

[Europa Distribution](#) workshop about animation has been held in Annecy from June 7th until June 9th in partnership with [Annecy International Animated Film Festival and Market](#).

## **TUESDAY JUNE 7th, RELEASE STRATEGIES FOR ANIMATED MOVIES IN EUROPE: YOUNG AUDIENCE POLICIES & VIRAL MARKETING**

The first talk dealt with release strategies for animated movies in Europe with a special focus on audience policies and viral marketing. It gathered Michaël Ismeni, with Belgian theatrical distribution [Le Parc Distribution](#) associated to the cultural center [Les Grignoux](#) and the schoolnetwork [Ecran Large sur Tableau Noir](#), Alessandra Romanelli, from the Swiss child cine club [The Magic Lantern](#), and Stefan Tiess, head of content and video promotion at [Moviepilot.de](#), a web agency for movie communication.

Michaël Ismeni opened the discussion with the presentation of his activity, as a distributor and an exhibitor. Indeed, created 20 years ago, Le Parc Distribution is the distribution arm for young audience animation movies of the cultural center Les Grignoux which manages 3 movie theaters (Le Parc, Churchill and Sauvenière), 8 screens, in Liège. It has been created in a time where animation movies were equal to Disney... Last year, Les Grignoux, first Belgian arthouse movie exhibitor, welcomed 403 000 spectators in their 3 spots. A few years ago, Les Grignoux created Ecran Large: showing movies in the morning for the schools in sixteen French-speaking cities of Belgium (130 000 pupils over one year). Le Parc Distribution movies represent 23 % of these admissions.

The main goal is to develop among young audience the desire to go to the movie theaters, and not only to watch movies at home, on TV, and to build their loyalty towards it. The library is composed mostly of animated movies, but also of live action movies, some classical films and documentaries. The idea is to create room for movies which are left aside normally.

To achieve this goal, they focus on developing good relationships with the arthouse movie exhibitors in order to be able to program all their movies from Le Parc Distribution, at least for a 6 weeks period. The other main part of the activity is Ecran Large which creates a one year programming booklet sent to every school and teachers. Ecran Large library holds 44 movies whose 21 are distributed by Le Parc. Everything is done in order to reach this young audience target, between 3 and 18 yo, through the learning of watching and understanding movies. They prepare children to become grown up spectators. They need to renew constantly their audience, as children grow... so the network is done by the other pupils, year after year, as well the business model.

The main problems are the following ones: to convince the press to talk about young audience animated movies, to get the public subsidies (they mainly have short movies which didn't match with the criteria) and the [MEDIA program](#) for distributors. On the other hand, here are their strengths: low expenses, flyers for pupils, social partners, mature internet strategy (website, newsletters, youtube and facebook profiles), co distribution with Folioscope, the [Brussels Animated Film Festival](#) organization), agreement for movies co purchase with the Flemish distributor [Jekino](#) to divide the distribution between Flanders, Netherlands, and Wallonia, Brussels and Luxemburg, vivid dialogue with French distributors and producers in order to get easily French version of the movies they're buying. In a way, the weaknesses are the strengths and vice versa...

Thus, the distribution activity is backed by the exhibition one, which enables them to give visibility to their movies. For the future, they'd like to be open to new partnerships, to make their library stronger, to discover new talents in animated movies for young people, to enter a European distributors solid network or to get in touch with producers who might associate them in projects.

Then, Alessandra Romanelli took the floor to introduce the Magic Lantern association which is a cine club for children from 6 to 12yo, created in 1993 in Switzerland. It has the same goal than Le Parc, to enable children to discover movies in real movie theaters. The originality stands in the fact that children go without their parents (there are four adults which are attending to take care of them). Now, there are 40 000 members and 74 clubs spread around the world (France, UK, Spain, Morocco, Senegal, Argentina, Mexico, Lebanon, Arab Emirates) with different realities to think about. The subscription fee is 32€ a year, 24€ if there is another child in the same family, and free for the rest of the family. It works over a one year period with 9 movies to see: mix of silent movies, black and white, animated ones, etc. 33% of animated movies are shown (12% of stop motion and 21% cartoon movies). Before coming to the theaters, the children read the magazine with all the information and tools which explain the movie. There are five fundamental criteria to choose the movies: technics, emotion, subject, aesthetics, story. For example, *Wallace and Gromit*, *Azur and Asmar*, *The adventures of Prince Ahmed*, etc. They're setting up partnerships with festivals, like [Fantoche](#) in Baden, or organizing contests to create a trailer. The idea is to make children active around a range of pedagogical activities. [Pop corn](#), the TV program about movies, is aired on the [TSR](#). As the Magic Lantern is an association, the financing is done through public subsidies, they're paying screening fees to distributors. There is no advertising.

