

Panel B4

Sala Emiciclo

National Experiences in Animation II

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From 'Justin Hiriart' to 'Ipar haizearen erronka'. Animating the Basque Whale Hunters



In this presentation we will check out how the graphic novel published in Spain between 1984 and 1989 'Justin Hiriart', by Fructuoso and Harriet adapted and inspired the animated film 'Ipar Haizearen Erronka' (1992, *The legend of the North Wind*) by Juanba Berasategi and the implication that this production had in the Basque cinema industry. Since the publication of 'Justin Hiriart', the animation director Juanba Berasategi got interested in adapting the stories of the Basque Whale Hunters into animation. Gregorio Muro, known as Harriet, started working with Berasategi as scriptwriter of the project called 'Baia' (*The one about the whales*).

As fact, 'Justin Hiriart' and 'Baia' presented two very different stories in the same historical context: the tradition of whale hunting mostly during the XIV and XV centuries in the Basque coast. Both made an approach to this historical reality in two different ways. The first introduces Justin Hiriart, captain of the San Juan and his travels to Newfoundland (Canada). The animated version introduces Anne and Peiot, who also join the San Juan in their way to Canada. From a narrative point of view, the choices of kids as main characters responded to Juanba Berasategi's needs, as the animation industry was focusing on children's films. The context appears to be the same; in both cases the trip starts in Pasaia, arrives to Newfoundland and implicates the Mic-Mac tribe. Also, the animated version includes many elements of the graphic novel, such as conversation and actions to resolve problems and other new elements like fantasy.

The production of the film coincided with a time of changes in the Basque Country. It was Juanba Berasategi's second feature after 'Kalabaza Magikoa' (1985, *The magic pumpkin*). The director decided to pass the work to another production team, EPISA (Euskal Pictures International) with the producer Iñigo Silva and director Maite Ruiz de Austri as main leads, to produce a new film based on the original. The new project changed the name from 'Baia' to 'Ipar Haizearen Erronka', modifying mainly the original sound track and the recording of the dialogs. The Basque Government changed his funding politics and entered in the feature as a co-producer with EUSKAL MEDIA. After the releasing of the film, Juanba Berasategi sued EPISA for plagiarizing 'Baia' due to the similarities with the final feature. This situation increased the discomfort of the cinema industry with the Basque Government.

The legend of the North Wind appears to be a local history that responds to the trends of the moment that it was made. After that, the Basque animated feature films evolved from local to global markets, searching new ways of production and modern topics.

In fact, after 'Ipar Haizearen Erronka' there were many other features that get inspired in comic strips or graphic novels. *Goomer* (1999) directed by Carlos Varela, who also worked in 'Ipar Haizearen Erronka', was inspired in the homonymous comic strips by Nacho Moreno and Ricardo Gómez, the same for *La crisis carnívora* (2008, *The carnivorous crisis*) of Pedro Rivero.

At the end, 'Ipar Haizearen Erronka' had a sequel made by EPISA called 'Ipar haizearen itzulera' (1993, *The return of the North Wind*) that was awarded by the Spanish Academy of Cinematographic Arts and Sciences as the best animated feature film of the year. Also some pictures of the films were taken and mixed with animation specifically made for the occasion to create a TV series (1992-1995).

By this way, 'Ipar Haizearen Erronka' appears to be a rich example of the Basque Animation, narratively and as an illustration of the cinema industry in the Basque Country and the relationship of the main cinema agents of the territory during the early nineties.

Biography

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Maitane Junguitu has a Bachelor Degree in Audiovisual Communication and a Master in Social Communication both by the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU). She is now carrying out her doctoral thesis about the animation feature industry in the Basque Autonomous Community (Spain). She has researched about the historical development of the Basque animation history and the narrative analysis of the Basque works. She is also interested in the study of the different animation aesthetics and particularly the formal elements and narrative structure of the animation full-length films. She has completed two research stays at University of Nevada, Reno (USA) and at University of Stirling, where she made an approach to the framework to research about animation cinema in small nations. She has conducted her work as researcher of the Department of Audiovisual Communication and Advertisement of the UPV/EHU.

She has participated in many conferences and published several papers about animation industry in the Basque Country and animation in Spain. In 2014 she presented with Begoña Vicario, professor of the University of the Basque Country and animator Spanish Academy of Cinematographic Arts and Sciences prize winner, the conference "The place of animation in the Basque Cinema of the last decades" during the summer course 'Three generations of Basque cinema makers' organized by Euskadiko Filmatagia / Filmoteca Vasca and the University of the Basque Country. In 2016 she published the paper 'The way to the co-production of the Basque animated feature', where she studied how lately Basque industry has evolve from single companies films to the participation of two or more companies.