

SUMMER 2021

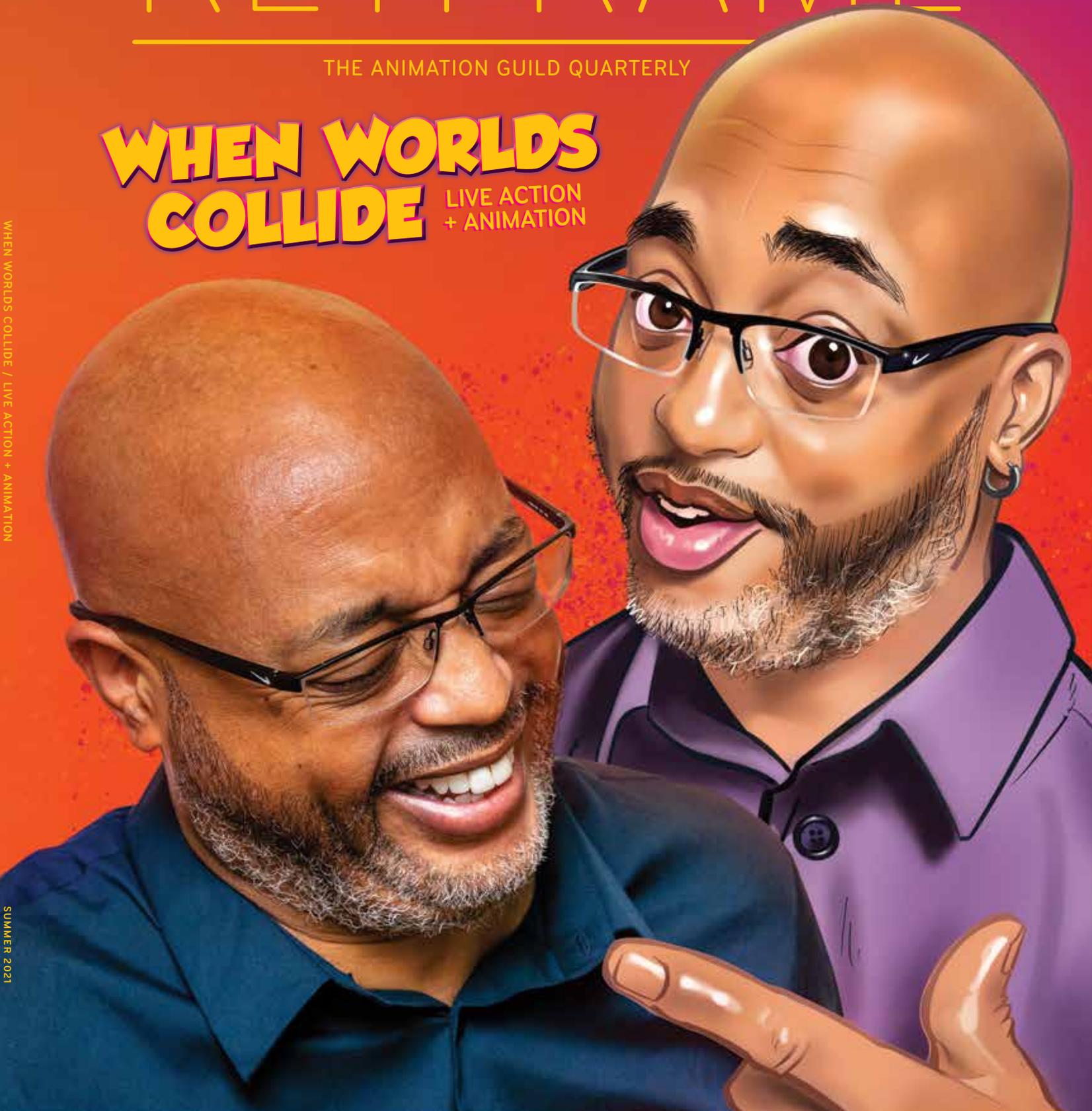
ISSUE NO. 14

KEYFRAME

THE ANIMATION GUILD QUARTERLY

WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE

LIVE ACTION
+ ANIMATION



IATSE LOCAL 839 MAGAZINE

WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE / LIVE ACTION + ANIMATION

SUMMER 2021

OUTSTANDING ANIMATED PROGRAM
AND ALL OTHER CATEGORIES

"FROM ITS
SLICK ANIMATION
TO ITS EXCELLENT
VOICE CAST,
**IT'S A WINNER
FROM TOP
TO BOTTOM**"

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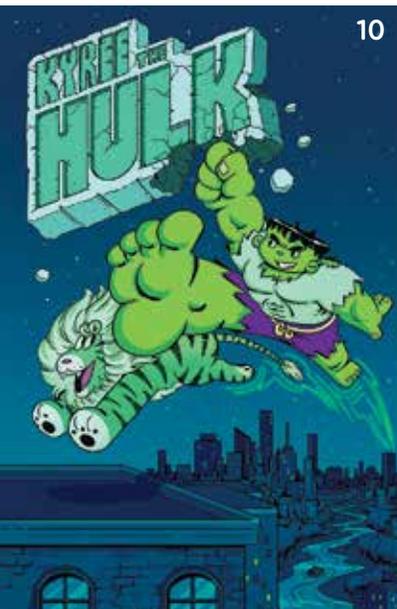
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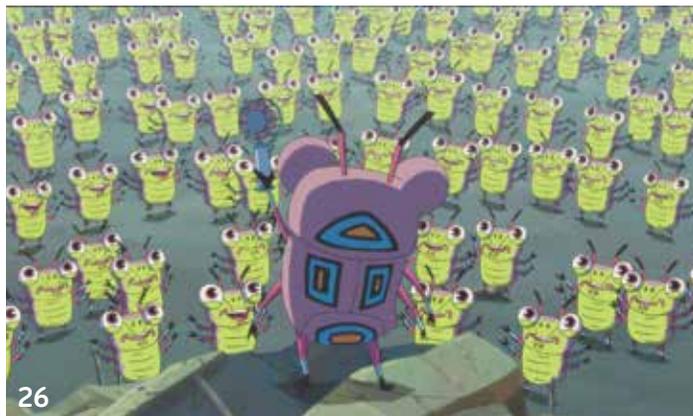
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NO SHAME IN SELF-LOVE



EVERY AWARDS SEASON I HEAR THE SAME CRITICISM: ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY AWARDS ARE JUST A GROUP OF INSIDERS PATTING THEMSELVES ON THE BACK. AS IF IT'S SOMEHOW A SIN TO BE RECOGNIZED BY YOUR PEERS FOR A JOB WELL DONE. BUT WHO OTHER THAN YOUR COLLEAGUES WOULD APPRECIATE THE SKILL AND TALENT IT TAKES TO DELIVER GREAT WORK?

I have to admit that I used to be one of those critics of such awards. Self-promotion never came easy for me, and I undervalued the work and skill it takes to make a career in art. But the sad truth is that if you don't call attention to your work and value yourself, most people won't notice. Especially with the fact that in animation you are just one talented member of a large talented team—and that team and the project they are working on is but one small piece of a huge animation industry that itself is one small corner of the entertainment industry behemoth. It can make you feel like a Who on a speck of dust.

So I've come around to feeling that there is no higher honor than to be recognized by your peers. They know you. They know the long hours spent training and striving to get to the level it takes to contribute to a great show. They understand what it means when you say, "Hey, look what I made!"

Happy awards season everyone!

In Solidarity,
Jeanette Moreno King | President
The Animation Guild, IATSE Local 839

ON THE COVER

Photograph of Bruce W. Smith by Tim Sullens.
Illustration by Overton Loyd.



“STILL AS
FUNNY AND
PROFANE AS
EVER.”

NEW YORK MAGAZINE



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animation
guild

Representing animation artists,
writers and technicians since 1952.



WARM WELCOME



JUNE MARKS MY 6-MONTH ANNIVERSARY AS MANAGING EDITOR FOR THE ANIMATION GUILD. PREVIOUSLY, LIKE MANY OF OUR MEMBERS, I'D BEEN WORKING FREELANCE, SKIPPING FROM JOB TO JOB. NOW, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 25 YEARS, I'M WORKING A "REGULAR" FULL-TIME JOB. I KNEW I'D ENJOY THE WORK: WRITING AND EDITING. IT'S WHAT I LOVE. BUT WHAT ABOUT THE "REGULAR" PART OF IT?

One thing I've learned over the years is that people can make or break a job. From day one at The Animation Guild, I knew the people were going to "make" this one. It's been a little strange because my encounters with my fellow co-workers in the office have been almost entirely through Zoom. But that hasn't gotten in the way of me knowing that I'm working with a special group of people. They are warm and genuinely committed to the well-being of the TAG community, and they're just the tip of the iceberg. Working on *Keyframe* magazine, as well as the *Keyframe* website and other TAG publications, I encounter talented people every day—and I keep marveling at how darn nice and generous everyone is!

This issue is a perfect example of that, from the TAG members who contribute their artistic talents to the Superhero Project for youth with serious illnesses and special needs (p. 10) to the members who volunteer their time and energy to help the next generation at our annual Portfolio Review Day (p. 16). When I was working on *How to Market Yourself Online* (p. 18), everyone I interviewed genuinely wanted to help our members showcase themselves and their work in the best way possible. And what amazing work it is, as is evident in our Emmys piece (p. 26) and our feature on the magic behind live-action/animation hybrid movies (p. 32).

With each article, interview, and interaction, I also enjoy something else: learning about the amazing world of animation, which feeds my curiosity to know more and more. I'm just having so much fun, and I'm grateful to be a part of this original and welcoming community.

Kim Fay

Kim Fay
editor@tag839.org

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EVAN HENSON'S ("When Worlds Collide") career spans journalism and nonprofit communication. His work has appeared in *Orange Coast Magazine*, *TV Guide*, and *Los Angeles Daily News* where he was a staff writer and critic. While earning his Master's Degree from USC, Evan walked the entire length of Ventura Boulevard.



Freelance writer and author **KAREN BRINER** ("Acts of Faith") grew up in Cape Town, South Africa, where her garden was home to wild chameleons. Her most recent novel is *Snowize @ Snitch: Highly Effective Defective Detectives*.



L.A.-based photographer **TIM SULLENS** has one wife, two daughters, and six cameras. Over the years, he has captured images of musicians and performers, political rallies and weddings. In this issue, he snapped Bruce W. Smith for our cover.



SoCal native **TERI HENDRICH CUSUMANO** ("Standing Strong") is a Color Supervisor, Chair of the Color Designers Committee, and mom to two young kids, each named after *Sailor Moon* characters. She is currently studying to earn a Certificate in Labor Studies from Cornell ILR. Find her personal paint work on Instagram @teri.h.c.art.

ACTS OF FAITH



A LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD IS JUST ONE OF MANY SUCCESSES FOR MULTI-TALENTED CAROLE HOLLIDAY.

“God wants me in animation... I insisted that was where I was supposed to be.”

When an email popped up in Carole Holliday’s inbox in 2020, informing her she was the winner of the Black in Animation Lifetime Achievement Award, she almost deleted it as junk mail. “Who’s going to honor me with a lifetime achievement award?” she wondered, believing that her roles in the animation industry have been out of the spotlight. “So when I found out that my peers noticed me, I was like George Bailey, surprised ... but very happy.” The award “was like a shot in the arm to say don’t give up.”

In fact, Holliday’s career is an example of staying the course, and she has many strings to her bow: animator, story director, training animator, character designer, and children’s book writer and illustrator—to name just a few.

Holliday’s path to animation was not a direct one. Growing up in Los Angeles County, she split time between the homes of her divorced parents. Her super fun mom was her biggest fan and introduced her to art and music. As a child, Holliday doodled and drew, and at one point wanted to be Charles Schulz. However, she also sang, and soon her love of musical theater took over.

Holliday and her sister were bussed to the Westside for school, and she landed a spot at Beverly Hills High. While it was the perfect school for her musical ambitions, being Black affected her opportunities there. At one point, “I auditioned for Elizabeth Proctor

in *The Crucible* ... but I was told they wanted me to audition for Tituba the slave, and that was why they had picked the play, so that I could have a part.”

She adds, “High school prepared me for the realities of the world, but it didn’t deter me from it.”

Broadway ambitions landed Holliday at CalArts, studying theater. They also put her in close proximity to its animation department, where she began making friends. At the end of her first year, Holliday became a Christian and felt a need to change her study path because she was concerned it might compromise her faith. She went to the head of the animation department and said, “God wants me in animation.” He replied, “But you can’t draw.”

“I could,” Holliday adds, but just not in the way expected for the animation field. “Even still, I insisted that was where I was supposed to be.” The head of the department sent her away to fill a sketchbook with drawings of people. For a month, Holliday kept returning until he finally said, “You still can’t draw, but we’ll let you in on your enthusiasm.”

During one summer while she was at school, Holliday got her first paid job in animation at Hanna-Barbera working on *The Smurfs*. Her task was to photocopy rough character designs and then white out the extra lines. One day Storyboard Artist Mitch Schauer asked if she could draw like Jay Ward. Despite having no idea who that was, Holliday immediately said yes. “I just drew the tightest, cleanest lines I could possibly do and fortunately, my style was close enough to what he wanted,” she says. As a result, Holliday was moved on to design characters for *Star Fairies* and *Pound Puppies*.

