

Czech Television Dubbing Workshop

Have you ever wondered how many sounds are there in an animated film? Like the splashing of water, knocking on door, birdsongs, gate opening and naturally voices. All these sounds must be made before the film is screened. Would you like to learn how and try the work of a voice artist? Our workshop is just for you!

(photo: René Volfík)



Get delicious discounts with your festival pass

We have partnered up with a number of restaurants all over Liberec, so you can turn your stay at Anifilm into a film-food-fest!

If you are wondering where to grab something to eat and refresh yourself between screenings, we recommend visiting any of the thirty restaurants, cafés, and bars (and one ice cream shop) that we have partnered up with this year to arrange attractive discounts and benefits for all Anifilm's visitors with festival passes. You can find the full list of these places on our website, and we have also marked all of them for you in our festival map. For example, you can present your festival pass to get a 30% discount on any dish on the menu at Pivovarský dvůr (Papírenská Street), a free dessert with a tortilla at the VEGway snack bar (Revoluční Street), a 15% discount or a tasting platter for CZK 99 at the Fresh Cantine salad bar and fresh bistro (Zámečnická Street), or large chips (made from Czech potatoes) for the prices of small ones at FÄNCY FRIES (Široká Street). And that's just a taste!

Festival Tram Ticket

Take advantage of discounted festival fares: Day ticket for 25 CZK, weekly ticket for 120 CZK. To be purchased at festival venues: Chateau, Dr. E. Beneš Square, Cinema Varšava or at the Ticket Office at the DP terminal Fügnerova.

Festival App

Festival programme, film details with screening times and locations, festival map with navigation, festival news, ticket reservation, your screenings, your schedule...

Festival Center Chateau – Felberova 1/2

Festival Centre / Festival Passes / Ticketing / Festival shop / Festival café / Chill-Out Zone

Tuesday – Saturday: 8.30 – 20.00
Sunday: 8.30 – 15.00

iQLANDIA / Dabingové studio
ČT / Coffee Corner / School of Animation Powered by PPF Foundation

Tuesday – Saturday: 9.00 – 18.00
Sunday: 9.00 – 16.00



Festival daily

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ANIFILM LIBEREC 2022

FESTIVAL
DAILY
SATURDAY
14. 5. 2022

Stas Santimov: I do think about my audience

When did you first become interested in animation?

My first experience in animation happened when I started working for the gaming industry. I was a creative director in a startup game development company Hooligans Entertainment. At first, the company did not have any animators, so I applied for the position of a 2D artist, even though I had no idea how to make animation. So I had to start learning it at the workplace. I loved the process so much I decided to dive deeper into it, until I eventually switched to animation completely and left my short career in gamedev. However, I never studied animation, since there is no animation school in Dnipro, where I come from. Even though there are a few film schools in Kiev, I just learned everything by myself using different animation software and tutorials.

Ukrainian graphic artist, director, and creator of dark animated GIFs Stas Santimov sits on the jury that will pick the best music videos and abstract and non-narrative animated films this year. He will have to judge the competing films and music videos remotely because even though we tried very hard, we were unable to arrange for him to get to Liberec. The director's macabre animated loops are on display in the Redern Wing of the Liberec Chateau every day of the festival. In his interview, he talks about how he got into creating GIFs as well as about his projects *Bullets* and *Eluvium: Regenerative Being*, which we will be screening today as part of the non-competition section *Eastern Promises: Ukraine* dedicated to Ukrainian animation.

You are working with a hand made 2D digital animation, which sometimes looks like a hand painted technique, can you describe the technical genesis of your films?

Sure. I am basically drawing all of the frames by hand in Photoshop and all of the post-production or modifications are added in After Effects, but those are made only when I'm working on some bigger projects, for example short films. I don't really add much to the gifs, which are the main part of my work. So yes, my films are digitally made, but at the same time they are completely hand drawn.



Tips for today

Foam Bath
16.30, Cinema City 4

Anifilm's regular visitors will know that every year, we screen one restored film as part of the *Classics Rebooted* section. In recent years, we have been dusting off primarily films from the other Visegrad countries. This year, the choice fell on a wild Hungarian collage-like musical about a groom who gets cold feet.

