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Na obálce / Front cover:
Políčko z filmu *To jsou Bratři v triku* (Bruno Šefranka, Břetislav Dvořák, 1956).
Film Still from *To jsou Bratři v triku* (Bruno Šefranka, Břetislav Dvořák, 1956).

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SPECIAL ISSUE:
ANIMATION STUDIOS: PEOPLE, SPACES, LABOR
Guest Editors:
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OBSAH

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Animation Studios: People, Spaces, Labor

In the 1980s, after a long hiatus, Film Studies began to pay attention to the division of labor in the film industry from a historical perspective. Much of this was due to the publication of *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* by David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson. At the beginning of the 21st century, American media scholar John T. Caldwell spurred a major revival of so-called production studies and research on the media industry and film studios as places of work, careers, and shared values and norms. The methodological impetus for research on film studios has been provided by the work of media and visual culture historian Brian Jacobson, who has put forward the possibilities of studying film studios as virtual and material environments; as symbols that take on a wide range of meanings; or as points at which different forms of scientific and technical knowledge, different technologies, resources, and materials, and groups of professionals of different competencies intersect. This has been followed up by a recent project led by British film historian Sarah Street *Film Studios: Infrastructure, Culture, Innovation in Britain, France, Germany, and Italy, 1930–60*.

Animation production has specific demands and conditions depending on the animation technique, the size of the studio, or possible collaboration with other film production sectors. Studio spaces impose specific architectural demands on lighting, equipment, workshop facilities, and support staff, whether it is a puppet, cartoon, computer animation, or filmmaking combining animation and live action. An animation studio is a stimulating object of investigation as a site of work, careers, and shared values and norms. At the same time, many animation techniques were already very flexible in terms of space requirements before the advent of digital animation. Some phases of work did not require studio conditions, which created space for non-standard types of collaboration between animators and studios. It is possible to study the impact of technological change and its effect on collaboration, communication, conventions, and artistic solutions. Another set of

specific questions relates to the coordination of animation and sound, dialogue, dubbing, the process of education, and craft training.

Animation has its own 'canonical' global history in the form of a three-volume publication by Giannalberto Bendazzi,[1] its international organization (Society for Animation Studies — SAS), and several journals on animated film production, including *Animation Studies*, published by SAS. The literature is extensive and focuses on the history of animation studies, important filmmakers, or the analysis of individual films. This journal actively participated in the scholarly reflection on animation (e.g. by the thematic issue in 2020,[2] or by the paper providing a reconstruction of the process of professionalization of amateur animators).[3] In Poland in 2007, the by-then Polskie Wydawnictwo Audiowizualne released valuable DVD sets with Polish animation classics entitled *Anthology of Polish Animated Film*, *Anthology of Children's Animation* and *Anthology of Polish Experimental Animation*, for which the films were selected and annotated by Marcin Giżycki. Shortly thereafter, the publishing market was enriched by works by Jerzy Armata,[4] Joanna Prosińska-Giersz and Armata;[5] Armata and Anna Wróblewska,[6] Mariusz Frukacz,[7] Marcin Giżycki,[8] Hanna Margolis,[9] Adriana Prodeus,[10] Paweł Sitkiewicz,[11] Bogusław Zmudziński.[12] The literature on Polish animation has expanded in recent years, with collective works and monographic issues of academic journals being produced, including *Kwartalnik Filmowy* (112/2020 — half on animation, half on documentaries)[13] and *Pleograf: Historyczno-filmowy kwartalnik Filmoteki Narodowej* (3/2023).[14] Lately, film animation studios are also being examined, mainly through the angle of the films produced there.[15] The perspective of production research, in particular examining the preparatory processes, the

1) Giannalberto Bendazzi, *Animation: A World History: Volume I–III* (Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2016).
2) See especially Lukáš Skupa, "Která bude ta pravá? Počátky žánru pohádky v českém animovaném filmu po roce 1948," *Iluminace* 32, no. 4 (2020), 9–27, and Lucie Česálková, "Zboží především: Československá animace a reklama na počátku 60. let 20. století," *Iluminace* 32, no. 4 (2020), 29–46.
3) Tomáš Hubáček, "Přímá profesionalizace režisérů v animované tvorbě," *Iluminace* 36, no. 1 (2024), 93–120.
4) Jerzy Armata, *Śnione filmy Piotra Dumały* (Kraków: Korporacja ha!art, 2009) and Jerzy Armata, *Z Armatą na Wilka: Animowany blues Mariusza Wilczyńskiego* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Nowe Horyzonty, 2011).
5) Joanna Prosińska-Giersz and Jerzy Armata, *Witold Giersz: Malarz ekranu* (Warszawa: Stowarzyszenie Nowe Horyzonty, 2012) and Jerzy Armata, *Hobby: Animacja: Kino Daniela Szczechury* (Warszawa: Studio EMKA, 2009).
6) Jerzy Armata and Anna Wróblewska, *Polski film dla dzieci i młodzieży* (Warszawa: Fundacja Kino, 2014).
7) Mariusz Frukacz, *24 klatki na sekundę: Rozmowy o animacji* (Kraków: Klub Lokator, 2008).
8) Marcin Giżycki, *Kino artystów i artystek: Od Méliès do Maciunasa* (Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2023).
9) Hanna Margolis, *Animacja autorska w PRL w latach 1957–1968: Ukryty projekt Kazimierza Urbańskiego* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2019) and Hanna Margolis, *Niewidzialną ręką: Filmy animowane kobiet w (męskich) strukturach kinematografii w Polsce* (Kraków: Universitas, 2024).
10) Adriana Prodeus, *Themersonowie: Szkice biograficzne* (Warszawa: Świat Literacki, 2009).
11) Paweł Sitkiewicz, *Polska szkoła animacji* (Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2011).
12) Jerzy Armata, Marcin Giżycki, and Bogusław Zmudziński, *Polski film animowany* (Warszawa: Polskie Wydawnictwo Audiowizualne, 2008).
13) *Kwartalnik Filmowy*, no. 112 (2020), accessed January 15, 2025, https://czasopisma.ispan.pl/index.php/kf/issue/view/23.
14) *Pleograf: Historyczno-filmowy kwartalnik Filmoteki Narodowej*, no. 3 (2023), accessed January 15, 2025, https://pleograf.pl/index.php/film-animowany/.
15) Patryk Oczko, *Nie tylko dla dzieci: Studio Filmów Rysunkowych w Bielsku-Białej 1947–2021* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego and Bielsko-Biała: Książnica Beskidzka, 2024).

day-to-day reality of teamwork, the economic and material concerns of the production process and the self-reflections of the members of the film crews, is becoming present in Polish film studies on animated film.[16] However, there are very few academic monographs or papers approaching animation production from the perspective of the sociology of art (although one chapter in a book on Soviet animation by Balakirsky Katz[17] goes in that direction).

The project of comparative research on Czechoslovak and Polish animation studios, led by the editors of this issue of *Iluminace*, Pavel Skopal and Ewa Ciszewska, seeks to provide new methodological inspiration. The project draws on the prosopographical approach as applied in relation to the field theories of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu; the concept of art worlds of the American sociologist of art Howard S. Becker; the actor-network theory of Bruno Latour; and social network analysis, which allows to describe and explain the role of social contacts, distribution of knowledge and different types of capital, or the role of intermediaries in the professional environment. Investigating the history of two social worlds of animation film production operating in Central Europe allows for a new path of research on film history by internalizing the objectives of film production studies and combining them with the tools of sociology of arts.

The proposed approaches for researching Central-European film studios in post-war era have been tested in two books, a series of articles, and two databases.[18] This project's findings are represented in this issue with texts authored by Szymon Szul & Michal Večeřa and Tereza Bochinová & Agata Hofelmajer-Roś. The first text deals with the question of creativity within state socialist film production on the example of animation studios in Gottwaldov and Łódź. Since the internal dynamics of each studio were shaped by its em-

16) On the preparatory process in animation, see Szymon Szul, "Kierunek Wschód: Kulisy realizacji filmu *Mamo, czy kury potrafią mówić?*," *Panoptikum*, no. 27 (2022), 104–121; the determinants of teamwork see Margolis, *Animacja autorska w PRL*; on the self-understanding of film crew members see Anna Wróblewska, "Produkcja filmów lalkowych we współczesnej polskiej kinematografii," in *Polska animacja w XXI wieku*, eds. Małgorzata Kozubek and Tadeusz Szczepański (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Biblioteki Wyższej Szkoły Filmowej, Telewizyjnej i Teatralnej, 2017), 302–321.

17) Maya Balakirsky Katz, *Drawing the Iron Curtain: Jews and the Golden Age of Soviet Animation* (New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2016).

18) Pavel Skopal, ed., *Lidé – práce – animace: Světy animovaného filmu na Kudlově* (Brno: Host, 2024); Ewa Ciszewska, Agata Hofelmajer-Roś, Michał Pabiś-Orzeszyna, and Szymon Szul, *Społeczne światy Studia Małych Form Filmowych "Se-Ma-For" w Łodzi* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2025); Pavel Skopal, Ewa Ciszewska, and Michal Večeřa, "Functionality in The Production of Animated Films: Czechoslovak and Polish Film Studios, 1945–1960," *JCMS — Journal of Cinema and Media Studies* to be published in 2025; Ewa Ciszewska and Agata Hofelmajer-Roś, "Lalka filmowa — perspektywy badan: Rozważania na podstawie wybranych produkcji lalkowych zrealizowanych w Studiu Małych Form Filmowych 'Se-Ma-For' w Łodzi," *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis: Folia Litteraria Polonica*, no. 2 (2024); Ewa Ciszewska and Szymon Szul, "Animation Workers From 'Se-Ma-For' Studio of Small Film Forms in Lodz (Dataset)," *Journal of Open Humanities Data*, no. 10 (2024), 1–7. P. Skopal, E. Ciszewska, T. Bochinová, A. Czajkowska, A. Hofelmajer-Roś, M. Gonciarz, M. Kos, K. Kunkelová, O. Nadarzycka, M. Pabiś-Orzeszyna, D. Piekarski, T. Porubčanská, J. Pospíšil, M. Rawska, S. Szul, K. Šrámková, M. Večeřa, and P. Veinhauer, "Animation in Czechoslovakia and Poland, 1945–1990" [dataset] online database, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University; Faculty of Philology, University of Lodz, accessed December 9, 2024, https://animation.phil.muni.cz; Ewa Ciszewska and Szymon Szul, "Animation workers from 'Se-Ma-For' Studio of Small Film Forms in Lodz (dataset)," *Repozytorium Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego*, accessed December 9, 2024, https://repozytorium.uni.lodz.pl/handle/11089/52081.

ployee structure, dominant personalities, and interactions with other institutions and given that most serials were co-productions or commission projects, character of the series was primarily influenced by the demands of the co-producer or commissioning entity, rather than the studio itself. Authors claim that filmmakers at "Se-Ma-For" enjoyed a higher degree of creative freedom and autonomy in their work than those from Gottwaldov. Similarities and differences in the functioning of the two Central European animation studios are researched by Tereza Bochinová & Agata Hofelmajer-Roś in an article tracing the agency of technical equipment on animation production in studios "Se-Ma-For" and FS Kudlov in the 1970s and 1980s. Both studios managed to develop specific actor networks to navigate and mitigate their constraints.

Animated films during the socialist period were not only made by studios specialising in short films, Polish film historian Emil Sowiński analyses the production strategy of the Irzykowski Film Studio in the field of animated film production, a communist-era film institution founded in 1981 that produced debut films of all types and lengths, without animated film being prioritised.

With a text by Jane Cheadle, we are moving to contemporary animation market. This paper uncovers difficulties and challenges related to transcontinental studio partnerships in the production of the African-futurist anthology *Kizazi Moto*. Analysis of points of tension allowed a closer examination of specific aspects of transnational animation production, including its barriers and opportunities, with the aim of better questioning and understanding patterns of labour circulation and meaning making.

Cultural capital enhances professional expertise, serving to showcase one's ability to think and express freely. A studio's role is to harness and commodify creative energy, making it tangible and exchangeable. The practice of desk decoration analysed in Colin Wheeler text, offers a glimpse into how animators balance the use of personal space with the cultivation of cultural capital to foster communication with colleagues and peers.

The issue of control in the context of the architecture and organizational aspects of film studios is revisited in the conversation with Brian Jacobson, also featured in this issue. In the conversation, Jacobson describes how his perspective shifted toward a broader technological history, linking it to the development of infrastructure, technologies, and larger systems. This reframing connects the studio and cinema to the history of technology in novel and unexplored ways.

As this thematic issue hopes to demonstrate, research on animated film studios welcomes a range of perspectives, including working conditions, work coordination, and the social, architectural, urban, technical, or technological aspects of animation studios, and opens floor for an exploration of their international cooperation and coordination.

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How Serials Reshaped Animation Production

Comparative Analysis of Animated Film Serials Produced by the Studio in Gottwaldov and 'Se-Ma-For' Studio of Small Film Forms (1960s–1980s)

Abstract
The 1960s marked a significant shift in animation production in socialist Czechoslovakia and Poland toward serial formats, and our text focuses on a comparative analysis of the adoption of animated serial production at the Polish studio Se-Ma-For and the Gottwaldov animation studio in Czechoslovakia. In Gottwaldov, evening serials for television were the predominant form of production, while Se-Ma-For favored co-produced serials. The shift to serial production required adjustments in production practices, including changes in workforce composition and skill requirements. Comparative analysis reveals divergent approaches to serial production, influenced by production backgrounds, animation techniques, and employment structures. In Czechoslovakia, strict requirements from the commissioning authorities limited artistic freedom, while Polish filmmakers retained more control, leading to the marginalization of workers below the line. The decentralized nature of Se-Ma-For and the diversity of commissioning sources led to different preferred solutions for serial production. This study underscores the complexity of serial production in socialist contexts, highlighting the interplay between organizational dynamics, artistic autonomy, and external influences.

Keywords
Animation studies, Serial production, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, Custom production, Comissioners, Coproductions, Czechoslovak Television, Gottwaldov, Łódź, Se-Ma-For

The text analyzes the production systems in Czechoslovakia and Poland, using the examples of the Se-Ma-For studio ('Se-Ma-For' Studio of Small Film Forms) in Łódź and the Czechoslovakian studio in Gottwaldov from the 1960s to the end of the 1980s.[1] Although each studio operated under specific conditions, the aim is to explore the dynamics of existing work collectives and their transformations by examining the division of labor and decision-making powers in serial film production. We claim that each studio had its internal dynamics, driven by its employee structure, strong personalities, and relationships with other institutions. Since most serials were produced as co-productions or commission films, their nature depended on the requirements of the co-producer or contracting authority, rather than the producing studio. We argue that filmmakers at the Se-Ma-For studio received a greater degree of creative freedom and control over their work.

A closer examination reveals that both studios developed serial production simultaneously and shared some similarities. Both film industries operated according to the principles of the state-socialist mode of production, where the ruling party[2] apparatus played a strategic management role. The actual production process[3] occurred at the level of studio managers, dramaturges, and production groups. These units held responsibility for developing film projects, assembling production crews, and controlling the production process to varying degrees.[4] Market conditions, local production systems, and specific political situations, however, resulted in different development dynamics. Both studios were shaped by contrasting dimensions of market size, political developments (e.g., martial law in Poland in the 1980s), and the individual career trajectories of filmmakers.

According to the concept of art worlds formulated by Howard Becker, a co-creator of an art world is anyone involved in what is considered art. Members of this world collaborate on given tasks, using conventions confirmed by standardized practice.[5] Becker's theory assesses the extent to which innovative solutions emerge in serial production and the degree of progressive standardization and elaboration of conventions within each animation technique. Becker posits that the art world functions as a well-structured ecosystem of integrated professionals.[6]

This study examines the organizational dynamics of the Se-Ma-For studio in Poland and the Czechoslovakian facility in Gottwaldov and analyzes how employee commitment influenced the creative environment among artist-craftsmen and craftsmen. This environment facilitated the management of specific serial productions based on these collaborative efforts. Becker suggests that artist-craftsmen benefit from their integration into the art world, whereas craftsmen, with more modest aspirations, prioritize excellence in their

1) In the text we will use the name Gottwaldov, which is the name held by today's city of Zlín between 1949 and 1989 after the first Czechoslovakian communist president Klement Gottwald.
2) In Czechoslovakia it was Komunistická strana Československa (The Communist part of Czechoslovakia) and in Poland Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza (Polish United Workers' Party).
3) In this context, the term "process of production" encompasses the entire production cycle, from the initial planning stages through to the final shooting phase.
4) Petr Szczepanik, *Továrna Barrandov: Svět filmařů a politická moc 1945–1970* (Praha: Národní filmový archiv, 2016), 33–34.
5) Howard S. Becker, *Art Worlds: 25th Anniversary Edition* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2008), 34–35.
6) Ibid., 228–233.

craft.[7] This distinction prompts reflection on the differences between Czechoslovakian and Polish animation studios in terms of serial production. Training and preparing integrated professionals for new tasks demanded profound mastery of the craft and minimal inclination towards innovations (termed "mavericks" by Becker — those within the art world who challenge conventional norms).[8] Whether it's the usage of materials or work methods, we can see conventions influencing the organization of serial production. This analysis explores the impact of the prevalence of certain techniques, the establishment of work standards to enhance efficiency, and the adaptability of artist-craftsmen to changing economic and political landscapes. An organized art world may stifle innovation but remains adaptable to functional changes prompted by external factors.[9]

Serial production serves as a litmus test for assessing the organizational similarities within Czechoslovakian and Polish animation studios, through internal evaluations found in archives or oral histories collected in subsequent years.

The text consists of two major sections. After an introduction focusing on a quantitative analysis of the main tendencies in serial production (e.g., episode length, usage of individual animation techniques),[10] it proceeds to analyze how working on serials differed from other types of production.[11] Although the available data do not fully cover all serials produced between 1960s and 1980s, they allow us to trace the organizational patterns of contemporary industries associated with the advent of serial production.[12]

The Introduction of Film Serials in Czechoslovakia and Poland

The 1960s saw the emergence of animated serials in Poland and Czechoslovakia, which overshadowed previously dominant non-serial production and brought about significant quantitative changes in production output, film length, and the frequency of animation techniques employed. The specific form of production in each country was influenced by the intended purpose of the serials. In Czechoslovakia, most serials were evening shows commissioned by local television facilities. In contrast, in Se-Ma-For, television began to play a more important role in the 1970s, focusing on co-produced serials that were considered economically viable.

In the typology of film production discussed in this text, we distinguish between serials and non-serial production, two categories derived from the production perspective. Unlike other types of production, serials are conceived from the outset as a group of indi-

7) Ibid., 272–299.
8) Ibid., 233.
9) Ibid., 244.
10) As we will discuss further, before the advent of serials devoted to puppet animation, such focus receded into the background over the years.
11) Both parts of the text are based on the data collected during the project Animation Studios in Gottwaldov and Łodź (1945/47–1990) and its outcomes, namely the volume edited by Pavel Skopal *Lidé — Práce — Animace*.
12) In terms of the availability of sources, the situation was most complicated in the 1960s; apart from the unpreserved or unavailable sources, the quantitative level of production was not as high as in the following decades, and it was not possible to use interviews with studio employees to the same extent as in later decades.

vidual episodes linked by specific characteristics (e.g., common story, characters, art design, or the author of the literary model).[13] Regardless of the number of episodes produced, it is necessary to understand the differences in serial production, which typically involve employing workers over a longer period compared to individual projects.[14] In addition, one must consider the position of a particular film in the production portfolio and whether it was a program film or a commissioned film. Program films formed the basis of the annual dramaturgical plans[15] of individual studios. On the contrary, custom productions were based on orders from various institutions, outside the structure of the nationalized cinema institutions (e.g., branches of local television stations, partners from abroad).

In Czechoslovakia and Poland, the production of animated series began almost simultaneously in the mid of the 1960s. In previous years, most productions were non-serial with only a few exceptions — none of those was intended to create a standardized season with a certain number of episodes. In Czechoslovakia, it was common for such serials to be spread unevenly over several years or even decades. From the late 1940s to the early 1970s, the Gottwaldov studio produced fifteen films connected by the puppet character, Mr. Prokouk.[16] Prague animation studios were in a similar situation — Studio Jiřího Trnky (Jiří Trnka Studio) in 1955 produced the trilogy *Good Soldier Švejk I–III* (Dobrý voják Švejk I–III; Jiří Trnka), based on the novel by Jaroslav Hašek. The Bratři v triku (Brothers in T-Shirt) studio made a hexalogy of short films featuring the Doggie and Pussycat

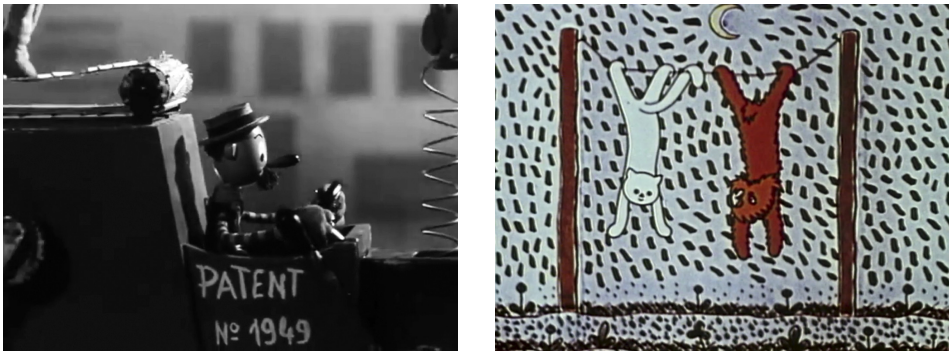

Fig. 1: Images from *Pan Prokouk vynálezcem* (1949) and *Jak pejsek s kočičkou myli podlahu* (1950)

13) The terms "series" and "serials" can be understood to have different meanings in different contexts, with the former typically denoting a storytelling method. In this text, the term "serials" is employed in the sense of "serial production," which primarily refers to the production planning associated with the production practice. Radomír D. Kokeš, *Světy na pokračování: Rozbor možností seriálového vyprávění* (Praha: Akropolis, 2016), 181–182.

14) Some of the interviewees recalled the monotony of such work related to keep only one artistic style for a long time. Jiří Plass, interview by Michal Večeřa, June 9, 2021; Nataša Boháčková, interview by Michal Večeřa, August 22, 2023.

15) Archival sources provide only inconsistent terminology — thematic plans, ideological-thematic plans, or dramaturgical plans. In our text, we will stick to the unified term dramaturgical plans.

16) Tereza Bochinová, "Pan Prokouk a standardní figurka agitace," in *Lidé — práce — animace*, ed. Pavel Skopal (Brno: Host, 2024), 321.

characters (known as Pejsek and Kočička),[17] as five fairy tales based on books by Karel Čapek and produced between 1959 and 1973. An exceptional case of serial production were several cartoon serials made by the American filmmaker Gene Deitch in the Bratři v triku studio.[18]

A fundamental change in serial production occurred during the second half of the 1960s when Czechoslovakian cinema began intensive collaboration with Československá televize (Czechoslovak Television) on what were called bedtime stories.[19] The growing demand for this new type of content is evident from its increasing broadcast frequency — from once per week in January 1965 to daily appearances in 1973 and, by the 1980s, it was broadcast twice daily.[20] These conditions encouraged the domestic production of animated serials, representing the only alternative to foreign cartoons.[21] The first Czechoslovakian bedtime stories were produced by Prague animation studios in 1966 (*Pohádky ovčí babičky* /Václav Bedřich, 1966/). At about the same time, the first evening cartoons began to appear from the Gottwaldov studio. Due to their success, the bedtime stories were integrated into the production portfolios of Czechoslovakian animation studios in the early 1970s, only a few years after their introduction. Contemporary production statistics show that the previously predominant non-serial productions, based on the studios' dramaturgical plans, suddenly became the minority.

The year 1961 marked a significant milestone for the Se-Ma-For studio. Notably, the company, previously known as Studio Filmów Lalkowych (Puppet Film Studio) in Tuszyn, adopted its new name. This rebranding was accompanied by a diversification of the studio's production profile, which, in addition to the existing division producing puppet films, included the establishment of additional branches dedicated to live-action films, cartoons, and cut-out films. Consequently, Se-Ma-For emerged as the sole studio in Poland producing films in all animation techniques, incorporating new methods that heightened the demand for creative cadres skilled in celluloid painting and animation phases. This development necessitated the implementation of a new strategy in film production.

In the early 1960s, puppet films did not enjoy high critical acclaim,[22] prompting the studio to pivot towards cut-out and cartoon film production. Inspired mostly by the festival successes of Daniel Szczechura, Se-Ma-For invested in filmmakers with expertise in this artistic domain. The majority of the Cartoon Film Department's employees were alumni of the Państwowe Liceum Sztuk Plastycznych (High School of Fine Arts) in Łódź,

17) All six movies were later edited into the feature film under the title *Povídání o Pejskovi a kočičce* (Eduard Hofman, 1950–1955).

18) Oldřich Haberle, interview by Michal Večeřa, September 9, 2021.

19) Bedtime stories were created as a television program for the youngest viewers before they went to sleep.

20) "Večerníček: Historie večerníčku: Jak to všechno začalo a bylo dál," *Česká televize*, accessed March 21, 2024, https://web.archive.org/web/20210201182056/https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/0-vecernicek/5626-historie-vecernicku/.

21) Katarína Kunkelová and Veronika Podlipná, "Večerníček pro Bratislavu: Vliv zakázkové tvorby na animovanou produkci gottwaldovského studia," in *Lidé — práce — animace*, ed. Skopal, 274–282.

22) "Analiza działalności Studia Małych Form Filmowych 'Se-Ma-For' w Łodzi za lata 1962–1967," APŁ, zespół Studio Małych Form Filmowych Se-Ma-For w Łodzi, sygn. 1943, karton 39/1943/0/-/25.

educated by directors of the Studio Filmów Rysunkowych (Animated Film Studio)[23] in Bielsko-Biala.[24] These directors brought valuable experience from working on animated serials.

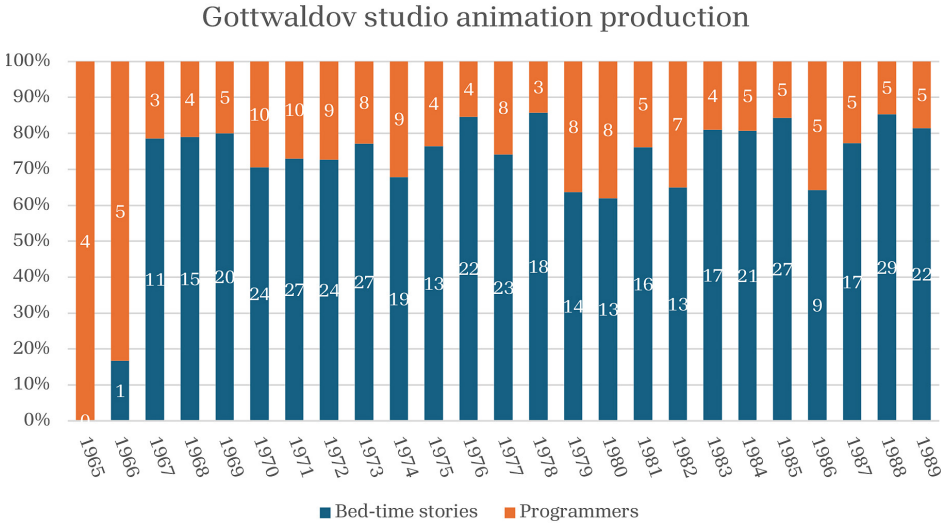

Fig. 2: Changes in the production output of Gottwaldov studio[25]

In 1963, Se-Ma-For produced the first episode of the serial *The Magic Pencil* (Zaczarowany ołówek, 1963–1977).[26] What was once conceived as an individual film, resulted in the long-running production spanning over fourteen years. The need to ensure continuity of production at the Studio, characterized by maintaining the pace of puppet development, drawing celluloids, preparing storyboards, etc., became indispensable through the serialization process. This evolution is illustrated in the accompanying chart, which depicts the growth in serial title production relative to individual film production.

With the increase in production in Czechoslovakia, the most noticeable change was the average film length. Before the introduction of bedtime stories, the average length of films varied significantly, often due to the infrequent production of longer titles. However, following the introduction of bedtime stories in the late 1960s, the typical length of animated films slightly decreased and became standardized to under ten minutes, which co-

23) Jolanta Zakrzewska, interview by Szymon Szul, February 8, 2023, ASFAGŁ, SMFF_0034, Łódź, Poland, in Ewa Ciszewska and Szymon Szul, "Animation workers from 'Se-Ma-For' Studio of Small Film Forms in Lodz (dataset)," *Repozytorium Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego*, 2024, accessed November 22, 2024, https://repozytorium.uni.lodz.pl/handle/11089/52081.

24) Ryszard Szymczak, interview by Szymon Szul, December 8, 2022, ASFAGŁ, SMFF_0004, Głowno, Poland, in Ciszewska — Szul, "Animation workers from 'Se-Ma-For' Studio of Small Film Forms in Lodz."

25) According to the available data there are blank spots in data on bedtime stories episodes, namely for years 1975, 1979, 1980, 1982, 1986, 1989. Kunkelová – Podlipná, "Večerníček pro Bratislavu," 294.

26) Before The Magic Pencil there were plans to produce a puppet series based — similar as it was in the series with Mr. Prokouk — on the recurring character Pan Piórko, who was the protagonist of Zenon Wasilewski's *Pan Piórko śni* (1949). Zenon Wasilewski, "Pan Piórko," sign. A-62 poz. 93, AFINA, Warsaw, Poland.

incided with the duration of a program slot in television broadcasting.[27] Unlike custom films, programmers exhibited more variability in length, as they were not constrained by the requirements of the commissioner.[28]

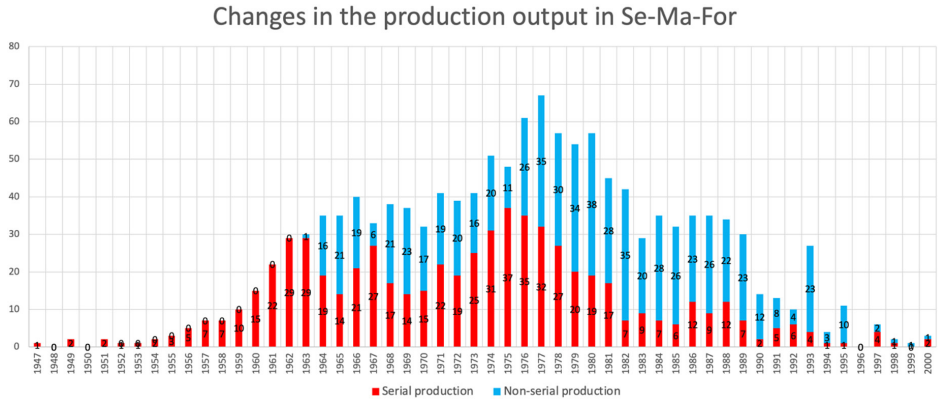

Fig. 3: Changes in the production output of Se-Ma-For[29]

However, in Poland the standardization of the format for the length of a single serial episode proceeded differently than in Czechoslovakia. The figure referenced above, due to gaps in the film database and the need to convert the film's meterage from meters of tape used to minutes, is not as precise as it could be with consistent data for all films. Nevertheless, it captures a characteristic trend in the production of serials, whose lengths were initially non-uniform. From the original length of eight to nine minutes in the early 1960s, the length of one episode became standardized at twelve to thirteen minutes after the Studio undertook the co-production of the Polish-French serial *The Adventures of Teddy-Bear Colargol* (Przygody misia Colargola, 1968–1974). Notably, the role of television in regulating and imposing the film's length in the studio was minimal initially; instead, the requirements set by the Western contractor played a significant role in establishing an episode's length of a puppet serial, because it was the first puppet serial made in the Studio. The data depicted in the chart further confirm anecdotal accounts from Se-Ma-For employees, who

27) According to the editor Jiřina Pěčová, the limit was strictly given, and it was not possible to exceed it by even a few frames. Jiřina Pěčová, interview by Michal Večeřa, September 29, 2023.

28) For pointing out the key role of Československá televize as a customer we can compare bedtime stories with serials designed for cinema distribution. In cinemas, animation films were screened as an appendix of long features without given length restrictions since there was no need to fit an exact slot in the broadcasting. Týrlová worked on two serials for cinemas in the 1970s — *Kocour Modroočko* (1974–1976) and *Ferda, the Ant* (Ferda mravenec, 1977–1978). Zeman worked on the seven-episode cycle between 1971 and 1973, telling the story of *Sinbad the Sailor*. Each episode of the previously mentioned serials was approximately fifteen minutes long. "Týrlová, Hermína," *Zlínský film database*, accessed April 2, 2024, https://zlinskyfilmdb.phil.muni.cz/akter/11943; "Zeman, Karel," *Zlínský film database*, accessed April 2, 2024, https://zlinskyfilmdb.phil.muni.cz/akter/180.

29) There are blank spots in this figure due to shortages in the dataset where some films are not included.

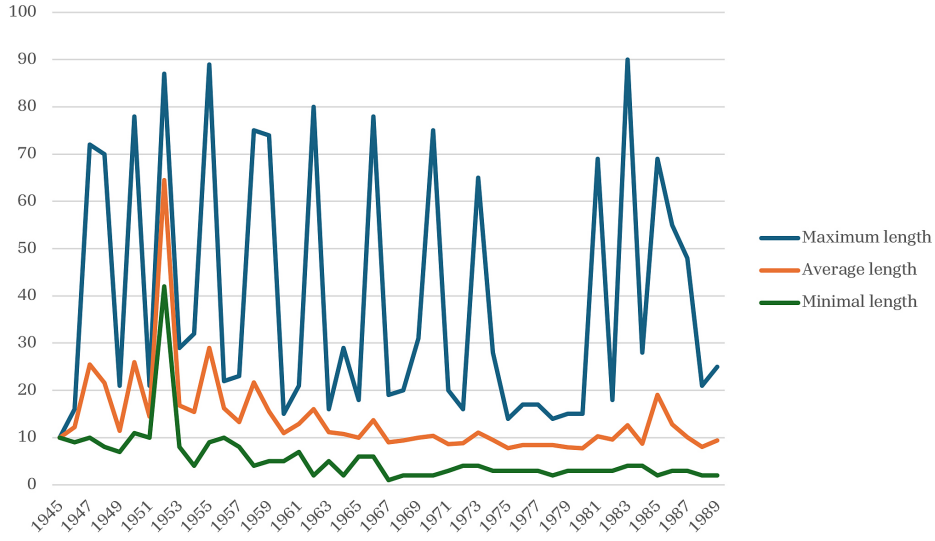

Fig. 4: The average length of Czechoslovakian animation production in minutes

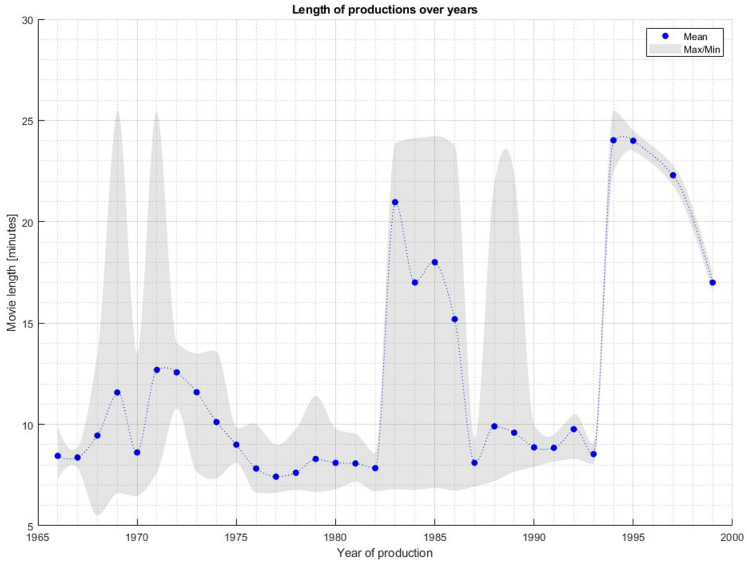

Fig. 5: The average length of Se-Ma-For studio production over the years

admitted that when creating a single episode, they did not have to consider its length in relation to the prequel.[30)]

The second half of the 1970s brought about stability in the form of a seven- to eight-minute standard, which lasted until 1983 when Se-Ma-For's next major co-production

30) Antoni Bańkowski and Sławomir Grabowski, *Semafor 1947–1997* (Łódź: Studio Filmowe "Semafor," 1999), 64.

with Jupiter Film premiered in full. German and Austrian decision-makers negotiated that the puppet serial *Trzy misie* (1982–1986) would adhere to a standard length of about twenty-five minutes.[31] This significantly overestimated the average film length presented in the chart, due to the production of the twenty-six-episode serial, which decreased after the serial ended in 1986. The destabilization of the average length of individual episodes could potentially be attributed to economic ramifications, precipitated by the imposition of martial law in Poland in 1981. Despite high inflation and a lack of access to certain supplies, which led to an apparent collapse in the average production per year of all films after 1982,[32] Se-Ma-For continued to increase its workforce.[33] In 1982, with a total volume of annual production that included the sale[34] of 46 films, the workforce was 156. In contrast, by 1986, with annual sales of 28 film titles, the workforce had already increased by 20 employees and stabilized at 186. It is worth mentioning that in the early 1970s, sales stood at 37 films, and there were 127 employees.

Fig. 6: Images from the episode *The Morning of a Teddy-Bear* (Poranek Misia, 1968) of *The Adventures of Teddy-Bear Colargol and Gościnna jaszczurka* (The guest lizard, 1986) from *Trzy Misie*

The third characteristic of animation influenced by the advent of serial production involves preferred animation techniques and their perception. With the advent of serials, Czechoslovakian producers began to produce a considerable number of films using limited drawn[35] or cut-out techniques. This usage was often economically motivated, given the possibility of making films under restricted budgets as quickly as possible.[36] In serial pro-

31) "Sprawozdanie z delegacji służbowej do Austrii w dniach 25 XII. — 1 XII 79," December, 1979, sign. Jupiter-Film, Film Polski, Apollo Film, AFINA, Akta Studia Małych Form Filmowych Se-Ma-For, Warsaw, Poland.

32) "I. Produkcja," sign. AAN_syg_12_106, Warsaw, Poland.

33) "III. Kadry, zatrudnienie, płace," sign. AAN_syg_12_106, Warsaw, Poland.

34) In documents term "sale" means "finished in the current year." There is no evidence that the sales in the cited figures included actual sales of all the studio's films — those produced in the year when the document was written and years before that.

35) Compared to the full cartoon animation, the limited animation employs fewer images to create the illusion of movement. Rather than utilizing 8–10 images, only 1–3 images are used. While this results in a less fluid illusion of motion, it also reduces the workload on the drawing department and associated costs. Jiří Kubíček, *Úvod do estetiky animace* (Praha: AMU, 2004), 87–88.

36) Hermína Týrlová's statement that her entire department was fully occupied with work for the television stu-

duction from the Gottwaldov studio, puppet animation was common until the early 1970s, after which the dominance of cut-out, cartoon, or relief animation varied. This shift can be attributed to the significant role of television as a client, particularly in the case of cut-out and relief animation, which were perceived as less time-consuming than other forms of animation. Another possible explanation lies in the ease of shooting a film with a lower frame rate compared to puppet animation.[37)]

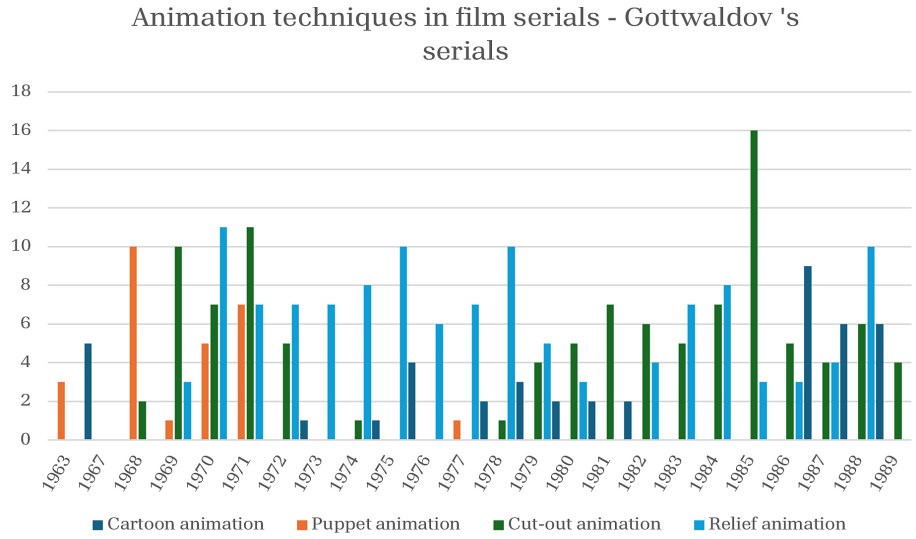

Fig. 7: The animation techniques used at the Gottwaldov studio

A notable trend at Se-Ma-For indicates that animated serials did not initially receive primary attention from the Puppet Films Department in Tuszyn. Instead, they were the primary focus of newly established departments dedicated to other animation techniques. This phenomenon can be largely attributed to the studio's strategy of recruiting individuals who were either enrolled in or affiliated with the Film School; this trend may be exemplified by figures like Henryk Ryszka, Jerzy Kotowski and Wadim Berestowski, who were simultaneously directors at Se-Ma-For and lecturers at the Film School. Berestowski actively promoted the establishment of strong collaboration between film education institutions and animation studios in Łódź.[38)] Moreover, the influx of graduates from art high schools was influential e.g., Ryszard Szymczak, Andrzej Piliczewski, Julitta Freisler, Krystyna Kulczycka, Stanisław Lenartowicz and Jolanta Zakrzewska, who received practi-

dio in Bratislava, shooting films outside its dramaturgical plan, illustrates the pressure of television on the speed of production. This was reflected in the necessary increase in the pace of work. Alois Humplík, "Studio s nejmenší halou v Evropě II: Hledá se Jirka," *Kino* 23, no. 5 (1968), 4.

37) Significant time savings are also mentioned in connection with cut-out animation by the creators who used it; for example, Jaroslav Cita or Jiří Tyller. Jaroslav Cita even recommends a combination of cartoon and cut-out animation to save time. Jaroslav Cita, "Vděčná ploška," *Amatérský film* 9, no. 7 (1977), 167; Jaroslav Cita, "Maličkosti ve filmu," *Amatérský film* 13, no. 1 (1981), 21; Jiří Tyller, interview by author, December 1, 2022.

38) "Protokół z zebrania Rady Artystycznej odbytego w dniu 27 listopada 1976 roku," November 27, 1976, sign. Protokóły Rady Artystycznej, AFINA, Akta Studia Małych Form Filmowych Se-Ma-For, Warsaw, Poland.

cal training from cartoon film directors at the studio in Bielsko-Biala, including Lechoslaw Marszalek, the creator of *Rexie* (Reksio, 1972–1982).[39] The relatively low proportion of puppet serials at Se-Ma-For before 1970 may also be attributed to the generally modest reputation of puppet films in Poland, which were regarded with disrespect by Polish film critics,[40] in contrast to cut-out animation, which enjoyed greater prestige.[41] As we can read in one of the studio's documents, which referred to critics' indifference "Puppet film, which requires a lot of work and a long production period, relies on a motionless and difficult to animate body of puppets, is not able to achieve a high pace of action and a wide range of gags, and gives distance to cartoon film in this aspect."[42]

However, the 1970s witnessed a gradual increase in puppet productions, which steadily displaced live-action, combined, and cut-out techniques. Until 1989, puppet serials accounted for approximately one-third of the total annual production, with minor exceptions. The emergence of puppet serials was primarily facilitated by the co-production of *The Adventures of Teddy-Bear Colargol*, which provided employment for the Tuszyn department. According to Tadeusz Wilkosz, the project's art director, the co-production enabled the entire studio to sustain and expand itself.[43] *The Adventures of Teddy-Bear Colargol* comprised fifty-three episodes produced until 1974 and established a certain group of preferred solutions in serial production. The impetus for further serials did not originate internally, i.e., at the behest of television, but externally, from foreign contractors, who were addressing "Film Polski" — the enterprise supporting the import and export of films. As Se-Ma-For was the first animation studio in Poland carrying out a large co-production, this in turn resulted in them being redirected to that studio. The establishment of new production standards in the making of the Colargol serial influenced the later production of puppet serials.

Subsequent serials, notable for their extensive episode count or individual episode length, were predominantly co-productions. Both the seventy-eight-episode *Tales of Moomin Valley* (Opowiadania Muminków, 1977–1982) and the twenty-six-episode *Trzy misie* were produced using puppet techniques, with episodes averaging almost twenty-five minutes in length. This led to a significant increase in average episode length observed in the early 1980s, as depicted in the preceding chart. Se-Ma-For's longest animated serial, the 104-episode *The Adventures of Teddy-Bear* (Przygody Misia Uszatka, 1975–1987), was also crafted using puppet technology, albeit primarly intendet for broadcast on domestic television.

The notable prevalence of puppet techniques in serial production can be attributed primarily to considerations of material reusability, which were not as feasible with drawing techniques. According to puppeteer Wiktoria Bartoszek, puppet breakdowns primarily occurred due to skeletal issues, which, once repaired, allowed the puppet to be seam-

39) Szymczak, interview by author.

40) "Analiza działalności Studia Małych Form Filmowych 'Se-Ma-For' w Łodzi za lata 1962–1967," sign. 1943, carton 39/1943/0/-/25, APŁ, Warsaw, Poland.

41) Andrzej Kossakowski, *Polski film animowany 1945–1974* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1977), 104–105.

42) "Analiza działalności Studia Małych Form Filmowych 'Se-Ma-For' w Łodzi za lata 1962–1967," sign. 1943, carton 39/1943/0/-/25, APŁ, Warsaw, Poland.

43) "Letter from Tadeusz Wilkosz to author," June 22, 2023, private collection of Szymon Szul.

lessly reinstated.[44] Unlike drawing techniques, creating animation frames did not necessitate the reconstruction of most set elements from scratch, as was required for painting celluloids with individual movement phases in drawn animation.[45] With the commencement of the *Tales of Moomin Valley* production in the late 1970s using semi-flat puppets, efficiency in serial production further improved, with skeletal-free puppet bodies experiencing less frequent breakdowns.

The production duration of a *Tales of Moomin Valley* episode, featuring semi-flat puppets, was approximately one-half of that of *The Adventures of Philemon the Cat* (Przygody kota Filemona, 1977–1981), a similar-length cartoon serial.[46] Moreover, comparing nine-minute cartoon serials from the 1970s with thirteen-minute episodes of *The Adventures of Teddy-Bear Colargol*, the latter managed to maintain a nearly one-third shorter length than the former.[47] In addition, puppet technique films' overall cost was lower than cartoon technique films.[48] These factors collectively contributed to the ascendancy of puppet techniques in serial production.

Fig. 8: Images from the episode *He Has Melted Away* (Szukaj wiatru w polu, 1977) of *The Adventures of Philemon the Cat and The Californian King* (Król Kalifornijski, 1977) from *Tales of Moomin Valley*

The development of serial production in Poland and Czechoslovakia followed slightly different trajectories. Despite some similarities in the animation techniques used, production in both countries differed, with one of the main reasons being the commercial nature of animated serials in Czechoslovakia due to tight connections to custom production for the local television industry. In Poland, the demand for serials was shaped by external factors that had influenced the field of Polish animation. The choice of technique was dictated by the cost calculation. Puppet films were cheaper in production than cartoons.

44) Wiktoria Bartoszek, interview by author, March 22, 2024, ASAFGŁ, sign. SMFF_0037, Łódź, Poland.
45) On the contrary to movement phases, in drawn animation it was common to re-use background paintings.
46) "Analiza ekonomiczno-produkcyjna filmu z serii: *Opowiadania Muminków* pt. *Król Kalifornijski*," sign. Król Kalifornijski. odc. 2. 1977, Opowiadania Muminków, AFINA, Warsaw, Poland.
47) "Analiza ekonomiczno-produkcyjna filmu lalkowego, bawrwnego pt. Miś pod wodą," sign. Miś pod wodą. odc. 30, Przygody misia Colargola, AFINA, Warsaw, Poland.
48) "Z serii: *Przygody kota Filemona*," sign. Wilczy apetyt. odc. 10, Przygody kota Filemona. reż. Andrzej Pilczewski, 1978, AFINA, Warsaw, Poland.

