continuum

Independent
animation
from Japan
and Australia

Feb 18
– July 2
2022

The Japan Foundation Gallery

We acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which The Japan Foundation, Sydney now stands. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

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Foreword

continuum: Independent animation from Japan and Australia is a vibrant showcase of contemporary animation from independent filmmakers across Japan and Australia. With its 15 subtly subversive works, this exhibition invites you to discover the boundless possibilities of independent animation.

Japanese animation, specifically anime, has received worldwide acclaim through the popularity of Studio Ghibli and breakout films such as *Demon Slayer: Infinity Train*. Disney and Pixar have long been upheld as the pinnacles of Western animation. In contrast, *continuum* serves as a departure from the mainstream and provides an alternative viewing of deeply personal and insightful forms of storytelling from Japan and Australia.

While a number of exhibitions devoted to Japanese animation have been shown in Australia, there have been rare opportunities for the Australian public to engage with animations such as these. With its mission to promote cultural exchange between Australia and Japan, The Japan Foundation, Sydney is pleased to present *continuum: Independent animation from Japan and Australia*.

The exhibition features recent works by award-winning animators Kōji Yamamura and Jilli Rose. These films are joined by works from remote Indigenous media organisation Pintubi Anmatjere Warlpiri (PAW) Media and Communications, as well as social enterprise Tjanpi Desert Weavers. All works highlight the social and cultural complexities of Japan and Australia, helping us to imagine and explore the continuum of human connections through untold stories and underrepresented narratives.

We would like to extend our gratitude to all the participants, without whom this exhibition would not have been possible. In particular, we thank our co-curators Deborah Szapiro and Honami Yano, as well as advisor Kōji Yamamura, who created this beautifully considered exploration of the concept of *continuum.*

JPF Sydney is grateful to the authors who offered their insightful essays for this publication. We hope that these written contributions encourage further consideration of independent animation and its enduring imprint on the world.

With *continuum*, we invite our audiences to explore a world enriched by culture, traditions and new stories.

The Japan Foundation, Sydney

Curatorial statement
Deborah Szapiro

In curating *continuum: Independent animation from Japan and Australia*, I was driven by my passion to engage people to think more critically about short independent animation as a mature artform. With this exhibition, I wanted to celebrate the creativity and plurality of voices, ideas and techniques that animation brings to our screens.

The exhibition is also a reaction to the current moment in time. Framed by Covid-19, this is a period that has heralded some of the most significant social and political changes in the living memories of many. The pandemic removed our routines around time and forced us to navigate the obstacles of a deadly global emergency, while underscoring a heightened consciousness of the banal and profound aspects of daily life.

In ancient Greece, there were two concepts of time, Chronos and Kairos. Chronos referred to structural time: the clock time that so many of us live by in our busyness, measured in the efficiency of seconds, minutes, hours and years. Kairos signified a time lapse, a moment of indeterminacy, in which everything happens. Where Chronos was quantitative, Kairos was qualitative. Kairos measured moments, not seconds. It referred to the moment when the world pauses for long enough to give us time to see a range of possibilities.

While Chronos and Kairos articulate a dualistic perception of time, in Japan, the concept of *uji* (being-time) speaks to a more expansive approach. *Uji* says that our humanity is a continuum of consciousness, of being in space and time — it is only our perception that changes. The wondrous complexity of *uji* time is at the heart of my choice of *continuum* as the concept that underpins this exhibition.

The films in our program reflect the idea of continuum through independent yet interconnected moments. There are no beginnings, ends or missing points in this continuum of space and time, only personal and collective memories that the filmmakers have chosen to highlight, forget, reject or reimagine.

We showcase independent Japanese and Australian animators whose voices sit outside mainstream animation. The works reflect the filmmakers' lived experiences, contesting dominant narratives about our relationships with nature, history and each other.

The contrast of styles, techniques and content in the Australian and Japanese films offers a perspective into each country's identity and concerns. It would be impossible to view the Australian films without recognising how the natural environment shapes this country's experience. In Honami Yano's curation of works from Japan, the concept of continuum takes a more personal turn that looks to social history, family lineage and folklore.

The films in the Australian program hold a mirror to contemporary Australian concerns and culture. The Indigenous films reflect a long-overdue new wave in Australian animation where First Nations filmmakers place themselves and their stories front and centre. In *Cooked Episode 4: The DKI*, First Nations filmmaker Jake Duczynski co-opts mainstream conventions in animation and, with a large serving of irony and of humour, challenges the historical and cultural discourses that shape Australia's origin story.