While she was at CalArts, Don Hahn, then a production manager at Disney, looked at her portfolio; he told her she was good and that she needed to do more life drawing. Holliday says she only heard the “you’re good” part of his statement

and kept wondering why they didn’t hire her. Upon learning from Glen Keane that he’d filled up five sketch pads after his portfolio had been reviewed, she realized she had more drawing to do. She filled up seven, submitted the best work, and was eventually hired as a training animator on *Oliver & Company*.

After a stint at Ralph Bakshi, she returned to Disney to work in her previous role, this time on *The Little Mermaid*. While there, she was called away to trace photostats for Glen Keane. She worked on a few pieces in scenes he had animated, to help him speed up his workflow. While doing this basic task, she began to understand movement and depth as it applied to animation. She soon went back to her job as a training animator where she received conflicting opinions: “One was: Carole will not be an animator. The other was: Carole just needs help.”

Another animator was assigned to mentor her, but her real progress came from the training program she created for herself, working on figure drawing and animating a self-boarded sequence. At the end of three months, her work was reevaluated and the review board questioned her drastic improvement in such a short time. She says they asked her mentor if he had done the work for her, Holliday explains, “and he told them no, he’d been swamped. I didn’t get a promotion and was asked to do more testing.”

Holliday left Disney again, but soon came back, eventually working on *The Little Mermaid* TV series as a character designer, where director Kevin Lima asked her to do a design during her lunch break. Holliday did a quick drawing that would become the much-loved Roxanne from *A Goofy Movie*, and she was hired as a character designer and storyboard revisionist on the film, which took her to Paris, her favorite city.

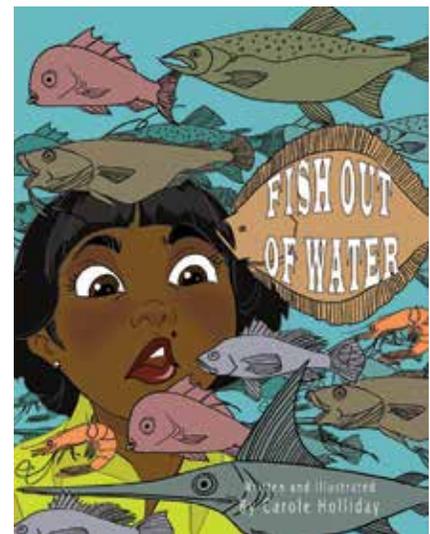
Upon returning to the U.S., she continued working with Lima, this time on *Tarzan*. She would be there for the duration of the movie, a project she’s proud of, she says,

probably because it was one of the hardest she’d worked on.

Holliday credits part of her success to her willingness to leap at every opportunity that’s offered, but she says the biggest challenge in her career has been getting a lead role. In 2007, she took time off from Disney to follow her passion and direct a live action short, *Witt’s Daughter*, which won Best Narrative Short at the 2009 GI Film Festival. She emphasizes that while she loves getting paid to create art, being able to express herself in her own creative projects is especially important, and she is most proud of her film, her Christian weight loss book, *The Food Ain’t the Problem*, and her book for children, *Fish Out of Water*.

More recent work includes *Sofia the First*, *Elena of Avalor*, and *Spirit Riding Free*, and these days Holliday freelances while looking for a full-time gig and developing her own projects. “Dreams take time to happen,” she says, and while many of hers have come true, she’s still dreaming of achieving much more.

— Karen Briner



ABOVE: The love and compassion of Holliday’s faith define who she is, and her projects, such as this children’s book, are shaped by that.

EVERYDAY HEROES



TAG ARTISTS USE THEIR TALENTS TO HELP YOUTH WITH SERIOUS ILLNESSES AND SPECIAL NEEDS DISCOVER THEIR INNER SUPERHEROES.

When Lisa Kollins went to her high school homecoming dance with Tim Yoon, she had no idea that years later she would reach out to him to help make dozens of children's dreams come true.

In her eighth year as a volunteer program specialist and cabin counselor at Camp Sunrise, an Ohio camp for children impacted by HIV/AIDs, she thought it would be fun to ask the kids what they would look like and how they would make the world better as superheroes. Then, on the last day of camp, they would be surprised with posters of themselves as those characters.

In need of more than 100 artists, she remembered that her long-ago date now worked in the animation industry. She sent Yoon a message, and soon he responded with dozens of names.

Among them were TAG members, including Jeremy Polgar. Currently directing and show-running music videos, Polgar says: "It was a really strong, simple idea. It was an easy thing to say yes to."

The result was a slideshow on the last day of camp, where Kollins realized "how powerful it was [for the kids] to see themselves reflected in such a joyful way, with such strength."

Kollins considered how she could turn the project into an ongoing, sustainable program.

The ensuing Superhero Project kicked off in late 2017 with patients at a Cleveland children's hospital. Soon word spread and individual families and other organizations reached out.

Each poster begins with an in-person or video interview. First, kids are asked to describe themselves. Next, they describe who they want to be as a superhero. (If they're nonverbal, parents, siblings, and other loved ones provide this information.) The descriptions that are then sent to artists can get elaborate, according to Polgar.

"I got my first prompt and I was like, oh, this is a creative, fun, challenging assignment." He was able to work the girl's ten dogs into the poster, but he couldn't figure out how to include her cage that captured bad guys—so he had Kollins add a note explaining that a miniature cage, that expanded when needed, was hidden in a pocket.

"You really have to step outside of yourself and what it is you feel comfortable drawing," Polgar says. "That's what's fun about this assignment. And you're giving [kids] a gift of letting them see their own imagination. You really want to show them empowered in the way they want to feel empowered."

Polgar's enthusiasm attracted other TAG members like Danny Ducker, a storyboard artist on *Amphibia* and an Executive Board member.

"It's so different from anything I would draw for myself or draw for work," she says. "It's never a moment of frustration, but it is a moment of, oh God, how am I going to do this? I really want to make this kid happy." For example, "they want a rainbow cape, but they also want rainbow hair. As an artist, let's figure out a way to make that look like it makes sense and doesn't blind anybody."



TOP: Mimi was created by B. (age 9) and designed by Jeremy Polgar. **BOTTOM:** A. (age 7) came up with the idea for *Super Guinea Pig*, which was then designed by Danny Ducker.



Each poster is credited as being created by the youth, whose names are withheld for privacy, and designed by the artist. Creators and artists (FROM LEFT): Supergirl G by G. (age 4) and Danny Ducker. Kyree the Hulk by K. (age 4) and Julia Srednicki. Ali Strong by by A. (age 21) and Danny Ducker. Vibranium Man by M. (age 22) and Julia Srednicki.

“Kids are honestly the most fun art directors!” adds Julia Srednicki, another TAG artist Polgar recruited. A character designer at Netflix, she says that the trick is taking the child’s lead while making sure you’re creating something original. “This 4-year-old really wanted to be the Hulk—but I tried my best to pay attention to and emphasize the specifics he mentioned, like ‘big green feet’ and ‘lots of muscles’ to be sure it wasn’t just a generic Hulk... My hope was that the child would instantly recognize himself as his own unique hero.”

Each artist is drawn to the project for different reasons. Srednicki felt it was “a perfect chance to put our everyday work skills to use to bring some joy to a kid going through a tough time—and in a way that

specifically reflects their own creativity and admirable qualities right back at them.”

Those admirable qualities are what appeal to Ducker. When asked about their superpower, “some [kids] are like, ‘I go to other kids like me and make them feel better.’ I just can’t imagine being that young and trying to process the position you’re in. It’s very touching that their response is wanting... to make other people feel loved.”

The interviews serve a deeper purpose than simply aiding in the creation of the posters. One mom of a child with special needs explained to Kollins, “We’re always asked to talk about the things our kid can’t do... to explain what the deficiencies are.”

“[The Superhero Project] really flips that on its head,” Kollins says. “We’re asking them to tell us how their child makes the world better every day.”

Kollins says she’s surprised at the effect a single poster can make: “[Families have] reported back that their kids, after seeing their superhero and going through this process, have more self-confidence. That they seem more comfortable with their bodies and with their body differences because they’re being celebrated. Being in a wheelchair is one thing. Seeing yourself in a rocket wheelchair shooting across the sky is something totally different.”

ART FOR A CAUSE

Serving children with more than 100 different diagnoses from almost 40 different states and 13 countries, **The Superhero Project** is now officially collaborating with TAG to ensure every child who wants to participate is able to. Want to join your fellow TAG members in creating these one-of-a-kind treasures? Email hello@superheroprojectkids.org to get involved.

LEFT BRAIN, RIGHT BRAIN

MORE AND MORE TALENTED WOMEN ARE PURSUING CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN CG AND EXCELLING IN THE TECHNICAL SIDE OF THE INDUSTRY. HERE, THREE OF THEM SHARE THEIR CAREER PATHS AND WHAT THEY LOVE ABOUT THE JOBS THEY'VE CHOSEN.



LORIN Z. PILLAI
LEAD SURFACING ARTIST,
JURASSIC WORLD CAMP
CRETACEOUS

WHAT DREW YOU TO A JOB AS A SURFACING ARTIST?

I spent several years as a muralist, and I love color theory and color application. I wanted to have a position where I was part of a team that was creating something bigger than I could create on my own. The collaborative process of creating animation—it's really incredible the way it unfolds. We have a lot of assets to get through in order to create these final shots, and sometimes it can be a seemingly insurmountable amount of work. Working with other artists to figure out how to approach that is really exciting for me.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR JOB TO A LAYPERSON?

If [someone was] looking at what a shot would look like without my job, they would see gray scale models moving around. My job is to apply not only color to the surfaces, but also [to figure out] how bumpy are they, how shiny are they, how dull and matte. But it's

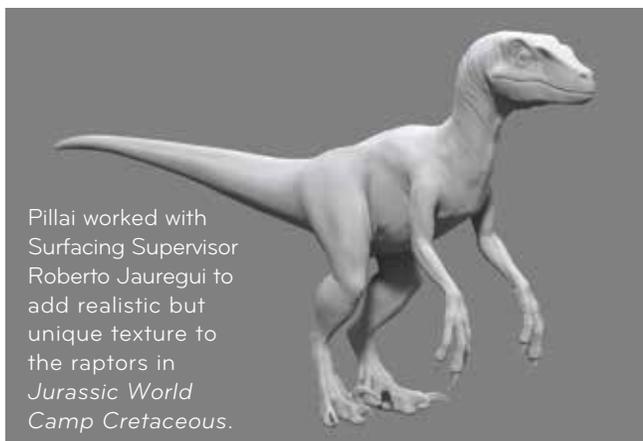
not just paint. It's developing the shaders. It's how those shaders, which are applied to the gray models, react to light.

It's equal parts artistic and technical. That was very hard for me at first. I spent two years [at Gnomon School of Visual Effects] learning and pushing my mind to wrap around this crazy CG process. Now I've been in the industry for over 12 years, worked at various studios and on games as well, and surfacing has been the aspect I've gravitated toward the most because I get to paint.

DESCRIBE A CHALLENGE YOU'VE ENCOUNTERED IN THIS JOB.

I was incredibly challenged to do the raptors for *Jurassic World Camp Cretaceous*. What are they going to look like? What's going to make the most sense? They had to feel of the same world from the films, and yet they had to have their own flavor and flair.

We used real life references: different lizards and birds' legs. But also, it was supposed to be pseudo-real life, because at the end of the day these raptors are in the same shots with these very stylized characters. If you had a realistic-looking dinosaur right next to these human characters, but they're clearly cartoons, it would feel off.



Pillai worked with Surfacing Supervisor Roberto Jauregui to add realistic but unique texture to the raptors in *Jurassic World Camp Cretaceous*.





CANDICE STEPHENSON
LOOK DEVELOPMENT LEAD,
BIG NATE (UPCOMING)

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB?

My first love—before I ever touched a computer, before I ever learned how to animate—was drawing and painting. When I went to school, I went as a generalist. And once I started doing the different parts of the



CG pipeline, I found that texturing was something I was really good at. I also liked surfacing because, I joke, it's kind of like painting with math.

When you build shaders and start dealing with that, all of those terms are physics terms. You have to think both problem-solving—dealing with the way the computer calculates, and the way that light behaves—in addition to understanding painting and color theory and how to make something look beautiful. This is one of the crafts where you really get to have a foot in both left brain and right brain thinking.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR NEW ARTISTS STARTING THIS JOB?

Sometimes in CG you have people who will come at it from a love of the software, a love of technology, which you absolutely need. But it's also important to go out and do your own research. You might have a program that has a really cool leaf shader, which yes, absolutely, research that. But go outside and look at your own leaves.

It was kind of a joke with my peers at [Nickelodeon]. I love fabrics. So I had this bag of fabrics at my desk because there might be some really cool shaders out there that do fabrics, but I like to physically pick it up and hold it and play with it in the light to see what it does. Don't be afraid to do your own research, and really look at objects and come up with your own solutions.