In connection with Becker's art worlds' theory, it is important to notice the Polish and Czechoslovakian trends in implementing innovations and in turning them into new solutions. The Gottwaldov studio, mainly due to television, established a standard for the length of a single serial film in the second half of the 1960s. In the early 1970s, there was also a shift in the dominant technique for serial production, with puppet film first being replaced by relief animation and later by cut-out animation. In both cases, the increasing dominance of serial production is evident, although it occurred at different times, depending on the faster emergence of animated serials in Czechoslovakia. Since its inception in the 1970s, the Se-Ma-For studio had observed a fluctuation in the length of its serial production, with changes occurring every five to seven years because of the actual co-production projects. In Czechoslovakia, there were no such abrupt changes, suggesting that certain conventions were adopted over a longer period, probably influenced by the closer association with television production compared to the various co-productions of Se-Ma-For. Conventions existed in both countries, but the internal processes of developing and refining them differed between Poland and Czechoslovakia.

The Dynamics of Workgroups and Management in Serial Production

The changes in serial production described above also raise questions about the evolution of the animation production system and the organization of work. The following section will examine specifically how serial production changed production practices. One significant fact is that the introduction of serial production caused a visible growth in production output, consequently influencing the functioning of the production system. The dearth of proficient personnel demanded that a single worker fulfill a greater number of tasks, as well as the immediate recruitment of new employees.[49] The shift towards serial production and quantitative changes in the usage of animation techniques also highlight the necessary competencies and adaptability of workers for new types of production. Considering these characteristics, several issues had arisen due to these changes. These included how the older and younger generations of workers adapted to them, the extent to which serial production was integrated into the existing workflow, and the impact of changes in the quantitative aspect of production on the distinct animation art worlds.

Since 1945, two workgroups had been involved in animated film production in Gottwaldov; one led by Hermína Týrlová and the other by Karel Zeman. When the studio began producing serials, they made only a few series of short films for cinematic distribution and did not actively participate in custom-produced serials for Československá televize.[50]

49) There are no exact quantitative data, but the problem is often mentioned by internal publications or interviews with studio employees See for example: "Filmové studio Gottwaldov. Komplexní rozbor hospodaření za rok 1984," undated, k. R13/BII/4P/3K, f. ÚŘ ČSF, NFA, Prague, Czech Republic; Ladislav Vlk, interview by Pavel Skopal, June 10, 2021.

50) Unfortunately, it is not possible to tell in detail about the dramaturgical process of bedtime stories since it happened outside the studio structures without the most important artistic personalities being involved. In part it is also related to the passivity of Týrlová and Zeman in bedtime stories and previous extensive loss of archival sources.

The only structural change to this system came in 1973 with the establishment of a separate cartoon film workgroup that focused exclusively on the serial production of bedtime stories.[51] The existence of the Cartoon Film Department highlighted the lack of experienced animators specialized in new animation techniques. Initially, its workers had formerly participated in one of the aforementioned workgroups, consequently blurring the borders between all groups. For example, one of the few members of this department, Ladislav Vlk, had participated in puppet film production for Karel Zeman, but also collaborated with Týrlová. This situation prompted Gottwaldov's representatives to hire Bohumil Šejda, a seasoned animator from Bratři v triku and a collaborator with Gene Deitch, to train new workers in cartoon animation techniques.[52]

In Poland, working groups operated within the activities of the film departments of the enterprise. Due to the dispersed structure of the studio, individual employees could not explicitly adjust serial production under them, although such situations did occur. One such employee was Tadeusz Wilkosz, who specialized in puppet animation, received training at the Czechoslovakian animation studios — namely Bratři v triku and Studio Jiřího Trnky (Studio of Jiří Trnka), studied at UMPRUM in Prague,[53] and held significant institutional positions at Se-Ma-For, including leading the Artistic Council of the studio for some time.[54] Wilkosz was among the oldest employees of the studio; he began his work in Tuszyn, debuting with the film *Mysie figle* (1959), and quickly became one of the most influential employees due to his membership in the Polish United Workers' Party.[55] Interview respondents likened Wilkosz's management style to working in a factory, where all tasks had to be performed on time according to his established plan and using his prepared projects.[56]

With Wilkosz's serials we observe the role of an art director, which does not appear in other serials from the discussed period. Wilkosz, as the art director, rarely directed serial films himself. He was responsible for shaping scripts written jointly with other directors or approved by him, and for developing the visual designs of characters and sets, thus having a significant influence on the serials. The co-production of *The Adventures of Teddy-Bear Colargol* was economically beneficial for the studio and allowed the directors participating in the serial to travel abroad. Albert Barillé, Head of Procidis, the French co-production partner, together with Wilkosz, organized trips to Paris for employees, treating it as a form of gratitude for their work on the serials.[57] This co-production gave Wilkosz considerable

51) "Zpráva o výsledcích rozboru hospodářské činnosti KF za rok 1973," 1974, k. R13/AI/6P/1K, f. ÚŘ ČSF, NFA, Prague, Czech Republic.

52) Until the late 1970s, he held two concurrent positions at the two studios. In 1978, he relocated permanently from Prague to Gottwaldov, where he remained until his retirement in the 2000s.

53) Tadeusz Wilkosz, interview by Szymon Szul, November 8, 2023, AFSAGŁ, SMFF_0036, Cracow, Poland, in Ciszewska — Szul, "Animation workers from 'Se-Ma-For' Studio of Small Film Forms in Lodz."

54) "Protokół ze spotkania Rady Artystycznej Studia Małych Form Filmowych Se-Ma-For z dnia 16 czerwca 1968 r.," July 16, 1968, sign. 07, Rada Artystyczna, AFINA, Warsaw, Poland.

55) Jerzy Podgórski, interview by author, November 19, 2021, SS_0002, Cracow, Poland. Similar observations about Wilkosz also appear in other interviews. Wilkosz himself mentions that he wanted to watch over the people who were making decisions about production in Tuszyn at the time, which is why he joined the party.

56) Monika Chybowicz-Brożyńska, interview by Szymon Szul, October 14, 2021, ASFAGŁ, SMFF_0006, Łódź, Poland, in Ciszewska — Szul, "Animation workers from 'Se-Ma-For' Studio of Small Film Forms in Lodz."

57) Wilkosz, interview by Szymon Szul.

control over a significant part of the Tuszyn team. He claims that he provided them with opportunities for advancement from animators to directors of serial films.[58]

Due to the rapid growth in serial production at the studio from 1970 to 1980, Wilkosz's protégés, often in conflict with him, due to the necessity to create films according to his solutions, sought further advancement within the studio hierarchy through serial production. For instance, Lucjan Dembiński became advisor-consultant for *Tales of Moomin Valley*, co-authoring scripts and directing some episodes, thus obtaining competencies similar to those of an Art Director.[59] He was in charge of the serial that he was responsible for and had a stable team of collaborators, just like Wilkosz. Similarly, Marian Kiełbaszczak, also in conflict with Wilkosz, managed his own serials, such as *Kolorowy świat Pacyka* (1981–1990), *Maurycy i Hawranek* (1987–1990) and *Mordziaki* (1993–2000). A certain relationship exists between these three figures in serial puppet film production. Those responsible for the visual designs of sets and puppets and involved in writing scripts were usually considered in the studio as the authors of the serials. This led to an interesting shift. Authorship in the sense of auteur cinema, which manifested itself in Se-Ma-For through directors of cut-out animation films, was adapted to serial production. These figures could be described as "barons,"[60] who owned the serials, developed directors' skills, and ensured the possibility of career advancement from Animator to Director, but only within serial production and not individual films.

However, these "barons" were essentially managers who saw serial production as individual achievements, realized with the help of craftsmen often not mentioned by name. A new understanding of the paradigm of authorship functioned at Se-Ma-For. Tadeusz Wilkosz never hid his approach, as evidenced by his actions aimed at popularizing the serials he managed, treating serial creativity at the same level as achievements in directing individual films.[61] Despite both *The Adventures of Teddy-Bear Colargol* and *Trzy misie* being co-productions, Wilkosz seems to treat them as purely Polish productions, achieved solely through his efforts.[62]

Not everyone was as vocal about supervising serial production as Wilkosz. A signifi-

58) Monika Chybowicz-Brożyńska and Anna Godlewska, ed., *Tadeusz Wilkosz: Scenografia filmu lalkowego: 40 lat twórczości (1958–1998)* (Łódź: *M*uzeum Kinematografii, 1998), 11.

59) "Umowa z doradcą-konsultantem," 1982, sign. 1, Gość z Marsa, odc. 77. 2, Żegnajcie, odc. 78. 1982. Opowiadania Muminków, AFINA, Warsaw, Poland.

60) The term "barons" is used in Polish journalism to describe regional politics. Party members who are responsible within the party structure for managing a particular region can enjoy extraordinary privileges and have more power than rank-and-file party members. This situation can be compared with those in charge of the production of a TV serial. They are not directors of the studio; they have an important role in their department and manage the work of the rank-and-file employees. Andrzej Stankiewicz, "Były baron Platformy z zarzutami," *Rzeczpospolita*, Februrary 29, 2016, accessed November 22, 2024, https://www.rp.pl/kraj/art-3873991-byly-baron-platformy-z-zarzutami. On Polish ground Marcin Adamczak also wrote about barons, defining in this way film directors who, with symbolic capital, were making high-budget film spectacles. Due to the funds that were invested, it was difficult to expect any formal experiments from them. Marcin Adamczak, *Globalne Hollywood: Filmowa Europa i polskie kino po 1989 roku* (Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2010), 301.

61) Chybowicz-Brożyńska, interview by Szymon Szul.

62) Wilkosz, interview by author. He also emphasizes that the image of Colargol was inspired by the appearance of his son, further highlighting the almost paternal relationship between the serial and the person who managed it.

cant role at the studio was played by a group of people associated with dramaturgical developments. The dramaturgists were primarily the two-person editorial team responsible for assessing the dramaturgy of texts submitted by employees and the screenwriting duo of Janusz Galewicz–Maria Kossakowska. In the 1970s and 1980s, the dramaturgical team consisted of Sławomir Grabowski and Antoni Bańkowski[63]. Although their competencies included accepting others' scripts, many respondents noted that they pursued a strategy where they themselves became scriptwriters.[64] The chart below presents the top ten most frequently occurring names of authors of the scripts of serial films in the 1970s and 1980s, with Galewicz at the top. Considering his connections with Maria Kossakowska (whose actual share in written scripts is higher than suggested by the FilmPolski.pl database), they would significantly dominate over other employees. Understanding the influence of participation in the production of as many films as possible confirms the thesis that the most influential employees had to include authorship or co-authorship of scripts as part of their competencies. Among the top ten people, who confirm the thesis, are for example Marian Kiełbaszczak and two dramaturgists.[65]

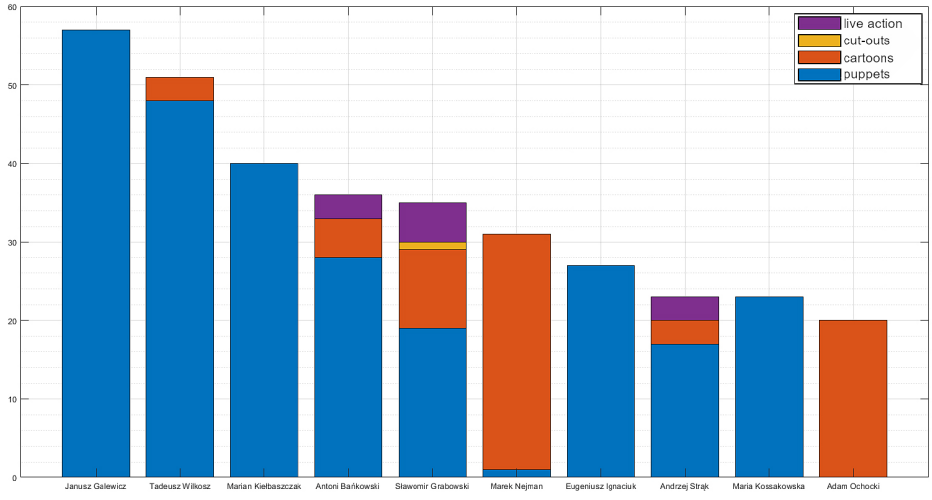

Fig. 9: The most influential employees (dramaturgists/screenwriters) in Se-Ma-For and the film techniques by which the serials were made

While dramaturgists encountered resistance from authors of non-serial films who, even upon accepting their scripts, implemented significant alterations in serial production — primarily geared towards supplying serials to entities such as television — they could craft narratives for numerous films directed by various directors.[66] During the period under

63) These four names can be considered the only professional scriptwriters who worked at the studio.

64) Daniel Szczechura, interview by Szymon Szul, March ASFAGŁ, 2022, SMFF_0019, Łódź, Poland, in Ciszewska – Szul, "Animation workers from 'Se-Ma-For' Studio of Small Film Forms in Lodz."

65) The chart should also include the name of Lucjan Dembiński, who co-authored the scripts for all 78 episodes of *Tales of Moomin Valley,* but this can only be determined based on archival documents, not information provided in the database.

66) Maciej Okuński, interview by Szymon Szul, November 27, 2021, SS_0004, Łódź, Poland.

examination, batches of several episodes formed a serial. Janusz Galewicz and Maria Kossakowska, whose relationship was both professional and marital,[67] formed a tandem that owed its position primarily to Janusz Galewicz's reputation. Galewicz, a script reviewer, studio director in the early 1970s, and later director of artistic affairs, could influence and establish the conventions of animated serials. Galewicz wrote episodes of the serial *The Adventures of Teddy-Bear*, while Kossakowska, together with Dembiński, authored the scripts for *Tales of Moomin Valley*, in which Galewicz's involvement was significant, as he was instrumental in securing a license from Tove Jansson to produce it. He was directly or indirectly responsible for the two most extensive serials of Se-Ma-For in terms of the number of episodes.

In comparison to Wilkosz's serials, overlapping similarities are evident, notably in the production methods — Galewicz's serials employed the same personnel and technical infrastructure as those of Wilkosz, which indicated sharing solutions in their work, but primarily influenced by the art director's way of conducting the serial. Furthermore, even at the level of titles, similarities can be found: one serial was about Colargol the teddy bear, while the other was about another teddy bear, Uszatek. However, differences in education and professional experience — Wilkosz received education in the field of film graphics, while Galewicz served as the literary manager at the "Pinocchio" theater in Łódź — influenced the way in which both serials were written. In *The Adventures of Teddy-Bear Colargol*, the narrative was linear and required knowledge of previous episodes to understand events in later films. In *The Adventures of Teddy-Bear*, each episode created a standalone entity. This resulted, among other things, in foreign importers ordering serials from Poland preferring serials like Galewicz's, because individual episodes could be placed in a children's cartoon slot.[68]

Galewicz's serials were created in a convention that was both a continuation of the production method established by Wilkosz[69] and in opposition to his dramaturgical or visual solutions, as Galewicz did not take over all the most important fields of serial production which were being responsible for art projects, directing and supervising the work of other employees. Figure 10 shows a list of names divided by animation techniques, highlighting individuals who had the greatest influence on the production of serial films, considering only positions such as art director, dramaturgist, and various professions involving artistic and graphic development. It is not surprising that among these names are people primarily specializing in puppet animation, as this technique had the majority share in serials at that time.

It is worth considering whether we can measure the level of influence and decision-making in the context of serials created in only one technique. For instance, looking at the figures of Grabowski and Bańkowski, they are the only ones among all who had a significant, comprehensive influence on serials produced in different techniques. Such a broad area of activity required some concessions; it forced them to share the informal role of art director with people responsible for visual designs, but at the same time, it showed a dif-

67) Ibid.

68) "Tots TV: Dog & other stories (1994 VHS)," accessed April 30, 2024, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-9BB-_aOfPk. Here can be seen the usage of that format in United Kingdom.

69) Letter from Tadeusz Wilkosz to Szymon Szul.

ferent, softer form of exerting influence and creating conventions in serial production.[70] This softer form of influence manifested itself not only on the literature layer of the film, but also in the process of accepting materials submitted by directors, such as scripts and storyboards.[71] Bańkowski and Grabowski also participated in most of the collaborations, influencing what changes should be made. Danuta Adamska-Strus, adDirector at Se-Ma-For, mentions that this tandem was responsible for creative issues at the studio.[72]

Comparing the situation in Se-Ma-For with Gottwaldov reveals significant differences. The sub-worlds of different animation techniques overlapped due to the specificities of the local production cluster in Gottwaldov and its isolation from other cinematic institutions and the previously mentioned shortage of personnel.[73]

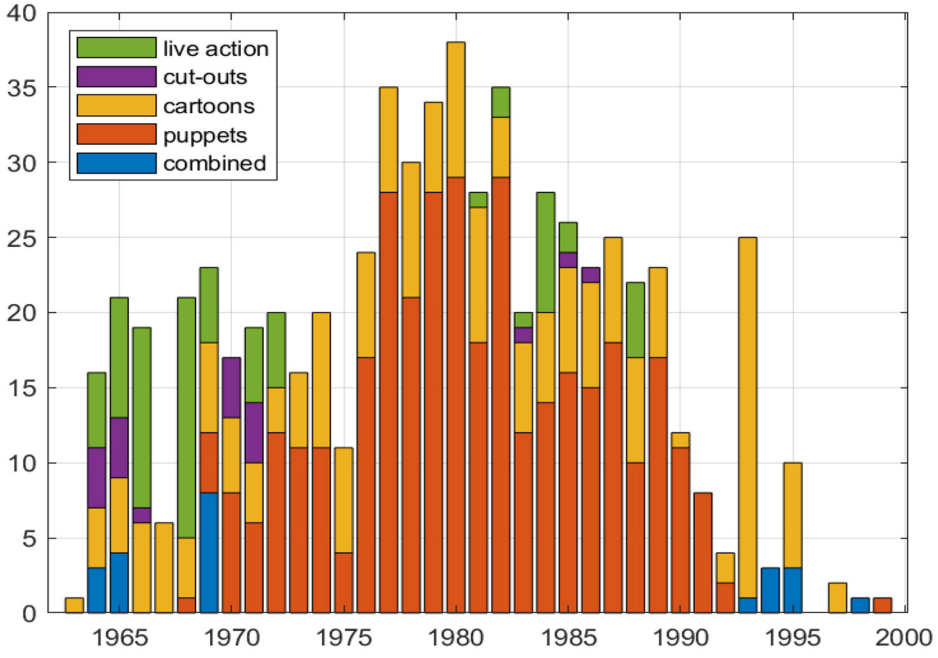

Fig. 10: Number of episodes of serials in the 1970s and 1980s by film technique (live action, puppet animation, cartoons, cut-outs, and combined animation) in Se-Ma-For

The aforementioned names also highlight another aspect. Individuals in creative-administrative positions enjoyed greater freedom in organizing serial production and creating space for their own authorial projects because they supervised production. Moreover,

70) Wilkosz, interview by Szymon Szul.

71) Antoni Bańkowski, interview by Joanna Banaszczyk, November 23, 2021, ASFAGŁ, SMFF_0011, Łódź, Poland, in Ciszewska – Szul, "Animation workers from 'Se-Ma-For' Studio of Small Film Forms in Lodz."

72) Danuta Adamska-Strus, interview by Szymon Szul, June 16, 2023, ASFAGŁ, SMFF_0035, Łódź, Poland, in Ciszewska – Szul, "Animation workers from 'Se-Ma-For' Studio of Small Film Forms in Lodz."

73) Pavel Skopal, "Umělecké světy a sociální sítě na Kudlově: Gottwaldovský animovaný film od poloviny 60. let 20. století," in *Lidé — práce — animace*, ed. Skopal, 173.

these authors, including both formal and informal art directors, were primarily found in the remote Puppet Films Department in Tuszyn. The independence afforded by historical conditions — as the department was the cradle of the traditional puppet technique for Se-Ma-For — and locational conditions — its location away from the management and editorial offices — facilitated the creation of several significant and interpenetrating teams with strong personalities. Tuszyn was also a place with its own more elaborate administration than the studio's other departments, so the influence of the studio's management was not direct. Both Galewicz and the dramaturgists had their offices in Łódź, in the building where the Cartoon Films Department was located. This physical proximity may have impeded a career path similar to that of Wilkosz, and subsequently, of Kiełbaszczak and Dembiński.

In Gottwaldov, Týrlová and Zeman led their respective workgroups independently, as noted by their subordinates. Their involvement in bedtime stories was rare, with most bedtime stories being produced by younger filmmakers. The reluctance to adapt to the new production practices was partly due to their age; in 1970, when the era of bedtime stories began, Zeman was fifty-nine and Týrlová was seventy, already of retirement age. Týrlová, as her co-worker Milan Šebesta indicated, initially attempted to engage in television production, but soon declined due to the necessity of meeting production speed requirements.[74] Karel Zeman did not participate in television custom production, except for a single instance in the 1980s. This occurred following the emigration of his daughter Ludmila Zemanová and son-in-law Eugen Spálený in 1986 during the production of the *Indian Fairy Tales* (Indiánske rozprávky; Eugen Spálený, Karel Zeman, and Ludmila Zemanová, 1982–1988) serial. Consequently, Zeman was compelled to take part in this project, despite having retired from film directing in 1980.[75] The early generation of filmmakers was circumspect about bedtime stories, leading to the majority of these films being created by younger filmmakers who began their directorial careers in Gottwaldov no earlier than the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The attitudes of the "old masters" towards younger collaborators varied significantly. Zeman, for instance, forbade his associates from working on bedtime stories until he retired as a director in the early 1980s. In contrast, Týrlová encouraged her collaborators to engage in these projects. This discrepancy led to a blurring of the boundaries between existing workgroups. Some of Zeman's workers, such as Josef Zeman[76] and Zdeněk Ostrčil, left his team to work with Týrlová on bedtime stories in the early 1970s.[77] In 1975, Ladislav Vlk also departed from Zeman's group to join the Cartoon Film Department, where he collaborated with Týrlová. Notably, Zeman expected his colleagues to be readily available for his projects. When they wished to work on their projects, they had to do so secretly and outside standard working hours.[78] Consequently, most bedtime stories were produced by Týrlová's workgroup, followed by the Cartoon Film Department.

74) In the 1968 interview, Týrlová mentioned that she had been working on an unspecified bedtime story, but there is no evidence that she ever finished the work. Humplík, "Studio s nejmenší halou v Evropě."
75) Vlk, interview by Pavel Skopal.
76) Even though he had the same surname, Josef Zeman was not related to Karel Zeman.
77) Kunkelová – Podlipná, "Večerníček pro Bratislavu," 298.
78) Vlk, interview by Pavel Skopal.

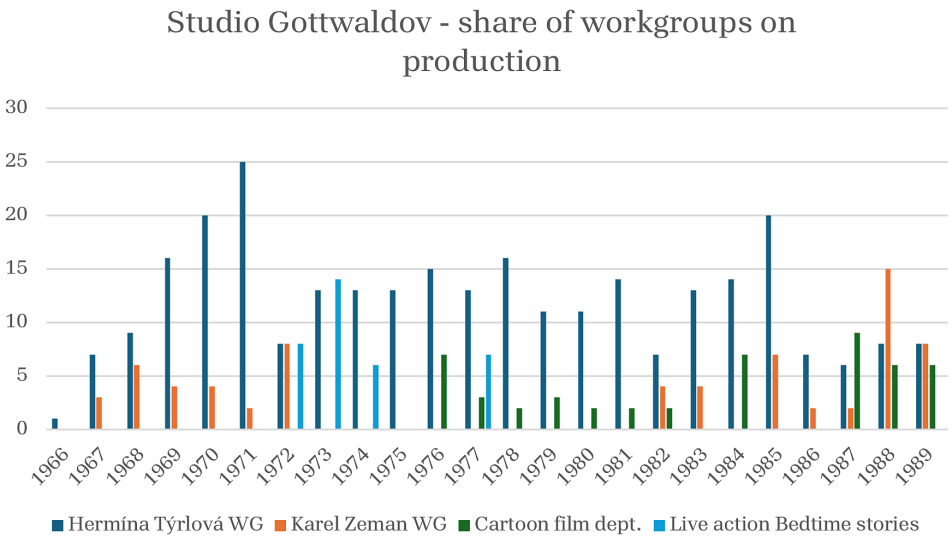

Fig. 11: The share of individual workgroups and departments for bedtime stories' production in Gottwaldov studio[79)]

The studio's relational dynamics were also influenced by the number of workers and the degree of labor division. Although the total number of people working in animation in Gottwaldov is unclear, it slightly increased with serial production. Filmmakers working on bedtime stories often assumed multiple roles, such as directing, writing, art design, and animation. As noted by one of these filmmakers, Ladislav Vlk, the advantage of this situation was that workers were compensated for all their contributions, thereby increasing their overall earnings.[80)] The limited personnel and isolation in Gottwaldov facilitated cooperation with individuals from other local studios, such as Taťána Havlíčková from a local feature film studio[81)] and two filmmakers involved predominantly in non-fiction production — Director Ján Iván[82)] and cameraman Bohuslav Pikhart.[83)]

In Se-Ma-For, despite the presence of numerous workgroups, advancing to the position of art director was challenging, due to the lack of a clear demarcation between seasoned veterans and new recruits in serial production. Minimal transition occurred between the "festival" filmmakers and artist-craftsmen, resulting in the latter group exclusively shaping promotion criteria within serial production.[84)] Leveraging their influ-

79) Kunkelová – Podlipná, "Večerníček pro Bratislavu," 297.
80) Vlk, interview by Pavel Skopal.
81) Taťána Havlíčková, interview by Tereza Bochinová, April 27, 2021, 1/3.
82) "Iván, Ján," *Zlínský film database*, accessed October 15, 2024, https://animation.phil.muni.cz/akter/1123.
83) "Pikhart, Bohuslav", *Zlínský film database*, accessed October 15, 2024, https://animation.phil.muni.cz/akter/416.
84) Groups of artists-craftsmen were only recognized collectively, mainly with awards from representatives of state institutions, such as the Prime Minister Dariusz Zawilski, interview by Tomasz Poborca, July 27, 2021, ASFAGŁ, SMFF_0005, Łódź, Poland, in Ciszewska — Szul, "Animation workers from 'Se-Ma-For' Studio of Small Film Forms in Lodz."

ential status, Wilkosz, Galewicz, Bańkowski and Grabowski oversaw the activities of other directors and animators, treating them as artisans and facilitating their progression within established parameters.

As previously mentioned, the quantitative changes led to significant alterations in the production of both studios. The isolated studio in Gottwaldov faced difficulties in recruiting new staff, as the only source of workers was the local art school in the nearby city of Uherské Hradiště. Due to that, existing workers had to assume multiple roles concurrently with increased production. In Łódź, there was generally more potential for recruiting new staff, due to the proximity of the Film School and the larger population. However, a commonality between the two studios was the absence of older-generation filmmakers as active creators in serial production.

Conclusion

When comparing the production of Czechoslovakian and Polish animated serials, several differences and similarities emerge, rooted in the distinct developmental stages of their markets and the growing demand for animated films. Significant influences include production backgrounds, preferences for specific animation techniques, and the employment structures of the studios. Examination of the two studios reveals several general themes that characterize serial production in both countries.

In Czechoslovakia, the close connection to commissioning authorities and the necessity to meet their stringent requirements, along with the transfer of dramaturgical competencies and mandatory approval of finished films, resulted in limited artistic freedom. In contrast, Polish filmmakers retained stronger control over the production process, especially in the 1960s, when they could freely shape the episode length and number of episodes. As a larger studio, Se-Ma-For could afford more competition among its employees. Influence on the shape of the serials was therefore more diffuse, the more that were produced. Unlike in Czechoslovakia, formal requirements in Poland were not as strictly standardized by commissioning authorities.

At Se-Ma-For, serial production was influenced by two main ordering centers: foreign co-producers and television. This dual influence meant that there wasn't a single, centralized form of serial production. One specific factor was the geographic organization of animation film studios. In Gottwaldov, isolation from other cinematic institutions created unique conditions for developing dynamics within workgroups, fostering a specific cluster environment. At Se-Ma-For, the geographic dispersion of departments and the exclusive co-production of puppet serials led to two different yet similar conventions for their realization, depending on the specific art directors responsible for them.

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Filmography

Ferda, the Ant (Ferda mravenec; Hermína Týrlová, 1977–1978)
Good soldier Švejka I.–III. (Dobrý voják Švejk; Jiří Trnka, 1955)
Indian fairy-tales (Indiánske rozprávky; Eugen Spálený, Karel Zeman, and Ludmila Zemanová, 1982–1988)
Jak Pejsek s Kočičkou myli podlahu (Eduard Hofman, 1949)
Kocour Modroočko (Hermína Týrlová, 1974–1976)
Kolorowy świat Pacyka (Marian Kiełbaszczak, Dariusz Zawilski, and Wojciech Gierłowski, 1981–1990)
Maurycy i Hawranek (Marian Kiełbaszczak, Teresa Puchowska-Sturlis, Marek Małecki, Dariusz Zawilski, and Wojciech Gierłowski, 1987–1990)
Mordziaki (Marian Kiełbaszczak, Adam Wyrwas, Zbigniew Kotecki, Krzysztof Brzozowski, and Wiktor Skrzynecki, 1993–2000)
Mysie figle (Tadeusz Wilkosz, 1959)
Pan Prokouk vynálezcem (Karel Zeman, 1949)
Pohádky ovčí babičky (Václav Bedřich, 1966)
Povídání o Pejskovi a Kočičce (Eduard Hofman, 1950–1955)
Rexie (Reksio; Józef Ćwiertnia, Edward Wątor, Lechosław Marszałek, Marian Cholerek, Romuald Kłys, and Halina Filek-Marszałek, 1972–1982)
Sinbad the Sailor (Dobrodružství námořníka Sindibáda; Karel Zeman, 1971–1974)
Tales of Moomin Valley (Opowiadania Muminków; Lucjan Dembiński, Krystyna Kulczycka, Dariusz Zawilski, and Jadwiga Kudrzycka, 1977–1981)
The Adventures of Philemon the Cat (Przygody kota Filemona; Ludwik Kronic, Wacław Fedak, Ireneusz Czesny, Andrzej Piliczewski, Alina Kotowska, and Zbigniew Czernelecki, 1977–1981)
The Adventures of Teddy-Bear (Przygody Misia Uszatka; Dariusz Zawilski, Eugeniusz Ignaciuk, Jadwiga Kudrzycka, Marian Kiełbaszczak, Lucjan Dembiński, Janusz Galewicz, Janina Hartwig, Eugeniusz Strus, Teresa Puchowska-Sturlis, and Krystyna Kulczycka, 1975–1987)
The Adventures of Teddy-Bear Colargol (Przygody misia Colargola; Tadeusz Wilkosz, Jadwiga Kudrzycka, Krystyna Dobrowolska, Janina Hartwig, Lucjan Dembiński, Teresa Badzian, Eugeniusz Ignaciuk, Lidia Hornicka, Dariusz Zawilski, Marian Kiełbaszczak, and Edward Sturlis, 1968–1974)
The Magic Pencil (Zaczarowany ołówek; Karol Baraniecki, Andrzej Piliczewski, Alina Kotowska, Zbigniew Czernelecki, Józef Skrobiński, Ludwik Kronic, Ireneusz Czesny, and Ryszard Szymczak, 1963–1977)
Trzy misie (Tadeusz Wilkosz, Eugeniusz Ignaciuk, Jadwiga Kudrzycka, Krystyna Kulczycka, Dariusz Zawilski, Janusz Galewicz, Teresa Puchowska-Sturlis, and Marian Kiełbaszczak, 1982–1986)

Biography

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The Agency and Effect of Technical Equipment on Animation Production in Studios Se-Ma-For and FS Kudlov in the 1970s and 1980s

Abstract
This study examines the animation studios FS Kudlov in Gottwaldov and Se-Ma-For in Łódź in the 1970s and 1980s through the lens of Actor-Network Theory (ANT). The goal is to demonstrate ANT as a tool for understanding the role of human and non-human actors (such as equipment, materials, and spaces) in shaping work processes. In Se-Ma-For, the "reprojector kit" used by Zbigniew Rybczyński for the Oscar-winning *Tango* (1981) prompted innovative techniques, while in FS Kudlov, a work process supplementing a copy machine influenced Karel Zeman's work.

Both studios faced constraints due to limited technology access in the Eastern Bloc, relying on creative adaptation. Se-Ma-For formed new working groups around the reprojector kit, whereas FS Kudlov integrated new equipment into existing networks, aided by in-house laboratories. ANT offers a broader perspective, where the human actors (directors, cameramen) and non-human actors (equipment, textured paper, darkrooms etc.) were equally crucial, highlighting their interdependence. By analyzing archival materials, oral histories and equipment, materials and spaces themselves, this study underscores the synergy between human and non-human actors, which was essential in shaping the unique innovative work processes of both Se-Ma-For and FS Kudlov.

Keywords
Actor-Network Theory, The Kudlov Film Studio, Gottwaldov, 'Se-Ma-For' — Studio of Small Film Forms, Łódź, animation

Introduction

The Kudlov Film Studio near the Czechoslovak town of Gottwaldov and the 'Se-Ma-For' Studio of Small Film Forms in Łódź, Poland, became renowned in the last century as important centres of animated film production in their respective countries. The state-operated film industries in the Eastern Bloc faced many limitations during the 1970s and 1980s, with technical restrictions being a primary obstacle, particularly when compared to their foreign competition. Despite these limitations, both studios developed specific networks of actors to overcome their constraints. To demonstrate this issue, we focus on the "reprojector kit" used in Se-Ma-For by Zbigniew Rybczyński to create the Oscar-winning film *Tango* (Zbigniew Rybczyński, 1981). In Gottwaldov's case, a work process supplementing a copy machine actively used in Karel Zeman's films will be examined.

Methodology

These case studies aim to examine the similarities and differences between selected working groups at Gottwaldov's Film studio Kudlov (FS Kudlov) and Łódź's Se-Ma-For studio, with a focus on the newly established work processes in the production of animated films. These work processes function as networks comprising both human and non-human actors. The Actor-Network Theory (ANT) approach, developed by Bruno Latour, Michel Callon, Madeleine Akrich and John Law,[1] serves as a valuable research tool for defining and examining the elements within these networks. ANT is a theoretical and methodological approach that views social structures as ever-changing networks of relationships. The general concept of a heterogeneous network, i.e. a network that contains many heterogeneous elements, is the basis of this method. The agents within these networks can be various entities. According to this approach, no network is purely technological or purely social.

The controversial aspects of ANT mainly stem from its concept of *actors*. In ANT, an actor is any element within a network that performs an activity.[2] This approach differs from other sociological theories by considering not only human actors but also non-human actors. Non-human actors can include objects, organisations, infrastructures, urban architecture, technical equipment, or even ideas, processes, or concepts.[3] According to one of the fundamental principles of the method, *generalized symmetry*, human and non-human actors are considered absolutely equal.[4] In ANT, actors are not assumed to have preconceived motivations. Instead of "motivation," it is more appropriate to use the term "agency," and we will also use the word "effect" to refer to the resulting outcome of an actor's actions.

We acknowledge that using ANT for film production analysis comes with a certain methodological baggage that needs careful vetting. Czech sociologist Tereza Stöckelová

1) Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
2) Bruno Latour, „On actor-network theory: A few clarifications," *Soziale Welt* 47, no. 4 (1996), 371.
3) Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 10.
4) Ibid., 76.

in her introduction to *Stopovat a skládat světy s Brunem Latourem* (Czech translation of selected Latour's texts)[5] highlights one of many possible dangers: "Instead of the desired analytical thoroughness and reflexivity, reference to 'theory' is often used as a shorthand or fetish, and in the case of ANT, the term 'actor' is inserted before every other word."[6] Rather than simply assigning agency to all present non-human elements, we employ ANT in this text as a tool to discover acting in dynamic interactions among the collectives of entities.

Jan Teurlings, in his text "What critical media studies should not take from actor-network theory," outlines several key issues with using ANT in critical media studies, which are also relevant to contemporary film studies. Besides the excessive reliance on description,[7] one problematic aspect of ANT is its tendency to describe things from the perspective of "the victors."[8] As noted in Collins and Yearly's paper, ANT is ontologically radical (putting humans and non-humans on an equal footing) but epistemologically conservative.[9] Despite its principles of generalized symmetry, we acknowledged that ANT can still be very human-centred. As Milan Fujda points out, "[H]umans' testimonies are always respected and taken seriously within ANT."[10] A common criticism of ANT is its failure to consider human intentions, morals, backgrounds, previous experiences, or political stances.[11] This issue is also present in our study, as many of our sources rely on the artists' accounts of the working processes under examination. We concur with Fujda on respecting, yet questioning, human testimonies.[12] We attempted to address this by gathering information from several interviews with different members of the working groups (including some artists peripherally linked to the networks), by framing our interview questions to also focus on non-human actors, and by examining the blueprints of non-human actors (such as the layout of ateliers and complex equipment) as well as the non-human actors themselves (including cameras, reprojectors, paper-puppets, masks, tapes, etc.).

An even more relevant characteristic of ANT, criticized by Teurlings, is its rejection of the notion of structure.[13] From the inception of ANT, Latour saw "no need to go search-

5) Bruno Latour, *Stopovat a skládat světy s Brunem Latourem: Výbor z textů 1998–2013*, trans. Čestmír Pelikán (Praha: Tranzit.cz, 2016).

6) Ibid., 8.

7) Teurlings, "What critical media studies should not take from actor-network theory," 69.

8) Jan Teurlings, "What critical media studies should not take from actor-network theory," in *Applying the Actor-Network Theory in Media Studies*, eds. Markus Spöhrer and Beate Ochsner (Hershey: IGI Global, 2017), 66–78.

9) Harry M. Collins and Steven Yearley, "Epistemological Chicken," in *Science as Practice and Culture*, ed. Andrew Pickering (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992), 301–326.

10) Milan Fujda, "Zakázaná slova, etnometodologické inspirace a náboženství jako modus existence: recenzní esej ke knize 'Stopovat a skládat světy s Brunem Latourem'," *Religio: revue pro religionistiku* 25, no. 2 (2017), 155.

11) E.g.: Langdon Winner, "Upon Opening the Black Box and Finding It Empty: Social Constructivism and the Philosophy of Technology," *Science, Technology, & Human Values* 18, no. 3 (1993), 362–378; Reijo Miettinen, "The Riddle of Things: Activity Theory and Actor-Network Theory as Approaches to Studying Innovations," *Mind, Culture and Activity* 6, no. 3 (1999), 170–195 or Chris McLean and John Hassard, "Symmetrical Absence / Symmetrical Absurdity: Critical Notes on the production of Actor Network Theory," *Journal of Management Studies* 41, no. 3 (2004), 493–519.

12) Fujda, "Zakázaná slova, etnometodologické inspirace a náboženství jako modus existence," 155.

13) Teurlings, "What critical media studies should not take from actor-network theory," 69.

ing for mysterious or global causes outside networks,"[14] thereby rejecting sociological abstractions such as structure, patriarchy, racism, or capitalism, as they present possible deus ex machina that are too easily invoked. According to Teurlings and others, this leads to the delegitimization of studying these structures altogether.[15] This is a crucial issue for our study, as the production of animated films (and indeed any form of media) operates within an economic mode of production. In our cases, it is not the capitalist mode of production (whose existence is occasionally acknowledged even by Latour)[16] but rather the state-socialist mode of film production, as defined by Petr Szczepanik:

> The state-socialist production systems of East-central Europe products of the centralization and nationalization that took place after 1945. They were supervised by a central administrative body, were the subject of communist party control, state censorship, and bureaucratic production plans and norms, and were required to issue permanent, as opposed to short-term, contracts of employment. At the same time, they were recipients of the material and symbolic benefits of modernization, which included the establishment of new studios, laboratories, distribution networks, film schools, clubs, and film festivals.[17]

The state itself was equivalent to the owners of a major Hollywood studios and was therefore responsible for the production infrastructure, labour division and the general flow of the capital.[18] This caused, among other things, many specific constraints regarding the available equipment. Let us use the Xerox copy machine as an example. In the Western Bloc animation studios, like the Walt Disney Studio, there was generally no political reason to monitor the copy machine which therefore could have been used as a production tool. Since the 1950s, photocopying was revolutionising both American offices and Disney's animation,[19] but an unsupervised copy machine in a film studio would be inconceivable in East-central Europe during this time.

It is important to recognise that FS Kudlov and Se-Ma-For operated within a specific, partly self-supporting system. The working groups we studied might be reminiscent of the so-called "units"[20] – semi-autonomous groups of writers, directors, production managers, and other personnel.[21] However, we seek to overcome the traditional focus on "personnel"

14) Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 130.
15) Teurlings, "What critical media studies should not take from actor-network theory," 70.
16) Latour, *Reassembling The Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, 167–168.
17) Petr Szczepanik, "The State-socialist Mode of Production and the Political History of Production Culture," in *Behind the Screen: Inside European Production Cultures*, eds. Petr Szczepanik and Patrick Vonderau (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 115.
18) Ibid.
19) See Hannah Frank, *Frame by Frame: A Materialist Aesthetics of Animated Cartoons* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), 211–256.
20) Szczepanik, "The State-socialist Mode of Production and the Political History of Production Culture," 117.
21) Szczepanik works with the "dramaturgical unit," where dramaturgs coordinated screenplay development but were largely isolated from the production process and answered directly to Central dramaturgy. This was typical of live-action film production during the studied period (1970–1982). However, in animation production at both Gottwaldov and Łódź, directors often took on multiple roles, including screenwriting and serving as liaisons with Central state dramaturgy. As a result, the smaller working groups in animation

and the exclusion of non-human actors is precisely why we believe that combination with ANT has merit, as we will try to demonstrate in this text.

In this approach, the studied working groups and ateliers are viewed as *hybrids* — combinations of humans, nature, and technology. Rather than considering humans and non-humans as separate categories, ANT highlights the necessary entanglement between the two.[22] In the working groups, we examined at both studios, skilled human workers interacted with specific non-human elements such as facilities, equipment, and materials, creating networks of newly established working processes. Actors within these networks are not fixed points; rather, they contribute dynamism to the network through their flexibility.[23] The process of *enrolment* of an actor into the network is, in simple terms, a series of attempts to position the actor in a desired role within the network's dynamics. This is a crucial aspect of "translation," during which all the actors must agree that the network is worth creating and maintaining. If this process is successful, the actor becomes indispensable to the network. However, it is common for the original form of the actor to change throughout this process.[24] From a Latourian perspective, it is essential to understand not only the actors and their actions but also their effects on other actors. The concepts of *intermediaries* and *mediators* are useful in exploring this dynamic. An intermediary does not alter inputs; that is, inputs are exactly equal to outputs.[25] It works with input information predictably, so its role may be somewhat neglected. It may be distributed over multiple elements by the principle of assemblage, but to examine its actions and network effects, it can be considered as a single actor. In contrast, the mediator transforms and translates the input, often introducing various distortions or changes in meaning, making the output unpredictable. Both human and non-human actors can serve as mediators or intermediaries within networks.

As this research focuses on the networks formed around newly established work processes — comprising people, equipment, materials, and even spaces within the studios — we frequently encounter significant changes to previously established networks. Therefore, it is crucial to trace which actors functioned as mediators and which as intermediaries, and to understand the effects that new actors brought into the network. Indeed, even something as detailed as a particular type of paper with a specific surface finish can have an impact on the functioning of the animation production network.

Another key concept in ANT is the *black box*. A black box is a tool, object, or system that works with inputs, outputs and transmissions. We lack insight into how the black box operates internally or how it processes incoming inputs, and consequently, we cannot fully understand how the transfer of information takes place. We therefore have no information on how and by what the output has been affected. However, the input is not necessarily always transformed.[26] In these studies, we are primarily locking into the black box the

were more integrated with the production process, unlike their counterparts in live-action film production. Szczepanik, "The State-socialist Mode of Production and the Political History of Production Culture," 121.

22) Mike Michael, *Actor-Network Theory: Trials, Trails and Translations* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2017), 40–43.

23) Latour, "On actor-network theory: A few clarifications," 371.

24) Michael, *Actor-Network Theory: Trials, Trails and Translations*, 38–39.

25) Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, 39.

26) Ibid.

production and development of other departments within FS Kudlov and Se-Ma-For studios. This includes other working groups within the studios as well as the development of FS Kudlov's laboratories. While it may be touched upon peripherally, our primary focus remains on the working group led by Karel Zeman at FS Kudlov and the groups working with the reprojector at Se-Ma-For.

Much like Teurlings,[27] we conclude that the appropriate application of the right dosage of ANT can enhance our understanding of film industry networks. Although this may appear as a "methodological crutch," ANT's descriptive nature often falls short in providing clear guidelines for analysing network dynamics. However, it remains an invaluable tool due to its ability to capture the myriad entities that shape the network. Employing ANT enables us to detail the processes that create and sustain the dynamic behaviours within these networks. We believe that an ANT-enhanced comparative study can deepen our understanding of the selected subjects — working processes affected by human skills, spatial environments and technical equipment.

While ANT has naturally been seen as more suitable for the studies of technology rather than culture, this notion has been challenged several times over the past two decades. In the field of film and media research, the use of ANT in production studies offers relevant examples. Markus Spöhrer, for instance, explores ANT's potential as an approach to production studies based on a detailed production log written by producer Paul Lazarus.[28] Similarly, Oli Mould, through a case study of the Australian feature film *Three Dollars*, demonstrates how ANT can be employed to describe the project-based mode of film production, which is sensitive to the freelance workers involved.[29] Furthermore, Björn Sonnenberg-Schrank's *Actor-Network Theory at the Movies: Reassembling the Contemporary American Teen Film With Latour*[30] represents one of the first major publications applying ANT to film studies.[31]

This text seeks to continue the discussion of ANT's method in film studies and to test its possibilities and limitations. The significant presence of non-human actors and their agencies cannot be overlooked, and ANT is the most effective tool to fully account for these factors.

ANT's approach allows us to consider this duality, enabling us to explore it in all its complexity. Our primary focus is on the role of equipment and spaces. In both cases, spe-

27) Teurlings, "What critical media studies should not take from actor-network theory," 74.

28) Markus Spöhrer, "Applying Actor-Network Theory in Production Studies: The Formation of the Film Production Network of Paul Lazarus's *Barbarosa* (1982)," in *Applying the Actor-Network Theory in Media Studies*, eds. Markus Spöhrer and Beate Ochsner (Hershey: IGI Global, 2017), 114–141.

29) Oli Mould, "Lights, Camera, but Where's the Action? Actor-Network Theory and the Production of Robert Connolly's *Three Dollars*," in *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media Industries*, eds. Vicki Mayer, Miranda J. Banks, and John T. Caldwell (New York: Routledge, 2009), 203–213.

30) Björn Sonnenberg-Schrank, *Actor-Network Theory at the Movies: Reassembling the Contemporary American Teen Film with Latour* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

31) The author of this text has also previously examined the possibilities of ANT as a methodological tool in the context of Gottwaldov film culture. Tereza Bochinová, "FABrika Kudlov: Studie působení aktérů na produkční kulturu FA Kudlov mezi lety 1945–1952" (Masters's thesis, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk university, 2020) and Tereza Bochinová and Kateřina Šrámková, "Možnosti využití ANT ve výzkumu materiálů gottwaldovského animovaného filmu," in *Lidé — Práce — Animace: Světy animovaného filmu na Kudlově*, ed. Pavel Skopal (Brno: Host, 2024).

cific pieces of equipment were newly introduced into the production process in the 1970s, reestablishing working procedures that continued into the 1980s. In FS Kudlov's working group, these included a darkroom, photographic apparatus, textured papers, and soft-metal wires. For the Se-Ma-For working group, the primary elements were the reprojector and intermedia tape.

We have examined interviews with the human actors conducted by ourselves and our colleagues for this project,[32] as well as studied the available non-human actors: spaces and their historical blueprints, production documents, equipment itself, paper-puppets, masks, and tapes.

Gottwaldov — FS Kudlov

Cutout animation is one of the oldest animation techniques and is often regarded as one of the simplest and most cost-effective to produce. Unsurprisingly, this technique gained popularity in Czechoslovakia, particularly when there was a demand for television animation programmes. By the 1970s, the tradition of animated bedtime stories on television had become firmly established when the programme "Večerníček" became an integral part of Czechoslovak television broadcasting. The film studio Kudlov (FS Kudlov), located near the town of Gottwaldov (now Zlín),[33] became the main producer of these animated bedtime stories for the Czech television studio in Bratislava. FS Kudlov employed cutout animation in numerous projects. However, another already-established department at FS Kudlov developed an even more intriguing relationship with paper-puppets.

During the 1970s, director Karel Zeman returned to animation production after achieving worldwide acclaim for his adventurous feature films such as *Journey to the Beginning of Time* (Cesta do pravěku, 1955), *Invention for Destruction* (Vynález zkázy, 1958), *The Fabulous Baron Munchausen* (Baron Prášil, 1962), among others. For his next project, Zeman adapted the stories of Sinbad the Sailor, incorporating elements from other *Arabian Nights* tales, using a new animation technique that was similar to, but distinct from, cutout animation.

