

## 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 our 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-Chair:** Tristian Goik, [asifaeastfestival@gmail.com](mailto:asifaeastfestival@gmail.com)

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

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November 2024



from Pat Smith's "Broken"

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What a month for animation in our region. In a 30 day time span there was the Ottawa Animation Festival, our Jim Simon Event at SVA, the Woodstock Film Festival Animation Spectacular and the NYC Animation Weekend, where we celebrated International Animation Day along with many other ASIFA chapters worldwide.

And we're lucky enough to have longtime Ottawa attendee **Pilar Newton-Katz** and the Woodstock's Animation Program curators **Noelle Melody and Joy Buran** write about those festivals.

It was a pleasure to meet **Jim Simon**. He told us how he began, presented his amazing work and told us some very entertaining stories about animation in the 70's. Here's a fun fact, his first short for Sesame Street, "I Can Remember" was the only animation in their 50th Anniversary Celebration. Michael Sporn, on his Splog wrote "Animation's lost a treasure in your talents" and I think everyone in the audience would surely agree.



#NYCAnimWknd started on Friday with Animation Speak/Easy talking to **Shane Fu, Anne Beal and Bill Plympton**. I've been to a few and get more impressed every time with the amount of work that goes into each interview, whether it's talking to the animators whose films are being shown, this time it was Marv Newland or a very interesting breakdown of the color palette of "On Your Mark" by Hayao Miyasaki.

**Eve Leonard** of Women In Animation talked about AI and its effects on creative production that spurred an exciting q&a. Next up was a program of films curated by **Ryan Castrillo** centered around the theme of love. That was followed by an open screening where we saw some wonderful work ranging from established artists like **Candy Kugel** to the next generation of animators. Be sure to be on the lookout for the Hostos CC film show because their work is fearless. Lastly, Animation Nights New York presented their 99th (!) international program and happened to include "Last Year..." by our own **Emmett Goodman**.

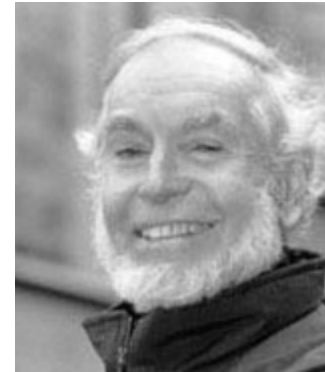
Whew.

Are there any more robot movies coming out this year? Those last two were great and I want more.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Howard Beckerman Memorial

Animator, father, devoted husband and partner, historian, writer, and friend, Howard Beckerman touched the lives of so many for so long that no words can encapsulate the love felt for him as news of his passing travels throughout the animation community and the world. Howard Beckerman may not be a household name, but without exaggeration he earned a place in animation history next to the greats. His influence and example live on in his writing and films, and in the hearts and wrists of the thousands of aspiring animators he taught and mentored over course of his seventy-five year career in animation.



See our socials for tickets.

**Nov. 11 at 7pm**

**School of Visual Arts Graduate Center Screening Room  
136 West 21st Street**

# INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

International Animation Day was celebrated my many chapters worldwide.

We are keeping it high, despite all the odds. In Animation Department of my former university there is three days of wonderful Animation events.

**Fatemeh Hosseini-Shakib, ASIFA IRAN**

We are going to have ASIFA IAD screenings in 2 days with 53 shorts from 11 countries.

**Nelson Shin, ASIFA Korea**

Hi all, ASIFA-South is doing a screening at Kennesaw State University open to public Oct 30th along with our last mixer of the year and a costume party :D

**Ginger Marisa Tontaveetong, ASIFA-South**

In just one hour, our students and public we'll joyfully celebrate the birth of animated art right here on our campus.

**Mohamed, ASIFA Egypt**

Also, **Lucija Mrzljak** will be designing the poster for next year's IAD.

# FILM SPOTLIGHT

## Emmett Goodman

Emmett Goodman, ASIFA-East's Social Media Director, has fulfilled a New Year's resolution that so many of us have dreamt of doing, animating everyday for a year.

His film, **Last Year...** (with three periods at the end) was created by animating one second every day of the year 2023. It is the first animation project Emmett has made with the use of an animation-based app, Rough Animator (a few sequences were also animated using Procreate).

