

## Panel D2

Sala delle Colonne 1

### Theoretical perspectives on the animated documentary



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#### Rotoscoping the Real: Philosophical Implications of Rotoscoped Animation in Animated Documentaries

This paper analyses the use of rotoscoped animation in animated documentaries, its implications on the documentary genre, and its claims to the indexical. By examining the use of rotoscope in animated documentaries such as *Tussilago* (Jonas Odell, 2010) and *30%: Women and Politics in Sierra Leone* (Anna Cady and Em Cooper, 2013), this paper illustrates the porous boundaries of the documentary genre, and how animated documentaries disrupt classical film theory's concept of indexicality, the idea that cinema can capture the real world. While many classical film theory arguments assert realism as the essence of film, these arguments often remove animation from the conversation, despite the important philosophical implications of rotoscoped animation on claims of the indexical. While documentaries seek to illustrate the real world, many animated documentaries do not use rotoscoped animation, despite its connections to the indexical, illustrating alternative purposes for (animated) documentaries that go beyond just capturing the indexical, such as conveying psychological interiority. *Tussilago* and *30%: Women and Politics in Sierra Leone* are examples of specific stylistic choices in regards to rotoscoped animation, capturing the physical and emotional weight of its subject matter, ultimately tying the emotional impact of the animation to the real world. By putting animated documentaries, rotoscope animation, and classical film theory into conversation, this paper illustrates the new and evolving conceptions of realism in animation and animated documentaries.

#### Biography

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Jacqueline Ristola is a Masters student in Cinema and Media Studies at York University in Toronto, Canada. She graduated from Calvin College with a Honours BA in Film and Media Studies. Her research interests include animations and its various incarnations, with her current research project examining the cross-cultural aesthetic exchanges between the Japanese anime *Samurai Champloo* and the American animated series *The Boondocks*. Her previous presentation at SAS 2016 explored the relationship between *Waltz With Bashir* and *Persepolis* to the documentary genre. She currently is the interim co-editor of *Animation Studies 2.0*.