In the 1960s, the two key animation working groups in Gottwaldov — Hermína Týrlová's group and Karel Zeman's group — were relocated to a newly built building. The division of the floors was strategically planned according to the specific needs of each working group. At the time, Zeman required high ceilings for filming scenes with live actors and lights for his films combining live-action actors and animation. Consequently, he was allocated the top floor, which offered the necessary studio space with high ceilings. In contrast, Hermína Týrlová and her group were placed on the third floor, where the rooms

32) This text is a result of the implementation of the CEUS-UNISONO project funded by the National Science Centre entitled "Film Animation Studies in Gottwaldov and Łódź (1945/47–1990)" No. 2020/02/Y/HS2/00015. This publication was created with the financial support of the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic (GF21-04081K). The project was implemented at the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University in the Czech Republic and the Faculty of Philology of the University of Łódź in Poland.

33) The town was renamed Gottwaldov between 1949 and 1989 when the name changed back to the original name Zlín.

were more office-like in design. The high ceilings on Zeman's floor served as intermediaries, ensuring the efficient shooting of films that required large set pieces. Another intermediary was the floor itself, made of wooden cubes, which allowed for easy nailing of set pieces.[34)]

The space on the top floor also introduced several mediators — entities that brought unpredictable dynamics into the newly established network. One such mediator was the unreliable cargo elevator, which was designed to transport large set pieces from the top floor to the exterior of FS Kudlov. Additionally, the uninsulated ceiling created uncomfortable temperature conditions for workers in this large space. The workshop section of the atelier was located near the uninsulated windows to take advantage of natural light, which, while beneficial for lighting, also contributed to temperature fluctuations. A crucial actor in this new space was the darkroom, which will be examined in greater detail later.

The network of the studied working group also enrolled many human actors. The well-established collaboration within the "trick department," as Ludmila Zemanová referred to the group in her book,[35)] encompassed a range of professionals, including animators (e.g. Arnošt Kupčík, František Krčmář, Sylvie Sedlářová and initially also Jindřich Liška and Jan Dudešek), art directors and background painters (Zdeněk Ostrčil, Zdeněk Rozkopal), carpenters and woodworkers (Antonín Buráň), lighting department staff and camera operators (initially Antonín Horák and Bohuslav Pikhart, with Zdeněk Krupa joining in the 1970s) and a prop workshop of 2–3 workers (e.g. Alena Vicherková, Marie Mazůrková, Antonie Horáková). This group of actors formed a mostly pre-established working network, which gradually enrolled the new atelier space and, as a result, was able to implement a new working procedure.

This new working process involved several meticulous steps to create the animated characters:

1. Crafting a 3D model: The process began with sculpting a three-dimensional model of the character using wood or Modurit clay. This model often took the form of a classic puppet, and in some cases, only the head of the puppet was created.
2. Photographing the model: The next step involved capturing numerous photographs of the model from all angles and at various stages of movement using a camera.
3. Creating animation phases: The photographs were then transformed into animation phases. This involved developing, enlarging it to the required sizes, and editing the images using photographic methods.
4. Transferring phases to paper: The animation phases were then developed on paper multiple times (as shown in Fig. 1).
5. Hand-tracing the lines: The next stage required going over the faded lines of the paper images by hand to enhance clarity and detail.
6. Constructing cut-out puppets: Multiple cut-out "puppets" were created simultaneously (as illustrated in Fig. 2). These paper-puppets were reinforced with tape for durability and fitted with wire joints to provide the necessary mobility for stop-motion animation (as depicted in Fig. 3)

34) Zdeněk Krupa, interviewed by Pavel Skopal, August 20, 2021.

35) Ludmila Zemanová and Linda Zeman-Spaleny, *Karel Zeman a jeho kouzelný svět* (Brno: CPress, 2015), 36.

7. Animating the paper-puppets: Finally, the mobile paper-puppets were used for stop-motion animation. The reinforced and jointed puppets allowed for intricate and dynamic movements, bringing the characters to life in the final film.

Fig. 1: Uncut paper phases are visible behind Karel Zeman, *The Birth of Film Puppet* (Josef Pinkava, 1982, Czechoslovak Television). Source: The Czech Television Archive

Fig. 2: Paper phases of Master's head, *Čarodějův učeň* (Krabat — The Sorcerer's Apprentice, 1978). Source: Private archive. Photo: Tereza Bochinová

Cameraman Zdeněk Krupa recalls the specialized equipment in Zeman's atelier: "Zeman as a national artist was given a trick-film camera 'TK-3'(meaning 'triková kamera' — trick-film camera, type 3), the first of its kind, you see. So the film industry made a prototype of the camera and it didn't stay in Prague, but Zeman in Gottwaldov got it. Then we also got a photographic camera with a huge number of various lenses of the Linhof brand, that was the inheritance from Hanzelka and Zikmund (Czechoslovak travellers and filmmakers). So we had quite a bit of equipment for that time."[36)]

The "trick-film" camera mentioned was capable of simultaneously reeling two film strips at once. This enabled the integration of pre-recorded elements like rain, snow, bliz-

36) Zdeněk Krupa, interviewed by Pavel Skopal.

zards or splashing water into animated scenes, similar to the reprojector used in the Se-Ma-For studio. Additionally, the camera was instrumental in incorporating archival live-action film footage as backgrounds for animated sequences.

Krupa emphasised the skill required for these trick shots, particularly in mastering the correct exposures and the complexity of two-strip technology.[37] However, the process could become unpredictable, especially when the film strips passed through the camera mechanism multiple times,[38] making the camera a mediator in the production process. As Krupa explained, "Now, take into consideration the risk. Anything can happen. The material is delicate. Poorly formed loops on the strip or mechanical damage and then you don't know what they're going to do with the footage in the film lab and so on."[39]

This was similar to the multiplane camera used at Walt Disney Studios and a differently modified trick-camera used at Se-Ma-For, where comparable unpredictability could be found. Gottwaldov's trick-film camera was also modified for vertical shooting, but there does not seem to be such an emphasis on the number of vertical planes, nor the illusion of depth caused by having several layers of artwork moving at different speeds. Instead, the stationary animation table beneath the camera, with the movement of papercuts, produced a panoramic effect.[40] This setup required close collaboration between the cameraman, the director and the animator, with the non-human actor of the trick-film camera acting as a crucial connector within the film crew.

The goal of this intricate process was to counteract the flatness typically associated with cutout animation while striving to achieve the fluidity of hand-drawn films.[41] Leveraging his extensive experience with puppet film, Zeman began by creating three-dimensional models of his characters' heads. These models were then photographed from various angles. The darkroom, located conveniently on the same floor as Zeman's atelier, was a critical non-human actor enabling quick, controlled development of the images independently of the studios' main laboratories, though primary development of the photographic material (pictures of the 3D model) could still be done in the in-house laboratories of FS Kudlov if necessary.[42]

During darkroom development, the phases could be adjusted — whether resized, toned photochemically, or altered with analogue filters to disrupt the line drawing on the photographed models. Zdeněk Krupa recalls working closely with the props workshop in this stage of the process since in Zeman's working group, the cameraman also participated in the workshop preparation:

> I used to use photo papers with a matte natural surface finish, I used a raster pasted to the negative to distort the drawing, or I prepared tinting baths, etc. Several film cameras were used at the same time during the shooting and the actual shooting at

37) Zdeněk Krupa, "Kamera v animovaném filmu" (Bachelor thesis, Faculty of multimedia, University of Tomáš Baťa), 25.
38) Zdeněk Krupa, interviewed by Pavel Skopal.
39) Ibid.
40) Sylvie Sedlářová, interviewed by Tereza Bochinová, July 28, 2022.
41) Ibid.
42) Ibid.

such a project took about two years, with an eight-member film crew directly involved.[43]

The photographic and chemical materials were provided by the production department,[44] with the final photo paper on which the animation phases were enlarged typically sourced from the Czech brand Foma due to its matte surface.[45] Thanks to this, it could be further modified after development, for example by redrawing the line with pencil by animators and prop makers, making the Foma paper a seemingly reliable intermediary. The process capitalised on the camera operators' photography skills, a practice shared with the Łódź studio, as will be discussed later.

This workflow effectively compensated for the absence of a photocopier or printer — tools commonly used in similar contexts at Walt Disney Studios. In the state-socialist environment, access to such machines was restricted due to fears they could be used to print and copy anti-communist propaganda. The employees at FS Kudlov were aware of the Walt Disney studio's practices as Disney animated films were included in "study projections" which were a part of the job for Kudlov's animators.[46] If our interviewees mentioned Xerox, they noted only the impossibility of their ownership leading them to improvise other time-saving methods.[47] However, the studied process was not regarded as an imitation of the Xerox machine, but as a method with distinct artistic results.[48]

Hannah Frank extensively discusses the Xerox photocopy machine and its effect on the Walt Disney studio.[49] While stylistically the Xerox machine acted as an intermediary, faithfully transferring drawings onto celluloid with the same artistic intent since the late 1950s,[50] it was actually quite disruptive to the studio's operations. The introduction of the Xerox machine eliminated the need for manual tracing, and consequently, led to the dissolution of the predominantly female ink and paint department at the Disney studio.[51] In contrast, FS Kudlov's technique still necessitated the work of artists. This involved manually tracing lines lost during the process with a pencil, reinforcing paper-puppets with paper tape, and adding joints to paper-puppets made from thin copper wire, which provided them with mobility (see Fig. 3). This work was carried out by animators and props makers at workbenches positioned around the windows to take advantage of natural daylight. According to several testimonies, prop maker and art director Alena Vicherková[52] was the most prominent figure in this post-process work.

43) Zdeněk Krupa, interviewed by Pavel Skopal.
44) Sylvie Sedlářová, interviewed by Tereza Bochinová.
45) Zdeněk Krupa, e-mail correspondence with Tereza Bochinová, July 22, 2022.
46) Petr Novotný and Ljuba Novotná, interviewed by Tereza Bochinová, June 5, 2021.
47) E.g. Sylvie Sedlářová, interviewed by Tereza Bochinová; Jaromír Hasoň, interviewed by Tereza Bochinová, February 17, 2022; Jaroslav Navrátil, interviewed by Tereza Bochinová, March 2, 2022.
48) E.g. Zdeněk Krupa, interviewed by Pavel Skopal; Zdeněk Krupa, e-mail correspondence with Tereza Bochinová; Sylvie Sedlářová, interviewed by Tereza Bochinová.
49) Hannah Frank, *Frame by Frame: A Materialist Aesthetics of Animated Cartoons* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), 211–256.
50) Hannah Frank, *Frame by Frame*, 216.
51) Ibid., 217.
52) E.g. Sylvie Sedlářová, interviewed by Tereza Bochinová; Zdeněk Krupa, interviewed by Pavel Skopal; Jaroslav Navrátil, interviewed by Tereza Bochinová, March 2, 2022.

Fig. 3: Detail of wire joints on Master's paper-puppet, *Čarodějův učeň* (Krabat — The Sorcerer's Apprentice, 1978). Source: Private archive. Photo: Tereza Bochinová

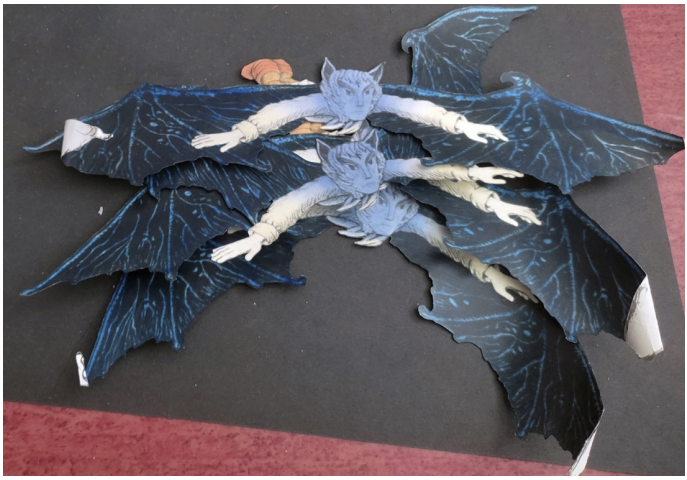

Fig. 4: Curled-up wings of paper-puppets from *Pohádka o Honzíkovi a Mařence* (The Tale of John and Mary, 1980). Source: Private archive. Photo: Tereza Bochinová

Used paper, however, acted as a mediator in certain animation scenes, particularly in the depiction of flight in *Pohádka o Honzíkovi a Mařence* (The Tale of John and Mary, 1980). The paper exhibited curling along its edges (see Fig. 4), an undesirable characteristic that animators had to address. This curling had to be factored into the animation process, as the paper's unique properties influenced the overall appearance of the scenes, imparting a distinct visual effect.[53)]

Animators and cameramen could simultaneously work at three animation tables within the atelier space.[54)] Ivan Matouš, an editor working for FS Kudlov, described the versatility of editing equipment:

> Some trick effects or mistake fixing could be done during the editing process. Once Zdeněk Krupa came to me with one of the directors and they needed to make some sequences longer which could not be done by animation in time. The animation and laboratory work would have taken 10–14 days. So, we came up with a solution to make a copy of the negative for the sequence and I could elongate it because it was repeating multiple times, and the audience would not notice.[55)]

53) Jaromír Hasoň, interviewed by Tereza Bochinová; Jaroslav Navrátil, interviewed by Tereza Bochinová.
54) E.g. Zdeněk Krupa, interviewed by Pavel Skopal; Sylvie Sedlářová, interviewed by Tereza Bochinová.
55) Ivan Matouš, interviewed by Pavel Skopal, July 16, 2022.

These mistakes-hiding techniques highlight the effects of hybrid actors enrolled in the network. According to the creators, the described working process was both time-saving, labour-efficient, and particularly effective for feature-length films.[56] The working process was developed for both short and feature-length film production in Karel Zeman's department. These films were designed for domestic cinema distribution as well as international festival circuits. This distribution model, prevalent in the state-socialist mode of the production environment, provided significant revenue and prestige, frequently emphasized in film periodicals as a selling point of the film.[57]

The production of serialized animation bedtime stories for the "Večerníček" TV programme at FS Kudlov was done by the unenhanced method of cutout animation technique, prioritising cost-effective production and different artistic characteristics.[58] This is of course not to say that these projects were lacking quality. Nevertheless, the approach did not aim to simulate the fluidity of hand-drawn films. Photographing 3D puppets was not necessary as the effect would have been invisible on smaller TV screens. Additionally, this method did not show strong cooperation between the director and the cameraman typical of Zeman's working group.[59]

However, a notable development occurred when the studied process, initially reserved for feature films, was adapted for TV production in the late 1970s.[60] A prime example is the second season of the serialized animation *American Indians Tales* (Indiánske rozprávky, 1983–1988), commissioned by Czechoslovak television in Bratislava, Slovakia, in the 1980s. The project, led by Ludmila Spálená-Zemanová and Eugen Spálený — both collaborators and relatives of Karel Zeman — utilised the studied process, ending the feature-film production exclusivity.[61] In 1984, following the illegal emigration of Ludmila Spálená-Zemanová and Eugen Spálený to Canada, Karel Zeman was given the roles of screenwriter and art director for the series, with Ladislav Vlk as director.[62] Consequently, the effect of the studied process persisted in the studio until the end of the nationalized film industry.

56) E.g. Zdeněk Krupa, interviewed by Pavel Skopal; Ivan Matouš, interviewed by Pavel Skopal; Sylvie Sedlářová, interviewed by Tereza Bochinová and Reconstruction blueprints of film school, source: Archive of the Municipality of Zlín, Department of Construction and Traffic Procedures, Department of Construction and Administrative Procedures (Construction Office), folder "Miscellaneous."

57) E.g. -tp-, "Čarodějův učeň," *Filmový přehled*, č. 11 (1978), 3; Jan Hořejší, "Čarodějův učeň a jeho mistr," *Kino* 33, č. 6 (1978), 9.

58) Sylvie Sedlářová, interviewed by Tereza Bochinová; Ladislav Vlk, interviewed by Kateřina Šrámková, February 2, 2023.

59) Ladislav Vlk, interviewed by Kateřina Šrámková.

60) Ibid.

61) Zdeněk Krupa, interviewed by Pavel Skopal; Sylvie Sedlářová, interviewed by Tereza Bochinová; Ladislav Vlk, interviewed by Kateřina Šrámková.

62) Zdeněk Krupa, interviewed by Pavel Skopal.

Łódź — 'Se-Ma-For'

Reprojection, also known as rear projection, is an in-camera cinematic technique that combines a pre-recorded background image with an image captured in the foreground.[63] Ray Harryhausen was one of the earliest animators who started using it in the 1950s, using rear screens in miniature sets with stop-motion creatures.[64] Later, in order to mechanize the process, one of the devices that used the rear projection technique in animated films was a trick table produced by Crass Company. This type of tables were also utilized in the 'Se-Ma-For' Studio of Small Film Forms in Poland.

In this analysis, I would like to show on the example of the production of the film *Tango* (Rybczyński, 1981) directed by Zbigniew Rybczyński that the use of experimental techniques available thanks to reprojection kit in the animation process, can bring measurable benefits to the studio.[65] In the central point of the considerations, using the approach of Actor Network Theory, I will place the trick table — "reprojection kit"[66] to show how it generates new ideas in human network working with it.

The studio began planning to acquire a trick table for developing such special effects in animated films following Edward Sturlis's initial use of the reprojection technique[67] in 1963. To implement reprojection on a larger scale, specialized equipment was necessary. In 1971, the studio's records indicate purchasing a reprojector kit, referred to as a "trick table" and a "Crass" camera for PLN 1,260,900.[68] This was a significant investment compared to the studio's capital expenditures in the period 1965–1973, which amounted to: 1965 — 55,000; 1966 — 256,000; 1967 — 294,000; 1968 — 696,000; 1969 — 140,000; 1970 — 598,000; 1972 — 528,000; 1973 — 102,000.[69] In 1977, the studio further invested

63) Charles Galloway Clarke, *Professional Cinematography*, 2nd edition (Los Angeles: American Society of Cinematographers Press, 1968), 153.

64) Robert Sellers, "Ray Harryhausen: Pioneer of special effects hailed as the master of stop-motion animation," *independent.co.uk*, accessed March 14, 2024, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/ray-harryhausen-pioneer-of-special-effects-hailed-as-the-master-of-stopmotion-animation-8608340.html.

65) In 1983, Zbigniew Rybczyński won an Academy Award for Best Short Animated Film for *Tango* (Zbigniew Rybczyński, 1981), which was produced entirely using analogue technology at the 'Se-Ma-For' Studio of Small Film Forms in Łódź (1947–1999) between 1980 and 1981. *Tango* is regarded as the most complex animated film ever created at the studio, largely due to the use of a reprojector kit in its production.

66) Reprojection kit — this will be the name for the whole equipment: reprojector, camera, trick table. Reprojector — this will be named only for special kind of projector which was called reprojektor (*reprojector*).

67) In 1964, Edward Sturlis's working group, including cameramen Leszek Nartowski and Wacław Fedak, made the film *Plaża* (*The Beach*; Edward Sturlis, 1964). This project marked the first attempt to incorporate reprojection in an animated film at the 'Se-Ma-For' Studio of Small Film Forms in Łódź (1947–1999). Though the film is now classified as a combined film, it featured sequences where live-action sets were integrated with traditional drawing techniques. At that time, the studio did not yet have a reprojector kit. Instead, the layering was achieved by photographing the recorded live-action segments onto larger cellulose sheets, which served as backgrounds, onto which the drawn elements were then added. This method bears similarities to the techniques employed by Karel Zeman's working group.

68) "Analiza działalności za rok 1971," Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, sign. 39_19430_27, Łódź, Poland.

69) Analyses of the studio's investment expenditures from 1965–1973. Grants for the studio's activities were awarded every year by the General Board of Cinematography (GBC) (Naczelny Zarząd Kinematografi) on the basis of the demand presented by the studio. Subsidies were not always spent in full. Unspent funds were returned or not to GBCs by their decision. Perhaps such a large amount is the sum of unspent funds from previous years, which the studio did not return. This is only a guess, because in the document "Analysis of

PLN 610,000 in additional trick tables with "Crass" cameras and PLN 169,139 in a "Varic" lens for the reprojector.[70)]

The German company "Crass" was a leading supplier of reprojection kits in the 1970s, and some of the studio's equipment may have also been purchased from this supplier.[71)] Andrzej Strąk, an assistant operator at the studio, says that Zbigniew Rybczyński played a role in the purchase of technical equipment from Germany, potentially including the reprojector kit used for *Tango*.[72)] A comparison of the preserved table from the studio (Fig. 8) with images from the company's leaflet (Fig. 5, 6, 7), reveals a notable similarity.

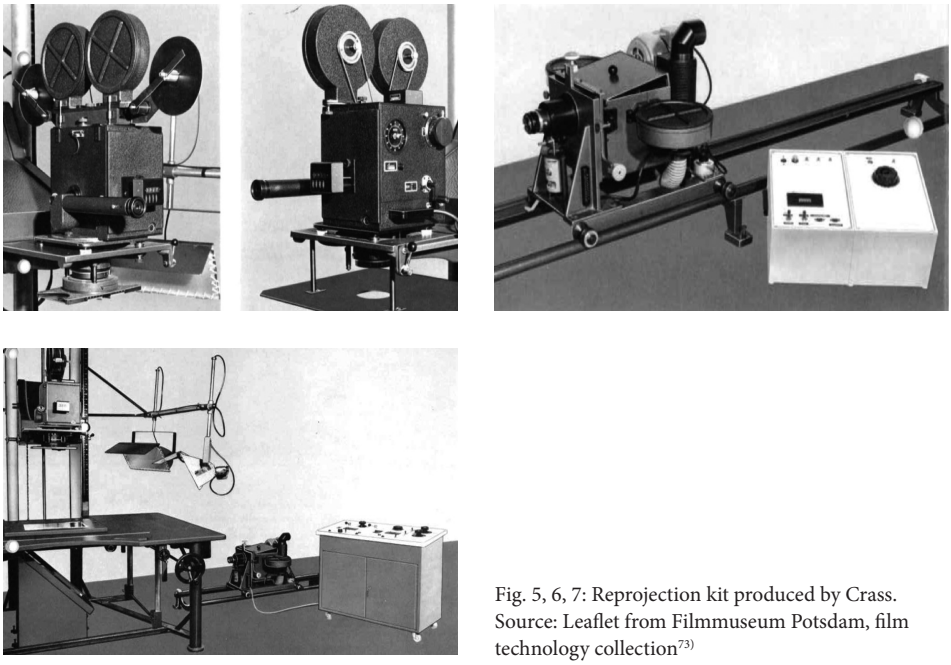

Fig. 5, 6, 7: Reprojection kit produced by Crass. Source: Leaflet from Filmmuseum Potsdam, film technology collection[73)]

activities for the year 1971," from which the information about the amount and purchase of the reprojection kit comes from, it is not indicated where the funds come from. Own compilation — Agata Hofelmajer-Roś based on materials: "Analizy działalności z lat 1965–1973," Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, sign. 39_1430_25, 39_1430_26, 39_1430_27, Łódź, Poland.

70) "Analiza działalności za rok 1977 i 1978," Archiwum Akt Nowych, sign. AAN_syg_11_43, Warsaw, Poland.

71) In the studio's documentation, reports reference Crass cameras, trick tables, and a reprojector. However, it's challenging to definitively identify specific equipment. Notably, on a surviving projector (pictured in Fig. 8), there is a label indicating it was manufactured by the "Crass company," suggesting the camera's origin.

72) At that time, Rybczyński was an active member of the Studio's Technical Council, giving him significant influence over the acquisition of new equipment, including the reprojector. According to Hieronim Neumann, Rybczyński was the first person to test the reprojector at 'Se-Ma-For'. His initial experiments with this technology were in the films *Plamuz* and *Zupa* in 1973, which aligns with studio records indicating that the reprojector was first put into service that same year. See the interview with Hieronim Neumann, conducted by Oliwia Nadarzycka on December 16, 2021, as part of the project archiv: Ewa Ciszewska and Szymon Szul, "Animation workers from `Se-Ma-For' Studio of Small Film Forms in Lodz (dataset)," Repozytorium Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2024, accessed November 22, 2024, https://repozytorium.uni.lodz.pl/han- dle/11089/52081.

73) "Filmtechnik in Museen," *kameradatenbank*, accessed September 28, 2024, https://www.kameradatenbank.de/index.php/Detail/Object/Show/object_id/855.

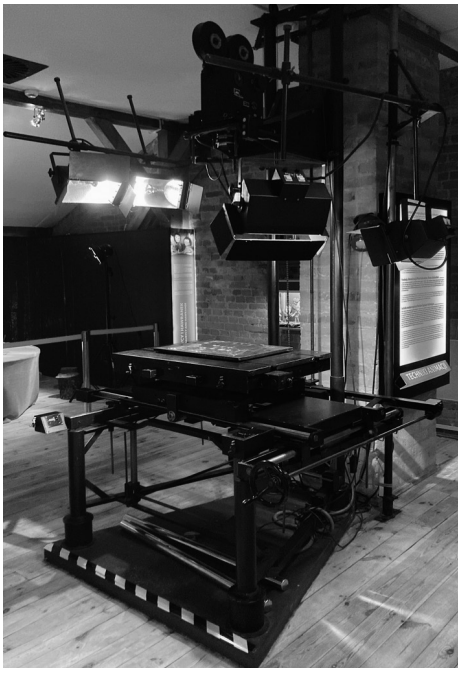

Fig. 8: Reprojector kit. Source: Muzeum Kinematografii in Łódź. Photo: Agata Hofelmajer-Roś

The reprojection equipment produced by the German company "Crass" included a camera for 35 mm, 16 mm, and Super 8 formats, known as "Trickfilm-Kamera"[74]; a reprojection table called "Tricktisch" which featured a mirror placed underneath; and a time-lapse projector, the "Ruckprojektions" available for 36 mm, 16 mm, and Super 8 formats equipped with a rail, a controller and a sound mixer.

Production materials for *Tango*,[75] suggest that the sound editing was done separately from the film's reproduction process. This implies that the version of the reprojection kit purchased by the studio might not have included a sound mixer. Although the surviving equipment from the studio is incomplete, it matches the same model. The camera stands 3 meters high, the table measures 2 meters in length, and 1.60 meters in width, and it is a single-station table, illuminated by four spotlights placed on tripods at its corners.

For 'Se-Ma-For's experimental or combined films, the integration of background images projected by the reprojector with live-action elements, such as recorded actors or other objects, was accomplished through in-camera editing on the trick table, which was part of reprojector kit. These films were:[76]

74) All the nicknames mentioned are taken directly from the "Crass" company leaflet. See: Filmmuseum Potsdam, film technology collection, "Filmtechnik in Museen," *kameradatenbank*, accessed September 28, 2024, https://www.kameradatenbank.de/index.php/Detail/Object/Show/object_id/855.

75) "Brak nazwy [*Tango*, Zbigniew Rybczyński, 1980]," Archiwum FINA Łąkowa 29, Warsaw, Poland.

76) The list of films is composed based on information from interviews with the crew members including: Hieronim Neumann, Zbigniew Kotecki, Daniel Szczechura, Ryszard Szymczak, Edward Strąk, Stanisław Lenartowicz. See database: Ciszewska – Szul, "Animation workers from 'Se-Ma-For' Studio of Small Film Forms in Lodz (dataset)." Additional information is sourced from the filmpolski.pl portal: https://filmpolski.pl/fp/index.php.

Table 1

Title and director	Trick's crew
Mozaika (Janusz Połom, 1975)	cameraman: Janusz Połom, editing: Henryka Sitek awards: 1976, Moscow (FF Trick and Technical) — Honorable Mention
Śniadanie na trawie (Breakfast on the Grass; Stanisław Lenartowicz, 1975)	co-director: Anna Ziomka, cameraman: Stanisław Kucner, Andrzej Teodorczyk, editing: Barbara Sarnocińska awards: 1976, Linz (International Film Festival) — Second Prize
Portret (Portrait; Stanisław Lenartowicz, 1977)	co-production: Anna Ziomka, cameraman: Ryszard Waśko, Lechosław Członowski, Wacław Fedak, editing: Barbara Sarnocińska; co-production: Anna Ziomka awards: 1977, Kraków (International Film Festival) — CIDALC Award (UNESCO Commission for the Dissemination of Art and Literature through Film)
Plamuz (Zbigniew Rybczyński, 1973)	cameraman: Zbigniew Rybczyński, Janusz Olszewski awards: 1985, Wrocław — (International Film Festival "Jazz Film Saloon") — I Prize
Zupa (Soup; Zbigniew Rybczyński, 1974)	editing: Barbara Sarnocińska awards: 1978, Chicago (International Film Festival) — Golden Badge
Nowa książka (New Book; Zbigniew Rybczyński, 1975)	cameraman: Zbigniew Rybczyński, Jerzy Zieliński, Janusz Olszewski, Andrzej Teodorczyk awards: 1976, Oberhausen (MFFK) — Main Prize; 1976 — Kraków (KFF) — Bronze Lajkonik; 1977 — Huesca (International Short Film Festival) — Honorable Mention; 1977 — Melbourne (International Film Festival) — Third Prize
Lokomotywa (Locomotive; Zbigniew Rybczyński, 1976)	cooperation: Janina Dychto, Janusz Olszewski, Andrzej Teodorczyk awards: 1977, Poznań (International Young Audience Film Festival "Ale Kino!") — Brown Goats
Tango (Zbigniew Rybczyński, 1981)	cameraman: Zbigniew Rybczyński, Andrzej Teodorczyk, Janusz Olszewski; co-director: Andrzej Strąk, Halina Krajewska, animation: Janina Dychto, editing: Barbara Sarnocińska awards: 1981, Kraków (KFF) — Bronze Lajkonik; 1981 Oberhausen (International Film Festival) — FIPRESCI Award; 1981, Huesca (International Short Film Festival) — Special Jury Award; 1981, Annecy (International Animated Film Festival) — Main Prize "Annecy's Crystal"; 1983, Academy Award for Best Animated Short Film
Fatamorgana I (Mirage I; Daniel Szczechura, 1981)	cameraman: Andrzej Górski, editing: Henryka Sitek awards: 1982, Oberhausen (International Film Festival) — Award of the FICC Film Clubs
Fatamorgana II (Mirage II; Daniel Szczechura, 1983)	cameraman: Zbigniew Kotecki, Andrzej Górski, co-production: Anna Kopeć, Halina Krajewska, Ewa Stańczuk, Anna Ziomka
5/4 (Hieronim Neumann, 1979)	cameraman: Jerzy Zieliński, Janusz Olszewski, Andrzej Teodorczyk, editing: Barbara Sarnocińska
Blok (Block of flats; Hieronim Neumann, 1982)	cameraman: Zbigniew Kotecki, editing: Henryka Sitek, co-production: Andrzej Strąk, Janina Dychto, Janusz Olszewski, Ignacy Goncerz, Ewa Stańczuk awards: 1982, Huesca (International Short Film Festival) — Second Prize in the feature film category; 1983, Oberhausen (MFFK) — FICC Film Clubs Award

Table 1

Zdarzenie (Event; Hieronim Neumann, 1987)	cameraman: Zbigniew Kotecki, editing: Henryka Sitek, co-production: Janina Dychto, Janusz Olszewski, Piotr Jaworski, Zygmunt Smyczek, Krzysztof Kowalski awards: 1988, Oberhausen (International Film Festival) — Main Prize; 1988, Kraków (KFF) — Award for cinematography; 1989, Lausanne (International Film Festival on Architecture) — Press Award for the best animated film

In animated films made using traditional cartoon animation techniques, only the reprojector from the reprojector kit was utilized. Ryszard Szymczak, an animator and director of animated films at the studio since the 1960s, notes that the teams of cartoonists used the projector as an auxiliary tool to trace the movements of animals.[77] The projector displayed an image from below onto the drawing desk, with tracing paper placed on the top. The cartoonists then drew the successive phases of the movement of the displayed figure, such as an elephant, on the tracing paper. This method allowed them to accurately capture each stage of movement, akin to drawing from nature. However, a challenge was that the film in the projector heated up quickly, requiring the artists to work rapidly.

For cartoon animators, therefore, the reprojector kit served as an intermediary similar to the Xerox machine, not altering the final output. The technique involved a series of repetitive actions aimed at achieving consistent results. The cartoonists did not experiment with exposure times or use masks and counter-masks. Instead, the reprojector was used to streamline production, rather than to innovate the visual style.

In contrast, the methods employed by the working group responsible for the films listed in Table 1 were experimental, characterized by their uniqueness. The new reprojection technique allowed crew members to develop their skills in innovative ways. The reprojector kit enableds various tricks, such as creating repetitions, comparing effects, changing colors and textures, and integrating live-action elements with animated sets. The artistic effects achieved were a result of the deliberate use of the reprojector kit, which guided the choice of effects based on the specific capabilities of the device.

However, the reprojector's complex design, large size, and other physical attributes imposed significant constraints on film production. These limitations affected both the mental and physical well-being of the filmmakers. In the below-mentioned examples from the trick's crew, the reprojector kit acts as a mediator, causing several production failures and sometimes changing the final output. Hieronim Neumann, a film director, described the process as follows: "It was hard, arduous work. You sat in a dark room for weeks and it wasn't really attractive to the cameramen, neither financially nor artistically."[78] Consequently, only a few operators or assistants were willing to take on this type of work.

Zbigniew Kotecki, a cameraman who worked with the reprojector kit, highlighted the challenges of maintaining proper orientation and color intensity.[79] With no ability to preview the completed material, errors often resulted in dark images, lacked contrast,

77) Ryszard Szymczak, interviewed by Oliwia Nadarzycka, July 28, 2021, see database: Ciszewska – Szul, "Animation workers from 'Se-Ma-For' — Studio of Small Film Forms in Lodz (dataset)."

78) Neumann, interviewed by Oliwia Nadarzycka.

79) Zbigniew Kotecki, interview by Agata Hofelmajer-Roś, August 31, 2022, SAFGŁ, sign. SMFF_AHR_0004, Łódź, Poland.

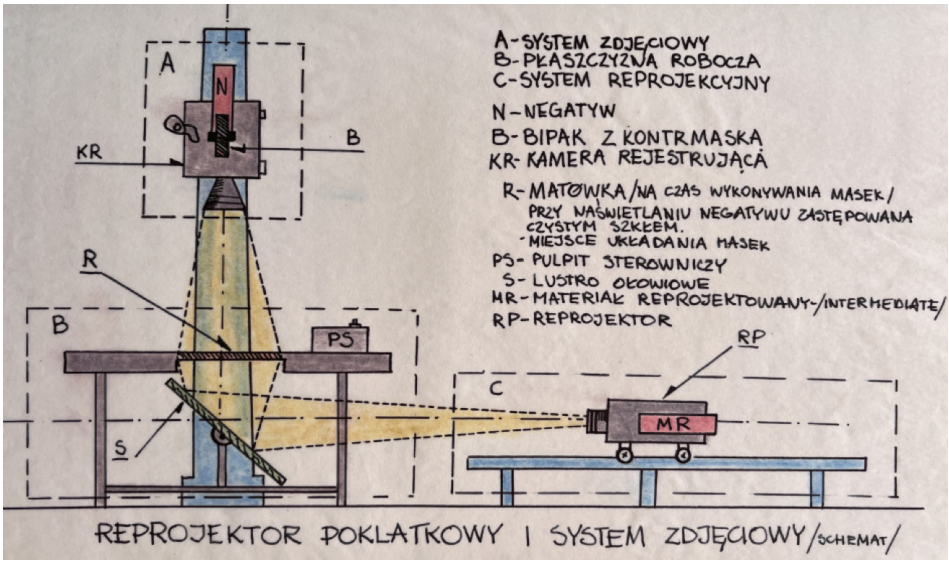

Fig. 9: The light path. Source: Zbigniew Weresa. Photo: Agata Hofelmajer-Roś

and had misaligned layers. The live-action part of the image from the reprojector (RP) was projected through a lead mirror (S) onto the working surface of the shooting table (R), ultimately landing on the focusing screen (Fig. 9).

The reprojector kit from the "Crass" company was highly regarded by 'Se-Ma-For' cameramen as one of the best available. However, achieving consistent light intensity across all points was crucial. This required precise illumination of the projection material and careful alignment of the axes. Even light distribution over the image surface was essential; while the centre of the image was the brightest, brightness and sharpness diminished towards the edges. Proper lens fitting could mitigate these imperfections, but this demanded a deep understanding of optics and photography principles, a skillset that characterized teams working with the reprojector kit.

To maintain accurate color reproduction, the 'Se-Ma-For' studio used an intermediate film strip. However, this was imported with limited availability, typical of the state-socialist production environment. The Supreme Board of Cinematography (Naczelny Zarząd Kinematografii — NZK) established the Film Production and Technology Team which set standards for the wear of the film and allocated an annual limit for ordering different types of film. Intermediate, Eastman, and high-contrast black-and-white tapes were very expensive and usually procured from abroad using foreign currency. Consequently, filmmakers had to estimate their needs very precisely. In 1975, one combined film required between 220 and 240 meters of film.[80] Despite the high costs, NZK approved orders for these materials to increase competitiveness and chances for awards.

Since Se-Ma-For, unlike FS Kudlov, did not have its own laboratories, film development was outsourced to various external laboratories, including the Feature Film Studio,

80) "Informacje o produkcji 1946–76," Archiwum FINA Łąkowa 29, Warsaw, Poland.

the Film Rental Headquarters, or laboratories abroad, such as in Czechoslovakia. The development process took two to three weeks, causing long delays between film production stages. These delays significantly affected production time, as reprojector kit settings had to be repeated by different working groups, while waiting for film development.

The reprojection kit enabled the superimposition of multiple image layers within a single frame. It facilitated the transfer of pre-recorded footage, such as live-action scenes, onto various backgrounds or other prerecorded material. The technique itself suggested the choice of effects for the film, as it allowed for the combination of multiple live-action elements within a single frame. The mask system was a supportive technique, with the reprojector kit enabling the layering of different images, akin to superimposing multiple tapes with varying materials. These layers could be resized and combined into a single video using a camera that captured the composed layers.[81)]

This process is akin to layering different images on top of each other. A film with one set of material can be overlayed onto another, with the option to reduce or enlarge the layers as needed. By stacking these layers, a camera can capture a composite image of the combined layers in a single shot.[82)] In *Tango*, twenty-two layers were used. To prevent images from overlapping, some layers needed to be masked or revealed selectively. To achieve this, cinematographers and directors created masking tapes (Fig. 10).

Creating masks[83)] and maintaining the cleanliness of the work surface on the table required continuous, uncomfortable hours spent half-bent over the table, often under the glare of four incandescent spotlights. Additionally, many hours were spent in the darkroom preparing counter-masks on light-sensitive material, which led to spinal injuries, as noted by Zbigniew Kotecki.[84)]

To illustrate how complicated process it was, I will describe the production of *Tango* by Zbigniew Rybczyński, which we can split into four phases:[85)]

1. Shooting live-action material: Multiple shots were taken of individuals moving along painted paths on the floor within the same set design. These images were recorded on Kodak intermediate tape (slide) at a fixed focal length.
2. Creating masks: Separate masks (Fig. 10) were made for each character, and frames showing character movements were reduced to minimize masking. The masks were painted with tempera paint and Mowilith[86)] on celluloid, with perforations and dimensions matching 35 mm film. Approximately six thousand masks were created.
3. Making counter-masks: Celluloid masks were used to produce counter-masks on black and white High Contrast film (Fig. 11). These counter-masks facilitated exposure of the background on the High Contrast film. The entire length of the film was used for this masking process, employing bipack attachment that allowed simultaneous movement of two tapes: a negative and a counter-mask.

81) Kotecki, interviewed by Szymon Szul, November 18, 2021, see database: Ciszewska – Szul, "Animation workers from 'Se-Ma-For' — Studio of Small Film Forms in Lodz (dataset)."
82) Kotecki, interviewed by Agata Hofelmajer-Roś.
83) The masks were made separately by hand, putting ink directly on a tape with a rapidograph pen.
84) Kotecki, interviewed by Szymon Szul.
85) This description is based on a work: Zbigniewa Jerzego Weresy, op. cit.
86) Paints with coalescent agents, low emission paints, exterior coatings, facade paints (mineral substrates).

Fig. 10: Mask of a girl. Source: Zbigniew Weresa. Photo: Agata Hofelmajer-Roś

Fig. 11: Live-action footage — intermediate film stock, mask for background-high contrast, background exposition, black and white copy for sound. Source: Zbigniew Weresa. Photo: Agata Hofelmajer-Roś

4. Reeling the image: The final image was recorded on Eastman colour negative. The process involved reprojecting the material through the projector (containing the live-action shots), applying the masks on the table, and using the negative in the camera and the counter-mask in the bipack.[87)]

The reprojector kit was integral to every stage of this animation process, enabling the combination of numerous live-action elements within a single frame. This meant that errors could occur, such as the one related to the film *Tango*. During it production, the reprojector kit experienced several failures. After about a month of shooting, the grippers[88)] in the tape moving mechanism were damaged, resulting in the destruction of 600 meters of intermediate tape. This setback extended the production time and increased costs, as masks had to be recreated and the film redeveloped. The malfunction was attributed to the

87) I described this process based on: Daniel Szczechura, interviewed by Ewa Ciszewska and Agata Hofelmajer-Roś, September 5, 2023, SAFGŁ, sign. SMFF_ECAHR_0001, Łódź, Poland, Kotecki, interviewed by Ewa Ciszewska and Agata Hofelmajer-Roś and books: Zbigniew Rybczyński, *Traktat o obrazie* (Poznań: Art Stations Foundation, 2009); Grodź Iwona, *Synergia sztuki i nauki w twórczości Zbigniewa Rybczyńskiego* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 2015); Zbigniew Jerzy Weresa, "Twórczość filmowa Zbigniewa Rybczyńskiego na tle rozwoju polskiego filmu animowanego" (Unpublished Master thesis written under the supervision of Kazimierz Sobótka at the Institute of Literary Theory, Theatre and Film, University of Łódź, Łódź, 1985).

88) Using a reprojector kit, recorded footage on tapes could be played back in time-lapse, enabling the working group to meticulously construct each scene within the frame. This technique is exemplified by the detailed frame-by-frame calculations for Zbigniew Rybczyński's film *Tango*, which were meticulously plotted on graph paper. As a result, the masks precisely obscured selected areas, allowing 22 figures to seamlessly coexist in a single shot.

excessive wear of the mechanism due to repeated masking activities. After approximately six months, the camera malfunctioned, complicating focus adjustments. Consequently, the film's production spanned from February to December 1980. The unpredictable issues with the reprojector kit led to a production cost of PLN 962,850 for *Tango*.[89] Additional challenges included a shortage of standard celluloid, the need for precise cutting of capacitors and undersized perforation pins. Masks also required two coats of paint to ensure impermeability,[90] necessitating the work of three extra people for twelve hours a day over three months to complete these tasks.

Access to film sets for recording live-action material was facilitated by the placement of reprojector kits at Bednarska 42[91] and Pabianicka Street,[92] and the Wytwórnia Flmów Fabularnych on Łąkowa Street. As Hieronim Neumann notes: "[…] to use something like reprojection, to combine these live-action photos with animation, you need to have access to a real film set. And it worked very well in Łódź."[93] In contrast, FS Kudlov's working group utilized both archival and new live-action footage, but Karel Zeman's atelier, which was well-equipped with a spacious filming set, had less spatial dependency for its footage.

The reprojector kit fostered a network of specialists — human actors with expertise in optical phenomena, film development and stop-motion animation. Despite the presence of dedicated departments like the Combined Photography Department, Trick Workshop, and Animated and Special Photography Department, film teams working with the reprojector kit were not always recruited from these specialized units. Expertise in optics, photography, and art history was crucial for employing the advanced techniques provided by the reprojector kit. The selection of team members was often influenced by the director's preferences, as working with the reprojection technique required a unique skill set. Knowledge of photographic and film equipment mechanics, film exposure and development, lighting, lens optics, mask usage, and meticulous photographic material handling were essential.

Despite the small size of the teams working on the reprojector kit, their work was very labor-intensive and precise, which meant that tasks could not be easily divided among many people. Firstly, there were not so many specialists available, and secondly, the set-up for each project was customized without standardized settings, making it difficult for new members to replicate previous configurations. The production method at 'Se-Ma-For' relied on small, specialized group working on unique, technically complex projects involving numerous transformations and effects.[94]

Neumann also mentioned that operators at 'Se-Ma-For' were initially apprehensive about the reprojector kit due to its complexity. The fear of using this innovative device was prevalent until Rybczyński's productions led to a new wave of directors embracing

89) Op. cit.,"Brak nazwy [*Tango*, Zbigniew Rybczyński, 1980]," AFINA.
90) Ibid.
91) Janusz Martyn (animator) claims that the reprojector kits were located on Bednarska 42 Street. Janusz Martyn, interviewed by Szymon Szul, May 25, 2022, SAFGŁ, sign. SMFF_0022, Łódź, Poland.
92) In the production file for the film *Tango*, it is noted that the reprojection kit was utilized at locations on Bednarska and Pabianicka streets. See: Ibid.,"Brak nazwy [*Tango*, Zbigniew Rybczyński, 1980]," AFINA.
93) Neumann, interviewed by Oliwia Nadarzycka.
94) Kotecki, interviewed by Szymon Szul.

the technology. Among them were Lenartowicz and Szczechura, who had previously worked at the studio. Despite this, only a small group of five directors and cinematographers – Rybczyński, Nuemann, Lenartowicz, Połom and Szczechura — became prominent users of the reprojector kit.[95]

The directors and cinematographers who worked with the reprojector kit were mostly graduates of film academies, including Szczechura (1962), Rybczyński (1973), Połom (1977) and Kotecki (1979), from the Cinematography Department at the National Film, Television and Theatre School in Łódź (Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Filmowa, Telewizyjna i Teatralna im. Leona Schillera w Łodzi — short PWSFTViT). Rybczyński and Połom were also members of the Film Form Workshop during their studies. Neumann graduated from the Faculty of Painting, Graphics and Sculpture at the State Higher School of Fine Arts in Poznań in 1977 (Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Sztuk Plastycznych) and completed his student internship at 'Se-Ma-For' with Lenartowicz. Rybczyński supervised Neumann's first independent film *Wyliczanka* (1976) and collaborated with Połom on the production of the film *Oj, nie mogę się zatrzymać* (Oh, I Can't Stop; Zbigniew Rybczyński, 1975). Lenartowicz graduated from the Extramural Studies of the Directing Department of the National Film School in Łódź in 1978. The opportunity to work on creative animations at Se-Ma-For provided these graduates with a platform to achieve international acclaim.[96]

Assistants and other staff members such as Wacław Fedak, Henryka Sitek, Tadeusz Strąk, also had experience with tricks and reproductions, including work on the full-length film *Mniejszy szuka Dużego* (The Smaller Seeks the Big; Konrad Nałęcki, 1975). Stanisław Lenartowicz even thinks that the rerojector kit significantly broadened, if not so much in animation, but the possibilities of telling stories, enriching not only animations but also feature films and documentaries."[97]

The introduction of the reprojection kit led to the establishing of a special Technical Council at the studio in 1976. This council, composed of Henryk Ryszka (cameraman), Mieczysław Janik (sound designer), Wacław Fedak (cameraman), Zbigniew Rybczyński (director), Daniel Szczechura (director), Stanisław Kucner (cameraman), and Andrzej Teodorczyk (cameraman), was responsible for assessing photographic technology, making investment decisions in film equipment, developing modernization programs, and keeping abreast of film technology advancements in Europe and worldwide. The directors and crews working on the reprojector kit were instrumental in integrating well-known technologies in new ways, furthering the studio's commitment to innovative filmmaking. Re-

95) Neumann, interviewed by Oliwia Nadarzycka.

96) An important figure here is Jerzy Kotowski, who made his animated films at Se-Ma-For before becoming the rector of the State Higher School of Theatre, Television and Film in Łódź. Hieronim Neumann recalls that despite completing his graduate internships, as a student of the National Film School in Łódź, with Lenartowicz and Połom, he officially made his documentary film debut with Kotowski. It was he who directed him to the studio, where he later completed his diploma film *Wyliczanka* (Hieronim Neumann, 1976) with Rybczyński. Kotowski was therefore the person who directed the students to the studio, which translated into the fact that it was there that they made their own experimental films. The same is true of Janusz Połom, who made his debut *Mozaika* at Se-Ma-For under the pedagogical supervision of Jerzy Kotowski. See Ewa Ciszewska and Dominik Piekarski, "Początki drogi twórczej Jerzego Kotowskiego: szkic do biografii," *Pleograf*, no. 4 (2023), accessed April 25, 2024, https://pleograf.pl/index.php/poczatki-drogi-tworczej-jerzego-kotowskiego/.

