

## **LIST OF SPEAKERS AND ABSTRACTS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE**

### **Keynote speaker**

#### **Ülo Pikkov**

studied animation at Turku Arts Academy in Finland and since 1996 has directed several award-winning short animation films in Eesti Joonisfilm and Nukufilm studios. His articles, caricatures and illustrations have been published in the Estonian press. In parallel with producer's work Ülo has continued directing his own animation films and supporting new talents in the Estonian animation scene. Together with Priit Pärn he is the founder and Associate Professor of the Animation Department in the Estonian Academy of Arts.

### **Speakers day 1 Wednesday April 25**

#### **Veronika Reichl**

works as a filmmaker, writer and lecturer in Berlin. Her animated films and performances are regularly shown at festivals and exhibitions.

She received her PhD from the University of Portsmouth.

#### **How can animation relate to philosophical language?**

How can animation relate to abstract concepts and theoretical language? What kind of relations can be created between sentences and different elements of an animated film scene? How can animation shape how we perceive philosophical texts? Can it provide an interpretation of such texts?

Based on a series of short experimental animated films made by me in the course of my research, I investigate in the possibilities of combining animated film scenes and original philosophical text passages. It is important to state, that this research project and the animated films dedicated to it do NOT try to build a visual language for abstract thought but concentrate on meaningful relations between visual representations of beings and object in movement and theoretical language.

With the help of linguistic and semiotic concepts I describe how viewers make sense of such combinations of philosophical text and animation. I will talk about typical qualities of philosophical texts and how animation can address these central aspects of philosophical sentences. Visual metaphor, visual metonymy and visual literality play an important role in this process. The difference between visual and linguistic metaphor is especially important, because it explains, why combinations between text and animation become often nonsensical. But it also helps to comprehend, why and how animation can provide an interpretation of philosophical text passages.

#### **Iveta Karpathyova**

Freelance illustrator and animator. Master of Design - Interdisciplinary Master's in Art, Media and Design, OCAD University, Toronto (Canada).

#### **Rotoscoping design for bodily technique: An interdisciplinary research on embodied knowledge in dance and animation.**

In animating short film Phases of Dance (2017) which constitutes of 2,100 drawings, I rendered move-ment at 12 frames per second and approached rotoscoping as a design method that allowed me to analyze and document aspects of visual expression, performance and technique in my bachata dance practice. As I observed the physical and mental processes involved in traditional animation, I reflect-ed on how my body conditions over time and how it learns to recognize connections between move-ment and timing. The embodied research methodology integrated a writing reflection on an ongoing two-month studio regime where I drew 100 frames on daily basis.

Traditional animation was analyzed as a discipline of embodied knowledge in relation to my long-term practice of latin dancing and martial arts. As noted by Norman McLaren, “[a]ny art which doesn't move seems to me to be in one category, and all the arts that are connected with motion are in another category” (19). I explored embodiment as a common way of learning through these practices which stands for a state of thinking, perception and knowledge acquisition through movement and action. In the process I became aware how my experience in dance, which revolves around rhythm, timing and pacing, informs my animation practice and the perspective through which I perceive and understand movement.

The research was grounded in the theoretical framework proposed by Ben Spatz in *What a Body Can Do: Technique as Knowledge, Practice as Research* (2015) which proposes that a practitioner's bodily technique should be observed as a type of knowledge production conducted on daily basis in studios, training sessions or rehearsals (6). I use various drawing approaches in animating movement that seek to capture the epistemic structure of a particular gesture or performative element in bachata, placing emphasis on muscle tension, points of impact, emotive expression and musicality.

Bringing together the diverse perspectives of a scholar, practitioner and performer, this presentation aims to foster a discussion of animation as a design tool for documenting embodied knowledge but also as an embodied practice in itself.

### **Javad Khajavi**

is a scholar, researcher, independent animator, and media designer with backgrounds in animation, engineering and new media art. He is currently an Associate Professor at Volda University College in Norway where he lectures and researches on Media Design and Animation.

