

Panel F2

Sala delle Colonne 1

Animation and Memory: Forms, Methods, Contexts, Practices



Chair: **Nicholas Miller**

Respondent: **Timothy Jones**

Traditional animation has frequently demonstrated its flexibility and precision as a tool for the exploration of the forms and processes of memory. Artists as diverse as Jan Svankmajer (*Jabberwocky*, 1971), Caroline Leaf (*The Street*, 1976), Yuri Norstein (*Tale of Tales*, 1979), Frederic Back (*Crac*, 1981), the Brothers Quay (*Street of Crocodiles*, 1986), Suzan Pitt (*Joy Street*, 1995), Michael Dudok de Wit (*Father and Daughter*, 2001), Koji Yamamura (*Muybridge's Strings*, 2011), and Lynn Tomlinson (*The Ballad of Holland Island House*, 2015) have harnessed animation's many expressive modes to explore the shaping of memory by subjective psychology and emotion, the role of material objects in anchoring personal and collective narratives of the past, and the tension between creation and retrieval in documenting historical events. In recent years an important subgenre highlighting the disruption of personal memories caused by emotional and sexual trauma or by progressive neurodegenerative disorders and unique brain states has emerged in films by animators like Tim Webb (*A Is for Autism*, 1992), Michèle Cournoyer (*The Hat*, 1999), Adam Elliot (*Harvie Krumpet*, 2003), Kunio Kato (*La Maison en Petits Cubes*, 2008), and Anita Killi (*Sinna Mann*, 2009).

One explanation for this continuing preoccupation with matters of memory in classical animation lies in an interesting convergence of psychology and technique: from a cognitive standpoint, animation's frame-by-frame procedure parallels what Alan Burdick and other researchers regard as the dominant psychological structure of memory, the mind's tendency to perceive the passage of time in continuously created, moment-by-moment intervals. At the same time, the richness and complexity of animation's engagements with memory can be traced directly to the form's inherent interdisciplinarity, its employment of diverse materials and processes from drawing to sculpture to dance, and its reliance on varied visual vocabularies to convey meanings that are at once public and intensely personal.

This panel proposes to explore animation's engagements with memory across diverse contexts, methodologies, and practices. Participants will discuss animation as a tool for intervention in the work of memory (and forgetting) in their respective professional practices, including the negotiation of identity within social and cultural communities, the treatment of neurodegenerative disorders such as dementia and Alzheimer's disease, the study of inherited or acquired cognitive conditions such as prosopagnosia and "phantom limb" syndrome, and the material/textual renegotiation of family narratives built around lacunae forged by emotional or sexual trauma.

Aiming to open a rich dialogue between and among the panelists and attendees in order to gauge the significance of animation's wide-ranging and continuing interest in memory, this panel presents the following new perspectives:

- Award-winning animator **Samantha Moore** (University of Wolverhampton) will speak about the corporeal dimensions of memory in her animated documentary representations of the physiological and cognitive experiences of prosopagnosia (face-blind) and phantom limb collaborators.
- Art therapist and licensed professional counselor **Caroline Edasis** (Mather LifeWays) will discuss object memory in connection with the animation of personal objects and stories by older adults living with dementia in Chicago.
- Founder of Healing Education Animation Research Therapy **Melanie Hani** (Animation Academy, Loughborough University) will address the dynamics of memory and bereavement.
- Animation, film, and literature scholar **Nicholas Andrew Miller** (Loyola University Maryland) will consider Chris Sullivan's use of cutouts, photographs, and drawings to craft a material language of memory in his 2012 multi-media animated feature, *Consuming Spirits*.
- Animation scholar **Timothy Jones** (UCLA) will serve as respondent.

Biography

Nicholas Andrew Miller (Presenter and Panel Chair)

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Nicholas Andrew Miller (Loyola University Maryland) is Associate Professor of English and Director of Film Studies at Loyola University Maryland. His areas of teaching and scholarly interest include film animation, early cinema, the intersections between modernist print and visual cultures, and twentieth-century Irish and British literature. He is currently at work on an interdisciplinary study of metamorphosis in modernist visual culture. He is the author of *Modernism, Ireland, and the Erotics of Memory* (Cambridge, 2002).

Timothy Jones – Respondent

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Timothy Jones (UCLA) is the Production Manager in the Office of Instructional Enhancement (OIE) at the University of California, Los Angeles Extension where he conducts research and development for engaging online and distance education courses. His responsibilities include instructor training and professional development, as well as coordinating the Strategic Exploration and Education Design (SEED) Lab, a test kitchen for new instructional tools and learning experiences. Timothy's personal research interests include animation pedagogy, professional development, virtual reality, and games. Timothy's recent dissertation "Animating Community: Reflexivity and Identity in Indian Animation Production Culture" investigates how Indian animation practitioners represent their practice theoretically as well as the impact of this upon their professional identities and community structures. Timothy is an active member of the Society for Animated Studies, assisting with the website and journal, and contributing to the archives working group. He is co-chair of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS) Animated Media Scholarly Interest Group (SIG), and also participates in the ASIFA Hollywood Animators Educators Forum and Animation Resources.org. His publications appear in the

journals *Animation: an interdisciplinary journal*, *Animation Practice, Process & Production*, *Animation Studies Journal*, and *The South Asianist*, as well as *Animation Studies 2.0*. and a forthcoming Routledge edited volume on global film policy.