The Great Cheese Conspiracy
16.30, Cinema City 1

This cult mid-length (ninety-minute long) film for children by Václav Bedřich is an adaptation of the French best-selling book *The Great Cheese Conspiracy*. One day, a trio of mice that live in an old cinema, where they watch heist films every day, decide to become gutsy gangsters themselves and start planning the biggest cheese heist of all time.

Cheatin'
17.00, TUL – Aula G

Bill Plympton, the leading figure of independent American animation, has an impressively extensive and varied filmography. Bill is one of Anifilm's jurors this year, and he has also prepared a selection of his feature films for our visitors. Today, we will be screening his artistically distinctive and "Plympton-esque" provocative film *Cheatin'* (2013), which won the Jury Prize at Annecy.

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The Surrogate (Stas Santimov, 2021)

Have you ever considered trying different techniques, like cut out or puppet animation?

Not really, I don't understand the process of other techniques. In order to try them I would have to learn everything from scratch first.

Even though you can be considered as a very young filmmaker, your artistic style is already very distinctive and recognizable. You are often using subdued colours which help to convey a mysterious, grotesque or macabre atmosphere, and you often deal with dark topics coming from human subconsciousness and nightmarish scenes. Is dealing with fear and darkness personally important for you?

No, I wouldn't say that it's something personally important to me, I'm just really interested in these subjects in general and sometimes they can seem even childish, not just scary. I don't really think much about the topics I portray in my films, they usually suddenly come to my head and I have an urge to work with them further.

Do you think about the audience when making your films and what their reaction will be like?

Of course, I do think about my audience when making my films. It is not very big yet, but it seems that my films seem to satisfy some people and that they make

them happy, at least I hope it does. I'm still at an early stage of my career, so hopefully the audience will be growing.

Do you like the horror genre? Is it something you draw your inspiration from?

It isn't my favourite genre, I much prefer crime series like *Better Call Saul*, *The Sopranos* or *Breaking Bad*. I'm also a big fan of films by Nicolas Winding Refn, however those inspire film-wise, not animation-wise.

You often work with short gifs or the so-called motion stories. How did you become interested in this format in the first place?

Well, I actually started my whole animation career by making gifs. I suppose most of the animators do, it is part of our job to work with loops, after all. I have always loved this format, even more than traditional short films, because gifs have specific rules and rhythm to them. If classic animation represents literature, then gifs can be perceived as poetry. However, there are still not many platforms or festivals for distributing them, so I guess that's why most of the animators make them just for fun.

Are there any ways how you can actually make a living by creating GIFs?

For many years I also made them for

fun like many other artists and I was making a lot of commercials in order to earn some money, but recently gifs have gained more popularity and I can actually sell them, especially in the form of NFTs. Digital art in general is taking off quite well nowadays because it's not just something that you can hang on your wall. Thanks to blockchain technologies digital art acquires the value traditional art has always had. Finally, it is also collectible. And a lot of artists who spend their whole lives creating their masterpieces really deserve it. The digital age opens up new possibilities.

I have also seen some of your projects like Dogfaced where you were working on a 360 motion comic - how was this experience different from what you normally do?

Dogfaced is actually still an unfinished project, but I'm not working on it anymore. I wanted to make a motion story – a format that I am used to – but to experiment with the 3D visuals, (since VR technologies and such were becoming trendy), so that the spectator would be able to look out into different scenes and see different angles. There were supposed to be ten scenes in total, but I stopped the whole project after finishing one scene. To be honest, it was more of an experiment. I did it manually like a traditional painting, but I tested the animation many times in GoPro

VR Player. Many people asked me how I managed to do that, because it was unique. But soon Photoshop came up with the Spherical Panorama tool, which made it much easier to work this way. And because of that I lost interest in this format – I was interested in making the project while it was difficult, because I love to challenge myself.

You also did an animated music video for The Regenerative Being by Eluvium. Who came up with the initial ideas for the video and how did the collabs go with the musicians?

