

## Training for Trainers - Cartoon Master

# Annual Meeting of ETNA – the European Animation Schools

***Viborg (Denmark), 18, 19 and 20 May 2010***

Attended by the representatives of the most important European schools of animation, the 4<sup>th</sup> Training for Trainers seminar, organised by Cartoon, with the support of the MEDIA Programme of the EU and The Animation Workshop, VIA University college, took place in the city of Viborg on 18, 19 and 20 May 2010. The first seminar took place in Halle (Germany) in October 2006, the second seminar in Ludwigsburg in October 2007 and the third seminar in Viborg in January 2009. The network of schools attending the seminars has increased during these past years: from 20 films schools in 2006, ETNA is now composed of 26 European institutions.

These unique seminars for animation academic trainers in Europe enable them to create a network, exchange ideas and programmes as well as students and teachers, and discuss current industry issues.

The Training for Trainers event opened on Thursday 18 May with the presentation of **Tim Wescott**, researcher at Screen Digest and author of "The Global Animation Industry", a report covering up to 2009 the production of feature films, television series, DVD and Internet markets in several key territories (US, Canada, Australia and the big 5 European countries). Japan was not included in the study. The report looked into two areas: business-to-business – production budgets of TV, film and DVD – and consumer behaviour – box office and DVD retail and rental. In 2007 Canada became the first country in terms of hours of animation produced (more than 350 hours produced in 2008), closely followed by the US and France, and then the UK, Italy, Spain, Australia and Germany. It is interesting to notice the increase of the number of hours produced in Italy, due to a pro-active policy of RAI, compared to the slow decline of animation in Germany.

In terms of global animation production value the US is ahead of Canada. Screen Digest estimates the value of the US market in 2008 in the range of 200M€, followed by Canada (around 175M€), France (160M€) and the UK (125M€).

Not surprisingly the cost per hour of an animation work is considerably higher in the US than in all the other countries. In 2008 an hour of animation cost around 800,000€ in the US, compared to the UK (700,000€), France (600,000€) or Germany (500,000€). This difference is

even higher if we look at the global movie production value. In 2008 the value of the US market accounted for almost 500M€, followed by France with 100M€.

The first world animation studio is the Canadian Nelvana, followed by Walt Disney and Nickelodeon Animation Studios. The first European studio is Moonscoop/Moonscoop IP, in the 9th position.

The Screen Digest report highlighted some major trends that possibly will be occurring in the next few years: a move from traditional 2D to digital 2D and CG techniques; the decline of broadcasting funding; the rise of co-productions with Asia; and the shift from fee-based business towards a royalty-based model.

In the second morning session, **Pascal Héroid**, CEO of Herold & Family and producer of the stereoscopic 3D movies *Puss'n Boots* and *Cinderella*, presented during 2 hours the steps he followed to create an animation studio after having worked as producer developing games. He also explained the basic differences between CGI 2D and CGI 3D. From an artistic point of view, there are some very simple elements that really make a difference between CGI 2D and CGI 3D. There is no real difference in the script writing process. It is important to have as many objects as possible behind the characters to create the sense of depth. CGI 3D directors love trees and chandeliers, for example. In the process of directing a CGI 3D movie, the only change is in the workflow. It is important to check carefully every single step of the Layout in 3D.

There are many more technical elements to take into consideration when working in CGI 3D compared to CGI 2D: there are many more SFX and 3D sets. The workflow to control the 3D is also different.

At the end, it costs only 5% more to work in CGI 3D compared to CGI 2D.

In the first afternoon session, **Søren Fleng**, founder of the animation company Happy Flyfish, explained his experience of setting up an animation business after finishing school. His experience has been used to illustrate the best practices the animation schools should follow in order to help young people to set up their business after graduation. According to Søren, not everyone should start a company. The role of the schools should not be to give support to everyone. Schools should only support those people with actual ambitions and goals. It is important for example to give access to discounted or free office space for a limited time, prepare students for the real world and make sure that they create a business in close collaboration with existing businesses in the region.