Stephenson built procedural CG fabric material (**RIGHT**) based on fabric from the samples she keeps at her desk (**LEFT**).



SUKI LEE
HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTS
AND SET EXTENSION,
US AGAIN

WHAT DOES YOUR JOB ENTAIL?

I'm in charge of everything [to do with the] environment, from something very small—a mug the character is holding—to the whole set. [This involves] look development, which is texturing and surfacing. But also modeling, set dressing, and set extension, which is matte painting. Everything is all combined together as one environment... texture to finished art.

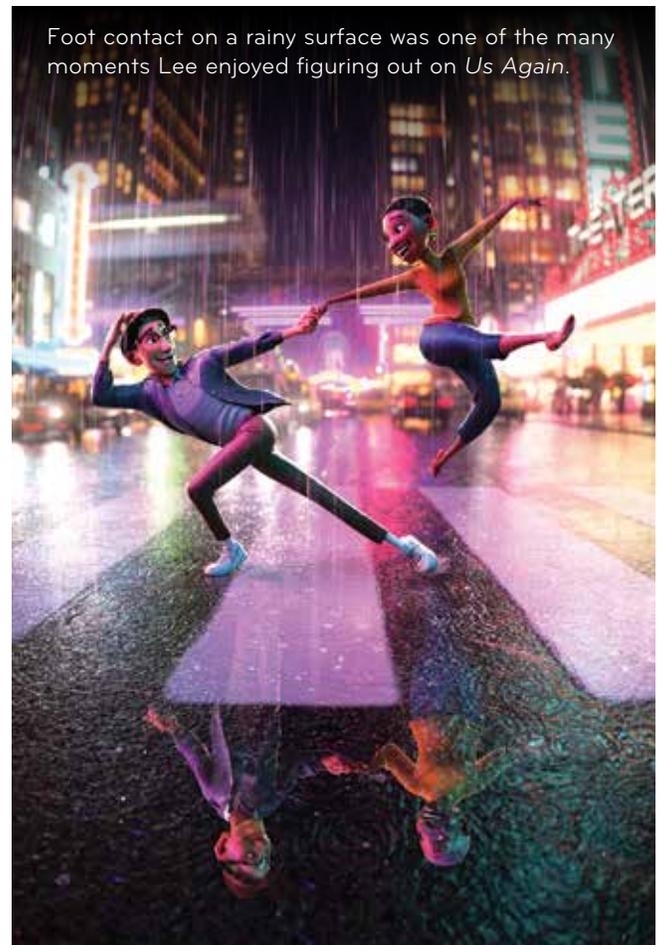
DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE SURFACE YOU'VE WORK ON?

One of the fun moments I worked on [in *Us Again*] was the bridge shot. It's the moment when it goes from dry to wet. So we need to look at how the street or concrete is reacting to different weather, and the time of the day, and when the neon lights or the traffic lights are zooming by, how it reacts differently.

After that, creating the whole city in the background. How the lights are showing in the buildings, when some of the rooms have lights on and some of the rooms don't have lights on, and how that interacts with the traffic lights. We considered the geometry and the natural qualities of what the materials are. Also, we played with depth of field, boca, and all that stuff. That was really fun, working with animation and effects.

HOW DO YOU STAY UP-TO-DATE ON TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY?

You can't just be comfortable where you are. Always look out for inspiration from your peers, from other artists, from other studios. Even in our groups, our team members, we show what we're up to, personal work, what we're doing. And if there's new software or anything else, we share and we talk about it. It's a constant learning process.



Foot contact on a rainy surface was one of the many moments Lee enjoyed figuring out on *Us Again*.

HERE COMES THE JUDGE

WHEN IT COMES TO FILM FESTIVAL AWARDS, THERE'S AN ADVANTAGE TO HAVING A JURY OF YOUR PEERS. HERE, FOUR TAG MEMBERS SHARE INSIGHTS BASED ON THEIR EXPERIENCES JUDGING SHORTS AT OSCAR-ELIGIBLE FESTIVALS.



RON MYRICK

Animation Director, *J.G. & the B.C. Kids* and *Six Point Harness* series

JUDGE: LA Shorts International Film Festival

WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR WHEN EVALUATING A SHORT FILM?

A) The first thing I ask is if the film is entertaining. B) What is the intention of the filmmaker? C) What is the quality of the animation?

DO YOU JUDGE PROFESSIONAL SUBMISSIONS DIFFERENTLY THAN THOSE PUT OUT BY STUDENTS?

Yes. I have higher expectations if the film is done professionally.

HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE IDEA VERSUS THE ARTISTRY?

The idea tells me what the filmmaker was thinking and what the story is. The artistry shows the skill level of the artist, designers, and animators.

HOW DO YOU ASSESS INDEPENDENT SHORTS VERSUS THOSE DONE THROUGH THE STUDIO SYSTEM?

Typically, the small, independent studio has a smaller budget. Their style of storytelling is usually more unique than the larger studios. An independent studio will take more chances and think outside of the box. They both have their pluses and minuses. Personally, I prefer the more innovative outside-of-the-box thinking.



CHRIS PRYDOSKI

President and Founder of Titmouse

JUDGE: SXSW Film Festival

WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR WHEN EVALUATING A SHORT FILM?

I evaluate a short on its mood, message, storytelling, execution, style, and originality. And recently, "potential" factored into a piece a jury and I evaluated. The filmmakers were not afraid to push the boundaries of their skills, and the result was worth it.

DO YOU JUDGE PROFESSIONAL SUBMISSIONS DIFFERENTLY THAN THOSE PUT OUT BY STUDENTS?

The films that were presented to [our] jury... weren't categorized as

either professional or student work. I didn't know which were which, so they were all judged equally.

HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE IDEA VERSUS THE ARTISTRY?

Artistry is definitely a consideration. A film with an idea or story that doesn't quite land, but excels in craft or innovation in its execution, will still be ranked high by me!

HOW DO YOU ASSESS INDEPENDENT SHORTS VERSUS THOSE DONE THROUGH THE STUDIO SYSTEM?

I don't remember if there were studio system films presented to the jury this year. They all felt very independent in spirit, and I judged the selections based on their content. Also, it's tough to determine by which criteria one would determine a film to be independent. If a film receives funding through a grant that's higher than a budget provided by a studio, is it independent? Would an independent studio be considered differently than a major studio? If an individual hires a small studio to execute their idea, is it an independent film? Someone would have to carefully consider the definition of an independent film.



JORGE R. GUTIERREZ

Creator, Writer, and Director at Netflix Animation

JUDGE: New York International Children's Film Festival (NYICFF), Spark Animation, International

Animation Festival Chilemonos, El Festival Pixelatl, Voces Nuevas, Anima Mundi

WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR WHEN EVALUATING A SHORT FILM?

I'm personally really looking to hear a unique voice. This can be pretty clear in a student short, but it gets tougher with a big studio short. I adore when something makes me laugh, think, or touches my heart. And if it does all three, I'm sold!

DO YOU JUDGE PROFESSIONAL SUBMISSIONS DIFFERENTLY THAN THOSE PUT OUT BY STUDENTS?

Absolutely. If resources are endless, then the story has to be amazing. And vice versa, if there are no resources, then a good story can carry it. But the bottom line is: good story always wins.

HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE IDEA VERSUS THE ARTISTRY?

Ideas are not that important to me. I want to see how they were executed. Simple and clear are incredibly hard. All stories have been told, so it's all about the storytelling for me.

HOW DO YOU ASSESS INDEPENDENT SHORTS VERSUS THOSE DONE THROUGH THE STUDIO SYSTEM?

Ingenuity and resourcefulness often [result in] the most creative of outcomes. I will innately root for the independents since there was so much more sacrificed, and honestly, there is so much more at stake.

**TOM WARBURTON**

Executive Producer, *Muppet Babies*,
Disney Junior

JUDGE: Ottawa International
Animation Festival, RiverRun
International Film Festival, and
ASIFA-EAST Animated Film Festival

WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR WHEN EVALUATING A SHORT FILM?

Personally, I'm always looking at the idea first. For something I've never seen before. For a different way of saying something through film. YES! I want it to look *sooper* beautiful and technically brilliant. But if there's no idea behind it then, in my mind, it becomes more of an exercise. That's not to say an exercise can't be a superlative and enlightening film. But when judging for a festival, I'm really looking for both idea and artistry.

DO YOU JUDGE PROFESSIONAL SUBMISSIONS DIFFERENTLY THAN THOSE PUT OUT BY STUDENTS?

These days it can be hard to tell the difference between student and professional films. Some student work looks more professional than the professionals' (and vice versa). But as a veteran of watching over eleven billion student films at ASIFA-EAST over the years, I most definitely judge them differently. A lot of it is looking for the gem beneath the rough exterior and knowing that with time, experience, and money, a lot of these films would be different. Some for the better. Some not. And some are just perfect the way they are.

HOW DO YOU ASSESS INDEPENDENT SHORTS VERSUS THOSE DONE THROUGH THE STUDIO SYSTEM?

Coming from New York City, a community with a long and strong history of independent filmmaking (Bill Plympton, Buzzco Associates, Emily Hubley, George Griffin, etc.) I have a deep affection for independent filmmaking. I know the time, effort, and money it takes to get a film done. So I appreciate the fact that ANYONE has finished one. But I ALSO appreciate films made within the studio system for the polish and professionalism on display. And that they too finished a film. That said, technology has blurred the lines between what an independent and studio-made film looks like. It's often hard to tell! But honestly, it doesn't matter who made it or how. I just want to sit up in my seat and say, "YAAAAAY!"



Festival attendees gather in the Bonlieu Exhibition Hall.

BONJOUR, ANIMATION!

The Anney International Animation Film Festival is among the most prestigious in the world. On June 14-19 it's going virtual for the second year in a row, but being online doesn't dilute its cachet. TAG members worked on a few of the festival's Official Selections this year, including *Animaniacs* "Suspended Animation" and *Disenchantment* "Last Splash." Rob Hoegge, Executive Producer and Head Writer on another contender, *Stillwater* "The Impossible Dream," explains why he appreciates being a part of Anney.

"It can be easy to see animation as a commodity—a product that is manufactured and sold to an audience. Festivals look beyond that and help celebrate the artistry of what we create. As far as animation festivals go, Anney is considered one of the most respected, so having *Stillwater* in competition is a tremendous honor for us. We've worked incredibly hard to make a good show, and to be among other programs that are considered the very best in the global animation community is a real validation of our efforts."

SUPPORT SYSTEM

WITH MORE THAN 600 SUBMISSIONS THIS YEAR, TAG'S ANNUAL PORTFOLIO REVIEW LEAPED FROM PASSION PROJECT TO INDUSTRY ESSENTIAL IN JUST THREE YEARS.

On May 23, TAG's annual Portfolio Review Day paired members with fledgling artists from across the country—and beyond. Hello, Australia and Japan! It's a notable success for a project that its co-founder Crystal Kan jokingly dubbed the "Jake and Crystal Chaos Committee." Jake being her fellow storyboard artist at Nickelodeon at that time, Jake Hollander, Kan's partner in organizing crime.

Back in 2018, Kan started thinking about the cost of starting out in animation, which led her to ask: "How can we make animation more equitable? How can we make it more diverse? If you think about it, who has the privilege to get into animation? It's someone who can afford art school. It's someone who has the time and the money... and the privilege to even think that art is something they can do."

One element especially on her mind was the portfolio review. These reviews cost money, in the form of a fee or admission to a conference or expo where the reviews are held. Kan and Hollander started talking about the need for free reviews. "And we were like, why don't we just do it?"

Why don't we try to figure out a way to use the resources of our Union to provide a resource for [artists] who will eventually be future Guild members? How can we help the most people, and how can we help them help us, and therefore all boats rise?"

Brimming with enthusiasm, the *Chaos Committee* drafted a plan and took it to TAG's Executive Board. But the board didn't feel the Guild was ready at the time to take on this major project. That year, Kan confides, a small park by CTN served as the locale for more than a few rogue reviews.

Then 2019 rolled around, and Kan and Hollander tried again. "We really wanted to make it more formalized with the actual backing of the Union," says Kan. The pieces fell into place, and the first official Portfolio Review Day occurred in May with approximately 180 submissions.

One of those submissions came from Caroline Chiou, who submitted again in 2020 and returned in 2021 as a reviewer. The reviews, she says, taught her how to make her portfolio better: "This industry is all about specialization. When you're trying to get your first

job, it's better to have a really high-quality portfolio in one discipline than a mediocre generalist portfolio because you've spread yourself too thin. Don't be afraid to cut work from your portfolio either. Consistent quality is key, and you will be judged by your weakest piece."

But it wasn't just the critiques that were helpful. "It was really cool getting to meet working artists and learning more about the specifics of the job and what people are looking for," she says. Chiou is currently working as a background designer on *Pantheon* at Titmouse, and she adds, "I wouldn't have broken into the industry without the help of many generous artists taking the time to review my work."

With 2019 a clear success, 2020 was planned. "I sent out a notification in March," Kan says. "I wasn't really thinking about Coronavirus, although it was in the back of my brain. Of course in the middle of the submission period, we go into lockdown, and [we wondered], will we even be able to do this?"

