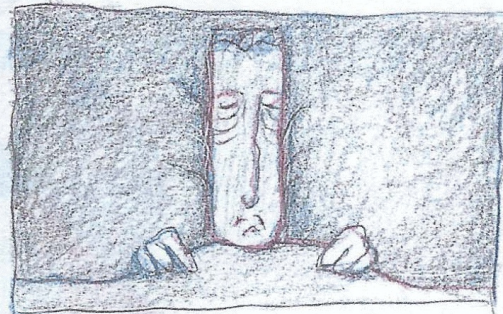
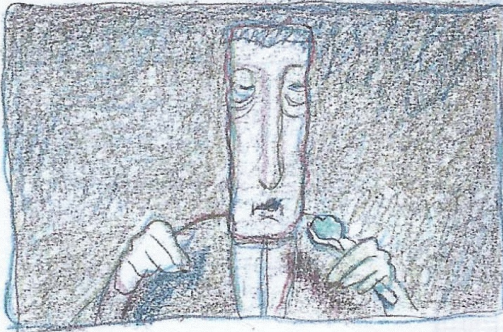
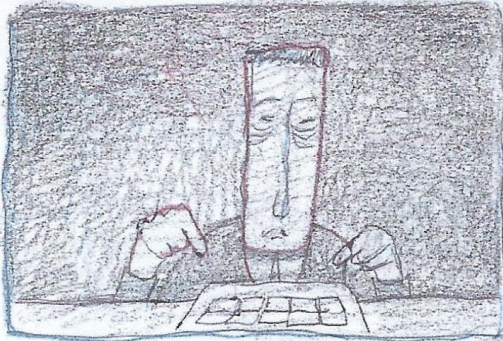


**IT'S OFFICIAL!!!! LOOK OUT, KIDS - THIS  
YEAR, WE'RE PACKIN' PLYMPTON!**

**ASAFA**

INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION DAY

2024



*Plympton*

It's hard to beat news like that anywhere else in this issue, so we're just going to put it out there and let it sink in. Look for more information in the weeks ahead, and certainly look for some group projects and Anijammery to keep everyone busy, because, you know, 2024 just doesn't have enough going on already! We're Packin' Plympton!



This page has been intentionally left  
blank.  
Although there's this on it.  
So, yeah, I know...  
Technically this blank page isn't blank.  
However, if I drew a blank, it might look like this:





## Newsletter for June 2024

### *In This Issue:*

International Exploits of Our Wandering Membership - Deanna Morse  
Works Her Passport Overtime!



The Underappreciated Impact of Astro-Boy on China - And Yet  
Another Metaphor



What About All This AI Fuss? Don't Ask Google or GPT, Ask the  
ANIMATORS!!



Gary Schwartz Because - Well, It's Gary Schwartz!



Website Stats - Stated, Coffee Breaks - Stimulated. Win-Win!



New Member Bios - *IAD Poster Update*



Yr Hmbl Typst Types With His Eyes Shut, Spell-Check Has A Stroke  
and He Ends Up at Kodak and RIT



Public Domain Updates



Festival News from Europe, Canada, and Certain States that Reject 4K,  
Because - Well, 8 Bits is Just Good Enough



*(and how many bits until a byte gets rabies, and can you byte a bit, or  
have a bitty byte of a byte o' mine sandwich, and now if tacos are a  
sandwich, will that mean the end of cum in, as in cum in around the  
mountain, hoarse from the six white horses)*



"Animation - and coffee - unites us!" (May coffee gathering)



## May 2024 Coffee Notes

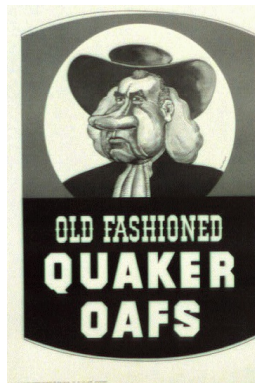
The 11 lucky participants in May were able to experience David Thrasher's combination coffee break and animation history tribute, "Let's Go Out to the Coffee" at the start of this ongoing series of gatherings. "120 years in 15 seconds" were synchronized to an adaptation of a very familiar intermission refrain, using Blender and *udio.com* for the music creation (there were three versions - "I can't stop it," David confessed): a Swing version, a la Benny Goodman, one more in line with Artie Shaw, and a final one with a variation of Ethel Merman. Chris Sagovac suggested the film as a springboard to a group animation project.

Deanna Morse, chiming in from an undisclosed location (that certainly resembled the northwestern wilderness), propelled the members to perform a countdown with a resounding "ASIFA!" in the Zoom environment, and then attempted to get a group ASIFA shot with prepared letters from those peeking in. The caprice of Zoom made proper alignment possible, alas.

This literal ASIFA interaction was part of a group promotion for ASIFA on an international level (later note - it came out pretty dawgun good), to be edited with the assistance of Suzanne Zack, master of multitrack magic. The concurrent use of *udio* prompted a discussion on AI, as some festivals - most recently Cinanima in Portugal - have noted an uptick in AI-based submissions. *Should AI be in its own category, should it be identified as a cooperating entity, or have submissions note whether AI completely created the production?* This will be an ongoing discussion.