97) Stanisław Lenartowicz, interviewed by Szymon Szul, April 16, 2021, sign. SMFF_0002, Łódź, Poland.

projection kit availability in Łódź's animation studios allowed filmmakers to employ modern and innovative techniques. It enabled the creation of complex visual effects, such as repetitions, comparisons, color and texture changes, and the juxtaposition of live-action elements with animated backgrounds.[98)]

According to the studio's management, the reprojection kit was a cutting-edge device that significantly influenced the visual and artistic quality level of the films. Almost all of the listed films in Table no. 1 are awarded winners on internationals films festivals, including one of the most prestigious award an Oscar for Tango. The second film in a studio history, and the last one, which won in 2008 an Oscar was *Peter and the Wolf* (Susie Templeton, 2006). This may be one of the key arguments confirming the role of the reprojection kit in the development of film animation techniques at the Se-Ma-For studio.

Conclusion

The case studies of the two state-socialist film studios reveal analogous constraints due to their production environments. Both studios faced limited supply chains and difficulties accessing new technologies that were not easily available in the Eastern Bloc countries. Consequently, the working groups in both studios had to experiment with existing equipment within the confines of the 1970s production limitations — such as the reprojector kit without a sound mixer and photographic process imitating Xerox technology. The key distinction between the two cases is that 'Se-Ma-For's experimentation was driven by the availability of the reprojector kit, whereas Gottwaldov's experiments arose from a lack of alternative options.

Both studios developed new compositional techniques in animation that integrated both human and non-human actors, with substantial effects which could have been selected and examined as equally important through the ANT framework. In both cases, the techniques relied heavily on the cameramen's expertise in photographic methods — masking actors during shooting in Łódź and manipulating phases of the paper-puppets in the darkroom in Gottwaldov. A major difference was the presence of in-house laboratories and darkroom at FS Kudlov, which facilitated production, compared to 'Se-Ma-For's lack of such facilities, which affected their production timelines.

We observed the enrolment of the new actors into mostly established working groups in Gottwaldov and the forming of fully new working groups in Łódź. In both cases, the non-human actors served as crucial connectors among film crew members. The network of each studio had to adapt and compensate for unpredictable mediators, such as reprojector kit failures in Łódź and issues with curled paper-puppets in Gottwaldov.

One of the goals of this article was to test the possibilities of film production research enhanced by the Actor Network Theory approach. The studied working processes in Se-Ma-For and Gottwaldov were initiated by the introduction of new non-human actors into existing networks: the reprojection kit in Se-Ma-For and the work process supplementing a copy machine Gottwaldov. Ultimately, this network had a hybrid quality, in which it

98) Kotecki, interviewed by Szymon Szul.

would not be productive to clearly determine which of the actors had the greatest effect in shaping the final output. To separate the networks from the existing structure would be similarly unproductive.

The state-socialist mode of film production introduced specific constraints. Where there were limitations: technical (lack of tape or the Xerox machine), financial (uncertainty in obtaining funds for the purchase of equipment), there were skills and resources of employees (technical knowledge allowing to find substitutes on the domestic market). The new possibilities offered by the equipment created new techniques and opportunity to conduct experiments; using tapes for special effects and combining the cut-out technique with a live set, or in the plot layer, as in *Tango*, or negating the flatness of the cut-out animation by the photographic techniques in Karel Zeman's films.

Our primary focus was the role of equipment and spaces. However, the analysis of these networks enhanced by ANT showed several concrete instances how the human and non-human actors were inseparably intertwined in these processes: the darkroom, photographic apparatus, textured papers, and soft-metal wires with cameramen and prop makers of FS Kudlov and the reprojector kit and intermedia tape with 'Se-Ma-For's directors and cameramen.

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Filmography

5/4 (Hieronim Neumann, 1979)
Blok (Hieronim Neumann, 1982)
Čarodějův učeň (Karel Zeman, 1977)
Dobrodružství námořníka Sindibáda (Karel Zeman, 1971)
Druhá cesta námořníka Sindibáda (Karel Zeman, 1972)
Fatamorgana I (Daniel Szczechura, 1981)
Fatamorgana — II (Daniel Szczechura, 1983)
Indiánske rozprávky (Eugen Spálený and Karel Zeman, 1983–1988)
Létající koberec (Karel Zeman, 1973)
Lokomotywa (Zbigniew Rybczyński, 1976)
Magnetová hora (Karel Zeman, 1973)
Mniejszy szuka Dużego (Konrad Nałęcki, 1975)
Mozaika (Janusz Połom, 1975)
V zemi obrů (Karel Zeman, 1973)
Mořský sultán (Karel Zeman, 1974)
Nowa książka (Zbigniew Rybczyński, 1975)
Oj, nie mogę się zatrzymać (Zbigniew Rybczyński, 1975)
Plamuz (Zbigniew Rybczyński, 1973)
Plaża (Edward Sturlis, 1964)
Peter and the Wolf (Susie Tempelton, 2006)
Pohádka o Honzíkovi a Mařence (Karel Zeman, 1980)
Pohádky tisíce a jedné noci (Karel Zeman, 1974)
Portret (Stanisław Lenartowicz, 1977)
Śniadanie na trawie (Stanisław Lenartowicz, 1975)
Wyliczanka (Hieronim Neumann, 1976)
Tango (Zbigniew Rybczyński, 1981)
Zdarzenie (Hieronim Neumann, 1987)
Zkrocený démon (Karel Zeman, 1974)
Zrození filmové loutky (Josef Pinkava, 1982, Czechoslovak Television)
Zupa (Zbigniew Rybczyński, 1973)

Biography

Tereza Bochinová is a PhD student of the Department of Film Studies and Audiovisual Culture at Masaryk University. Her current research focus is the study of nationalized film culture in Zlín using the Actor-Network Theory as a methodological tool. This subject is a continuation of her Master's thesis "The FABric of Film: Study of Actors' Agencies on Production Culture of FS Kudlov (1945–1952)." She is a member of research teams in projects "Relational database, map projections and data visualisation used for promotion, education and support of tourism — implementation on the case of Zlin film culture" and "Animated film studios in Gottwaldov and Łódź (1945/47–1990) — comparative collective biography." She also participated in "Visuality and Animation in relation to tradition and the present" project (2022) and "Digitization of Hermína Týrlová's archive" project (2020) which was made available as a specialized database "Digital archive of Hermína Týrlová" in 2022.

Agata Hofelmajer-Roś is a PhD student in the Doctoral School at the University of Silesia. Her research mainly concerns film education in Poland and Europe, the activities of cultural institutions in the field of creating film culture, and the presence of film analysis in educational activities. She is a scholarship holder in the project "Film animation studios in Gottwaldov and Łódź — comparative collective biography," implemented as part of the CEUS-UNISONO program (2021–2023). She published: "Now us! Animations created by youth and their application in film education," *Studia de Cultura* 15, no. 1 (2023). Since 2022 she is a member of the Polish Animation Research Group. She was an intern at the British Film Institute (2022) and a scholarship holder of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage (2016 and 2019). She runs a blog about films for young audiences: kinodzieci.info.

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From Semi-Amateur to Professional Production Conditions

The Irzykowski Film Studio and Animation in the Late People's Republic of Poland

Abstract
The present paper contextualises and closely analyses the production strategy of the Irzykowski Film Studio (a communist-era film institution founded in 1981 that produced debut films of all types and lengths) for animated films in the 1980s. In reconstructing the realities of animated film production, the author points out not only the reasons for their making, but also draws attention to production conditions. It proves that the Studio operated under semi-amateur (1980–1985) where films were produced on extremely limited budgets as well as professional (1986–1989) production conditions. The research draws on archival materials, including a variety of production documents, as well as qualitative interviews with filmmakers and production staff.

Keywords
Polish animated films, Irzykowski Film Studio, People's Republic of Poland, Solidarity, martial law, 1980s.

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The aim of this paper is to trace and reconstruct the production strategy of the Irzykowski[1)] Film Studio in the field of animated film production, a communist-era film institution founded in 1981 that produced debut films of all types and lengths (animated film

1) The studio was named after the first Polish film theorist Karol Irzykowski. See Elizabeth Nazarian, *The Tenth Muse: Karol Irzykowski and Early Film Theory* (Saarbrücken: Lap Lambert Academic Publishing, 2011). The choice of patron may have been influenced by the decision of Hungarian filmmakers, who in 1959 chose Hungarian film theorist Béla Balázs as the patron of the Hungarian debut studio there.

was not prioritised). In this article, 'production strategy' refers primarily to creative plans and activities and their socio-political contexts. This article is based on two types of sources which can lead to a fuller understanding of the Studio's activities in the field of animated film production and will also enable a greater understanding of the mechanisms of filmmaking under a communist regime. Firstly, in line with what many researchers of the production culture have recommended, the focus in this study is on production documents[2] which have been hitherto neglected, such as production reports, minutes of internal meetings, memos and notes.[3] Examining such records provides an insight into the finer workings of animated filmmaking while allowing for the characterisation of the relationship between the below-the-line and above-the-line crew. In this sense, the archive searches that were conducted for this paper are based on a multifaceted selection of sources in which no source type is essentially discriminated against. Secondly, semi-structured interviews were used as they are a characteristic of ethnographic research. The choice of interviewees was not restricted to the authors of animated films, but as suggested by a number of production culture researchers,[4] background staff were also included. These were members of the Studio's Artistic Board and the management along with the employees of the production department.

As a result, this research has a multifaceted approach. Not only can the creative activities be characterised, but primarily, the realities of the Irzykowski Film Studio can be described in a fairly comprehensive manner. Moreover, owing to the interviews, the informal ties between the Studio's staff can be traced and reconstructed. As historian Jerzy Eisler correctly identifies,

> in practice, it is only from [people's] accounts (and memoirs!) that we can learn what the actual informalities looked like in a given environment […]. Only in this way can we find out who met with whom in private, who — regardless of their position in the system of power and authority — could be consulted on important matters, who participated in decision-making, and who often didn't get to know about those decisions until after the fact, who had only formal power, resulting from the function or position held, and who had the real power as a result of their ability to influence people in formal positions.[5]

It is worth adding to Eisler's observation on the customs of the studied environment that the interviews used here excellently compliment investigations into other aspects of

2) See John T. Caldwell, *Production Culture: Industrial Reflexivity and Critical Practice* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Vicky Mayer, Miranda Banks, and John T. Caldwell, eds., *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media Industries* (New York and London: Routledge, 2009); Petr Szczepanik and Patrick Vonderau, eds., *Behind the Screen: Inside European Production Cultures* (London: Palgrave Macmillan New York, 2013); Marcin Adamczak, *Obok ekranu: Perspektywa badań produkcyjnych a społeczne istnienie filmu* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo UAM, 2014), Miranda Banks, Bridget Conor, and Vicky Mayer, eds., *Production Studies, The Sequel!* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

3) Caldwell, *Production Culture*, 347.

4) Ibid., 351; Adamczak, *Obok ekranu*, 25.

5) Jerzy Eisler, "Refleksje nad wykorzystywaniem relacji jako źródła w badaniu historii PRL (Rozmowy z dysydentami i prominentami)", *Polska 1944/45–1989: Warsztat badawczy: Studia i materiały* 6, (2004), 52.

animated film production in the People's Republic of Poland. One example is the role that chance or technical factors played in influencing the production of animated films.

The Founding of the Irzykowski Film Studio in 1980

The work on establishing an institution as a place where young graduates of the Lodz Film School could make their first non-school films would not have started if it had not been for the socio-political changes in 1980. In the summer of 1980, negotiations between the authorities and workers resulted in the workers being granted the right to form independent, self-governing trade unions to represent the working class. As a consequence, the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union Solidarity was officially registered by the court of the People's Republic of Poland on November 10, 1980. This significant social movement, which saw nearly 10 million people registered on that day, sparked an immense desire for political and social action.[6] Not only did independent professional, agricultural and student organisations emerge on the wave of freedom, but the authorities' attitude towards artists was also liberalised. In January 1981, an agreement was signed between the Polish Filmmakers' Association (SFP), under the leadership of director Andrzej Wajda, and the Ministry of Culture and Art, democratising the rules of cooperation between filmmakers and the state cinema authorities. Among other things, the agreement stipulated that 'the SFP has a guaranteed influence on the method of appointment and operation of film units, as well as selecting their members,'[7] and that 'the SFP has at least half of the votes in all committees and advisory bodies at all administrative levels.'[8] This meant that filmmakers were able to shape the programme policy of state bodies such as the committees and boards, where state officials and the party-affiliated filmmakers and writers. This included the commission that decided on which films should be approved for distribution.

The agreement also guaranteed the democratic election of the artistic directors of the film units (the basic organisational entities of the Polish full-length film production system at the time), who until that time had been appointed by the Minister of Culture and the Arts. The first free elections for the artistic directors of film units[9] caused a debate on the reform of state cinema. It envisaged the creation of independent, self-governing and self-financing creative film units, with the aim of creating 'a self-governing subsystem of

6) See Krzysztof Brzechczyn, "Communitarian Dimensions in the Socio-Political Thought of the Solidarity Movement in 1980–1981," *Studia Philosophica Wratislaviensia* XIV, (2019), 109–128.

7) "Agreement between the Ministry of Culture and the Arts and the Polish Filmmakers Associationy," 23 January 1981, sign. LVI-1701, unnumbered pages, archive unit: Wydział Kultury KC PZPR, Archiwum Akt Nowych (Department of Culture of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR), Archive of Modern Records), Warsaw, Poland.

8) Ibid.

9) As a result of the election the heads of the film units became renowned film directors, among others: Andrzej Wajda ('X' Film Unit), Krzysztof Zanussi ('Tor' Film Unit), Wojciech Jerzy Has ('Rondo' Film Unit), Jerzy Kawalerowicz ('Kadr' Film Unit) and Janusz Morgenstern ('Perspektywa' Film Unit). See Marcin Adamczak, "Film Units in the People Republic of Poland," in *Restart zespołów filmowych: Film units: Restart*, eds. Marcin Adamczak, Piotr Marecki, and Marcin Malatyński (Kraków and Łódź: Korporacja Ha!Art, Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Filmowa Telewizyjna i Teatralna w Łodzi, 2012), 232–270.

the national economy, capable of economic self-sufficiency.'[10] Ultimately, as a result of the introduction of martial law, work on the reform was abandoned.

The wave of solidarity thaw was the catalyst for the creation of an independent studio for young filmmakers. Throughout the 1970s, young filmmakers attempted to establish this institution, but each proposal was rejected by the state cinema authorities. The proposed organisational framework for the studio included a provision that production decisions would be made by an independent Artistic Board, consisting of five filmmakers democratically elected from among all of the studio's members.[11] The authorities were not even convinced by the fact that a similar studio, managed by an independent artistic council composed of young filmmakers, operated in socialist Hungary (Studio Balázs Béla).[12] The state cinema authorities only changed their opinion in 1980 and agreed without hindrance to the creation of an independent institution that was to provide a bridge between the film school and a full-blown career. The reason for such a decision was the socio-political situation described above, but an important factor was also the living situation of young filmmakers, which had deteriorated significantly in relation to 1970. At that time in 1980, the Young Filmmakers' Circle of the Polish Filmmakers' Association, which brought together young film school graduates, included 146 filmmakers, of which only 14 people were employed, and only two of these had permanent full-time employment. (In 1970, this problem was non-existent.) The establishment of the Studio was therefore intended to guarantee young filmmakers' permanent employment.

In 1980, two young filmmakers (Robert Gliński and Maciej Falkowski) were sent to Hungary to investigate the financing framework and the organisational and programme model of the studio there.[13] As a result of this visit, The Rules and Regulations of the Irzykowski Studio were drafted following an analysis of the regulations and registration documents of the Hungarian Balázs Béla Studio for debuting film professionals. The state cinema authorities also introduced a 'fuse' into the statute of the Studio, which stipulated that its films would not be intended for public exhibition.[14] The studio was able to make independent decisions regarding the production of its films; however, the distribution of these films relied entirely on the state cinema authorities. Additionally, the authorities determined that the studio's annual subsidy would equal the average production budget of a live-action full-length film from the previous year.[15]

10) Andrzej Ochalski, "Przewagi kina uspołecznionego nad upaństwowionym," *Ekran*, no. 42 (1981), 10.

11) The first Artistic Board elected in 1981 consisted of cinematographer Jan Mogilnicki and four film directors: Maciej Falkowski, Robert Gliński, Waldemar Dziki, and Michał Tarkowski.

12) In 1970, the then Deputy Minister of Culture and the Arts made the founding of the Studio conditional on the establishing of the position of director, to be nominated by the Ministry. See Lech Pijanowski, "Studio Prób Filmowych," *Kino*, no. 6 (1970), 20.

13) Robert Gliński (film director, member of the Artistic Board of the Irzykowski Film Studio in 1981–1982), interviewed by Emil Sowiński, October 22, 2020.

14) "Regulamin Studia Filmowego im. Karola Irzykowskiego" (Rules and Regulations of the Irzykowski Film Studio), no date, sign. 2-109, pp. 26–27, archive unit: Naczelny Zarząd Kinematografii, Archiwum Akt Nowych (Central Board of Cinema, Archive of Modern Records), Warsaw, Poland.

15) Tomasz Miernowski (head of production in the Irzykowski Film Studio from 1981 to 1984), interviewed by Emil Sowiński, April 11, 2019.

The Irzykowski Film Studio Compared to Other Animation Studios

The prerogatives of the Irzykowski Film Studio should be regarded as pioneering in comparison to those vested in other film production establishments in the People's Republic of Poland. The Studio was in fact the only institution that could produce films of all lengths and types. The film production system in the People's Republic of Poland was strictly defined, with specified studios responsible for specific types of film. For example, film production units and feature film studios were in charge of producing live action films, as producers and executive producers, respectively. Newsreels were produced by the Documentary Film Studio (Wytwórnia Filmów Dokumentalnych), while the Educational Film Studio (Wytwórnia Filmów Oświatowych) in Łódź was responsible for educational films.[16] Animation, on the other hand, was entrusted to five specialized studios: Se-ma-for Studio of Small Film Forms (Studio Małych Form Filmowych "Se-Ma-For") in Łódź, Cartoon Film Studio (Studio Filmów Rysunkowych) in Bielsko Biała, Film Miniature Studio (Studio Miniatur Filmowych) in Warsaw, Animated Film Studio (Studio Filmów Animowanych) in Kraków, and Television Studio of Animated Films (Telewizyjne Studio Filmów Animowanych) in Poznań.

Importantly, none of the above-mentioned institutions enjoyed such lenient rules regarding production-related decisions as the Irzykowski Film Studio, where those decisions were made by a majority vote among the members of the Artistic Board. In the 1980s, the decision-making process in animated film studios involved several steps. First, reviewers in the literary division of a studio evaluated the scripts and then sent them to the head of the studio for approval. This was the first point at which the decision-makers could recommend changes to the text or reject it. The accepted scripts were then included in the so-called thematic plan, which was reviewed at the central level by the Programme Department of the Central Board of Cinema in the Ministry of Culture and the Arts. Thus, central state officials were another body, following the editors and the head of the studio, that could decide to reject a project. In practice, it meant that in order for an animated film to be sent for production, the approval of both the authorities of the studio and the officials of the centrally controlled cinema authorities was needed.

The acceptance of a film itself was also a multi-stage process. First, an internal review and approval session was held at an animation studio, in which an official of the state censorship agency and the studio's authorities participated. Next, the film was evaluated by the Artistic Evaluation Committee at the Central Board of Cinema, which made a decision regarding the range of distribution (or refused to distribute the film) and the artistic rating. Finally, an approved animated film was presented in cinemas as an addition to the main screening. At the Irzykowski Studio, the evaluation of the film depended solely on the Artistic Board, while the central authorities in charge of cinema decided whether to

16) Of course, there were exceptions in the activities of these institutions. For example, thanks to the openness of its editor-in-chief Maciej Łukowski, the Educational Film Studio produced dozens of experimental films created by emerging filmmakers in the 1970s. See Masha Shpolberg, "The Polish Educational Film Studio and the Cinema of Wojciech Wiszniewski," in *Experimental Cinemas in State-Socialist Eastern Europe*, eds. Ksenya Gurshtein and Sonja Simonyi (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022), 125–150. Another exception was Se-Ma-For, where medium-length live-action films and series were produced.

release it for distribution. Let us recall that, according to the Rules and Regulations of the Irzykowski Studio, its films did not have to be distributed at all, but whenever a decision was made to do it, an animated film produced by the Studio went through a similar process to that of other animation studios, i.e. it was reviewed by censors and the Artistic Evaluation Committee, and then it was screened in cinemas.

While the structure of the decision-making process in the Irzykowski Film Studio gave it much more autonomy than in other animation studios, it was far behind them in terms of infrastructure. The Studio was assigned only one large room, which was located in a building at the junction of the Trębacka and Krakowskie Przedmieście Streets in Warsaw, i.e. in the same place where the Central Board of Cinema had its seat. It was a typical office space (in fact, it was previously occupied by the Director of the Programme Department of the Central Board of Cinema, Michał Misiorny,[17] who was dismissed at the beginning of 1981), intended for administrative and programme-related work (Artistic Board meetings). Tomasz Miernowski, the Studio's head of production, recalls that the walls were decorated with paintings loaned by the National Museum, and predominantly Biedermeier furniture.[18] His own desk there was a huge, richly inlaid piece with lion's feet.[19] Thus, in the very same setting where the most important decisions concerning the state programme policy in the field of cinema had previously been made (e.g. Michał Misiorny decided to produce Andrzej Wajda's *Man of Iron*), young directors were now to decide on the shape that young Polish cinema would take. At the end of 1982, the Studio was moved to an office building at Mazowiecka Street,[20] where it could take up four rooms.

According to the Studio's Rules and Regulations, it could produce its films using any of the film company operating in Poland (i.e. Educational Film Studio, Feature Film Studio in Lodz or Film Miniature Studio). In order to do that, the Studio had to conclude a contract for the provision with a given film company of services regarding a production film. For that reason, the Studio itself employ beginner film directors and cinematographers and administration staff (head of production, production managers, accountants), while its technical resources were limited to office equipment. The Irzykowski Film Studio was thus a rather paradoxical institution, independent in terms of its programme on the one hand, but on the other hand very much dependent on other film production institutions when it comes to the actual filmmaking. In fact, this kind of organisational dependence was characteristic of the system of live action film production in Poland at the time (film units as producers, feature film studios as executive producers), and to some extent it also applied to other animation studios, as many of them were not fully self-sufficient. For instance, Se-ma-for, although it had adequate technical facilities, equipment and space (it probably had the best space, only second to the Cartoon Film Studio in Bielsko-Biała), sometimes occupied the sound stages of the Feature Film Studio in Łódź (this was the case during the shooting of the Oscar-winning film *Tango*, directed by Zbigniew Rybczyński)

17) Tomasz Miernowski, interviewed by Emil Sowiński.
18) Ibid.
19) Ibid.
20) Mazowiecka was also a street where state cinema institutions were located, in the building opposite the Studio there was the headquarters of the State Enterprise Film Polski, which dealt with the import and export of films.

and continuously used the laboratory of the Educational Film Studio to process the deliverables of the animated films and series it produced.[21] In terms of infrastructure, the Irzykowski Film Studio could be contrasted with the Animated Film Studio in Kraków, which also had only a few small rooms (although theirs was not only office space) and used the technical facilities of external institutions (mostly the Kraków branch of the Poltel Television Film Studio), but at the same time had the necessary equipment for the production of animated films (e.g. two Krass cameras).[22]

Freedom of Production During the Solidarity Period The Case of *Smoczy Ogon* (Dragon's Tail)

The influence of the Studio's organisational conditions and socio-political contexts on its programme policy and culture of animated film production is perfectly illustrated by the course of production of the Studio's very first animated film, *Smoczy ogon* (Dragon's Tail, 1981), directed by Michał Szczepański. Its title refers to one of the most characteristic social phenomena of the People's Republic of Poland, that is shop queues, which reached their apogee with the economic crisis of 1980 (wherever a shortage commodity appeared, a queue of people eager to buy it formed, the so-called tail).[23] *Dragon's Tail* is a politically controversial story about Poland in the times of Solidarity, an observational documentary in the form of an animated film. Szczepański portrays events taking place on the streets of a Polish city and alludes to the political situation at the time. There is also a bear-hug between the leaders of two countries, with one (the larger one, symbolising the Soviet Union, according to Szczepański) eating the other (the smaller one, symbolising the other communist countries), and a rocket flying over the city that looks like the Palace of Culture and Science built in honour of Stalin.

This is how Michał Szczepański recalls the circumstances in which he decided to make the film:

> Times were quite difficult. I graduated and did not really know what to do with myself. My graduation project had involved an animated piece,[24] so I decided not to wait, just get on and start making a film […]. I was able to do it thanks to the fact that I had a painting by Witkacy[25], a rather poor one as for Witkacy. It was a portrait, but it was not really clear whose face it was, because, honestly, it was quite sloppy. I sold it without much remorse, and thanks to that I was able to rent a studio in

21) Michał Dondzik, Krzysztof Jajko, and Emil Sowiński, *Elementarz Wytwórni Filmów Oświatowych* (Łódź: Wytwórnia Filmów Oświatowych, 2018), 19, 97.
22) Monika Wysogląd, "Kraków: Animacja '86," *Film*, no. 37 (1986), 11.
23) See Marta Mazurek, *Społeczeństwo kolejki: O doświadczeniach niedoboru 1945–1989* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Trio, 2010).
24) Animated film entitled *A* (Michał Szczepański, 1980) made under the supervision of Henryk Ryszka and Mirosław Kijowicz at the Lodz Film School.
25) Witkacy (real name: Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz) was a Polish painter, philosopher and writer. He worked primarily during the period between the wars in the Second Polish Republic (1918–1939).

> Warsaw's Ochota district and start doing my own thing, which meant I got down to drawing a film, drawing what I saw in the city, what I saw through the window […].[26)]

Szczepański began working on the film before the Irzykowski Film Studio was established, but after Solidarity had been formed (at the beginning of 1981). Therefore, his decision to make the film independently was influenced by the socio-political situation in the country, which indeed inspired autonomous initiatives. This was also made easier not only by the fact that Szczepański had money to rent a studio and buy the necessary artistic accessories (he had received the painting by Witkacy as a gift from his father, writer Jan Józef Szczepański),[27)] but also by the fact that he had a 16 mm Bolex camera, which he had borrowed while a student at the Film School from Sibille Wieser,[28)] a friend who lived in Switzerland.[29)] Getting film stock, which was an expensive and, more importantly, a scarce commodity was a problem though. Szczepański:

> When I already had about 25 per cent of my drawings, I heard that the Irzykowski Studio had been set up by some friends of mine. I went there and asked if they were interested in animation. It turned out that they were, so I got a production manager, whom I then only saw once, because I had almost nothing to do for her except get me a few spools of Fuji film stock. In fact, I would just sit at home and draw. I did not actually need anything from the Studio […].[30)]

Among the initiators of the Studio was Michał Tarkowski, a graduate of film directing studies, musician and cabaret artist, who just before his studies at the Film School was one of the leaders of the Salon Niezależnych (Salon of Independents) cabaret group. Tarkowski was also a close friend of Szczepański's from their student days, when they had supported each other on the sets of their student films. Suffice it to say that Tarkowski's extra-curricular short film *Przerwane śniadanie braci Montgolfier* (The Interrupted Breakfast of the Montgolfier Brothers, 1980) was shot with the camera that had been lent to Szczepański.[31)] Thus, when Tarkowski became a member of the Artistic Board in the Irzykowski Film Studio in 1981, he offered Szczepański his help in making the film and convinced the other members of the Board to do likewise.[32)]

Certainly, the friendly relationship between Michał Tarkowski and Michał Szczepański was not the only reason for the creation of *Dragon's Tail*. Economic issues also played a sig-

26) Michał Szczepański (employed as a film director at the Irzykowski Film Studio from 1981 to 1987), interviewed by Emil Sowiński, September 9, 2022.
27) Ibid.
28) Interestingly, in the credits of each film made on the borrowed camera, there is special thanks to Sybille Wieser.
29) Grzegorz Rogala (employed as a cinematographer at the Irzykowski Film Studio from 1981 to 1986), interviewed by Emil Sowiński, February 9, 2023.
30) Michał Szczepański, interviewed by Emil Sowiński.
31) See Marek Hendrykowski, "Przerwane śniadanie z Braćmi Montgolfier," *Images: The International Journal of European Film, Performing Arts and Audiovisual Communication*, no. 26 (2015), 317–324.
32) Michał Tarkowski (film director, member of the Artistic Board of the Irzykowski Film Studio from 1981 to 1984), interviewed by Emil Sowiński, July 7, 2020.

nificant role. Cinematographer Grzegorz Rogala emphasises that the making of a film like *Dragon's Tail* involved a relatively small budget.[33] Szczepański's memories are similar: 'It was a cheap film, which actually did not involve any resources at all; I did not need anything apart from some film stock. It was a convenient production for the Studio.'[34] Michał Tarkowski confirms his words, 'I asked Tomek [Tomasz Miernowski, the Studio's head of production — note author] if we could do it. Tomek nodded and formally started the production.'[35] Though Miernowski mentions that such a project did not require a lot of money (apart from the film stock and the filmmakers' salaries, the Studio only paid for the services of the Documentary Film Studio, which was in charge of the post-production process), he also admits that getting film stock, which was a strictly rationed commodity at the time, was a real problem, and emphasises that the Fuji stock that was needed for Michał Szczepański's film had to be obtained through informal channels. Luckily, Wiesław Wellman, director of the Film Research and Development Centre, who felt a debt of gratitude to the Studio (his son, Krzysztof Wellman, who was a unit stills photographer, found employment there),[36] would lend a helping hand to the Studio and informed the Studio's head of production whenever he had a surplus of stock.[37] Thus, thanks to the kind heart of Wiesław Wellman, the Studio was not condemned to making films on, as Miernowski described it many years later, 'toilet paper from the East German company ORWO.'[38] The decision to make *Dragon's Tail* was perfectly in line with the Studio's production strategy. The Studio primarily made films which served as auteur commentary on the socio-political situation in Poland and which, due to their controversial nature, could not be made within the centrally controlled cinema framework. This applied both to the relatively liberal Solidarity period and the much more rigorous time of martial law. In the portfolio of the Studio from the first half of the 1980s, a number of live action films can be found along with documentaries tackling the subject of the blind spots in the history of Poland (e.g. the Poznań Riots, brutally suppressed by the army and the police in 1956)[39] or referring to the realities of the early 1980s (the activities of Solidarity,[40] the martial law repressions[41]). Out of 26 films made between 1981 and 1985, as many as 12 were banned from distribution, while three were released only after censor cuts.[42] Consequently, by looking at the short film studios, film units and animation studios which operated at the time, it can be seen

33) Grzegorz Rogala, interviewed by Emil Sowiński.
34) Michal Szczepański, interviewed by Emil Sowiński.
35) Michal Tarkowski, interviewed by Emil Sowiński.
36) Krzysztof Wellman was employed at the Studio as a unit stills photographer between 1981 and 1984.
37) Tomasz Miernowski, interviewed by Emil Sowiński.
38) ORWO film stock made in the GDR, which was used in film production in the People's Republic of Poland. Tomasz Miernowski, interviewed by Emil Sowiński.
39) *Jeszcze czekam* (I'm Still Waiting; A. Marek Drążewski, 1984), *Niepokonani* (The Undefeated; A. Marek Drążewski, 1984)
40) For example, *Choinka strachu* (Christmas Tree of Fear; Tomasz Lengren, 1982) or *Prom* (Ferry; Jacek Talczewski, 1984).
41) For example, *Wigilia* (Christmas Eve; Leszek Wosiewicz, 1982), *Słoneczna gromada* (Summer camps; Wojciech Maciejewski, 1983) or *Jest* (He has arrived; Krzysztof Krauze, 1984).
42) See Emil Sowiński, "State censorship of debut films in 1980s People's Republic of Poland: The example of the Irzykowski Film Studio," in *The Screen Censorship Companion: Critical Explorations in the Control of Film and Screen Media*, eds. Daniel Biltereyst and Ernest Mathijs (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2024), 201–214.

that the Irzykowski Studio was a record breaker in terms of the number of films without a censor's agreement.[43)]

The Way Towards Professionalisation

The animated films produced during the studio's early years did not face censorship issues. Many of these films are noteworthy examples of formal experimentation. Considering the context of their production and the aesthetics involved, it is likely that they were inspired by the works of members of the Workshop of Film Form, an avant-garde group that operated at the Film School in Łódź from 1970 to 1977.[44)] One such title is the live-action animated film entitled *Wnętrze* (The Interior; Jacek Kasprzycki, 1986), made in 1984 — a story of a flat over the course of many years (the changing furnishings were indicative of the respective periods in which the events took place). Another such film was *Kostia* (Michał Szczepański, 1984), a short form showcasing the vibrant, motion-filled world of fantastic paintings by Bogusław Kostia, a painter from Zakopane. Szczepański also made a cartoon film joke, *Palawer* (Palaver, 1985), which introduces the viewer to a house party that is gate-crashed by uninvited guests. Cinematographers also tried directing animated films. For instance, Jacek Siwecki directed *Bajka o śpiących rycerzach* (The Tale of the Sleeping Knights, 1985), based on Jan Kasprowicz's and Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer's short stories. The lead role in this stop-motion animation is played by Giewont, a mountain massif in the Tatra Mountains of Poland and guardian of the knights (according to legend, sleeping knights on Giewont watch over Poland and will rise to come to her aid in case of danger). Michał Szczepański's close associate, cinematographer Grzegorz Rogala, also engaged in directing. First, he made *Kinolino* (1984), a short animated form depicting the world of flora, and then *Nocny seans* (Night Show, 1987), which showed a frenzy of colours and geometrical blocks changing at a truly frenetic pace.

Suffice it to say that most of the short animated forms previously mentioned were produced under homemade conditions, as was the production of *Dragon's Tail*. For example, Grzegorz Rogala made his subsequent film using a camera borrowed from Michał Szczepański, and partly also on the film stock he had received as a prize at the 1981 Munich International Film School Festival for his film *Linia* (Line, 1980).[45)] In the official production records, this method of production was described as 'a specific course of production involving independent work by the director equipped with basic equipment and film

43) The vast majority of banned films produced between 1980 and 1984, i.e. those the distribution of which was prohibited by censors, were the Studio's films. See "List dyrektora Zespołu Widowisk Radia i TV do dyrektora Departamentu Programowego Naczelnego Zarządu Kinematografii" (Letter from the Director of the Radio and TV Broadcasting Team of the Regional Office for the Control of Publications and Performances addressed to the Director of the Programme Department of the Central Board of Cinema), 6 December 1985, sign. 3313, k. 63, archive unit: Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy Publikacji i Widowisk, Archiwum Akt Nowych (Central Office for the Control of Press, Publications and Performances, Archive of Modern Records), Warsaw, Poland.

44) See Marika Kuźmicz and Łukasz Ronduda, eds., *Workshop of the Film Form* (London: Sternberg Press, 2017).

45) Grzegorz Rogala, interviewed by Emil Sowiński.

stock.'[46] *Palaver*, another film by Michał Szczepański, was made in a similar way. Its production manager, Jacek Lipski, recalls years later that renting a room in Warsaw's Forum Hotel (at the time, Szczepanski was not living in Warsaw, but in Bukowina Tatrzańska, several hundred kilometres away) was virtually the only extra cost. Szczepański not only lived in a hotel room, but also, equipped with a camera and the necessary tape, made a film there.[47] Thus, in the case of subsequent animated films, the Studio mainly had to pay for film stock, post-production salaries (not many, because the crew was kept to a minimum, e.g. in *Palaver*, Michał Szczepański was responsible for the drawings, animation, direction and script). Importantly, salaries were strictly regulated by ministerial order and the duration of a film's production did not affect the amount.

In the case of animated films from 1982–1985, the technical facilities of the Czołówka Polish Army Film Studio (*Palaver),* the Educational Film Studio (*Night Show*), the Documentary Film Studio (*Kostia*, *Tale of the Sleeping Knights*), the Animated Television Film Studio in Poznań (*Interior*) and the Poltel Television Film Studio (*Kinolino*) were used. The choice of that particular post-production infrastructure was also determined by economic factors — contracts were made with those studios that offered a fast turnaround time and that, importantly, were based near the director's home address (eliminating the cost of travel and accommodation).[48]

At the beginning of 1985, state officials decided to observe the Irzykowski Studio more closely. These measures ended with a 'surgical cut,'[49] as Jarosław Sander, the Studio's literary director from 1982 to 1996, referred to it. The cut was made by Jerzy Bajdor, Deputy Minister of Culture and the Arts, under whose decision of 30 August 1985 the operations of the Staff Board, which at the time also acted as the Artistic Board, were suspended. A day later, he appointed Leszek Kwiatek (employee of the Youth Department of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party) as the Studio's head.

Kwiatek introduced a new production strategy, under which the Studio stopped making politically controversial films. Instead, Leszek Kwiatek aimed to make as many medium- and full-length live action films as possible, not necessarily debut titles, in order to compete with film units. Therefore, it was a matter of ambition — the new, Party-nominated head of the Studio, not really involved with film before, wanted to show that the institution under his leadership was capable of competing with the film units led by much appreciated film directors.[50] Moreover Kwiatek's idea was the expansion of the production base. This would make the studio a self-sufficient company. It would be both a producer and a maker of its own films. In the surviving documents, there is, for example, the con-

46) "Skierowanie do produkcji filmu pod roboczym tytułem *Pokoje*" (Referral for production for the film under working title *Rooms*), 21 September 1982, sign. S-31334, k. 86, Archiwum Filmoteki Narodowej — Instytutu Audiowizualnego (Archive of the National Film Archive — Audiovisual Institute), Warsaw, Poland.

47) Jacek Lipski (employed as a production manager at the Irzykowski Film Studio from 1981 to 1985), interviewed by Emil Sowiński, November 9, 2021.

48) That is why, for example, *Interior* was shot in Jacek Kasprzycki's place of residence, i.e. in Poznań, with the support of the Animated Television Film Studio there.

49) Jarosław Sander, "Kartki z historii Studia," in *Dziesięciolecie Studia Filmowego im. Karola Irzykowskiego*, eds. Tadeusz Skoczek and Piotr Wasilewski (Bochnia: Studio Filmowe im. Karola Irzykowskiego, 1991), 8.

50) Leszek Kwiatek (director of the Irzykowski Film Studio from 1985 to 1987), interviewed by Emil Sowiński, September 13, 2018.

cept of merging the studio with the Documentary Film Studio to form an autonomous Feature and Documentary Film Studio.[51] These plans did not ultimately come to fruition, but at the same time this concept influenced the fact that the studio under Kwiatek did not produce animation (only the production of Rogala's *Night Show* was completed).

The Return of Animated Film in the Profitability Era

The era of Leszek Kwiatek came to an end in the second half of 1987, when he resigned from his position following the change in the state's policy towards artists, initiated by the convention of the Polish United Workers' Party held in July 1986. Art historian Jakub Banasiak observed that as a consequence of the convention,

> repressions diminished step by step, the scale of censorship weakened considerably, civil liberties got loosened, and a far-reaching liberalisation of culture, science and arts started. Belief in the ritualistic nature of the official sphere became widespread. The new doctrine involved the system co-opting the circles that had previously been critical or neutral towards the authorities, including those from underground opposition circles.[52]

This also resulted in changes to the organisational structure of the Irzykowski Studio. The post of the Studio's head still existed, but a new Artistic and Programme Board was appointed. It included two young filmmakers before their full-length debut — Jacek Skalski and Mariusz Treliński, two film directors after their debut at the Studio — Wiesław Saniewski and Marek Koterski, and one of the initiators of the Studio — Janusz Kijowski. Due to his extensive experience and in accordance with the Studio's new regulations, Kijowski was elected the chairman of the Board, and consequently also became the deputy artistic head. The new Artistic and Programme Board faced a difficult task of lobbying for the appointment of the Studio head who would submit to the Board's authority. Zbigniew Pepliński, former television head of Poltel and the Feature Film Studio in Wrocław, was elected, and, as it later transpired, he indeed followed the Artistic Board's instructions.[53]

There is no doubt that the marginal position of the head of the Studio meant that the Artistic and Programme Board was responsible for the Studio's programme strategy, just as in the early 1980s. This becomes even more evident upon examination at the first approval for production signed by Pepliński, one which states the title of Magdalena Łazarkiewicz's feature-length debut, *Ostatni dzwonek* (The Last Schoolbell, 1989) — it was

51) "Protokół z posiedzenia Rady Artystycznej" (Record of the Arts Board meeting), 27 September 1986, *Protokół z posiedzenia Rady Artystycznej*, 25–27 IX 1986 r., sign. 1-4, c. 65, archive unit: Studio Filmowe im. Karola Irzykowskiego, Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe (Irzykowski Film Studio, National Digital Archive), Warsaw, Poland.

52) Jakub Banasiak, *Proteuszowe czasy: Rozpad państwowego systemu sztuki 1982–1993* (Warszawa: Akademia Sztuk Pięknych w Warszawie and Muzeum Sztuki Nowoczesnej w Warszawie, 2020), 40–41.

53) Janusz Kijowski (chairman of the Artistic and Programme Board of the Irzykowski Film Studio from 1987 to 1989), interviewed by Emil Sowiński, February 4, 2021.

perfectly in line with the policy of making politically controversial films, which was initiated by the first Board of the Studio. Łazarkiewicz's film is a story of a group of high school students who, inspired by a new classmate (expelled for anti-government activity from another school), begin preparations to stage a performance entitled *History lesson*, based on the censored work of the cabaret Piwnica pod Baranami (including a mocking song using the text of the communist government's 1981 martial law decree)and the Solidarity movement bards Jacek Kaczmarski and Przemysław Gintrowski (which included the protest song 'We don't run away from here' / "A my nie chcemy uciekać stąd").

As the liberalisation progressed, titles such as *The Last Schoolbell,* were approved without any censorship interference, and even the most hardline official censors, who could sense that change was coming, described them as 'outstanding political films.'[54] On the other hand, due to the precarious economic situation of the declining communist era, film institutions were ordered to follow the logic of profit when making decisions regarding film production.[55] The new Artistic Board of the Irzykowski Studio also had to take into account the profitability of the projected film.

This context influenced the decision to produce the animated series for children entitled *Przygody smoka Rurarza* (Dragon Adventures; Jacek Siwecki, 1989). The Studio produced three pilot episodes as a bargaining chip in negotiations with Telewizja Polska (Polish Television), in order to persuade the latter to sign a contract for a whole season (scripts for 26 episodes were waiting).[56] The Studio was to be the executive producer in this case, while Telewizja Polska was to be the commissioning party. As a result, the first three pilot episodes were produced in a professional setting with the participation of the Film Miniature Studio, which specialised in animated films for children. Siwecki, fascinated by *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (Robert Zemeckis, Richard Williams, 1988), decided to make the series using a combined method of putting together live-action shots with animation.[57] However, it was not possible given the technical capabilities of the Film Miniature Studio, so Siwecki combined live-action shots with stop-motion puppet animation, and treated traditional animation as a kind of addition. The friendly dragon, who helped children in each episode, appeared in two versions, i.e. as a cartoon character and as a puppet. In the end the television company did not buy the film, and that decision was largely influenced by its final form. The pilot episodes, although made in a professional cinematographic setting, were rather clumsy in the technical aspect. Members of the Ministry's Artistic Evaluation Committee remarked that the puppet shots (dragon made of plasticine) and live-action shots were put together in an awkward manner ('This idea was practically unworkable in our conditions;' 'We have plasticine that does not move, the quality of animation is not really high. There is no connectivity between these worlds;' 'I appreciate the

54) See, for example: "Stenogram z posiedzenia komisji kolaudacyjnej filmu *Ostatni dzwonek*" (Stenogram of the meeting of the review committee for *The Last Schoolbell*), 16 March 1989, sign. A-344, item 580, unnumbered cards, Archiwum Filmoteki Narodowej — Instytutu Audiowizualnego (Archive of the National Film Archive — Audiovisual Institute), Warsaw, Poland.

55) Ewa Gębicka, *Między państwowym mecenatem a rynkiem: Polska kinematografia po 1989 roku w kontekście transformacji ustrojowej* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2006), 37–42.

56) Jacek Siwecki, interviewed by Emil Sowiński.

57) Ibid.

idea, but the way it was implemented killed it completely').[58] Consequently, none of the episodes entered official circulation.[59]

The decision to produce *Dragon Adventures*, the film series which no one wanted to buy for distribution, shows that those at the helm of the Studio, just like the artistic heads of most communist-era film units, were not competent enough to produce films in the then-hatching free-market film industry. The Artistic and Programme Board was far better at implementing the policy of debuts, which had been significantly marginalised under the rule of Leszek Kwiatek. As Jarosław Sander explained, that time was marked by a return to 'the rigorously understood idea of the film debut as the Studio's overarching goal.'[60] Therefore, contracts with the filmmakers associated with the Studio in the first half of the 1980s were not renewed (including animated film directors Michał Szczepański and Grzegorz Rogala), which meant that the creative part of the Studio's staff consisted mainly of pre-debut directors working on their very first productions.

Under the new regulations of the Studio, it was still possible to make films regardless of metre and type.[61] However, not many of the young filmmakers who found employment with the Studio at that time were interested in animation. This was because of two main reasons. Firstly, many of the animation films made in the first half of 1980s, although censor-approved, were presented under irregular distribution only (short form reviews, seminars organised by Film Discussion Clubs) and were therefore known to just a small group of people.[62] Only one of the films, *Kostia*, received a festival award,[63] but this did not help create the image of the Studio as a place where interesting, animated films were made. Secondly, it was undoubtedly influenced by the programme policy introduced by director Kwiatek, for whom full-length films were a priority. Thus, in popular opinion the Studio was not associated with animation. As a result, at the end of the 1980s, only one debut animated film was approved for production — *W.A.L* (Robert Turło, 1990). According to the documentation, it was the Studio's own initiative to make it.[64] In 1989, at the Young Polish Cinema Festival in Gdańsk, the Artistic Board representatives (Janusz Kijowski and Jacek Skalski) invited a student of the local Academy of Fine Arts to make an animated film

58) "Protokół z posiedzenia Komisji Ocen Artystycznych Filmów Animowanych" (Record of the Meeting of the Commission for the Artistic Evaluation of Animated Films), 2 February 1989, sign. S-31416, c. 390-391, Archiwum Filmoteki Narodowej — Instytutu Audiowizualnego (Archive of the National Film Archive — Audiovisual Institute), Warsaw, Poland.

59) The technical condition of the copies of the three episodes, which are available in the archives of the National Film Archive, the Audiovisual Institute, leads one to believe that it was never shown on the big screen.

60) Sander, "Kartki z historii Studia," 12.

61) "Statut instytucji filmowej Studio Filmowe im. Karola Irzykowskiego" (Film Institution Rules and Regulations of the Irzykowski Film Studio), no date, k. 10, sign. 1-11, archive unit: Studio Filmowe im. Karola Irzykowskiego, Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe (Irzykowski Film Studio, National Digital Archive), Warsaw, Poland.

62) See Emil Sowiński, "Alternative Distribution and Its Role in the Promotion of Films Produced by the Irzykowski Film Studio Between 1981–1984," *Images: The International Journal of European Film, Performing Arts and Audiovisual Communication* 32, (2022), 99–111.

63) The film received an honourable mention at the 1986 Art Film Review in Zakopane.

64) "Protokół z posiedzenia Rady Artystyczno-Programowej" (Record of the meeting of the Artistic and Programme Board), 23 November 1989, sign. 1-4, k. 90, archive unit: Studio Filmowe im. Karola Irzykowskiego, Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe (Irzykowski Film Studio, National Digital Archive), Warsaw, Poland.

in professional conditions. With the co-production support of Miniature Film Studio, the work on the film began in 1990. This macabre-grotesque vision of war directed by Robert Turło, a single-sequence short funny cartoon, is the Studio's last animated film and at the same time the only one to have achieved international success (Turło's debut participated part in the short film competition at the Cannes Film Festival in 1991[65]).[66]

Conclusion

At one of the Irzykowski Film Studio's staff meetings at the beginning of the Kwiatek era, director Marek Koterski summerised the studio's transformation by saying: 'The craft workshop is over, the factory has begun.'[67] Koterski's terminology perfectly captures both stages of the Studio's operations including its production strategy for animated films which navigated an institutional framework balancing state control with creative freedom.

The first stage, the craft workshop and the semi-professionalism was defined on the one hand by programme autonomy with production decisions being made by an autonomous and democratic Arts Board, but on the other hand film production being constrained by minimal financial resources and existing under semi-professional conditions, as highlighted in the example of Michal Szczepanski shooting one of his animated films in the room in the Forum Hotel.