The organizers quickly pivoted, investigating the possibilities of the Guild's new Zoom subscription. "After a little bit of quick research and learning about breakout rooms," Kan says, "we realized that Zoom was possibly the most perfect tool that we could use at the time."



(LEFT) Crystal Kan's illustration to publicize Portfolio Review Day captures the event's spirit of mentorship and paying it forward.

The main Zoom room was treated like a waiting room, where artists “hung out” until they were called into a breakout room. These individual breakout rooms were private. “No one else watching,” Kan explains. “You don’t have to be afraid of judgmental people. You don’t have to be vulnerable in that sense.”

This was useful because, while the reviews serve a practical purpose, they’re also intended to be a form of support. A visual development artist and concept designer, industry veteran Gary Montalbano has reviewed in numerous categories for all three years, and he feels one of the main goals is “encouragement and to build confidence, not out of falsehoods but pointing out strengths. That and pinpointing what the reviewee’s true passion is within the art field. No piece of art will ever be perfect, so focus on helping and guiding the individual so they can live up to their goals and dreams.”

Montalbano also notes: “The role of mentor and apprentice has unfortunately diminished quite a bit in the animation/movie industry over the last 20-30 years.”

“So why don’t we try to bridge that connection between our older membership ... and our future membership?” Kan adds.

Because of the uncertainties surrounding the start of the pandemic, only 100 reviewees participated in 2020, but with everyone getting the hang of communicating by video, 2021 submissions skyrocketed. It also helped that Kan and Hollander were now working with the event’s new POC Committee, which reached out to groups like *Black N’ Animated* and *Rise Up Animation*.

While Zoom has allowed artists from outside the L.A. area to participate, Kan hopes to see a return to in-person

reviews next year. “I really do think there’s a value to a face-to-face connection,” she says. Of course, in her ideal world, it would be held twice a year—once in person and once virtually.

As for Kan’s thoughts now that she has her third year under her belt, she realizes, “I was just breaking down the barriers that I myself experienced... If I think about it, I went to a no-name school, I’m a minority, I had to move from New Jersey to get here. If I didn’t have the privilege of having parents who were able to work their way up to a middle-class level of prosperity, I might not have had the job that I have. [Doing these reviews is] paying respect to the opportunity that was given to me because of their hard work.”

Just as serving as reviewers allows TAG members to pass on the tradition of guiding the next generation into the animation industry.

“Why don’t we try to figure out a way to use the resources of our Union to provide a resource for [artists] who will eventually be future Guild members? How can we help the most people, and how can we help them help us, and therefore all boats rise?” – Crystal Kan



MARKET YOURSELF

ONLINE PORTFOLIO

SOCIAL MEDIA



THE GATEKEEPERS



EMILY BRUNDIGE
Head Writer
Big Nate
Nickelodeon



MEGAN NICOLE DONG
Showrunner
Netflix



MARK EDWARDS
VFX Supervisor
DreamWorks
Animation



KENDALL HANEY
Story Editor/
Head Writer
Unannounced Show
Mattel



ROB HOEGGE
Executive Producer
and Head Writer
Apple TV+

HOW TO MARKET YOURSELF ONLINE

Industry experts weigh in on the best ways to promote your talents and skills online.

Recruiters, showrunners, directors, producers, and other hiring managers—they're as eclectic as the artists they hire. Each has an individual approach to staffing, but at the same time there are certain elements they all believe make for a strong online presence. Read on for expert insights to showcase your experience.

by Kim Fay



JACKIE HUANG
Senior Talent
Development Manager
Cartoon Network
Studios



BROOKE KEESLING
Head of Animation
Talent Development
Bento Box
Entertainment



VANESSA MCATEER
Senior Director of
Artistic Recruitment
DreamWorks
Animation



MATT ROBERTS
Recruiter
Walt Disney
Animation Studios



MARC SCOTT
VFX Supervisor
DreamWorks
Animation



PAULA SPENCE
Art Director/Shorts
Department
Cartoon Network
Studios



HOW TO CREATE A WINNING ONLINE PORTFOLIO

A strong online portfolio is a key promotional tool to get you hired. Preferably, this portfolio is presented as a dedicated website that is clean, organized, and easy to navigate, with information and artwork that lets you shine.

INTRODUCE YOURSELF



JUST BE YOU: Use a URL that includes your name. Huang says websites and social media pages that use nicknames can be hard to find and make it difficult to contact a person.

MAKE AN IMPRESSION: Along with your resume, include an “About Me” page to convey your personality—a few paragraphs describing your background and your goals. When evaluating many people with similar experience for the same position, Spence says this “can be very useful in helping me make a decision about who I contact.”

SHOWCASE YOUR BEST WORK

BE SELECTIVE: As you choose the work to include in your portfolio, keep in mind that whatever you pick is “what you’re going to get more work doing,” Huang says. So not only choose your best work, but the work you like doing best.

SPECIFY: When you apply for a job, Roberts recommends curating your website to that position. This doesn’t require a complete overhaul, but “submit a link to the specific section that’s relevant to what you’re applying for; we can always explore the rest of your site if we want to see more later.”

STAY FOCUSED: If your portfolio is all over the board, it’s hard to know what you’re good at doing and what you want to do. If you have more than one area of expertise, Keesling suggests creating an easy-to-navigate tab to a separate page for each skill and making “the things you want to be hired for really findable.”

DIVVY UP: While your social media can showcase your work, consider it a separate entity from your online portfolio. Keesling notes that on your Instagram page, she might have to sift through photos of your cat to find your art, which is fine if there’s a place she can go—your dedicated online portfolio—to get a clear understanding of your talent and skills.

LET GO: If work doesn’t represent the best that you can do, don’t include it just to have a larger portfolio or to show your range. Experts agree that quality will always beat quantity.

GET ORGANIZED: Your website should be easy to explore. According to McAteer, a disorganized website can “drive away traffic, deter interest in the work, or hinder a recruiter’s ability to see the range in the work.”

FIND A HOME: Along with free website builders such as Wix, Weebly, GoDaddy, and the like, a common place for online portfolios is Artstation. Avoid any type of blog-style platform that requires scrolling through dated entries to explore your work.

PRO TIP FOR PORTFOLIOS

“Watch the credits of the shows that you like, or look up people you admire on IMDB. What does their online portfolio look like, because that can give you clues to what you should put in yours. If they’re working, whatever they did worked for them.”

- Brooke Keesling

MOST COMMON PORTFOLIO MISTAKES**SPOTLIGHT YOUR CONTACT INFO**

It may sound like a no-brainer, but everyone we spoke with said that contact information is often missing or impossible to find on websites and social media pages. If you don’t feel comfortable including your personal email and phone number, you can create a Google phone number and a dedicated email address or have a contact form on your website. However you choose to do this, though, make sure it’s easily discoverable.

**STAY UP TO DATE**

You never know when someone in a position to hire is going to come across your website, so make sure it’s current. Include your best work from your most recent shows, and on your “About Me” page, indicate if you are looking for work or not. Keesling says she often keeps portfolio links on file. If she receives the same portfolio a year later, “it’s a little bit of a red flag. Someone not updating their portfolio, that can come off to me as phoning it in.”

AGE IS JUST A NUMBER

Different stages call for different ways to present yourself. “How people put their work together often tells you a lot about where they are in their career,” Huang says. Below are ways to shape your portfolio based on your personal experience.

RUNNING START

If you’re beginning your career, avoid the shotgun approach. One mistake students just out of school make, Huang says, is throwing all of their work onto their portfolio “and hoping something lands.” You don’t need a ton of experience. You do need to showcase what you’re really good at. Five great examples will take you much further than dozens of practice projects.

THE MIDDLE GROUND

Cull your portfolio to show what you’re best at now. Typically, if someone is in the middle of their career, Huang says, she can tell because she’ll go on their website and see 15 shows they’ve worked on. “Okay, you’re definitely very experienced. But maybe I don’t need to see your revisionist work,” she notes. As you improve, Keesling agrees that you should remove earlier, less polished work—this makes your strong, current pieces stand out. Also remove the type of work you’re no longer interested in doing, even if you have good examples of it. There’s no point in taking up space showing off a skill for a job you’re not interested in.

IN FULL BLOOM

If you’ve been in the industry for decades, most likely you started out using pencil and paper. While it’s great to show longevity, employers want to know what you can do now. “The concern is, have they evolved and adapted with technology?” says Huang. “Do they have the current ability to work with current tools?” This requires more than listing the software you know. It means showing strong examples—and they don’t have to be from a produced show. If you’re learning how to use a new tool and have a great personal example, don’t hesitate to showcase it. As for your beloved past projects that may not be good contemporary examples—if you want to keep them on your website, Keesling offers a simple solution. “Just create a tab that says archived work or legacy work.”



12:00 PM



HOW TO NAVIGATE SOCIAL MEDIA & FORUMS

If someone likes your work in your portfolio, they may want to poke around your social media sites to see more. Or someone might stumble across your work on Instagram. But in general, according to Roberts, “We discourage using social media as your sole platform of presenting your portfolio. It often doesn’t make for the cleanest or most efficient format for showcasing your work, plus it doesn’t show any thought in your application.” Dong adds that your actual portfolio will always be more relevant to hiring than your social media, so consider social media a nice opportunity to complement your portfolio.

CONNECT YOURSELF: Include links to your social media on your website, and vice versa. Make sure, wherever someone finds you online, that all roads lead back to your portfolio.

SOCIALIZE: Dong feels social media is a great way for people to engage with their community. Follow people you admire. Tag fellow artists. Actively create a network that will draw people back to your social media pages, and therefore to your portfolio.

FIND YOUR HOME: For displaying art, Instagram is the hands-down choice. Roberts says it’s the easiest way for studios and followers to find you.” For writers, Hoegge says, Twitter is the logical choice. If he’s looking for someone to do comedy, he wants to know if their sense of humor is in sync with his project, so he might dip into their Twitter feed.

USE HASHTAGS: Instagram tends to be the most popular place to search, and Huang and McAteer both

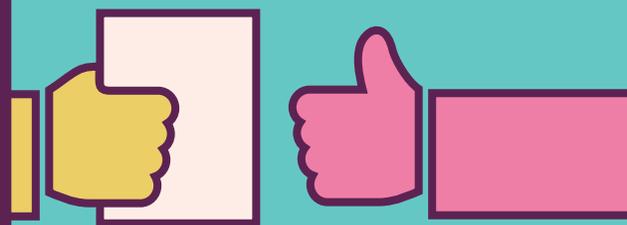
say that sometimes they will search by hashtags. So on social media, it’s a good idea to always tag yourself by your job. i.e. #storyboardartist #artdirector

WATCH YOUR MOUTH: While most say they don’t use social media to vet people, it is agreed that you shouldn’t use social media or forums to gripe about everything in your life. “If you complain all the time to random people you don’t even know,” Hoegge wants to know how will that manifest at work. Keesling adds, “We’d always rather hire someone who gets along well with people.”

SPEAK UP: Edwards says it can help boost your online presence if you’re actively answering questions and providing feedback in forums. He notes that Autodesk, Foundry, SideFX, and Blender are all great places to engage and offer a sense of your abilities and technical prowess. Another place to participate online, McAteer says, are professional LinkedIn Groups.

EXPAND YOUR REACH

While the online portfolio is essential, it’s also true that you never know who your social media pages might bring your way. As Huang says, “Artists that I like or follow sometimes post or repost stuff from their friends, and I’ll go down that rabbit hole.” And if she thinks that person might be a good fit for a show later, she’ll make a note. Here are three artists who found work through their social media presence.



Character Designer **Brittany Myers** didn’t think anything of it when she posted an *Ariel* fan art sketch on her Facebook page. Then she received a “like” from none other than her animation idol Glen Keane. She was over the moon—apropos since the next day producer Gennie Rim contacted Myers, and soon Myers was working on Keane’s Netflix movie of the same name.

Back at his advertising agency in London, **Simon Chong** created an animated fan short by blending characters from *Bob’s Burgers* and *Archer*. He posted it on Twitter, tagging the show’s creator, Loren Bouchard, and the voice actors. The next thing he knew, he was packing his bags and heading to Los Angeles where he still works on *Bob’s Burgers*, and also *The Great North*.

While it’s not quite a social media story, it does show the benefits of an online presence. Living in Atlanta, **Kathryn Hudson** started a Kickstarter for her enamel pins that led creator Lauren Faust to “friend” Hudson on Facebook. Like Chong, the next thing she knew, she was on her way to L.A., in this case to work as a character designer on Faust’s *DC Super Hero Girls*.

HOW TO ASSEMBLE A SUCCESSFUL REEL

When your portfolio calls for a reel, there are a few musts—and a couple don'ts—that are essential for capturing the right kind of attention.

CHOOSE A PLATFORM:

There isn't a blanket preference for platforms, as long as your reel has smooth, high-resolution playback. The most commonly used platforms are YouTube and Vimeo.

LINK IT: Don't use big files that need to be downloaded. Make sure you have a link to access your reel. Not only are links easy to view, they are easier for an employer to share.

THINK SMALL: As you decide what you want to include, keep in mind that the agreed-upon sweet spot for a reel is between one and a half to three minutes. It's better to have a few short reels highlighting different skills, than one too-long reel that includes everything you can do.

