

## 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 US 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

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**Board Member:** J. J. Sedelmaier



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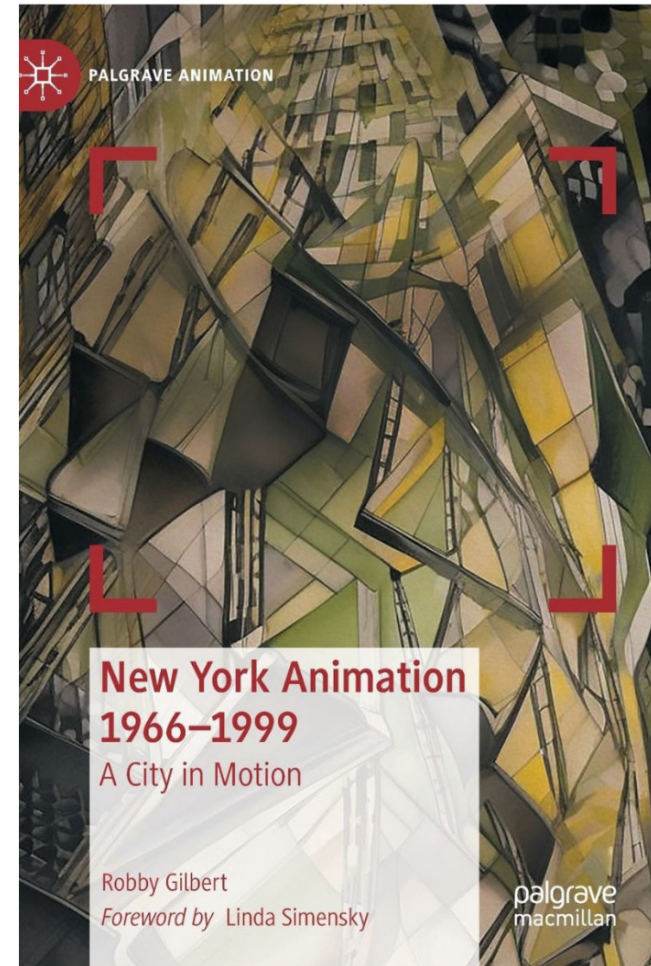
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March 2026



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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

February in NYC means the Animation First festival. I can't thank L'Alliance New York enough, especially Curators Delphine Selles-Alvarez and Chloé Dheu, for hosting such an amazing festival. On any day one would run into a plethora of animators from our area and beyond.

Another place to meet animators was at the Jefferson Market Library, where animation author and historian Jake Friedman led a Q&A with Robbie Gilbert, see below, and Neil O'Brien, author of **After Disney**.

These are the types of in-person events that are one of the best things about ASIFA-East. And it hasn't just happened by accident.

Over the past 2 years we have been working diligently to come out of a COVID despondency and, as the saying goes, it takes a village. And it's been working.

Membership is back to previous levels, the aNYmator has returned, figure drawing sessions are happening at multiple studios, the festival continues bigger and better and is back at the New School and our historical documentation will soon be online. The team of Emily, Liz and Candy (our keeper of institutional knowledge) have been rock solid in holding it all together and, because of their steadfastness, our new board members have had a solid foundation on which to grow and keep ASIFA-East relevant.

So in this issue we're going to highlight our newest volunteers, how they came to us and what they've been doing and their plans for the future. It's so great to be working with such enthusiastic, motivated and dedicated animators, and I think it's time you met them.

Speaking of, our newest board member, J.J. Sedelmaier, has interviewed Robby Gilbert, author of **New York City Animation, 1966-1999: A City in Motion**. I know we've spoken a lot about Robby's book recently, and this will probably be the last time for a bit, but it's such an important book for our community, and hopefully the first of many.

Going back to speaking of festivals, I didn't enter my film into ours. I looked at it and decided it needs work

A lot of work.

Hopefully next year.

New York Public Library system or purchasing through second-hand thrift shops and boutiques. Streaming content on services like Prime Video is a practice I exercise in moderation.

**Ryan:** I enjoy experimental animation, as well as stop motion, and anime as well. I love weird and trippy styles of animation. Lately I've watched the new Netflix short series Samuel, and Studio Orange's Trigun Stargaze. Right now I'm excited for the IMAX release in March for Kiki's Delivery Service.