As a result, decisions to produce animated films were influenced by both socio-political and economic factors. These films were largely home-made, created outside the walls of traditional animation studios and on extremely limited budgets with only the post-production stage completed in a professional setting.

In the second stage marked by factory and professionalism, production retained its independence in the programme strategy, but was now fully professional at every stage, as the Irzykowski Film Studio collaborated with professional studios such as Miniature Film Studio. Decisions to produce animated films were driven by both profit motives, such as in the production of the *Dragon Adventures* series and by the Studio's policy of supporting debut films, as exemplified by the production of the *W.A.L.*

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65) Other Polish representatives in the short film competition were: *Ja Wałęsa* (Jacek Skalski, 1990) and the short film produced by the Lodz Film School titled *Z podniesionymi rękami* (With Raised Hands; Mitko Panov, 1985). The latter film won the main prize.

66) In the 1990s, the time that was fully controlled by the logic of profit, the Studio lost its original function and had to fight for survival by competing with emerging private-owned production companies in the free market realities. In 2005, in the process of restructuring state film studios, it was merged with the Czołówka Film Studio, which five years later became part of the structure of the Documentary Film Studio.

67) "Protokół z zebrania ogólnego Studia Filmowego im. Karola Irzykowskiego" (Record of the general meeting of the Irzykowski Film Studio), 21 February 1986, sign. 1/6, archive unit: Studio Filmowe im. Karola Irzykowskiego, Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe (Irzykowski Film Studio, National Digital Archive), Warsaw, Poland.

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Jest (He has arrived; Krzysztof Krauze, 1984).
Jeszcze czekam (I'm Still Waiting; A. Marek Drążewski, 1984)
Kinolino (Grzegorz Rogala, 1984)
Kostia (Michał Szczepański, 1984)
Linia (Line; Grzegorz Rogala, 1980)
Niepokonani (The Undefeated; A. Marek Drążewski, 1984)
Nocny seans (Night Show; Grzegorz Rogala, 1987)
Ostatni dzwonek (The Last Schoolbell; Magdalena Łazarkiewicz, 1989)
Palawer (Palaver; Michał Szczepański, 1985)
Prom (Ferry; Jacek Talczewski, 1984)
Przerwane śniadanie braci Montgolfier (The Interrupted Breakfast of the Montgolfier Brothers; Michał Tarkowski, 1980)
Przygody smoka Rurarza (Dragon Adventures; Jacek Siwecki, 1989)
Słoneczna gromada (Summer camps; Wojciech Maciejewski, 1983)
Smoczy ogon (Dragon's Tail; Michał Szczepański, 1981)
W.A.L (Robert Turło, 1990)
Who Framed Roger Rabbit (Robert Zemeckis and Richard Williams, 1988)
Wigilia (Christmas Eve; Leszek Wosiewicz, 1982)
Wnętrze (The Interior; Jacek Kasprzycki, 1986)

Biography

Emil Sowiński is a film historian, an assistant at the University of Lodz (Department of Film and Audiovisual Media) and a lecturer at the Film School in Lodz (Faculty of Film Art Organisation). His research interests include the history of Polish film and the study of production culture. He participated in the project "Film Distribution and Exhibition in Poland, 1945–1981" funded by the National Science Centre. He is currently conducting a research project on the production activities of the Irzykowski Film Studio. In 2018, he was awarded the main prize in the Professor Ewelina Nurczyńska-Fidelska Competition for the best master's thesis on Polish cinema. In 2023 he was awarded the Alicja Helman Prize for the best doctoral thesis in the field of film studies.

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Transcontinental Studio Collaboration in the Production of the African--futurist Anthology *Kizazi Moto*

Abstract
This paper explores the production of the animated anthology *Kizazi Moto: Generation Fire* as a case study for understanding the transnational dynamics and power relations within the global animation industry in the post-colonial context. Utilizing qualitative research based on interviews with key decision makers, the paper examines the production culture, the complexities of identity and representation, and the ideological tensions embedded in the animation tools and processes. Through the interview record, moments of resistance and acceptance emerged, revealing uneven access to resources and the colonial legacies influencing contemporary African animation. The research highlights the need for a critical reassessment of production practices, creative control, the diversity of production crews, as well as the ideological assumptions embedded in animation tools and processes.

Keywords
Animation Studio Culture, African animation production, Disney EMEA, Triggerfish, African-futurism

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Introduction

Kizazi Moto: Generation Fire was released on Disney+ in 2023. The animated anthology of 10 short films was billed as African content made by and for an African audience.[1)] The di-

1) Disney Press release: "'Kizazi Moto: Generation Fire' Streaming July 5th Exclusively On Disney+," *Disney Plus Press*, accessed April 24, 2024, https://press.disneyplus.com/news/disney-plus-kizazi-moto-generation--fire-streaming-july-5.

rectors were selected from a call-out for 'fresh new African voices' and the project was pitched to the Walt Disney Company's Europe Middle-East Africa division (EMEA) by the South African animation studio, Triggerfish. The anthology of films resulted from a complex set of transnational collaborations, with the production undertaken by studios across the globe, based in Africa, Europe and North America.

This paper makes use of a qualitative research approach, informed by grounded theory, where insights are allowed to emerge from an iterative and inductive interview process. In-depth and extended interviews were conducted with six key decision makers in the production of *Kizazi Moto*: three animation Directors, two Executive Producers, and two Producers with day-to-day oversight of the production process.[2] The interviews explored how each decision maker made sense of their roles and relations within the broader production culture,[3] as well as their 'distinct relations of personhood'[4] and the context of both contemporary African studio animation and the global animation studio network. Taking inspiration from Nicholas Garnham's view that 'story worlds result not only from the technologies' affordances but also from their creators' assumptions about a medium, technology and an audience',[5] this paper explores the 'constraints and possibilities'[6] that informed choices that were made through the production process, and the contested spaces in which these decisions were taken.

The aim of this paper is to explore the *Kizazi Moto* production as a case study for insights into the operations and power relations that underpin the global animation industry within the enduring legacy of colonialism and imperialism, with a particular focus on the African context. The argument of this paper is that the contending voices of those interviewed for this paper can be understood within the frame of post-colonial theory, within the 'dialectic of cultural struggle',[7] a term that refers to the consumption, distribution and production of popular culture. This paper's focus is solely on latter, where key actors are always, already confronting each other in the field of cultural production.

In his 1972 essay, "External Influences on Broadcasting: Television's Double-Bind," Stuart Hall writes:

2) Disney has a 'one credit' policy. Many undertook additional roles in the project such as script writing, script editing, concept design and animation.

3) The term 'production culture' as set out by Banks, Conor and Mayer seeks to highlight the 'tension between individuals' agency and the social conditions within which agency is embedded'. Miranda J. Banks, Bridget Conor, and Vicki Mayer, eds., *Production Studies, the Sequel! Cultural Studies of Global Media Industries* (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016).

4) Beverley Skeggs and Helen Wood, *Reacting to Reality Television: Performance, Audience and Value* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

5) Nicholas Garnham, "Political Economy and Cultural Studies," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 12, no. 2 (1995), 65.

6) Creativity within constraints: "The balance that media researchers strike between describing media workers as the creators of popular culture and as functionaries in the service of capitalism." Vicki Mayer, Miranda J. Banks, and John Thornton Caldwell, eds., *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media Industries* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 8.

7) Stuart Hall, *Essential Essays: Volume 1: Foundations of Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley (London and Durham: Duke University Press, 2019).

> There is a continuous and necessarily uneven and unequal struggle, by the dominant culture, constantly to disorganize and reorganize popular culture; to enclose and confine its definitions and forms within a more inclusive range of dominant forms. There are points of resistance; there are also moments of supersession. This is the dialectic of cultural struggle.[8)]

The views and voices recorded in the interviews undertaken for this paper sit well within Hall's prevailing argument here. Interviewees spoke openly of moments of friction, where identities and representation were contested and where the restrictions of unacknowledged bias were pushed-up against and renegotiated within studio working relationships. The production itself was situated in the context of global competition and the extension of a dominant global corporation's reach into Africa, a process that highlighted pinch points of uneven and unequal access to professional networks, knowledge, intellectual property, and technology.

The animation tools themselves were contested, with several interviewees voicing frustration about what is often dismissed as 'purely technical'[9)], pointing to the skewed perspectives and ideological assumptions baked into the software and industry standard processes. Further to this, the importance of the production team and how it is constituted was questioned, as well as the use of service studios, pointing to the need to re-define and acknowledge the importance of crew diversity and for a better understanding of the creative impact of animation workers 'below the line'.[10)]

These moments of 'resistance and supersession' that emerged from the interview record were complex and deeply contradictory, with interviewees voicing overlapping and at times competing understandings of Africa, African-ness and by extension notions of, 'centre,' 'power' and 'periphery.' This was particularly pronounced in relation to the role of the South African lead studio, with its own acutely fraught colonial inheritance.

Authenticity (of voices) was an agreed aim for all those interviewed, although there were differences of understanding regarding how this could be achieved and what was really at stake. Despite some degree of scepticism, all spoke enthusiastically about the project's aim to amplify marginalized (African) voices and the ambition to celebrate the diversity of these voices in reclaiming cultural identities — two key tenets of post-colonialism itself.[11)] However, perhaps unsurprisingly, interviewees were largely silent in relation to the core corollary of these tenets, namely the dismantling of the oppressive power structures that have (and continue to) silence such voices.

Interviewees were contacted through the author's personal and professional contacts, with subsequent introductions. The resulting familiarity and level of trust between interviewer and interviewee allowed for an informal, open, and discussion-based interview ap-

8) Ibid., 354.

9) To paraphrase Hall, 'no profound technological revolution is ever in any sense *purely* technical' (2019), 350.

10) *Below the line* refers to crew members who bring the projects vision to life, contrasting with *above the line* 'creatives' who are tasked with directing the projects vision. The latter group usually benefits from significantly better pay and working conditions.

11) Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction: Second Edition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019).

proach.[12] The interviews explored the production as a whole (all 10 short films) but focused specifically on three animated films, each with a different location of animation production (Europe, North America and Africa), and animation technique (ranging from 2D to 3D). The Interviews were conducted over Zoom and in-person, with follow-up interviews in some cases and further email communication. The interview questions were open ended, allowing themes to emerge from the discussion.

All interviewee details have been anonymised for this paper. In some cases full anonymity is not possible, given the nature of the project, particularly further up in the production hierarchy. Interviewee names have been replaced with letters of the alphabet: Director A, Producer B, Executive C, etc.

Context Overview
Pitch, Precedent & Oligopoly

In late 2018, the South African animation studio, Triggerfish approached Disney EMEA with the idea for *Kizazi Moto: Generation Fire*. Triggerfish is a well-established South African animation studio, specializing in computer generated animation (CGI), with a successful track record of global service studio work and self-initiated feature films. The company's structure is organized around five (White, male) executive partners and a small core team. The company enlarges on a project-by-project basis by hiring contracted employees (numbering over 100 at the peak of *Kizazi Moto* production).

The success of the *Kizazi Moto* pitch to Disney was due to a confluence of favourable factors at local and global scale. This section will detail these factors, situating the project with the view to exploring how this context framed the expectations of key role players and project development. Once Disney EMEA executives were persuaded of the merits of the project, it was necessary for them to pitch the project internally to Disney executives in the USA. There were four key factors that determined the successful internal greenlighting of the project: Walt Disney corporation's strategic business interest in launching Disney+ into Africa, the nature of the corporation's funding cycle, the recruitment of high calibre talent (Oscar winning Director Peter Ramsey as Executive Producer, in particular), and lastly, the financial successes of two important precedents: *Black Panther* (2018) and *Love, Death & Robots* (2019), both were understood to reflect a wider shift in audience appetite.[13]

The financial and critical success of Netflix's animated anthology *Love, Death & Robots* proved that there was an audience for animated short film anthologies for an adult audience. The phenomenal box office success of the feature film, *Black Panther*,[14] demonstrat-

12) For a discussion of horizontal interview and research approach in production studies see: Vicki Mayer, "Studying Up and F**cking Up: Ethnographic Interviewing in Production Studies," *Cinema Journal* 47, no. 2 (2008), 141–148, https://doi.org/10.1353/cj.2008.0007.

13) Executive A (Disney), interview, February 2024.

14) The film made it's production budget ($200 million) back in the 1st week of global release, and was the second highest grossing film that year ($1.3 billion). (Pamela McClintock, "Box Office: 'Black Panther' Becomes Top-Grossing Superhero Film of All Time in U.S.," *The Hollywood Reporter* (blog), March 24, 2018,

ed that there was a global audience for Black and African content on, as well as off, screen — with a predominantly Black cast *and* crew. As film historian Wil Haygood notes, 'no Black Director had ever been given such a large amount of money to make a film', and the film was made with an almost all Black cast and a significantly diverse crew.[15)]

Furthermore, the Afrofuturism of *Black Panther* was deemed to be a clear precedent for the potential for fictional sci-fi inflected content *about* Africa. This revealed a blurring of genres that impacted on the ways in which *Kizazi Moto* was understood to be not just about Africa but *from* Africa.

A clear distinction should be made between the genre approach of *Black Panther* and that of *Kizazi Moto*. The feature, *Black Panther* was created in the *Afro*-futurist genre, a sub-category of science-fiction centered on the Black experience from the perspective of the African diaspora. Whereas the *Kizazi Moto* anthology was to be *African-futurist* with it's depiction of an imagined Africa viewed expressly from *outside* the Western perspective.[16)] It was apparent through the interviews undertaken with key actors in the production of *Kizazi Moto* that subtle inconsistencies and comingling of ideas relating to genre and world views became amplified later on, forming a backdrop that reflected tensions and contested aspects of the production from authorial control of script-writing process to animation studio allocation, explored later in this paper.

As Executive A notes, when it comes to financial greenlighting, 'comps are very important' ('comps' is the industry contraction for 'comparison': a financially favourable precedent).[17)] However the most significant factor for the project's greenlighting from Disney's US division was the alignment of Disney EMEA's remit to develop African content with the overall corporation's business strategy at the time. As Executive A explains: "The biggest thing of course, was the streaming investment. The industry was in a risk-friendly phase to some extent at that point."[18)] Disney had plans to extend their streaming platform Disney+ into Africa, in the context of what writer James Meek describes as the 'present-day oligopoly in digital media'[19)] where streaming firms such as Netflix challenge the 'legacy media conglomerates' (Disney, Disney+ and ABC make up the largest share of this 'legacy' group).[20)]

Some background to this shifting oligopoly is instructive here:[21)] when Netflix first launched in 2007, Disney had licenced much of its content to the, then up-and-coming,

accessed December 9, 2024, https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-news/box-office-black-panther-becomes-top-grossing-superhero-film-all-time-us-1097101/).

15) Wil Haygood, *Colorization: One Hundred Years of Black Films in a White World*, First edition (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2021), 383–384.

16) The term African-futurism was coined by Nnedi Okorafor. See: Nnedi Okorafor, "Nnedi Okorafor: Sci-Fi Stories That Imagine a Future Africa | TED Talk," accessed April 29, 2024, https://www.ted.com/talks/nnedi_okorafor_sci_fi_stories_that_imagine_a_future_africa.

17) Executive A (Disney), Interview, 2024.

18) Ibid.

19) James Meek, *London Review of Books*, accessed January 2024, https://www.lrb.co.uk/podcasts-and-videos/videos/bookshop-events-films/james-meek-dreams-of-leaving-and-remaining.

20) The remainder is comprised of Paramount, Paramount+ and CBS, Channel 5 in the UK; Comcast (Peacock) and NBC, along with the UK Sky channels; Warner Bros Discovery, which as well as streaming via Max now controls CNN. (Meek, 2024).

21) To add tenor to this picture, Meek likens the Disney-Netflix 'face-off' to the fictionalized struggle between Gojo and Waystar that plays out towards the end of HBO's 2018 Series, *Succession*, (Meek, 2024).

streaming firm.[22] Disney CEO, Bob Iger, later spoke of this 'short-sightedness' in not identifying Netflix as a competitive adversary and by not recognizing streaming as an existential threat to the corporation in its traditional form: 'we decided at the time that we would stop licensing to Netflix and do it ourselves.'[23] Consequently, Disney's streaming platform was launched into Europe and America in 2019 with the ambition to expand globally by 2022. With this global push came the increasing appetite for discovering 'new talent' and 'new voices' globally.[24] This is the slipstream that Triggerfish and Disney EMEA identified: "Our creative ambitions aligned with the launch of streaming and the greater investment in original content. We used that opportunity to get Kizazi through."[25]

The African Animation Studio Context
Service Studios & Freelance Labour

The title *Kizazi Moto*, is derived from Swahili, (*Generation Fire* is the English translation). 'Moto' is the word for fire in several African languages, intended to capture 'the spirit of the project coming from several countries across the continent'.[26]

The project began with an open call for African Directors to pitch their script ideas. Triggerfish and Disney received 63 responses from which 10 films were selected (a total of 13 Directors). Towards the end of the pre-production and script development phase, Triggerfish, as the lead animation studio on the project, undertook the process of allocating each Director to an animation studio for the production phase (referred to in the industry as a 'service studio'). The intention had been to use African studios for the production phase, however due to a series of factors outlined below, only half of the 10 films were ultimately allocated to studios within Africa of which four were allocated to studios in South Africa, and one to a studio in Egypt. The reasons behind the decision to allocate service studios in this way is illuminating in what it can reveal about the contemporary African studio context and the shape of the global studio network.

22) Most notably, Disney's Marvel content following Marvel's acquisition in 2006 as well as content from Disney's later acquisition of Pixar, Lucas Film, FX, Hulu and Fox Entertainment, (Meek, 2024).

23) "As Disney Turns 100, Its Business Is on a Rollercoaster Ride," *The Economist*, accessed April, 24, 2024, https://www.economist.com/briefing/2023/01/19/as-disney-turns-100-its-business-is-on-a-rollercoaster-ride.

24) In 2022, Disney+ added 42 additional countries and 11 territories in Africa, Europe and West Asia (https://variety.com/2022/digital/news/disney-plus-march-2022-earnings-1235264311/) Todd Spangler, "Disney+ Powers to Nearly 138 Million Subscribers, Beating Streaming Expectations for March Quarter," *Variety* (blog), May 11, 2022, https://variety.com/2022/digital/news/disney-plus-march-2022-earnings-1235264311/.

25) Executive A (Disney), Interview, 2024.

26) Tendayi Nyeke quoted in SYFY Official Site. Josh Weiss, "Disney+ to Showcase African Creators with 'Kizazi Moto: Generation Fire' Sci-Fi Anthology," *syfy*, June 17, 2021, accessed April 24, 2024, https://www.syfy.com/syfy-wire/kizazi-moto-generation-fire-disney-plus.

Film Title	Production Company	Lead Studio	Service Studio	Main country of animation production
First Totem Problems	Disney	Triggerfish	Giraffics	Egypt
Surf Sangoma	Disney	Triggerfish	Chocolate Tribe Motif Triggerfish	South Africa
Stardust	Disney	Triggerfish	Triggerfish	South Africa
Herderboy	Disney	Triggerfish	Triggerfish	South Africa
Moremi	Disney	Triggerfish	Lucan	South Africa
Mkhuzi	Disney	Triggerfish	Studio Meala	Ireland
Hatima	Disney	Triggerfish	Studio Meala	Ireland
Mukudzei	Disney	Triggerfish	Saturday Animation Allula Animation	Canada
You Give Me Heart	Disney	Triggerfish	Portfolio Entertainment	Canada
Enkai	Disney	Triggerfish	Blink Industries	United Kingdom

Africa's transnational animation industry connections are weak.[27] Beyond national borders, African studios are more likely to connect with other parts of the world than with other African countries. This lack of a robust intra-African studio network was a key factor in the decision to allocate service studios to those based outside the continent. As Producer A and Producer B noted, there are significant challenges that skew the growth and development of a more inward facing Africa animation industry, such as high software associated costs, particularly in relation to digital 3D animation, where a complex series of interwoven stages and workflows are formalized into a standard of practice (known as 'the pipeline'). "Through this project we've met a lot of cool people doing things on the continent [African], but most are working with free software because things like Maya or training in Houdini are insanely expensive… Software is the biggest barrier to entry and you need to conform with a certain pipeline to make it work."[28] Furthermore, these patterns are perpetuated by the industry's reliance on reputation and existing networks: "It's hard if you don't know the studios and they don't have a reputation to fall back on. It's hard to know if they can pull it off or not because you don't see a lot of animated features or even shorts coming out of Africa. I don't think the culture is there yet. The barrier to entry is so high."[29]

27) "It is hard to imagine quite how limited the interaction is, in this [media production] space." Producer A, Interview, February 20, 2024.
28) Producer A, Interview, February 28, 2024.
29) Producer B, Interview, 2024.

In an attempt to build African studio connections through the project, a questionnaire focused on quality assurance (QA) was sent out to over 100 African animation studios, asking them to self-report on organizational issues such as how many people worked regularly in the studio, to equipment, IT infrastructure, free-lance base, and data protection (the latter being a core priority for Disney).[30] The results of the brief survey were presented to Triggerfish and Disney EMEA and the recommendation was that (outside of South Africa), only one of the studios surveyed would fit the requirements (namely Giraffics Studio in Egypt). As Executive B notes "most African studios were too small. They did not have access to enough crew, even if they drew on their pool of freelancers. Most studios were about 12 people and each short needed about 60 and and a lot of them wouldn't comply to Disney security requirements, and all sorts of things like that."[31]

Several interviewees questioned how genuine an attempt the survey had been in reaching out to animation studios on the continent, and some questioned how clear this method of studio appointment had been made to the Directors at the outset of the project. More than one Director stated that there had been suggestions in the initial stages, that their own studio would be considered for the production of their film "but after signing the contract it was like 'Nah bra, this is the studio you'll be working with."[32] Others suggested that assistance could have been provided to studios in order to meet the QA and data protection standards required. Several interviewees pointed to the commercial nature of the project, the current African industry context, and potential for financial risks: "things could have gone really, really wrong."[33] and as Executive A noted, from Disney's perspective they were already taking a risk with Triggerfish (one of the continent's most established studios), "Triggerfish had done a lot of great service work…but we were kind of taking a risk in terms of their original stuff."[34]

In addition to this there was pressure on the lead studio to make timely decisions in terms of service studio allocation. As Executive B explains, the funding window for the project was tight, with implications for time available to establish connections with other African countries that were absent or undeveloped: "We were planning on doing them all on the continent. It was very ambitious, but [Disney] were like, 'We want to get this going quickly".[35] Executive A explains the view from Disney was: "The focus was backing the director/creator's vision with strong talent/studios and to do as much of the production in the [African] continent while taking into account current constraints of budget, timeline and available expertise [within Africa]."[36]

Ultimately, as a commercial venture, cost was the significant factor in studio allocation and while African studios could provide relatively cheap studio services in terms of labour,[37]

30) A postgraduate student from Witwatersrand University was tasked with managing the questionnaire and compiling the results.
31) Executive B (Triggerfish), Interview, 2024.
32) Director B, Interview, 2024.
33) Producer A, Interview, 2024.
34) Executive A (Disney), Interview, 2024
35) Executive B (Triggerfish), Interview, 2024.
36) Executive A (Disney), Email correspondence, 2024.
37) "We have a cheaper salary base" (Executive B, Interview, 2024).

studios in Canada, France, the UK, and Ireland were able to compete due to their ability to access state tax credit incentives.[38] This was decisive.[39]

It is worth noting that although state tax credit incentives do exist in South Africa, Triggerfish, the lead studio on the project was not eligible to access them. The state incentives are designed as affirmative action to promote groups previously disadvantaged under the Apartheid regime[40] and despite attempts to modify and extend the company leadership, as set out by Executive B's interview, Triggerfish remains a White, male-led company therefore unable to access state support in this regard. Triggerfish has however more recently opened an office in Ireland and is able to access tax credits through the Irish Government.[41]

The South African Studio Landscape

Following the results of the African studio questionnaire, the option had initially been explored to allocate all films to service studios within South Africa for the projection phase. The country's freelance labour base, however, on which the South African animation industry depends, would not have had capacity to sustain this scale of project,[42] as the same pool of contracted labour circulates between the country's animation studios on a project-by-project basis; "We all use the same people." [43]

The growth and development of this limited labour pool in South Africa is frustrated by a series of cascading and mutually compounding factors, namely the lack of sufficient full-time employment to support skill development and specialism (on which the growth of an animation industry depends), as well as a global 'brain drain' of skilled labour. As Producer A notes, "There isn't a fulltime employer for people that work in the animation industry because there's not enough work being commissioned." This lack of job security forces a flattening of the specialized skill base: "you'll see a lot of people working on two sides of the pipeline… on upfront design or modelling and then on lighting or surfacing or comp. That way they know at least they have two contracts per project."[44] The precarious nature of the industry additionally undermines standard career progression. Freelancers are tempted to work for international studios remotely, getting paid in foreign curren-

38) For example, in France, this incentive amounts up to: "30% or 40%, of the qualifying expenditures incurred, and can total a maximum of €30 million per project," "The Tax Rebate for International Productions (TRIP)," *CNC*, accessed April 29, 2024, https://www.cnc.fr/web/en/tax-rebate/the-tax-rebate-for-international-productions-trip_190742.

39) Executive A (Disney), Interview, 2024.

40) See Stefano Ponte, Simon Roberts, and Lance Van Sittert, "'Black Economic Empowerment,' Business and the State in South Africa," *Development and Change* 38, no. 5 (2007), 933–955, and "SA Film & TV Production and Co-Production (SA Film) — The Department of Trade Industry and Competition," May 15, 2019, http://www.thedtic.gov.za/financial-and-non-financial-support/incentives/film-incentive/sa-film-tv-production-and-co-production-sa-film/.

41) Some of the accounts and payments for Kizazi Moto were routed via Triggerfish's Irish office.

42) Particularly as companies like Triggerfish were already working on other productions at the same time, for example. *AAu's Song* (2023, Disney+).

43) Executive B (Triggerfish), Interview, 2024.

44) Producer A, Interview, 2024.

cies that have a favourable exchange rate with the South African Rand. In doing so, they are often likely to accept roles that are below their grade.[45]

To give additional context, it is worth noting that the original pitch for the *Kizazi Moto* project had been motivated, in part with the aim of African industry capacity building.[46] Disney EMEA and Triggerfish had previously collaborated on a project to support the development of African script writers.[47] This script writing incubator had been remarkably successful[48] and there was the resulting ambition on behalf of executives from both companies to work together to support the development of African Directors.[49] As such, the initial *Kizazi Moto* pitch had included training for Directors, with budgeting for interns (in an attempt to build a culture around these new voices). During the pitching and greenlighting process, this training arm of the project was largely dropped as it was deemed "an expensive part of the production that doesn't necessarily add to the final product."[50]

This initial thrust for the project to provide a basis for broader-based industry capacity building and training had a legacy: it remained in the minds of the Directors and other members of the production team as an ambition, providing a backdrop for some of the tensions and contestations that surfaced around the projects purpose: "This is what you guys sold, you sold this as an African project. So I said, 'you better deliver on that!'"[51]

Project Organization: *People/Team/Diversity*

During the early pre-production phase, it was clear that the scale and global complexity of the project required the recruitment of further members of the senior production team. At full tilt the project "had over 1000 contracts across the globe… we'd invoice Disney separately in Euros, Rands, Dollars, get money into different accounts and then we'd pay-out depending on where people were based. And then there'd be a tank in the exchange rate![52] It was super complex!" [53]

During the recruitment phase Triggerfish was keenly aware of the need to redress the gender imbalance within the production. The selection of directors from the call-out had resulted in only two female directors out of the 13. "We struggled to find female directors because many of them were super busy. There are less women directors to start with and those that had won awards were already noticed and employed."[54] There was a conscious

45) "They are happy to take a Junior job because they get paid like Seniors would in SA, they're like, 'its so much less hours and I get paid so much more money'," (Producer A, 2024).
46) "A big part of it was our initial collaboration with Triggerfish," (Executive A, Interview, 2024).
47) *Story Lab* (2015) — an African script writing incubator. Georg Szalai, "South African Animation Studio Triggerfish Launches Story Lab With Disney Support," *The Hollywood Reporter* (blog), July, 15, 2015.
48) Resulting in commissions from Netflix and Disney: *Kiya and the Kimoja Heroes*, and *Supa Team 4* (2023).
49) "We still had the problem that when directors come on board they usually want to change the script anyway and we don't get many opportunities to train directors"(Executive B, Interview, 2024).
50) Executive B (Triggerfish) and Executive A (Disney) noted that despite this, the team did offer a degree of training and mentoring for directors during the project.
51) Director B, Interview, 2024.
52) 'Tank', meaning a sudden drop or decline in the currency exchange rate.
53) Executive B (Triggerfish), Interview, 2024.
54) Executive B (Triggerfish), Interview, 2024.

push to redress this gender imbalance by recruiting female script writers, producers and into other key creative roles.

The project was also an opportunity to recruit with a broader view to diversity within Triggerfish itself. "I knew I wanted more development execs as Triggerfish does have a history of being White, male [led]."[55] Tendayi Nyeke, was recruited as executive Producer and two experienced Senior Producers were brought on to the project: Leanne Preston Cortez and Kaya Kuhn, as well as line-producer Larney de Swardt. Triggerfish had been keen to recruit Nyeke for some time, but it was only with the budget stability of Disney funding that Triggerfish was able to create an attractive full-time post with her in mind.[56]

There was a push for diversity from the Directors themselves: "Early on, the team starts ramping up. In the beginning it's just you and a concept artist and then suddenly, it's just like 12 people got hired, and not one of them was black!"[57] Producers and Directors spoke insightfully about the benefits of crew diversity as well as the significant barriers to achieving it. Interviewees noted that existing networks and working relationships within the industry are "globally… still very Male and very White"[58] and more narrowly the context of the South African studio industry, still deeply implicated in the legacies of racial inequality, as well as the lack of development opportunities to strengthen an African industry network.

Producer A and Director A spoke of how the push for diversity within the crew raised a debate regarding the understanding of diversity as a guiding principle, extending beyond race to include gender identity and sexual orientation, allowing for an African-futurist project to be responsive and responsible to the breadth of African experience.[59] Producer A noted that unlike South Africa, where respect for freedom of sexual orientation and gender identity are enshrined in the Bill of Rights, in many African countries (where some directors were based), homosexuality is oftentimes illegal and gender identities strictly policed.

Friction in Production: *Race, Bias, and Studio Cultures*

Within *Kizazi Moto's* complex and intricate production process there were points of synergy between individuals and studios and there were points of friction. This section focuses further on examining the sources of friction and ways that they were mitigated and understood, with the purpose of further elucidating aspects of the local and global landscape that these actors had to navigate. The decision not to focus on the many, fruitful points of synergy between key actors of this extraordinary project is in no way intended to under-

55) Executive B (Triggerfish), Interview, 2024.
56) Nyeke was later headhunted by Netflix and she left Triggerfish before the completion of *Kizazi Moto.*
57) Director A, Interview, February 9, 2024.
58) Executive B (Triggerfish), Interview, 2024.
59) See, for example: Bisi Alimi, "If You Say Being Gay Is Not African, You Don't Know Your History," *The Guardian*, September 9, 2015, sec. opinion, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/sep/09/being-gay-african-history-homosexuality-christianity.

mine or deny their existence. It is purely that points of discord are likely to be more helpful to this paper's purpose: the illumination of aspects of the constraints and barriers of the transnational studio landscape from an African, post-colonial perspective.

Tensions are inherent in the production process and particularly in productions of transnational nature,[60] and the particular tenor of these tensions were evident in communications between studio, Director and production team. Directors came up against a 'narrowed' understanding of racism, where 'proper racism is thought of in the past tense' or even 'frozen.'[61] Directors and Producers pointed to perceived levels of presumed superiority, miscommunication, and at times, severely biased expectations of African creatives and crew:

> I don't think we were what they [the studios] expected. They were expecting 'signed for'[62] Africans, you know, 'simple,' not people who are more skilled than their entire studio put together.[63]
>
> We needed to protect African directors more and push for their vision against that kind of white saviourism colonialism bullshit that comes in [the form of] 'we know better than you because … you're just a primitive African,'[64]

All three directors interviewed and those on the production team related moments when they felt dismissed and made to feel as if they were complaining, particularly when making the case for diversity on their team:

> It took a long time for people to see the value of brining Africans and Afro diasporans into the project.[65]
>
> It isn't about charity. It is necessary if you want to create an authentic film and for it to have a unique quality, we need to bring the people into the room who can represent the culture and the tones we are trying to tap into.[66]

In many instances there was frustration with the inability of studios to acknowledge bias inherent in the very tools of contemporary animation making. The digital realisation of character hair and skin tone were sources of friction.[67] Director A spoke of frustrated communication with members of their production team regarding the main character's

60) For a discussion of this and exploration of tensions inherent in transnational (film) productions see Jane Landman, "'Not in Kansas Anymore:' Transnational Collaboration in Television Science Fiction Production," in *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media Industries*, eds. Vicki Mayer, Miranda J. Banks, and John T. Caldwell (New York: Routledge, 2009), 140–153. And more generally Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Priceton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

61) Alana Lentin, "Racism in public or public racism: doing racism in 'post-racial times,'" *Ethnic and racial Studies* 39, no. 1 (2016), 33–48.

62) i.e. tokenism: 'signing on behalf of others.'

63) Director B, Interview, 2024.

64) Producer B, Interview, 2024.

65) Director A, Interview, 2024.

66) Director C, Interview, 2024.

67) "If you spoke to every Director, they would all have their own freak out about this!" (Producer A, Interview, 2024).

skin colour and tone. The concept art and design called for dark skin tones of the characters, in-keeping with the setting and context of the film's story but the reply from the lighting supervisor had been, 'no we can't do this', and the Director was asked to make the character lighter in skin tone. Producer A spoke of how they resorted to tasking their project manager to seek out online tutorials on lighting that could be shared with the technical lighting team. Producer A also resorted to bringing in precedents such as the Disney/Pixar feature *Soul* (2020) to evidence that the lighting of dark-skinned characters for animation was entirely, technically possible. Another Director reported on how they discovered that their character's body shape had been changed without them being notified. The female character had lost her curves and hips due to a freelance designer on the project thinking that it would be best to 'slim her down', based on (unexamined and presumed to be 'neutral') aesthetic choices. Similarly, the Directors came up against technical teams who presumed the conventions of the animation process to be neutral. When developing animation for characters with African hair textures, an interviewee reported frustratedly that "every time they came back with 'no but the polygons and the this and that, or it's too much render'. And I was like, it is hair! How can you tell me this!?"[68]

Another area of friction developed around the conventions and established norms of the 3D animation pipeline. One experienced industry interviewee explained that there is markedly more rigidity in the more established studios and that any project of this kind would need to navigate this. What was different about *Kizazi Moto* was that the Directors felt that the lack of general awareness of colonial legacies and assumptions muddied the communication with their service studios on the production at times. Directors' creative decisions were mis-interpreted as power struggles (they were made to feel that they were complaining) thereby undermining the ability for the team to arrive at creative solutions and an agreed point of view. As one interviewee noted, when flexibility was requested or unconventional routes suggested, the response was often: "No you just don't know how to do things properly, this is how it's done, this is how it's always been done and we have the money to do it that way."[69] An example was given where a studio, working with the software *Unreal Engine* pushed back on the directors and their team with regards to what was visually possible, "They were pushing us in terms of what Unreal could and couldn't do. They couldn't achieve a look for the effects for [the film]". The Producer's solution was to bring in the studio run by the Directors of the film, based in Africa. "We said to the Director's studio: 'whatever you can fix in comp, do it, here's some money, have fun'. And they kit-bashed stuff and hacked it and got what they wanted. Because they weren't trying to follow some big studio pipeline."[70]

Directors and Producers noted that smaller European studios and women-led studios demonstrated more flexibility and were more willing to take creative risks. Whereas the more established, South African studio, Triggerfish[71] was considerably more rigid, keen to

68) Producer A, Interview, 2024.
69) Director B, Interview, 2024.
70) Producer A, Interview, 2024.
71) "Triggerfish is White, male, and comes from a very privileged blind spot whereas when working with our Ugandan studios, our female led studios, our small studios who've had to like fight a little bit harder, they are a lot more flexible." (Producer A, 2024).

fit in with the established, global industry pipeline:[72] "So when [the director] came in and he's used to running his 'wild west' studio [in Africa]… he'd want something that he knew was quick and easy to do if you didn't do it by the Triggerfish book. He came up against quite a lot of 'No you can't do it that way.'"[73]

Executive B noted that perceptions of studio rigidity should be understood in relation to the global studio context and the nature of anthology animation projects in general, where each short film is treated as if it is a singular unit 'but the budget and pipelines don't necessarily account for that.'[74] Executive B noted that Triggerfish comes from a feature film background, where artists specialise in a particular area, "so it's not always possible to hack something together like a smaller studio can, where everyone is a generalist." In addition, many of the international studios on the project came from a TV background "where the turnaround is much faster and each stage is locked off without any chance of going back, compared to the Kizazi project, where we did multiple versions of just the animatic, for example" [75] Executive B also noted that the majority of the directors on the project "were first time directors, so [lack of experience] could also have accounted for some of the friction and frustrations and decisions made. They [the Directors] already all felt a huge amount of responsibility to deliver something good and worthwhile, so although working with European studios must have affected the end results of course, I'm not sure we would've managed working with local studios as well."[76]

Authorial Control

When undertaking interviews, it had been expected that there would be reports of friction regarding the script development and overall narrative control of the short films, given the nature of the project: African content and creatives being commissioned by a global media conglomerate, mediated by a studio within Africa that has not yet meaningfully challenged its roots in the residual privileges of apartheid. Contestations of authorial control, however, were not raised by any of the interviewees. When asked directly, many even went so far as to say that there 'was no brief' from Disney.[77] In addition, interviewees spoke openly of the support, particularly from individuals within Disney EMEA in delivering 'their vision as directors', insisting that Disney was 'hands-off' regarding the content, form and story-telling structure of each short film: "They organized a lot of sessions, like every week it was a new person saying how they wanted us to be more authentic to the culture and whatnot. They enforced that repeatedly until it actually went through our skulls that they were not trying to make us make 'Disney Africa' but [rather to] tell our own stories." [78]

72) "[they say] this is how it is done overseas so this is how we should be doing it" (Producer B, 2024).
73) Director B, Interview, 2024.
74) Singular units are the way feature films are developed as opposed to episodes (tv series) where certain aspects are repeated and re-used.
75) Executive B, Email correspondence, November 2024.
76) Executive B, Email, 2024.
77) "It was an open brief. I mean, obviously with the African vision. But we did want it to be optimistic because that's Disney's brand, you know, and there's a lot of dystopian stuff out there." (Executive B, Interview, 2024)
78) Director B, Interview, 2024.

What is striking, however is the marked similarities in form, content, thematic and narrative approach of each of the 10 short films. As one Director notes, 'There are so many similarities between topics and themes of the films! But this was not planned because we were actually working in silos!"[79] Each film production team had worked in isolation from one another with the aim of preventing any cross pollination between the films. However, most of the 10 films share recurring themes with archetypal characters and individualist narrative arcs: hero's journey, coming-of-age, magical children proving themselves against the odds to an older generation (featuring strong female, grandparent, ancestral supporting characters). In addition, it is striking that none of the 10 central, pubescent characters were written to explore sexual orientation or gender identity — themes now increasingly common in 'coming of age' popular narratives and in media.[80] This lack is particularly marked given the attempts made to include strong, often older (though only cis/heteronormative) female characters, as well as the fact that South Africa (where lead studio Triggerfish is based) is a bastion and regional exception in terms of queer rights and protections.[81]

What were, then, the processes or mechanisms by which this degree of homogeneity arose? When asked directly, interviewees referred to the initial pitch for a story that had been brought by the Directors themselves to Triggerfish and Disney. It is not clear therefore, whether in response the call-out for a 'Disney' pitch, directors self-censored in relation to their anticipation, perhaps unfounded, of Disney's expectations of 'African content' and fashioning them after successful precedents. Or whether perceptions of conservative religious views held by some key role players within the lead studio or the socially conservative nature of the global media corporation inadvertently had a dampening effect through the initial selection of scripts. As Executive B points out, there was indeed a project brief given to the Directors, albeit one that emerged through the form of script revisions, production comments and editing advice. "We did want it to be optimistic because that's Disney's brand."[82] "[Directors] were told it had to be aspirational, and it had to be Afrofuturism. They were all under the same creative team. They all got notes from this same team so of course that will carry through."[83] Each project, was guided and under the direct control of a central creative executive production team: "Some of the scripts, went through up to 17 drafts!"[84]

Executive B explains, "We asked a lot of questions, but most [script] changes were aimed at pushing the films further apart. The editorial advice we gave was…to make sure their intentions for their stories were coming across to an audience."[85] It should be asked

79) Director B, Interview, 2024.

80) "2022 GLAAD Studio Responsibility Index | GLAAD," *glaad*, October 13, 2022, accessed December 4, 2024, https://glaad.org/sri/2022/.

81) South Africa's Constitution is the first in the world to prohibit unfair discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. It thereby guarantees equality for gay and lesbian people. ('Gay and Lesbian Rights'). See also: Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe, eds., *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands: Studies of African Homosexualities*, 1. ed. (paperback) (New York: Palgrave, 2001); Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe, *Islamic Homosexualities: Culture, History, and Literature* (New York: New York University Press, 1997).

82) Executive B (Triggerfish), Interview, 2024.

83) Producer B, Interview, 2024.

84) Executive B (Triggerfish), Interview, 2024.

85) Executive B (Triggerfish), Email correspondence, 2024.

then, how was this 'audience' defined? In earlier sections of this paper, it was noted that the critical and financial success of the feature film *Black Panther* (2018) had been an important precedent and supportive contextual factor in Disney's greenlighting of the budget for *Kizazi Moto*. It is instructive here, to revisit this and note, as Executive Producer A explained: "One of the things that helped was the success of Black Panther with *US audiences*"[86] (emphasis added). If North American audiences are the yardstick for success for the corporation[87] this may indeed have filtered down into the selection, pre-production, production and post-production processes, compromising the very impetus of an African futurist project.

Given that Directors did not raise concern regarding their authorial control as such, shows that there is a broader scope of creative control that needs to be acknowledged that includes the composition and site of the animation production itself: the impact and creativity of 'below the line'[88] workers, as well as the world views and power relations that often serve as interruptions or at least complications in communication between Director, crew and studio.

Conclusion

This paper has focused on the frictions and contestations within the production of *Kizazi Moto: Generation Fire*, as an attempt to better understand the way that contemporary media practitioners navigate the animation production landscape from an African perspective in a global, transnational context. Unpicking points of tension helped zoom-in on particular aspects of the transnational animation production terrain, it's barriers and possibilities, in the hope that patterns of labour circulation and meaning-making can be better questioned and understood. As previously noted, this focus should not be taken to suggest that the *Kizazi Moto* project was not also teeming with bold and deeply creative working connections (to which all interviewees testified). Indeed, between the release date of the animated anthology and the writing of this paper, several African Directors from the project have had further projects commissioned and some intra-African networks and connections that developed through the *Kizazi Moto* production are likely to gather more support as a result. In South Africa, Triggerfish (with continued calls for it to decolonize) performs the thankless task of pushing projects like *Kizazi Moto* forward, clearing a path for those who are already challenging the studio's dominance, a burgeoning Pan-African grouping of young media makers — some of whom were interviewed for this paper.

The paper has argued that the contending voices in the interview record can be understood within the frame of post-colonial theory within a 'dialectic of cultural struggle,' which, as Stuart Hall writes, "goes on continuously, in the complex lines of resistance and

86) Executive A (Disney), Interview, 2024.

87) See: Malou Van Rooij, "Carefully Constructed Yet Curiously Real: How Major American Animation Studios Generate Empathy Through a Shared Style of Character Design," *Animation* 14, no. 3 (2019), 191–206, https://doi.org/10.1177/1746847719875071.

88) For more on this term and debate specific to the field of animation, see Sabine Heller, "Below-the-line creativity and authorship in animation: the reality of animation production," *Revue française des sciences de l'information et de la communication*, no. 18 (2019).

acceptance, refusal and capitulation, which make the field of culture a sort of constant battlefield. A battlefield where no once- for- all victories are obtained but where there are always strategic positions to be won and lost."[89] This paper has highlighted moments of 'resistance' and 'acceptance' around strategic positions of representation and authorial control, in the hope of identifying more precise nodes where inequality and colonial legacies can be challenged within animation production. The paper aims to point out particular barriers to change as areas for further research, namely to question: the 'neutrality' of the tools and processes of animation making (technical, software, pipeline), the nature and composition of production crew, and the allocation of service studios (working relationships and a re-evaluation of creative control), as well as further study into animation specific cultural circuits.

Contending ideas and imaginings about Africa and African-ness[90] framed both the context and focus of the *Kizazi Moto* production. The interview record reveals how overlapping concepts of identities, assumptions and biases underpinned the relationships that shaped the production process, further complicating and contesting ideas of an international division of cultural labour.[91] The billing of the *Kizazi Moto* project as African, was a core orientating focus for the project and for those involved in its creative development. The slippage between the ambitions and frictions inherent in this project can be read in the space between the two following two quotes:

> I don't think it really matters where production takes place — US productions are often outsourced to the East. For [*Kizazi Moto*], an African studio pitched the project and produced the project. Some of the work was outsourced to international studios, sure, but the creators[/Directors] were all African and that was what made it African.[92] Initially I'd been hoping to work with a studio on the [African] continent, so for the decision for the… production and the money to go externally to Europe, I was very upset by that. I think I had to spend a couple of days thinking about how I fit into new neo-colonial structures.[93]

One voice speaks of the compromises necessary to build projects of this scale within the limits of the current industry landscape, and the other calls for the need to push up against the legacies that have formed this landscape, demanding change, in keeping with the titular expectations of the projects creators, "We titled it Generation Fire…because it was this new generation of film makers kind of looking back at the past and where they came from."[94]

89) Hall, Stuart, 2019.

90) For more detailed discussion on these interconnected images and imaginings see Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall, "Writing the World from an African Metropolis," *Public Culture* 16, no. 3 (2004), 347–372, https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-16-3-347.

91) A term coined and explored by Toby Miller in Toby Miller, "The New International Division of Cultural Labor Revisited," *Revista ICONO14: Revista Científica de Comunicación y Tecnologías Emergentes* 14, no. 2 (2016), 97, https://doi.org/10.7195/ri14.v14i2.992.

92) Executive B, Interview, 2024.

93) Director C, Interview, 2024.

94) Executive B, Interview, 2024.

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Bring Your Toys to Works

Desk Displays at the Animation Studio

Abstract
Animators distinguish themselves through decorating their workspaces, which is why we should explore how this social ritual reflects the values inherent in animation production culture. Previous analyses have interpreted these practices as resistance to the alienating power of the studio, focusing on large companies such as Nickelodeon. However, many diverse office environments remain unexplored. Drawing from long-form interviews with animators across Atlanta, Georgia, this research uses discourse analysis and ethnographic methods to study how decorations differ in their purpose and function. Participants revealed myriad motivations for their choices: some decorations, such as calendars and anatomical models, were purely utilitarian, while others served an expressive purpose, grounding the animator aesthetically and fostering communication with coworkers. Yet, as studios actively brand themselves as cool, fun workplaces displaying toys as part of their décor, individual items may no longer resist corporate power. Recalcitrant animators find other means, displaying a parody of a family photo or snarky slogans such as "I'm Dead Inside." Some refuse to decorate their desk at all, either as a means to avoid infantilization or to maintain a clear division between labor and leisure.