Courtesy of David Thrasher



Library of Congress



Animating Apothecary Archives

Chris S added that, when Photoshop first appeared in a 1990 episode of the *Today Show*, the main observation was whether we can "ever trust a photograph again?"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHbM4QJYVYM>

The *Today Show* discussion seems rather quaint and naive today.

Deanna, Jim, and Michael then reminisced about the days of Watergate when all sorts of satiric liberty was taken with reality - Nixon on Quaker Oatmeal, pre-digital audio manipulation, culminating with the "Missing White House Tapes" from *The National Lampoon* (where physical editing of the infamous "No White Wash in the White House" speech was edited with Scotch tape and razor blades to have Nixon say, "Well, I'm a crook.")

The discussion then went to plans for summer trips, with Bob Swieringa musing that he looks for moments to socialize in the analog sense, in order to avoid "becoming a snail, I'm in my own house!"

Brad Uyeda, animation director from Phoenix, Arizona, offered some suggestions surrounding Adobe products before bowing out (stop motion is his specialty at *savmostudio.com*).

Shweta Marathe, our chapter correspondant from Mumbai, provided us with the screenshot, appearing on page one (along with the beautiful, underused ASIFA letters she created for the coffee break).

And then, just like that, it was time for more coffee in June!




Again, from the very busy David Thrasher





## June 2024 Coffee Notes

*Hot-off-the-wire service from our battlefield correspondent, Michael Long of Webster University*

 David Thrasher dropped in first and tried out his new condenser mic (sounds good). He explained how he's been working on upgrading the audio for the animated coffee opening.

After more folks arrived, he played the latest version of "Let's All Go to the Lobby," with midi tones carrying the melody.

Vivi shared a "white hot pepper" cover illustration from a children's book she did for a client (wonderful illustrations!). Then, she started us on a discussion of how to know what ideas to pursue, how do you choose the right one and keep developing the story? Do you make the animation to please yourself, or to please an audience? Big, deep topics!

Steve observed that we're not the novelists of animation (like Pixar or other big studios) – we're *poets*, and often you remember poetry better for its concise, compact, intense effect and resonance.

(Orin felt unwell, alas, and had to leave early, before we got to here about his latest projects.) Shweta M is working on an animated project – a personal, animated documentary. It's not at the stage where she can talk about it yet, but she's doing a lot of pre-production work on a complicated topic. We hope she'll share it with us when she's ready.

Bob, who likes face-to-face board games, is preparing for a sabbatical next year on writing and developing games, partly using open source materials. He's also looking forward to animation projects once he's retired.

For those who weren't around for our pandemic zooms, I shared links to the group projects we did then: *Spiritus Mundi* and the *Animated New Year's cards for 2021*.

***Note: Next month's coffee zoom falls on July 4th, a US holiday, so we'll probably reschedule that month for Wed. July 3<sup>rd</sup>.***



Around the world with ASIFA Central - David from Iowa, Michael from Missouri, Vivi from Greece via the UK, Steve from the wilds of mid-Michigan, Orrin holding down the fort in Indiana, Dr. Bob from an undisclosed location in downtown Grand Rapids, and Shweta from the longest address ever created for a studio in Mumbai, India!



## Meet A New Member - Madison Goetsch

*Madison Goetsch of GVSU is a new student member with ASIFA Central, by way of Julie Goldstein. Her student film, Shimmy On, Starlet, will be part of this chapter's IAD celebratory showreel this fall. She settled down at her keyboard to ask the usual painful questions from yr humbl typst.*

### 1. Recollections from an animated youth:

"The first animated film I remember watching was The Little Mermaid when I was about four. Throughout my life I've been fascinated by the ocean, so that definitely played into my obsession. I did also have a very strong attachment to Ariel's character, particularly in her mermaid form. I spent the rest of my childhood wishing I could be a mermaid (ironically, the reverse of Ariel's character arc). I watched The Little Mermaid at least once per day from ages 4-6, probably due to my admiration for Ariel (more recently, however, I've rewatched the animated series Arcane around 5 times. The way it combines 3D and 2D is absolutely fascinating to me—not to mention, the story is great).

"When I was in late middle school, I encountered the short films made by Calarts students through YouTube. I loved watching them and started hoping that I would eventually have an opportunity to do the same sort of project in college (which I did!).

"I come from an illustration background, so I was never too interested in making a live action film myself. The ways that animation can naturally bend reality depending on the art style has always appealed to me.

"At that age (middle school), I had no confidence in my ability to learn animation on paper, so I held off on animating until I got an iPad as a sophomore in college. In retrospect, I do wish I had started earlier with those materials because of the unique effect of paper animation...there weren't any specific channels I followed—I just soaked up whatever information I could. In my junior year of college is when I took my first of three animation classes taught by Julie Goldstein."



