notes or folded paper helps.

Secure phone with rubber bands, or non-tacky tape - be aware of location of shutter button.

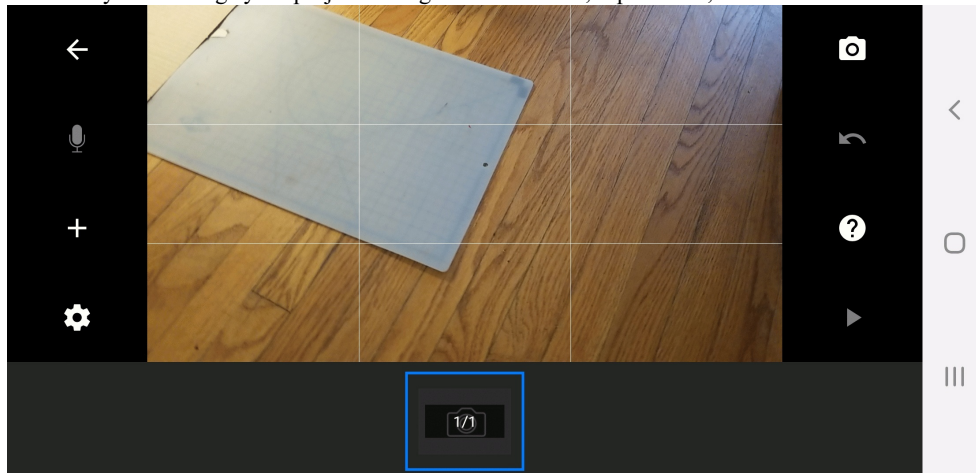
Create a registration setup - I used *Post-Its* to align the perforations

GETTING STARTED STOP MOTION STUDIO (SMS):

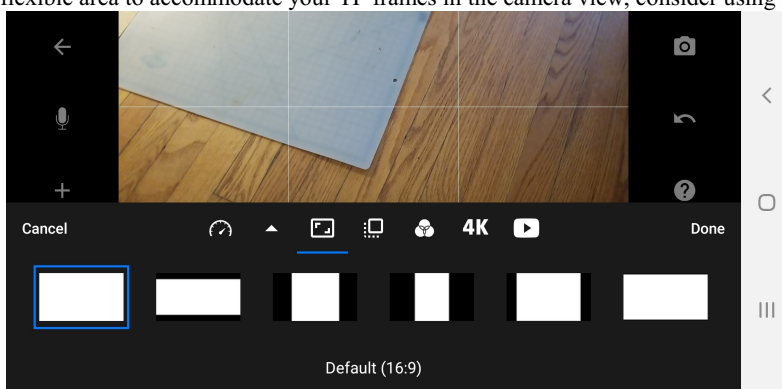
To give the manual a glance when you open the app on your phone, you can use the drop down menu in the upper left corner, choose help, and it will launch the manual with tutorials and instructions. The tutorial clips are cute and informational. The manual will show you how to set up your camera to **change**

the camera mode to manual so you can make adjustments to exposure and focus during shooting. Using manual settings will avoid auto-focus/auto exposure flicker.

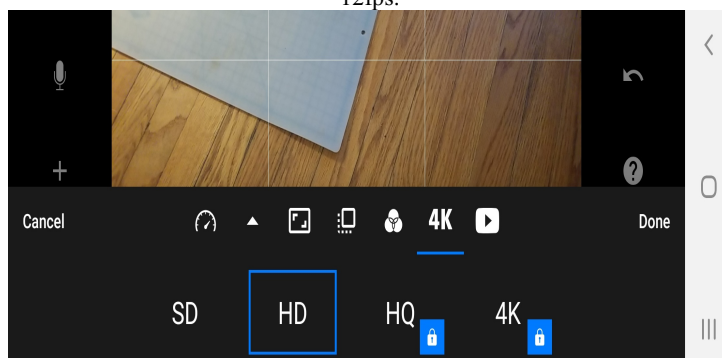
The gear icon will allow you to change your project settings like frame rate, aspect ratio,



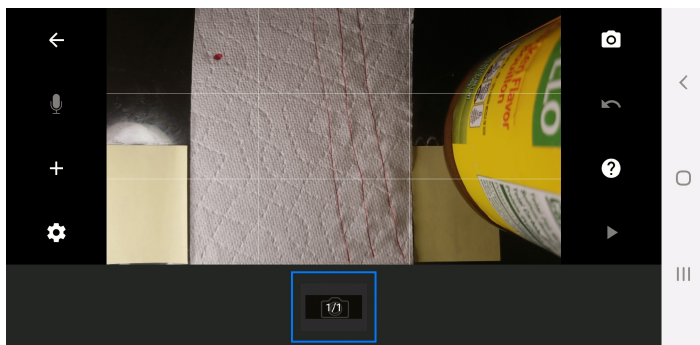
In order to give yourself a flexible area to accommodate your TP frames in the camera view, consider using a wider capture aspect ratio.