Keywords
animation, creative labor, cultural capital, material culture, media industries, production culture

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Introduction

Animation is a profession that resides at the intersection of creativity and industry, characterized at once by imagination and whimsy as well as by alienation and anonymity. It is this alienation which pushes animators to express their creativity in the workplace through eccentric behavior, dress, and ostentatious desk decoration. John Caldwell, citing Lisa Leff's research on Nickelodeon Studios, suggests the ritual among animators is an adapta-

tion to resist the alienation experienced as studios sort them into anonymous "cubes."[1] The desk decoration ritual demonstrates the participant's capacity to think, act, and express themselves as an authentic creative professional. So, animators enact this ritual in part to ward off the inauthentic "suits" (upper-level management), partially alleviating their own anxieties over finding themselves stuck in an abstract and commercial position. Such an act allows the animator to superimpose a personal place upon the studio's anonymously designated space.[2] Through a study of workspace personalization, this article builds on John Caldwell's insights, exploring how such rituals allow animators to make daily tasks easier and more pleasant, communicate amongst coworkers, and express values outside the commercial scope of the studio's objectives. The animation industry can be described as a multi-dimensional space which spans from economic production to social status. A solely financial appraisal fails to appreciate the "symbolic struggles" that occur in and across disparate fields. What is at stake is one's very representation within this social world, as well as one's place in the social echelon.[3]

This article continues Caldwell's thread of research by drawing from thirty structured interviews from animators based in Atlanta, Georgia, to argue that animators make use of desk decoration rituals for *helpful, inspirational, expressive* and *resistant* purposes. Helpful objects fulfill utilitarian roles, functioning as tools to assist in the production process. Inspirational decorations create a pleasurable aesthetic zone that simultaneously makes the long workdays more endurable while expressive objects enable conversation with peers, establishing the animator as a fellow geek and signaling their dedication to their position in a precarious work environment.[4] Resistant decoration practices have emerged in response to animation studios branding themselves as fun places to work, adopting open floor plans and filling the space with toys and other whimsical paraphernalia. Primal Screen Studio, for example, once adorned available shelves and rafters with myriad robot figures, from the retro to the futuristic.[5] If the studio actively cultivates such a reputation through this decor, animators may turn to more sarcastic or minimal forms of decoration to resist the managerial invitation to have fun, in an effort to define their identity as something opposed to corporate strategies.

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1) Lisa Leff, "The Creative Spirits of Nickelodeon Animation Studio Have Turned Their Drab Office Cubicles into Celebrations of Personal Style," *Los Angeles Times Sunday Magazine*, November 28, 1999, 22, as cited in John Thornton Caldwell, *Production Culture: Industrial Reflexivity and Critical Practice in Film and Television* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 78.

2) This friction can be described as a politics of place and space, in which places constitute the local and the personal, necessitating negotiation with the spaces defined by political institutions and global capital. David Morley, *Television, Audiences and Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1992), 282, as cited in Serra Tinic, *On Location: Canada's Television Industry in a Global Market* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 30.

3) Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity, 1992), 229.

4) The term geek refers to an individual knowledgeable in particular niche subjects, typically of the pop-cultural variety. Because animators are creators of pop-culture in their own right, knowledge regarding various television shows, films, and video games provide an advantage in communicating with colleagues and clients alike.

5) Primal Screen was Atlanta's oldest animation studio, establishing itself in 1995 before closing down in 2024. Amid Amidi, "Atlanta-Based Animation Studio Primal Screen to Shut down after 30 Years," *Cartoon Brew*, accessed October 27, 2024, https://www.cartoonbrew.com/business/atlanta-based-animation-studio-primal-screen-to-shut-down-after-30-years-239621.html.

Animator desk decoration practices constitute what Michel de Certeau would distinguish as a tactic, defined by its grassroots manipulation of resources and improvisatory nature, as opposed to a strategy of preconceived maneuvers imposed from the top down.[6] The animation studio's strategies are oriented around the production of commercials, television shows, video games, and films that can be monetized across a variety of products as intellectual property. In this setting, capital manifests both economically and culturally, with cultural capital — achieved through degrees, portfolios, and displays of shared interests — often dictating who advances or secures greater job stability. Animators tactically accrue cultural capital, in the form of portfolio pieces, degrees, and enthusiastic displays of geekiness both online and at the workplace to negotiate better jobs and attain a degree of stability in an otherwise precarious industry. Cultural capital tends to determine who is considered legitimate, whose contract is renewed, or who receives the promotion to become lead or director.[7] This type of capital also plays a role in deciding what practices, strategies, and forms of knowledge are useful or usable in the field. Animators accumulate this capital by skillfully navigating a competitive and precarious profession, while using decorative rituals to assert their creative identity and to resist the impersonal standardization of the studio environment.

These desk decorations are rituals in that they represent a habitual practice that stand in for some greater social or transcendental value.[8] The purpose of this ritual, according to the animators, is to exercise creative autonomy, as Derek Iverson says in Leff's article: "they kind of have to let us do what we want because they want to encourage creative expression…"[9] The animators decorate their office space in wild and whimsical ways, and they frame this liberty as stemming from their status as creative laborers. Caldwell argues that media analysis requires study of the cultural and symbolic significance of production spaces and the rituals of production undertaken.[10] Production spaces have a culture and rituals unique to individual locations; they only make sense as workers enter and legitimize the site as a studio. For Émile Durkheim, rituals function as a system of ideas through which individuals imagine their society and their relations within it, externalizing values onto ritual objects and defining the sacred from the profane.[11] Rituals within media production are self-reflections in addition to expressions of production culture.[12] A study of production spaces would be myopic without attention to the particular practices and rituals that transpire there. Thus, it is vital to scrutinize not only the workers' trade rituals but also the animator's tactics in which they transform their work spaces into habitable places from the bottom up.[13]

6) Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 30.
7) Ibid., 30.
8) Nick Couldry, *Media Rituals: A Critical Approach* (London: Routledge, 2003), 3.
9) Leff, "The Creative Spirits of Nickelodeon Animation Studio Have Turned Their Drab Office Cubicles into Celebrations of Personal Style."
10) Caldwell, *Production* Culture, 69.
11) Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 227.
12) Ibid., 70.
13) Craig Calhoun, Richard Sennett, and Harel Shapira, "Poiesis Means Making," *Public Culture* 25, no. 2 (2013), 197.

Method

As a part of studying these rituals, in-depth interviews with thirty animators were conducted between December 29, 2018, to August 29, 2019. These participants needed to meet two requirements: first, they were employed in the production of animated content or had received training as an animator; second, they had lived in Atlanta for at least a year. Keeping the research constrained to Atlanta represents an effort to control the vast number of variables at work in everyday interactions; at least they have a geography in common. Participants range in age from twenty to fifty plus, with the average being in the late twenties and early thirties. Everyone had an undergraduate education or vocational training, with some even having MAs or MFAs specifically in animation. Interviews ranged from thirty minutes to four and a half hours, averaging around ninety minutes. Conducting interviews face to face proved difficult for the many who work late hours. In the end, the majority took place over Google Meet.

Twelve of thirty respondents were employed at the same studio for more than two years. The remaining individuals moved between short-term contracts, working from home, or relocating offices regularly. While all twelve studio-based participants worked on animated content, not all of them are categorized as "animators" by industry standards. Some held roles such as background designers, illustrators, modelers, riggers, and compositors for animated content. A few individuals with animation degrees and/or industry experience transitioned to full-time employment in animation-related fields such as motion design, game design, and visual effects. Some worked on television programs, but the majority produced digital content for advertising and streaming. The majority of participants were white, followed by African Americans, Asians, and Hispanics. At the time of the interview, fifty six percent identified as female, while forty four percent identified as male. For demographic information, see the Appendix at the end of this article.

These interviews involved twenty-five pre-written questions, although participants often wandered into topics to be asked about later, resulting in omitting questions and reordering on the fly. These questions and the interview process were approved by Georgia State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) which holds a Federal Wide Assurance with the Office for Human Research Protections. This assurance confirms compliance with Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) regulations for human subject protection, incorporating the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects. The IRB is responsible for safeguarding the rights and welfare of human research participants, adhering to the ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. In compliance with the IRB, participants must remain anonymous, ensuring this research could not result in potential retribution from employers. Because the animation industry in Atlanta is relatively small, mentioning specific studios at which participants work has been avoided for this reason.

This article focuses exclusively on the physical accessories on the animator's desk. This is due to the structured nature of the interview process, in which one of the questions approved was "What is on your desk? Why?" Participants did not bring up what is on their digital desktop, neither backgrounds nor screensavers, although a few discussed their favorite software and methods of customization, such as brush presets and hotkeys. This is

partially due to the nature of the question asked, along with potential technological factors. For example, screensavers are rarely used in animation studios now that cathode-ray tube (CRT) monitors, which were susceptible to burn-in, have largely been replaced with liquid-crystal displays (LCD). Digital backgrounds are rarely visible at the studio as well, because animators typically have software like Toon Boom Harmony, Adobe After Effects, or Autodesk Maya open when they are working. This means that backgrounds are only visible for a few seconds when switching between programs or logging off, while toys and posters remain on display regardless of the task at hand. While digital technology is essential for animators and can be customized in categories similar to helpful, inspirational, and resistant, its expressive capacity remains in question. How animators in Atlanta incorporate digital displays into their daily tactics would need to be explored in a future article.

Little scholarly attention has been devoted to the cultural industries outside a few coastal elites such as New York City, Los Angeles, and Vancouver, rendering Atlanta uncharted territory regarding the animation industry.[14] Serving as an intermediary city, it captures resources such as creative laborers and outsourced production from the aforementioned coastal hubs to sustain itself in a post-industrial economy focused on the production of intellectual property.[15] This process is heavily influenced by the entrepreneurial ideology imported from California's media and technology industry, where digital exceptionalism flourishes, leading to a disconnect between the interests of the locals and the global companies which set up shop in their neighborhoods.[16] An optimal location for studying the strategies of creative laborers, Atlanta is a city in-between the influences of global cultural and commercial hierarchies.

Participants provided data for micro-level analysis, comparable to describing a location on foot, whereas macro-level analysis would be comparable to charting a city from a jet aircraft.[17] To continue this analogy, this research follows a mid-level "helicopter" view, examining social forces as they are experienced and communicated by participants. Game development,[18] web design,[19] and other animation-adjacent industries have already undergone mid-level analyses. This study divided and categorized these transcriptions according to broad categories, following Grounded Theory's spiraling approach, in which narrower groupings became components of grander themes.[20] These themes were ar-

14) Michael Curtin, "Thinking Globally: From Media Imperialism to Media Capital," in *Media Industries: History, Theory, and Method*, eds. Jennifer Holt and Alisa Perren (Hoboken: Wiley Publishing, 2011), 108–119.

15) Lealan LaRoche, "Introduction," in *Fostering the Creative Class: Creating Opportunities for Social Engagement*, 2008, 3–7, accessed October 27, 2024, https://georgiaplanning.org/student_reports/2008/8--Creative%20Region/Creative_Region_report.pdf.

16) The Web 2.0 delineates the internet of 1997–2001 from the "2.0" era, characterized by a renewed emphasis on "transparency, participation, and openness." Alice E. Marwick, "You May Know Me from YouTube: (Micro-)Celebrity in Social Media," in *A Companion to Celebrity*, eds. P. David Marshall and Sean Redmond (Hoboken: Wiley, 2015), 333–350.

17) Timothy Havens, Amanda D. Lotz, and Serra Tinic, "Critical Media Industry Studies: A Research Approach," *Communication, Culture & Critique* 2, no. 2 (2009), 234–253.

18) Casey O'Donnell, *Developer's Dilemma: The Secret World of Videogame Creators* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2014).

19) Helen Kennedy, *Net Work: Ethics and Values in Web Design* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2011).

20) Antony Bryant, *Grounded Theory and Grounded Theorizing: Pragmatism in Research Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 96.

ranged into productive dualisms, including enjoyment vs. alienation, traditional practices vs. digital software, and tactics vs. strategies, to name a few.[21] Including professional perspectives to describe industry discourse and practices while maintaining a broad framework is imperative, as the animation industry is influenced by the unrelenting explosion of technological innovation and cultural shifts. From poorly understood yet potent digital tools to the overwhelming force of the market, the ethical frameworks and values of the profession are perpetually shifting. Although this qualitative approach is not suited for making general claims applicable to a global industry, it does provide a nuanced view of the specific circumstances and opportunities these creative laborers face.

This is already a well-established path in the study of media industries; some early examples include Leo Calvin Rosten's *Hollywood: The Movie Colony, the Movie Makers*[22] and Hortense Powdermaker's *Hollywood the Dream Factory*,[23] which examine the ways in which creative laborers in Hollywood become alienated from their work. Hesmondalgh and Baker undertake a study of three different areas of the cultural industries, television, music recording, and magazines, to form a larger theory of ethics and labor.[24] Areas adjacent to animation, such as game development,[25] or web design,[26] have undergone mid-level analyses in which interviews from laborers inform arguments about the industry's power-ladened structure. However, critical media industry studies have not been applied to the animation industry specifically in Atlanta.

Analysis

Animated media have entered a state of hyper-fragmentation, as innumerable genres in countless forms and formats are produced for proliferating platforms and applications.[27] This has blurred the lines between special-effects heavy live-action films and animated movies as well as professional and amateur production, as careers in animation become increasingly casual and precarious.[28] Digital platforms dramatize this contradiction, as amateur and professional animation diffuses, so too must the professional identities of those that produce it.[29] One is told to follow one's authentic desires, seeking out careers that inspire passion, but this often amounts to trading security for the opportunity to

21) Dualistic theorization is an ancient method for structuring arguments, as Plato positions form against substance and Kant delineates the sublime from the beautiful. Janet Borgerson and Alf Rehn, "General Economy and Productive Dualisms," *Gender, Work & Organization* 11, no. 4 (2004), 457.
22) Leo Rosten, *Hollywood: The Movie Colony, the Movie Makers* (New York: Arno Press, 1970).
23) Hortense Powdermaker, *Hollywood the Dream Factory* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 1950).
24) David Hesmondhalgh and Sarah Baker, *Creative Labour: Media Work in Three Cultural Industries* (London: Routledge, 2011), 14.
25) Ibid., 14.
26) Kennedy, *Net Work*, 32.
27) Dave Valliere and Thomas Gegenhuber, "Entrepreneurial Remixing: Bricolage and Postmodern Resources," *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation* 15, no. 1 (2014), 5–15.
28) c.f. Andrew Ross, *Nice Work If You Can Get It: Life and Labor in Precarious Times* (New York: New York University Press, 2010) and Melissa Gregg, *Work's Intimacy* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011), 250.
29) Phoebe Elefante and Mark Deuze, "Media work, career management, and professional identity: Living labour precarity," *Northern Lights: Film and Media Studies Yearbook* 10, no. 1 (2012), 10.

practice aesthetic judgment on commercial products.[30] Self-expression becomes a means to accrue cultural capital, bulking up the resume and bolstering the online portfolio, turning animation into a game in which one strategically presents oneself according to an increasingly mobile and global culture.[31]

These self-presentation tactics are contextualized by a precarious industry characterized by increasingly short-term contracts and lengthy hiatuses. Participants in this study report similar career trajectories. Freshly graduated from art school, they sought out jobs that add to their portfolio, taking on short term work until linking up with studios that promised better pay and benefits, despite warnings about long hours. Soon after starting, they experienced periods of "crunch," with several reporting working over ten hours a day and six days a week. Some saw working hours increase significantly as deadlines approached, reaching twelve-hour days, eventually escalating to an 85-hour workweek, with barely any time off. The constant extended hours led to fatigue and depression, while a few had to seek medical attention to treat carpal tunnel syndrome, lateral epicondylitis (tennis elbow), and other repetitive stress injuries. It is clear this grueling schedule is often a part of the animation industry's standard operating procedure. A few participants stated they felt deceived, as initial promises of aesthetic freedom and work-life balance were broken, and they were left questioning why they remained in the field. Several found a need to "recalibrate," taking on less work or strategically accepting crunch for limited times, particularly as they entered their thirties, gradually improving their capacity to negotiate through the accumulation of cultural capital.

In spite of the industry's challenges, participants regularly report enjoying their work, preferring a job that allows greater degrees of self-expression over a more stable career. Cynical interpretations of this phenomena chalk it up to the sunk-cost fallacy or, worse, ideological conditioning. For example, Kathleen Kuehn and Thomas Corrigan argue that uncompensated labor performed in the hopes of future employment is "largely not experienced as exploitation or alienation,"[32] implying that some ideological veil renders the worker unable to recognize the conditions of their exploitation. The *illusio*, to make use of Bordieuan terminology, is not an illusion so much as the result of the animator admitting that the stakes of the game are worth pursuing.[33] Acknowledging self-exploitation proves a viable strategy to attain full-time employment and greater degrees of creative autonomy and professional status therein. Some researchers grow myopic as they focus on the *illusio* of these creative careers, missing the participants' genuine enjoyment in the production process, instead claiming they are caught up in some form of social parlor trick.[34] Others lament digital technology's power to enchant, deceive, and control the masses, such as Michael Siciliano's research into music engineers and professional Youtubers.[35] He argues

30) Angela McRobbie, *Be Creative: Making a Living in the New Culture Industries* (Cambridge: Polity, 2016).
31) Ibid.
32) Kathleen Kuehn and Thomas Corrigan, "Hope Labor: The Role of Employment Prospects in Online Social Production," *The Political Economy of Communication* 1, no. 1 (2013), 9.
33) Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 76–77.
34) For a basic overview of these approaches, see Michael L. Siciliano, *Creative Control: The Ambivalence of Work in the Culture Industries* (New York: Columbia Press, 2021), 10.
35) Ibid., 13.

that the cool atmosphere of the studio and the regular rotation of cutting-edge gear enable states of pleasant concentration, sweetening the working conditions without fully masking their bitter aftertaste. However, Siciliano primarily focuses on the gear supplied by the studio, but animators in this study brought their own toys to work, emphasizing their willingness to infuse their workplace with personal meaning.

As desk space is primarily for digital production purposes, the vast majority of objects listed by participants were electronic, including computer monitors, headphones, drawing tablets, and keyboards. Photographs, stationery, and food/beverage were also common, along with the occasional house plant. Video game controllers and puzzles allow for playful activities, which seem categorically different from the myriad toys and action figures that served an aesthetic rather than utilitarian function. In addition to sorting the types of objects listed, this research also defines how these items are used and why they are considered significant.

The interview with Carmen serves as an ideal starting point, because she provides a set of emic categories for the use and purpose of desk decorations at the studio at which she works.[36] In spite of her tight schedule and imminent move to California, she responded to the interview questions, albeit through the relatively data-poor medium of email rather than an interview face to face. Offering a wonderful guide to decoration etiquette in the workplace, she also grants insight into her own practices as well:

> **CARMEN** I like to have a balance of things that inspire me and things that help me.
> **Inspire:** I have a calendar from one of my favorite artists, plants, a sketchbook and a small packet of traditional drawing materials, typically some art books that might be helpful resources, and a very pretty stained-glass lamp from my mother.
> **Help:** A couple small personal pictures, a small bottle of calming hand lotion, and an 8×10 print out of different wrist and back stretches, water, snacks, plus a few other personal items like a stuffed animal from my best friend and a couple small toys from one of the first projects I ever worked on. Small little objects that don't distract me, but really help the space feel like my own. Oh, also a small bottle of natural cleaning solution. I like being able to clean and dust every so often.

Carmen provided *inspirational* and *helpful*, two categories for desk objects reflecting a tension between contemplation and action, aesthetic and utilitarian quality.[37] Many animators evaluated their decorations in this manner, although the specifics of how they categorized these objects varied. For example, Carmen defined her sketchbook as inspirational but other animators characterized it as a helpful organizational and conceptual tool for taking notes and mapping out tough scenes. This latter category serves as a reminder against a prejudice so ingrained as to appear obvious; technology is helpful. Carmen's placement of toys such as stuffed animals within the helpful category suggests these ob-

36) For demographic information on Carmen, see #7 in the Appendix.
37) Arendt defines the human condition as an unresolvable tension between contemplation and action, Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 150.

jects serve a utilitarian purpose in addition to the power of resisting alienation that Caldwell observed.[38]

Helpful

Animation as an industry is unique in how such whimsical desk objects blur the line between the useful and the purely decorative. For example, some animators keep models for anatomical reference on their desks, figures which can be articulated into funny poses or fiddled with during long meetings. Oscar, a 3D modeler, reported keeping anatomical models on his desk when he needs to reference the human form, over an interview conducted online.[39]

> **COLIN** What's that behind you?
>
> **OSCAR** I recently got this, like, an anatomy model, you know? So, it's just, like, a naked guy who's standing in front of me… and half of it is just muscles. It shows all the muscles on the bones, and the eyeballs, and stuff. Yeah, that's really helpful. I've been using books, but this kind of thing is easy to just look for … like, what you're looking for, the right muscle. Looking through books, well … you're just searching for the right angle, so it's confusing because they'll show you the same arm … but the same muscle at every angle is different. In my background, I'm not so much checking for animation. But I'm checking more for like, the quality of the character, right? If they show a sculpture, the first thing I check is the faces. And I always grab the sculpture and tilt it so it's facing from the chin up. So, that's one thing that a lot of 3D artists kinda struggle with. They come from a 2D background, sometimes. So that's why you tilt it, to see the curvature that kinda connects the front of the face to the side and that's one of those things that I don't do consciously, right?

Digital sculptures require an understanding of three-dimensional space, yet the interface this sculptor uses remains confined to a two-dimensional screen. As a means to bridge this gap, he keeps an anatomical toy on his desk, an object he can freely manipulate in actual space in accordance with the virtual object that he sculpts. Behind the simple ingredients of the face, the bones, the muscles, the eyeballs, and "stuff," lie infinite possible combinations and recombinations. Oscar's capacity to generate cultural capital is directly linked with his expertise in anatomy and form, a strategy born from years of studying sculpture as fine art. Anatomical models are tactically displayed both for their usefulness and their capacity to generate cultural capital, incorporating the tools of his trade like a scholar might fill out the bookshelf in their office. This speaks to the fluidity of these categories, in which desk objects can fulfill multiple functions according to the needs of the animator.

38) Caldwell, *Production Culture*, 78–79.

39) For demographic information on Oscar, see #22 in the Appendix.

The same can be said regarding the ways Oscar customizes his desktop, creating specific keystrokes and making use of apps like Kuadro to both speed up his workflow and express his individuality and expertise in the office.

> **OSCAR** Well about programs… I use Z-Brush, Maya or 3DS Max, one of those and maybe something to render like either V-Ray or Keyshot. Something like just to show my clients what I'm doing. Those are my bread-and-butter. I got Z-brush, Photoshop, maybe some extra programs like… Maya or something like that… There's that little Kuadro program… it's only a little extra thing. It's free; it doesn't take too much time. And I carry all my brushes with me, that's one thing too. I got this little USB drive that has like all my brushes and my hotkeys. My presets and stuff. My hotkeys are really what cuts my workload down to half, right? And everybody's different, like my friend. They tried to use my Z-Brush; they couldn't use it! It's like, where is everything? Why is everything different? … Everybody has a different way of doing things. I don't let anybody… you can take their opinion but it's just an opinion.

In addition to generating cultural capital through sculptural proficiency, Oscar establishes his acumen with digital software through the customization of his office's computer. While this allows him to work more efficiently, it also renders others at the office unable to interface with the software in its current configuration. This cements his role as an expert with skills that cannot be easily replaced, a tactic that expresses the specificity of his proficiency. Like the anatomical models, the digital tools and presets he keeps stored on his USB move fluidly between helpful and expressive categories, simultaneously producing cultural capital while augmenting his ability to accomplish his daily tasks.

Oscar also demonstrates his skill in 3D modeling by displaying three-dimensional prints of his digital sculptures, such as a 5" tall plastic figurine of himself featuring various alien and cybernetic augmentations. He also shows off some physical prototypes he has built, called maquettes, which were constructed as a part of his research process for sculpting digital characters. In a similar manner, Blue Sky's[40] lead sculptor, Vicki Saulls, takes her maquettes and scans them with a 3D scanner to produce a digital mesh.[41] After the scanning process, the maquettes serve as decoration like on Oscar's desk. These physical objects function as helpful tools and expressions of acumen, illustrating how digital tools allow for ubiquitous "hackability and remixability" and, as Lev Manovich argues, represent tactics that can no longer be considered "outside of the system."[42] DreamWorks studios prominently display these maquettes in their behind-the-scenes features and videos online, suggesting these prototypes serve a promotional purpose as well.[43]

40) An American animation studio, Blue Sky Studios, Inc. was based in Greenwich, Connecticut, from 1987 to 2021.

41) Grace Randolph, "Rio 2, Epic, Ice Age 4: Blue Sky Studios Tour! — Beyond The Trailer," *YouTube*, 2013, accessed October 27, 2024, https://youtu.be/WgK_kBxKwz0?t=94.

42) Lev Manovich, "The Practice of Everyday (Media) Life: From Mass Consumption to Mass Cultural Production?," *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 2 (2009), 325.

43) CNN, "Inside DreamWorks' studio," *YouTube*, 2011, accessed October 27, 2024, https://youtu.be/JzMzFom9eX0?t=142.

Fig. 1: Chris Wedge and Vicki Saulls at Blue Sky Studios, with maquettes on display behind them. Retrieved from: Grace Randolph, "Rio 2, Epic, Ice Age 4: Blue Sky Studios Tour! — Beyond The Trailer," *YouTube*, 2013, accessed October 27, 2024, https://youtu.be/WgK_kBxKwz0?t=94.

Inspirational

When toys are not actively being used, they still serve to create an affective environment around the animator, turning an occupational jail-cell into a carefully curated museum of one's favorite things.[44] Alfred Gell defined art as a "technology of enchantment;" one becomes momentarily overwhelmed by the technical perfection and intricacy of the object, losing oneself in an aesthetic experience.[45] Arranging objects around them according to their affective capacity to inspire a sense of place, animators keep desk decorations orbiting in the periphery of their attention as they enter and exit aesthetic states of flow. Thus, their decorations allow for a free recombination of attention at various levels of the individual, cultural, environmental, etc., such that one's focus orients away from the individual towards a multi-layered system of meaning.[46]

Animation production culture encourages the formation of *mono no katari no hitobito*, or "a person who talks about things;" a phenomenon symptomatic of the increasing intimacy between personal identity and material possessions.[47] Animators bringing their toys to work has become a part of the industry's mythology, a widespread tactic to authen-

44) Leff, "The Creative Spirits of Nickelodeon Animation Studio Have Turned Their Drab Office Cubicles into Celebrations of Personal Style."

45) Alfred Gell, "The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology," in *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics*, ed. Jeremy Coote (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 46.

46) Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Halton, *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

47) Ken Ōhira, *Yutakasa no seishinbyō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 1990), as cited in Anne Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 87.

Fig. 2: Dave Weatherly animating at DreamWorks Studio, with toys from *Shrek* (2001) and *Flushed Away* (2006) on his desk. Retrieved from: CNN, "Inside DreamWorks' studio," *YouTube*, 2011, accessed October 27, 2024, https://youtu.be/JzMzFom9eX0?t=142.

ticate their creative role, but each of them have their individual reasons for displaying these particular items. Anna McCarthy's study on decorating the area around the computer, what she refers to as the "geekosphere," including desk objects and stickers on laptops, delineates the ways these spaces express something about the worker and their environment.[48] They reflect current cultural trends within the studio, speak to the accelerated pace and increasing impermanence of the workplace, as well as expressing professional frustrations and anxieties. The geekosphere and the office space represent fields within "a multi-dimensional space" which reflects everything from economic strategies of production to the creation of aesthetically pleasant workspaces.[49]

Carmen continued her explanation of her desk decoration practice with a list of reasons why she finds the practice valuable.

> **CARMEN** I really love getting to decorate my desk and I really think it's important for a couple reasons:
>
> 1. It shows that you're excited to be there and that you're "setting up shop" / "moving in" —> aka you're there for the long haul. You're showing that you like working there and that you want to stay.
> 2. It helps people learn a little bit more about you. I never really thought this was that important until I started working in a studio and saw all of the people's desks that were either filled with stuff or not. I'm a visual learner so seeing all

48) Anna McCarthy, "Geekospheres: Visual Culture and Material Culture at Work," *Journal of Visual Culture* 3, no. 2 (2004), 213.

49) Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 42.

this stuff around people's desks helped me learn their names and remember more information about them.

3. It really helps me feel more at home. I can relax and get into the flow of work much quicker when I feel at home than when I feel uncomfortable. I mean you spend half of your time at work so why not really make it enjoyable for you. Have some snacks neatly stowed in a desk drawer, have a small rug if that's your thing. I can guarantee that people will notice what you're doing and genuinely enjoy it.

   One word of warning: Don't have too much stuff on your desk. It overcrowds you and then everything starts getting really dusty and grimy and that's not a fun thing to have to see. So, if you're going to have figurines or little statues and such sitting on your desk, please for the love of all that is good, take five minutes to dust your desk once a week. Keep a cloth and a natural cleaning solution under your desk. This not only puts you at the pinnacle of professionalism, but it really helps with your health. Let me just say I would not feel good if I sat in a cubby full of dust every day. No thank you.

Although she did not define them as such, objects on one's desk also serve an *expressive* function, communicating to oneself and one's coworkers, as mute material rises out of the real world and takes on significance within a network of meaning. Unlike the relative privacy of the home, desk objects exist in a semi-public environment and therefore not only represent what animators keep for themselves but also what they present to others. These objects can be valuable tools, in that it becomes easier to start a conversation with a coworker if one shares a common interest, facilitating communication in the workplace. This practice also allows for easier differentiation between coworkers, as new animators can get to know their colleagues quickly through the variety of symbols arranged around them. Bringing toys to work, above all, generates cultural capital by participating in the media ritual that helps make the office space fun. Laying down paraphernalia can feel like growing roots, communicating commitment and enthusiasm, while an undecorated desk may suggest that the animator will not linger there. The quality and quantity of the decorations functions as a tactical shorthand for investment or seniority.

Expressive

The decoration practices of animators at Nickelodeon Studios in 1999 transformed each cubicle into a place rich in personal value, featuring themes ranging from angels and winged goddesses for spiritual renewal to a surfer motif for the aspiring SpongeBob animator.[50] Studio tours occur fairly regularly at Disney and Pixar studios, suggesting these decorations are a branding strategy by which studios demonstrate being an entertaining

50) Leff, "The Creative Spirits of Nickelodeon Animation Studio Have Turned Their Drab Office Cubicles into Celebrations of Personal Style."

Fig. 3: Nick Pitera presents John Lasseter's office. Retrieved from: Nick Pitera, "Pixar Animation Studios Tour with Nick Pitera | Disney Live," *YouTube*, February 17, 2017, accessed October 27, 2024, https://youtu.be/mjMQyeZKLto?t=1116.

place to work. Here, animators have contributed to their studio's narrative and reputation,[51] which has turned into a recruitment strategy. Indeed, the success of Pixar's features and shorts are often linked to the studio's fun and creative atmosphere, with filmed tours of the workspace only augmenting their reputation.[52] Nevertheless, in the online guided tour at Pixar, Nick Pitera emphasizes that the animators all did this "on their free time, they kind of collectively decide what they all want it to look like, and they go to town."[53] These decorations are like Hollywood sets, demonstrating a high investment in their position if they would sacrifice their weekends to build it. Toys are ubiquitous throughout the video, on display on animator's desks and in the lobby. The tour concludes at John Lasseter's office, the appearance of which blurs the line between toy store and museum.[54] The sheer number of objects inspires awe, as if he has made it a point to show every toy from every single film he has worked on, as a display of cultural and economic capital. Many of the toys appear in duplicates and in their original container, signaling their value as collectibles by retaining their "mint condition" — an unusual practice for animators. Here, the sheer number and value of items on display establish Lasseter as the most authentic creative in the studio, dazzling others with material representations of the myriad successful franchises he produced.

51) Calhoun – Sennett – Shapira, "Poiesis Means Making," 196.
52) Richard McCulloch, "Whistle While You Work: Branding, Critical Reception and Pixar's Production Culture," in *Storytelling in the Media Convergence Age*, eds. Roberta Pearson and Anthony N. Smith (Berlin: Springer Nature, 2015), 174–189.
53) Nick Pitera, "Pixar Animation Studios Tour with Nick Pitera | Disney Live," *YouTube*, February 17, 2017, accessed October 27, 2024, https://youtu.be/mjMQyeZKLto?t=1116.
54) Ibid.

Desk decorations reflect the economic capital necessary to purchase them; however, this differs from collectible culture in that the economic value of the figure is often secondary to its cultural meaning. This is evident in the fact that few animators keep their desk objects in their original boxes or concern themselves with how the toy's condition impacts its economic value. Thus, cultural capital generated through decoration usually supersedes its economic value. These objects often reflect personal values, as shaped by one's age, history, and context of consumption, generating cultural capital based on taste while facilitating communication by establishing common interests. Figures such as Totoro, Pikachu, and the ubiquitous Pusheen provide a dash of cuteness, while Batman or Lt. Judy Hopps serve as reminders of the characters' best qualities. Totoro, Pikachu, and Pusheen contrast the guns and muscles typically associated with Western toys by combining cuteness with immaculate character design. This reflects an evolution of the Hello Kitty aesthetic, which emerged on the international scene in the 1970s.[55] Between fans of Japanese anime and those who do not understand it, this divide is deeply felt across a generation of animators, as Lila explains:[56]

> **COLIN** Do you share a lot of common interests with your coworkers?
>
> **LILA** Oh yeah, especially like, people my own age. It's weird because the older generation at the studio … Anime. It changed animation forever. Everyone I know, who's older than our generation, never got into anime. Everybody younger than that has watched different things, their humor is different.
>
> **COLIN** It warps your perspective, huh? I guess older animators aren't discussing whether you're more *tsundere*[57] or *kawaii*.[58]
>
> **LILA** The answer is *tsundere*, in case you want to put that in…

Desk objects that represent characters from Japanese media function as a specific form of cultural capital, reflecting whether one is "in the know" or not. Their presentation at the office speaks to a form of communication involving the ad-hoc assembly of symbolic objects, such as toys and tee-shirts, to facilitate the formation of relationships. Without hesitation, the interviewer introduced organically formed Japanese/English fan-speak, cracking a joke about the cultural differences between Lila and her coworkers, indicating a shared cultural literacy. Lila responded with a challenge, disbelieving such a trivial thing could make it into an academic document, while also communicating in such a way as to authenticate the fan-to-fan relationship. The distance between the interviewer and participant closed, with fan-speak rendering them equals from the same community. While these moments may seem insignificant, they are an example of a shared work experience. These toys, and the ideas they represent, contribute to the affective qualities of studio production culture. This describes a texture that grows in richness over accumulated experi-

55) Allison, *Millennial Monsters*, 22.

56) For demographic information on Lila, see #9 in the Appendix.

57) A stock character who initially acts coldly but gradually behaves more warmly over the course of the story, or one who oscillates between these emotional temperatures. Susan Noh, "Subversion and Reification of Cultural Identity in Global Fandoms," *Gnovis Journal* 17, no. 1 (2016), 31.

58) "cute, loveable." Ibid., 31.

ence, disrupted by precarious working conditions that produces mobility over stability. Even though this shared fan-language marks sites that span the cultural and the affective domains, as careers in animation become increasingly characterized by working remotely or in open office spaces intended for short-term occupation, desk decoration rituals lose the ritualistic power to resist alienation as it did before.[59]

Resistant

This loss of relevance began when Apple kicked off a wave of sleek open office designs in the 1980s, implementing the most cutting-edge floor plan, in an effort to distinguish themselves from their competitor, IBM.[60] Following Apple's lead, chinos, chill-out rooms, and "hot-desking" have become the norm for many offices. Game studios such as the Electronic Arts branch in Playa Vista, which feature diversions like arcades and swimming pools, all aimed at fabricating a "fun" space that contrasts with the corporate image of beige cubicles.[61] Resistant uses of the desk decoration ritual signify an emerging trend in the precarious industries, as animators demonstrate authentic creativity by defying professional expectation. Unlike the Nickelodeon animators, participants added their toys to the existing assortment provided by the studio, answering the managerial invitation to ritually demonstrate their creativity.[62] Relating back to Manovich's argument that digital tools blur the boundaries of strategies and tactics, Deuze and Lewis suggest that the boundary between "suits" and "creatives" gives way under such forces as convergence culture and web 2.0 allows anyone to perform creative labor.[63] Richard Florida expands the definition of the creative labor to include such professions as lawyers, technicians, and managers,[64] in order to make the claim that the generation of intellectual property has become the central economic driver in the United States.[65] The limitation of this ritual's resistant function becomes clear when one considers the ways in which creative and professional roles have continued to destabilize.

Lila, for her part, does not engage in decorating her desk in a very elaborate manner, displaying a purposefully awkward family photograph and a plaque reading "I'm Dead Inside." While demonstrating creative authenticity can lean on the playful or whimsical elements of the artistic, Lila instead utilizes aspects of the archetype which specifically resists the managerial invitation to conform. Studios exert aesthetic authority over those who occupy them by presenting the studio designer's image of the fun work environment as legit-

59) Ibid.

60) Chris Bilton and Stephen Cummings, *Creative Strategy: Reconnecting Business and Innovation* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2015), 220.

61) Ibid.

62) Michael Siciliano defines the managerial invitation as the administration's promise that routine workers can engage in a certain freedom of expression, a bid that must be accepted if the worker wants to remain employed. Siciliano, *Creative Control*, 30.

63) Mark Deuze and Nicky Lewis, "Professional Identity and Media Work," in *Theorizing Cultural Work: Labour, Continuity and Change in the Cultural and Creative Industries*, eds. Mark Banks, Rosalind Gill, and Stephanie Taylor (London: Routledge, 2017), 162.

64) Richard L. Florida, *Cities and the Creative Class* (London: Routledge, 2003), 74.

65) Ibid., 330.

Fig. 4: Inside DreamWorks Animation's "hidden room," a crawl space repurposed into a hangout lounge complete with Christmas lights and beer kegs. Retrieved from: Louis Cole, "Amazing DreamWorks Tour," *YouTube*, 2014, accessed October 27, 2024, https://youtu.be/rFu3Mlz1mPM?t=180.

imate or commonsensical.[66] Desk objects also provide a relatively safe space for ironic denial of workplace fun; some animators at Nickelodeon incorporated elements of sarcasm, such as covering their computers with tiny bits of tape as a form of job security, because someone would have to clean it up if they were fired.[67] While Caldwell is correct in reading the decoration ritual as resistant to authority, this method of tactically generating cultural capital is distinguished from previous research, as this resistance is complicated by the managerial invitation to participate.[68] While decorating one's desk functionally capitulates to the studio's efforts at promoting a positive image, precarious working conditions reduce the incentive to emotionally invest in the role or the space. This ritual is meant to resist or recapture the forces behind this constant state of uncertainty. Establishing oneself becomes all the more important when one's position remains tenuous, and precarious conditions in the creative industry have found expression in the animator's decoration practice. Refusing the managerial invitation to decorate one's desk generates cultural capital through rebellion, playing into the independent risk-taking mindset associated with the creative entrepreneur.

Not all studio spaces are quite so curated as Lasseter's office. At DreamWorks, for example, one cubicle was themed around "found objects."[69] While the tour guide describes

66) Gabrielle Hosein and Daniel Miller, "Food, Family, Art and God: Aesthetic Authority in Public Life in Trinidad," in *Anthropology and the Individual: A Material Culture Perspective*, ed. Daniel Miller (London: Routledge, 2009), 159.

67) Ibid., 159.

68) Caldwell, *Production Culture*, 78–79.

69) Louis Cole, "Amazing DreamWorks Tour," *YouTube*, 2014, accessed October 27, 2024, https://youtu.be/rFu3Mlz1mPM?t=180.

it as "so random," the animators have actually converted their cubicle into a college dormitory, recombining junk into a pastiche of sleepy-stoner vibes. This is an example of generating cultural capital by resisting the studio's call to immaculate desk decoration. DreamWorks also has a "hidden room"[70] which the animators began using to chat and sneak a drink away from the security cameras, very much against the wishes from the higher ups. This is a story that presents the decoration as a resistant practice, done in spite of studio authority. When very few emotional states are permissible in the workplace, snark or sarcasm becomes one of the only viable tools for communicating negative emotions, suspending authentic grievances within a relatively safe field of ambiguity.[71] The openness of the ritual allows it to tactically resist the decoration mandate, enabling the subversiveness of the action to disappear or reappear within the context of the everyday, emerging as a resistant object only relative to particular situations.[72] The playful element likewise only adds to this capacity to ridicule or reduce the powerful, as questions of seriousness are suspended when the toys ironically establish the space of professional animators.

Out of the animators interviewed, a third of them did not adorn their personal areas with anything at all. Leff reported only one undecorated desk in her article on Nickelodeon, belonging to a background layout supervisor who would clearly rather be outside with his dog.[73] The reasons that animators in Atlanta gave for opting out reflected a more atomized workforce. A few animators cited laziness as the primary reason for not decorating their desks, either feeling no desire whatsoever or taking pride in constructing an identity around being "the boring one" in the office. Some animators have found themselves operating in corporate environments, sharing the building with a business firm, working as the sole motion designer for a bank, or organizing film festivals. Without an environment of animators to establish a collective production culture, those working in more traditional office spaces tend to keep their desk objects understated. Animation freelancers expressed frustration with the juvenile treatment they receive from clients or higher-ups, finding a kiddy demeanor was a hindrance for negotiating real business. Although stickers, decals, and other forms of decoration offer a way to customize computers and other tools, shared computers and workspaces disincentivize even this. Ultimately, generating cultural capital through desk decoration serves as a form of communication in a highly contextual environment, with the refusal or subversion of this practice acting as a new way to signal creative authenticity in a precarious workplace.

Conclusion

Many of the tactics employed by animators in the 1990s have since become a part of studio culture, not so much a subversion as an anticipated and endorsed aspect of hiring authentic creatives. Studios not only legitimize categories and designate spaces but also ex-

70) Ibid.
71) Gregg, *Work's Intimacy*, 250.
72) de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 24.
73) Gina Neff, *Venture Labor Work and the Burden of Risk in Innovative Industries* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2012), 6.

ert an aesthetic authority around which animators must tactically navigate. The ritual of warding off "the suits" has failed; everyone's creative now, as the post-industrial marketplace smooths the distinction between professions. Rather than engaging in the performative aspects of participating in a studio, many animators find the practice futile. Still, the majority persist in decorating their office to some degree, if only to capitalize on that ambiguous space between serious office work and authentic expression of the self. Oscar's hotkey presets are so specialized that only he knows how to operate the software under such a configuration, and some cultural references are so obscure that only Lila could catch them. Both tactically produce cultural capital to cement their position as authentic creatives in a precarious work environment. Yet, many desk decorations call out to be seen and touched, inviting a connection between coworkers in an environment in which turnover is high. Working remotely, an increasingly common practice after the Covid-19 pandemic, severs this tactility but offers new modes of expression online. Animators decorate their desks and desktops as expressions of their professional and creative selves, speaking through a shared language of objects representing fandoms.

Drawing from these interviews, the four categories of *helpful, inspirational, expressive*, and *resistant* explain broadly what animators gain by decorating their desks. The former two suggest utilitarian and aesthetic approaches that mirror findings from research on objects in the home,[74] while the latter two provide a basis for communication and establishing oneself in the relative sociality of the office space. Carmen assembles materials around her to help her with daily tasks and to surround her in a pleasant aesthetic field, carving out a place in an otherwise open office's anonymous space. Lila's resistant use of sarcastic placards simultaneously amuses her and subtly resists the office's invitation to make the workplace fun. With a comparatively higher number of animators opting out of the ritual entirely, the question then becomes whether this new form of resistance though abstinence will still generate cultural capital or not.

Today, the animation industry brands itself as a space of play and exuberance, if behind-the-scenes features like Pixar's studio tours are anything to be believed.[75] This is not to say that desk decoration is an unusual practice in any industry, nor that there was something outrageous about the way it manifested in places like Nickelodeon Studios or John Lasseter's office. Expressions of identity are on the move, as sites of meaning seem to shift onto the personality derived from web presence and engagement. Even then, it is clear that animation studios like Pixar derive enormous benefit from being perceived as a creative environment,[76] as evidenced by their willingness to tour fans and prospective employees.[77] The animator's decorations turned the studio from anonymous cubes into a "cool sweatshop" reminiscent of the internet startups of the 90s, where seventy-two-hour work weeks are considered a feature rather than a bug.[78]

74) Csikszentmihalyi – Halton, *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self*, 94.
75) Carly Kaplan and Tarreyn Van Slyke, "Nickelodeon's Animation Studio Tour: SpongeBob & Lincoln Loud | Inside Nick Ep. 3 w/ Tarreyn & Carly," *YouTube*, April 4, 2018, accessed October 27, 2024, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7gfx8JiKx6M.
76) c.f. McCulloch, "Whistle While You Work," 174–189.
77) Neff, *Venture Labor Work and the Burden of Risk in Innovative Industries*.
78) Ross, *Nice Work If You Can Get It*.

Animators decorate their desks as a tactic to negotiate abstract and short-term labor, demonstrating they have a broad set of unorthodox tools, while also finding novel and multiple uses from what they have available. Cultural capital embellishes professional expertise, showcasing one's capacity to think and express freely. Desk decoration practices also provide insight into how animators balance the need for space with the need to generate cultural capital to facilitate communication with their coworkers and peers. This conspicuous consumption is only part of the story, however, as such objects can oscillate between inspirational and expressive, utilitarian and resistant, according to the needs of the animator.

These practices can express membership, but they may also alienate, as such brand-name rituals cannot help but delineate the sacred from the profane, or those who get the reference from those who miss it. As studios continue to brand themselves as fun places to work, cramming the halls and offices with cool paraphernalia, they present a managerial invitation to return to an office enchanted by these commodities. However, as offices trend towards more open floor plans and shared workspaces,[79] this also communicates to the animators not to become attached to a particular spot. Management will need to navigate between the changing needs of the studio space with the value of granting employees enough aesthetic autonomy to demarcate their personal place.

The desk decoration ritual animators have employed fluctuates according to the cultural context at the studio. As Caldwell argues, this began as a means of differentiating oneself from the stifling corporate environment,[80] this ritual has shifted as offices promote themselves as funhouses when they are not disappearing in favor of remote laborers. Now that a huge swathe of employees is accustomed to working from home, offices call for them to return, and many refuse.[81] In the future, studios may need to adopt yet more "fun" features to entice laborers to come back, but the individual animator's desk is unlikely to be so spectacularly contrary to the bureaucratic style, when this same style has absorbed play into its ethos.

Remote work allows these rituals to be incorporated into decking out the home office, although the communicative potential of such tactics is unclear. Modifying, decorating, customizing, and "pimping out" of personal electronic devices, like slapping a sticker on a laptop, displays cultural capital while deepening the bond between the user and the machine.[82] Some animators would prefer to ignore this invitation, as they see more value in generating cultural capital by raging against the machine. It is unclear if these same rituals will retain their meaning as objects viewed through a webcam. Video conferencing also allows for screen sharing, which briefly reveals art on desktops, but it is typically only visi-

79) Brodie Boland, Aaron De Smet, Rob Palter, and Aditya Sanghvi, "Reimagining the Office and Work Life after Covid-19," *McKinsey & Company*, June 8, 2020, accessed October 27, 2024, https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/reimagining-the-office-and-work-life-after-covid-19.

80) Caldwell, *Production Culture*, 78–79.

81) Tovia Smith, "Returning to the office, a moment of joy for some others, would rather stay home," *NPR*, March 8, 2022, accessed October 27, 2024, https://www.npr.org/2022/03/08/911128317/march-back-to-office-work-from-home.

82) Meredith W. Zoetewey, "A rhetoric of ornament: Decorating mobile devices in the aesthetic economy," *Computers and Composition* 27, no. 2 (2010), 138–157.

ble for a few seconds before the user opens the material intended for presentation. The capacity for digital displays to fulfill expressive or resistant functions remains dubious and further research is required.

Studio owners must balance the desire to create an appropriate space with customizable places that encourage laborers to meaningfully generate cultural capital. The conversion of a tactic to a strategy is nothing new, as Lev Manovich has argued, particularly during an era characterized by digital labor.[83] It is the function of a studio to capture and commodify creative energy, rendering them knowable and fungible. As labor increasingly shifts to remote work, however, decoration practices are likely to enervate. Yet, this does not mean that animators have lost all recourse to mischief. The ways in which they assert their humanity amidst anonymity and alienation are as myriad as they are ad hoc. In this way, they continue to spontaneously carve out opportunities from precarity.

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83) Manovich, "The Practice of Everyday (Media) Life."

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Biography

Colin Wheeler researches creative discourse in media industries, with a focus on the animation studios in the United States. A passionate creator and critic of animated media, he makes short experimental films which incorporate animation, puppetry, and live-action film.

Building on his BA in Theater, he completed an MFA in Animation at the Savannah College of Art and Design. Desiring to understand the animation as a career, specifically, the lives and motivations of animators as creative laborers, he went on to earn a Doctorate in Communication at Georgia State

University. Exploring the industry as a practitioner, he uses his on-the-ground perspective to inform higher theories on production cultures and the creative class. His findings are published both in print and online.

His teaching interests span from History of Comics, Cartoons, and Animation to Media and Popular Culture. He is currently teaching Storyboarding Composition with an emphasis on the art of storytelling. Stop motion animation is his passion, and he has a collaboration on two films that have screened at The Center for Puppetry Arts, bringing to life ancient stories and ecological parables.

