

## Chateau – Felberova 1/2, Liberec

Accreditation, Ticketing, Festival shop  
8<sup>30</sup> – 20<sup>00</sup>

Game Zone & Brainz VR Cinema,  
School of Animation, Chill-out Zone  
9<sup>00</sup> – 18<sup>00</sup>

## Festival daily

Festival daily is published by Anifilm on the occasion of Anifilm 2023 – International Festival of Animated Films.

**Redaction** Malvína Balvínová,  
Natálie Kozáková, Tomáš Hubáček  
**Translation** Lukáš Wicha  
**Design** Jan Šimsa

## Exhibitions and Installations

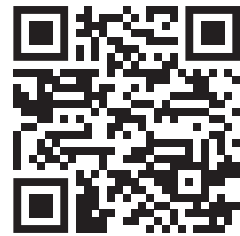
**Kōji Yamamura: Four Flashing Figures**  
Liberec Regional Gallery  
10<sup>00</sup> – 17<sup>00</sup>

**Filip Pošivač: Anifilm 2023**  
Chateau – Foyer  
8<sup>30</sup> – 18<sup>00</sup>

**IOGI: 11 Stories from Everyday Life in Japan**  
Chateau – Redern Wing  
8<sup>30</sup> – 18<sup>00</sup>

**Darkening – VR installation**  
Liebieg Villa  
10<sup>00</sup> – 18<sup>00</sup>

## Festival Visitor Page



## Festival daily Thursday — 4. 5. 2023

### Kōji Yamamura: „There is always a desire in me to entertain people through my work“

*Kōji Yamamura is one of the most prominent personas of independent animation today. Apart from directing, animating, writing and at times editing and producing his films, which are full of vivid imagery, subtle humour and striking characters, he also teaches young students what animation can be. At this year's edition of Anifilm, you'll be able to watch his films and visit his exhibition in Liberec Regional Gallery.*

*I heard that your first experience with animation started pretty early, when you were already thirteen years old. Is that true? Where did your early fascination with animated films come from?*

Yes, it's true. I realized that the animations I've been watching on TV since I was 10 years old are pictures, but I wondered why pictures are moving. When I was 13, the first monthly magazine on animation was published in Japan, and in it was a small column about how to make animation on 8mm film. I learned the principle for the first time and created an animation on impulse. I borrowed a camera from a teacher at my junior high school to shoot the film, and used the school's projector to voice and music on the film.

*What has animation taught you throughout your career?*

Animation and drawing are necessary and pleasurable for my life, and through creation, I was able to think about the relationship between myself and society and various arts. However, as Eric Satie said, "When I was young, I was told that I would understand when I turned 50. Now I am 50, but I don't understand anything." So I don't think I can answer this question – I'm 58

## Tips for today

**Amateur filmmakers on the big screen**  
18<sup>00</sup> → Varšava Cinema

One of the purposes of film festivals is to explore areas that are partially or completely unknown to both most viewers and many experts. One such area, on which we decided to focus this year, comprises non-professional Czech animated films made before 1990. Today, the first of the two screening blocks that we have prepared will take us back to the beginnings, with live music accompanying the included silent films.

years old. Creation simply satisfies curiosity and leads to new curiosity.

*You are also a book illustrator. How does your initial creative process differ in case of illustration and animation? Can we perceive the animation as an enhancement of illustration, or do you consider it being something completely different?*

I don't think the initial creative process is that different between illustration and

animation. Ideas that begin to take shape little by little in my mind are solidified by repeating sketches. However, in the case of picture books, I often think about the words first, and in animation, I often focus more on the visual image. I attribute my success in illustration to animation. I've been making animations for many years, so I can imagine the camera work in my head, so I can create scenes from various angles, which is quite different from other illustra-

# ANIFILM



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- Boca Bar
- Bylo nebylo
- Pivovarský dvůr
- Stereo
- Výběp
- Switch Bar & Café
- Beer Warehouse
- Knihkupectví Fryč