Madison Goetsch, of GVSU

## 2. Influences and Attractions to The Genre

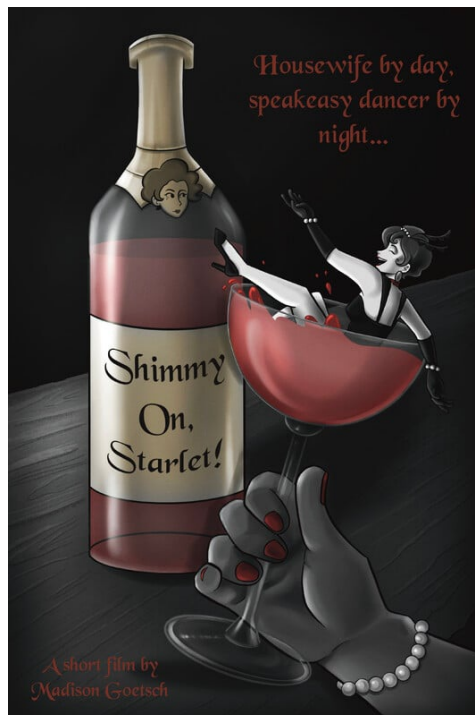
"The Disney films I grew up on were definitely a major inspiration style-wise, but Phineas and Ferb was the first animated show that made me curious about the animation process. I remember asking my mom how the characters were always drawn the same from scene to scene (her answer: "a lot of practice."), and from there I started drawing my favorite characters consistently.

"There's definitely [the aspect] of anticipation—because the medium doesn't have to follow the laws of nature, you never know exactly how far the

animation will push natural boundaries... I do think there's a general misconception in American audiences that animation is for kids, but some recent series such as Arcane and Blue Eye Samurai are shifting that perception, alongside anime becoming more mainstream. My friends and I always like to analyze the colors, camera angles, and character designs within an animated film or series, because many of us are artists or are at least immersed in the art world. Being able to watch films either analytically or for pure entertainment is definitely fascinating, and opens up new ways to perceive the same film."

## 3. Media and Methods

"Drawing frame by frame digitally was the first medium I explored, but I have also dabbled in zoetropes and a bit of clay and Lego stop motion. (I am) still drawing frame by frame digitally! I think it aligns most closely with my illustration style and allows me to express my ideas more clearly than other mediums. Because I grew up on Disney films and other 2D animated cartoons, frame by frame has always been the most familiar medium to me."



## 4. Software of Choice and The Education Arc

"(For software,) Procreate (the original version, not Procreate Dreams), mainly because it's also what I use for illustration, so I was already familiar with the software. (At GVSU), my Animation 2 class, where we created individual short films, was probably the most beneficial. I also received



feedback from Film & Video majors (who made up most of the class), and their suggestions opened my eyes to avenues newer to my usual way of thinking, which is heavily tied to illustration. I started to become more intentional with my cinematography, rather than just trying to make things look pretty for pretty's sake.

"The film program as a whole would showcase student work at the end of the semester, which animation was a part of. The short film I made for my Animation 2 class was one of the most rewarding projects I've ever done, and I've already started making plans to animate another. With full creative power, you can quite literally do anything with animation, and that is a freeing reality."

### 5. Careers, Future Options, and Creating Soundtracks


"If not an animator - illustration! If it had to be outside the visual arts, however, I think creative writing would still be rewarding. Some illustrators incorporate small animated elements into otherwise still images, or on their websites. Creative writing plus animation has clear pathways to film, but I also think animated online zines or webcomics are an interesting combination.

"So far, (my music has) been whatever is copyright free! Generally, I come up with the visuals first and find music to match it. This wasn't too much of a challenge for my short film *Shimmy On, Starlet!* because much of the 1920s jazz I was seeking was already public domain."

### *Speaking of Public Domain*

*(thank you, Madison, for that convenient seg-way)*



 r hmb1 typst continues to add to the online material of public domain music, both at [archive.org](http://archive.org) and [asifa.org](http://asifa.org). The latest acquisition to the archives is a 16 volume set of LPs from 1958 - "The Standard Treasury of the World's Great Music." This grocery

store answer to the *Funk-and-Wagnall's* encyclopedia offered a library of classical recordings for \$1.30 each, with the extra advantage of being pressed so that everything could be played in "one four-record stack" with those new-fangled High Fidelity turntables. However, there's a thing about the performances - they were completely anonymous! (The explanation was that "our great performers are under contract to others" so the records cannot be

distributed "through music stores.") The best guess is that the producers had made bootlegs of some of the earliest reel-to-reel recordings from the late 1940s, which apparently never had their copyrights renewed (certainly this "Standard Treasury" never did).



*The Mystery of Music*

It is likely the masters hailed from post-WWII Europe, and some of the performances do exhibit a chaotic need for speed (missed cues, random early brass section note). But once transferred and edited, they'll be added to the audio data bases, adjusted for proper speed when necessary (the *Egmont Overture* sounded like overly medicated dinner music). Not stereo - but FREE! Stay tuned!

### *Website Stats - Stated*

#### *For May*

*Visitors 198*

*Views 262*


*Welcome Page - 203 views*

*Membership process - 10 views*

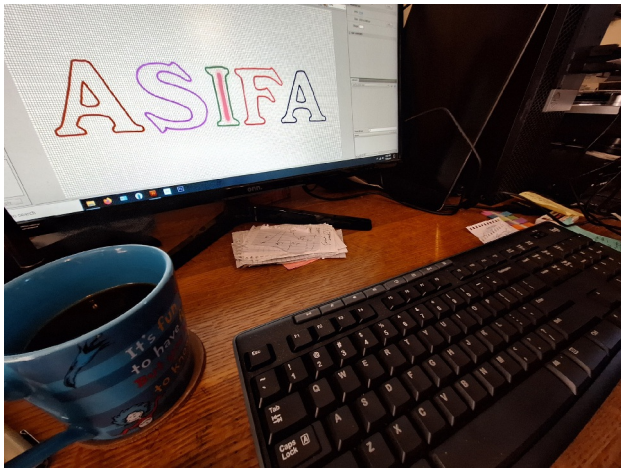
*PD and sound - 9 views*

*Fall 1995 and Fall 1986 newsletters were particularly scrutinized and downloaded from the US, from France, and from Italy*