CONTROL QUALITY: Scott notes the importance of full playback speed, low compression, and color accuracy. For the latter, he says, "If the color or gamma of your content is broken, it can really torpedo an otherwise fantastic reel."

SIMPLIFY: Reels often contain too much content. Focus on your best work and avoid repetition. Showing multiple passes of a shot may be nice for an important shot, but Scott says, "It can drastically reduce the impact of your reel and may pull the reviewer out of the content." He also notes he has seen reels slim on content because the artist might be starting out, but it was made up for with "editing, menus, titles, and additional details in the reel," as well as exceptional personal work.

HIGHLIGHT QUALITY:

Emphasize how you used specific tools. "One extremely complex, beautiful shot involving multiple characters and FX elements with detailed breakdowns of each component done by a single artist will give more insight than a dozen same-as shots where the artist inherited a lead lighting rig and sweetened characters slightly," says Edwards.

LET IT FLOW: McAteer recommends taking the time to create a reel that flows smoothly from shot to shot. She suggests a bookend approach: start with one of your best shots to engage the viewer, and then end on another prime shot to leave a strong impression.

ADD MORE: Include information that describes your contribution to each shot. For burn-in text added directly to your video, Scott suggests something very short and simple at the bottom or top of the frame for each shot: name of project, name of company, and your contributions. For example, "texturing" or "compositing only." McAteer adds she also wants a burn-in of your contact info at the beginning of the reel.

BREAK DOWN YOUR SHOTS:

Provide a detailed reel breakdown—on your website or a document to be downloaded—with the information you burned in, as well as the software you used. Edwards says this also provides the opportunity "to dive deeper into breakdowns and descriptions for work relevant to the given position." Make sure all information is relevant to the job you're applying for. And for those employers who might happen across your website, you can include links or tabs for the different types of work you did, so that someone can view pertinent categories.

AVOID AT ALL COSTS: Do not include restricted content. If you're not able to show it or don't know if you have clearance, Scott says to avoid it always. "I have seen talented artists skipped for a position because they included restricted content." This is where your resume and website come in, because you can explain what you are working on, and why you can't share it: *in development, untitled project not yet announced*, etc.

▶▶▶▶ PRO TIP FOR REELS ▶▶▶▶

"Almost all reel review meetings I've attended in my career were run without sound. I know that it is common to edit a reel to music, but there is a high probability that we'll be reviewing with sound off. That isn't to say you shouldn't add music to your reel. I would just suggest making sure that the artist watch the reel with sound off to make sure it still works and isn't too cutty or drags too much because of choices made to time with the music." - Marc Scott



6 WAYS TO CRAFT AN EFFECTIVE RESUME

While a resume on your website is fine, nearly everyone agrees that the ideal way to present your resume online is to use LinkedIn—just include the link on your website’s “About Me” page. “LinkedIn is really appreciated by a recruitment team,” McAteer says. “It’s an easy, efficient way to keep your experience and job titles up to date. It also makes you searchable online, which helps us keep track of your career progress.”

STATE THE FACTS

Essential information includes the studios you’ve worked at, the productions you’ve worked on, and the specific job titles of the positions you’ve held—with exact dates. And make sure your profile always includes your current title and position.

CLARIFY

Huang says she likes to see two to three bullet points about your roles and responsibilities because “some titles are the same at different studios, but the actual job responsibilities are very different.” Stick with your main responsibilities and specific contributions, McAteer adds. Don’t bog things down with the nitty-gritty.

MENTION YOUR TRAINING

Include relevant education (especially if you’re just starting out or deeper into your career and learning new technology) and all of the tools you’re proficient at.

ADD CONTACT INFO

This has already been mentioned, but it’s worth repeating: Include contact information or provide a link to your website contact page. You don’t want anyone to struggle to contact you.

ADD EXTRAS

Additional experience isn’t a dealbreaker, but Huang says that anything that displays leadership skills, such as volunteering or mentoring, is always a plus.



PICTURE THIS

Same goes for your photo. Not a dealbreaker, but McAteer says including one is definitely appreciated. Keesling suggests using a more creative image if you’re applying for the art side of animation, and something more professional on the production and administrative sides. Your image, Huang says, “should be whatever you want people to perceive of you.”

CUSTOMIZE YOUR WRITING PORTFOLIO

Most established writers have representation, so the issue of portfolios and samples usually depends on where you are in your career. If you're established, your agent or manager most likely will be sharing your work with potential employers. But for those starting out or finding jobs on their own, a website is recommended.

ALL ABOUT YOU: Hoegge says it's hard to get a sense of a person from their IMDB page. Your website can give insight into "who the writer is as a person," and Brundige feels the "About Me" page is a great way for potential employers to learn about you.

ADD DIALOGUE: Your website should contain entire sample scripts, if possible, showing your range as a writer and/or your specialty. Hoegge likes samples from an existing show (spec or produced) to see how you can work with someone else's material, and Brundige recommends including an original pilot. This provides a sense of your individual voice as a writer.

EMBRACE THE PDF: Don't put your scripts directly on web

pages. Create links on a web page to PDFs. Triple-check that the links go to the correct scripts, Haney says. "I've encountered more than one link going to an incomplete, incorrect, or no script at all."

RESPECT THE NDA: Make sure your sample is shareable. If you aren't sure if you have permission, err on the side of caution. Your original scripts, Haney says, are more beneficial anyway, because a produced script has gone through a story editor and/or showrunner, while your original script is you and only you.

STAY CURRENT: As with art portfolios and reels, keep everything up to date. It's great that you worked on a classic back in the day, but that doesn't show what you can do now.

PRO TIP FOR WRITERS

"One online resource I've been using [for hiring] a lot recently is the TAG Airtable Staffing Grid. This has introduced me to a lot of writers I haven't had the opportunity to get know. [Also], you can post samples—and since this is a closed group and password-protected, it's an ideal place to make them available to possible employers." - Rob Hoegge

HOW TO USE

PASSWORDS



Potential employers understand the need, at times, for passwords on your website. That said, they can be a roadblock. Keesling notes that when she passes potential candidates to a director, producer, or other hiring manager, she can't guarantee they will check password-protected content. As a rule, avoid it if you can, but if it is necessary, keep the following in mind.

GET PERMISSION: Be certain that you have permission to put artwork or video in a password-protected section of your website. If not, don't do it.

EXPLAIN YOURSELF: If you don't have permission to share something, you can still share what you worked or are working on. "I've seen some artists do it really well," says Huang. "They'll put up an image like 'Unannounced Disney Project' to show that they're currently active." She notes that this is where your personal work can be effective. If you can't share something from a show, share something comparable that you've done yourself.

TAKE IT DOWN: Do not make an employer use a password when it's not necessary. As soon as a password is no longer needed, make the content publicly accessible on your website.

MAKE IT EASY: If someone has to hunt for your password, chances are they won't. If you have a page on your website for password-protected content, put your contact information right there so you can be easily reached.

DON'T FORGET: If you send a link to your password-protected content, remember to include the password. Roberts says, "You'd be surprised how many people submit password-protected work without a password for us to see it."

DON'T GO CHANGING: Don't change your password unless there's an essential reason. Keesling says she keeps a list of everyone who reaches out to her. If she goes to a website a few months later and the password has changed, that's an unnecessary obstacle. 🙄

PRIMETIME PLAYERS

WHAT ARE YOUR INSPIRATIONS? A FAVORITE MOMENT YOU CREATED FOR YOUR SERIES? THE SHOW THAT GOT YOU THROUGH THE PANDEMIC? WE REACHED OUT TO CREATIVES FROM A FEW OF THIS YEAR'S EMMY HOPEFULS FOR OUTSTANDING ANIMATED PROGRAM TO FIND OUT THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS—AND THEN SOME.



NATHAN RICO
ART DIRECTOR
BIG MOUTH
NETFLIX

WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES *BIG MOUTH* UNIQUE?

I think *Big Mouth* walks a line between gross humor and raw feelings about sex and relationships. Our EPs and writers are great at finding relatable moments/topics and making them fun yet approachable.



"Nick Starr" sees the characters in *Big Mouth* visiting a dystopian future.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE MOMENT YOU CREATED FOR YOUR SHOW?

It is an episode coming up for next season. But a close second would have to be Season 4, Episode 6: "Nick Starr"—we took our cast into a future dystopian Earth. It was super fun to take a normally light-hearted *Big Mouth* into a more dark and gritty locale.

WHAT ANIMATED SHOWS INSPIRED YOUR CAREER?

Too many to count! *Dragon Ball*, *Batman: The Animated Series*, *Aaah!!! Real Monsters*, and *Samurai Jack*. I remember running to watch these shows on Saturday mornings or after school. All of them have a strong and distinct visual style that drew me to them from a young age. Most have a strong protagonist who is trying to be a good person, and the monsters are just fun and weird! I think two ideas were imprinted into my brain from these: opening my eyes to a wide range of looks for animated shows, and also for me to try to be good, fun, and weird.

WHAT ANIMATED SHOW HELPED YOU GET THROUGH THE PAST YEAR?

The Midnight Gospel one hundred percent. Thought-provoking subject matter, fun style, and a format that was a little different. It released in April 2020 when things were getting more intense, and it helped me take a breath to enjoy something really cool.



"Skater's Circle" captures the spirit of park living in Central Park.



Batman and the Justice League fight evil in Gotham City in Harley Quinn's "Lover's Quarrel."

Top left: Image courtesy of Apple TV+. Top right: Image courtesy of Warner Bros. Animation. Opposite Page: Image courtesy of Netflix, Inc.



STEVEN THEIS

**DIRECTOR
CENTRAL PARK
APPLE TV+**

WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES CENTRAL PARK UNIQUE?

The cast, the settings, and the musical element of the show. The Tillermans, a mixed-race family, living in the middle of Central Park, open an unlimited amount of stories and experiences that can be told. New York is huge and populated, and there are so many places to go and people to see. The music is catchy, and the animation paired with it is on another level. I often find myself singing or humming the music on my off-time.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE MOMENT YOU CREATED FOR YOUR SHOW?

Without giving too much away, in the upcoming season there's a song sequence I directed where two of our characters have a trippy fantasy. It's my favorite because I had such a great time coming up with ideas and thumbnailing it. It allowed me to think outside of the box, draw from some of my favorite inspirations, and go a bit wild. Finally, when I saw it in color and fully animated, I was more than pleased with the way it turned out.

WHAT ANIMATED SHOWS INSPIRED YOUR CAREER?

Growing up in the '80s and '90s, I was inspired by all sorts of shows, from *DuckTales*, *Animaniacs*, and *Batman: The Animated Series* to *Beavis and Butt-Head* and *The Simpsons*. They were just so darn good. When I was young, I wanted to be a comic book artist, but as these shows started airing, I fell in love with animation. I was so fascinated with the stories and the characters. It became a dream of mine to work in animation, and luckily I got my foot in the door with an internship on *The Simpsons*. I was inspired all over again when I finally got to meet the artists and see the process.

WHAT ANIMATED SHOW HELPED YOU GET THROUGH THE PAST YEAR?

That would have to be *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*. I had never watched it before and noticed there are 133 episodes. So it took a very long time to finish, and it kept me excited and lifted my spirits.



CECILIA ARANOVICH

**SUPERVISING DIRECTOR
HARLEY QUINN
WARNER BROS. ANIMATION**

WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES HARLEY QUINN UNIQUE?

If I had to pick one thing, I would say the comedy is what sets it apart from other shows. Every script is hilarious, and the dialogue between the characters is so sharp and witty, I often find myself laughing out loud as I read through the scripts. I feel the comedy also comes from the way the characters interact and relate to each other in this version of the DC Universe: having traditionally established characters and taking them out of their comfort zone makes for a lot of comedic situations.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE MOMENT YOU CREATED FOR YOUR SHOW?

Back in Season 2, I had a chance to plan and storyboard a musical piece for the "Bachelorette" episode, where a lobster tries to lure King Shark back to the Shark Men Kingdom—and his main argument is nothing other than the ability to poop in the sea anytime he pleases. The song was conceived as a parody of another famous animated crustacean who also sings about the benefits of living underwater. I personally love staging and choreographing musical numbers, and we generally do not get to do songs in the show, so bringing this tune to life was a real treat for me.

WHAT ANIMATED SHOWS INSPIRED YOUR CAREER?

When I was young ... I was very drawn to the work of Hayao Miyazaki in particular. Series like *Sherlock Hound*, *Future Boy Conan*, and *Heidi, Girl of the Alps* were some of my favorites. Later I became familiar with his feature work with Studio Ghibli, and I loved *Castle in the Sky*, *Kiki's Delivery Service*, and *Porco Rosso*, to name a few. ... To me each one of these movies was—and is—a work of art, and they were extremely influential in my decision to pursue a career in animation.

WHAT ANIMATED SHOW HELPED YOU GET THROUGH THE PAST YEAR?

I have three young children, so it has been a particularly difficult year with the pandemic. Most of the animated shows I watch

SHORT AND SWEET



The Primetime Emmys' Short Form Animated Program category recognizes an animated series or special 15 minutes or less. This year's submissions include Walt Disney Animation Studios' *Once Upon a Snowman*.