Use HD capture quality so that you can still crop and maintain decent quality. Adjust your frame rate (the speedometer icon) - I used 12fps.

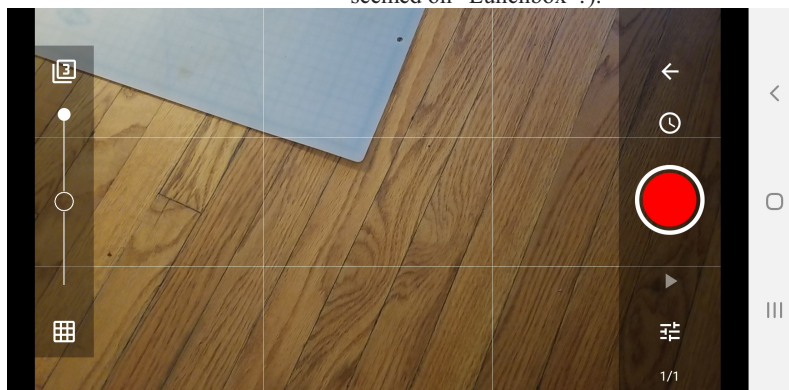


To move into capture mode (and change camera settings) hit the camera button in upper right corner.



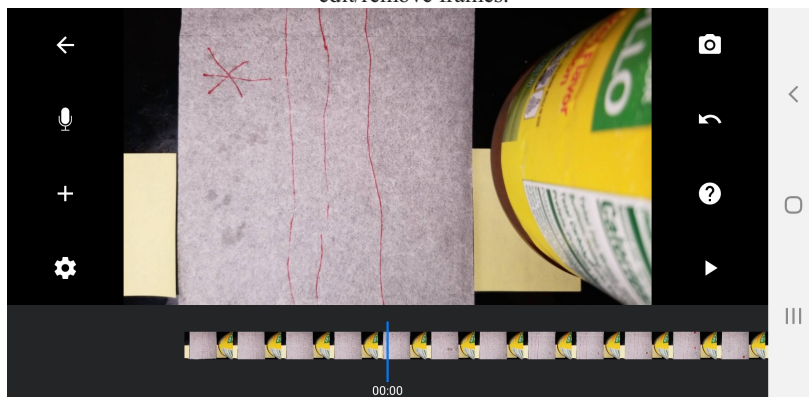
TIP: During your capture session, consider using the grid to line up the edge of your TP.

To take pictures tap the red button. To adjust onion skin, use slider on left hand side of screen (a very nice feature - remember how great it seemed on "Lunchbox"?).

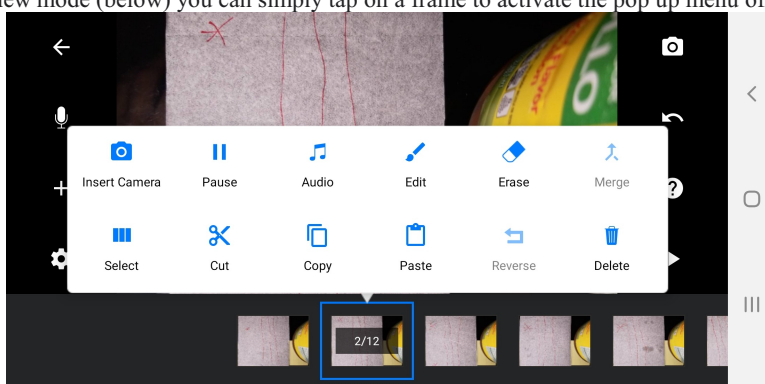


If you make a mistake just shoot the frame again. You can remove frames in “Timeline Mode.” To get to Timeline Mode from the capture window, just hit the back arrow in the upper-right hand corner.

When you enter Timeline Mode, you may have to double tap a frame at the bottom of the screen to see the “frame view” where you can edit/remove frames.



In the frame view mode (below) you can simply tap on a frame to activate the pop up menu of editing options.



To wrap things up, press the arrow pointing left at the top left. You’ll be brought back to the main menu, with “My Movie” now one of the selections available.

Press on the image for “my movie” and a blue menu bar will appear at the top of the screen.

The “share icon” (a V pointing left, with pronounced dots at its points) will permit you to export the movie, create an animated GIF, export all images, or create a flip book.

Exporting the images will create a series of JPGs that can then be imported to a video editing program.

Movies are exported as mp4s.

Flip books are exported as pdf files. Snip snip! Staple staple!

For a freebie, *Stop Motion Studio* has many options.