### *Deanna and Suzanne Make a Movie! Jim Doodles.*

 uring the May coffee, Deanna was gathering video greetings for her upcoming ASIFA co-production for our International assembly of chapter representatives, enlisting ASIFA Central member Suzanne Zack as additional creative eyes and editorial mastery of WAVs, AVIs, and MPs with any number you choose following.





Jim Middleton provided a few moments of animation along with edited snippets of public domain music. The short film celebrates the importance of the volunteers who keep ASIFA viable and vital. We give it our all, and our “I” is fed by the whole!

Time to move our vowels - The “I” in ASIFA is “U”!!

The film, “Why I Volunteer for ASIFA” will be made available in the months ahead, because the thing about volunteers is - well, let’s say we wear out before we rust out!

### ***RIFF in New York - Jim takes a Canadian Shortcut for COFFEE CRISP!***

The Rochester International Film Festival (RIFF) hit birthday #66 this June, and yr hmbl typst was invited to attend with the recently completed *Sfumato #2, Political Asylum*. It was a generous offer on their part, including tours of Kodak and RIT's MAGIC Studio. In a word, YIPES. The pandemic had created a battalion of mostly cosmetic "festivals," often little more than anonymously judged affairs with a possible showplace in someone's basement. RIFF is hardly one of those festivals.



The eight hours of showings, in four separate sections, represented a full phalanx of film genres, and five animated films made the cut. The venue was the Eastman Museum Dryden Theatre – air conditioned, soft-seated comfort with a goodly sized screen accustomed to running rarities from the Eastman archives. There was no admission charge (donations always accepted), the audience was of several strata from

in and around the Rochester area, and the animated films included two from students at Daemen University, one from a senior lecturer at RIT, one from the director of *Dragonball Z*, and...yr hmbl typst.

*[Permit me to drop the third person narrative to say that I was completely stunned by the generosity and attention given me during my three days in Rochester. I was chauffeured. I was fed. I was coddled, and I'm not ever sure I know what coddled means, but boy this sure felt like coddled. I was made to feel an instantaneous part of a rare collection of filmmakers, educators, and avatars of celluloid. Whatever hesitation I had about the seven - no, make that nine - hours of driving – drat those one-lane bridge construction*



*bottlenecks – vanished once I saw the now-nearly-empty KODAK building and my phone began exploding with a 72 hour barrage of WhatsApp welcomes and communication. If you have a film, and if you can only enter one festival, this is the one to enter.]*



*Pockets checked before leaving*

Between the showings came tours of the evaporating Kodak company, the melancholy of walking past George Eastman's rather neglected tomb, the discovery that the fourth floor of the old research building is now rented to a pot farm (oh yeah, that isn't Kodachrome you're smelling), and that the



*Mr. Eastman's final resting place needs a trim*





*MAGIC was - magic*

folks who made my Tri-X Super 8mm film are resurrecting their formula to market a boutique Super 8mm camera for \$5500, without a single-frame function, with the 3 minute cartridge selling for \$50, with an additional \$100 for developing and creating a digital transfer.

Whatever nostalgia was shattered was replaced the next day with a welcome rush of optimism and exaltation in the form of the RIT and its MAGIC program. Where many 2-4 year

film programs are beset with administrative budget crunches that can challenge keeping their infrastructure current, yet alone looking forward, MAGIC (acronym for Media Art Games Interaction Creativity) provides students with cross-training among several curricula, "speed-dating" with students at the Rochester School of Music for soundtracks, a 7000



*Thali of India - magic!*



*These chairs - not magic - creativity has its limits!*

square foot soundstage, Dolby-designed auditoriums and sound studios, and commercial productions to pack many a portfolio. It was enough to make one dive onto Nintendo Switch to play *That Damn Goat*, the MAGIC-produced video game released May 15.

**TO SUMMARIZE - THE RIFF IS ON FILM FREEWAY, AND YOU NEED TO CATCH THEIR ATTENTION!!!!**

## Sidebar - The "New Kodak"



The new Kodak Super 8mm film camera is not your grandfather's (or your father's) Kodak. Anticipated and delayed for several years, its appearance was expected to combine nostalgia with production utility. Its price kept creeping upward with each announcement of its progress. While one never expected the \$19.95

FunSaver box kit from 1968, the final price tag of \$5500 remained rather shocking.

The RIFF attendees were able to inspect a "show model" during the company tour, and it made a nice, familiar sound as the cartridge was exposed in its newly re-engineered feeding mechanism, and the digital viewfinder created the illusion of a modern portable video camera. But it is still a 50 foot cartridge. It is likely the reason for the surge of manufactured "retro footage" in recent films - you've seen the shots, soon to be a cliché of documentaries of the 2020s, with the oddly framed images, suggesting found footage from the past, served up with a side of flickering sprocket holes.

