Panel A2

Women in Animation: The Contemporary International Context

Chair: **Bella Honess Roe**

This panel explores the position of female animators in the contemporary landscape and context of global animation production. Nearly 20-years ago, in *Understanding Animation*, Paul Wells implied that female animators necessarily work outside of the mainstream industry when he says that 'more than any other form of filmmaking' animation 'offers the opportunity to operate in a safe space and create *auteurist* cinema outside the constraints of patriarchal norms.' (p. 199) Thus Wells establishes a binary of men as the driving force of the animation industry and women as artisanal outsiders. Prior to this, women were often seen as occupying support roles to the male figures that are thought to have shaped animation history. We will question whether this historical marginalisation of women prevails in the current production context. Are women relegated to positions as isolated and independent artists working in the 'feminine aesthetic' (Wells, 1999)? Or do they now occupy greater agency across independent and commercial animation? This panel will address these questions through four papers presented by women working at the forefront of international animation production, both experimental and mainstream, across working models including independent, collective and commercial. As such, we hope to evolve the discussion around gender and contemporary animation production.

This panel is intended to generate discourse with a second panel on women in animation (titled 'Researching the History of Women in Animation') and, if both panels are accepted, the desire is to begin a dialogue questioning whether historical research into women in animation can help us understand the contemporary landscape for female animators working today. This dialogue will be facilitated, in part, by having the same person chair both panels. However, both panels are designed that they are independent of each other and stand alone in terms of their research questions.

Biography

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Bella Honess Roe (University of Surrey, UK) is a film scholar who specialises in documentary and animation. Her 2013 monograph *Animated Documentary* is the first text to investigate the convergence of these two media forms and was the recipient of the Society for Animation Studies' 2015 McLaren-Lambart award for best book. She has also published in journals including the Journal of British Cinema and Television and Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal. She is currently editing a book on British animation studio Aardman Animations and co-editing another on the human voice in documentary.
She is Senior Lecturer and Programme Director for Film Studies at the University of Surrey.