We touched base with the film's director, Trent Correy, who's also been submitted for the Character Voice-Over Performance and Individual Achievement categories.

HOW DOES *ONCE UPON A SNOWMAN* COMPLEMENT *FROZEN*?

The original *Frozen* was my first film at Disney Animation, and Olaf was the very first character I animated. As a huge fan of *Frozen* and the summer-loving snowman, I couldn't help but wonder what happens between "Let it Go," when Elsa builds Olaf, and the moment Anna, Kristoff, and Sven all meet him. How does he come to life? How does he know what summer is? And most importantly, does he remember that Anna and Elsa built him as kids?!? These are all questions that my fellow director, Dan Abraham, and I set out to answer, with the hopes of adding an origin story to Olaf's existence and complementing the film by answering our burning questions.

WHAT ANIMATED SHOWS INSPIRED YOUR CAREER?

I've always just LOVED film. Being a '90s kid, I grew up with *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Lion King*, *Toy Story*, and of course, *Jurassic Park*. I also have a deep love for the history of animation.

WHAT ANIMATED SHOW HELPED YOU GET THROUGH THE PAST YEAR?

As soon as the pandemic hit and with a new subscription to Disney+, I decided to watch every Disney Animation and Pixar feature in chronological order, beginning with *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and ending when we finished our work on *Raya and the Last Dragon* ... Anything to stay sane!!!

now are children's cartoons with my kids, and I have to say that one that resonates with me as a mom is *Bluey*. After a long day of virtual schooling and working from home, it is easy to find yourself too tired and demoralized to want to participate in fun games, but every time I watch *Bluey* with the children, I feel inspired and motivated to be more present and play with them in more creative ways: If Bluey's dad can do it, so can I.



Close Enough's "Josh Gets Shredded" sees Josh overdoing it in his attempt to play with Candice.



CALVIN WONG
SUPERVISING PRODUCER
CLOSE ENOUGH
CARTOON NETWORK STUDIOS

WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES *CLOSE ENOUGH* UNIQUE?

Close Enough is great because it's got the edge and surreal twists of other adult animated shows, but it also has a nice sentimental center. We very much care about the characters. We're not a cynical show! I also like that our art style is looser, and we're not too strict about models. We like storyboard artists' styles to come through.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE MOMENT YOU CREATED FOR YOUR SHOW?

We were really able to capture the world of skateboarding past and present in the first season episode "Skate Dad." I was particularly happy about a dream sequence I did where Josh floats around L.A. on a skateboard and flips off his rival. It was after a lot of dialogue [had been] cut for time, and the sequence successfully said everything ... with no words, in a much shorter amount of time, was funny to look at, and ALSO [paid] homage to *The Big Lebowski*!

WHAT ANIMATED SHOWS INSPIRED YOUR CAREER?

The Simpsons, *Futurama*, *The Tick*, *The Venture Bros.*, *DuckTales*, *Aeon Flux*, *Beavis and Butt-Head*, *Rocko's Modern Life* ... off the top of my head!

WHAT ANIMATED SHOW HELPED YOU GET THROUGH THE PAST YEAR?

Elizabeth Ito's *City of Ghosts*. It's really inspiring to see a show that takes its time and is deliberate and comfy and profound. So many shows are so loud, and it's nice to see what happens when you're quiet. People listen!



DAYTIME DELIGHTS

HOW DO YOU CHOOSE YOUR FAVORITE BABY? LET'S FACE IT, IT'S HARD! WE CHALLENGED THESE TAG MEMBERS TO PICK THEIR FAVORITE EPISODES FROM THEIR PAST SEASON'S WORK. PLUS, WE FOUND OUT WHAT INSPIRES THEM AND WHAT SHOWS HELPED THEM SURVIVE THE PANDEMIC.



ROMAN LANEY
ART DIRECTOR
ANIMANIACS
WARNER BROS. ANIMATION

WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES ANIMANIACS UNIQUE?

The core structure of *Animaniacs* is a variety show. This isn't all that common on television ... animated or live action. As an art director, it is a dream environment to play in. We're allowed, encouraged, and expected to experiment with all sorts of different looks, and we keep challenging ourselves to keep up with where our wacky characters go next. It's not often you get to use all the crayons in the box.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE EPISODE FROM THIS PAST SEASON?

It's hard to pick a favorite when there are so many. Episode 7 ['Warner She Wrote/France France Revolution/Gift Rapper'] has a special place in my heart. It's just sprawling in the number of things we did in that show. The art department generated over 800 individual art assets to create a French revolution spoof, a murder mystery on a steam engine, and finally a rap battle. Watching it reminds me of the talented crew and all the hard work they put in to bring it to life.

WHAT ANIMATED SHOWS INSPIRED YOUR CAREER?

Any answer to this question will date me. Let's just say I was a child in the '80s, so there were a lot of shows to watch on Saturday morning that got me interested in television

animation. None, though, that would be considered essential viewing for a serious student of animation. I recently went back and showed *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe* to my 12-year-old son as a lesson about how much television animation has changed since I was a kid. I figured he'd want to turn it off right away, but we actually had a great time watching it.

WHAT ANIMATED SHOW HELPED YOU GET THROUGH THE PAST YEAR?

This will sound strange, but I just got around to watching *Attack on Titan*. It's an anime about a medieval world where naked giants are terrorizing tiny humans. Such a bonkers idea, one that I imagined would be one-dimensional at first, but has all these twists and turns and true shocks in the plot. I love it. Obviously, it wouldn't be everyone's favorite during a pandemic, but a good reminder it could be worse, maybe?



Animaniacs' first season's Episode 7 features an eclectic medley of rap, murder mystery, and French Revolution.



Trash Truck's "Movie Night" is rescued by the creative use of headlights.



SYLVIA LIU
PRODUCTION DESIGNER
TRASH TRUCK
NETFLIX

WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES *TRASH TRUCK* UNIQUE?

I like that *Trash Truck* is tonally quiet, simple, and slower paced. I also think that a trash truck being the best friend is an interesting idea since it's a memorable moment to see a large and loud trash truck in the very early morning. And it's cool that the original idea was inspired by [creator] Max Keane's son.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE EPISODE FROM THE PAST SEASON?

My favorite episode would be the first one because [my fellow art director] Eastwood Wong and I got to work on the colorscript together. A lot of the main sets and stylizing were established in this episode, so there's a lot of great paintings and designs from the team.

WHAT ANIMATED SHOWS INSPIRED YOUR CAREER?

I've always been a pretty visual person, and anime in general caught my eye as a child because the styles/animation were somewhat realistic/relatable with a twist. And story-wise something about the culture described in those shows also spoke to me as an Asian American. Shows like *Sailor Moon* or *Cowboy Bebop* had a lot of emotional range and learning experiences that I felt really immersed in. For me these shows displayed a lot of diversity in character/story/setting that was also very specific/distinct. Even if I may not have understood the meanings of everything until later on, I could generally feel the intent, and I think it's great in animation that you can express many different points of views in unlimited settings that can potentially speak to different people on different levels.

WHAT ANIMATED SHOW HELPED YOU GET THROUGH THE PAST YEAR?

I only worked on *City of Ghosts* for an episode or two toward the end, but I was always admiring it on the sidelines. *City of Ghosts* is such an amazing show, visually and story-wise. I think the pacing is great, and the concept is so well-executed.



"Snow Place Like Home" keeps Craig and his friends indoors in *Craig of the Creek*.



DASHAWN MAHONE
SUPERVISING DIRECTOR
CRAIG OF THE CREEK
CARTOON NETWORK STUDIOS

WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES *CRAIG OF THE CREEK* UNIQUE?

To me, nothing like it has been done before. I have not seen a cartoon about a young black boy, in a leading role, playing in the creek with his friends. There's so much more to the show than that, though. We let the kids be whoever they want to be in the creek, and imagination plays a big role in the stories we tell. And who has a bigger imagination than kids? By telling the stories from a child's perspective, I believe it resonates more with them. While I believe tons of children would love to be a superhero, every one of them *can* be a creek kid. It's cool.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE EPISODE FROM THE PAST SEASON?

This is a tough question. It's probably 'The Ground Is Lava!' Or maybe 'Trick or Creek.' I loved 'Jessica Shorts,' though. And 'Ferret Quest' was fun, too. But then there's 'The Ice Pop Trio' and 'Snow Place Like Home.' It's too hard to pick just one. I can tell you that my favorite one to storyboard on was 'Fall Anthology.' I love working on the wackier episodes.

WHAT ANIMATED SHOWS INSPIRED YOUR CAREER?

Shows like *Dexter's Laboratory*, *SpongeBob SquarePants*, *Dragon Ball Z*, and *Samurai Champloo*. I tend to like action, anime and comedy. This selection is very interesting, even to me, but I loved these shows growing up. My art style and tastes are an awkward amalgamation of all of them.

WHAT ANIMATED SHOW HELPED YOU GET THROUGH THE PAST YEAR?

I watched a lot of *Futurama* last year. I guess it's a comfort show of mine. The episodes never get old to me, so I re-watch them when I want to have something on. Considering how uncomfortable last year was, I'm sure you can imagine how often I had it on.



DAN HOLLAND
CHARACTER DESIGNER
KIPO AND THE AGE OF WONDERBEASTS
DREAMWORKS ANIMATION

WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES *KIPO AND THE AGE OF WONDERBEASTS* UNIQUE?

One thing is the visual style of the show. The characters' design style that [show creator] Radford Sechrist created—I haven't seen anybody take a very Asian- or Japanese-inspired style and mix that with, let's say, the round and bubbly design that DreamWorks does. Kind of like *Kung Fu Panda* mixed with Japanese anime. That stood out to me and attracted me to want to work on the show.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE EPISODE FROM THE PAST SEASON?

Besides the finale, the episode *Requiem for a Dave*. That episode had really strong character development and a ton of funny moments with Dave. I always take questions about Dave and Benson: Dave's back story, and how Benson and Dave became friends in that hectic, chaotic, post-apocalyptic world. I think it was really interesting and fun [to address that].

WHAT ANIMATED SHOWS INSPIRED YOUR CAREER?

Growing up, when I was really young, it was Looney Tunes and anything Disney. Then anime hit the scene in America, and I watched *Ninja Scroll*. That changed everything. It went from these funny characters to very realistic. Then Pixar came into play [for me] and then anything by Studio Trigger. More recently it's been French animation. There's a school in France called Gobelins. I watch their shorts every year. It's always fresh and new. It went from American to Japanese to French and European, and currently *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-verse* and *Soul*. Those two are pushing me to want to do new things.

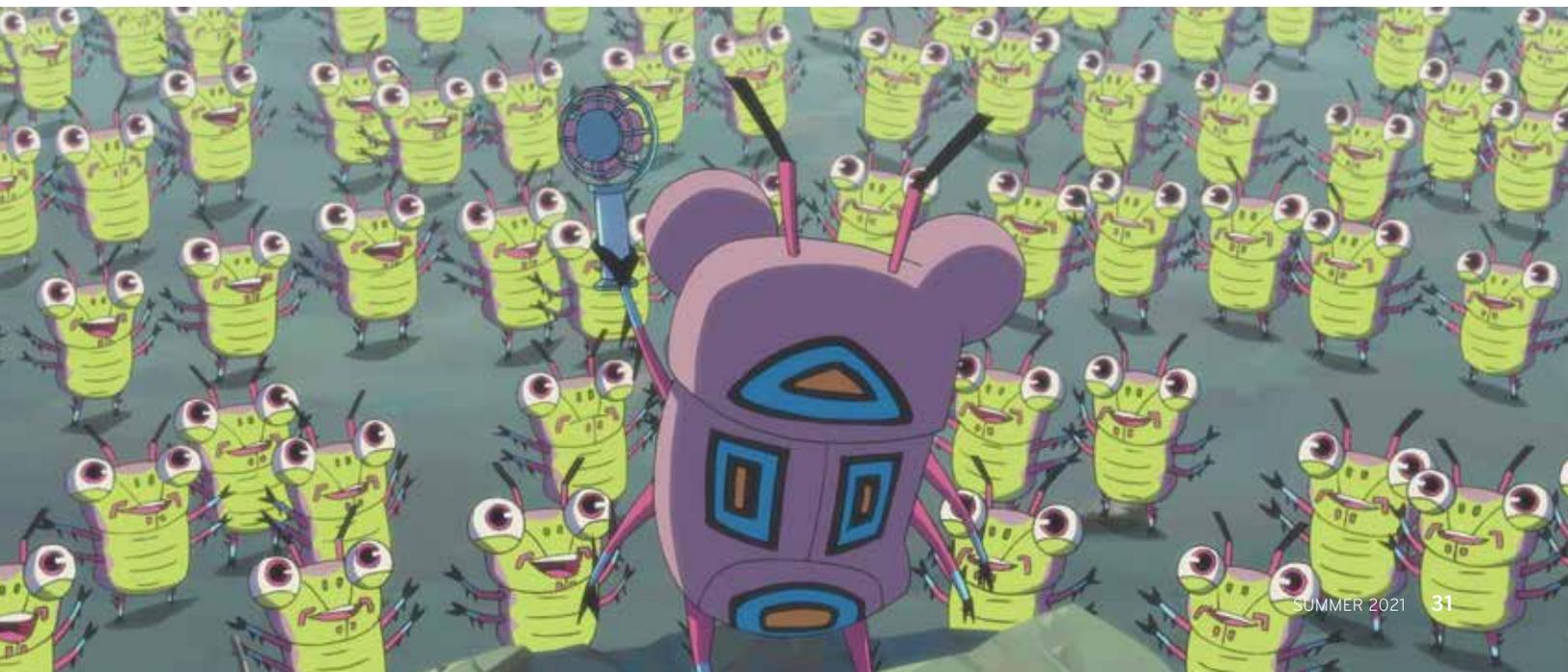
DAY IS THE NEW NIGHT

This year's 73rd Emmy Awards is seeing a shift when it comes to animation. From now on, children's programs—no matter what time they run—will no longer have a category in the Primetime Emmys. Since the majority of Children's Programming categories were already in the Daytime Emmys competition, the Television Academy and National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences say they hope this will streamline submissions and eliminate confusion. A contributing factor to this change is streaming, since programs on streaming services don't fall into a specific time slot and can be viewed at any time of day or night. Excellence in Children's Programming will continue to be voted on by Daytime Programming, Children's Programming, and Animation peer groups.