Appendix

Number	Gender Presentation	Ethnicity	Age	Years of Industry Experience	Current Position
1	M	Asian	31	2	Full-time animator employed at studio
2	F	African American	27	4	Independent animator funded by Kickstarter
3	F	African American	25	1	Full-time animator employed at studio
4	M	Latin American	49	7	Owner of small animation studio
5	F	African American	29	3	Animator working remotely
6	M	Caucasian	35	7	Animator working remotely
7	F	Caucasian	25	2.5	Full-time animator employed at studio
8	F	Asian	31	3	Animator working remotely
9	F	Pacific Islander	26	4	Lead animator at studio
10	M	Caucasian	34	6	Owner of small animation studio
11	F	Caucasian	31	6	Lead animator at studio
12	F	Caucasian	23	3	Experimental animator as hobby
13	F	Caucasian	25	5	Animator working remotely
14	F	Caucasian	36	15	Animator working remotely
15	M	Caucasian	23	.5	Full-time animator employed at studio
16	F	Caucasian	25	2.5	Full-time animator employed at studio
17	M	Caucasian	57	30	Animation director employed at studio
18	M*	Caucasian	23	0.5	Full time animator employed at studio
19	M	Caucasian	22	2	Animator working remotely
20	M	Caucasian	22	0.5	Animator working remotely
21	F	Southeast Asia	23	3	Animator working remotely
22	M	Latin American	33	10	Full-time digital sculptor employed at studio
23	F	Caucasian	26	5	Full-time animator employed at studio
24	F	African American	49	0.5	Animator working remotely
25	M	Caucasian	30	9	Lead animator at studio
26	M	Middle Eastern	30	1	Production Assistant at Animation Studio
27	F	African American	26	5	Animator working remotely
28	F	Caucasian	30	4	Full-time employed at studio
29	M	Caucasian	40	18	Animator working remotely
30	F	African American	27	9	Animator working remotely

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"Studios Are Fundamentally about Controlling the Environment." Space Control and Epistemologically Challenging Failures in the Film Studios' Research

An Interview with Brian R. Jacobson

Brian R. Jacobson is a Professor of Visual Culture at the California Institute of Technology and Director of the Caltech-Huntington Program in Visual Culture. He is a historian specializing in modern visual culture and media. His research spans cinema, media studies, energy and environmental humanities, and the history of science and technology. Jacobson has published widely in academic journals and outlets such as *The Atlantic* and the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, covering topics like media technologies, infrastructure, corporate media (particularly in oil and gas industries), and representations of technology. He is the author of *Studios Before the System: Architecture, Technology, and the Emergence of Cinematic Space* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), a finalist for the Richard Wall Memorial Award, and editor of *In the Studio: Visual Creation and Its Material Environments* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2020), which won several awards, including the Society for Cinema and Media Studies' Best Edited Collection. He also co-edited the *Media Climates* issue of Representations in Winter 2021. His recent book is *The Cinema of Extractions: Film Materials and Their Forms* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2025).

Pavel Skopal (PS): *It was a great pleasure to have you as a guest speaker here in Zlín, Brian.*[1] *We have gathered in the buildings of film studios established in 1936 to discuss methods of animated film studios research. Not so long ago, you have published groundbreaking research on American and French film studios in the early cinema period.*[2] *Can you reconstruct what was the state of the research when you launched your project?*

Brian R. Jacobson (BJ): When I started, I understood myself to be intervening in two fields. One was early film history and historiography, and the other was studies of space and place, an area often associated, at the time, with the theoretical work of figures such as Henri Lefebvre, Gaston Bachelard, and Yi-Fu Tuan and, in film studies, Stephen Heath's classic "Narrative Space" essay (1976) and what has become a burgeoning field devoted to urban geography, architecture, and so on. In the first case, I was interested in getting beyond questions about the film text and how films had come to look the way they did. Formal aesthetic questions dominated a lot of research on the change from a cinema of attractions to a cinema of narrative integration to the development of feature films. I wanted to ask a different kind of question: where had film come from?, a question I felt could be answered in a new way by expanding the way we define the film apparatus beyond its strict association with the camera and projector. We knew a lot about the technological development of the cinematograph or the kinetoscope and all of the intricate details of how to create these devices. But it seemed to me that there was a broader technological history that I wanted to tell, and that history intersected with histories of infrastructure and broader technological systems. This reframing put the studio and cinema in conversation with histories of technology in ways that I thought hadn't been explored before.

And then on the other side, and this is connected to the space and place issue, I was interested in thinking about the production side of the equation. The literature about space and place at the time was focused on texts, asking questions such as "what is the nature of space within the film text?", or "How do you create space on the screen?" And when it wasn't about the text, it was typically about exhibition. In the early 2000s there was a lot of writing about different kinds of spaces films are viewed in, as the film theater starts to be displaced by home viewing and other kinds of sites of exhibition. There was a lot of work at this time on spaces of exhibition and I felt that spaces of production still needed to be explored. I wanted to think about those kinds of spaces.

PS: *And you argued that film studio as a place for making movies implied illusionism, creating an illusionary space. Is it possible to generalize some strategies in creating these illusionary worlds?*

BJ: I became invested in two questions about space. One was about how you generate the kind of space you need to make movies, and what kinds of architectural space you need to make a virtual space. And a related question is, how then does that space translate to the screen? What is the effect of the architecture on the way the image ultimately ap-

1) The interview was held on May 7, 2022, during the conference Studying Animated Film Studios in East-Central Europe: Tools and Methods, Zlín, Czech Republic.

2) Brian R. Jacobson, *Studios Before the System: Architecture, Technology, and the Emergence of Cinematic Space* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

pears? It's not to be taken for granted that the nature of space has any obvious relationship to the aesthetics that it produces. Today, most studios are kind of black boxes from which similar kinds of images emerge that make it difficult for a viewer to say that an image on the screen came from a specific studio.

I was interested in both aspects of the way the studio space works. Most of my thinking derived from the materials that I was studying, so I was looking at very specific studios: at Edison's Black Maria and at the Méliès studio, as two kinds of spatial types. One was a cavernous space of darkness, and the other was an open space of glass and iron illuminated by natural light. Of course, the Black Maria is also a space in which light comes in, but what I learned from that space — a studio built on a mounted track that could be rotated to follow the sun — was that there's a particular kind of effort to control features of the natural environment demanded for making virtual spaces on the screen. You need to be able to control the light in a period in which there's no electrical lighting available to make movies because the lights aren't good enough, and the film emulsion isn't sensitive enough. You need really, really bright lights and then the lens and a very specific configuration. All of this told me what studio space is essentially about: controlling the environment for the purposes of image production. This derives from the laboratory itself and the designs of laboratories like Edison's, where every building is constructed for very specific kinds of needs — for example, stability to avoid vibration or keeping the building cool by orienting it in relation to the sun, or by not using certain kinds of materials that might disrupt the experiments happening in the lab. I felt that the studio is ultimately a kind of lab that is defined by a particular orientation, by a particular relationship to the natural environment, and by an attempt to create a perfect world for image creation. In that sense, what I think is generalizable is that studios are always about controlling the environment. Different kinds of things need to be controlled over the course of history, but it's always a space of control of some sort, or at least of an effort at control, as control always has its limits.

There are two other things in this context that need to be mentioned. Firstly, it is the process of translation from space to screen, which I think always depends on the space itself. In the case of the Edison studio, a specific aesthetic becomes recognizable with the black backdrop and the illuminated foreground it sets off (in the book I call this the "framed aesthetic"). In the case of the Méliès' studio, there's also a particular aesthetic, but it is related less to the studio's look than the kind of affordances that the studio offered to Méliès to help him make his tricks and to develop his uses of space. That kind of affordance started to change the studios and to move them into periods I did not research.

Secondly, I wanted to say something about what happens "beyond the studio" on location. While researching the studio space, I repeatedly faced the question: "well, what about location shooting?" Afterall, not every film is made in a studio, and filmmakers in New York and Philadelphia and Chicago eventually left their studios to find sunnier environments South and West.

To answer the "what happens when they go off on location?" question, I first emphasized that these are all people basically trained in studio filmmaking. So when filmmakers start to shoot outside the studio and when they start to develop an idea of location, they apply studio-created ideas to non-studio spaces and try to reproduce the conditions of studio filmmaking in non-studio places. In comparison to studio, there's a lot more con-

tingency: you can't control the weather, or the environment in the same way. But the attempt to do so is the key to how filmmakers work, particularly in this period. And they do things like using the same spaces over and over again, treating the natural world in some ways like a studio supply closet where you just pull out the set that you want. In this case, however, you have to drive to the set you want.

As Hollywood develops its large back lots, it can control the "location," the "natural environment," right? You can create a lake. You can plant trees. You can modify the land. And then you can use it over and over again, just as if it were a set. And ultimately, the distinction between studio and location starts to blur. Of course, we know that today if you live in a city where people make movies, you see "location" shooting happening. That process often looks like people arriving with truckloads of materials, props, costumes and lots of lights, and even set pieces that you're going to use to decorate or modify the space that you found. And I argue that the impulse to change the location to suit your needs starts in the early days of cinema with the location conceptualized as "the studio beyond the studio."

PS: *It is basically a story of adaptation and control of the environment. On the other hand, in your research on the studio architecture and the new light and sound infrastructure that shaped the American film industry's transition to sound in the 1920s, you called for greater attention to pay to persistent and uncontainable failures in cinema's technological history.*[3] *Can you explain the epistemological challenges the concept of failure implies?*

BJ: I became interested in failure for two reasons. One was because one editor of my book asked me to extend the timeline of the project through the transition era to the sound period. I felt that I would have to do an entirely new project, but I nonetheless did some research to find out what such a project would look like. I discovered an interesting story about a fire in an early sound studio in New York and decided to write an article about it. There was great literature about fires in cinema, but they were all about exhibition spaces: we all know the famous 1897 Bazar de la Charité fire in Paris that killed lots of people, and many stories about the danger that fire posed to filmgoers are available. But I knew from my research that there were also a lot of fires in film studios for approximately the same reasons of having a lot of flammable materials lying around. What interested me was the fact that this became a bigger problem with the shift into the sound era, because the period of the introduction of sound (this is the same era in the 1920s in which studios become largely lit by artificial lighting) brought a lot of electricity into the space and, consequently, a lot of opportunities for sparks that will ignite flammable things. Fire is the kind of unruly product of a space that is designed for extreme supervision, and the research findings told me that you can try to control the studio environment as much as you want, but there are certain kinds of environmental features that escape it. And fire is the most obvious case. In a way, I already knew that from the example of the Black Maria, or even from Méliès' studio, where the environment was always beyond their control to an extent: the best example, perhaps, is the Black Maria getting really hot, and there was no

3) Brian R. Jacobson, „Fire and Failure: Studio Technology, Environmental Control, and the Politics of Progress," *Cinema Journal* 57, no. 2 (2018), 22–43.

great way to cool it down, so some people didn't really want to perform in that studio. As for the Méliès' Studio, we all know that a hothouse is called a hothouse for a reason. There are ways you can try to keep the space cool using drapes and things to cover the glass, but no matter how much you try, you can't completely control it. This offers us epistemological opportunities in the sense that seeing the moment when control fails gives us a chance to think about the nature of the control they're attempting to achieve. And this led me to study the different methods that are being employed in these early sound studios to try to control sound and heat and to try to limit the risk of fire.

It inspired me to research the materials being used to try to control space. Any time you're studying something that fails, it gives you a chance to kind of reverse engineer and ask, "why did it fail"? What were they attempting to do and why were they not able to do it? When things don't work, it provides an opportunity to reconstruct what they were trying to do that didn't work. These questions point to the social element of studio control, because what is ultimately controlled, at least in the story that I tell about the fire, are humans. Those who suffer from this failure are workers in the studio, and those people too are being controlled. It implies that studios are interesting social spaces, being nodes and networks of the circulation of people, materials, objects and technology. Particularly the people circulating through studios are important and interesting. I believe that taking a studio perspective on industry gives us a chance to think about the circulation of people. What kind of people come to studios? What do they do when they're there? What purposes do they serve? How much control do they have? How much control is exerted upon them? In the case of, say, fires in the 1920s in New York, a lot of control is exerted upon them, sometimes with devastating consequences.

PS: *Besides being controlled space of image production, the studios are also buildings interacting with the environment of its location, with the city and its citizens. How such interaction worked for the studios you researched?*

BJ: One of the features that always struck me about studios after I got into the project is that they're designed to be invisible. You are not supposed to see the studio when you watch the movie, and you are not supposed to think about its invisibility, with some rare exceptions of films that are reflexive about their studio origins. Studios are designed to disappear in order to generate a visibility that always includes them but tries to separate themselves from the place in which it's made. But it does not hold true if you happen to live near the studio or are visiting a place where the studio is located. This raises the question of how we might do a kind of architectural history or aesthetic analysis of studios as buildings. I was mostly focused in my book on how this worked in early Hollywood, a place where we know that despite boosters' claims, locals weren't always especially excited about the arrival of the new industry. Studio architectural designs tried to appease the locals by projecting an air of responsibility and respectability.[4] The method often used to fit into the local environment in the case of early Hollywood was to build the studio in a glass and iron style, which was common at the time, and to put in front of that glass and iron

4) Brian R. Jacobson, "Fantastic Functionality: Studio Architecture and the Visual Rhetoric of Early Hollywood," *Film History* 26, no. 2 (2014), 52–81.

structure a facade in a local vernacular architectural style. It was often the style of the Spanish Colonial Revival, which was not exactly native to the region and introduced to it as a kind of popular myth-making style of architecture in around the 1880s. Nonetheless, film companies tried to use this style to show the locals that they belonged to this region and had belonged there for a long time. It is symbolic work that the studio companies were trying to perform using their studios as tools.

PS: *Do you recognize any aspects of the studio spaces that can be generalized, something that transcends your area of research of early 20th century America and French studios?*

BJ: I thought about this a lot when I was editing a book about studios because I wanted to learn about those studios I could never write about myself due to language barriers or regional and historical period expertise that I just don't have.[5] I read all the chapters and then tried to write an introduction that would do something of what you're asking about, so I could try to draw out some general principles and a methodology universally applicable to studio spaces. The three kinds of approaches that I saw the authors applying in the book were, first, to treat the studio as an environment, second, as a form of a symbolic spectacle, and third, as a node in networks of different kinds of relations, mostly social relations. And if we want to say that there's anything you can generalize about studios, it's that they're always invested in some kind of control. Generally, it's environmental control and social control. That often involves energetic relations. They control energy, including the energy of people who work in the studio buildings. In the case of studios, there are always nodes and networks, and we can read them in that way as nodes through which people, materials, and ideas move. And that's always true.

Ewa Ciszewska (EC): *Were there any notable benchmarks in the development of European film studios? Was there an "ideal" studio that served as a template or was replicated in other countries?*

BJ: It is beyond my full expertise, but I think that in the early years, it was the glass and iron, the studio of Méliès' type that has become a common studio form in most places where people have enough money to build them. There certainly are some places where enough resources were not available to build this kind of studio. In the volume I edited we can see in Rielle Navitski's work that in Brazil they were not building a lot of permanent studios and using makeshift spaces instead, taking opportunities where they can find them to use other workable buildings.[6] But my sense is that in places where it was financially feasible, at least up to the end of the 1910s, most studios tend to be of the glass and iron or hothouse sort, and then in the 1920s you start to see a transition to the black-box style studio that becomes the dominant form. But that's just a general sense. We don't have enough studies yet of pre-1930 European studios, at least not in languages that I can read. It's a territory to be confirmed.

5) Brian R. Jacobson, ed., *In the Studio: Visual Creation and its Material Environments* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2020).

6) Rielle Navitski, „Regulating Light, Interiors, and the National Image: Electrification and Studio Space in 1920s Brazil," in *In the Studio*, 42–62.

EC: *Have there been any studies on the architectural styles of film studios? For instance, have architects explored how these styles were shaped by local or international traditions? I'm curious if this area of research exists and what it might reveal.*

BJ: I think it is cropping up here and there. I edited the book to have people really write about exactly what you just described: tell me how in the place you study the local architectural style and the local architectural norms shaped the studios that were created, and I was really thinking about architectural form and the symbolic. It turned out that it's not what almost anyone wanted to write, and I ended up not doing that and never really figured it out. There are some examples from the Studio-Tec project that Sarah Street was doing.[7] She was writing about the studio that's designed in Art Deco style by Walter Gropius.[8] So you do see some cases, although of course Gropius is imported to the UK to build the studio.

EC: *Is there a standard or widely accepted approach to designing film studios that ensures functionality, supports successful filmmaking, and facilitates the effective transition from concept to screen? If so, can this knowledge be replicated across different contexts?*

BJ: That's something that I see in the archive by the middle of the 20th century. You start to see real evidence that film companies are monitoring their competitors or their partners around the world to see what they're doing. And we have some evidence that this is happening earlier, for example, in Diane Wei Lewis' chapter of the edited volume about the early Japanese studios.[9] There we learn that the executives of these companies did travel to the US and Western Europe to see what filmmaking looked like in these places and that this probably had some influence on what they ended up deciding to do in Japan. By the middle of the 20th century, say in France, which is my place of expertise, you see a committee formed to study the studios in France and how the studios look and what the stages are doing, but also to study studios all around Europe. They're collecting data about studios everywhere to figure out who has the best studio facilities and what would be the ideal studio for them.

EC: *In the context of post-World War II film studios in Central and Eastern Europe, how did the interplay of influences shape their design and operation? For instance, studios like those in Łódź drew inspiration from models such as Cinecittà and incorporated Soviet influences, yet also adapted to local conditions, such as reusing industrial spaces and adopting factory-like workflows. How did this blend of international standards, regional adaptations, and industrial practices impact the development and identity of these studios? It seems to me that these studios combine the functions and characteristics of both film studios and factories.*

BJ: That's consistent with my sense of where studios come from in the early period — from laboratories, hothouses, and factory designs. Factory designers in the late 19th and early 20th century were heavily invested in the question of how to bring a lot of light in-

7) For details on the research, see https://studiotec.info.

8) Sarah Street, "Designing the ideal film studio in Britain," *Screen* 62, no. 3 (2021), 330–358.

9) Diane Wei Lewis, "'The Longed-For Crystal Palace:' Empire, Modernity, and Nikkatsu Mukōjima's Glass Studio, 1913–1923," in *In the Studio*, 23–41.

side to make labor possible. A lot of the methods and materials used to design factories, particularly in the US and in France where I did the research, were reproduced by studio designers, particularly when the studios started to be designed by professional architects. It is not the case with the first Edison studio or the Méliès studio. But with Gaumont, Pathé, or the later Edison studios in New York, they're designed by professional architects whose expertise is often in factory design, and you can see the same strategies being directly translated. There's a concrete way in which the first studios often are literally factories. I think it's no surprise that that would persist.

Michał Pabiś-Orzeszyna (MPO): *Could we follow the "studio as factory" thread and the issue of extractivism? You brilliantly highlight the connection between studio logic and the logic of plantation. In the studio we have the attempt to make the physical place controllable and scalable. The studio output is similarly governable and indeed scalable. However, could you elaborate on the practices of extraction?*

BJ: I can say a lot about this because it's the kind of question that animates my work now. I'm working on a project about oil and energy extraction and its relationship to visual culture. But of course, it made me think about my earlier work.[10] And what do studios have to do with this? Studios, particularly as we move out of the period in which you're mostly dependent on natural light, rely upon the extraction of resources to function, and the extraction involves lots of different kinds of materials that you need to build studios. It involves the energy resources to power the studios, especially as the lights get bigger and brighter. All of this has its connections to the work that we know about the materiality of the film industry and to all the extracted resources you need to do everything in the film business. Particularly in the case of the studio, you need to extract lots of energy from fossil fuels for most of the 20th century, and from the bodies of the people who work in the studio. But extraction also comes up when we start to think about location, and we have already in the 1910s a kind of language of extraction being used to describe the work of location shooting. People were described as going out to "prospect" for locations and they talked about going out and extracting views for the screen: here we find an early extractive logic. It also drives the buying up of the huge Hollywood backlots where what you're doing is capturing land to extract its value. In this case, the value to be extracted is the value of having space to represent. And that is a commodity already in early Hollywood.

MPO: *You aptly emphasize the exhibition value and symbolical value of the front-end, but what's your take on the fact that studio's back-end also gain exhibition value? This invisible part of the studios is getting some visibility when tours are organized to show the backlots.*

BJ: There are people who write about factory tours, and I'm not an expert on this. But it's very much connected to what you see in the early days of Hollywood, where people were curious to know what's happening behind the studio walls and behind the scenes. And the industry wants to capitalize on that interest as part of the star system, for example. You are commodifying the stars and you're commodifying the studio at the same time.

10) Brian R. Jacobson, *The Cinema of Extractions: Film Materials and Their Forms* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2025).

There's a process of cultivation of the interest these people have in these places. One way to do it is to let people actually in. And one of the things I thought was really fascinating is that the studios are invisible, it's the space that exists out of sight, out of mind in a certain way, but on the other hand, till the 1910s and 1920s, the studio is a well known place to people because they are able to go on these tours. And even if they don't live anywhere near the studios, they're able to see behind the scenes thanks to trade publications and fan magazines that take people behind the scenes. Maybe it is not the kind of commodification of the back lot that we see now with Universal Studios or with a theme park, but it's a kind of commodification in the sense of cultivating interest and a real love for these places and the products by giving you the sense of privileged access to the behind the scenes world that you don't get to see when you watch the movies. We have special features and making of documentaries now, but the impulse and economic logic behind it existed already in the 1910s.

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Refusing to Fade: Soviet Domestic Photography Archives as Memory Strongholds

Oksana Sarkisova and Olga Shevchenko, *In Visible Presence: Soviet Afterlives in Family Photos* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2023).

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Oksana Sarkisova and Olga Shevchenko's *In Visible Presence: Soviet Afterlives in Family Photos*, the result of a long-lasting intellectual endeavor that began around 2006 and was ultimately published in 2023, immediately captivates the reader with its commanding and elegant materiality. At first glance, the book recommends itself as a photographic album, due to the excellent quality of its glossy paper and its rich iconographic material. Nearly all of the reproduced photographs return the viewer's gaze in the most literal sense, prompting an immediate affective engagement with the content. This prevents the casual graze over the surface that many beautiful "books as objects" elicit and instills a sense of responsibility towards the researchers' ethical as well as theoretical tenets. Beyond the appearance of the book, this ethical dimension is what instantly grabs attention, insofar as the preface starts by thematizing the sinuous paths post-Soviet domestic photography archives relentlessly take. It illustrates its ar-gument with a snapshot of a military unit stationed in Kyiv — taken in 1947, found by the two authors in 2007 in a photo album during an interview with its Russian possessor, and commented upon in 2022, in the light of the war of aggression led by Putin's regime against Ukraine. Similarly, the book closes with Sarkisova and Shevchenko's reflections on the weight, but also the honor, of having been granted intellectual, if not material, guardianship of the photographs they have encountered during their investigation of Southern and Central Russian families' care practices for private visual media. Thus, the dense, polyvalent, and engaging research carried out by the authors, which follows several transversal conceptual axes, is firmly grounded in a heightened awareness of the sensitivity of the ma-terial being dealt with. They remain mindful of its historical situatedness as well as of its temporal dis-persion, recognizing the many shreds of unresolved past(s) that perforate the layers of both national and familial heritage laid upon the photographs under scrutiny.

Besides the objectual and ethical gravitas of the book, what becomes quickly apparent is the extent to which Sarkisova and Shevchenko's effort fills the lacunas left by the growing body of articles and theses on the functions and configurations of amateur photography in the Soviet space. Each of these earlier studies created small islands of specialized knowledge that struggled to coalesce into a comprehensive map of the whole phenomenon. The fact that the previous explorations of themes that also surface,

under various guises, in Sarkisova and Shevchenko's book — such as the construction of feminine identity through home photography,[1] the role of specific press outlets in the formation of a Soviet amateur photographer's ethos,[2] or the intertwining of image and writing in photographs meant to circulate within kinship networks[3] — often adopted a narrow research focus is indicative of the complexity of these topics. This reflects the challenge posed by the multifaceted character of both the medium of photography, especially when various cultural, ideological, and technological forces pull it in different directions, and the notions of amateurism and/or privacy in Socialist contexts.

The two authors resolve at least part of the difficulties inherent in ambitions to strictly define and compartmentalize the swarming field of Soviet private visual photographic practices by choosing not to pre-select specific theoretical aspects of their topic on which to focus. Rather, they let themselves be guided by the organizing methods — looser or stricter, depending on the custodian of each domestic archive — of the different corpuses they examine. Thus, the photo album, the picture book, but also the framed photo-collage or even the careless depositing of pictures in boxes and bags become the structural models of the book. Sarkisova and Shevchenko take it upon themselves to dissect their spontaneous logics of display, apposition, and connection, or, conversely, of invisibilization. From these idiosyncratic and pre-theoretical arrangements, Sarkisova and Shevchenko are able to draw rich reflections and sophisticated digressions, all while staying attuned to the micro-narratives embedded in the pictures and the operations of care that surround them.

The place occupied by the issue of materiality in both the problematization of post-Soviet private archiving practices and in shaping the reader's encounter with Sarkisova and Shevchenko's findings should not overshadow the researchers' deep engagement with the human element. Following in Annette Kuhn's footsteps, Sarkisova and Shevchenko adopt the method of "interactive performative viewing" (xviii), anchoring their interviewing techniques in the specific communicative and affective environment created by presenting one's private image archive to an audience. Proceeding from this framework, the two authors orient their questions — addressed to themselves as well as to their subjects — along three axes. First, they explore the historically situated uses of photography as a preservation medium of discrete slices of life. Second, they focus on the tensions and intersections between post-Soviet official discourses — on topics such as heroism, collective trauma, or nationhood — and the narratives of selfhood and descendancy vehiculated in the private sphere. Lastly, they examine the generational exchanges that may happen during the excavation of a family's photographic archive, foregrounding their oscillation between continuity and differentiation.

If these axes often converge along the pages of the monograph, three sections nonetheless emerge, following a movement from macro to micro, only to take a few steps back again in the final part of the book.

The first section is the most ambitious (and the most successful) in weaving together numerous theoretical threads that arise from and connect the various corpuses of photographs studied by Sarkisova and Shevchenko. An impressive array of sources, materials, and concepts is masterfully brought

1) Maria Gourieva, "Constructing the Feminine in Late Soviet Private Photography," *Photography and Culture* 13, no. 3–4 (2020), 369–383.

2) Emily Joyce Evans, "De la photographie amateur au mouvement des photocorrespondants. Sovetskoe foto et la transformation de la pratique photographique en URSS," *Transbordeur: Photographie histoire société*, no. 4 (2020), 60–69.

3) Tatyana Alexandrovna Mishchenko, "Family, Friendship and Memorabilia in Inscribed Amateur Family Photographs," *Revista Turismo: Estudos & Práticas* (Caderno Suplementar), no. 1 (2021), 1–12.

together to address the problematics related to private media and memory practices — many of them developed mainly by Western or Western-based thinkers such as Pierre Bourdieu, Roland Barthes, Marianne Hirsch, Aleida and Jan Assmann, or Geoffrey Batchen — and realities pertaining to the former Soviet space. Despite potential tensions between these two spheres, the authors succeed in extracting the pertinent aspects of the Western theories and applying them to distinctly Soviet and post-Soviet issues. This approach exemplifies the type of work many academics from non-Western cultures must undertake in order to reconcile their own specific cultural contexts and heritages with the dominant discourses flowing from the Global North. This is not to say that Sarkisova and Shevchenko do not also ground the personal testimonies gathered from interviews with possessors of photographic archives in a wealth of local primary or secondary textual sources, produced during and after the Soviet era. This integration of local sources draws attention to a vast intellectual landscape that would have remained inaccessible to non-Russian speakers without the authors' contribution.

Therefore, the first section of the book effectively displays the overarching aims of the research: to historicize and spatialize domestic photographic archival gestures in contemporary Russia without pigeonholing them to the field of post-Soviet Studies or even to the broader disciplines of media studies or memory studies; and, conversely, yet equivalently, to interrogate the grand generalizing tendencies of many Western theories on media configurations — especially domestic ones, as the private sphere was of defining importance in modern occidental ideologies. By doing so, the authors nuance and enrich these theories, demonstrating both their utility and their limitations when applied to places and periods outside the context in which they were originally developed.

The opening chapter of the first section introduces the reader to the methodology of the entire volume, starting with an encounter with one of the interviewees and thus indicating that all theoretical expansions are going to be deeply rooted in lived experiences and in the patterns their remembrance generates. At the same time, as the first interviewee's accidental remark — linking the two authors with the ultranationalist organization Pamiat' which attempted, in the 1990s, to disseminate an ideologically tailored version of Russia's past — serves to prove, talking about memory practices in the post-Soviet space can never be strictly factual or depoliticized. Sarkisova and Shevchenko embrace this fact and transform it into the discreetly beating militant heart of their research. The authors review a series of movements and projects originating in Soviet memory policies, such as The Name of Russia contest to elect "the main hero of the fatherland" or The Immortal Regiment marches, which started as grassroot initiatives and were quickly reappropriated by the state power. In this charged context, domestic photography has become a battleground, especially in virtue of its constitutive duality between representative finitude and symbolic surplus — a battleground from which the two researchers are not willing to stay away.

In the second chapter, Sarkisova and Shevchenko offer a historical overview of the constellation of practices surrounding popular photography in the Soviet Union. They investigate the interconnectedness between what we traditionally understand as domestic photography and the snapshots taken during professional duties or for official purposes, which often end up in the same albums, thereby contesting established (Western) distinctions between public and private spheres. Once again, this narrative echoes the fate of many documents in other Socialist spaces beyond the Soviet Union, which, as long as they did not belong to state services, were supposed to incarnate the visibility of the private sphere in a period when it was being reshaped into the collective sphere. This porosity of the individual's statuses outside and inside the home is also relevant in light of the drastic privatization — economic but also behavioral and moral — which occurred in post-Socialist societies. Chapter two fur-

ther introduces the recurrent theme of the interpretative shift that operates when the same photograph travels through the hands of members of distinct generations.

The third installment delves into the materiality of domestic photo archives, occasioning a review of different types of interaction with images-as-objects. These include: modes of presentation –organization within frames, folders, and albums; modes of circulation — from one place to another and one lifestyle to another (an issue especially relevant considering the major socio-geographical changes hurled at the population by the Soviet regime); and modes of transmission, in virtue of their power as evidence of these displacements and oftentimes happening during similar periods of transition.

Lastly, the final chapter of the section (and personally, the one I found the most inciting) zooms in on one particular subgenre of amateur image production, namely travel photography. The case study conducted by the authors on touristic snapshots and their afterlife masterfully illustrates all the main methods employed in *In Visible Presence* — from the detailed study of the photographic contents, coupled with the detection of recurrent patterns that unite various domestic archives, to the thorough historicization of their conditions of production and the illuminating analyses of the affective and discursive manifestations of their reappropriation by succeeding generations. The issues of the political valency of spatiality, the construction of a new supranational collective scenario, and the markers employed to give a population the impression of "possessing" a highly fragmentary territory all converge and find expression in this otherwise quite disregarded subgenre, marred by touristic clichés and overly descriptive intents.

The second part of the book anchors itself even more deeply in specific family archives, while concentrating on the different discursive formations (or their brevity or total lack) that take shape around them. The authors treat photographs as fragments of lost wholes that the succeeding possessors continuously try to recompose, always subjectively, always (self)creatively, when traumatic silence has obscured the context in which the images were made. The fifth and opening chapter of this second part approaches the physical traces of the elimination of certain individuals or events from the photographs themselves, as well as their symbolic radiation from the memory landscape of a family. As silence is cultivated as a survival tactic in highly volatile political contexts, so is the exclusion of problematic evidence of kinship in the form of tearing, cutting, or throwing away certain images. Beyond these extreme material operations, many photographs are just cut off from their wider contexts by refusing to clearly pass on their surplus meaning from one generation to the next. Sarkisova and Shevchenko do not emit any moral judgment on these voluntary omissions and embellishments, limiting themselves to trace the narrative developments of these half-truths and half-lies and their impact on the arrangement of the photographs and the operations of display and care that surround them.

In the sixth chapter, these reflections are anchored in a concrete case, the 1962 Novocherkassk tragedy — a protest initiated by the workers of the local Electric Locomotive Plant and suppressed in blood by the armed forces — whose traces resurface in different configurations that again bridge the private-public dichotomy.

In chapter 7, the author then venture into the myriad ways photographs can be used to generate diverse and atomized (self)portraits, in accordance with processes of revealing and obscuring, framing and deframing, emphasizing and withholding: in one word, what Hayden White described as processes of "emplotment."[4] In the ideologically-charged context of post-Soviet Russia, these strategies prove

4) Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-century Europe* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1973).

to be far from innocuous or entirely private; self-narration becomes inseparable from the power plays that unravel behind present attempts to write Russian official history. The fact that almost all the participants in the research have been anonymized through name changes serves, in addition to protecting privacy, as a statement that these personal framings of one's photographic archive are indeed symptoms of a broader need to reclaim the nation's fraught visual heritage through rewriting and personalization.

In the eighth chapter, Sarkisova and Shevchenko frontally address the issue that has been underlying the book from the beginning: the photo album as a performative object. It reflects the intentions of its successive owners, who arrange, relocate, and add or remove photographs in line with their desired origin story yet also materially resists the total erasure of its previous architectures. Similarly, the photo album can fulfill different functions according to the identity of the person who is flipping through its pages. For instance, it can display visual evidence of an exemplary career and a fulfilling personal trajectory, while also holding traces of the sacrifices that were made to uphold such a social image — sacrifices which only the "curator" of the album knows about.

The book reaches its third and final part with an ample discussion on the gestures of care that surround domestic photographic archives. These gestures are expressions of deeply rooted affects as well as manifestations of the need for emotional and historical closure, thus inscribing the debate within a less technologically inflected interpretation of maintenance and repair studies. Photographs' micro-movements — from one material framing to another, from one generation to another — as well as their macro-movements — from the private sphere to the public, from one type of overarching narrative to another — are revelatory of their intrinsic fluidity of meaning. This demonstrates the necessity of regularly engaging in intellectual endeavors like those of Sarkisova and Shevchenko, which do not attempt to establish a rigid interpretive system for reading domestic visual archives but instead provide a glimpse into their embeddedness within current post-Soviet dynamics, intersecting at individual, regional, and national levels.

The issue of commemoration is first addressed, in the ninth chapter, through the lens of the need to concretize emotional bonds by engaging in a special type of labor devoted to arranging, displaying, and transmitting photographs. Caring for the visual traces of progenitors sometimes amounts to enacting a reconciliation that was impossible to achieve during their lifetimes, because of a tumultuous and divisive historical context. At this point, we arrive at the emotional apex of Sarkisova and Shevchenko's study, which does not shy away from exploring and conveying affects, insofar as these are fundamental to our interactions with both our own and others' domestic archives.

Finally, the tenth and closing installment rises to the expectations set by the first chapter, where the two authors boldly examined contemporary strategies for absorbing domestic photographic archives into various ideologically laden collective ventures. Building on the idea of the movement of photographs, discussed in the previous chapter on a smaller scale, here Sarkisova and Shevchenko follow the incorporation of these images into mass movements. The authors explore the birth and expansion of the Immortal Regiment marches, which began as a grassroot initiative in the Siberian city of Tomsk in 2012 and were quickly overtaken by the state propaganda apparatus. They also investigate the visceral reactions that the exhibition and parading of family portraits elicited in ordinary citizens — reactions that extended beyond the political channeling of the spectacle that the regime clearly intended.

As mentioned in the beginning, the book closes as it had opened, with a vibrant recognition of the necessity to critically engage with the past in the light of the emergencies of the present. It emphasizes the importance of considering the longer passage of time and its corollary shifts in reading grids and

interpretative approaches, which will inevitably demand further research on this still enigmatic, still profoundly significant corpus of photographs.

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I provizorní zastávka může být cíl

Jiří Anger, ed., *Digitální Kříženecký: Nový život prvních českých filmů* (Praha: Národní filmový archiv, 2023).

Jan Bergl (Univerzita Karlova, Česká republika)

Již více než symbolické století uplynulo od chvíle, kdy si Jan Kříženecký spolu s Josefem Františkem Pokorným pořídili kinematograf, nasnímali první obrazy a „pohyblivou fotografii" předvedli veřejnosti — a také od chvíle, kdy Kříženecký zemřel. Odešel 9. února 1921 ve věku nedožitých 53 let. Tím ale jeho příběh neskončil (viz 298–305). Možná nepatří k nejznámějším osobnostem české historie (169), na nezájem či (po)zapomnění si ale nikdy stěžovat nemohl. První popularizátory svého odkazu nalezl již několik let po své smrti (299) a coby pionýr české kinematografie z veřejného prostoru nikdy zcela neodešel. Co nám z Kříženeckého zbylo? Co nám stále skrývá a může nabídnout? Kniha *Digitální Kříženecký: Nový život prvních českých filmů*, vydaná Národním filmovým archivem v prosinci 2023, dokazuje, že Kříženeckého osud i dílo představují stále živou, amorfní a podnětnou matérii.

Kniha navazuje na projekt z roku 2014, kdy začal NFA filmy Jana Kříženeckého digitalizovat. O pět let později je vydal na DVD i Blu-ray (v jednom balení) pod editorským dohledem filmového teoretika Jiřího Angera. Ve spolupráci s dalšími odborníky připravil Anger bonusové materiály a brožuru, které zasazují Kříženeckého dílo do kontextu současného poznání a vysvětlují principy uplatněné během jeho digitalizace.[1)] Studijní materiál tím však nebyl vyčerpán (nebude nikdy), a zrodila se idea věnovat Kříženeckému celou knihu.[2)]

Coby editor chystané knihy *Digitální Kříženecký* přizval Anger opět ke spolupráci další kolegy. Jádro týmu dle jeho slov tvořily další dvě osoby, které se podílely také na přípravách zmíněného nosiče: restaurátorka a kurátorka Jeanne Pommeau, jež vedla proces digitalizace Kříženeckého filmů, a historik a filmograf Jaroslav Lopour, odborník na fakta a archiválie spojené s personou Kříženeckého a počátky filmování v Čechách.[3)] Lopour zpracoval tyto materiály do obsáhlé edice dokumentů (236–485),

1) Jiří Anger, ed., *Filmy Jana Kříženeckého / The Films of Jan Kříženecký* (DVD / Blu-ray, Praha: Národní filmový archiv, 2019).

2) Ke genezi celého projektu viz rozhovor s Jiřím Angerem: Kryštof Kočtář, „První české filmy nebudou nikdy dokončeny: Rozhovor s Jiřím Angerem", *Revue Filmového přehledu*, 20. 3. 2024, cit. 31. 10. 2024, https://www.filmovyprehled.cz/cs/revue/detail/prvni-ceske-filmy-nebudou-nikdy-dokonceny-rozhovor-s-jirim-angerem.

3) Tamtéž.

kterou poznáte ještě před otevřením *Digitálního Kříženeckého* podle nažloutlého zbarvení listů, a doplnil ji vlastní studií. Na bílém papíře, v první půli, pak najdete poděkování, autorské medailonky, slovník základních technických pojmů, úvod do tématu a sedm odborných studií. Dvě z nich napsal sám Anger, pod zbylými jsou podepsány filmové historičky a teoretičky Lucie Česálková, Kateřina Svatoňová, Alena Šlingerová, výše zmíněná kurátorka Pommeau a historik a kurátor Jan Trnka.

Studie v první části knihy jsou rozdělené do dvou bloků: „Materialita: Fotochemický a digitální film" a „Cirkulace: Mediální paměť a druhý život". Jak odtušíte už z názvů, první oddíl je více „dostředivý", zaměřuje se na Kříženeckého filmy jakožto fyzický artefakt, zatímco druhá, „odstředivá" část zohledňuje kontext jejich vzniku, pozici ve veřejném prostoru a další vývoj obrazu jejich autora. Oběma společný je důraz na přehlížené aspekty Kříženeckého osobnosti a díla, stejně jako snaha zkoumat je jinak než skrze velké zobecňující koncepty reprezentace, narace, žánru či aparátu (43). Zatímco starší publikace o Kříženeckém, například *Český kinematograf Jana Kříženeckého* (1973) od Zdeňka Štábly,[4] vznikaly v intencích tradiční historiografie, *Digitální Kříženecký* je produktem vývoje filmových a mediálních studií posledních pár dekád. Zohledňuje různorodé přístupy a materiály, reviduje starší poznatky, odmítá totalizující přístup k dějinám a přitakává věčnému provizoriu poznání.

Digitální Kříženecký se metodologicky opírá o řadu přístupů, jejichž množství odráží pestré složení autorského kolektivu. Jedná se například o „teorii archivnictví a digitálního restaurování, dějiny filmové techniky, materialistickou teorii filmu a médií, mediální archeologii, filmovou estetiku, umělecký výzkum či digital humanities" (30). Svým myšlenkovým a hodnotovým směřováním celá kniha tíhne ke konceptu „špatných dějin filmu" Katherine Groo, která učí nevnímat nedokonalosti a diskontinuity jako limity poznání, nýbrž jeho úběžníky (33). Zastřešující otázka zní: „Bylo by možné první české filmy vnímat jako svébytné archivní artefakty, jejichž estetické účinky a historická paměť bezprostředně souvisejí s jejich materiálně-technologickým ukotvením a putováním napříč různými kontexty, médii a formáty?" (23). Oproti publikacím z linie tradiční historiografie si tedy kniha klade detailnější a složitější otázky, což nese daň nižší přístupnosti pro širokou veřejnost. Toto manko se nicméně snaží zaplnit edicí textových a obrazových materiálů vážících se k Janu Kříženeckému a počátkům české kinematografie ve druhé části publikace a popularizační online kolekcí na adrese krizenecky.nfa.cz. „Staré" a „nové" přístupy se tak mohou alespoň částečně doplňovat.

Dveře k novým perspektivám otevřeny

Pokud čtete tuto recenzi, znamená to, že držíte v rukách *Iluminaci*, a tudíž pro vás nebude problém přečíst také *Digitálního Kříženeckého* od začátku do konce, v pořadí kapitol daném editorskou dramaturgií. Pokud byste ale chtěli knihu doporučit i nezasvěceným do tajů filmového bádání, navrhněte jim po přečtení úvodu Jiřího Angera (22–34) přeskočit k druhému oddílu věnovanému různým druhům cirkulace. Texty Kateřiny Svatoňové, Lucie Česálkové a Aleny Šlingerové jsou intuitivně přístupné orientací na kulturně-společenské otázky — a přitom nezůstávají nic dlužny předpokládané odbornosti ani úsilí představit Kříženeckého dílo a osobnost z nových perspektiv.

Svatoňová v kapitole nazvané „Pohyblivé obrazy Jana Kříženeckého aneb Český kinematograf jako výzva pro výstavní praxi" myšlenkově vychází z německé filozofie médií a zájmu o dispozitiv raných filmů, tj. „interakci mezi technologií, specifickou filmovou formou a pozicí diváka" (150). V první

4) Zdeněk Štábla, *Český kinematograf Jana Kříženeckého* (Praha: Čs. Filmový ústav, 1973).

z podkapitol dokládá, že poznatky Thomase Elsaessera týkající se tvorby bratří Lumièrových platí také pro některé postupy využívané Kříženeckým. Analogie nachází v umístění snímací techniky, kompozici obrazu i způsobu ovlivňování chodu projekce (promítání filmů pozpátku). Nezastavuje se přitom u pouhého popisu. Technologický pokrok vztahuje k soudobé, kulturně-společenské funkci výstav a estetiku Kříženeckého filmů představuje jako spojovací článek mezi fotografií a kinematografií, poeticky personifikovaný do strnulé figury mlynářky z *Dostaveníčka ve mlýnici* (1898) (154).

Pro potřeby svého textu zdůrazňuje Svatoňová rozdíly mezi ranou — atrakční, exhibicionistickou, útržkovitou — a „klasickou" kinematografií, určenou soustředěnému pohledu (159). Třebaže je tato dichotomie legitimní, obecně přijímaná, mohli bychom debatovat, nakolik jsou množiny obou modů samostatné a nakolik se protínají. I hollywoodské filmy příležitostně čerpají z dědictví kinematografie atrakcí, a navíc v době digitální, kdy se hranice mezi filmem a uměním rozmlžují (163), není problém umístit do galerie plochou obrazovku, kde ve smyčce poběží klasicky koncipovaný dokument o autorovi vystavovaného díla. Návštěvník může sledovat snímek pozorně, od začátku do konce, nebo mu věnovat zběžný pohled a jít dál.[5] Z pole teoretického uvažování o výstavnictví bychom se ale dostali k iniciativě divácké. Zůstaneme-li v nejužším rámci vymezení výzkumu — dvojí prostorovosti Kříženeckého filmů (164) —, můžeme bezpečně zkonstatovat, že dveře do světa Kříženeckého děl i nových možností jejich chápání byly otevřeny.

Česálková se věnuje cirkulaci narativů, které se kolem Kříženeckého nashromáždily po jeho smrti. Neomezuje se přitom na specifické údobí ani konkrétní typ mediálních výstupů, vedle sebe staví například výše vzpomínanou biografii Zdeňka Štábly a popularizační seriál pro děti *DějePIC!* (2017; díl „Biograf Jana Kříženeckého", 2021). Zaniká tak časová a personální situovanost či podmíněnost výroků, avšak vzhledem k množství dostupných pramenů (viz 283–287, 434–442) i snaze podat zobecňující výpověď působí volba rámce paměťových studií a několika často se opakujících motivů jako logický krok. Česálková připomíná topos Kříženeckého koupelny, v níž vyvolával své filmy, mýty o jeho nešikovnosti, kameru zakoupenou od bratrů Lumièrových a podobně. Všímá si, jak často paměťové artefakty odvádí naši pozornost od filmu jakožto média (169–170) a plní jiné funkce. S odkazem na terminologii teoretičky Svetlany Boym tvrdí, že Kříženeckého odkaz saturuje potřebu po dvou typech nostalgie — restaurativní[6] i reflexivní (171) —, přičemž řada vzpomínkových snímků kombinuje obojí.

Česálková věrohodně analyzuje příběhy, které daly vzniknout chápání rané kinematografie jako primitivní (nedokonalé) verze kinematografie narativní a přežily i proměnu vědeckého paradigmatu (viz výše, Svatoňová a Elsaesser). Pod vlivem restaurativní nostalgie, směřující k (iluzorní) rekonstrukci „ztraceného domova" (171), vznikají ahistorické a zavádějící zkratky jako označení Kříženeckého za prvního komediografa nebo spojování jeho filmů s pozdější praxí titulkování (176–177). Trvanlivost takových mýtů je důkazem lidské inklinace chápat historii skrze milníky, čísla a statistiky, hodící se během výročí, kdy mohou být rituálně připomenuta (170). Mytizační tendence se ovšem nevyhýbají ani současnějším, více ironizujícím přístupům ke Kříženeckého odkazu. Přestože rétorika seriálu *DějePIC!* odpovídá v pojetí Boym spíše reflexivnímu vzpomínání, vývoj kinematografie opět nahlíží teleologickou optikou a Kříženeckého filmy jako archaické a primitivní.

5) Součástí výstavy KAFKAesque v pražském DOXu (9. 2. – 22. 9. 2024) byla nepřetržitá projekce krátkých filmů Jana Švankmajera (*Byt*, 1968) a bratrů Quayových (*Ulice krokodýlů*, 1986). Návštěvník mohl do projekční místnosti bez dveří vstupovat a odcházet dle libovůle.

6) Nabízí se rovněž překlady „restorativní" nebo „obnovná".

„[N]a Kříženeckého nevzpomínáme jako na autora, ale inovátora a technologického nadšence. Jeho figura se tak blíží spíš tropu bláznivého vynálezce než umělce," konstatuje v závěru své kapitoly Česálková. Snad i proto se Šlingerová v rámci svého příspěvku zaměřila na Kříženeckého právě jako na autora. Nikoli však filmaře, nýbrž fotografa. Podobně jako Česálková čelila také Šlingerová otázce, jak naložit s množstvím disponibilního materiálu: fotek po Kříženeckém zůstaly v archivu tisíce (187). Takticky se rozhodla rezignovat na komplexní hodnocení (typologii) jeho tvorby a svůj výzkum opřela o koncept diseminace od současného teoretika fotografie Geoffreyho Batchena, který snímky zasazuje do sítě diskurzivních vláken; „nahrazuje lineární posloupnost autorů, směrů či technologií uvažováním o šíření a reprodukování fotografií napříč různými dobami, kontexty a médii" (187). Analýzy Kříženeckého fotografií ve třech různých kontextech (vrstva, objekt a instituce) doplnila Šlingerová komentářem k výchozím rámcům — časoprostorovému rozměru snímků a osobnosti jejich autora.