### **Re-defining Calligraphic Animation: Toward a Taxonomic Demarcation**

**Abstract.** The amount of literature written about animations that incorporate calligraphy, more specifically Islamic calligraphy (which is defined here as any sort of calligraphy written in Arabic script) in their visual structure has noticeably expanded in recent years, thanks to the increasing production of such animated films. In particular, a few articles appeared in edited books, animation magazines, and academic journals in the last few years that focus on examples of animated films that contain calligraphic elements or address the art of calligraphy in a wider sense. A majority of these publications were focused on the innovative use of calligraphy in such animations or were concerned with interpreting the semantic meaning of calligraphy in these films. With almost no exception the term “calligraphic animation” have been used across these different articles to refer to animated films that dealt with calligraphy in one way or another. However, most of these articles fail to define what they mean by the term calligraphic animation, and what constitutes such a film. A detailed examination of the literature on this topic reveals that terms such as “calligraphic animation,” “calligraphy animation,” and “animated calligraphy” are used loosely, not only by novice writers but also by established scholars. Most of the literature on this topic have taken the definition of these terms for granted, and considered any sort of animation in which calligraphic elements are used as an example of “calligraphic animation.” It is argued, in this paper, that such a proposition has created great misconceptions about one of the least understood genres of animation, namely calligraphic animation, and led to superficial analytical descriptions of the animated films that portray calligraphic elements. Stating that a question of definition is by essence a philosophical question, the author begins by an ontological investigation of the current definitions of the abovementioned terms. Then, by proposing a taxonomy of animated films that incorporate calligraphic elements in their visual structure, the author redefines calligraphic animation.

## **Jürgen Hagler**

studied art education, experimental visual design and cultural studies at the University for Art and Design in Linz, Austria. He currently works as a professor for Computer Animation and Animation Studies in the Digital Media department at the Hagenberg Campus of the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria.

### **Animating Participants in Co-located Playful Mixed-Reality Installations**

As Virtual and Augmented Reality technologies become more prevalent, they are being increasingly utilized in artistic installations in order to offer participants a more immersive spatial experience. Such installations typically focus on the experience of individual users. Nevertheless, shared co-located experiences with multiple users are becoming more common. Making participants aware of each other and facilitating interaction between them in such virtual environments can be quite challenging, particularly considering the technical limitations that still exist despite the advent of new technologies.

Due to the development of new AVR devices in recent years, many novel forms of applications have emerged, such as 360-degree videos and VR games. In the context of animation, there is a continuum from passive experiences to playful interactive environments and workspaces. For instance, with tools such as animVR1 or Tilt Brush2, the user can slip into the role of an animator or a digital artist. Typically, these applications are tailored for single-user experiences.

However, advanced technologies, such as position tracking or motion capture, allow the inclusion of multiple participants in MR, for instance, connecting VR users with other participants located in real physical space. By doing so, these technologies can be harnessed to establish a gateway between virtual (VR user) and real space (participant). Initial approaches for co-located MR experiences were already introduced in the 1990s, with a focus on experiments in computer graphics, display technologies, and network performance. Nevertheless, very little is known regarding the implications on the design of co-located MR experiences.

This presentation will focus on design strategies to visually embed participants inhabiting the real space in a co-located interactive MR environment. By presenting three co-located MR installations, novel approaches and design implications of animating the participants in hybrid virtual worlds will be discussed. The key challenges are: merging the real and the virtual world through animation, visually embedding the participant in the virtual world, and using participants as an input for animation.

## **Turine Tran**

Turine Viet-Tu Tran is a PhD candidate in digital storytelling and illustration at Nanyang Technological University. An international award-winning illustrator, she has spent the last 15 years in illustration, graphic design, advertising, film, animation, and is currently most passionate about the research in digital storytelling and visual adaptations of classic literature.

