

## ABOUT

ASIFA was founded in 1960 in Annecy, France by a group of international animators to increase world-wide visibility of animated film. ASIFA's membership includes animation professionals and fans from more than 50 countries.

ASIFA-East, based in New York City, is the Northeast chapter. We host screenings, workshops, and panel discussions on all things animation, and the ASIFA-East Animation Film Festival, which debuted in 1969, is the oldest animation-only festival in the US.

## BOARD MEMBERS

**President:** Douglas Vitarelli, [asifaeastpresident@gmail.com](mailto:asifaeastpresident@gmail.com)

**Secretary:** Liz Van Verth, [secretaryasifaeast@gmail.com](mailto:secretaryasifaeast@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Emily Compton, [asifaeasttreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:asifaeasttreasurer@gmail.com)

**Social Media Director:** Emmett Goodman

**Festival Co-Chairs:** Emily Compton and Tristian Goik, [asifaeastfestival@gmail.com](mailto:asifaeastfestival@gmail.com)

**Technology Manager:** Emily Compton, [asifaeast.webmgr@gmail.com](mailto:asifaeast.webmgr@gmail.com)

**Board Member:** Candy Kugel

**Board Member:** Ray Kosarin

**Board Member:** Bill Lorenzo

**Board Member:** Christi Bertelsen

**Junior Board Member:** Hugo Segal

**International Coordinator:** Douglas Vitarelli



## FIND US ONLINE

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May 2024



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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the latest edition of the aNYmator!

When I became president in January I tasked myself with renewing lost connections, forging new alliances, introducing ourselves to animators who may not know that we exist and more.

This project began with outreach. The first thing to do was to get advice from some of ASIFA-East's longest-tenured members, past board members and most ardent supporters. They imparted some great advice and with this roadmap in hand I was off and running.

Getting Robby Gilbert and Emmett Goodman to join the team was a huge get. Robby has been talking to our members who have been doing amazing work. Check out those interviews on our webpage. Emmett is our Social Media Director and has been getting the word out on all our, and our friends, news on multiple platforms. They're both working on personal projects so we'll get to turn the interview and social media tables on them soon!

I created a pitch deck and have presented it to many of the colleges here in the Northeast that teach animation, letting them know that our community is here for them to stay in touch with the animation scene post graduation.

We made new friends! It was great to meet with Animation Nights New York, Animation Speak/Easy, ACM SIGGRAPH NYC and Women In Animation's New York Chapter to talk about how we can work together in the future to promote our community here in NYC.

Figure drawing is back. Titmouse Studios is again hosting our (last Thursday of the month) sessions.

We've had some really exciting events with Jake Friedman, Signe Baumann and Joanna Quinn.

And there's the aNYmator our newsletter for members and colleges. This is the first issue in a long time and it's what I wanted to bring back more than anything else.

It's been a busy 4 months and a lot has been accomplished to fulfill the goal of bringing ASIFA-East back to its former prominence but there's a lot more to do.

We'll talk soon.vz  
Doug

# INTENTIONALLY BLANK

All of this work is being done by a small number of volunteers and we need help.

Contact us to help ASIFA-East continue its mission to promote animation.

## EVENTS



Our first post Covid event was at the NYPL's Jefferson Market with author Jake Friedman who talked about his book, "The Disney Revolt".

Next was a tour of Signe Baumann's studio, who talked to members and students about her film "My Love Affair with Marriage". And lastly was a party for Joanna Quinn, hosted by Candy Kugel at Buzzco, our unofficial headquarters.



Emily Compton, Tristian Gaik, Kathryn Roake, Signe Baumann, Jeremiah Dickey, Frank Mouris, Ray Kosarin, Sturgis Warner, Joanna Quinn, Les Mills, Doug Vitarelli  
Pilar Newton-Katz, Katie Cropper-Klein, Deborah Solomon, Kalika Sharma, Lisa LaBracio, Biljana Iabovic, Arice Liu  
Emily Hubley, George Griffin, Candy Kugel, Jose Sala, Robby Gilbert

## INTERVIEWS

There are many animators living in the northeast who are doing amazing work and Robby Gilbert and Doug Vitarelli have been busy talking to some of them. In the future the full interviews, which are all on our website, will be in the aNYmator but for now enjoy this snippets.