Pintubi, Anmatjere and Walpiri Elders' recollection of first contact with kardiya (non-indigenous people) in PAW Media's films, *Kardiyarlu Kangurnu: Mujunyku (It Came with White People: Rabbits)* and *Kardiyarlu Kangurnu: Bullocks (It Came with White People: Bullocks)*, along with the Western Desert-based Tjanpi Desert Weavers' delightful stop-motion film, *Ngayuku Papa (My Dog*): *Tiny,* speak directly to Indigenous audiences in a way that mainstream media does not. They offer a precious opportunity for non-indigenous Australians to experience the richness of culture and humour inherent in Indigenous communities. These films are first-hand accounts narrated in Warlpiri, Anmatjere and Ngaanyatjarra languages.

Language is also at the heart of Steffie Yee's strata cut animation, *The Lost Sound*. Inspired by the poem *On Ç* by Japanese poet Hiromi Itō, a woman looks at the matrilineal inheritance of linguistic tones in her family, mourning the parts of languages that become extinct through semantic evolution and how this has caused a generational gap between family members.

Jelena Sinik's split-screen animation, *Imagining Time* is a response to the recurring phrase 'There will be time' in T.S. Eliot's poem, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*. Sinik uses this as a springboard to portray the disruption of everyday experience and tackle issues of mental health and identity.

Anthony Lawrence's stop motion film, *Grace Under Water*, a visually glorious homage to hills hoists, BBQs and the local swimming pools of Australian suburban life, explores the unconscious shadows of our past and how they shape our relationships.

Jilli Rose's *Bright Spots*, a poetic portrait of scientist Nick Holmes and his work preventing extinctions on islands and Nicholas Tory's *Life Blood* — written in collaboration with Bourke Elders, Aunty Dot Martin and Phil Sullivan — reflect on our natural heritage as a complex place of celebration and concern, as we consider our stewardship of it through time. Both films amplify the visceral beauty of Australia's environment, conjuring a metaphysical awareness of what is at stake.

The Japanese and Australian films and artwork in *continuum* unveil animation as a temporal artform that is hardwired to imagination. They explore the importance of connection through stories that speak of the continuum of human connections that do not just exist *in* time but *are* time.

We hope that you enjoy this exhibition of contemporary animation from Japan and Australia. I would like to thank Honami Yano for her inspired curation of the Japanese works in the exhibition and Koji Yamamura for his mentorship. A very big thankyou to The Japan Foundation, Sydney and all its staff for supporting and making this exhibition possible. The Japan Foundation, Sydney's cultural remit plays an important role in supporting both Japanese and Australian culture and speaks to the long-standing friendship that continues to grow between both countries. I would also like to thank the steady hands of Yurika Sugie and Simonne Goran and the inspiring, patient and indefatigable Susan Bui.

Curatorial statement
Honami Yano

When I think of the notion of a continuum, the image that comes to my mind is that of water. Water exists in a continuous state, but this state shifts and changes with no clear distinction. Expanding on this image, water becomes the ocean. Japan, Australia and the world are all connected by the ocean. Just as the ocean continues to be the ocean, my memory is also a continuum. While there are memories that we may have forgotten and cannot recall, we somehow manage to preserve a sense of ourselves as a continuum. In order to externalise this continuum, we sometimes turn to artistic expression.

Creating a work of art may be like creating water. A work of art, however, is nothing but a droplet of water and the act of exhibiting it is akin to returning that water to the ocean. The water to which I have added this droplet joins the ocean and drifts around the world, traveling and mingling together, while still preserving a sense of itself as a work of art or animation.

The six works I have selected from Japan around the theme of continuity are *Polar Bear Bears Boredom* (Kōji Yamamura), *House Rattler* (Shinobu Soejima), *Bath House of Whales* (Mizuki Kiyama), *CREATIVE EVOLUTION* (Song Yungsung), *CASTLE* (Ryotaro Miyajima), and *A Bite of Bone* (by this writer, Honami Yano).