### **Philosophy meets pop-culture entertainment: Chinese ‘Three-Teachings’ in 3 visual adaptations of the classic novel *Journey to the West***

This paper looks into the demonstration of Chinese philosophy in 3 visual adaptations of the Chinese classic novel *Journey to the West* (*JTW*) in animation, digital games, and comics. *JTW*, written in 16<sup>th</sup> century, is one of the “four-great classics” of Chinese literature. The story not only is popular in its origin but also has brought Chinese culture and philosophy to audiences around the world through many pop-culture adaptations. Compare to other Chinese classics, *JTW* is the most adapted one because the story suits many different demographics and can be appreciated in many levels. It can delight a young reader who look for a fairy tale or an adult audience who search for an elaborated adventurous world where monsters, demons, gods, and fairies all interact. At a much deeper level, the story of *JTW* and its

immersive world can offer a lens to look at the Chinese cultural heritage and the fundamental philosophy of “Three-Teachings,” where Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism co-exist in harmony. In fact, one might say that it is hard to successfully adapt *JTW* without expressing some degree of the “Three-Teachings.”

This paper is divided into 2 parts. Firstly, it introduces briefly how the philosophy of “Three-Teachings” is presented in the novel and in its three contemporary visual adaptations. The second part of the paper discusses whether it is always crucial for adaptations to retain the original story’s philosophy, especially when they are exposed to a culturally diverse audience. From there, the paper calls for a discourse in preserving the original culture and ideology in the process of adapting classic literature.

### **Guo Chunning**

Chunning (Maggie) Guo teaches New Media Art and Animation at Renmin University of China. She was a creative director for Vancouver Film School, a visiting artist to Central Saint Martins, London, and a resident artist at Centre Intermondes in France in 2014. She earned her PhD on independent animation in 2015.

### **Applied Baudrillard: The Remake of Objects in the Stop-Motion Work *AANAATT***

The studies of daily life have been an important perspective on the rethinking of modernity, especially from the contributions of French philosopher Jean Baudrillard’s theory about *The System of Objects*. The flatness of modernity has often been regarded as a metaphor of a mechanical system. This machine of modernity has the desire to produce more daily object consumption and manage the population into a routine life.

However, by the criticism and experimentation of modern artists, daily objects could just be a weapon against consumerism and a base to reverse the routine. This paper will examine the work of Max Hattler as an example exploring how the process of the remaking of daily objects might bring about the glory of transfiguration, as well as revealing the potential of daily life. The animated short *AANAATT* as an example of object animation was produced in 2008 by German artist Max Hattler. This work was inspired from a Japanese musician and finished on Max’s personal desk in his London home. This paper will explore how this “Banquet of Object” as a unique transfiguration was fulfilled through the remaking of daily life objects:

First, Max simply shot the objects in the positions in which they already were (e.g. on the table) and moved them, shooting frame by frame with a stop-motion camera. And the new juxtaposition of the colorful objects offered an opportunity to get rid of the routine relationships and functions of their own in their daily lives.

Second, Max remade the objects white or black, and these objects on his desk then became a unique menu of objects, as if these characters were on a stage, influenced by Japanese dramas. Third, in the process of collecting and remaking the objects, Max has a new chance to review his own daily life, as well as visiting his friends’ working environments in the context of the system of objects.

## **Benjamin Seide**

is a Singapore based artist, Visual Effects Supervisor and Associate Professor, Benjamin Seide is dedicated to Animation and Visual Effects with over 15 years of professional experience.

### **Layers of Meaning: Exploring artistic impressions and photorealistic representations in Virtual Reality**

Virtual heritage commonly utilizes laser scanning, CGI, 360-degree imagery and photogrammetry aiming to create photorealistic and accurate representations of historical environments. The goal of being as accurate and realistic as possible has not been fully accomplished yet, but considering the rate of improvement, virtual environments and augmented extensions will become indistinguishable from reality.

A countermovement of artists and researchers create artistic impressions of virtual environments, not aiming for photorealistic perfection but to add an interpretation to the debate how the deeper meaning beyond the visual representation can be best represented.

Philosopher Merleau-Ponty quotes Rodin, “It is the artist who is truthful, while the photograph lies; for, in reality, time never stops.”

This research project investigates the possibilities of artistic impressions by exploring and comparing the effect of stylized and abstract interpretations created with animation techniques to common representations such as 360-degree video and photorealistic virtual reality environments.