In the 1979s, the cartridges were \$3-4, two-day developing for another \$3, and you received a 50 foot roll of Kodachrome that would run through the projector in about three minutes. And then the editing started, culling that 50 feet into a couple of yards of useable material (you learned to think and plan before you pushed that sweet, ASMR-worthy button). The cartridges now cost \$38 each for Plus-X B/W, \$49 for Ektachrome (no more Kodachrome, with its aroma of delicious vegetable dyes when you pierced the foil packaging). For developing, expect another C-note to cover the process and whatever digital format you want provided for your editing files.



Even so, it's on a several-month backorder - they cannot keep up with the orders

*Significantly, it, has no single-frame function. 18fps, 24fps, 36fps only.*

I'd classify this as a boutique camera, for films with bigger budgets than most of us experience.

The need to show sprockets is also interesting - that wasn't the purpose ever with home movies in the



*Yr hmb1 typst personal preference for Super 8mm, ca 1972*



pre-video era. You winced back then if you could see a splice (Guillotine splicers were the slicer of choice for yr humbl typst, and even those weren't helpful for staccato montage work).

It was nice to see Kodak at least trying to keep film alive ("If you want the look of film, shoot film!"), but it only made me want to go on Ebay, score a replacement for a long-lost Bolex 160, and reserve its use for very, very special occasions - thinking like my mom, who wouldn't take pictures of our UFO encounter in the UP back the '60s, because "there's color film in that Instamatic - I'm saving it for good!"

Digital effects in an editing suite can approximate the same look, and it will remain only an approximation, but go easy on showing off the sprocket holes, ok?



"Full Format Overscan" from *Negativland* - the new visual cliché for the 2020s? - Super 8mm master

**By the Way, Have We Mentioned that Bill Plympton Has Created the Poster for the 2024 IAD?**

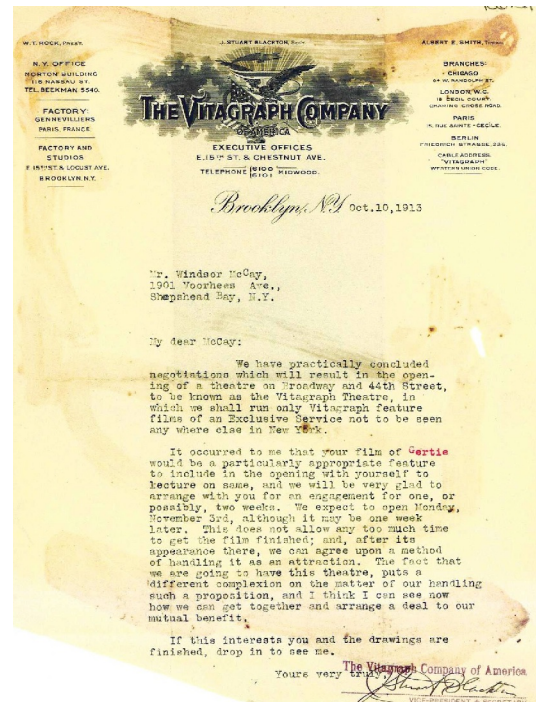
*Seems it has been a while since brining it up..*



image from NPR

## Winsor McCay Department Presentations and Artifacts

**First of all, an ARTIFACT, to wit:**  
*A letter between J. Stuart Blackton and Winsor McCay*



It reads, from an era predating spell-check,

"The VITAGRAPH COMPANY, Oct. 10, 1913  
Mr. Winsor McCay  
1901 Voorhees Ave  
Shepshhead Bay, NY

My dear McCay:

We have practically concluded negotiations which will result in the opening of a theatre on Broadway and 44<sup>th</sup> Street, to be known as the Vitagraph Theatre, in which we shall un only Vitagraph feature films of an Exclusive Service not to be seen any where else in New York.

It occurred to me that your film of **Gertie** would be a particularly appropriate feature in include in the opening with yourself to lecture on same, and we will be very glad to arrange with you for an engagement for one, or possibly, two weeks. We expect to open Monday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, although it may be one week later. This does not allow any too much time to get the film finished; and, after its appearance there, we can agree upon a method of handling it as an attraction. The fact that we are going to have this theatre, puts a different complexioun on the matter ouf our handling

such a proposition, and I think I can see now how we can get together and arrange a deal to our mutual benefit.

If this interests you and the drawings are finished, drop in to see me.

Yours very truly,  
J. Stuart Blackton  
The Vitagraph Company of America"

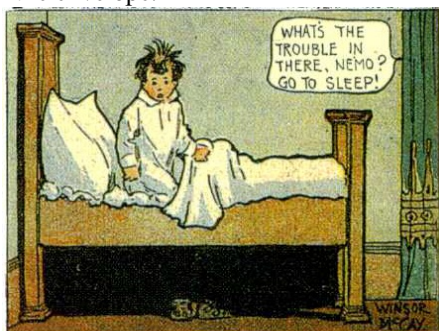
*Even Winsor McCay had deadline pressures...*

## Second of All, the Presentation:

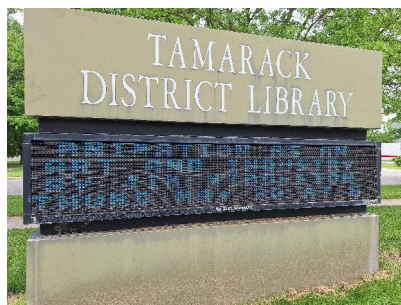
At the end of this past May, a few miles from the scampering grounds of the teenager whose uncle still spelled his name *McKay*, yr hmbly typst introduced the *Godfather of All Things Animated* to a small, but interested, group of Tamarack Library aficionados. One young lady in attendance had also attended my old high school (back when the building was new, to me, but "oldish" to her), and said after graduation, she went to Japan to study, and returned a few years later with some extended homework, namely, a husband from Japan.