Patrick Smith

A Conversation with Robby Gilbert

**Talk to me a little bit about monetizing YouTube and your experiences with that.**

YouTube is now really getting into gear. This is potentially a home for short filmmakers— particularly for animation— because animation has found a nice little place on YouTube. Very little competition. The people that could compete don't take it seriously, and the old guard totally don't know how to do it and have refused to go there. Matter of fact, I think a lot of filmmakers I respect have this odd [aversion to] YouTube.

**A resistance?**

Yes. This talk I did in Singapore last year went over 3 hours and it was just, it's too big of a talk,

So, I was thinking, maybe I should start breaking it apart. It's called The Billion Person Theater."

**I just love the title.**

And it's my thoughts on new media and how it's oddly getting ignored, unless it's Netflix or stuff like that, which is not a home for independents. I'm talking about making your independent artistic vision in the format of a short film. On your own channel. Truly independent.

So, the billion-person theater, in my view, is a Gutenberg printing press revolution for animation. You're talking about the accessibility to hundreds of millions of people. And I'm not exaggerating. I have a film that has close to two hundred and fifty million views.

Now, it's difficult to get your head around that as an animator, because I'm used to celebrating over a film festival with maybe a thousand people, or maybe a decade ago, a Vimeo "staff pick" video going viral and getting a hundred thousand views.



## INTERVIEWS

Signe Baumane

A Conversation with Doug Vitarelli

We decided to meet at her studio and as I traveled to Sunset Park on a cold, dark January afternoon, past the adult dvd stores, tire-fix-it shops and Industry City. I only had a couple of questions for Signe and her partner, Sturgis Warner.

One.

**Why a feature?**

Signe: "I had programmed the animation program at the Woodstock Film Festival for about 10 years and began to figure out how to create a flow for 90-100 minutes of animation for an audience. I also knew that I had gone as far as I could making shorts. And I had more stories to tell."

Her first feature, *Rocks in My Pockets*, took 4 years to make and she told herself that the next one would be better.



John Morena

A Conversation with Robby Gilbert

John Morena is the quintessential New York independent animator. Born and raised in the Bronx and currently working out of Brooklyn, he finds inspiration in the everyday goings on of the city and synthesizes the quotidian into picture and sound. "New York City is full of surprises," notes John. "It's brash. It's in your face. The city has a way of providing a straight path to the truth that naturally flows into my work."

John's work found its way into the festival circuit in the 2018 / 2019 season— including *Annecy*, *Ottawa*, *Hiroshima*, and *Zagreb*. He's a big name that you may have yet to hear of, but I suggest keeping your ears open. His thought provoking and expressive short films (most hover around one minute in length) are a feast for the senses and are like nutritious film snacks. In fact, Morena compares his work to being given grapes at Halloween instead of candy..they come in bunches, they're lush, juicy, snackable, and probably not what you came to the door expecting. His films are, nevertheless, both trick and a real treat.



## INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

By Doug Vitarelli

Before I was president, I volunteered as our International Coordinator, succeeding Ray Kosarin. I've known Ray since we worked together back in the 80's at Michael Sporn's studio and know that he's a tough act to follow. We are lucky to have Ray continue to be a part of ASIFA-East as a board member and that he's available for international advice.

Czech director and animator Michaela Pavlatova is the winner of the 2024 ASIFA Prize, considered to be a Lifetime Achievement Award. She has received numerous awards in her career, recognizing her edgy experimental approach as she explores themes of communication, relationships, routines and life. With recognition at major animation festivals, and nominations for Golden Globes and Oscars, her body of work is consistently engaging, inventive and challenging.

The ASIFA 50th Anniversary Book: *The Animation Art and the History of ASIFA*, a celebration of the organization, is now available to be downloaded for free on ASIFA.net. The ASIFA-East section was written by none other than Ray Kosarin.

ASIFA-East member Bill Plympton was chosen to create the poster for this year's International Animation Day.

The International Student Award is a new project, headed up by ASIFA's president and ASIFA Central member Deanna Morse, that is beginning its 3-year trial period. The program will consist of student films from all over the world, chosen by an international jury.

Recent SVA MFACA grad Chiung Xiaoqiong Zhang's film "The Awakening of Insects" has been chosen to be a part of the inaugural tour.

ASIFA is planning activities for ANIMAFEST in Zagreb and Annecy. If you are attending, please contact me.

# SCREENINGS

NYC animator Anne Beal had a solo exhibition, *The Animated Art of Exuberance*, featuring her animation art at the Sheen Center's Janet Hennessey Dilenschneider Gallery from April 5th until the performance of her husband Chris's Album, 'Exuberance,' on May 11th.