Polar Bear Bears Boredom is a bird's-eye-view depiction of the world of the sea, based on the 12th-13th Century picture scroll series *Choju Jinbutsu Giga* (Caricature of Birds and Beasts). While the story in this latter work begins with animals frolicking in water before the setting changes to the mountains, *Polar Bear Bears Boredom* depicts a world of water. In other words, it is a *Kaiju Giga* (Caricature of Marine Animals). One might suppose that Yamamura's objective in making this film in the present day was to shift the setting from the mountains to the ocean and to cast on the subject a softer and gentler gaze that would be closer in spirit to our modern emotions, instead of satire or ridicule. This film, with its humor and sarcasm, is a modern-day *Kaiju Giga*: it invites us to come closer to modern society,

which tends to cause us to lose our own sense of rhythm due to the frantic busyness of life and let out a relaxed yawn instead.

House Rattler takes as its subject the Japanese folk myth that believes the rattling sound one hears coming from an empty house is the work of a demon. Earlier in history, people recognised the existence of demons called *yanari,* regarding them with awe and cherishing the houses where they lived.

In the present day as depicted in the film, however, this sense is fading, and even the generation that ought to have grown up with the *yanari* does not notice them. These little demons have been left behind by the changing times. In this work, we bear witness to the loneliness of this wordless sound.

At the beginning of *Bath House of Whale*s, a length of string passes between two continents. A mother hangs a towel on it. A girl is taken by her mother to the 'Whale Bath,' a public bathhouse. There, beyond the steam, she finds a community of unknown mothers, and a world of women who enjoy scrubbing, hot water, and sometimes even a steely gaze or two in the sauna. When the steam disappears, the mother enters the ocean once again. Through water, the girl and her mother, who is in a world unknown to her, communicate with each other wordlessly. This work makes me ponder how that steam vanishes and the water that lies between us.

The title *CREATIVE EVOLUTION* comes from a concept proposed by the French philosopher Henri Bergson, which posits that the evolution of life is based on the creativity of 'leaps' that even we cannot predict. This work is more of an evolutionary leap than an evolution that seeks out a sense of cause and effect: it evokes, to my mind, a sense of festivity akin to a prayer. The painting endures and overflows with joy and blessings, and then takes a leap forward with an even greater sense of festivity. At the end of this leap, however, the black wings take flight and the festive colors return to white, to the life of a single individual.

CASTLE moves back and forth between visions of a castle and a teahouse during Japan's Sengoku period. The castle, as depicted by its designer, becomes a reality, while the camera becomes unified and returns to the struggles that take place in the castle, the shells that fly, and the people who design the structure from the interior. When

the teahouse appears, we see that tea is both a space and a quiet moment of reprieve for people. If the castle is the exterior, then the tea is the interior. Through tea, we get a sense of the designer, the people who live there, and the moment in which a new life emerges. The moon depicted at the end of the film historicises this momentary tension as part of a continuity — and it is also the same one we gaze up at tonight.

The title *A Bite of Bone* refers to the custom of bone biting, practised in some parts of Japan, where people eat the bones after a body is cremated in order to incorporate the deceased person into themselves, and overcome their grief and suffering. Since this is my own work, I will offer only a brief introduction. Set on a small island in Japan where I was born and raised, this work was made so that I might confront once again the bones that I came across at my father's funeral. The gunpowder magazine that appears in the film is actually located in the mountains behind his house. The act of handing down intangible things from the past, such as customs, can be said to be a kind of continuity.

Every year, every day, new art is created, and among this, a voiceless work reaches the audience as if it were riding a wave capturing the vast ocean. And I, as a viewer, will be shaken and encouraged by one of these works scooped up from the vast, wide ocean, the recipient of a warm (hot), dream-like pleasure that will help me overcome sleepless nights (but sometimes make it impossible to sleep).

I would like to express my gratitude to Deborah Szapiro (The University of Technology, Sydney), Yurika Sugie and Susan Bui of The Japan Foundation, Sydney, as well as everyone who has seen these works through this exhibition. We hope you enjoy our creations.

Exhibition images

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CURATORS
Deborah Szapiro
Honami Yano