Her husband was an enthusiastic anime fan, and likely could have told me what Miyazaki had for breakfast, but had never heard of McCay, nor of Little Nemo, nor of the aborted project that Studio Ghibli had attempted in the mid-1980s.

He did get to see some of the animation cels from the final degenerated product that made it to the US screens in the 1990s, because, well, years ago yr hmbly typst had purchased a couple at a wildly discounted price, and the seller, seemingly glad for the opportunity to reduce inventory, sent several dozen cels, along with the original drawings, a handful of watercolor and poster paint backgrounds, in a traveling envelope that went to the various homes around the studio where after-hours families painted the cels, according to the guidelines on the envelope.



The presentation was a quick overview of McCay's work, then a timeline of his impact on films that followed - from pushing the primitive product



*Scene of the crime*

of pre-WWI into grudging adolescence, to inspiring films first by Edwin S. Porter, then Victor Fleming (*pre-Wizard of Oz*), to animation references of lobster nightmares, ultimately tracing a path to Lionel Ritchie's *Dancin On the Ceiling* and an over-plotted variation of Nemo as a girl on Netflix.

As one would have said in an earlier area weekly newspaper, "A good time was had by all." One suspects it was because there wasn't a quiz afterwards. One suspects.

## Animated Thoughts: My Love Affair with Marriage

Chuck Wilson **REVIEWS!**

(From his blog of Tuesday, February 20, 2024,  
<http://smudgeanimation.blogspot.com>

Well, I saw [My Love Affair With Marriage](#) at the Flint Institute of Art. Having done promotional work on both of Signe's features, it's a real rush to sit in the theater and see the final product--even moreso to see your name in the credits as one of the financial backers of the film. And I have to say it was a very enjoyable movie, but more than that, it was very thought provoking. Given the litany of "advice" family and friends have given me about marriage over my lifetime, I spent more than a little time pondering issues raised by the movie on the drive home.

Though one initial question that crossed my mind as I walked out of the theater was related to how Signe puts a lot of herself into her films. In her animated short *The Dentist*, Signe drew upon her experiences having some dental surgery in order to create a spine-tingling film. In *Birth*, she drew upon her experience

of becoming a new mother and how advice given isn't always as helpful as one would hope. In watching *My Love Affair With Marriage*, I do have to wonder how many of the situations the character Zelma found herself





in were drawn from Signe's own life experiences... or drawn from experiences related to her by family and friends?

For me though, *My Love Affair With Marriage* raised some very interesting (uncomfortable?) situations as it confronted the stories we are told about marriage. For example: how you are not a complete person without someone there to complete you. Or, how we over-romanticize marriage and childrearing while ignoring the realities of said experiences. Now I'm not anti-marriage or anti-children, far from it. I'm a big supporter of both if for no other reason than how families can add stability to society and children provide for society's longevity. But oftentimes, being married and having children is portrayed in culture as the be-all and end-all of the human experience and your existence is empty and meaningless if you're single--a concept that I've been striving against for the better part of my life.

The very real question that I've been pondering lately is: is the desire to get married something that you want for yourself or do you only feel that desire because it's "expected" of you?

And that's where I found myself as I watched Zelma's trials and tribulations as she wandered through life as a single woman, and then in life as a married woman. Throughout this film, Signe asked the questions and confronted the sacred cows of marriage and the decision to have a child (or not) in a very entertaining fashion – but without fully answering them, always leaving room for speculation based upon your personal experiences.

Signe is masterful at weaving the triumphs and failures of the human experience into very interesting and engaging characters who leave you wanting more. Despite all the difficulties she faced through childhood, adolescence, and finally adulthood, the film struck this hopeful tone as Zelma walked a path to finding peace in her relationships. As Zelma grew, I wondered if maybe she would realize that she doesn't "have" to be married in order to live a life filled with meaning and purpose--a realization that many of us single people look for: that

particular moment of clarity when you really start living and enjoying your life in the moment instead of chasing after some highly-romanticized vision of the future that society says you must have.

Or maybe marriage was the key to happiness for Zelma after all, once she finds the right person with whom she can share the rollercoaster of life. Maybe her personal happiness could only be found in sharing her life with another person, and it would take her a series of failed relationships to finally grow into the person she needed to be in order to share her life with someone else? I'll leave it up to you readers to watch the film for yourselves and see how the story ends for Zelma... or maybe doesn't end. Every apparent end for Zelma is just the beginning of another chapter in her story

(including the ones we don't get to see).

Regardless, after the movie ended, I did have the feeling that it would be nice to check in with Zelma in about five or ten years and see how life turned out for her. For by the end of the film, Zelma felt like less of a character in a story and



more like a friend or a family member who you only saw every couple of years but pick the friendship right back up where you left off.