**Festivalová mapa / Festival Map**

- 1 festivalové centrum festival centre
- 3 festivalové místo festival venue
- 2 festivalový partner festival partner
- 4 festivalové ubytování festival accommodation
- 5 parkování parking
- MHD terminál MHD public transport terminal
- PRO autobusové nádraží bus station
- WC veřejné toalety public toilets
- I městská informační centrum tourist information
- H nemocnice hospital
- 6 výhled na Ještěd a view of Ještěd
- 7 tramvajová linka, zastávka tram line, tram stop
- 8 festivalový partner: jídlo festival partner: food
- 9 festivalový partner: zmrzlina festival partner: ice cream
- 10 festivalový partner: bar festival partner: bar
- 11 festivalový partner: káva festival partner: coffee
- 12 festivalový partner: knihy festival partner: books



**The hand-drawn worlds of Kōji Yamamura**  
17<sup>30</sup> → TUL – Aula G

**Best of Annecy WTF2022**  
23<sup>30</sup> → Varšava Cinema

The opposite of laughter is not seriousness, it is the reality,' a certain Georg Hegel tried to proclaim. It's time to forget about dark times for a short while and add glitter, tears of joy, white-knuckles and shrieks of surprise by escaping with a few films! Why don't you step outside your comfort zone, be flabbergasted, shudder, roar with laughter or weep watching these 12 little gems selected with love to fire up WTF2022? From 18 years old.

One of this year's precious guests is master of hand-drawn animation Kōji Yamamura, author of many short and one feature film. Today you will have the opportunity to see not only some of his original animated shorts, but also the director himself. The author's fans and anyone interested in his work should also not miss out on the accompanying exhibition *Four Flashing Figures* at the Regional Gallery Liberec.





Water Dream (2017)

tors. Also, I think it's a strength to be able to draw the characters in vivid and moving pictures.

*You are one of the biggest names of independent animation not only in Japan, but worldwide. Did you ever get any offers from studio productions and were you ever tempted to try to collaborate with a larger studio?*

No, I have never received an offer from a large studio. I offered to co-produce with the National Film Board of Canada, but the producer was thinking about the same thing at the same time, so the decision was made immediately. My collaboration with Miyu Productions in France has also resulted in an offer to help fund post-production during the course of my production. Basically, I have never wanted to collaborate with a larger studio because I like to produce on a small budget and with a small staff.

*You participated in a feature film Winter days (directed by Kihachiro Kawamoto) with other prominent animation directors from all over the world. What was this collaboration like in comparison to your own work?*

The length of the part I was in charge of was shorter than my own project, and it took less time to complete. Kihachiro Kawamoto supervised the project, and many of the participants had responses from Mr. Kawamoto regarding the storyboards, which were adjusted, but as for my ideas, they were fully accepted. However, as for the sound, it was created collectively as a whole, so I was not able to direct it in as much detail as I would have done in my own work.

*When did you decide to open your own studio, what was the initial impulse?*

While working freelance, I received my first commission in 1991 from NHK, Japan's national prestigious broadcaster, to produce

a short animation for a children's program. After that project, it was easier to sign a contract to continue working with NHK if I was a legal entity, so I established my own company in 1993. In Japan, it is easier to work with a corporation than with a single artist.

*How does the funding work, when you are an independent animation director or producer in Japan?*

When I produced *Mt. Head*, I basically used profits from picture books, commercials, and other commissioned work to fund the production. I still use this way of self-producing from time to time, but after the success of *Mt. Head*, I have received funding from other studios through commissions and co-productions. I have also received a government grant once.

*You have learnt various animation techniques on your own. What role does experimentation play in your work and which technique do you personally prefer?*

I always believe in the possibilities of animation and experiment to expand them. However, even though I am experimenting, I am always trying new things to improve my technique and out of necessity in the creation of my work, so I feel that I am always making gradual progress. Personally, I like the method of drawing on paper and use it most often.

*I feel like a game of associations plays an important role in your films (some short films remind me of the structure of children's picture books), often even depicting child-like imagination, using real children's drawings, but also text etc. You still manage to maintain the inner logic, which holds all of the imagery together.*

*What comes first when you are coming up with the ideas for your new films? Is it the characters / situations / simple storyline / associations themselves or something else entirely?*

Indeed, I often string together a series of associations and find new forms from them. The moment I come up with an idea for a new work may be the overall structure, the mood of a few scenes, an emotion or a situation, and so on. I write it down in short words and stash up those words in the department, and then interact with the painting while repeating the sketches to find the depth of my idea.

*How does one achieve consistency in an animated story?*

I am not sure if I am doing a good job of being consistent with my stories. My animation has a fragmented storyline, but I believe that consistency can be maintained by the mentality of the artist if he or she is deeply focused and thoughtful about the work while creating a piece of art.