Struktura celé kapitoly je přehledná a logická (deset stran připadá rozboru obecných diskurzů, dalších deset konkrétně zacíleným analýzám) — byť druhá část je spíše ilustrací, doplňkem k té první, než by odhalovala zásadní poznatky zúročené v závěru (209). Klíčové informace přináší první polovina kapitoly, v níž Šlingerová důsledně přesochává psychologizující, romantizující představy o Janu Kříženeckém jako autorovi a předestírá proměnu jeho vnímání z nadšence v poučeného dokumentaristu. Již zde ukazuje, čeho si na fotkách všímat a jak je lze „číst" (194–195), v rámci analýz pak zohledňuje vícero parametrů včetně pozice fotoaparátu nebo kompozice obrazu. Překvapivě málo prostoru věnuje Šlingerová materiálnímu rozměru fotografií, přestože v úvodu (188) i závěru kapitoly (209) zdůrazňuje jeho důležitost. V rámci oddílu „Fotografie a objekt" si sice vybírá k rozboru mechanicky poškozenou, roztrženou fotografii, ale od dotyčného artefaktu se vzápětí vrací k fotografii coby otisku skutečnosti a zabývá se osudem sochy sv. Jana Nepomuckého, která na snímku chybí. Těžištěm výkladu, který Šlingerová vystavěla na poctivých rešerších, je převážně vztah autora a jeho díla ke společenským reáliím.

Archiválie pod drobnohledem

Dostáváme se k druhé — chronologicky první —, oborově specializovanější části knihy. Z makrokosmu kontextů a kulturně-společenských témat se přesouváme do mikrokosmu artefaktů, které nás narativní, iluzivní kinematografie naučila nevnímat a digitalizace je následně vytěsnila z rituálu filmové projekce. Pisatelé a pisatelka prvního oddílu knihy „Materialita: Digitální a fotochemický film" věnovali pozornost někdejším zprostředkovatelům (uměleckého) zážitku a nositelům (obrazové) informace: filmovým pásům.

Historik Jan Trnka prozradil zvolenou metodu a její předmět zájmu už názvem své kapitoly „Provenance filmových materiálů: Původ a životaběh negativů a kopií s kinematografickými díly Jana Kříženeckého". V druhém odstavci textu definuje provenanci jako

> původ (ve smyslu zdroje či místa nálezu) a životní dráhu (ve smyslu historické biografie či itineráře) materiálního objektu, sledovanou od momentu jeho vytvoření až po přerod ve sbírkový předmět a zohledňující i případné proměny obsahu a formy artefaktu nebo způsoby jeho užívání pod vlivem různých vlastníků, včetně procesů typu reprodukce či prezentace (109).

Úvod do tématu uzavírá představením pozoruhodného hierarchického modelu pro popis a katalogizaci filmů, který specifikuje čtyři entity každého artefaktu: dílo, variantu, manifestaci a jednotlivost (v tomto pořadí).[7)]

Trnkova kapitola je cenná jako připomínka množství „inkarnací" jediného filmového díla. Z celé hierarchie se autor zabývá zejména nejnižší složkou, jednotlivostmi, kterých v případě Kříženeckého děl našel v archivu přes sto třicet. Dělí je na „proto-generaci", tj. filmové materiály spjaté s filmařskou činností samotného Jana Kříženeckého (originální negativy a původní kopie), a „neo-generaci", materiály vzešlé z působnosti jiných aktérů v pozdějších dekádách (duplikátní negativy a duplikační kopie sloužící k zabezpečení a nové kopie sloužící k projekci). Posléze sleduje proměnu kulturně-společenské hodnoty těchto kopií a negativů ve třech obdobích přístupů k archivaci (předarchivní, meziarchivní a archivní). Každou z kategorií Trnka ve zbytku svého příspěvku detailně rozebírá. Někdy až do té míry, že kdokoli méně znalý v dané oblasti ztrácí pojem o relevanci uvedené informace („soubory dat byly poté ve formátu Matroska/FFv1 pro účely archivace uloženy v jedné online kopii na diskovém poli a ve dvou offline kopiích na LTO páskách" — 137). Na druhou stranu může Trnkův text kromě představení metodologie provenance a jejího aplikování v kontextu filmové historiografie posloužit jako orientační mapa toku dějin Národního filmového archivu a řady jmen s ním spjatých. V jednotlivostech tak pomáhá chápat kontext a motivace k tvorbě různých materiálů, a přitom nezastírá „bílá" místa historie (např. na s. 123–125 se několikrát opakuje přiznaná spekulace, poznámka o nepoznatelnosti skutečnosti atp.).

Vědecky popisná — až protokolárním způsobem — je také kapitola Jeanne Pommeau, z francouzštiny přeložená Alexandrou Moralesovou. Autorka se zabývá dlouho opomíjeným zabarvením některých z Kříženeckého filmů (konkrétně původních kopií) a svou „Studií ve žluté"[8)] se přísně metodicky táže po jeho původu. Na rozdíl od Trnky je předmětem jejího bádání úzce vymezený problém, k němuž nabízí skrze kritéria umístění barvy, jejího výskytu a dalších případných předpokladů až překvapivě vysoký počet sedmi hypotéz. V případě rozboru některých z nich se bude opět lépe orientovat odborník, popřípadě chemik (např. popis fenoménu „antihalace"), nicméně Pommeau se podařilo řešený problém představit tak, aby byl pochopitelný i běžnou logikou, abstraktně. Závěr přichází poněkud záhy, ve chvíli, kdy se k finálnímu zodpovězení otázky po původu zbarvení nabízejí ještě tři různé hypotézy, kterými se autorka nadále zabývá v rámci svého zkoumání lumièrovských filmových pásů. „Detektivně" laděný text, psaný v reálném čase probíhajícího výzkumu, tak získává nečekanou pointu, příznačnou pro otevřenost celé publikace. Namísto očekávatelného potvrzení jediné správné hypotézy se dočkáme informace o aktuálním stavu řešení a výzvy všem archivářům, popř. historikům s příslušnou aprobací, k bližšímu zkoumání filmových materiálů. Dle Pommeau má stejný význam a hodnotu jako studium obrazových pigmentů ve výtvarném umění (104).

Podobně popisný, investigativní charakter má také studie Jaroslava Lopoura „Kámen — Číslo — Satan: K identifikaci filmů Jana Kříženeckého", jež čtenáře uvádí do edice dokumentů v druhé půli knihy. V návaznosti na digitalizaci Kříženeckého filmů, vzpomínanou v úvodu recenze, Lopour přezkoumal nejasnosti a nesrovnalosti ohledně dosavadního označení a vročení některých z nich. Zaměřil se

7) Dílem se označuje intelektuální nebo umělecký obsah a proces jeho vytváření. Variantou se míní dílo s malou, nepříliš signifikantní odchylkou (například dabovaná nebo restaurovaná verze). Manifestace odlišuje způsob zpřístupnění díla (filmový pás kontra DCP kontra videokazeta atd.). Jednotlivostí je konkrétní artefakt uchovávající dílo (111–114).

8) Celý název zní: „Studie ve žluté: Hypotézy o přítomnosti zapomenutých barev v lumièrovských filmových pásech".

na tři filmy — *To nejlepší číslo* (1902), *Satanova jízda po železnici* (1906) a *Svěcení základního kamene jubilejního kostela sv. Antonína v Praze VII.* (1908). Na základě detailního studia dobových tiskovin, sekundárních pramenů i obrazové informace nesené samotnými filmy byl jako první schopen správně určit jejich název a rok vzniku. Vzhledem k tomu, že první dva zkoumané filmy byly součástí divadelního představení, Lopourův text přináší také překvapivý vhled do prolínání obou médií. V dlouhé sumarizační poznámce pod čarou mapuje kontakt filmu a divadla ještě daleko před vznikem Laterny magiky (248).

Kromě své vlastní studie přispěl Lopour do publikace dalšími dvěma texty (jeden z nich napsal spolu s Jiřím Angerem) komentujícími edici dokumentů, kterou sám editoval. Více než dvě stě stran knihy nabízí vyčerpávající přehled archivních materiálů, které po Janu Kříženeckém zbyly. Spolu s Kříženeckého filmografií představují časovou osu jeho života a díla, soupis filmů a televizních pořadů jim specificky věnovaných, digitalizovaný přehled reflexe Českého kinematografu z dobového tisku (o čtyřiapadesáti položkách), stejně koncipovaný přepis Kříženeckého korespondence, čtyřicet stran chronologicky řazených fotografií a několik dalších oddílů. Svou mravenčí prací připravil Lopour skvělou výchozí půdu pro každého badatele, který se bude chtít Kříženeckým v budoucnu zabývat.

Zhodnocování opomíjených aspektů filmu i jeho limity

Poslední, dosud nereflektovanou součástí *Digitálního Kříženeckého* jsou dva texty Jiřího Angera, které v rámci knihy patří k nejvíce inspirativním i nejvíce spekulativním. Každý z nich náleží jinému ze dvou velkých tematických bloků (Materialita a Cirkulace) a oba vycházejí z Angerova dlouholetého zájmu o filmový materiál a videografickou reflexi média. Svou spekulativní povahou mohou na první pohled působit odtažitě, díky promyšlené struktuře a srozumitelnému jazyku však otevřenému čtenáři nebudou méně přístupné než kapitoly Kateřiny Svatoňové, Lucie Česálkové nebo Aleny Šlingerové.

Studie „Estetika praskliny: Filmy Jana Kříženeckého na pomezí figurativna a materiálna", s níž se chronologicky postupující čtenář seznámí nejdříve, analyzuje dochované filmy Jana Kříženeckého z estetického hlediska. Anger se nezabývá pouze fikčním světem nebo filmovým stylem, nýbrž jejich interakcí s různými (zdánlivými) nedokonalostmi filmového pásu, případně rovnou projekce. K rozboru si vybral tři filmy, z nichž každý vykazuje jiný typ defektu: ve *Slavnostním vysvěcení mostu císaře Františka I.* (1901) jsou nasnímané osoby zahaleny do žlutočerveného barevného hávu s nejasným původem, v *Prvním dnu jarních dostihů pražských* (1908) zasahují výboje statické elektřiny, vzniklé během natáčení, žokeje jedoucí na koních a *Slavnost otevření nového Čechova mostu* (1908) se během promítání třásla tak, že nasnímané postavy ztratily své pevné kontury. Tyto jevy, které Anger souhrnně nazývá „divnotvary", zkoumá pomocí vlastního konceptu praskliny a postupuje analogicky jako při studiu experimentálních „found footage" filmů, jejichž autoři, na rozdíl od Kříženeckého, operují s divnotvary cíleně.

Anger předjímá očekávatelné výtky a vysvětluje, že autorský záměr nemusí být zdrojem hodnoty (48). Navíc přesvědčivě argumentuje pro aplikaci své metody na vybraný vzorek, tedy snímky dlouhé maximálně několik minut, které samy o sobě disponují především dokumentární hodnotou. Co by obyčejnému divákovi přineslo, vidět dnes v nejvyšším možném rozlišení několik postav kráčejících po mostě? Nečiní právě obrazová patina ze *Slavnostního vysvěcení mostu císaře Františka I.* fascinující umělecký artefakt, jehož barvy vábí oči i na fotkách (viz 49)? Pokud filmu takovou hodnotu přiznáme, pak ji také stojí za to studovat. Aby to bylo možné, je třeba jít látce pár kroků naproti. Anger trochu

nadhodnocuje „znepokojivost“ (63) optického efektu, způsobeného třasem filmového pásu, a k jeho docenění doporučuje „vnímat pohyb ‚mezi‘ (in-between) jednotlivými okénky“ (66). Někdo by takový výzkumný postup mohl napadnout jako svévolný, ve prospěch Angera ale jednoznačně hovoří jeho poučenost (viz množství uvedených zdrojů), kontakt s praxí (čerpá z dopadů „neintervenčního přístupu k digitalizaci“ — 64) i rozvážnost (zdůrazňuje svou „idiosynkratickou“ perspektivu — 71). Odvážně zhodnocuje aspekty filmu, které zpravidla bývají opomíjeny. Studii doplňuje ještě šestnáctiminutová audiovizuální esej *Digitální Kříženecký v paralelních světech* (Jiří Anger, Veronika Hanáková, Jiří Žák), která jednotlivé divnotvary ukazuje, komentuje a dále rozehrává.

Kapitola „První políčka českého filmu: Videografický přístup k raným kinematografickým artefaktům“ naopak uzavírá druhou část knihy a slovy autora tvoří pandán ke stejnojmenné, čtyřminutové audiovizuální eseji. V ní Anger s Adélou Kudlovou postupně prezentují první políčka ze čtyřiadvaceti Kříženeckého filmů, nechávají je rotovat, prohýbat se a následně skládat do nepravidelné mozaiky (viz 228). S přibývajícími políčky se postupně odkrývá citát Hannah Frank v následujícím znění:

> Představte si, že poznáváte budovu nikoli procházením jejími uličkami [sic!] či prohlížením jejího plánu, nýbrž zkoumáním každé její cihly. Představte si, že mozaiku nehodnotíte na základě celku, ale podle odlesku jednotlivých destiček. Anebo si představte, že film nesledujete, ale hledíte na něj políčko po políčku.

Popsaná video-esej zapadá do kontextu kurátorských snah archivních a muzejních institucí, které Anger přibližuje na stranách 218 až 221, následujících osm stran pak věnuje objasnění vlastního postupu práce.

Frank nás svým citátem vybízí k pohledu na svět z netradiční perspektivy, automaticky se ale nabízí otázka, čím bude studium „jednotlivých cihel budovy“ přínosné. Samotná video-esej má oproti *Digitálnímu Kříženeckému v paralelních světech* spíše poetickou než explikační funkci a těžko říct, jaké konkrétní „nové perspektivy“ (229) nabízejí digitální deformace (otáčení, roztahování fotografií) uplatněné na políčka z Kříženeckého filmů. Tím spíš, pokud „rozehrávání paradoxů“ je společným jmenovatelem všech kapitol knihy a zpozorovat variabilitu perforace můžeme i bez video-eseje.[9] Ta funguje spíš jako forma stvrzení výchozích tezí a potenciální zesilovač jejich dosahu. Za pozornost stojí ještě kritérium výběru „cihel“. V návaznosti na poznatek Toma Gunninga, že představení raných filmů nezřídka začínala promítnutím statického obrazu, a obsesivní fascinaci různými prvenstvími vybrali Anger s Kudlovou „*první* políčka z průkopnických snímků, […] *první* obrazy, které se objevily na plátně“ (221). Čtenáři *Digitálního Kříženeckého* nejspíš nebudou překvapeni, ale docení tu ironii: uctívané „primy“ (v tomto případě obrazy, ale dosaďte si libovolná jiná prvenství) jsou mnohem nejednoznačnější a tajemnější, než se nám může zdát.

Závěr

Formát knižní antologie není snadné souhrnně hodnotit, neboť recenzent musí přiblížit metodologicky různě ukotvené texty ve zkratce, nevyhnutelné vzhledem k jejich množství. Některé přístupy bude

9) Srov. „Díky audiovizuální eseji můžeme zpozorovat, že lumièrovské otvory nejsou vždy přítomny v původním stavu“ (229).

přirozeně znát důvěrněji než jiné, k některým příspěvkům bude mít více co poznamenat. Žádná z námitek uvedených v tomto textu nesměřuje k zpochybnění *Digitálního Kříženeckého* jako novátorské, podnětné a po všech stránkách zdařilé publikace, za níž stojí dlouhé hodiny práce erudovaných odborníků a pečlivá editace Jiřího Angera. Cílem recenze je dále rozdmýchávat intelektuální plamen, který kniha v českém filmově-vědeckém prostředí zažehla. Všem zájemcům o Kříženeckého dílo, potažmo raný film, nabízí pestrou informační a kontextuální síť, jejíž uzly (studie) jsou vzájemně pevně propojené (poznámkami pod čarou), aniž by se jeden druhému příliš podobal (a poznatky se překrývaly).

V neposlední řadě je namístě vyzdvihnout práci Michala Krůla, který stojí za grafickým designem knihy. Poznámky pod čarou uvedené přímo v textu umožňují snadnou orientaci ve zdrojových materiálech (čtenář nemusí hledat aparát v závěru knihy ani kapitoly) a barevné reprodukce fotografií vhodně doplňují text. Přestože je *Digitální Kříženecký* pověstnou „bichlí", hmotností přesahující váhu jednoho kilogramu, díky absenci klasického hřbetu se kniha pohodlně čte (dvojstranu lze uvést do polohy přímého úhlu, aniž by došlo k poškození vazby). Viditelné stehy, tradičně zakryté hřbetem, korespondují s tématem historických prasklin a lakun a dvojjediný nápis „pozitiv–negativ", přítomný na přední straně knižního bloku, je příznačně nedělitelný — leč pozorovatelný z různých úhlů pohledu. Vzhledem k neustálému vývoji poznání lze těžko rozporovat Angerovo tvrzení z posledního odstavce úvodní kapitoly, totiž že „tato kolektivní monografie představuje pouze provizorní zastávku v dlouhé hře o pochopení, čím filmy Jana Kříženeckého coby symbolické počátky české kinematografie jsou nebo mohou být" (34). *Digitální Kříženecký* nicméně dokazuje, že i taková provizorní zastávka může být cíl.

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VÝZVA K AUTORSKÉ SPOLUPRÁCI

NA MONOTEMATICKÝCH BLOCÍCH DALŠÍCH ČÍSEL

Prostřednictvím monotematických bloků se *Iluminace* snaží podpořit koncentrovanější diskusi uvnitř oboru, vytvořit operativní prostředek dialogu s jinými obory a usnadnit zapojení zahraničních přispěvatelů. Témata jsou vybírána tak, aby korespondovala s aktuálním vývojem filmové historie a teorie ve světě a aby současně umožňovala otevírat specifické domácí otázky (revidovat problémy dějin českého filmu, zabývat se dosud nevyužitými prameny). Zájemcům může redakce poskytnout výběrové bibliografie k jednotlivým tématům. **Každé z uvedených čísel bude mít rezervován dostatek prostoru i pro texty s tématem nijak nesouvisející.**

S nabídkami příspěvků (studií, recenzí, glos, rozhovorů) se obracejte na adresu: lucie.cesalkova@nfa.cz.

V nabídce stručně popište koncepci textu; u původních studií se předpokládá délka 15–35 normostran. Podrobné pokyny pro bibliografické citace lze nalézt na webových stránkách časopisu: www.iluminace.cz, v rubrice Publikovat — Pokyny pro autory.

Iluminace 2/2025

Special Issue

A Conversation Beyond the Script

Deadline for abstracts: November 15, 2024; deadline for submissions: February 15, 2025.

Guest editors: Jan Trnka (Národní filmový archiv)**, Jan Černík** (Palacký University)

Since the last issue of *Iluminace* focused on screenwriting (4/2014), the field of writing for the screen and its academic reflection has undergone several changes. The biggest challenges for the screenwriting community (mainly in the USA but not only there) have been the financial remuneration of screenwriters, their job opportunities, and the rise of artificial intelligence. It resulted in another WGA strike, with which many regional screenwriting associations stood in solidarity. Screenwriting studies are responding to this with a gradual change of perspective. Alongside the continued interest in teaching screenwriting and narrative patterns, we are increasingly encountering case studies on regional approaches to writing, scripting for short formats and VR which can be understood as a tendency to broaden the field of interest and opportunities for screenwriters.

Issues affecting screenwriting are reflected each year at the annual Screenwriting Research Network Conference. In 2024 the conference will take place in the Czech Republic and its topic is "A Conversation Beyond the Script". The aim of the conference is to reflect on the changes in formal aspects (especially dialogue and voice), the ways in which audiovisual works are developed and produced, and the changes in the craft of screenwriting.

We are calling for contributions that address the complex and multifaceted nature of dialogues and conversations in the screenwriting and audiovisual industry. This theme can be grasped in two ways: either as a reflection of dialogues in scripts and audiovisual art or as an insight into the filmmakers' debates during the development and production phases or as ways of negotiating between screenwriters and production companies. Papers may reflect both traditional approaches to writing and new technologies such as AI and VR.

Neither of the meanings of ‚conversation' is new to the literature. Film dialogue, although given less space than other elements of film form (such as framing, editing, and music), has been more researched in the last thirty years than it used to be. At the turn of the millennium, Sarah Kozloff rehabilitated dialogue as an object of inquiry (Kozloff, 2000). Paolo Braga pointed out that dialogue needs to be considered in the context of other formal aspects of film (Braga, 2015). Warren Buckland has shown how the tools of quantitative linguistics can be used to clarify what dialogue can tell us about film characters and authors (Buckland, 2019). Besides there are reflections on the realism of film dialogue (Nelmes, 2011) or research approaching dialogue as a side topic in texts on acting (Ganz and Price, 2020), or in a number of formal analyses and interpretive texts.

Dialogues in screenwriting are more than mere exchanges between characters; they are the lifeblood of storytelling, driving narratives and revealing the depths of characters' emotions and motivations. This focus on dialogues and conversations recognizes their role in not just advancing the plot but also in creating a connection with the audience. Dialogues are where characters' inner worlds are externalized and conflicts are brought to life.

Similarly, conversations among filmmakers during the creation process are crucial. These collaborative discussions shape the final output, blending diverse creative visions into a cohesive narrative. Understanding these conversations offers insights into the collaborative nature of filmmaking, highlighting how collective creativity and shared decision-making impact the storytelling process. Formal or informal conversations between filmmakers during the development and production of films is a topic that has been treated much more thoroughly from a scholarly perspective, as studies on production culture in audiovisual industries have shown (we are referring here primarily to studies following the tradition of sociological approaches to the development and production of film, building on authors such as Bourdieu, 1996; Caldwell, 2008; Macdonald, 2013; and others). Thus, we have new knowledge not only about final versions of scripts but also new insights into their development from the first simple idea, more broadly about the essence of screenwriter's job, their analog and digital instruments (used for communicating personal and shared visions), different kinds of multiple- and collaborative authorship, functions of writing departments and organizational structures of locally or media-specific dramaturgical systems, which altogether changing our understanding of what happens during the development of a screenplay (or any non/narrative content), and which presents screenwriting into considerable extent also as art of constant, ongoing discussions (usually democratic in nature) about each detail of future work/creative output (Price, 2010; Bloore, 2012; Macdonald, 2013; Tieber, 2014; Millard, 2014). However, the question arises whether and possibly to what extent our knowledge of the field will be relevant after the advent of artificial intelligence.

For the forthcoming issue, we invite authors to send us abstracts dealing with any of these possible (but not exclusive) topics:

- Dialogues and Discourse in Screenplays: Examining how character dialogues function within scripts to convey subtext, emotion, and narrative progression.
- Plurality of Voices and Polylogues: Analyzing scripts that feature multiple voices and complex conversational structures, reflecting the diversity of perspectives.
- Dissemination of Information: Investigating how information is shared through dialogue, affecting audience perception and engagement.
- Storytelling Through Conversation: Exploring the role of conversational dynamics in shaping narrative and character arcs.
- Collaborative Conversations in Filmmaking: Understanding the impact of dialogue between writers, directors, and other stakeholders on the creative process.
- Intercultural Dialogue in Film and Television: Studying how cross-cultural interactions are represented and negotiated through dialogue in screenplays.
- History and Theory of Screenwriting: Reflecting on the evolution of screenwriting practices and theoretical approaches.
- Teaching Screenwriting Techniques: Discussing pedagogical methods and strategies for teaching dialogue writing and screenplay construction.
- Narrative Strategies in Audiovisual Media: Examining innovative narrative techniques in film, television, and new media, focusing on the integration of dialogue.

Submission Guidelines:

We invite scholars and practitioners to submit papers that engage with these topics, offering fresh perspectives and rigorous analysis. Submissions should be original, unpublished works that contribute to the academic discourse on screenwriting and filmmaking.

Please send an abstract (250 words) and a short bio (150 words) to lucie.cesalkova@nfa.cz, jan.trnka@nfa.cz and jan.cernik@upol.cz by **November 15, 2024**. The authors will be informed of the decision by December 15, 2024. The deadline for submitting the full article is February 15, 2025.

The detailed submission guidelines can be found on our journal's website.

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Iluminace 3/2025

Special Issue

Filmic Matter and Geographic Specificity

Deadline for abstracts: December 15, 2024; deadline for submissions: April 30, 2025.

Guest editor: Byron Davies (Universidad de Murcia, Spain)

Much classical film theory was marked by an explicit concern with the material foundations of the cinematic medium, including its connection to "physical reality" (Bazin 1960; Kracauer 1960). The aim of articulating a self-consciously materialist ontology of cinema later developed out of awareness of film's technological apparatus, with an especially rich relationship to experimental film (Wollen 1976; Gidal 1978; Le Grice 1978). Of course, there are also very few agreements about what "materialism" means in these discussions. For example, an assumption often emerging from apparatus theory is that a resolutely materialist perspective should counter the impulses lying behind photographic realism (Baudry 1976). But in other contexts, realism can appear to work intricately with materialism, including when it comes to a close analysis of photographic "noise" and "interference" (Frank 2019). Materialist views, including so-called "new materialisms" (such as Bennett 2010), are also understood to bear a close relationship to photochemical film practices (Knowles 2020). Nevertheless, materialist perspectives can also help us to understand digital media—including the material infrastructure of digital projection as well as of the screen itself (Manovich 2001; Denson 2020).

But are these even the same sets of questions in all regions of the world? Or are questions of materiality in film permeated by the fundamental geopolitical fact of exploitation of the Global South by the North? Recent film scholarship has foregrounded geographically varied photochemical and handmade film practices (MacKenzie and Marchessault 2019; Coelho 2023; Doing 2024; Ramey 2024) or regionally specific challenges with collecting, preserving, and curating film materials (Fossati 2021; Hediger and Schulte Strathaus 2023; Cua Lim 2024). Attention to the geopolitics of digital *matter* would additionally turn on access to and extraction of lithium and indium (Cubitt 2017). What, then, are the consequences of geopolitics and ecology for current treatments of "matter" in film scholarship? For example, if efforts in experimental cinema in the South can result in a "shamanic materialism" (Colectivo Los Ingrávidos 2021), what then might we understand to be film's *shamanic matter*, if anything?

Taking into account the connections between filmic materiality and corporeality (Knowles 2020; Yue 2021; Suárez 2024), parallel questions might then arise regarding the geographic variability of conceptions of *bodies* communicated on film. Is filmic corporeality the same phenomenon in all regions of the world, or does it rather reflect the geopolitics and ecology of the different materials through which it is expressed?

This special issue invites scholars to address questions about geographically specific materials in film from a range of theoretical, philosophical, historiographic, and practice-based perspectives. Contributions may engage with topics such as experimental filmmaking, archival practices, film stock production, or broader media ecologies, while reflecting on how geographic specificity shapes variegated understandings of materiality and corporeality. We are especially interested in case studies of film practices from Latin America, Africa, Asia, Ocean-

ia, and other regions of the Global South. We are also highly interested in alternatives to Eurocentric frameworks and Indigenous conceptions of matter and materialism.
A thought guiding this issue is that attending to geographic specificity might render more concrete the divergent senses of "matter," "materiality," and "bodies" across a variety of traditions and perspectives, including seemingly irreconcilable ones.
For this issue, we welcome **articles** (6000–7500 words) or **audiovisual essays** (5–15 minutes) with written statements (1000–2500 words).
Please send an **abstract** (250 words + 3–5 bibliographic references) and a **short bio** (150 words) to lucie.cesalkova@nfa.cz, jiri.anger@nfa.cz, and byron.davies@um.es, by **December 15, 2024**. The authors will be informed of the decision by **January 15, 2025**. The deadline for submitting the full article or a completed audiovisual essay is **April 30, 2025**.

We will be pleased to consider proposals on these or related topics:

- The aesthetic significance of locally specific materialist film practices: experimental cinema, found footage, expanded cinema, animation, but also practices related to textiles, botany, ceramics, and painting (including painting directly on film).
- Materialist theories and philosophies of film articulated from the Global South, including the relationship between materialist philosophies of film and anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism.
- Global circulations of film theory/philosophy and their impact on our notions of filmic matter.
- Alternatives to Eurocentric frameworks for materialist approaches to film, including Indigenous materialist perspectives.
- The geographic specificity of archival film practices: collecting, curating, preserving, and exhibiting.
- The geographic specificity of film production: manufacturing, processing, printing.
- Possibilities of attending to geographically specific film practices as a basis for articulating alternative conceptions of "matter" and of "bodies."
- The ecological impact of geographically specific film practices, including their potential for articulating visions of degrowth.
- How geographic specificity informs questions of the materiality of digital audiovisual formats.
- How geographic specificity informs questions of the materiality of profilmic events and objects.
- Consequences of geographically specific materials for debates about whether films can "do" philosophy.

Submission guidelines:
Proposals should be original, unpublished works relating to the philosophical significance of geographically specific materials in film. The detailed submission guidelines can be found on the journal's website:
https://www.iluminace.cz/artkey/inf-990000-1200_Instructions-for-Authors.php

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Iluminace 1/2026

Special Issue

Short Film in the Balkans and Eastern Europe

Deadline for abstracts: February 15 2025; deadline for submissions: May 15 2025.

Guest Editors:
Fabio Bego (Independent Researcher)
Ana Grgic (Babeș-Bolyai University, Romania)
Irina Tcherneva (CNRS — Centre national de la recherche scientifique, France)

Archives are spaces of power expressions. They are places where power is stored and information is selected and converted (Azoulay 2019). At their foundation, archives are essentially patriarchal, paternal, and colonial institutions designated to preserve and expand the political order which founded them (Derrida 1996), however archives are also "sites of memory" (Nora 1989) which preserve traces of cultural and social experiences, practices, and resistances. For this special issue, we invite scholars to consider how short films reinforce and challenge archival power. Our aim is to draw attention to the way in which short films reverberate and reflect the (dis)continuities of state-building projects, political activism, and regime changes in the Balkans and Eastern Europe throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. More than thirty years after the end of the Cold war, the region now demands a decolonial view of its past, archives and memory, one that is shaped by "a multivocal discourse" (Sendyka 2022), encompassing multiplicity of creative expressions and intersected temporalities (Petkovska 2024). This special issue aims to shift film studies perspective in four ways: by focusing on short films (non-fiction, fiction, and hybrid forms) that tend to have a marginalised position within distribution circuits as a result of social, cultural, and economic practices, and technological advancements; by approaching their aesthetic, political and narrative specificities, their artistic and archival re-usage in contemporary times; by examining transnational connections, networks, and exchanges of filmmaking practices; and, finally, by decentering our gaze on the context of the Balkans and Eastern Europe. Doing so, we hope to make a contribution at the intersection of area studies, film studies and postcolonial studies (see Mazierska, Kristensen, & Naripea 2014). Ultimately, we seek to understand how the meanings, histories, and practices of the short film have contributed to reinforcing or challenging categories, taxonomies, and relations which have served to shape our knowledge of the Balkans and Eastern Europe, given that the short film has rarely attracted scholarly attention.

While the history of "author"-centric and national cinemas of Eastern Europe and the Balkans is quite well-established (see Imre 2005, 2012; Iordanova 2001, 2003; Mazierska & Goddard, 2014), the histories and filmmaking practices of abundant and varied short film forms are lesser known and rarely considered (see Česálková & al, 2024). We are interested in original research on hybrid and experimental works, newsreels, and documentaries made by filmmakers, artists, amateurs, and film professionals both within smaller state-funded studios and within film clubs, film collectives, and other institutions. This special issue also invites scholars to engage with the historicity of short formats by questioning the connections between short film practices, archives, and their dependence on the political conjectures throughout

the 20th and 21st centuries. What room for manoeuvre did the short format allow for collectives, minority groups, filmmakers and political activists? To what extent was the short film affected by censorship practices within specific national contexts? And how did the short format contribute to forms of alternative filmmaking practices (in terms of film expression and sometimes political orientation)? How did the intertwining of the market economy, political liberalism, and the predominant role of festivals and archives in the film industry since the 1990s shape the directions it took?

Furthermore, the uniqueness of short formats should be seen as contributing to cultural exchanges between the various blocs during the Cold War. After World War II, films were used as a way of stimulating collaboration and solidarity between the socialist Eastern European and Balkan countries and the communist and socialist movements of (post)colonial states and societies (see Salazkina 2023). With the end of communism, a major part of this film heritage was deemed as mere propaganda and marginalised by the dominant discourse in national film histories and historiographies. However, these films remain relevant today, since the discourses and events that marked the history of Eastern Europe and the Balkans echo the imperial and colonial politics prevalent in other parts of the world. Through the analysis of short films, we aim to reflect on the way in which the wake of democratic regimes and "Westernisation" affected conceptions of race and politics of transnational relations.

Through this special issue, we also hope to reconsider such films, in order to explore the memories and limits of decolonial politics in state socialism and beyond. What was the role of film in fostering direct and flexible transnational connections between the countries of Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and the rest of the world? How did coproductions affect short film plots, creativity and the perspectives through which stories are told? Could these connections be mapped out dynamically, and what form might they take at the beginning of the 21st century? We are especially interested in case studies which explore the relations between Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and (post)colonial states in Asia, Africa, and South America through fiction and non-fiction short films (e.g. films or newsreels documenting anti-colonial movements, such as the Angolan war of independence, the anti-apartheid movement, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Cuban revolution, the Vietnam war, etc.).

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- The aesthetics and history of an evolving short cinematic form (politics of production and usage of audiovisual archives in Eastern Europe and the Balkans; censorship in archival film practices and creative approaches used in short films to circumvent censorship, etc.)
- Exhibition practices and spaces (film festivals and short films; film collections and modes of programming short film; film museum exhibitions; curation and programming of archival short films in cinemas; short film programmes on TV and digital streaming platforms, etc.)
- Short film and archives (short film archives, regional cooperation and civic engagement; low budget and DIY approaches to experimenting with short forms and archives; queer film history and archiving in the context of the short form; community and collective archiving, resistance archives and short audiovisual forms)
- Short film and memory (transition from analog to digital in the context of film archives and accessibility; memory and short cinematic forms in a digital age; re-use of archival short films in compilation film; curating and exhibiting short films in film museums or cinematheques)
- Transnational perspectives, inter-regional connections, and decolonial practices (third cinema; the non-aligned movement; militant films, newsreels and anti-colonial move-

ments; feminist movements and short film practice; short films and post-colonial/post-imperial histories in the Balkans and Eastern Europe)

Submission Guidelines:

We invite scholars to submit papers that engage with these topics, offering fresh perspectives and rigorous analysis. Submissions should be original, unpublished works that contribute to the study of the short film form in the Balkans and Eastern Europe.

Please send an abstract (250 words + 3–5 bibliographic references) and a short bio (150 words) to lucie.cesalkova@nfa.cz, jiri.anger@nfa.cz, irina.tcherneva@cnrs.fr, bego.fabio@gmail.com and ana.grgic@ubbcluj.ro by **February 15, 2025**. The authors will be informed of the decision by **February 28, 2025**. The deadline for submitting the full article is **May 10, 2025**. The special issue is slated for publication in January 2026. The detailed submission guidelines can be found on our journal's website here.

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ILUMINACE

je recenzovaný časopis pro vědeckou reflexi kinematografie a příbuzných problémů. Byla založena v roce 1989 jako půlletník. Od svého pátého ročníku přešla na čtvrtletní periodicitu a při té příležitosti se rozšířil její rozsah i formát. Od roku 2004 je v každém čísle vyhrazen prostor pro monotematický blok textů. Od roku 2005 jsou některé monotematické bloky připravovány ve spolupráci s hostujícími editory. Počínaje rokem 2022 Iluminace vychází třikrát ročně a v roce 2023 přešla do režimu Open Access. Iluminace přináší především původní teoretické a historické studie o filmu a dalších audiovizuálních médiích. Každé číslo obsahuje rovněž překlady zahraničních textů, jež přibližují současné badatelské trendy nebo splácejí překladatelské dluhy z minulosti. Velký prostor je v Iluminaci věnován kritickým edicím primárních písemným pramenů k dějinám kinematografie, stejně jako rozhovorům s významnými tvůrci a badateli. Zvláštní rubriky poskytují prostor k prezentaci probíhajících výzkumných projektů. Jako každý akademický časopis i Iluminace obsahuje rubriku vyhrazenou recenzím domácí a zahraniční odborné literatury.

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1. **Screen Studies Collection** (dříve FIO — Film Indexes Online)
   nabízí komplexní nástroj pro přístup k aktuálním publikacím zaměřeným na filmovou vědu spolu s podrobnými a rozsáhlými filmografiemi.
   Kolekce zahrnuje indexy a filmografie
   a) American Film Institute (AFI) Catalog
   b) Film Index International (FII)
   c) FIAF International Index to Film Periodicals

   a) American Film Institute (AFI) Catalog
   Filmografická databáze zaměřená na americkou produkci poskytující podrobné informace o dlouhometrážních hraných filmech vyrobených na území USA nebo financovaných americkými produkčními společnostmi v období 1893–1972. Databáze obsahuje více než 48000 záznamů filmů s produkčními informacemi, technickými údaji, údaji o tvůrcích, hereckém obsazení a ztvárněných postavách; dále záznamy obsahují podrobný obsah filmu, poznámkový aparát, žánrové zařazení filmu a citační odkazy. Nové údaje jsou vkládány dvakrát ročně. Klíčový zdroj doporučený pro výuku, výzkum a studium filmového umění.

   b) Film Index International (FII)
   Filmografický informační zdroj vytvářený British Film Institute (BFI). Představuje světově nejrozsáhlejší profesionálně budovanou filmovou knihovnu s více než 100000 podrobných záznamů o filmech ze 170 zemí od prvních němých film-ů do současnosti s více než milionem odkazů na herecké obsazení a technické údaje. Dále 500000 odkazů na bibliografické citace k jednotlivým filmům a filmovým tvůrcům, 40000 profesních profilů filmových tvůrců, informace o získaných cenách na prestižních filmových festivalech.

c) **FIAF International Index to Film Periodicals**
Databáze obsahuje více než 230 000 záznamů o článcích s filmovou tematikou od roku 1972 do současnosti z více než 345 filmových akademických i populárních periodik z celého světa. Roční přírůstek činí 12000 záznamů. Každý záznam sestává z bibliografických údajů, abstraktu a záhlaví (jména autorů, filmové tituly, předmětová hesla). Databáze obsahuje také záznamy o televizi od roku 1979 (cca 50000 záznamů), od roku 2000 se omezila na články s televizní tematikou pouze z filmových periodik.

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zkratka z anglického Journal Storage (úložiště časopisů)
Digitální knihovna pro studenty a výzkumníky poskytující přístup k více než 12 milionům akademických článků, knih a primárním zdrojům z mnoha disciplín včetně filmu.
Představuje špičkovou on-line databázi digitalizovaných plných textů z více než 2000 vědeckých časopisů. Každý časopis je plně digitalizován od prvního čísla prvního ročníku až po pohyblivou hranici (moving wall), což je obvykle „tři až pět let od současnosti".

3. **EBSCO**
Megazdroj vědeckých informací pro společenské a humanitní obory.
Databáze EBSCO vychází vstříc požadavkům všech výzkumníků a nabízí elektronickou knihovnu obsahující desítky tisíc časopisů, magazínů a reportů a mnoha dalších publikací v plném textu.
EBSCOHost je jednotné rozhraní umožňující přístup k vybraným bibliografickým a plnotextovým databázím.

V Knihovně NFA jsou k dispozici dvě databáze megazdroje EBSCO:

a) **Academic Search Ultimate**
Databáze byla vytvořena v reakci na zvyšující se nároky akademické komunity a nabízí nejširší kolekci recenzovaných plnotextových časopisů, včetně mnoha časopisů indexovaných v předních citačních indexech. Obsahuje tisíce plnotextových časopisů v angličtině i jiných jazycích, publikovaných na severoamerickém kontinentu, v Asii, Africe, Oceánii, Evropě a Latinské Americe, a nabízí tím pádem jedinečné regionální pokrytí. Databáze integruje lokální obsah předních územně specifických zdrojů z celého světa a umožňuje tak studentům pohled na jejich studium a výzkum z globální perspektivy. Cennou součástí obsahu je i kolekce videozáznamů (více než 74000) od agentury Associated Press. Při vyhledávání se na seznamu výsledků zobrazují v karuselu relevantní videa. Databáze obsahuje videa předních zpravodajských agentur publikovaná od roku 1930 do současnosti a je aktualizována každý měsíc.

b) **Film and Television Literature Index with Fulltext**
Online nástroj pro výzkum v oblasti televize a filmu. Databáze pokrývá problematiku filmové a televizní teorie, uchovávání a restaurování, produkce, kinematografie, technických aspektů a recenzí. Obsahuje kompletní indexování a abstrakty 380 publikací (a selektivní pokrytí téměř 300 publikací), dále plné texty více než 100 časopisů a 100 knih. Databáze Film & Television Literature Index with Fulltext navíc obsahuje i filmové recenze z předního zdroje Variety, datované od roku 1914 do současnosti, a více než 36 300 obrázků z archivu MPTV Image Archive.

Zpracovala: Božena Vašíčková

Databáze Evropské audiovizuální observatoře
(European audiovisual observatory)

O Evropské audiovizuální observatoři
Evropská audiovizuální observatoř (EAO) vznikla roku 1992 jako následnická organizace Eureka Audiovisuel, jejím sídlem je Štrasburk. Činnost této instituce spočívá ve sběru a šíření informací o audiovizuálním průmyslu v Evropě. V současné době sdružuje 41 členských států a Evropskou unii, zastoupenou Evropskou komisí. Je financována přímými příspěvky členských zemí a příjmy z prodeje svých produktů a služeb.
Posláním EAO je poskytovat informace profesionálům v oblasti audiovize a tím také přispívat k větší transparentnosti audiovizuálního sektoru v Evropě. EAO sleduje všechny oblasti audiovizuálního průmyslu: film, televizní vysílání, video/DVD a nová média. O každé z těchto oblastí poskytuje informace ve sféře trhu a statistiky, legislativy a financování výroby audiovizuálních děl. EAO sleduje a podrobně analyzuje vývoj audiovizuálního sektoru v členských státech.
Působí v právním rámci Rady Evropy a spolupracuje s řadou partnerských a profesních organizací z oboru a se sítí korespondentů. Kromě příspěvků na konference jsou dalšími hlavními činnostmi vydávání ročenky, zpravodaje a zprávy, kompilace a správa databází a poskytování informací prostřednictvím internetových stránek observatoře (http://www.obs.coe.int).
Česká republika je členem EAO od roku 1994.

LUMIERE VOD je adresář evropských filmů dostupných na vyžádání v Evropě. Najděte služby a země, kde je film uveden na VOD, a zkombinujte vyhledávací kritéria a vytvořte seznam dostupných filmů podle režiséra, země nebo roku výroby.
Prezentační video je k dispozici https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wxp_SwD3BZg.
Tento projekt, spravovaný Evropskou audiovizuální observatoří, je podporován programem CREATIVE EUROPE Evropské unie.

LUMIERE VOD je databáze evropských filmů dostupných na placených videích na vyžádání (transakční a předplatné VOD). Poskytuje seznam filmů dostupných v daném okamžiku ze vzorku služeb na vyžádání působících v Evropské unii.

LUMIERE VOD je primárně určen pro profesionály v audiovizuálním průmyslu : autory, producenty, distributory, filmové fondy a regulátory, aby jim pomohl sledovat využití filmů na VOD a posoudit složení katalogů VOD. Účelem není usnadnit pronájem nebo nákup filmů ani předplatné služby.

LUMIERE VOD řídí Evropská audiovizuální observatoř na základě maximálního úsilí. Adresář je aktuálně v beta verzi a obsahuje asi 300 katalogů VOD. Počet sledovaných katalogů a frekvence aktualizací se bude postupně zvyšovat.

Poskytnuté informace
Databáze je prohledávatelná podle řady kritérií. Upozorňujeme, že:
- všechna metadata jsou poskytována s maximálním úsilím;
- zahrnuli jsme možnost vyhledávat filmy podle originálních nebo alternativních titulů. Na stránkách výsledků se zobrazí pouze původní název;
- země produkce uvádějí různé země podílející se na výrobě filmu. Země produkce uvedená na prvním místě označuje zemi, která údajně nejvíce přispěla k financování filmu. Nejedná se o ofi-

ciální státní příslušnost filmu, jak je posouzeno národním filmovým fondem nebo národním regulátorem.

I když byla věnována maximální pozornost zajištění přesnosti, není poskytována žádná záruka, že materiál neobsahuje chyby nebo opomenutí. Naším cílem je udržovat tyto informace aktuální a přesné. Pokud budeme upozorněni na chyby, pokusíme se je vyřešit. Můžete nás kontaktovat ohledně jakýchkoli technických informací v adresáři pomocí kontaktního formuláře.

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EAO vydává Statistickou ročenku, měsíčník IRIS se speciálními suplementy (v tištěné i elektronické podobě), účastní se různých konferencí a workshopů. Na webových stránkách EAO jsou veřejnosti dostupné tyto informační databáze: LUMIERE (obsahuje údaje o sledovanosti filmů distribuovaných v evropských kinech), IRIS MERLIN (informace o legislativě upravující audiovizuální sektor v Evropě), databáze poskytovatelů AVMS. Informace o provozování televizního vysílání v členských státech obsahuje databáze MAVISE. Všechny tyto informace jsou poskytovány v angličtině, francouzštině a němčině.
Nejvyšším orgánem EAO je Výkonná rada, v jejímž předsednictví se každý rok střídají jednotlivé členské země.

Národní filmový archiv

Sbírka orální historie v Národním filmovém archivu

NFA pečuje o nejrůznější typy dokumentů se vztahem k historii českého filmovnictví včetně zvukových a zvukově-obrazových nahrávek.

Vlastníte-li takové typy materiálů (rozhovory, záznamy událostí či jiné druhy audiozáznamů, eventuálně audiovizuálních záznamů rozhovorů, vztahující se k tématu české kinematografie, a to z jakéhokoliv období), a máte zájem o jejich bezpečné uchování, nabízíme vám bezplatné uložení v depozitářích NFA.

NFA splňuje všechny podmínky, které zaručují nejvyšší možnou kvalitu archivace.

Jakékoliv obohacení naší sbírky z vašich zdrojů je cenným příspěvkem k rozšíření povědomí o minulosti českého filmu a současně i naší kulturní historie.

Kontakt: kurátorka sbírky Marie Barešová
Marie.Baresova@nfa.cz

Filmový přehled, databáze Národního filmového archivu

Objemná filmografická databáze *Filmový přehled* Národního filmového archivu přináší rozsáhlá, ověřená a doposud dohledatelná data a filmografické údaje od počátků české kinematografie. Aktualizuje a nahrazuje tak informace, které byly dříve vydány v katalozích *Český hraný film I–VI* a *Český animovaný film I*. Uživatel tak nalezne především údaje o českých **hraných** (všechny od roku 1898), **dokumentárních** (prozatím výběrově 1898–1991, všechny od 1992) i **animovaných** (všechny 1922–1945 a od 1992, prozatím výběrově 1946–1991), studentských, dlouhých i krátkých filmech, jež byly uvedeny v kinech. Databáze je pravidelně aktualizována a stále doplňována.

Údaje o filmech: filmografická (všichni tvůrci, členové výrobního štábu, herecké obsazení a další), produkční (výrobci, všechny názvy, žánry, první a poslední natáčecí den, datum cenzury, schválení literárního a technického scénáře, první kopie a celého filmu, ateliéry, lokace a další), distribuční (předpremiéry, distribuční, slavnostní, festivalové premiéry, popřípadě obnovené premiéry, distribuční slogany nebo premiérová kina) a technická (distribuční nosič, poměr stran, barva, zvuk, mluveno, jazyková verze, podtitulky, mezititulky, úvodní/závěrečné titulky, animační technika, minutáž, původní metráž) data, anotace, obsahy, zajímavosti, fotografie i plakáty.

Údaje o osobnostech a společnostech: filmografie, profese, zjištěná data i místa narození a úmrtí, alternativní jména, životopisy, fotografie.

Údaje o ocenění a dotacích: česká ocenění, festivaly a přehlídky, zahraniční ocenění udělená českým filmům. Plánováno je též zveřejnění filmových dotací za léta 1992–2022.

https://www.filmovyprehled.cz/cs/databaze

Rešerše ve sbírce Národního filmového archivu

Odborné i laické veřejnosti nabízíme možnost **vypracování tematických rešerší** ve sbírce Národního filmového archivu. S žádostmi o ně se prosím obracejte na e-mailovou adresu **reserse@nfa.cz**.

Podrobnější informace viz

https://nfa.cz/cz/sbirky/reserse/.

Přehled jednotlivých částí sbírky Národního filmového archivu viz

https://nfa.cz/cz/sbirky/sbirky-a-fondy/.

Národní filmový archiv

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