As one of the Crowdfunding backers, I'm really looking forward to receiving my copy of the film and watching it again since I not only enjoyed the story but I also really enjoyed the visuals in this movie. I was very drawn to the segments where the neuron narrator "Biology" (expertly voice acted by Michele Pawk) ran us through these mini documentaries detailing how the brain matures and processes emotions through biochemical networks before the film went back to Zelma's external story. Then there were the many examples of Signe's "digital setback camera" process--a digital evolution of Max Fleischer's setback camera setup that I wouldn't mind trying myself someday.

Signe continues to push the bar on her personal work, as *My Love Affair With Marriage* added a large number of musical numbers to the feature. And, while this film is drawn in her own signature visual style, you can see Signe pushing her drawing and animating skills forward and improving in both the 2D rendering of her

human characters as well as the more abstract figures she presented in the neurological characters and processes seen in the microscopic brain sequences.

All-in-all, Signe has added another interesting and entertaining film to the growing pantheon of adult-oriented animated features and is well worth a look, whether you want to be inspired or if you just want to be entertained. Given how approachable and relatable this film was to my own experiences with interpersonal relationships, I can't wait to see what concepts Signe decides to tackle for her next feature.

If you'd like to know more about Signe's process, I highly recommend watching the following presentation she gave at the University of Michigan/Ann Arbor screening of her film. Additionally, she's has some wonderful production process pages on her website: <https://www.myloveaffairwithmarriagemovie.com> where she covers the setwork, animation, and shows some presentation and interview videos – great stuff for the aspiring animator.

Interview link:

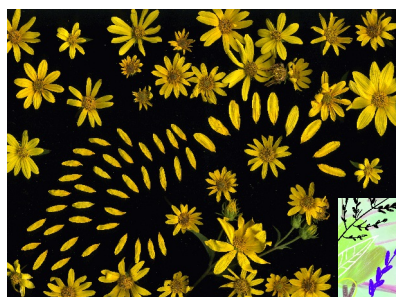
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ggJM6uMYxbc&t=2s>

(Images from Signe's presskit, copyright Signe Baumann)

## ***Postcards from the Hedge***

### ***ASIFA Central is well Represented!***

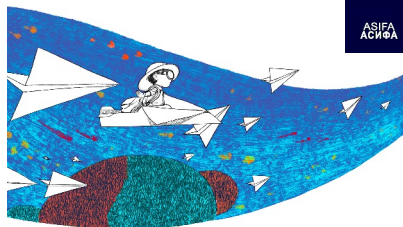
(Bundles are being made available to animation and film festivals as 2024 progresses – there will be postcards at OIAF in September!)



Deanna Morse



Vivi Markatos

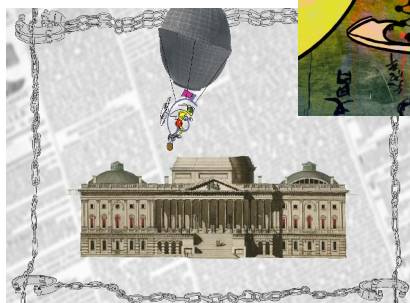


Shweta Marathe

With another international card program coming soon!



Peaches Wilczak



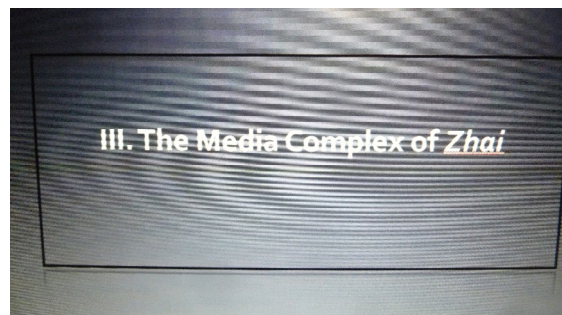
Some Retired Pharmacist in Edmore

## ***The China Syndrome***

– or –

## ***The Geek Shall Inherit the Earth***

Hong Kong-based Seminars attended by yr hmbl typst



[First of all, one thing to remember is that an 8am presentation in Hong Kong is the *previous night's 8pm* here in the mid-reaches of Michigan. It took a few attempts to get both my mind and watch synchronized to this fact, with a few missed online encounters in between. Repeat to yourself, “8am in Hong Kong on Thursday morning is 8pm in Edmore on *Wednesday* night” until you fall into a confused slumber. Yr hmbl typst may need to engage with a tattoo artist to cement this mental conundrum to the inside of his eyelids.]



here are two books that represent the foundation of these discussions, (1) *Anime's Knowledge Cultures* by Jinying Li, and (2) *Animated Encounters* by Dr. Daisy Du. The online discussion ran 45 minutes, with time for follow-up questions, and English has not been spoken that rapidly since my last visit to an old phonograph auction.





It boils down to this: in 1980, when China began to open up, the first commercial broadcasting allowed on state television came from Japan, and it came from Japan in the form of the 1960s animated series, *Astro Boy*, sponsored by Casio and Toshiba. This series sparked an overwhelming influx of color televisions into the Chinese market, helped by the foresight of the

series' producers to have the series translated into Mandarin.