**Josué:** I enjoy watching all sorts of animations. I really do enjoy independent animated shorts because they are more personal and experimental as well.

**David:** I grew up with cartoons like Adventure Time, Avatar: the Last Airbender, Regular Show, Batman Beyond, etc, so I watch those semi-regularly. I also watch a ton of anime – in particular, I like Cowboy Bebop, Samurai Champloo, Blood Blockade Battlefront, Made in Abyss, One Punch Man. I also watch a good amount of European animation, courtesy of Animation Resources bi-monthly reference packs: short films by auteurs like Bozetto and cartoons like Koziólek Matolek are featured regularly.

**J.J.:** I like to watch animation that's been created for good instead of evil....

*ASIFA-East is always looking for more volunteers. If you'd like help, please reach out. We'd love to talk and see how we can work with you, and you with us.*

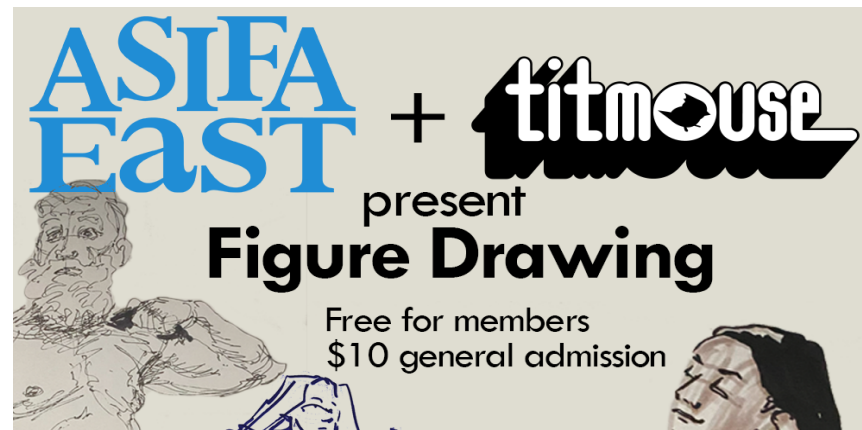
## FIGURE DRAWING

3rd Thursday of the Month

Check our socials and member emails for info.

Titmouse Studios

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



**David:** It's been super interesting to just learn about the long history of ASIFA-East. The organization is decades old, with the festival starting up way back in 1969. It's always fun to think about the different generations of board members who came before, the conversations they had, the problems they had to overcome. I am extremely proud to have the opportunity to work on a festival and within an organization that has so much history.

**J.J.:** The NY talent has always been a unique member of the animation community. Very fluid and versatile. ASIFA-East holds an important responsibility to educate, inspire and encourage its membership.

**Do you have any ideas you have for the board to take on in future?**

**Ronan:** I think that ASIFA-East, and ASIFA at large, should focus on supporting its younger members. It is important for those who want to pursue a career in animation to have a network of passionate people who can point them in the right direction.

**Hugo:** When it comes to planning future events, fostering new partnerships with cultural venues and institutions outside of our Lower Manhattan bubble (e.g., the Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance, United Palace, etc.) will be essential towards spreading wider awareness of our organization.

**Ryan:** Honestly I'd love to see more anime related events but also maybe do a full ani-jam with our community- I've loved seeing different stuff like that across other organizations and festivals, maybe something for the community here, not just internationally.

**Josué:** I would love an ASIFA East animation mixer. This would allow animators of all levels to come together and mingle.

**David:** I'm already cooking up some new ideas for the 2027 festival, but I'll save those for future board meetings. Beyond that, I would really like to catalyze some kind of deeper collaboration between ASIFA-East and Animation Resources.

**J.J.:** Assisting in the exploration of a permanent "Animation Archive/Museum".

**What kind of animation do you like/watch?**

**Ronan:** I like very character driven pieces of animation. Animation is a medium that's great at expressing emotion and depicting engaging characters on screen. I'm also biased towards 2D hand-drawn animation. I can gawk all day at very well-rendered eye candy CGI, and I have to admit I immensely respect the craft that goes into it. However, I think an artist has more control over their work in hand-drawn cel animation. That is why I admire it more.