The project started off as a way to experiment with mobile apps, and has since evolved into a visual stream-of-consciousness that is colorful and whimsical and is hitting the festival circuit now.



# THE OTTAWA ANIMATION FESTIVAL

## by Pilar Newton-Katz

The Ottawa International Animation Festival is like Christmas, my birthday, and a big ol' family reunion rolled into one; it is just my favorite thing. OIAF is a time for Festival attendees to descend upon Canada's Capital from around the world for this once-a-year whirlwind of animation screenings, talks, receptions and parties. And for me a big ol' family reunion of decades worth of friends and colleagues. Going to OIAF is like a pilgrimage for me. I did the math, and this is my 24th Ottawa and I've been going for so long I usually come a day early just to have an extra day to catch up with people. It's also a good time to enjoy Ottawa before the festival is in full swing (I've been telling myself forever that I will finally do the Ghost Tour. Next year, I promise!). Every year for the past I-lost-count years I drop my bag at my hotel and make my way across the street to Arts Court to pick up my festival pass and the first person I see is BFF Royleen, who knitted me socks this year! Then we head down to the Ottawa festival office where I have a rare moment to greet Artistic Director Chris Robinson before the biggest Festival in North America takes off at full steam ahead. Then over to Clocktower bar for my first Ottawa Pumpkin lager with my awesome friend Petr Maur.

The festival kicked things off with a sneak preview of Dreamworks' Wild Robot. If you have a chance to see it, run, don't walk, to your nearest theater when it is in wide distribution. It is such a heartwarming film. Beautiful visuals and a tear-jerking story. It really made me want to read the Wild Robot books. What a treat! Judging by the snipes from the rest of the audience, I think the feeling was mutual.

The Short Competition screenings are always awesome. One amazing film after the other. A highlight that immediately comes to mind is Thomas Renolder's film "Stampfer's Dream". Based on the Stroboscopic Discs, an optical magic disc that was invented by mathematician Simon von Stampfer. We meet Stampfer himself as a character in the film as he gains inspiration from various sights. As an Animation historian myself I was blown away by his film. Renolder's film highlights the point that I'm always making

about OIAF: How accessible the festival is. Ages ago as a RISD student, I realized that this was a different experience than going to a movie at the local multiplex. I'm used to seeing a film and then just going about my day. At OIAF you can go to a screening and then an hour later you're standing next to the filmmaker that created the film that made you cry from joy. 30 years later that fact still blows my mind. And to prove my point, when the Shorts competition screening ended, I walked out of the theater and I got to tell Thomas Renolder himself how much I loved his film. The filmmakers aren't rushed to





Chris Robinson

some sequestered room. They mingle amongst us, have a beer with us, eat at the same places we eat, walk around the same town as us as we rub elbows with them every day we are there. Even though I stayed out until 2:30 AM singing karaoke with my friends at the opening night party I got myself up the next morning to attend Meet the Filmmakers. 9:30 am feels like an early start time but like Chris Robinson who conducts the sessions told all of us “Don’t complain that it’s early if I can do it, so can you”

There were some wonderful feature films competing this year such as Adam Elliot’s dark yet poignant Memoir of a Snail, Flow an atmospheric, mystical story about a resourceful cat told without words that takes place in a seemingly post-apocalyptic world inhabited only by nature and rising tides, and The World’s Divide a two-hour sc-fi action adventure animated entirely by one person. In 2022 Chris asked me to be on the Features jury and it was such an honor to be a part of that process. I can’t write about Ottawa and not mention the Animator’s Picnic. By the time Friday rolls around you are running from one event to another (especially if you also happen to be attending TAC; a business-centric forum held annually alongside OIAF.) The Animator’s Picnic is a chance to catch your breath, eat and drink courtesy of the festival and maybe enter the annual pumpkin carving contest. I used to carve a pumpkin every year and I even won a few times. My pumpkins were usually household appliance-themed. “Pilar is somewhat of a pumpkin-savant”, Linda Simensky once mused. Most importantly the picnic offers a relaxing time in beautiful Strathcona Park to catch up with friends and colleagues. The four hours that the picnic takes place usually flies by and my voice is usually almost gone by the end because I run into so many people.



## Some pictures from NYC Animation Weekend



Emily Compton asking Eve Leonard of Women in Animation NY a question during the AI’s Effect on Creative Productons panel.