Søren recalled that generally creative minded are in greater risk of ending in problems as they don't care for money; they often have a far too

optimistic look at their financial capabilities and they have a hard time understanding concepts of, for example, VAT, tax, write-offs etc.

Running its own business is a risky activity. A little company with one employee must earn at least 82,000€ a year to survive, if we add all the costs related to office rent, travels, legal and accountancy fees, PR, equipments and insurances. According to Søren, a successfully established company must have a turnover of 135,000€ per employee per year to survive.

In the following session and as a concrete illustration of universities' cooperation initiatives, **Jason Robertson** illustrated the main aspects of a new Master in Audiovisual Production that the University of the West of Scotland would like to launch. As Jason recalled, Scotland is ranked third in the world in terms of research output and number of academic papers. The UWS is Scotland's largest modern university with approximately 20,000 students, over 100 full-time degree titles and 40 postgraduate programmes.

The European Master is expected to be modular. The pedagogy will combine distance-learning supported by short residential. The essence of the project is to be a collaborative European project, supported and taught by production professionals.

The areas of the Master would be:

- 1) Digital Entrepreneurship: structuring the business for the creation, transmission and downloading of creative content.
- 2) The producer as brand-manager. Creating a sustainable digital brand, and extending the brand.
- 3) Technological innovation and cross-platform development. Innovations in "really new media" and how to produce content for them. Writing, designing and project management for multi-platform properties.
- 4) New business models and strategies.
- 5) Multi-format & multi-platform business planning, co-production & co-finance. IP Management, Licensing & Merchandising.
- 6) Multi-platform distribution models & IP management. Circumventing the "walled garden". The rise of new content aggregators.
- 7) Interactivity and common communities of experience. Distribution multiplicity. Creative content consumption as a multi-experience multi-platform business. Co-production with consumers - how the interactive

viewer/listener participates as producer. Development of multi-platform content & 360 degree experience – added-value and interactivity.

#### 8) Production Project.

During the whole morning of the second day **Thomas Schneider-Trumpp** and **Harald Müller** of scopas medien presented a case study about producing and distributing animation content on-line.

scopas medien exists since 15 years; since '99 the company has been focusing on TV series concepts for the web and started to produce and diffuse content on Internet five years ago, and this for several reasons:

Firstly, in Germany animation is a rare content. scopas had to struggle and fight with broadcasters to come up with original animation content, which usually comes from outside Germany, licensed in Germany or co-produced. There are two additional important factors: broadcasters tend to finance pre-school series and the production cost for TV series are getting down drastically. On the other side, the web has many positive aspects. There is the possibility to reach all kinds of target groups, which in the case of scopas is from 14 to 45 years old. On the Internet the producer has the full control of its brand because he can decide when, where and how often to show the content. The producer also has full control of the value chain. Like other producers, scopas invested a lot of money in TV co-productions, with the idea of keeping the rights and search for licensing partners through their own merchandising department. This strategy becomes useless if the TV broadcaster doesn't show the content on TV.

The main Internet project scopas is producing is about "sports comedy", sports news and famous sports characters. scopas produces 1 to 2 puppet animation episodes a week always based on the sports news.

Eighty five percent of the traffic is generated through YouTube. The revenues are still quite modest: around 1,000€ to 3,000€ a month per episode. YouTube pays per click (cpc), and a company has to become a partner of YouTube to get a revenue share. This is possible when you have all the rights of the show. Being a professional company it is possible to become partners just with a contract. The company gets paid when people are watching the film (from the beginning to the end) and when they click on the advertisement; the right owner gets 50%. If this was translated in a pre-roll model (pay per impression model) it would correspond to about 13,000€ – 20,000€.