*Astro-Boy* had 100,000 horsepower, he was a boy of science, possessed the might of the atom, and to the directed audience, represented the “transnational myth of Techno-Utopia.”

For comparison, Milton Berle burst onto NBC's Texaco Star Theatre in 1948, and America couldn't get enough television sets to watch a man in a dress crack jokes.

A Techno-Utopia driven by Casio watches and *Astro-Boy* seems almost a subplot from the *Men In Black* franchise. But according to these books, and some general observations, it appears anime and *Astro-Boy* are societal driving forces among the 50 year-and-younger strata of the population in China.

In addition to all that, they have quickly absorbed the culture of anime, proudly embracing the term “geek” in parallel with the rest of Asia and the US.

Geek = Utako (Japan) = Zhai (China)

[As a point of comparison - there were always the terms “geek” and “nerd” in my misspent youth, both were derogatory, with the best definition at the time being, “A geek bites the heads off chickens, a nerd will tell you how many calories it will take.” It gave time to dash off while the football goon was thinking, and avoid a swirly. By the way, it's 17 calories.]

*Astro-Boy* created such a fondness for anime that China seemed almost too happy to take on providing the animation for Japanese productions. Now, with years of experience in the craft, China-based productions are hiring Japanese animators, because, well, it seems

Japanese animators are cheaper.

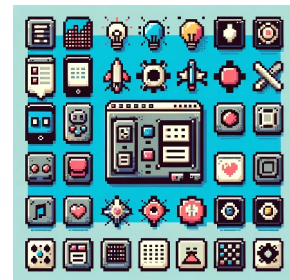
Ultimately, if all this bears out (these two books are laden with phrases like, “an imagined geocultural region that is constituted by the transnational, transmedial networks,” so it's not a casual read), it would behoove our State Department to dive into the *Astro Boy* library. It could be a shortcut in understanding what motivates such a devoted following in a population of 1.4 billion.

“Watch this space.” Or *Astro-Boy*.

## ***Festival News from Europe, Canada, and the Rejection of 4K, Because - Well, 8 Bits is Just Good Enough***

2K or not 2K...4K or not 4K. How about 0.25K?

There is a slight blowback on the craving for mega-resolution film files, perhaps as another bit of nostalgia for the days of Super 8mm (even 16mm film has an 8K+ level of information, according to



the kids at Kodak), so a few festivals have been appearing that set file limits on the entry uploads, seeing *how low you can go* (I recall Bri Yarhouse showing an early Flash animation that ran for about a minute with under 50K of file space, to the astonishment of the audience), as if reminiscing for the days of dial-up internet and *Happy Tree Friends*.

The *Small File Media Festival*, presented over sixty international works at a recent showing, in cooperation with Canada's Cinematheque. Described as “small in file size, but huge in impact,” they embrace the “aesthetics” of compression and low resolution (glitchiness and unintended pixelation) to lay the foundation for experimental films.


“Why small files? Because streaming media is killing the planet! Streaming comprises a significant chunk of the world's digital carbon footprint,” says their website. Their file limits? No more than 1.44 megabytes per minute, with TikTok a blunderbuss by comparison, at 70 megabytes per minute.

“Cosmically healthy, community-building, and punk AF, small-file ecomedia will heal the world, one pixel at a time.”

It seems rather niche, but then, yr huml typst is still intrigued about mechanical television from the 1920s...

<https://thecinematheque.ca>

## Featured on Disney +

 *Jim Henson, Idea Man*, a documentary directed by Opie Taylor, is worth a look to appreciate the creative genius behind the Muppets and confirm the importance of timely medical care.

And *What If?*, proof that the Marvel Universe is better in 20 minute animated doses, enters its second season, remaining a goddess-send for those with little time to invest in three-hour SFX sprees.

### ***The ASIFA Central Board***

*Volunteers all,  
gleefully promoting  
the best of all  
possible worlds while  
attending to their  
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*ASIFA Central Newsletter (cc) June, 2024, a quarterly-ish publication of ASIFA Central - see the updated website with more announcements **and an ever expanding newsletter archive** for ASIFA Central at - <https://asifa.org>*

### **ANIMATION UNITES US**

**ASIFA Central On INSTAGRAM! Woot Woot!** Make sure to check our newly created Instagram account: <https://www.instagram.com/asifacentral/>

### **ANIMATION UNITES US**

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

### **ANIMATION UNITES US**

*As usual, send any suggestions, comments, or recipes for zucchini bread, along with the usual castigations to yr hmbl typst, at [jim.middletonrx@gmail.com](mailto:jim.middletonrx@gmail.com) or, for dull bloggery, <https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com>*

### **ANIMATION UNITES US**

*Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the hmbl typst and do not necessarily reflect the thoughts, opinions, or policies of anyone anywhere else, and especially at ASIFA Central, which is a completely volunteer-run, non-profit gathering of very busy and frantic members moving at 24fps on a slow day, where vacations are when you shoot on twos.*

*Press releases are always welcome! We encourage shameless self-promotion!*

As the 50 year anniversary of ASIFA Central approaches,  
feel free to offer suggestions for material for the  
commemorative book  
[jim.middletonrx@gmail.com](mailto:jim.middletonrx@gmail.com)



There was so much more material for this issue, but space-time is so elusive!

Many thanks to everyone for their contributions!