The Titmouse 5-second Day. Every year, the artists employed at Titmouse studios in NYC, Los Angeles and Vancouver are given a chance to create 5-seconds of their own animation, outside of studio productions.



SVA, Pratt and NYU hosted their end of the animation shows.



# INTERVIEWS

Pilar Newton-Katz



A Conversation with Robby Gilbert

High-energy and exuberant in all the best ways, Pilar Newton-Katz exudes her work and the world of animation.

A cartoonist, painter, illustrator, and animator, Newton-Katz coordinates the design programs at the City College of New York. Her screen credits include the animated series, *Daria* for MTV and *Courage the Cowardly Dog* for Cartoon Network. But despite such big-name series involvement, Newton-Katz is now turning the corner to pursue and promote her own work, both in graphic novels and animation.

She is excited to share her films and graphic novel work as well as teach a new generation of creatives in New York.

I sat down with Pilar on a Thursday afternoon in April to find out more. The conversation was extensive and took many fun twists and turns.

If you've ever met Pilar, you know her enthusiasm is uncontainable. But why would anyone want to contain such vibrancy? Pilar Newton-Katz is truly one of a kind— in all the best ways possible.

Anastacia Henry-Ramos



A Conversation with Robby Gilbert

Anastacia (Staci) does not shy away from the injustices and horrors of our world and yet somehow maintains an effortless positivity that inspires. Staci has embarked on business venture that combines animation production with promotional services for artists. The company is called Missink Toons, LLC. The work is highly imaginative, proactive, and I would say brave and necessary, addressing identity, inclusivity, gender, sexuality, and violence against women in a way that doesn't aim to preach but rather, provides a place of positive representation for marginalized communities.

Anastacia represents a new generation of animators who are grappling the cultural maelstroms of our current condition. Wise beyond their years, Staci is a remarkable force. I have no doubt the future is bright for this infectiously positive artist, and with people like Staci in the mix, the future for animation seems bright as well.

# INTERVIEWS

Jacob Kafka

## A Conversation with Robby Gilbert

Jacob Kafka is one of the 'quiet ones' to keep an eye on. His work is thoughtful and sweet, and he embodies the spirit of the quintessential inventor/ animator. Based in Brooklyn, Kafka has achieved uncommon success with the development and growing distribution of a piece of software, Rough Animator, which now counts thousands as users. Rough Animator is available through any App Store. This success has afforded Jacob the ability to plug away at his first independent feature film, Beverly Bunny.

He's hoping to raise enough money to complete the film, and a Kickstarter has raised over 30k of the 60k he is hoping to bring in.

So far, Jakob has released a trailer and one of the finished clips from the film online. Beverly Bunny is well-worth supporting not just because of the quality of the concept, but because the New York independent feature scene continues its important legacy in young artists like Kafka and deserves much support!



Dean Lennert

## A Conversation with Doug Vitarelli

Dean began his career as an animator while a student at NYU at Broadcast Arts doing fabrication, rigging and special effects for stop motion animation. After graduation he worked at Rafik's, the cheapest place in town for video duplication and film supplies, before getting his "sad little" resume together and, walking uptown from Battery Park, dropped it off at every animation studio listed in the 'yellow book'. A chance meeting in a midtown elevator with his SVA animation teacher, Jeffrey Gatrall, led to a freelance job at the Ink Tank, which then led to bigger gigs at Jumbo Pictures, working on DOUG, J. J. Sedelmaier Productions, BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD, and Blue Sky, ICE AGE and BUNNY.

It was while working at J.J.'s, in '95 that he began to teach at NYU. When offered a second class a few years later he decided to accept it and moved out of the city.

These days Dean is the head of NYU's animation area and this interview was a fun reminder of NYC's vibrant animation scene in the 90's and 00's. Our meeting revealed that, even though we have many similarities, (both animators, married to a Nancy, same age, taught together at NYU and a love for the work of Frédéric Back) we never actually sat down and had an extended conversation.

Strange. Well, not as strange as the way the interview began...



# MEMBERSHIP CODE



**Did you know that your membership card has a qr code that will take you to our calendar?**

Simply scan the code with your phone and you'll access our upcoming events, like figure drawing, and links for tickets.

# FIGURE DRAWING

It's back the last Thursday of the month beginning at 7:30pm.

Free for members.

