

27th Stuttgart International Festival of Animated Film:

The First Programme Highlights

Press Release, Stuttgart, February 17, 2020

From May 5 to 10, 2020, the 27th Stuttgart International Festival of Animated Film celebrates diversity. With the motto “Creating* Diversity” the Festival focuses on diversity itself and asks: How do animation, games and digital media represent and generate diversity? An extensive programme of films, presentations, exhibitions, and concerts attracts audiences and industry representatives from all over the world to the heart of Stuttgart.

At ITFS, diversity is reflected in the different intercultural and international programmes, in the competition entries from more than 90 countries, and not least in Festival guests and visitors. Not limiting the definition of the term “diversity” to gender, it also encompasses ethnic, religious, cultural, political, and economic diversity. The works presented at ITFS demonstrate how animation, games, and digital media not only represent, but also produce and stimulate diversity.

Focus Topic: Wonder Women – Women in Games & Animation

From the beginning of film history, female artists such as Lotte Reiniger have been providing important stimuli for animation. However, female directors, producers and animation filmmakers are still underrepresented in the field of animation and games. Based on the “Women in Animation” programme curated by Jayne Pilling at ITFS 1996, the upcoming Festival presents new and historic positions of female animation filmmaking. This year’s programme focus on “Wonder Women – Women in Games & Animation” shows innovative animation art by women and, for the first time, explicitly presents computer games that have been realised by women to a significant extent.

Three **short film programmes** curated by **Waltraud Gausgruber and Birgitt Wagner** (festival directors of Tricky Women, Vienna) present diversity in the international female animation industry. The film programmes are part of the **Focus Day** organised by ITFS in cooperation with the association “Women in Animation Germany”; AG Animationsfilm also contributes to the focus topic with a panel discussion and case studies. Two further film programmes curated by **Gerben Schermer** (Curator Animation & Contemporary Art) put a spotlight on female Chinese filmmakers.

Monique Renault gives an **In Persona** presentation: Born in France, she is a pioneer of the European animation industry and has been addressing issues of eroticism and gender roles from early on as well as contributed to giving a wider audience access to the possibilities and seriousness of animated film. And another successful filmmaker has her say in the In Persona section: The film “Tragic Story with a Happy ending” by Portuguese animation artist **Regina Pessoa** is among the Portuguese films having received the most awards.

At ITFS GameZone, which allows visitors to experience how games and animation are connected, we present the diversity of the works of female game designers from the beginnings of game culture to date in a curated

exhibition (curators: **Stephan Schwingeler, Judith Ackermann**), including the work of American **Lynn Hershman Leeson**, a pioneer of interactive art.

Focus Topic: Copines! Focus on France

Germany enjoys a close friendship with its French neighbours; this is also true for the animation scene. And what would be better suited for an ITFS country focus and to this year's motto than France, with the French expressions "diversité" and "différence" making up the DNA of the idea of Europe? Diversity is a guarantor and basic condition of democracy, while (free) art is a substantial expression of diversity in practice.

In the **Master Class** held by **Benjamin Renner** visitors are given exclusive insight into the work of this Oscar-nominated cartoonist, animator and filmmaker. Among his awards is the César, the major national film prize in France. The award-winning animated feature film "J'ai perdu mon corps" of **Jérémy Clapin** was nominated for an Oscar this year. ITFS and FMX – Conference on Animation, Effects, Games and Immersive Media present the film as a joint ITFMX Screening. In addition, four renowned French animation studios introduce themselves in the ITFS **Studio Presentations**: Folimage (Jacques-Rémy Gierard), H5 (Ludovic Houplain, Federico Materazzo), Sacrebleu Productions (Ron Dyens), and Studio Silex. The **animation academies** La Poudrière and EMCA present their students' best works.

GameZone

GameZone as the digital playground of ITFS is dedicated to various formats – from indie games to VR installations to game jams – and takes place at Kunstgebäude Stuttgart this year. More than 50 games and VR installations presented on 2,000 square metres promise fun and games for visitors. The motto "Creating*Diversity" is a recurrent theme throughout the GameZone's programme, too: A panel talk is planned to present the games-industry initiative "**Hier spielt Vielfalt**" which is committed to greater diversity in economic structures as well the non-stereotypical portrayal of all people in games.

On Thursday, May 7 GameZone dedicates itself to education. For the first time, ITFS cooperates with **didacta – Die Bildungsmesse**. Discussions held at ITFS explore which roles animation and computer games can play in the presentation and communication of content in an educational as well as extracurricular context. The **EduTain Me 6.0** panel discussion deals with the implementation of digital media in teaching structures, with the keynote held by representatives of Brooklyn game studio **Tinybop** which primarily develops interactive educational games with elaborate graphic design.

Film Programmes & Presentations

Alongside special formats, the screenings of short and long films are always the core programmes of the Stuttgart International Festival of Animated Film. The International Competition presents some of the world's best animated short films, and prize money amounting to a total of 90,000 € is awarded in the various competition sections. Award-winning filmmakers introduce themselves and their work to audiences in the **In Persona** series, which this year includes French director and animator **Jean-Charles Mbotti Malolo** whose recent film has been nominated for a César in the short film category. He was the winner of the ITFS Grand Prix for his short film "Le sense du toucher" in 2015. **Liu Jian** is also our guest: His film "**Have a nice day**" was

a contender for the Golden Bear at Berlinale 2017; his film debut "Piercing I" which competed at ITFS 2011 is shown again at ITFS 2020.

Two further animated film programmes in cooperation with DEFA Foundation present films by **Marion Rasche**, one of the most important representatives of animated film in the GDR: a critical thinker and former head dramaturge of the DEFA studio for animated films.

The cooperation between ITFS and Popbüro Region Stuttgart in the Music & Animation section established in 2019 continues in 2020: On Saturday, May 9 at the Pop XR event, several speakers discuss the use of digital techniques and media art in live music performances. The multi-media Pop XR Party at Club White Noise concludes the day: Media artist **Portrait XO** from Berlin meets DJ **Difracto** from Strasbourg.

With a series of **Tributes**, ITFS pays homage to the works of deceased filmmakers such as **Rosto** from the Netherlands and **An Xu** from China. In the **Master Classes**, interested participants find out about the tricks used by great filmmakers such as **Pedro Rivero** („Birdboy“, „The Platform“), **Jalal Maghout** from Berlin/Damascus (Architecture and Animation) as well as musician and filmmaker **Fermin Muguruza** from Bilbao (transmedia project „Black is Beltza“). A first presentation is given by **Effat University in Jeddah (Saudi Arabia)** where animated film is studied and produced exclusively by women. Last but not least, the US animator, multiple Oscar nominee, grand master of indie animation, and longtime friend of ITFS **Bill Plympton** honours the Festival with a **Cult Night** of black humour featuring past and recent projects.

A special highlight this year is **„Animeo & Humania“**, **animated theatre** by Theater Marie (Aarau) and François Chalet (Zurich) in cooperation with FITZ! Zentrum für Figurentheater. In four performances, a human actress and an animated character engage in a flirt across species – the live aspect of the stage play embarks on an adventure with animated film.

Festival passes and accreditations at the discounted Early Bird rates are available until March 12 at:

www.itfs.de/en/tickets // Further information: www.itfs.de/en

The full programme will be published on our website shortly. To apply for press accreditation please go to:

www.itfs.de/en/press-pr/pressaccreditation

Pictures:

„J'ai perdu mon corps“ by Jérémy Clapin /© 2019 - Xilam Animation - Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Cinéma

„Uncle Thomas accounting for the Days“ by Regina Pessoa

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