



July-August

"IN VISIONIS PERTINACIA CONFIDIMUS!"

2024^{AoDi}

The ASIFA Central Board

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promoting the best of
all possible worlds
while attending to
their gardens:

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Frequently Bothersome
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With Frisky, Free-Range Board
Members

Deanna Morse!

(Madame President to All
ASIFAnians!)

and

Gretchen Vinnedge!

Stephen Leeper!

Michael Long!


Bob Swieringa!

Charles Wilson!



Retreat Outline Coming SOON! - we're ironing out some scheduling challenges.

IAD Anijam Project - Contribution Deadline October 1, 2024

 Members should, by now, have received an email from yr hmbl typst for this year's IAD 2024 Poster Anijam Project. It boils down to an exercise in morphing one image from Bill Plympton's poster into the next, with the universe at your feet for a roadmap. Here is a rough "pencil test" example on my blog -

<https://animatingapothecary.blogspot.com/2024/07/post-683-another-concurrent-exercise.html>

1. Submit the graphic files (or even a complete mp4/avi if you are so inclined, but certainly not necessary) to jim.middletonrx@gmail.com - a dropbox file is being created as well, if your images are too much for your server - details on that in a future email.

2. I'm looking at an October 1, 2024 deadline to give me time to stitch things together for the IAD itself.

3. The image files here are in the standard 1920x1080 size, so if you could keep your work in that frame size, that'd be fantastic. Otherwise, I'll be converting the images to that size and that may put a warp to your original intent. Fair warning!

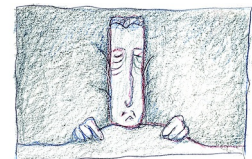
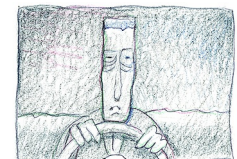
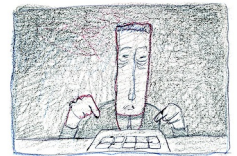
4. I should be able to handle the type of file you provide (ie jpg, png, etc), but would prefer jpg at this point.

5. The image process - Start with one image and migrate into the next. How you get there and how many frames you take is up to you. I usually set my editor for creating an "on-tvos" sort of animation.

6. Put your initials as part of your files, too, along with an identifier of the segment, "ie - JM1-2segment.jpg" I'll be building folders for each submission to keep track with them at this end.

7. If your contribution is very brief (10-12 drawings, for example), I will probably stretch things out and do a *Man Who Planted Trees* type of dissolve between them, so viewers can fully view and appreciate your astonishing visual acumen..

8. Let me know how you want your name to appear at the conclusion of this opus. I don't want to sabotage any witness relocation programs.



ASIFA

INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION DAY


2024



*In the Meantime, In Between Time,
Ain't We Got ASIFA Coffee!
July 3rd Edition
yr hmbl typst at the keyboard*



Some of the rowdies who gathered on July 3 - Michael Long, YrHmblYpst, Deanna Morse, Kobi Wright, David Thrasher, Jane Flint, Vivi Markatos, Chris Sullivan - not pictured, but with palpable enthusiasm were Orrin Scott from the SAS in AUSTRALIA, and Bob Swieringa, still the TALLEST ANIMATOR IN MICHIGAN!

 new membership prospect, primed for corruption by this insidious lot, was impressionable Kobi Wright, a recent grad from GVSU, and a fan of impressionism, and that was just our impression, as he gave us no impressions, but he could do a good impression of a recent grad from GVSU. A recent grad fluent in Japanese! Five years! Anime-zing! Bring on *Blue Robot Cat*!!!

♪ *The existing collective failed to frighten him away, and he happily joined into the fray.* ♪ Animation is like that. More hands in the pie doesn't make less pie, just more meringue (and nobody has any idea what that even means).

OK, the Celsius is wearing off. Here's what really transpired, only slightly less surreal than what just happened in the previous paragraphs.

News around the coffee urn:

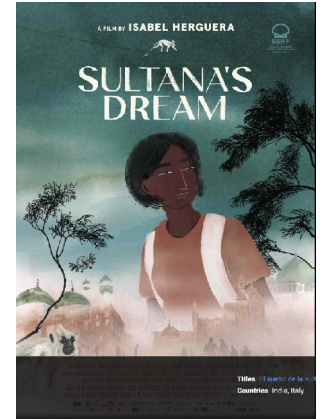
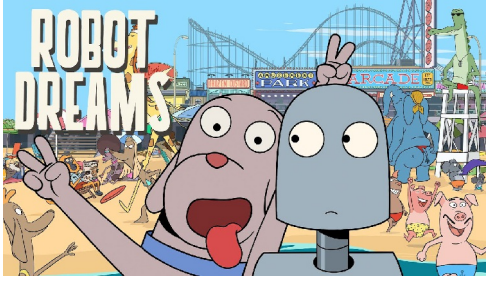
18 submissions thus far for the IAD celebration on FilmFreeway.