**Hugo:** I am usually open-minded with the types of animation I enjoy and appreciate, whether in short-form or feature-length. However, as I mature with age, I have come to accept that consuming animation on its merits of artistry and entertainment requires self-discipline, patience, and the ability to budget my options. In terms of physical media (i.e., VHS, DVD, Blu-Ray, and 4K), I prefer renting from the

# ROBBY GILBERT

Interview with the author of  
**New York Animation 1966–1999: A City in Motion**  
Interview with J.J. Sedelmaier



It's hard to state the importance of Robby's book to our community and, luckily, JJ sat down for coffee and animation talk to find out how it began and some of the inside stories that happened along the way.

**JJ:** Did you ever imagine doing a book?

**Robby:** I've done illustrations, children's book illustrations and comic illustrations. But to do an academic book—it's not something I ever set out to do before. And being a teacher was not something I'd ever considered doing—I was a terrible student—but now I've been teaching animation for thirty years!

**JJ:** Well, actually, just because you were a bad student that probably makes you a better teacher. I feel the same way. I was a terrible student. I think it had a lot to do with where you were educated.

**Robby:** Yeah, I think so.

**JJ:** But enjoying what you do and what you experienced comes through in the book as well. And speaking personally, I was so juiced to be a part of the whole thing because what you were doing was so, is so, important. And the time frame initially, my first reaction was, 'what is it?' And then within minutes it made complete sense. It was just an awesome period of time when everything was changing.

And, I'm glad you got to speak to as many people as you got to speak to. I mean, each and every day that goes by, we lose more and more people and the opportunity to reflect firsthand is just gone.

**Robby:** I wouldn't have spoken to half of those people without you. Your fingerprints are all over this book.

**JJ:** Yeah, sorry about that.

JJ and Robby laugh.

**Robby:** I'm very grateful.

**JJ:** How did the whole thing come together, though? Did they [Palgrave Macmillan] approach you?

**Robby:** No. Not really. I'm a big fan of Eric Dyer. Do you know his work?

**JJ:** No.

**Robby:** He's an animator. He did spend some time in New York.

**JJ:** He's a Lower East Side guy?

**Robby:** He was, but he's in Baltimore now. But he's a guy who works with zoetropes and zoetropic art and is brilliant. And I've always been fascinated by his approach to extra-cinematic animation—taking moving images off screens and putting them into real space. He was doing a seminar in England and I was invited to speak at the event. Carolyn Ruddell and Paul Ward were there—they're the editors of this series at Palgrave. So we all went out to dinner, and they were talking about ideas for books, and I said, "I've got some ideas", and they said, "Great, send them to us." So I pitched three ideas.

One was New York Animation. One was on zoetropic art. And one was the history of animation education. So they wanted the New York book. And I said, 'okay!'

So my initial thought was—because my own animation industry experiences were just the 80s and the 90s in New York,—to write about Broadcast Arts. For all of its ups and downs, it was a wild place, and for a time the busiest animation studio in New York. And the story about that studio is amazing.

But then as I started to go down that path, I realized that, you know, I really couldn't talk about the 80s unless I talked about the 70s and then the influence into the 90s. So it sort of grew into the last third of the twentieth century. And yeah, I think you're right, it seemed to fill a gap that I didn't realize was there until I started talking to people like you, Howard Beckerman, and John Canemaker.

I could see in John Canemaker face—and maybe I'm projecting—but when I interviewed him, (he was one of the first interviews), I felt like he suddenly realized that—this man, who had written so much history, and done so much—was realizing that now he was himself now an important piece of the history. And it was such an honor to talk with

**Hugo:** The New York Animation History map project has so far been the standout highlight of my career, especially given that I tasked myself with synthesizing as much written material about the metropolitan area's unsung impact on American animation to draw user engagement.

**Ryan:** Recently I just finished my two latest short films *Lovers' Quarrel* (LQ), and *Family Obscura* - and my career highlights would be my last short *Dork* playing in the festival circuit and snagging an award or two. Also recently just doing my first video DJ set and playing my animations in Brooklyn.

**Josué:** I am currently working on an animated series called "Work Buddies". However, teaching and finishing my masters degree has taken much of my production.