WHAT ANIMATED SHOW HELPED YOU GET THROUGH THE PAST YEAR?

The majority of the time during the pandemic, I was at home. I would go out once a week to one of my best friend's apartment. Of course, we're all masked up and everything. We would catch up, order some food—usually Thai—and watch an episode of anime called *The God of High School*. That was my weekly dose of normalcy during the pandemic. ☺

BELOW: An electric fan eventually bonds Dave and Benson in *Kipo and the Wonderbeasts*' "Requiem for a Dave."



WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE

By Evan Henerson

HYBRID MOVIES CARRY ON A TRADITION OF INNOVATION AS REALITY, 2D, CG, AND CLASSIC HAND DRAWING UNITE.

Once again, those Looney Tunes characters needed the assistance of a real NBA star to beat back their monstrous opponents. But unless Bugs, Daffy, and the gang were going to spring to life or LeBron James was going to get the full animation treatment, the upcoming *Space Jam: A New Legacy* had to be made as a live-action/animation hybrid, just like its predecessor of 25 years ago, *Space Jam*.

Much has changed in hybrid capabilities between *Jams*. Indeed, with the progression of CG effects, the technology for placing animated and live action together now leads to eye-popping visuals. Spike Brandt, who worked on both the original and the current versions, thinks it's especially cool, though, that even in these days of high-concept techniques, hybrid films often still use hand-drawn animation, which seems to be undergoing a cinematic renaissance.

Granted, there are certain things about the earlier routines that he most certainly will not miss. "The live-action parts used to be printed on these Mylar sheets, and they were very slippery," says Brandt, the new *Space Jam*'s animation supervisor, who has worked extensively in the *Looney Tunes* world. "If you had a stack on your desk, you had to be careful because once they started sliding, there was a waterfall effect, and they would end up all over the floor."

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP (LEFT TO RIGHT): LeBron gets the 2D treatment and Bugs goes CG in *Space Jam: A New Legacy*.

OPPOSITE PAGE, INSET: CG adds a new dimension to Daffy, Yosemite Sam, and other classic Tunes in *Space Jam: A New Legacy*.



The tools that artists now use to bring live-action/cartoon hybridization to life are not only more manageable than the old Mylar, they're also more plentiful since the days when rotoscope animation allowed Koko the Clown of the *Out of the Inkwell* shorts to interact with his creator Max Fleischer. Walt Disney started experimenting with live action and animation melds with the *Alice Comedies* of the 1920s, and as the years tumbled on, his toolbox expanded to include the sodium vapor process, in which filmmakers set up a white screen behind the actors and flooded it with sodium vapor light.

The multi-head optical printer developed for Disney by Ub Iwerks (earning him an Oscar for Technical Achievement in 1959) allowed filmmakers to combine and layer special effects

and matte paintings, making for a more seamless blend. As the technology improved, the hybrids kept on coming (see sidebar). And mixed scenes like *Mary Poppins'* "Jolly Holiday" outing or Eddie Valiant's chaotic visit to Toontown in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* turned out to be among the most memorable sequences of those beloved movies.

2D TAKEOVER

Details of exactly what the blended worlds of *Space Jam: A New Legacy* will look like are being carefully guarded before the film's July 16 release, but Brandt notes that the new *Jam* offers one obvious and quite significant feature.

"For a certain portion of the film, LeBron James will be a 2D [cartoon] character. Obviously, he's a new character

in the 2D world, and he had to kind of be invented. We had to explore how he would move and fit into the Looney Tunes world and still be believable as LeBron. I think people had a lot of fun animating those scenes and these characters and all of the scenarios we placed them in."

King James is not the only one who will be getting a visual metamorphosis. Watching the Looney Tunes characters morph from their hand-drawn roots to digitally enhanced CG through the course of the movie is something that artists and longtime fans of the characters should both appreciate.

"It's nicely integrated into the story, and it all makes sense," says Brandt. "2D animation onscreen is becoming exciting again. It's kind of becoming a new look, and then we're also able to do the CG version of some of these characters. This will be the first time we see Bugs Bunny in that full CG."

"We used tons of ink lines and shadows and tones and colors, celebrating all of these amazing characters and giving them extra spin for 2021," adds Devin Crane, the animation production designer on the new film before he was promoted to co-animation supervisor. "We found a way to stylize these [CG] 'toons in the computer which would help celebrate everything we love about them but make changes and improvements that would make them sing. We pushed textures and feathers and fur."



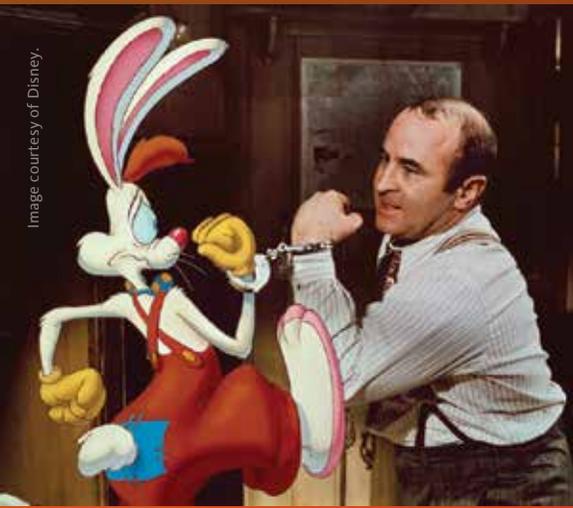


Image courtesy of Disney.



Cool World images courtesy of Paramount Pictures.



THIS PAGE: *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (TOP) and *Cool World* (available on Digital) ushered in a new generation of PG-and-up live-action/animation hybrid movies. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** A mix of animation and CG techniques creates a variety of looks in *Space Jam: A New Legacy*.

"In terms of the contact between the animated characters and the live action, if you're off by two to three frames, the illusion is blown."

– **Andreas Deja, Supervising Animator, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit***

MAKING CONTACT

From a creative standpoint, the challenges of bringing live action and animation into the same frame are still significant, especially if you want the audience's unconditional buy-in. We all know about actors working alone on a green screen opposite "characters" they never actually see. But how about the character designers, art directors, and visual effects crew whose work must convince the viewer that, yes indeed, a zany cartoon rabbit (Roger, not Bugs) is handcuffed to a balding gumshoe?

"Richard Williams was a stickler for technique. It had to be perfect," recalls Andreas Deja, *Roger Rabbit's* supervising animator, speaking about the late Oscar-winning animation director. "In terms of the contact between the animated characters and the live action, if you're off by two to three frames, the illusion is blown."

When looking at hybrids, Deja says he examines the tangible, physical ways in which these realms converge, such as *Bedknobs and Broomsticks'* Emelius Browne helping the lion king of Naboombu into his cape or the numerous dust-ups between Eddie Valiant and Roger Rabbit which, back in 1988, were a beast to create.

"I always look for the connection between the human actors and the animated characters," says Deja. "You have to make sure that their hands are touching in a convincing way when they shake hands. When a live-action character is picking up an animated character, are

they making sure it feels like the animated character has weight? If Roger Rabbit is holding a live-action glass of water, you have to make sure the fingers are always solid on that glass and not sliding up and down, which is something that could happen very easily."

"There are some movies that know this could be a problem so they avoid the physical contact between the live and the animated characters," he continues. "On *Roger Rabbit*, we were having as much contact as possible to set up the idea that these characters live side by side in the same world."

The cheek-by-jowl nature of *Roger Rabbit*, the complexity of the characters, and director Robert Zemeckis' insistence that the camera be allowed to move freely is part of what made the film a game changer in the live-action/animation genre. Ralph Bakshi's adult take on it, *Cool World* (1992), followed a similar path, mixing present-day Hollywood with a comic book realm created by the movie's main character, Jack Deebs—but the effect was notably different than what *Roger Rabbit* pulled off, according to the film's color modelist Clayton Stang.

"*Roger Rabbit* was trying to make 2D animated characters look like 3D. They had tone mattes and highlighting to make the characters look round so they fit in with live action," says Stang. "If a live-action character wound up in *Cool World*, we wanted those characters looking flat and 2D. We wanted this to be an animated film that live-action characters happened to drop into."

DROPPING ANCHOR

By the time *Space Jam* came around four years later, digital animation was at a threshold, making the task of bringing animation and live action together much easier than it had been in the past. Still, given the amount of unanswered questions involved in putting hybrid scenes together, the movie's animation co-director Bruce W. Smith says there was a certain amount of "duct tape and spit" creativity.

"There were a lot of happy accidents along the way, guesstimations that sometimes would fail, but we would quickly recover and find a way to make the movie look as cool as it was," says Smith, who had worked as an animator on *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*.

According to Smith, director Joe Pytko used a "loose camera," employing handheld camera effects. Register balls

placed on the outfits of stuntmen and in locations throughout the studio helped track all the live-action shots which would eventually be anchored to the animation. Instead of traditional side-to-side movements, animation could now be tracked in any direction without becoming a distraction.

In the film's first successful tracking shot, Michael Jordan had just landed in the Looney Tunes world, and a handheld camera was tracking him. So in order to establish Jordan as a character in a cartoon world, he had to be lit in such a way that he could be anchored in the setting.

"I don't think that shot had any real animation in it, maybe some Tunes running around here and there," Smith says. "But the fact that we could anchor [Jordan] in an animated world and still have it be believable was a huge

stepping stone for us."

And if you think it's difficult to have Michael Jordan maneuvering around a bunch of animated Looney Tunes characters and aliens, imagine the logistics involved with sending a couple of those Tunes back up into *our* world. For a scene that had Bugs and Daffy tunneling into Jordan's house to get his basketball kicks, Smith and his co-director Tony Cervone engaged in a constant game of "where's the rabbit?"

"We would have to take a dry erase [pen] to the screen and draw where Bugs would be in each portion of the shot so they would get the eyelines correct for the kids," recalls Smith. "The kids come through looking for Bugs and looking for Daffy. What about the shoe? How big is Daffy compared to the shoe? That was a whole week of plotting that shot out."

All *Space Jam*: A New Legacy Photos courtesy of Warner Bros. Pictures.