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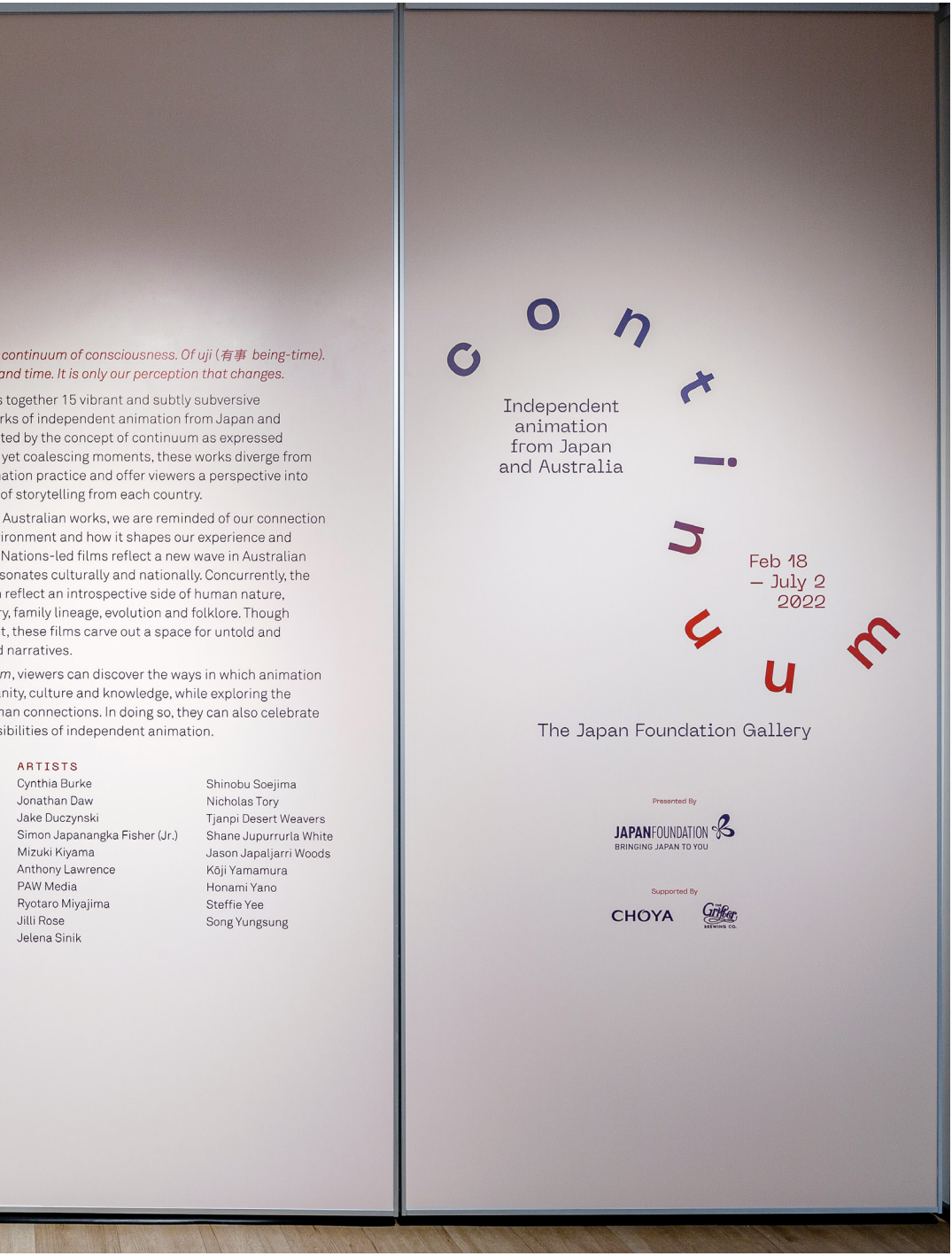
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Nations-led films reflect a new wave in Australian
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m, viewers can discover the ways in which animation
nity, culture and knowledge, while exploring the
an connections. In doing so, they can also celebrate
ibilities of independent animation.
ARTISTS
Cynthia Burke
Jonathan Daw
Jake Duczynski
Simon Japanangka Fisher (Jr.)
Mizuki Kiyama
Anthony Lawrence
PAW Media
Ryotaro Miyajima
Jilli Rose
Jelena Sinik
Shinobu Soejima
Nicholas Tory
Tjanpi Desert Weavers
Shane Jupurrurla White
Jason Japaljarri Woods
Kōji Yamamura
Honami Yano
Steffie Yee
Song Yungsung
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Thinking Through Drawing
Animators think through drawing. In a way they think through their hands, with drawing being the evidence of their thoughts. The process of thinking and problem solving through drawing is an integral aspect of evolving an idea and of the pre-production stage of animation, regardless of the animation technique used in the finished film. Drawing is an expressive form that facilitates ideas and is the method by which concepts, materials, designs, colour, space, layout, lighting and the choreography of movement, sequence and timing can be tested, iterated and communicated. The act of drawing forms a direct line from the animator's imagination through the pen, brush or drawing tablet, to the visualisation of their ideas for the finished film.
Each animator's approach to drawing varies in materiality and form, from rough preparatory sketches, which free the mind from conventional constraints, to highly stylised and formalised storyboards, lighting tests and artworks as the film starts to take form. An animated film's appeal lies as much in this development stage as it does in the finished film, each step of the process forming an artwork in its own right. After completing an animated film, there is a small sense of disappointment that, in the finished film, the audience can only ever experience a fraction of the myriad of thoughts and beautiful marks that have been created along the way.
- Deborah Scopino