**David:** I'm not currently working on any animation projects. However, I am currently trying to turn an old animated project into a book. I've only written a few chapters so far, but it's been fun, and I like how it's been turning out so far. In terms of career highlights, I would say that this year's festival is soon to take that top spot. But beyond that, I would have to go with pitching a show my friend and I made to Frederator Studios. It almost got greenlit, but, obviously, did not. Still, it was a great experience and I learned a lot from the moment.

**J.J.:** Arranging animators' archives. Setting up relationships with Syracuse University, Henry Ford Museum, and others.

**What have you learned about our community since being a member? Anything you're particularly proud of?**

**Ronan:** Being a part of the ASIFA-East community has turned me on to the amount of talent that is around the NorthEast animation scene. I'm proud to be a member of a very well-connected, arts-centered organization

**Hugo:** I find that, in the two years since becoming an active member, our community has regained a certain degree of post-pandemic stability thanks to an open dialogue between seasoned veterans and the current rising generation of industry professionals. Despite being more of a "behind-the-scenes" kind of member due to my role, I have used ASIFA-sponsored events as opportunities to meet and network with people from all walks of life.

**Ryan:** I learned it's such a small world. The amount of likeminded folks who also enjoy making weird stuff and talking about cartoons is awesome! And I think our new connections to now studios like BUCK and Hornet have been amazing too have!

**Josué:** I have gained extensive knowledge regarding the history of animation in New York and have encountered numerous individuals who have helped shape it. Speaking with many who worked on and produced the animated shows I watched in my youth is a surreal moment.

**David:** It's been super interesting to just learn about the long history of ASIFA-East. The organization is decades old, with the festival starting up way back in 1969. It's always fun to think about the different generations of board members who came before,

Created/Produced pilot of “Harvey Birdman: Attorney @Law” for Cartoon Network/Adult Swim (2000)

Over 600 projects produced and 700 international awards garnered  
(<https://www.jjsedelmaier.com/>)

Director, producer, artist/designer, cartoonist, author, historian/archivist....

### **What responsibilities are you doing to keep our organization flourishing?**

**Ronan:** I’m currently responsible for organizing Live Drawing Events that are hosted in animation studios across NYC, as well as managing our social media platform

**Hugo:** I have been scanning and uploading print issues of “The aNYmator” newsletter, which span from October 1990 to June 2007. I also scan and add print artifacts (e.g., event flyers, booklets, festival entry listings, etc.) to two databases created in the Internet Archive: one exclusively for ASIFA-East and one for Michael Sporn-related material. Each task connects back to the goal of physically preserving New York’s rich cartoon heritage.

Going forward, I plan on collaborating with like-minded animation historians whose breadth of knowledge will be essential towards unearthing new discoveries.

**Ryan:** I’ve been building bridges with a variety of organizations such as Japan Society and the mayor’s office of media and entertainment.

**Josué:** Currently I am a board member at ASIFA East. I have been assisting with the festival jury screening livestreams.

**David:** As the Festival Chair, it’s my responsibility to make sure the festival takes place and runs smoothly. That includes marketing, fielding the inbox, communicating with partner organizations, securing event spaces, managing operations for in-person screenings and awards shows, etc. This year’s festival is going to be particularly historic. We have entered a general partnership with Parsons School of Design: as such, the Awards Ceremony will be hosted at the Tishman Auditorium, The New School. Additionally, in collaboration with the New School WIA Student Collective, WIA NYC Chapter will once again be presenting the WIA Award, an honor which spotlights under-represented voices in animation. Last but not least, we have entered into an exclusive media partnership with Cartoon Brew, who in turn, will be presenting their own “Cartoon Brew Award for Excellence in Filmmaking” which comes with its own bespoke trophy.

**JJ.:** Helping to create and organize events that benefit membership and community. Actively arrange archival preservation of animation history related subjects and materials.

### **Are you working on any personal or professional projects? What’s been a career highlight to date.**

**Ronan:** Currently I’m working (when I can) on realizing some passion projects. Focusing on a project can be a challenge in itself, especially when you’re working full time. But, when I can I produce an animated series of microshorts based on my experience working as a barista. It is a slice of lifestyle story centered around a shameless self-insert character. It’s very fun to work on. It can be viewed on my Instagram, @ramunderscoresart.