I propose that the meaning of heritage is not just the form of a heritage site but could be understood as different layers. Interactive and immersive applications, such as augmented and virtual reality applications, enable us to explore alternative layers beyond the basic image acquisition. These layers are commonly understood as additional information layers, from superimposed text providing more detailed information to animated CG characters performing a relevant historic scene inside the virtual environment.

Virtual reality applications are naturally utilizing computer animation techniques such as character animation extensively. Static virtual heritage applications are interesting to academia and science, but enhancing them with character animation, they can become edutainment applications, possibly attracting a much broader audience, promising useful i.e. for museum installations. *Layers of meaning* could also be interpreted in a more artistic sense by creating impressions rather than photorealistic representations. These artistic impressions utilize animation techniques to ‘stylize’ the environment or even create representations on an abstract interpretation level, aiming to create a sense of atmosphere and trigger a stronger emotional response.

## **Panelists day 1:**

**Axel Akesson**, MPD, Asset Supervisor

has over 15 years professional experience in computer graphics with 12 years spent in feature film VFX contributing to over 20 major movies. Axel's latest challenge was building the photoreal fully digital recreation of the actress Sean Young as "Rachael" for "Blade Runner 2049", where he served as Asset Supervisor.

**Jeanette Bonds**

is the Co-Founder and Director of GLAS Animation Festival.

**Prof. Siegfried Zielinski**

is the Michel Foucault Chair at The European Graduate School / EGS, where he teaches as a professor of mediology and technoculture. He is also the chair of media theory, with a focus on archaeology and variantology of media, at the Institute for Time Based Media at the Berlin University of Arts.

## **Speakers day 2, Thursday April 26:**

**Steve Henderson**

is co-owner and Editor of Skwigly Online Animation Magazine. He is also founder and director of Manchester Animation Festival, the UK's largest animation festival. His PhD thesis focused on British Children's Television Animation and Animation Archives, an area which he has involvement and expertise in preserving, promoting and protecting.

**Philosophy in Motion: A Call for the Creation of a Joint Philosophy and Clearer Establishment of a Field of Animation Archiving.**

Animation is a unique art form, defined by processes that distinguish it from live action film. Its material heavy animation production processes demonstrates a fundamental difference between the two screen based forms. Animation archives and collections house these materials and represent a wealth of culturally significant records and objects that speak to a worldwide animation heritage.

However, the term 'Animation Archives' is a dangerously misconstrued one. It brings to mind an established and recognised networks, complete with funded collections and repositories available for public access, research and exhibition. In reality, the vast majority of animation archives exist as disparate under resourced collections that lack a much-needed communal response to the issues they collectively face. Though a lack of funds is a major damaging factor, it is the lack of communication and organisation between collections that is placing them at risk of a suffocation of knowledge and resources.

The materiality of animation production materials opens up many questions. It is proposed that a philosophy is defined that distinguishes animation archives from moving image or audio-visual archives that house media related to the presentation of the moving image. It is to great success that archiving philosophies such as those governing Audio-Visual archives have safeguarded their media throughout the years on an international scale. Without a similar approach to animation materials the entire animation worldwide community faces an erosion of our understanding of animation technique and heritage.

This paper proposes a plan to unite animation collections and archives to share their knowledge, resources and pool their talents in order to collectively define a peer reviewed and agreed upon philosophy for the collection and care for animation materials and address the myriad of issues that will be faced in doing so. This published and updated edition will act as a repository of knowledge and aid in the continuation of vital conversations around the definition, preservation and management (as well as other areas) of items in collections. By allow others to engage in a collegial community of animation archivists, promoting the process of animation and the unique attributes of this art form it is hoped that the dangers animation collections face can be recognised and addressed.

### **Bernhard Schmitt**

is Assistant Professor at the School of Art, Design & Media at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. His area of expertise is stop motion and experimental animation techniques.