Finally, Stefan Tiess concluded the workshop by introducing his activity through the website Moviepilot, which started as a personal entertainment guide, on the same pattern as IMDB, and now is more an advertising and communication company for movies distribution. Their clients are the distributors. It's the biggest and most active film community in Germany. There is no website, it's only a [Facebook](#) page and the whole idea is relying Facebook: the idea is to speak directly to your audience, and consequently to your friends' audience, to be funny and creative. "Get personal, act boutique", "there are no bad movies, there are only small audiences" are repeated as a mantra. But Moviepilot doesn't want to be presented as advertisers, they're creating games for the audience, because ads are always rejected. You need to by-pass this aspect and make your audience believe that they're playing... not that they're indirectly listening to an advertising speech (for example, personality tests for *The Simpsons* or *Brüno*). In Germany, people are reluctant to personal data use, they don't trust critics as well: using friends is a much better way. Now, they're mainly working on commercial movies, but they'll start with indie movies as well. The target audience is from 12yo, because they take the Facebook basic audience when teenagers go to junior high school and create their Facebook profile. Here's the limit as well, because it seems impossible to target younger audience for animated movies for example.

Moviepilot is a way to communicate about movies in a B to B scheme, by giving people something which doesn't exist: original footage, trailers, quizzes, tests. When they're dealing with movie majors, it can be tricky because they're not keen on giving this kind of material (because of the rights infringement) and they prefer the tests or quizzes. The growing worldwide movies campaign could however restrain their activity.

Caroline Nataf / The Biz and Tech Lab

## TUESDAY JUNE 7th, CREATIVE FOCUS ON 6 ANIMATION PROJECTS

[Here](#) all the details.

### NEW YORK-UTLAN

France, 90 minutes

Synopsis: 1993, New York is a city under Aztec influence. Peter O'Hogan, a private-eye, is investigating the murder of the first sacred astronauts.

Director, Production: Reno Armanet

Graphic creator: Maud CHALMEL

Author / Scriptwriter: Lionel BOUCHET, Guillaume CABAUD

Target public: 12-15 years / Young adults / Adults

Techniques used: 2D/3D computer, live action

Tigobo Production, based in Angoulême, is in charge of the production.

They have ideas of coproducing with the US, contacts with TV channel Eurochannel which broadcasts European movies.

### À POINGS FERMÉS

**Festival – TVPaint Développement Special Mention for a Feature film**

France, 105 min

Synopsis: Victor Younki is a young Jew born in the Tunisian ghetto. During his life, he will have crucial meetings – one with a boxer who will lead him to the heights of glory and the other with a lover who will lead him to hell.

Directors: Jean-Jacques Kahn, Franck Van Leeuwen

Production: Jean-Jacques Jauffret, Anne Trefel (*Johnny Mad Dog, Après le Sud*)

Graphic creator: Franck VAN LEEUWEN

Author / Scriptwriter: Jean-Jacques KAHN

Target public: Adults

Techniques used: 2D computer

For now, they have two partners, CNC development subsidies and Rhône Alpes regional subsidies. It's the true story of a boxer, and they wanted to represent it through animation to be able to narrate the century from 1918 to 1960, with the difficult representation of the extermination camps. It's not illustration but transposition.

The writing has begun, it will be a coproduction between Tunisia and France.

The animation will be in 3D, with motion capture (done by Thomas Champon who worked on *Happy Feet*) and photo compositing. The animation will be done by a painter.