**JJ:** And, it’s great, too, because I think the book will poke people into wanting to look into New York’s place in the industry. And look, I was guilty of it originally, too. I didn’t know animation had its start in New York. And, when you see how unique the industry has been because of being in New York, because of being around publishers and illustrators and cartoonists and art and just New York itself. It’s such a completely different industry than there has been any place else, but especially California. And all the people that are in California or that ended up in California, started in New York.

**Robby:** Yeah. As I write in the introduction, ‘The American animation industry begins in New York—full stop.’ And so many of my students don’t know that. I don’t think I realized that as an animator and as a student, because animation education is so often Hollywood-centric. It’s so fan based, frankly, and I think animation is such a diverse and wide and fascinating subject that to limit it to the Disney, the Hanna-Barbera—the cartoon paradigm—misses a lot of the opportunity of animation’s interdisciplinary origins and the entrepreneurial spirit that came out of New York. Edison, Kodak and then IBM and all these places. I didn’t realize it. You know, the first feature, animated computer film was attempted here in New York. There are many threads that needed to come together to bring us to the present, and many of these threads had origins in New York. Super 8 was introduced at the World’s Fair in New York and put single frame animation in the hands of children and independent filmmakers, creating a direct line between Super 8 techniques, Sesame Street, and then to Nickelodeon and MTV. I think there is a direct line which couldn’t have happened in Hollywood under that studio system that tended to exclude experimental styles, women, and artists of color. In New York, you had independent people—who were really working artists—experimenting with formats like Super 8, which came out in 1965, animating on the kitchen table. They could move clay around, use various materials and come up with techniques outside the cel-production paradigm. These techniques show up in the iconic MTV interstitials and changed the look of animation forever.

**JJ:** Yeah. It was really guerrilla filmmaking. And compared to the rest, it’s just like California was where you went after everything was worked out, proved and then it’s executed. And that’s why, for the most part, I think series work wasn’t a big thing in New York. It’s just these little boutique shops and advertising. The commercials that were produced for the industry, because you got to try all these different techniques and there wasn’t as much money riding on it and you could do wacked out stuff, and that was so important. And we’re losing that. Did you find when you were planning the book out that there’s so many different directions that you can’t mention stuff because there’s so much relationship between all the things? That must have been a hell of a struggle.

**Robby:** It was a heavy lift. There are some heavy stories that couldn’t be put to page. I was taking care of my mother who had dementia when I started the research. I received the contract for the book the day after she died. It was during Covid, so we were stuck inside. And so I just put a large paper on the whole wall of a room and as ideas came out, just with crayons or whatever, I would write, for example, JJ Sedelmaier and then I’d scratch down MTV or whatever. I tried to connect the dots.. I still have it somewhere—it’s like a big mind map.

**JJ:** Sounds like a CSI episode.

**Robby:** Yeah. It was this huge, huge, wall of just scribbles and thoughts and ideas. And it

just started to come together. And then when you showed me the Oxtoby-Smith report...

**JJ:** Which came via Howard (Beckerman).

**Robby:** Yes. That report seemed like a good place to start because when you talk about the unions, they defined what the roles were contractually. And in an academic sphere and in an industry that doesn't agree on what the very definition of animation is, to have something that says, all right, 'this is what an animator is,' 'this is what an assistant animator is,' the Xerox operator, and so on. That struck me as a good place to start about New York because that report delineated the job titles and was analyzing the state of New York's animation industry at a time of real downturn. It also defined the industry in a way that wasn't just someone's opinion. The union designations are what everyone adhered to. And it was pretty old school—it's pretty division of labor. And so the Oxtoby Smith report and the unions were used to give a point of reference from which to start talking about the independents who deviated from these designations and really shaped New York's trajectory.

**JJ:** And, and so much of what that report did was the antithesis of what New York animation is and the strength of it, because, once you're classified as something, and you see this in California, you run the risk of only getting that opportunity. One of the things in New York that's always been great is you might be animating one week, you might be designing another week, you might actually be producing and directing and all these opportunities at your fingertips potentially. So it was interesting in the 80s. I sat on both sides of the table. I started out sitting on the artists and animators side. And then when I became a producer at the Ink Tank, I was sitting on the producer side. And to see both sides of that, was very interesting, but New York has always been a reluctant participant in that whole process. And that I think that's good because creatively you want to encourage your membership that anything is still possible that you can do something that was a real, real important moment in the 80s with a lot of us coming in. We were young, we were wide-eyed. We were naive. And the union shunned us for the most part. We're just like the wine and cheese crowd, "Oh, these guys. You know, they didn't shoot opticals. They weren't here until three in the morning." So that was unfortunate because it could have been a very interesting participation level on the part of the new group coming in that really never happened because they weren't given the chance to be modern union members. It's unfortunate.