UNION PROUD

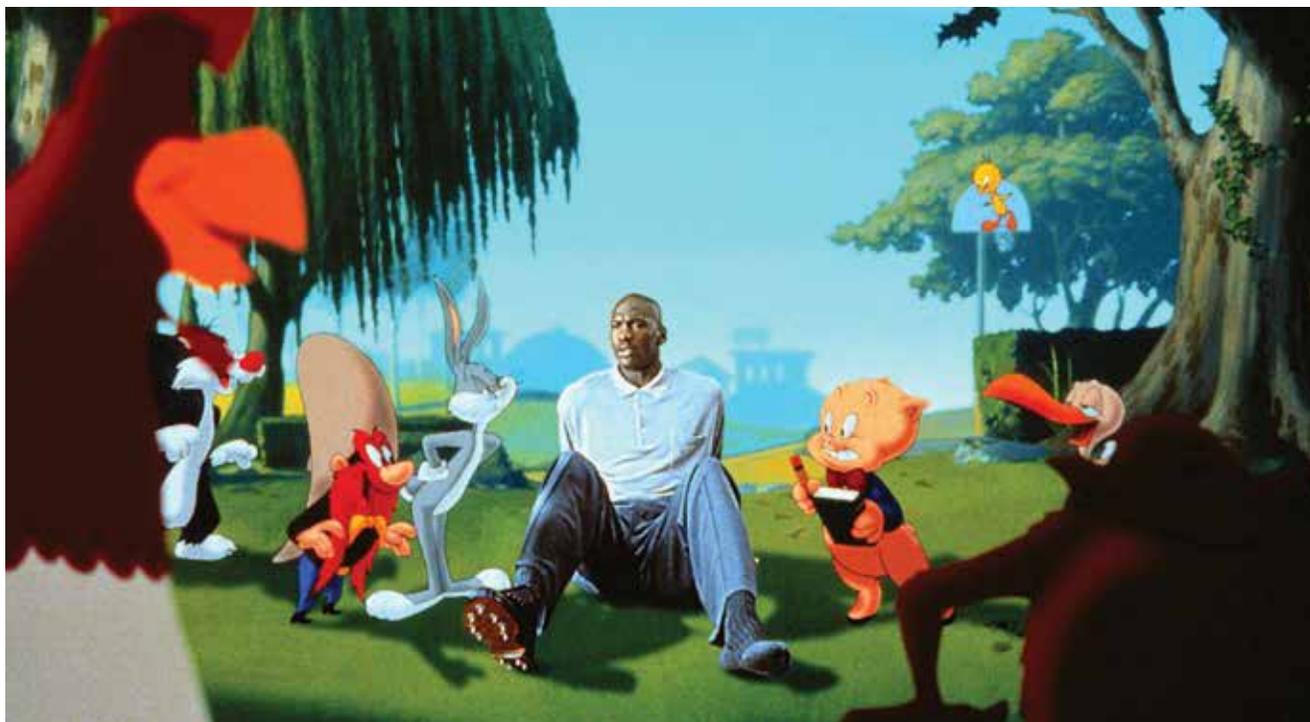
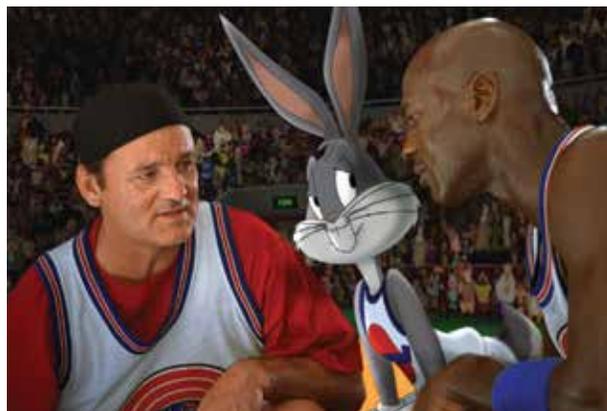
"If this were a union job..."

No, that's not a comment from one of your fellow TAG members. It's Daffy Duck muttering under his breath in the original *Space Jam*. It's part of a gag in which Daffy is piping up for the rights of his fellow Looney Tunes characters. A gag that's close to home for the many Guild members who worked on the film.

The now-classic hybrid movie is filled with Union Easter eggs. There's sly commentary between Daffy and Bugs Bunny about residuals, and at one point Bill Murray's (RIGHT) character references the Teamsters. Most notable, though, is an emergency meeting called by Porky Pig at Union Hall 839, a not-so-subtle nod to The Animation Guild, IATSE Local 839. While certainly not a social commentary, *Space Jam* gave members of the animation industry an opportunity to honor the struggles to organize and form a lasting Union!

THIS PAGE, BELOW: The size of classic Looney Tunes characters had to be enlarged to create a realistic-looking scene with 6'6" Michael Jordan.

OPPOSITE PAGE: With the use of a sodium vapor process and massive matte paintings, *Mary Poppins* won the 1965 Oscar for Best Visual Effects.



Images courtesy of Warner Bros.

"I don't think that shot had any real animation in it, maybe some Tunes running around here and there... But the fact that we could anchor [Jordan] in an animated world and still have it be believable was a huge stepping stone for us."

– Bruce W. Smith, Animation Co-Director, *Space Jam*



SIZE MATTERS

If you think back to Gene Kelly and Jerry the mouse dancing together in 1945's *Anchors Aweigh*, it doesn't take a trained eye to realize that Jerry is quite a bit larger than he typically appears in his usual 'toon world. The suspension of disbelief needed an even greater adjustment to bring relatively small characters into the same basketball game with NBA players and giant animated alien monsters. Because of this, sometimes the characters in *Space Jam* would be their traditional size, while in other instances, they were scaled down or up.

"Is Foghorn Leghorn actually 7 feet tall? He really shouldn't be that big. That's a very scary rooster," says Smith. "With situations like that, we had to anchor it and restage certain scenes to make sure all the characters that needed to be onscreen could be [there] at the same time."

Whether King James also contends with undersized ducks or giant roosters in the rebooted adventure, all eyes figure to be on the visuals of the new *Jam*, a movie which Brandt hopes will make 2D animation cool again.

"There were a lot of people who were animating on this who said, 'I can't believe we're doing this again,'" Brandt says. He notes what a different experience it is from CG work, and how blending it in fit the story, adding, "I think it's exciting to be able to reenergize 2D animation a little bit with this, and I hope it leads to even more projects." 🌀

LEAPS OF FAITH

Ah, the infinite possibilities that open up when worlds meet, when someone from the three-dimensional world enters a new or unexplored realm, or when someone (or something) from another place pays us a visit. No, we don't mean travel to the far reaches of outer space or the depths of the ocean. We're talking about the kinds of places that are most dramatically realized when animation and live action come together.

Filmmakers have been opening up brave new three-dimensional worlds for their animated characters to explore—as well as cartoon landscapes for us flesh and blood folks to visit—for the better part of a century, and long before computer-generated imagery made such dreams more easily realized. Early filmdom has a ton of examples. Donald Duck danced with Carmen Molina in 1944's *The Three Caballeros*, while Jimmy Durante dealt with a mouse (Mickey, of course) who crashed 1934's *Hollywood Party*.

Gradually these hybridized meet-ups started getting longer and more complicated. Everyone remembers Mary Poppins, Bert the Chimney Sweep, and the Banks children spending a "Jolly Holiday" in a chalk painting brought gloriously to life with carousel horses and dancing penguins. A few years later, in 1971's *Bedknobs and Broomsticks*, an apprentice witch, her flimflam sorcery instructor, and a couple of orphans plunged into a storybook to pay a visit to a beautiful briny lagoon and referee a soccer game between the cartoon creatures of Naboombu. The titular creature of 1977's *Pete's Dragon*—when he is visible—is, yes, a cartoon.

Disney upped its game big time in 1988 with *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, which saw 'toons and humans living side by side, not always harmoniously. In his effort to make a movie that brought animation into the real world, director Robert Zemeckis broke every rule of traditional animated filmmaking. *Roger Rabbit*, which proudly boasts of not containing a single computer shot, inspired legions of budding artists to try their hand at a career in animation.

Post *Roger Rabbit*, with well-known animated characters making the leap from TV cartoon series onto the big screen, it has become commonplace to find a CG Smurf, a singing chipmunk, a moose and his flying squirrel pal, a pair of cat and mouse frenemies, or a hedgehog of video game lore roaming around the live-action world. Coming soon will be a hybrid version of *Hello Kitty* to be directed by Jennifer Coyle and Leo Matsuda.

"You turn a corner with *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, where everything is kind of working together, and with the advent of computer animation, you begin to wonder what is a live-action/animation feature," says Fox Carney, Manager of Research at the Walt Disney Animation Research Library. "We work in traditional animation and things tend to be cyclical. If somebody has the right story idea that hits at the right time, I'm sure [it will lead to] something in the future for animated or digital characters to interact with live actors."



STANDING STRONG

EIGHTY YEARS LATER: LOOKING BACK ON THE DISNEY ARTISTS STRIKE OF 1941



From 1933 to 1937, entertainment workers successfully organized major craft unions, including the Screen Actors Guild (SAG), the Screen Directors Guild (now the Directors Guild of America), and the Society of Motion Picture Film Editors (now The Editors Guild). During this same span, Walt Disney Studio embarked on its most ambitious studio project to date: a full-length, animated film called *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

In order to create the film and finish it in time, not only did artists find themselves working around the clock, they occasionally worked without pay as well. Walt Disney kept their spirits up by promising “big bonuses” after the film’s release, but in the

end he dispensed and withheld bonuses at whim. He and management also arbitrarily set pay scales and raised or cut salaries.

By now, 1938, the Screen Cartoonists Guild (SCG) was established in L.A., and Walt Disney Studio was no longer the only animation studio in town. The SCG had managed to sign contracts with some of the smaller studios, but its long-term success as a labor union with any clout hinged on organizing the hundreds of artists at Disney.

Talk of forming a Disney union as part of the SCG started in the summer of 1940. After several months of secret meetings, influential animation director Art Babbitt and others managed to gather 400

signed cards. With more than a two-third majority onboard, they sought recognition from management, but Disney rejected the results. Then he openly violated the Wagner Act (the National Labor Relations Act) by firing Babbitt and 16 other artists for union activity.

On the morning of May 29, 1941, Disney was confronted by 300 picketers. The strike was divisive, and Disney took it personally. He dug in his heels, but the picketers found solidarity in their community. They were joined on the picket line every Wednesday by their Warner Bros. counterparts. June and July passed, and other entertainment labor unions threw in their support.

Disney refused to bargain in good faith, and it took the help of his brother, Roy, for the studio to reach an agreement with the union on July 28, 1941. Things weren’t over, though. Management laid off more than 200 workers, claiming this was necessary to meet the union’s financial demands. The union cried foul, and Roy Disney shut down all studio production.

All sides were called to Washington, D.C. for arbitration. In every instance, the judge ruled in favor of the union. The final agreement included standardized hours, the listing of complete screen credits on films, and increased wages retroactive to the start of the strike. The studio reopened on September 21, with everyone able to return to work. Disney held a grudge, though, and this affected many who had gone on strike. But their commitment and sacrifice meant hundreds of Disney artists enhanced the power of the SCG, and today that union lives on as The Animation Guild, IATSE Local 839.

– Teri Hendrich Cusumano

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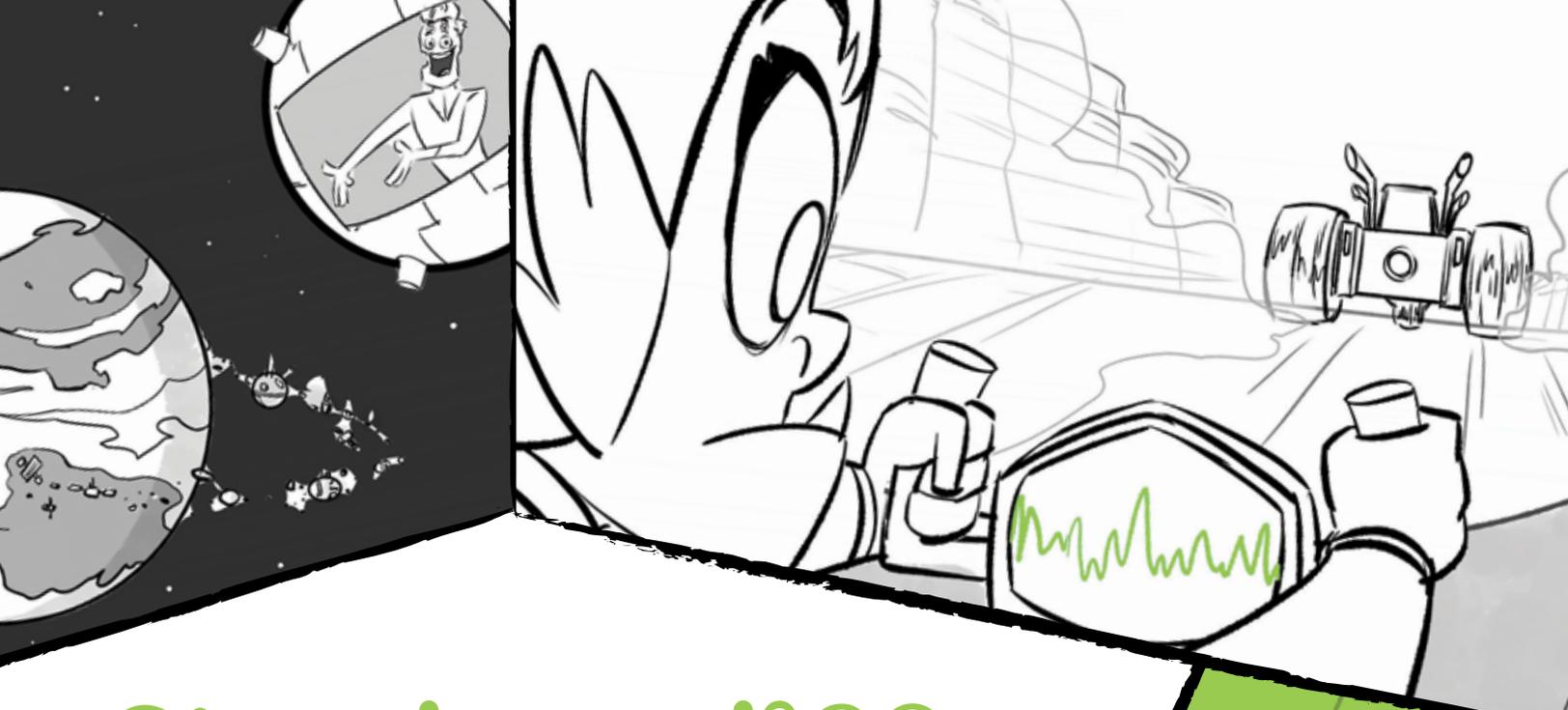
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