Finished Works
Completing a piece of work is one of the most pleasurable aspects of the creative process, but at the same time, it's also one of the toughest. It is a cycle of viewing the work objectively and taking a chisel back to what you've carved out. The work may have looked finished at first, but sometimes it requires further fling. There are times when you go too far and the piece becomes so small that it can't be salvaged. There are also instances when the work becomes more brilliant as you go. There are times when the piece 'tells' you it's finished, but there are also moments when you shouldn't stop just because you were told. The act of finishing a work itself is deeply profound. That is why the appreciation of art is so fascinating, and why pieces that obtain that perfect balance are a pleasure to behold.
For this exhibition, I gathered organic, tactile works from Japan that achieve this balance. Why do I the artists choose to do some things by hand? One reason is that this adds an element of unpredictability.
There are things that can't be expressed in digital format, such as indentations on paper, splashes of colour that seem useless at a glance, unnecessary dust – in other words, visible contamination. But these kinds of imperfections give continuity to the footage and often make it all the more sublime. As a result, sometimes the technique you should ultimately work with is born, or you end up with something you didn't expect. Unpredictability is not to be shattered.
– Hiroyasu Ishii


Finished


失われた音
The Lost Sound
The Lost Sound
Steffie Yee created The Lost Sound using strata-cut animation, a form of time sculpting where clay is built up in coloured layers to form long 'loafs' and then carefully sliced and photographed piece by piece to reveal the hidden animation within. Building strata blocks is complex and asks the animator to imagine the temporal flow of shapes required for the image to reveal its hidden creative intent. A meticulous pre-planning process on paper is needed to sculpt the rolls of clay in a manner that allows for optical shape distortions and a seamless animated performance.