**Robby:** But at the same time, you had this crossover period. You had old Terrytoons and Popeye animators like Johnny Gent over at NYIT with Alvy Ray Smith and Michael Sporn, and that's an important thread that I never knew about. And I think it's really important when we have this New York origin and this crossover period. And I got to work with people like Paul Sparagano—these old timer people—like Howard Beckerman. So there was still a little bit of that, you know. I could still smell that old school idea of what an animator was and what the process was and the timing and the exposure sheets. All that's gone now. And then transitioning into interactive computer animation—stuff like that. So the more I looked into it, the more it's just an amazing time for animation. And New York was central to this transition.

**JJ:** And there were those in those old timers who weren't able to make that kind of move into modern technology. It was sad watching a lot of people who just couldn't keep up, couldn't stay involved and would have liked to have been there.

three-month-long internship as a Gallery Assistant for Positive Exposure, which is a non-profit organization that provides a platform for artists with physical and developmental disabilities to express themselves.

**Ryan:** I got into animating in the beginning of 2022, with my first short and just made it a habit, with now 6 shorts under my belt. I've picked up a variety of freelance gigs ranging from helping smaller bands with brand and logo designs - to recently completing a video art edit of Marty Supreme for the magazine brand Heeb.

Josué: Ever since I was young, I have always been glued to the tv screen. Watching all sorts of animated content with my brothers lead me to foster my love for animation at a young age. As I got older and attended Hostos Community College my love for animation continued to grow. During my undergraduate years I began creating my own animated shorts. Thankfully I have also met pioneers and those currently shaping the commercial and animation space.

**David:** I started working in the animation industry during my first freshman year of college as a development intern at Frederator Studios in Burbank. I worked at Frederator for a little over two years – and while there, I met my mentor Steve Worth, who eventually invited me to join his organization, Animation Resources, a non-profit archive and foundation dedicated to preserving animation history. Initially, as a volunteer, I worked by scanning old artwork and cleaning up files in photoshop. Later on, when Steve asked me to join the Animation Resources board, I took on new responsibilities, like writing articles about animation theory for the bimonthly reference packs as well as helping to manage the media outreach. After five years in Los Angeles, I decided to move back to New York to pursue a career in special education. After returning, Steve asked me to reach out to ASIFA-East so as to connect the two organizations. I reached out, attended my first ASIFA-East board meeting, and quickly volunteered to help with the festival. This year, I am the Festival Chair for the ASIFA-East Animation Festival, working hard to put on a great 2026 season.

**JJ.:** Moved to NYC from UW/Madison in '79 to do comicbooks. Steered towards animation once I found out that there was a thriving NY Animation industry.

Met Tony Eastman in '80 and began assisting him as a freelancer.

Feb 1981 - First staff animation position (inbetweener) at Perpetual Motion Pictures working on Berenstain Bears/Strawberry Shortcake.

1982 - Assistant Animator @Perpetual Animation

1983 - On staff @Buzzco

May 1984 - Assistant Animator @ The Ink Tank

July 1984 - Animator @ The Ink Tank

Sept 1984 - Producer @ The Ink Tank

1986 - Executive Producer/Associate Director/Representative @ The Ink Tank

1990 - Patrice and J.J. open J.J. Sedelmaier Productions, Inc.

1990-2024 - Produced in-house film pitching "Cartoon Network" within Turner Broadcasting (1992)

Produced launch materials for Nickelodeon's "NickToons" block, including interstitials, logo design and intro title/closing (1992)

Launched Beavis & Butt-Head for MTV, (1992-93)

Reintroduced "Schoolhouse Rock" (1993)

Co-Created "Saturday TV Funhouse" cartoons with Robert Smigel (1996-2001)

Co-Created "Captain Linger" series with Stuart Hill for Cartoon Network (1998-99)

# NEW BOARD MEMBERS

For the past couple of years our board has been really working hard to get the organization back to providing our members with the events and opportunities that we've had in the past. From restarting the aNYmator, to free figure drawing sessions, a renewed International Animation Day celebration, documenting our history online, connecting to our international network and not only continuing our festival, but improving it.