### ARARAUNA

Colombia, Mexico, Spain, 90 min

Synopsis: In the Amazon Rainforest an indigenous man has three days to save his girlfriend, kidnapped during a Shamanic ritual when in the form of the Ararauna bird. On his path he meets various animals in danger of extinction, and joins forces with them to rally against the international poachers organisation.

Directors: Jairo Eduardo Carrillo, Vlamy Vizcaya

Production: Vlamy Vizcaya, Juan Carlos Concha Riveros

Graphic creator: Juan Carlos CONCHA RIVEROS

Author / Scriptwriter: Vlamy VIZCAYA

Target public: all audiences

Techniques used: 3D computer

Budget 5M€

The project has been presented in San Sebastian and Guadalajara festivals. The first step is to

establish a work in progress for the 3D (now in 2D). They're searching a production company right now, some Spanish and Colombian are already interested. They're planning to apply to Ibermedia and have hired Beatriz Navarra as a script doctor. They'd like Shakira to do the music.

## **LA RENARDE QUI N'AVAIT JAMAIS VU L'OCEAN**

(TALE OF SHAPE SHIFTER)

France, Great Britain

Synopsis: Kit is 500 years old, has never seen the ocean and can turn into a fox. And she is bored. When Lord Takeo breaks the rules binding them, Kit is delighted by the prospect of having fun at his expense. She has no idea of the potential consequences.

Director: Theresia MCCEARNEY

Graphic creator: Theresia MCCEARNEY

Author / Scriptwriter: Theresia MCCEARNEY

Techniques used: 2D computer

Category: Feature films

Target public: all audiences

Theresia has developed the project by herself and is now looking a director and a production company.

[theresia.mccearney@orange.fr](mailto:theresia.mccearney@orange.fr)

<http://larenarde.blogspot.com>

<http://taleoftheshapeshifter.blogspot.com>

## **ODDSOCKSHIRE**

United Kingdom, Portugal, 80 min

Synopsis: Little did we know that the objects we lose and misplace end up happy and alive in the magical land of Oddsockshire. All objects love it – except for Brolly, who will need help from his friends to return to his owner Luca.

Director: Sara Barbas

Target public: All audiences

Techniques used: 3D computer, drawing on paper

They're working with the BBC and looking for a production company.

The main characters have been developed and designed: Lenny the laptop, Penelope the parasol, Keith the key, Moby the mobile phone.

The general visual style will be in stop motion, in a CGI environment.

## **THE BOOK OF SHADOWS**

France, Ukraine, 80 min

Synopsis: Lucas, a street-child, discovers the shadow world and his own supernatural powers.

Director: Anatoliy Lavrenishin

Production: Florence Keller

Target public: 12-15 years / 9-11 years / Young adults

Techniques used: 2D/3D computer

Florence Keller, the French producer, has just been awarded with the Palme d'Or for the short movie she produced, *Cross*. She spent 2 years in Ukraine as an audiovisual attachée, and met Anatoliy there. They started to work on the project, which can be compared to *Kerity*.

There are 3 narrative parts: the city with the discovery of the book and the world of shadows (the goal

is to understand what is inside a shadow); the child is led by an oz in the forest and learns how to use the book; finally the underworld: as an Orpheus, he's using the shadows without the books and wants to save his "Eurydice".

At the end of 2011 summer, the script will be finished along a storyboard. They're looking for a studio for the coproduction, in Ukraine but also in other European countries.

Budget: 5M€

They aren't still not sure about the technics to use (it will depend on the budget as well). Maybe a bit of 3D for the shadows only.

