

Panel E1

Auditorium

Making Animated Films

Hannes Rall

Die Nibelungen-Adapting Germany's National Epic for Digital Animation



The author is currently working on an adaptation of Germany's famous national epic *Die Nibelungen* as an animated feature film. *Die Nibelungen* can be seen as the German equivalent of culturally significant epics of other nations such as the *Mahabharata* from India or *Journey to the West* from China.

Since Fritz Lang's masterful adaptation (1924) as a two-part-feature-film, arguably no new adaptation of similarly high artistic merit has been created.

The live-action-versions by Dr. Harald Reinl (1967) featured some strong performances and was comparatively faithful to the original. Yet the casting of the former athlete Uwe Beyer as Siegfried and shortcomings in visual prevented a full artistic success. The extremely loose adaptation of Uli Edel (2004) succeeded in creating a visually engaging fantasy epic, yet veered away significantly from the source material.

An animated adaptation in feature length is lacking entirely.

Therefore this project carries high potential for innovation. It will balance the traditional tale with a new narrative and visual approach that emphasizes its relevance for modern audiences yet pays respect to the narrative core of this medieval epic.

The paper will allow insight into scriptwriting, storyboarding and visual development. At the same time it will demonstrate the integration of theory and practice by explaining, how scholarly research on the medieval epic has informed the creative process. By doing so it will add to the body of academic work that engages with defining parameters for artistic research.

The talk will also highlight the connections between narrative approach and visual content: The highly complex and ambiguous story of *Die Nibelungen* has formerly been simplified and falsely appropriated by the National Socialist German Workers' Party, or Nazi Party in Germany during the 1930s and 40s.

This new version seeks to rectify this by radically re-contextualizing the content in terms of visual expression: The animated adaptation will employ the artistic styles of *Entartete Kunst/Degenerate Art*, as represented by artists like Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Willi Baumeister, Max Beckmann, Käthe Kollwitz and Wassily Kandinsky.

This will free the new adaptation of any nationalistic connotations and reveal the high complexity of the original tale.

Biography

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Hannes Rall (aka Hans-Martin Rall)

Hannes Rall is a tenured Associate Professor at the School of Art, Design and Media

at Nanyang Technological University and the Coordinator of the Digital Animation area. He is also a successful director of independent animated short films: Hannes has shown his work in exhibitions and has been an invited speaker for workshops and conferences in over 20 countries worldwide.

His films, primarily animated adaptations of classic literature, have been shown in over 350 film-festivals worldwide and won 41 international awards.

His conference presentations include FMX, ACM SIGGRAPH and the Annual Conferences of the Society for Animation Studies. In 2016 he was the Chair of the 28th Annual Conference of the Society for Animation Studies *The Cosmos of Animation* in Singapore.

He has published essays, articles, book chapters and books with renowned publishers like Routledge, UVK Verlag Konstanz and Julius Springer.

He is a member of the editorial board of the *Animation Journal* and member of the advisory board of the book-series *Animation: Key Films/Filmmakers*.

Hannes is currently working on a script for an animated feature film adapted from the German national epic *Die Nibelungen* and writing the book *Adaptation for Animation: Transforming Literature Frame by Frame* for CRC Press, a Taylor & Francis imprint.