All of these things wouldn't be possible without our newest board members and we think you should know a bit more about them.

If you've seen our social media posts or have gone to a figure drawing session at Titmouse, Hornet or Buck, you can thank Ronan Madden. Soon our extraordinary history will be available on our website because we have Hugo Segal. Josué Advincola has been instrumental in organizing and running our live events. Ryan Castrillo has taken the responsibility of keeping us abreast and participating internationally. David Eisman is growing our film festival with many new initiatives. J.J. Sedelmaier has been helping us off the books on a variety of subjects for the past two years and, now as a board member, will be even more of an invaluable resource.

They all answered the same questions, via email. So, let's say hello.



Give a brief recap of how you got into animation and your career so far.

**Ronan:** I have a mind that will stubbornly fixate on anything that catches its interest. The thing that just so happened to fixate me the most is animation. It's why I graduated from Pratt Institute's BFA in Digital Arts - 2D Animation back in 2023.

Ironically, my first break in animation was in a Children's Book Illustration class. Professor Patricia Cummings shared that an animation studio was accepting interns. It was Bill Plympton's studio, and I worked there during my junior year in college. Between that and my current position, as a Studio Assistant at Hornet, I did odd side jobs while balancing work as a barista in a neighborhood cafe.

**Hugo:** Although my ASIFA membership technically began in February 2020, the impetus of my involvement with the organization was during the final weeks of 2023. J.J. Sedelmaier, whom I consulted earlier that year for my student thesis, suggested I reach out to the president and inquire about future volunteer opportunities. By the start of 2024, I followed his advice and eventually secured a spot on ASIFA East's board of directors. Aside from my participation in New York's animation community, I recently began a

Talk a little bit about this whole struggle with how much the book costs.

**Robby:** Oh, thank you. Yeah. I didn't know what they were going to charge for it. And it's the first non-fiction book I've ever written. I never expected to write such a book. I went into it naively. I got a contract and I just signed it. I didn't think about it because — maybe it's going to sound self-serving—but I really wanted to just tell this story. I didn't really care about the money or anything like that. I didn't expect them to charge so much, though. I get no royalties out of it. I got six free copies, which I've given all away.

**JJ:** Thank you.

**Robby:** So it's a little embarrassing because I'd love to be able to give everybody a copy that was involved, because I feel like that book wouldn't exist without them. I had a different vision in my mind, much more Canemaker-like—something more broadly accessible. A lot of that is on me, though, because the Palgrave Animation series has a set format. 'Artist me' would've done a full-color coffee-table book!

**JJ:** Well, it's definitely not a coffee table book but it's still a wonderful, entry level, history to what New York is about. And I hope it also acts as a catalyst for more people to do the work.

How did you start the process of researching? Was it John Canemaker?

**Robby:** No. I started with that big mind map on my bedroom wall. I think you were among the first people I called. I talked to you before I actually called Canemaker. I remember calling you, leaving a message, and you called back pretty quickly, and you were really excited. And we had a great conversation about people to talk to and about— and that was a pivotal thing. And I'm very grateful for you.

**JJ:** Oh no, no, no, this is totally an honor.

**Robby:** And then as I talked to more people, there was excitement. I would describe the whole research process as 'all green lights.' Everyone I talked to was so giving—like John Canemaker just gave me all these files on his computer. And then the same with George Griffin. He was the next one I interviewed. They just poured all these files in my direction. They were just so generous. You all were so generous. It was almost as if the project took on a life of its own.

**JJ:** Well it's very exciting when you really feel someone is putting these puzzle pieces together. And we also are aware that we're going to end up learning as much out of this as you are. And there's that some of the connections you made and that the information you were coming up with was so exciting to hear. It just snowballed and it was wonderful.

**Robby:** Well, in our first conversation, I asked, I want to interview some Black animators for this. And you put me in touch with Dan Haskett. So I called Dan and he was most wonderful and said, "You've got to talk about Tee Collins, you've got to talk to Jim Simon."

And these are some of the most extraordinary artifacts—and friendships— that came out of that to me. The Tee Collins' story, finding Jim Simon, talking to Dan Haskett, under-