Jane Flint stated she is "sort of retired." HA! It's in *your blood*, your *very soul*! *Animators never retire - they just shoot on fours and fix it in post!*

Vivi Markatos is now a solid part of the British mainland - she and her fiancé are *with house*! Oh the pitty-pat of little mortgage payments. She continues to do a *lot* of work for her homeland county, Greece, but expects her 90 minutes from London will bring more anglophillic activity. She is looking to enhance her sketchability with retro animated characters (thinking of *Pink Panther* and *Gerald McBoing Boing* as retro brings a chill to the caffeinated boomers)

Chris Sullivan expects to have *Orbits of Minor Satellites* set for release in time for the ASIFA Central retreat in 2025. A delicious expectation. He also suggests exploring *Robot Dreams*, *Flow*, and *Away*.





Chris is also experimenting with midi and mic-based electronic sounds using a bit of new technology- *Nightsky* - that actually sports KNOBS! (But can it dial up to "11"?) Deanna Morse has been making the international circuits, reporting that India's *Sultana's Dream* and Adam Elliot's *Memoir of a Snail* were particular favorites at Annecy this past season.

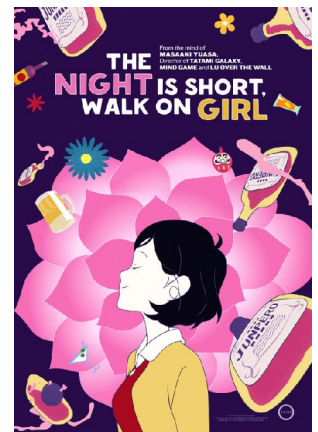
Bri Yarhouse reports that *Animators for Peace* is working on 8-30 second pieces for an international project. More on that to come!



Vivi's new neighbors - but her plumbing is much nicer

Also, programs are in development to create tighter communication among the ASIFA chapters in the US with the hopes of establishing cross-platform membership benefits. This is in its neophyte stage of implementation after several years of discussion. As part of this expansion, asifa.net is in the process of re-opening member profile bios. There have been some challenges in the wordpress platform for user access recently (gee-yr hmbl typst is talking about his Bolex 160 super 8mm macrozoom, in his bio there - yeah, time for an update)

Richard Williams' *Animation Survival Kit* book now has an app, and his accompanying 16 DVD disc set is appearing in online sales sites (at a substantially lower price).



Jane Flint brought up *Night Is Short, Walk On Girl* 's Japanese theatrical release poster with the name *Kanji* , and the literal meaning being, *The night is but short, so walk on, maiden*. The things one loses in translation. (director Masaaki Yuasa also created *Mind Game* and *Adventure Time* 's "Food Chain") A comedy about one epic night in Kyoto, where a sophomore known only as "The Girl with Black Hair" experiences a series of surreal encounters with the local nightlife; the director also created the film *Transcriptions* and *Tatemi Galaxy*, which is on the tubes of you:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kq7O6eR12oM>

Chris Sullivan also presented the group with Alan Kwan, amazing game developer, animator, and technologist - <https://www.kwanalan.com/>

Deanna Morse also has a new website! www.deannamorse.com - And the film by Deanna, Suzanne Zack, with animation by yr hmbl typst is on vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/951382514>

Piotr Kardas has completed this year's O!PLA from Poland, another great feature for IAD
And then the coffee ran out!!! Until August!!!

Analytical and Articulatory Animation Analyses

Supplement to ASIFA Central Newsletter Series - July 2024

Animated Thoughts: What I've been watching this season

By Charles Wilson

<https://smudgeanimation.blogspot.com>

As time marches on, I've been watching more and more Anime television series. Personally, I find that a lot of the stories are more engaging for people in my "middle-age" demographic. Fortunately though, we have been seeing an uptick in animated shows geared for the more mature viewer here in the States, mostly through streaming services like Netflix and Amazon Prime (see: *Invincible*, *Critical Role*, and *Love, Death & Robots*). However, I do still see us walking a long road before we witness Brad Bird's view of animation fully realized in the American consciousness as it appears to have already done so in Japan. As Mr. Bird so eloquently said back in 2015: "Animation is an art form and it can do any genre"--including stories for the middle-aged crowd.