#### **The shift of decision-making powers within stop motion and the consequences for the animation's aesthetics**

The digitalisation and technological sophistication of stop motion animation over the last two decades did not only affect its aesthetics and economics but increasingly the role of the animator and their relationship with the director. This paper addresses a lacuna in animation research by examining how recent technological developments have shifted the control over the animation from the animator towards the director and therefore pose the question: Who defines the aesthetics of animation? Before the introduction of digital picture recording techniques, the director would brief the stop motion animator prior to shooting the scene and then leave them to proceed with the animation. Alterations afterwards were impossible, unless the scene was reshot entirely, an option often avoided out of economic reasons. This set stop motion apart from other animation techniques like drawn animation with its many interim stages where the director always had the possibility to intervene and correct before the finalisation of the scene. In stop motion the animator was at the helm.

The introduction of techniques like video assist and line testers into stop motion changed this relationship. Control over the animation seems to be increasingly shifted to the director.

Using data drawn from interviews with specialist practitioners, this paper will demonstrate paradigm shifts that have arisen from this professional change which will continue to impact stop motion animation profession. I ask the following questions:

- How has the shift of decision making powers changed the aesthetics of stop motion?
- How will the ascent of digitally animated, 3D printed sequences, the crossover between CG and stop motion animation change the director-animator relationship in the future?
- Due to the impact of digital technology and the accompanying increase in smoothness of movement - has stop motion not only lost its quirkiness but also its soul?

While previous work such as Tony Tarantini's has looked at the recent change in workplace relationships in drawn animation, the field of stop motion has not been addressed so far. Stop motion animation is a highly productive field for research in this area, since technological developments create a fast changing environment that, due to comparability allows reliable conclusions about the impact of technology on workplace relationships in the animation industry.

### **Franziska Bruckner**

is Head of the research group Media Creation at the St. Poelten University of Applied Sciences. She is co-coordinator of the AG Animation within the German-speaking Society for Media Studies and board member of ASIFA Austria.

### **Reflecting Academic Symposia as a Trend at Animation and Media Art Festivals and Conferences on Computer Animation.**

A vivid synergy between practice, festivals and theory has always been a key factor for establishing a platform for the art form and culture of animation. However, in the past few years a trend could be observed towards a more intense interaction between animation theory and animation festivals and conferences on computer animation. Worldwide, Animation festivals and conferences are hosting theoretical and scientific symposia or conferences, which are open for theorists and practitioners.

As part of expanded a global survey including the international SAS conferences, the first part of the lecture features a reflection of the theoretical symposia Animafest Scanner which is part of the Animafest Zagreb and the Asia Animation Forum at Bucheon International Animation Festival. The second case study focuses on the hosting symposium, the evolving SAS Symposium at the ITFS Stuttgart which interrelates topics like narrative structures, color or sound within animation, comics and literature. In addition to these recent developments the talk addresses the historical roots of academic influences within the festivals in individual lectures.

Compared to the academic symposia at animation festivals the events on digital animation follow different definitions and stands on theoretical approaches. The conferences are putting a stronger focus on the technological evolution of the medium. This includes research and applied science on computer graphics and animation, as well as making-of presentations and artistic positions.

The second part of the talk will subsequently focus on the Expanded Animation Symposium at Ars Electronica Linz and the FMX Stuttgart, which takes place at the same time and place as the International Trickfilmfestival. These case studies will reveal the blurring boundaries between art, science, theory and industry as well as the specificities of the interplay between artists, practitioners, scholars, curators and festival visitors in different formats. Furthermore, the presentation will discuss the recent initiatives Women in Media Arts at Ars Electronica and Women in Visual Arts at FMX.

### **Raphael Zähringer**

studied English and German in Tübingen, Germany, and Leeds, Uk. He received his Ph.D. from Tübingen University (thesis: *Hidden Topographies: Traces of Urban Reality in Dystopian Fiction*) and is now a postdoctoral researcher in English Literatures and Cultures.

### **“There is no happiness”: Doki Doki Literature Club and Philosophy**

The paper discusses general issues of how video games negotiate philosophical questions and problems. In a first step, it surveys and problematizes the tendency of game studies to reduce philosophy in video games to questions of “gamifying moral dilemmas” (cf. Schott 2016).

Many scholars, the paper argues, underestimate underlying philosophical issues in games as they often solely focus on specific nodal situations (cf. Koschorke 2012) in games that force players to make a more or less difficult decision on the grounds of applied ethics (‘which of these two characters do I want to save?’). Furthermore, it will be illustrated how many of these decisions are driven by questions of gameplay strategy (in the sense of a consequentialist ‘best outcome’ for the player) rather than fully-fledged moral dilemmas.