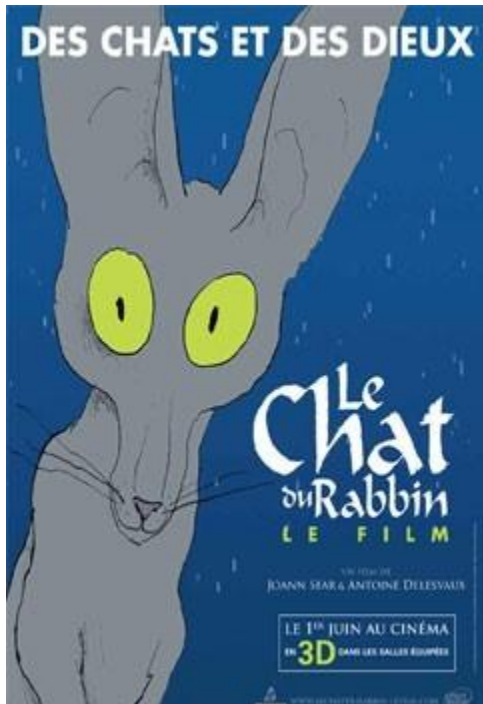
Caroline Nataf / The Biz and Tech Lab

## WEDNESDAY JUNE 8th, DISTRIBUTION AND MARKETING WORKSHOP CASE STUDIES

### THE RABBI'S CAT

Joann Sfar - France

Presented by Christine Eloy from Belgian distributor, [Cineart](#)



Cineart bought the rights at the script stage, because there was a good fan base of the comics, *The Rabbi's Cat* by Joann Sfar. They did it also for *Persepolis*, *Ernest & Célestine*.

The movie has been refused by Cannes in 2010, they've seen the completed movie in January 2011 during Unifrance Rendez-Vous. It was good but not perfect because of rhythms problems particularly at the end. So we weren't totally so excited about it, and the press showed tepid reviews. The other problem was the distribution in Flanders. The comic is in French so it was easy for Bruxelles. They had to decide in which movie theaters put it and finally they didn't release it in Flanders. Maybe it will be later. There were 6 prints in Belgium (2 in Bruxelles, 4 in Wallonia), 1 in Luxemburg. 2 were in 3D. They set up partnerships to support the movie: *Moustique*, a cultural TV magazine (122 000 copies), *Le Soir*, the most important French speaking daily, premieres with Joann Sfar. One week before the theatrical release, they organized a contest with merchandising to win (comics, tee shirts, pressbook). A newsletter has been sent to 26 000 email addresses. The week of the release, they put a banner in all the cultural pages of *Le Soir*. There has been a book sign with Joann Sfar in Brussels for the comics. The poster winked at the Cannes

winner, *Of Gods and men* (in French, *Des hommes et des dieux*) by writing the following tagline "Des chats et des dieux".

The marketing strategy was to target adults, the comics fans, the arthouse audience and the UGC network (as it's the French distributor). The stereoscopic 3D was not an important element, because it's more "2.5D" and people got bored. There are other real 3D releases, like *Kung Fu Panda 2* two weeks later.

They estimated 14 000 admissions but it won't go beyond 10 000 unfortunately, because of the weather the week-end of the release and the qualitative audience will go to see the Dardenne and Malick movies. In comparison, *Waltz with Bashir* did 20 000 admissions, and *Persépolis* 80 000. In Liège, they got a programmation scheduled for 6 weeks, so the movie is booked until Mid August.

In France, the movie had 240 prints with 300 000 admissions so far. Normally, in Belgium, the admissions are 2,5% of the French admissions, but in this case it will 1,1%.

The DVD will be released on October 1st.

The P&A was 33 000€,  $\frac{2}{3}$  for advertising and  $\frac{1}{3}$  for the prints.

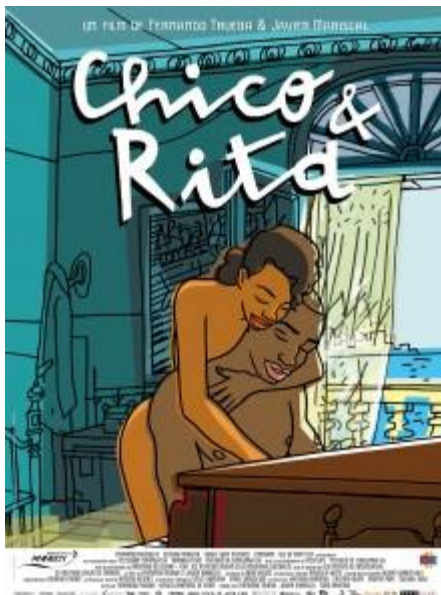
Now, animation movies are really common, and sometimes, they don't find their place...