Hence, my watching a lot of Anime. Of course, Anime is not immune to the overuse of certain tropes, like "the harem/reverse harem". And everyone chases trends. Here in the States, it's been "superheroes" for quite a while. In Japan, "the overpowered protagonist who wakes up in an alternate world" continues to be all the rage. Now don't get me wrong, some of the shows with those tropes and trends can work and can work pretty well--see: *Is it Wrong to try to Pick Up Girls in a Dungeon?* (both the *Familia Myth* and *Sword Oratoria* storylines), the *Sword Art Online*/*Gun Gale Online* series and movies, or the "Certain" series: *A Certain Magical Index*, *A Certain Scientific Railgun*, and *A Certain Scientific Accelerator*. But from time-to-time you do get the feeling of "been-there, done-that."

More often than not, before every season starts I'll make a list of six or seven shows that I want to take a look at and see if they're worth following through to completion. My plan allows for viewing the first two (maybe three) episodes to see if they're worth my time and the list gets culled as the season progresses.

I have to say: this past season had some pretty solid entries into the market. I ended up paring my list down from

around ten to five--though of those ten, there are two that I do plan on going back and finishing later this year.



The series on my 'must see' list ended up being: *Train to the End of the World*, *HIGHSPEED Etoile*, *Kaiju No. 8*, and *BARTENDER Glass of God* (all streamed on Crunchyroll) and *Delicious in Dungeon* (streamed on Netflix). The two "honorable mentions" that I plan on finishing were *A Sign of Affection* and *Obsolete*--though both of those shows were from prior

seasons, streamed on Crunchyroll and YouTube respectively.

<https://youtu.be/f244r8O8HgY>

Train to the End of the World. Now, you might think from the trailer that this is one of those stereotypical 'cute girls doing cute things' Anime. Well, you'd be wrong! From the opening sequences, this Anime takes a hard left turn into the surreal. The whole story follows four girls (and their dog) as they take a train from their home town all the way to Ikebukuro in order to find one of their missing friends.

The catch here is that the entire world has gone crazy due to the implementation of "7G" wireless connectivity. But the girls are determined and hijinks ensue at every stop on the way. Now while the banter is entertaining, as is the trouble the girls find themselves in, it's the attention to facial expressions and body language, the "acting", that really makes the series work for me. No matter what challenges they face, they never cease to behave like teenage girls who are at that midpoint between childhood and maturity. And when faced with a bizarre landscape (which they'd been dealing with for two years by the time they decide to make their trek) that is filled with equally bizarre perils, over and over it's their friendship that carries them through to the end. It reminded me of the "Certain" series in that regard: kids that are thrust into an adult world, who have to solve more-or-less adult problems. But they solve those problems as you expect a child (or teenager) would, not in the manner that an adult would--even though they're trying their hardest to act mature at the time.

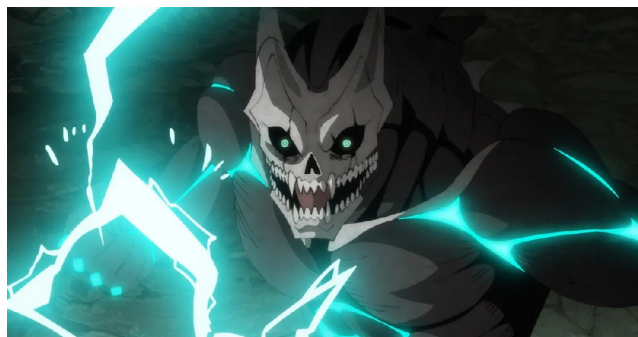
All-in-all, I found it to be a fun, thoroughly quirky show. From the start, you never really doubted what would happen by the end of the last episode, but it was an enjoyable journey to take. Do be warned though, it does get a little silly and a little cheeky in some spots so I wouldn't let little kids watch it.



YouTube Trailer for *HIGHSPPEED Etoile*
<https://youtu.be/yqp1raJNIOo>

I don't like watching sports. Never have. Don't like playing them either, though I guess I can see the appeal of playing sports... kind of. But it holds no interest for me for various reasons not really relevant to this post. Now sports movies? Well those I find rather engaging. I thoroughly enjoyed the live-action car racing movie *Gran Turismo* (based upon the true story of a videogame/simulator and aspiring race car driver Jann Mardenborough)--enjoyed it so much I watched it twice. *HIGHSPPEED Etoile* was another one of those entries. The initial premise was recycled: a ballerina who was sidelined by an injury gets involved in racing instead--same premise as in the Anime *Rideback* from back in 2009. The main characters from both series even have the same name. But this time it is racing in a future where a new power source allows race cars to propel themselves at a level of speed and skill never seen before. Other sci-fi tropes integrated into the show have a number of the race cars enhanced by AI as well as hologram announcers at the racetracks, a-la Vocaloids. This appears to be a 3d CGI animated show with 2d cel-shaded rendering. The character animation is pretty stiff but the racing sequences are very realistic--I mean, as realistic as they were in the live-action movie *Speed Racer*. Perhaps "well done" would be a better choice of words. What attracted me to this show is that Rin is not automatically good at the task she's presented with, unlike so many modern (boring) stories nowadays. No, Rin's performance behind the wheel evolves over time as it builds upon her athleticism and coordination from years of studying ballet. And while she does come off as a bit ditzy and clueless, as the show progresses, she grows as a

character and loses her naiveté. Some folks might not say that this is a "must watch" show, but it "is" another fun ride. If you liked the Emile Hirsch version of *Speed Racer*, you'll probably enjoy this series.