The crowd between shows with Ugo Onuorah, Bob Clark, Lisa LaBracio and more.



Pizza time with Liz Van Verth, Eve Leonard, Ray Kosarin, Emily Compton, Tristian Goik, Candy Kugel, John Lustig and Andy London and more.



**Joy:** Filmmakers came from near and far! Alain Delannoy flew in from Canada. Miranda Javid, an upstate local, walked right out her front door. Mike Enright drove up from the city just because he loves the fest. Others took the Trailways bus like we did on our first trip to Woodstock. I hope they return again and again.

**Noelle:** We haven't mentioned apple picking, hiking, or the incredible live action line-up! Next year, come see for yourself.

That's a wrap on the 25th Woodstock Film Festival's Animation recap. Submissions open in Spring 2025!

Joy + Noelle

## FIGURE DRAWING

Thursday, Nov. 21 at 7:30 pm

Titmouse Studios

150 W 30th St, between 6th and 7th. 10th floor



Before I knew it, I blinked, and Saturday had already rolled around. It was time for the Animation Made for Young Audiences 7+ Competition screening. This was my fourth year coordinating the Kid's Jury for this category and it never gets less awesome. This is the only category that the demographic of the film votes for the winner in that category! The 6 kids on our jury were a joy to work with. On the morning of the screening the audience was thrumming with excitement and applauded as I walked in with the jury and sat down to watch the screening. I was so glad that it was up to them, not me, to pick a favorite film because they were all fantastic. It's been really fun being involved with the kid's jury and truly an honor to do it.



It was finally time for the awards ceremony which wraps the festival competition up nicely before we get to chop it up at the Saturday Night party. A grand slate of winners and much deserved love for Kelly Neall, Managing Director celebrating 30 years with the festival. Winners include Gianluigi Toccafondo's La Voix des Sirènes which won Grand Prize for Short Animation, Gintz Zilbalodis Flow which won Grand Prize for Animated Feature (self-professed cat ladies Royleen and I were thrilled), Beautiful Men directed by Nicolas Keppens (a favorite of mine) won for best narrative short and I can't not mention the kids jury who picked stop motion animated film Freak of Nature as winner of Best Animation Made for Young Audiences 7+ and About a Cow which was too good to not be picked by the kids as Honorable Mention.





I can write a daily column about how to do OIAF and never run out of things to say, but the short version is if you plan your trip pretty carefully you'll catch most everything. There are some things that happen at the same time, so chances are you won't get to see every single thing that you want to see but all the competitions run twice during the festival. I used to be meticulous about carefully pouring over the schedule the night before the festival begins and carefully jotting everything down to the minute wanted to attend each day. But the last few years I've just been making it a rule to catch all five competition screenings, most of the feature films and definitely a panorama or two. The other thing I wanted to say is don't be a hero: Eat when you can, rest when you can. If you have a chance to sit down and eat, do so. The festival is pretty jam-packed as the two nights that I had popcorn for dinner during the festival is proof enough (What?! The popcorn is really good at the Bytowne Cinema where most of the screenings take place!). If you have a chance to get a half hour nap in once per day, try to do so. But getting little rest is just a symptom of going to the Ottawa festival. Lots of popcorn, not a lot of rest, but lots of fun.



**Joy:** Our third program, Fiercely Indie, was held at the packed Woodstock Community Center on Saturday evening. The owner said this taught him just how many seats can fit in this theater. We asked if we should find a bigger space next year and he yelled, "NO, I want Animation here!" We love that. The sold out show had nearly every animator in attendance with Candy Kugel's "Market of Hate", Alain Delannoy's "The Snip", Pilar Newton's "Last Class", Leah Shore's "Kindergarten Ice", Anna Samo's "The Wild-Tempered Clavier", Morgan Miller's "There's a Robbery in Progress", Jeremiah Dickey's "Sürgünlik (Exile)", Patrick Smith's "Onward Ye Costumed Souls", Paula Stuttman's "Rotten Representations: one-armed go go dancer", Miranda Javid's "What Humans Do", John Maslowski's "Buffy and the Balloon", John Quinn's "Free Snakes", Diana Linnet's "The Babysitter", Dustin Grella's "20 Years of Notes to Self", with Daniel Neidan and Owen Andrejco representing Bill Plympton's "Duckville". Several audience members made it to all 3 shows. We joked that we should've had an award for that.