In a second step, the paper highlights the game *Doki Doki Literature Club* (2017) as a game that is massively interested in ethics and philosophy beyond node-based operations of seemingly tough choices. As a player, the game asks you do make choices, but you usually cannot avoid a ‘bad’ outcome during your first playthrough – a crucial element of this dating



simulator-turned-horror game is that some human constellations are simply too complex in order to resolve them into ubiquitous happiness. The game occasionally also refuses to accept player's decisions. Additionally, as the title suggests, *Doki Doki Literature Club* pursues philosophical issues against the backdrop of the poems presented to the player, all of which can be attributed to specific poetic modes and traditions (e.g. Romanticism, Modernism) as they deal with questions of (for instance) identity and choice along the lines of these poetic traditions. Lastly, the game is also concerned with the philosophy of programming, as character in the game become aware of the fact that they are part of a game – and they encourage the player to tamper with certain game files in order to change the course of the game. Thus, the game not only reflects on the nature of games as ludic installations but also as philosophical projections of programming and epistemology.

### **Gray Hodgkinson**

is a digital media artist, designer and researcher, with specific interests in visual research methods, computer animation, and animated narrative. Gray has been developing and leading animation education for 17 years, 14 of those at Massey University, New Zealand, and now since 2017, at Nanyang School of Art, Design and Media, Singapore.

#### **Animation in VR – a whole new story**

As animated narrative continues to experiment with virtual reality (VR), principles of traditional storytelling are seriously challenged. Once the participant dons the VR headset they have to ability to look wherever they wish. This single act of independence takes control away from the story-teller, and in essence, makes the experience an interactive one. The story designer now finds themselves considering principles from different mediums – that of interactive storytelling and game design. And in these spaces, there has been much discussion over several years about how story and interaction can co-exist.

For example, a key principle of interactive story-telling is to replace the plot with a web of possibilities that comprise the same truth. The storyteller retains control at the broader abstract level, while the plot instances are performed by the participant. The story structure needs to permit some free will for the participant, to reduce the “likely clash between your story-world and their thinking” (Crawford). The same concepts are used in computer game design in various degrees, from pre-determined plot points to open sand-box, where the player makes their own story through environmental interaction.

However, once we become used to VR, will we continue to be sensorially seduced, or will we regain some detachment, and reclaim our awareness that we are standing in a room with a funny headset on? What, then, will keep us immersed in VR? If we can see past the illusion, what remains is the power of the engagement and story. As Marie-Laure Ryan states: “The immersion must come from the story, or more precisely, from the user's agency in the storyworld”. Like other forms of persuasive media, these are the things that will keep us in VR, and allow us to benefit from the increased immersion that VR brings.

This presentation will examine these new tools from these parallel mediums that an animator may need to embrace when they enter the VR realm.

### **Burcu Kartal**

graduated from Maryland Institute College of Art, with a BFA degree in Experimental Animation in 2008. She produced animation projects for TRT Children's Channel and held stop-motion animation workshops in Turkey. She started her post graduate degree at Yasar University Proficiency in Art and Design program in 2015. She has been working as a Part-time Lecturer at Yasar University Animation Department since 2017.

#### **Repetition and Autism Spectrum Disorder: Using Repetitive Children Drawings to Raise Social Awareness**

This research focuses on repetition as a connection between animation and the drawings of the children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, while focusing on their body movements and behavioral patterns, in order to raise social awareness and recognize their talents. By using drawings of the selected children -both savant and non-savant- with Autism Spectrum Disorder; project will show their unique world and open up new perspectives.