YouTube trailer for *Kaiju No. 8*:
<https://youtu.be/JwF7bhvnCxI>

Kaiju No. 8 wasn't what I expected given that it was produced by Production IG, the powerhouse that brought us *Ghost in the Shell*. There ended up being a bit of zaniness in *Kaiju No. 8* that I found a bit off-putting. I went in expecting a serious look at a world beset by giant monsters hell-bent on destruction and the people who stood in their way--including the para-military force that destroys them and most importantly, the crews of workers that have to clean up the aftermath (and carcasses) of the Kaiju. This show struck me as something that Studio Trigger would release as visually and performance-wise it had more in common with *Kill la Kill* or *Gurren Lagaan* than *Ghost in the Shell*. I almost stopped watching three episodes in, but stuck it out and *Kaiju No.8* ended up being worth the time spent. This is a show with some great action sequences and the story ends up being one with a lot of heart as it follows a middle-aged Kaiju disposal worker in his attempts to live out his dream of becoming a member of the Anti-Kaiju Security Force. In the end, despite the show's occasional over exaggeration of Kafka Hibino's performance I found myself rooting for Kafka and looking forward to the second season.



YouTube trailer for *BARTENDER Glass of God*:
<https://youtu.be/--yeqMISgEM>

Bartender Glass of God is one of those shows that is a slow burn. The pacing is relaxed yet there is an underlying tension to the story. The characters and their motivations are revealed across the series--much like watching a slow-motion video of a flower blooming. It's honestly a very meditative show to watch. The story follows Ryū Sasakura, a bartender who is on a quest to mix the "Glass of God"--meaning: that perfect drink for each of his customers. The conflict comes from a hotel owner who wants him to work at his high-end hotel instead of at the bar where Ryū currently resides. And there are minor conflicts among the side characters that only serve to reveal more and more about Ryū's character and history. This show is a reboot from 2006's *Bartender*. I'm not sure if I like this series as much as the first one from 2006, but I would definitely say I like them both, just for different reasons.



YouTube trailer for *Delicious in Dungeon*:
<https://youtu.be/n5JEoD7keVo>

Now *Delicious in Dungeon* is the show I've been waiting for. I've been following the manga ever since I discovered it during a break from watching (and reading) *Isekai Shokudō*--or in English: *Restaurant to Another World*. Setting aside the fact that *Isekai Shokudō* is on my "must see" list of Anime, I learned about *Delicious in Dungeon* (Japanese title: *Dungeon Meishi*) when I saw it on the bookshelf while looking for the latest manga and light novel translations of *Restaurant to Another World*. I tried it on for size, as it looked interesting, and I was not disappointed. The story follows a number of adventurers who are trying to rescue (resurrect) one of their friends who got eaten by a red dragon at the lower levels of this magical dungeon. But with little money to work with, they are faced with the prospect of never seeing their friend again or being forced to eat the monsters they kill in order to survive the expedition. Like what the trailer suggests, this show is nice and kooky. If you're into cooking shows and Dungeons & Dragons (as I am), you'll find this a fun romp--especially when you find yourself searching out a number of YouTubers who have made recipes similar to the ones in the show. A word of warning though: while this show is

very fun and looks lighthearted, as the story progresses it does get pretty deep and mysterious. There's a lot of meat there, so if you're expecting something light and fluffy from beginning to end, you might want to look elsewhere. It's a 24 episode run on Netflix and, in my opinion, is well worth the time spent. I've watched both the English sub and English dub episodes several times. I can recommend both. And if you have a minute or two to spare, I highly recommend the original animated music video made by Bump of Chicken for the song *Sleep Walking Orchestra*, which was used for the show's opening title sequence. YouTube link for *Sleep Walking Orchestra* music video: <https://youtu.be/RqooLet7B2Q>
 Well, the season draws to a close and there's only one episode of *Bartender Glass of God* left for me to watch. Then once again I'll be pawing through lists of seasonal shows on Crunchyroll, Amazon Prime, Netflix, HBO Max, and Hulu as I look for those shows that not only pique my interest but hopefully become one of the rare gems that adorn my DVD collection.

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ANIMATION UNITES US

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

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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

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

ANIMATION UNITES US

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the hmbly typist 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!