**Noelle:** At the Awards Ceremony, tables were scattered with rainbow scratch papers and wooden pencils. I wondered what everyone would draw. Joy said, "I'm writing my speech on mine." I said, "I'm copying that," because scratching on paper was actually an homage to the Best Animated Short.

Anna Samo's "The Wild-Tempered Clavier" pays tribute to the tradition of drawing directly on film using her own completely original method of painting on toilet paper. Clever, playful, and meticulously crafted, the viewer is invited to witness her thought process through her own POV. - That's the short version of what Joy, Patrick, and I scratched onto our rainbow papers and gave to Anna, which she said was (almost) better than the award itself.



We then met for lunch with Dustin Grella, an animator and friend who drove up in his Mobile Animation Station: a converted school bus complete with chalkboard siding where festival attendees made their mark in chalk. Joy and I tagged our Twins Are Weird logo.



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# WOODSTOCK’S ANIMATION SPECTACULAR

by Noelle Melody and Joy Buran



**Noelle:** This year marked the Woodstock Film Festival’s 25th Anniversary, a big deal. The festival happens every fall, timed perfectly to the changing leaves. It’s the first festival Joy and I ever attended in 2006 and we never really left; we’d take the Trailways bus from the city, whether we had a film or not. A bustling film community in an idyllic mountain setting? Yes, please. All of us animators would cram into an uninsulated cabin in the woods back then. 12 years ago, my husband and I packed up our pets and moved upstate—I credit the festival for this—and now Joy and friends have a warm place to crash when they come to the festival.

Woodstock’s Animation Spectacular, started by Bill Plympton and Signe Baumann, set the precedent for screening inventive, indie animation. Their loyal audience returned every year to see their show. In 2016, Bill and Signe asked Joy and I if we’d take over their Animation Program. We had experience curating small screenings in the city, but this felt like a leap. We jumped at the chance. Several years in, Woodstock’s Best Animated Short Category became Oscar Qualifying. Submissions tripled! We once had one animation block, now we have three, but we strive to keep the original voice of The Woodstock Animation Program. Here’s the recap!



**Joy:** We kicked off the first night of animation with our Family Friendly Program on Thursday, October 17th (the full moon!). This is our second time doing Family Friendly. We'd seen parents gently escort their children out of past screenings, though we'd made sure to mention that "animation" doesn't always mean "for kids". The Family Friendly Program is an opportunity to share indie animation with a younger audience. This year was another success! Half of the filmmakers joined us for an insightful, funny Q&A with Michael Dondero and Shengnan Dong's "Nostril", Daniel Kreizberg's "Tahlequah the Whale: A Dance of Grief", Tim Granberg's "Nubbinwood", Zen Pace's "Play Again", and Masha Ellsworth's "Bound". Our hearts were as full as the moon.

Next was our Mature Audience Program on Friday evening at Tinker Street Cinema, a revival house theater perfect for late night animation—darker themes, harsher language—all that good stuff. We started with Celia Bullwinkel's film, "Baby Bro", to gasps and laughter from the crowd as newborn babies crudely discuss being born (it's really about men discussing women in private spaces). Two of the filmmakers joined us for this block, with Sarah Beeby's "Gardening", a hopeful film about overcoming sexual assault, and Hubert Lapointe and Paul-Émile Landez's "Elon vs Mark", a hilarious film about two billionaires fighting to the death. Timur Kognov's delightful and surprising short, "The Three Sisters" closed the program, followed by an intimate Q&A.



**Noelle:** Saturday morning, Joy and I carefully deliberated the competition films over coffee with our co-juror, Patrick Smith. Side note: We first came up to Woodstock as color artists on his film, "Puppet", 18 years ago, so it was pretty cool to judge with him. The decision? Unanimous! Then we all went to The Woodstock Playhouse where Joy and I had the honor of introducing Gints Zilbalodis' animated feature, "Flow", a gorgeous 3D film about a solitary cat who finds refuge with unlikely friends at the end of the world. No dialogue, though these animals say so much in their expressions and actions. We even ran into filmmaker friends Candy Kugel and Mike Enright at the show!