The project introduces time concept into repetitive drawings. People with mental disabilities, including Autism Spectrum Disorder have remarkable abilities in varying degrees which is also called as "island of genius." Whatever the particular skill, it is always linked to massive memory, which the society ignore most of the time. When a stimulus is acted upon the body, the mind tries to bring forward selected images of the past from the unconscious to the conscious state, in order to decide which response action the body will take. This is when perception occurs. One of the main focuses of this research is on how this process accomplished in the minds of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Most of the researches done on Autism Spectrum Disorder in Turkey are related to education such as art therapy. Art therapy has significance improvement on the development, however this project aims to collect the artwork of the children and introduce them in a different framework. Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder aren't always welcomed in the society. For this reason, many of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder are not getting required education or social interactions. Furthermore, many individuals from the society don't have accurate knowledge about Autism Spectrum Disorder. Turning children drawings into animation and screenings of the work of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in countries like Turkey is crucial in order to raise social awareness and social acceptance of these individuals.

### **Markus Watzl**

studied Audiovisual Media at Hochschule der Medien, Stuttgart

Studied Media Studies at the Philipps-Universität Marburg

PhD student at the Institute for Film Studies at the Freie Universität of Berlin.

### **Do Algorithms possess moral values?**

"Morality is, if you are moral, Woyzek." Woyzek's superior officer gets tangled up in this, somewhat distorted, tautology in Georg Büchner's drama of the same name and thus caricatures himself. The title character cannot hope for moral orientation or even mediation of moral values from this side. The downfall of Woyzek can also be attributed to the lack of such an orientation.

The question of morality can hardly be answered universally, since it is primarily a very subjective one. While laws or norms are normally fixed, morality depends heavily on the individual. With Marshall McLuhan's understanding of media as an extension of the human senses, that is also an algorithm written in programming language, suddenly the question of a moral of the written code arises. Can the algorithm even possess morality, a quality that can only be attributed to man? Upstream, the algorithm would first have developed its own consciousness. Of course, one has to understand an algorithm first and foremost as a sequence of pre-established commands and paradigms. A bit in itself is insignificant. Only if it is syntactically processed and arranged, it is semantically representable and readable. Programming means writing for machines, using certain patterns, interfaces, and logics in the context of how they function, thereby identifying users' options for action.

Assuming that an algorithm, simply put, is nothing more than a recipe, it implements a series of steps and way. In order to achieve a specific goal, it becomes immediately clear that digital technologies always require specific discursive forms and bring forth.

However, if you continue the idea of a moral algorithm, you quickly come across the dystopian science fiction literature that has attempted to show what effects, in their view, can have on the user of acting morally. Think of the "PreCog" technology in Philipp

K. Dicks Minority Report and also HAL 9000 from Stanley Kubrick's "2001 A Space Odyssey" is in no moral dilemma when he kills human astronauts for his mission.

### **Leonie Sharrock**

Leonie Sharrock is an animation practitioner and Senior Lecturer in Animation at the University of South Wales, Cardiff, since 2002 (the former Animation Newport branch of the current merged university).

#### **'To be or not to be: that is the question: ...' ?**

The ontology of animation has long been discussed (animation IS philosophy!) : the movement that 'happens' in the void between frames, the shape-shifting uncertainties of line and form, the re-animating of inert matter, the breath of life, the resurrection of the dead. This tension between being and non-being has enabled the apparent magic of trick-film to cast the animator in the role of witch or shaman, scratching marks on a surface, manipulating objects and effigies.

The tactility and reality of 'inert' matter, when it is apparently re-animated, is what gives shamanistic power to the animator. Still close to its ancient precursors of mark-making and puppetry, the haptic, visceral animation tradition creates impossible worlds that echo something of the real worlds of our 'animated' selves, as well as remind us of the tensions between entropy and movement, life and non-life, and transcend nostalgia to connect us, makers and viewers, to primal experiences of being-in-the-world, and to contemporary narratives of empathy.

But if there is no inert matter to manipulate, what then?

For all of its possible worlds and their wonders, does the digital remove the magic for the author-animator-shaman (and ultimately for the audience)? If there is nothing to resurrect, no state of being other than the illusion itself, is the digital merely a reconfiguration of a constant energy flow, with images and forms that have never, will never, exist beyond the electrical pulse on screen? Do we surrender our embodied selves to the shadow-reflections of the dream? When as animators, we give primacy to vision over the sense of touch, when our illusions lose their tethers to the world, do we also, cease to exist there?