In the afternoon of the same day, **Stéphane Bernasconi**, author and film director of Marzipan Films presented a comprehensive guide to the process of developing a project from conception to final delivery both for a

series adaptation and an original series. From the perspective of an author, director and producer, the workshop presented the nuts-and-bolts of how a project is created as well as the role of the author, director and producer at each phase. Stéphane provided answers to many of the most commonly asked questions about animation, ranging from how to enter the business to the average cost and schedule for a prime-time animated series. Through two practical case studies, Stéphane gave detailed information on how to prepare a thorough production plan including the budget, schedule, and crew plan.

### Cooperation initiatives among schools and open discussion

The last morning of the seminar was dedicated to the exchange of views between schools and universities. CARTOON stressed on this occasion that this was a very important aspect of the annual meeting that schools and universities started to work together on concrete collaborations.

The school of la Cambre and University of Wales Newport exposed the main collaboration axes the two schools want to put in place with EMCA: jury exchanges and teachers and cultural and artistic exchanges. Nine students from la Cambre and EMCA will go on a 2 week-exchange to study stop motion. The seminar will be divided into two parts and end with a film at the end of the project.

The Animation Workshop informed participants that registrations were open online for the next MEDIA supported project "Animation sans frontières". The project is led by the Animation Workshop (Denmark), and is implemented in cooperation with MOME (Hungary), les Gobelins (France) and Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg (Germany).

A group of 16 students, 4 from each school, travels to every school to follow 4 separate parts of an overview of the entire animation film production process, from concept development through financing to actual production management. Television and feature films, games and interactive media, traditional and cross platform production processes will all be covered at various stages along the way. Each of the modules will run over 14 days.

"Animation sans frontières" opened its network to other animation schools. Students from all over Europe can apply to the training initiative.

### Proposal of themes for the next seminar

The representative of the University of Wales Newport proposed to have a section dedicated to how to teach animation and discuss best pedagogical practices and examples of good teaching methods.

According to the Escola Nacional de Belas Artes' director the seminar should try to have more connection with what each school is doing. In a small country like Portugal, where there is no industry, it is difficult to find teachers. All the money that is supposed to go to animation, through the FICA fund, will probably go to video games. In Portugal it is important to create programmes of trainers for trainers.

Supinfocom proposed to involve former students from the schools and see how they entered the work market. The Valenciennes school is interested to learn about team working methodologies as Supinfocom organises the e-magiciens event every year. E-magiciens brings several students together to work around concrete projects under the supervision of artists and broadcasters.

Several participants pointed out that in the next seminar it would be good to explore the existing cooperation programmes, like Erasmus. The workshop should leave more time to discover what the other schools do in terms of cooperation between them. There was a wide consensus to spend more time on the presentation of each school.

Several school representatives agreed on the idea to have sessions on the link between animation, video games and the multi-platform word. In this respect, the Danish Film School proposed to present a concrete case study. Twice a year the DFI brings together several students for one month to conceive a video game. In the next session a DFI teacher could be invited to explain the project and the working methods.

Most of the participants at the Viborg meeting found that the case studies were very valuable. In the next edition it would be interesting to see the broadcaster's point of view and propose other case studies.

HFF recalled that as many institutions are art-oriented, it would be interesting to explore how the other schools are teaching arts.

La Cambre mentioned the need to discover the technical aspects of each school. It would be interesting to know what kind of equipment the schools have, how they produce a short film, which kind of material they use (i.e. sound, stop motion, HD...).

According to the representative of the Vilnius Academy, beside the content, for a young institution like the Academy it is very important to get contact with other institutions to find professionals and teachers. In small countries it is not very easy to find the right professionals. It is important to share ideas, see different ways and methods of education.

For les Gobelins it is important to share ideas on how each school is managing the exchange programmes as at the moment the exchange programmes are not optimal. This proposal was approved by the Turku

University of Applied Sciences Arts Academy who stressed the importance to share experiences of working with companies and internship programmes.

The representative of the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia proposed two themes: a focus on how animation is used in other sectors, like documentary and advertisement; and how students are working in a commissioning environment.

The meeting ended at lunch time.