

## Panel E1

Auditorium

### Making Animated Films

Adriana Navarro Álvarez

#### Kijé. The Long Path towards a **Co**-produced Animated Short



The aim of this paper is to study the trajectory of a self-produced animated short film, in which the director herself takes on all the tasks of communication, administration, financing of production and distribution within the audiovisual domain. This is an artisanal and alternative model of production in response to the post-Fordism system. This system is characterized by an international division of tasks, which consists of the decentralization of the different labor processes in various countries through cooperation between small and medium-sized studios. This has certainly given rise to an abnormal situation within the framework of the animated short film, including co-production between countries for the production of non-commercial low-budget films such as Michaela Pavlatova's, *Tram*, a Czech-French co-production, *Decorado*, by Alberto Vázquez, with a Spanish and French company, or Mr Hublot de Laurent Witz and Alexandre Espigares, of Luxembourg-French nationality. Furthermore, there are cases where freelance animators participate in experimental short-film collections produced by private TV channels. For instance, the Italian filmmaker Donato Sansone took part in the collection *Dessine Toujours!*, a selected compilation of animated short films related to freedom of expression and released by the TV channel Canal+France, in which the production and the diffusion themselves were extensively promoted on this platform.

Nevertheless, the conjuncture of co-production described above, thematic compilations, as well as the weight of the already well-established high-level French animation schools like Gobelins, La Poudrière or EMCA and the diversity of animated studios with recognized courses like Auteur Minuit, Sacrebleu Productions and Les Armateurs, which defend their editorial line by having their story-lines and their graphic worlds realized by their own network of artists. Such schools and studios are obstacles to the development of the self-produced animated short film. Even renowned artists such as the prize-winning Michel Ocelot, Florence Mialhe and Sylvain Chomet, who form a powerful expanding ecosystem, prevent the survival of lesser-known independent filmmakers, forcing them to solve serious difficulties in obtaining financial support and their dissemination on the basis of a graphic bible or on the finished project, without a guaranteed minimum of success.

Although there are excellent studies on the economics of the animated cinema, such as Sébastien Roffat's, Cécile Noesser's and Lucie Merijeau's, the analysis of the production system of contemporary self-produced animated short film is barely touched upon in research. For his part, Professor Laurent Creton analyzes the condition of the independence of the cinema as a flexible and plural model that needs the rigid structure of the cinema industry to exist. As a result, the self-produced animated short film is a practical method of production as long as the director is linked to audiovisual market strategies. These strategies take into account, on the one hand, the director's possibilities of creation of an animated short film, and, on the other hand, the external environment of the human, material or financial conditions of the independent director of animated short films. Thus, the independent director must necessarily combine the role of the

entrepreneur with that of the creator in order to carry out a self-produced animated short film efficiently.

Consequently, this paper provides a vision of this model, a self-produced animated short film. An example of this is *Kijé* (2015), an animated short film made in France by the self-taught filmmaker Joanna Lorho, a poorly funded work whose production period was extended to about ten years because of lack of experience and financial resources. Award-winner in several competitions and with a remarkable career in festivals, *Kijé* is the result of a long journey, in which the widespread exhibition in different cinematographic circuits reveals the limited recognition and appreciation of the critics, specialised press and public.

It is therefore important to examine and discuss the processes of funding and disseminating this work to understand the ephemeral commercial tour experienced by many other creators of animated short films who have designed, produced and disseminated in the same way. Once the films are finished, the directors should send their projects to several cinematographic competitions or festivals. After passing through a period of non-commercial exhibition, if they are selected, animated short films take up little space in TV programming, with the Internet being one of the main platforms for distribution and viewing these pieces of work in recent years.

In addition, this paper will be supported by interviews with filmmakers and animation specialists to draw conclusions on trends and commonalities on the funding and distribution of independent animated short films, for instance: the search for subsidies, irregular production, the difficulty of delegating, and the uncertainty of the profitability and visibility of the work. In this way, we can study the particular career of *Kijé*, a self-produced animated short film in the cinematographic circuit, composed of diverse intermediaries, as well as the starting point of the director, Joanna Lorho, as the main person responsible from the very beginning from this animated short film.

## Biography

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Adriana Navarro Álvarez (aka Adriana Baradri) was born in Barakaldo (Spain). She holds degrees in Animation: Degree Specialist in Stop-Motion: Art & Industry, Master Degree in Animation and Master Degree in Artistic Production from the Faculty of Fine Arts of the Universitat Politècnica de València. Currently, she is a Ph.D. Candidate, researcher and lecturer at the Drawing Department - Animation: Art and Industry from the Universitat Politècnica de València. Her job there was granted by the Conselleria d'Educació, Investigació, Cultura i Sport Generalitat Valenciana. Adriana is the author of the Master's thesis *Diffusion and Self-Promotion of an Artistic Animated Short Film. Case Study: Via Tango*. Her present interest in researching is related to European independent animated short films and Spanish production in animated films. Her graduated film *Via Tango* was nominated for Goya Awards (the Spanish Oscars), award-winning and selected in hundreds of international film festivals, (such as Gijon, Mar del Plata or Zinebi). Furthermore, such work was part of the cycle *From Doodles to Pixels*, the major retrospective of the little-known art and industry of Spanish animation organized by the

Contemporary Culture Centre of Barcelona and Acción Cultural Española, and the anthology *100 Hundred years of Spanish Animation*, developed by Diboos Spanish Federation of Animation Production Associations. Mrs. Navarro has always been interested in the development of experimental projects related to other areas. Creating the short films *Squid Ink* and *C Plan* in the context of international project *Perspectives. Art, inflammation & me?*, connected to autoimmune inflammatory diseases and commissioned by the Chair Art & Disease UPV, she links animation with new narrative strategies. Moreover, she took part in the experimental animated film *The Cat Dances with its Shadows*, coordinated by Lecturer María Lorenzo, and she was assistant animator in the short film *Vida Mía*, directed by M<sup>a</sup> Carmen Poveda. Also, Mrs Navarro contributed as animator to the short film *Homeopathy Low Cost* by Ana Lorenz. Additionally, Adriana collaborated in production and distribution tasks in HollyShorts Film Festival (Hollywood, Los Angeles) and the Valencian film library CulturArts IVAC as well as the curation and coordination of 2<sup>o</sup> Prime The Animation International Showcase of Student Animation, collaboration in the AniKids Workshop for Children and BDAE Spanish Animation Database. Besides, she has also published and lectured in these countries: France, Portugal, Argentina, Cyprus and Spain. She has delivered papers in *Confia International Conference on Illustration and Animation* at the Polytechnic Institute of Cavado and Ave, *Avanca Cinema International Conference Cinema Art, Technology, Communication*, International Academic Forum Animation Anima, the magazine *Con A de Animación* and *Ilustrafic 2<sup>o</sup> International Congress of Art and Visual Culture* and *Deforma: Cultura Online*. Nowadays, she collaborates as a film critic in the French magazine specialised in short films *Format Court: Regards Pluriels sur un Format Singulier*, in which she was Jury Prix Format Court in Court Métrange International Film Festival In Rennes (France) and she works at the association *Coordinadora del Cortometraje Español*, dedicated to the audiovisual education, promotion and diffusion of the Spanish short film format. Recently, she has made a research stay granted by the programme Erasmus Practice scholarship at the prestigious University Sorbonne (Paris) and currently she continues her postgraduated studies as an intern in the well-known The Animation Workshop in Viborg (Denmark).