Collaboration with Eluvium was my first professional work. The record label of Eluvium, Temporary Residence Limited, contacted me, because they had seen my gifs, and they wanted to create something similar for Eluvium's music video. They sent me their track *The Regenerative Being* and they didn't really have any requirements, so I was quite surprised. For me, it was a pretty large project, but I reluctantly accepted nevertheless. To be honest, I completely procrastinated this project for several months and I couldn't come up with any ideas. For a while, I had hoped that they forgot about me, but they didn't. Finally, I suggested cancelling the project, but they even agreed to postpone the release of the album in order for me to make the video. So I pulled myself together and something began to clear up in my mind. I got the idea of a mysterious place filled with strange people, who in reality were just ghosts living in this place for many years. It took me only three months to make the video. I was in a hurry because I was ashamed that I had already delayed the release of the album for several months. This was unprofessional on my part, nevertheless it was the first experience of such cooperation I have had. The collaboration itself was quite smooth, I just sent a few storyboard pieces to the label and the artist, and they agreed to all my ideas without questioning them. It was quite difficult to come up with a video sequence for ambient music. The track is about seven minutes long, it has no lyrics, no rhythm and it was hard for me to find the right visual mood for it. Interestingly enough, it's also the reason why it's rarely identified as a music video. Many people think that the music is actually the soundtrack of the short film. Because of that, the film was often selected for short film competitions instead of music video programmes.

Where did the inspiration for your film The Surrogate, which made it to Vimeo Staff Pick, come from?

The Surrogate is my first independent short film, because my previous works were mostly commercial or experimental. In the case of *The Surrogate*, I wanted to make a real film with a plot and elements of specific genres, not just a motion comic. *The Surrogate* is deliberately devoid of traditional "animation tricks", because I wanted to give the impression like it was filmed with real actors. This realism, in my opinion, was supposed to enhance the tense atmosphere of the film. A "cartoonish" style would greatly reduce the degree of suspense. The final scene refers to a story from my childhood. Once I was at home alone and my mum returned home late at night, after visiting a beauty salon. She had some kind of astonishing 80s hairstyle and makeup, and I still remember well my childhood fear I experienced in the first minutes when she came in. This memory formed the basis of the film. Someone you know well comes to your house, but you realise that something is wrong. That someone else is hiding under their face.

I funded the project completely by myself and I actually took care of all of the elements in the film, including sound design etc. I was working on it in my free time, during weekends, whilst working in an advertising company, and I thought that I would never finish it. But suddenly the company closed, as it often happens with startups. So I got a lot of free time and enough savings to work on *The Surrogate* full-time. I finished the film in February 2020, when one of the biggest lockdowns happened and it became very hard to promote my film and send it to the film festivals. But I was very seriously engaged in its promotion and even kept a sheet of festivals where the film had been selected. Covid has brought significant changes to the festival life. *The Surrogate* was shown at many festivals, but I was able to personally present it only at a few Ukrainian ones. It was also successful at various online events, such as the online horror platform ALTER on FB, where it got a record number of views (12 million up to this moment).

I am also very curious about Bullets, which seems like an enormously powerful project to me. How did you get to work with the poems written by preschool kids? Did you actually get in touch with the little poets throughout the creative process?

I was contacted by Josh Kun, a director of a documentary film company, who was working with a preschool teacher Nancy Kangas. She is teaching her kids to write poetry. Together they launched the "Preschool Poets" project, which was funded on Kickstarter. It became a series, where eight animators from all over the world animated children's poems to life. I got a poem called "Bullets", which appears to be very relevant during these terrible times. Unfortunately, I didn't get in touch with the children personally, but I saw a few photos from the first premiere in a school, where kids and their parents watched the series based on their poems. It was very touching.

Are there any filmmakers or artists that you would like to collaborate with one day?

The problem is that I don't really like collaborations (laughs). The animator's solitude suits me very well when I'm working. I love having family and friends around, but when I work I really like to focus and have no distractions. Also, my creative freedom is important to me, which can be problematic when you collaborate with someone.

One last question, what is the situation with Ukrainian filmmakers like now? Are there any collective animation initiatives or so? Are there any ways we can help them?

I'm not sure about other artists. As for myself, I am still in Dnipro, but my wife and my son had to leave the country temporarily. I don't personally know many animators from my hometown or in Ukraine in general, but I just hope that they are in some safe place and that this horrible nightmare will be over soon. I know a lot of people who create short animations about the war on social media. Sometimes I do too. It helps with letting this helpless anger out. It perfectly reflects the mood of the era, of our generation and it lifts people's spirits. However I don't really think it affects anything or opens anyone's eyes. It's more like art therapy for us, because animation speaks through a metaphor. And nothing has bigger power than the authentic, horrible, totally shocking documentary footage. We are all doing what we can now. However, our main goal at the moment is to survive.