A Norwegian distributor did the clever comment that she's never heard of this comics: it's tricky in Scandinavia to sell animation movies for adults if there is not something really strong like the historical conflict in *Waltz with Bashir*.

## CHICO & RITA

Fernando Trueba - Spain

Presented by Florent Bugeau from French distributor, [Rezo Films](#)



The movie has been bought to British sales agent [Hanway](#) in Toronto 2010. Then the movie opened Cartoon movie festival in Lyon in March 2011 and they decided to wait until beginning of July to release it in France. It's an animation movie for adults. Cuba, 1948. Chico is a young piano player with big dreams. Rita is a beautiful singer with an extraordinary voice. Music and romantic desire unites them, but their journey – in the tradition of the Latin ballad, the bolero – brings heartache and torment. From Havana to New York, Paris, Hollywood and Las Vegas, two passionate individuals battle impossible odds to unite in music and love.

The movie will be released on about 60-70 prints, they kept the international poster. Maybe they'll get AFCAE support. They wanted to end the promotion in Annecy where the movie has been selected. The director, Mariscal, is famous in Spain as Hergé in Belgium or Sfar in France.

They did only subtitled prints. As the movie is relying a lot on the music, the sunny atmosphere, they thought that July is an ideal date to release it. It will work with word of mouth. The idea is to last the whole summer, a bit in the vein of *Buena Vista Social Club*.

Students, jazz fans, cuban culture fans are the main target audience. There are also many sub targets to work on, like the Spanish music fans.

They organized a contest to win a trip to Cuba, and also teeshirts, soundtracks.

A book has been created from the movie, published by Denoël on June 10th, private screenings of the movie have been organized for booksellers. There will be the "best window award" for the best promotional job done by a bookseller. Mariscal will decide who is the winner.

They set up a partnership with FNAC: tickets to win to the premiere, communication to their subscribers.

The press partners are TV cultural magazine Telerama, language learning Vocabale (a contest has been organized: ask the readers to translate a part of the movie).

Sony Music published the original soundtrack composed by Bebo Valdes.

Also, internet with Facebook, cinemovies, FIP Radio.

An art gallery is doing an exhibition on Mariscal work from June to September.

The press reviews are for now pretty good (Premiere, Studio, Telerama and some dailies). Exhibitors like the movie, but they're not confident with it, they don't know how to estimate a number of admissions. There is no obvious selling point except music. The movie will be stronger in Paris than in Province.

The P&A is 250 000€. Rezo Films signed a deal with Orange - Studio 37 (half of their line up is composed with Orange movies).

They're estimating 150 000 admissions.

Caroline Nataf / The Biz and Tech Lab

## **WEDNESDAY JUNE 8th, THINK TANK ABOUT THE DISTRIBUTION OF ANIMATED MOVIES IN THE FUTURE MEDIA SCHEME**

This discussion has been organized in order to point out the main outlines of animation movies market. Indeed, for a few years now, the box office dropped for animation movies, because of the increasing number of their theatrical releases.

The idea will be to accompany 3 or 4 movies for the promotion through a MEDIA scheme, in order to diminish the gap with Disney or Pixar financial means.

But how do you choose these 3 or 4 films? On which criteria?

Annemie Degryse for Lumiere outlined that it's crucial to do the marketing before the release, during the production stage, because the production takes much more time than for live action. In the US, they're releasing the movie after the whole merchandising has been done and everybody knows it. The branding is fundamental.

The problem is that sales agents ask for bigger MGs because animation movies budgets are higher (a low budget for animation is 5M€), so distributors prefer to wait to see the movie completed and the marketing has not been done before... This point needs to be supported.

For example, the high budgets in animation movies don't work with MEDIA selective support; they should do an exception for animation.

The 2 main elements in animation movies are the timing and the marketing costs.

There is a specific need in the promotion action, not in selective/automatic support. The idea will be to create an European brand, which could be led by Europa Distribution and Cartoon Movie (there will be always the problem of selecting the movies).

For MEDIA, they could suggest to

- raise the cofinancing of the budget and the dubbing
- rethink the countries selection (big countries are less important).

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