*Your characters are also very special and memorable, in some cases otherworldly. They truly come forward with the use of a minimalist background. How do you create your characters and has this use of a clean background always been your conscious artistic choice or does it just come naturally to you?*

Each character is different, but many are born from sketches in small notebooks. Sometimes there is a model, and other times it is a complete play or balance of shapes. In order for the background to exist in space on an equal footing with the character, I try to avoid overlapping the background as much as possible. We are not conscious of the space of the screen by simply dividing it into simple layers, such as background and characters, but rather consider all elements to be composed in a flat form. The overall balance and necessary elements of the screen are determined around the shape of the character.

*Your approach to sound and music is quite distinctive and melodic, often using voice as a sound effect or a capella instead of conventional music. How do you create "the sound images" and what is the most crucial step when synchronizing these two elements?*

If I use existing music, I listen to it until its rhythm and movement form through my hands without calculation. When I add sound later, I rely on the help of Koji Kasamatsu, with whom I always work. He always creates experimental and powerful sounds based on his understanding of my movements, the pattern of the pictures, and the mood of the music.

*Both characters and sounds carry a special sense of humour in your films. What part does humour play in your life?*

There is always a desire in me to entertain people through my work. I have a dark side, but I am basically optimistic. People's joy is my joy.

*Where do you draw inspiration for your work from (in general, but also if you could mention specific examples of a visual inspiration for films such as Mt. Head, The Old Crocodile, Franz Kafka's A Country Doctor, Dozens of Norths)?*

Inspiration for my work comes from everywhere. Inspiration can come from real life events, from books, from music, or from a momentary expression of a stranger's face that I saw at a certain moment that I did not fully understand but left an impression on me. The first three works mentioned in the question are based on other people's texts. Visual inspiration comes to mind from reading the text, but some find their form later, through research of materials and repeated sketches; *Dozens of Norths* draws inspiration from many literary, artistic, and cinematic sources, and the use of Willem Breu-

ker's music was the one that inspired the most imagery.

*What has been your most challenging project so far and why?*

*Mt. Head* was the most difficult piece to work on. It was produced entirely at my own expense, with no funding source, and was enormous in terms of work, ultimately taking six years to complete. There were times when I gave up on the project, but I am glad that I pushed myself to complete it, as it became an important work in my career.

*You opened an animation gallery part of which is also a praxinoscope shop. What was your goal? Were you inspired by any particular exhibitions or other galleries?*

I wanted to create a place that would offer a sweeping view of the world of animation as I see it. The idea of having a permanent place with boutiques that you see at film festivals. The specific idea was inspired by the Igor Kovalyov exhibition I saw in Ottawa and the Topol exhibition I saw at the Finnish Film Festival.

*You are also a professor at Tokyo University of Arts, how does this experience enrich your own work or creative process? What is your teaching approach? What are the most common topics that current students are usually dealing with in their films?*

The perspectives and information from the younger generation provide me with new nourishment. I personally teach a class that encourages students to think about animation with a broad awareness of the arts in general, comparing their inspirational animation pieces with other art forms, dance, music, painting, etc. Students' topics vary, but I believe that many are conceived based on their own current state of mind and situation.

Full Interview at [www.anifilm.cz/en](http://www.anifilm.cz/en).



## SARINA NIHEI

— questions, answers and quotes



**Hand-drawn animation, music videos, short films, surreal stories and humor. It has to be Sarina Nihei !!!**

SN Btw, I hate drawing on computer. It doesn't give me joy and animation takes a long time to make anyway, so I think it's better to do what you love the most.

**Can you share some know-how with us? Clever animation tricks?**

SN All you need is passion for animation and patience.

**You work a lot with absurd situations and artistic shortcuts. What comes first, characters, story or situations?**

SN Maybe it depends on the project, but when I made *Rabbit's Blood* (2017), I was looking at a random drawing of a rabbit on my sketchbook and there was also a girl so I started making a story about them. But sometimes I have a vague idea about the story and then start drawing characters.

**„Music doesn't necessarily need any pictures but animation needs sounds, and when they sync together, it has like a synergistic effect, which is amazing.”**



Drawing is from the film *Small People with Hats* (2014).

**— read it all at [f-a-t.cz](http://f-a-t.cz)**

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