美術設定画
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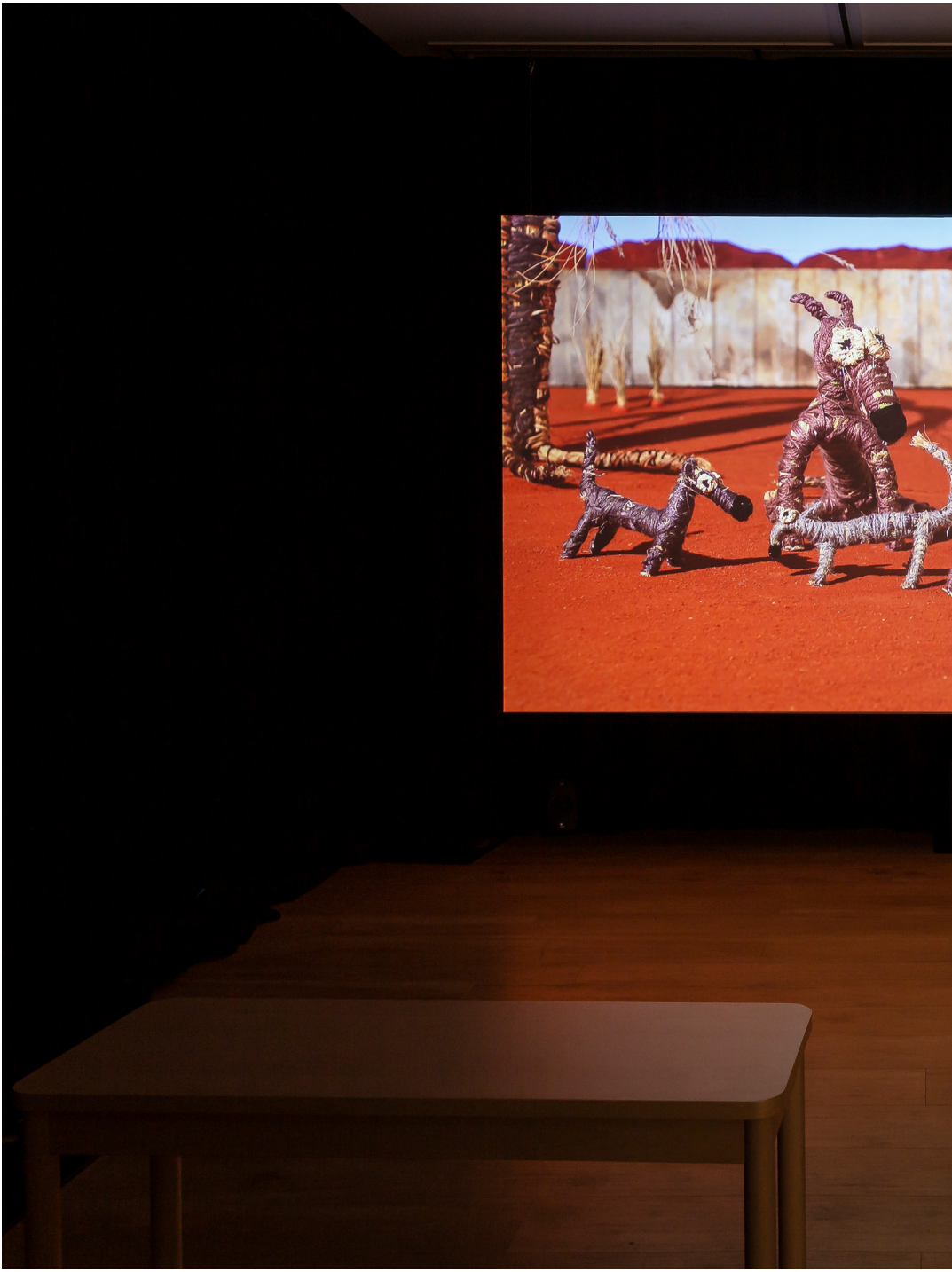
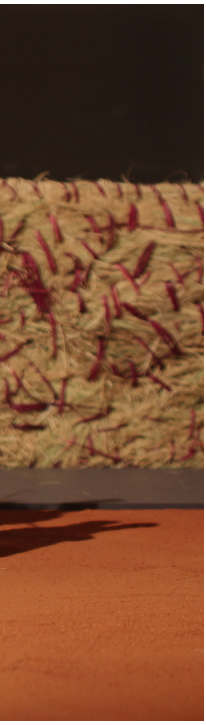


Reflections in a hall of mirrors: Australian independent animation

Deborah Szapiro

Ngayuku Papa: Bluey film still
© Tjanpi Desert Weavers 2017

Animation has firmly staked its place in contemporary media and digital culture. It is a significant cultural force for people under 30. Animation's ability to engage audiences, transcend language barriers, make complex ideas accessible and take advantage of new technologies has seen its application expand exponentially over the last decade. It also represents an effective form of soft power, as can be witnessed by the global popularity and influence of mainstream American and Japanese animation.



Australia's historical emphasis on live action filmmaking has resulted in animation being under-represented in Australian screen culture, with the excellent work of its auteur animation film directors rarely celebrated. As a result, the influence of Australian animation as a global cultural export has been limited. There are some notable exceptions, such as Yoram Gross' *Dot and the Kangaroo* and its eight follow up feature films (1977-1994), George Miller's *Happy Feet* (2006) and *Happy Feet 2* (2011) and our most recent cultural animated ambassador *Bluey* (2018-). With its subversive use of Australian suburban accents, expressions and culture, *Bluey*'s influence has sparked concern among British and American parents.

Despite receiving a mere fraction of the support of its live action counterpart, Australian animation has also managed to punch above its weight in that holiest of Holy Grails, the Academy Awards. Australia's first Oscar for short animation went to *Leisure* (1976), a boundary breaking, irreverent and thought-provoking film directed by Australian national living treasure, Bruce Petty. Petty's film, with its emphasis on the importance of leisure time in a society increasingly dominated by work, seems even more relevant today.

Australian short form independent animation gained traction in the period between the late 1980s and the early 2000s, with filmmakers such as Dennis Tuppicoff, Lee Whitmore, Antoinette Starkiewicz, Jill Carter Hansen, Andrew Horne and Deborah Szapiro, Nick Donkin, Andi Sparks, Anthony Lucas, Susan Danta, Nicole Renee Phillips and Sarah Watt achieving considerable success on the international animation festival circuit. However, it took a gap of 37 years before Adam Elliott followed up on Petty's success by taking home an Oscar for his poignant and idiosyncratic claymation, *Harvie Crumpet* (2003).

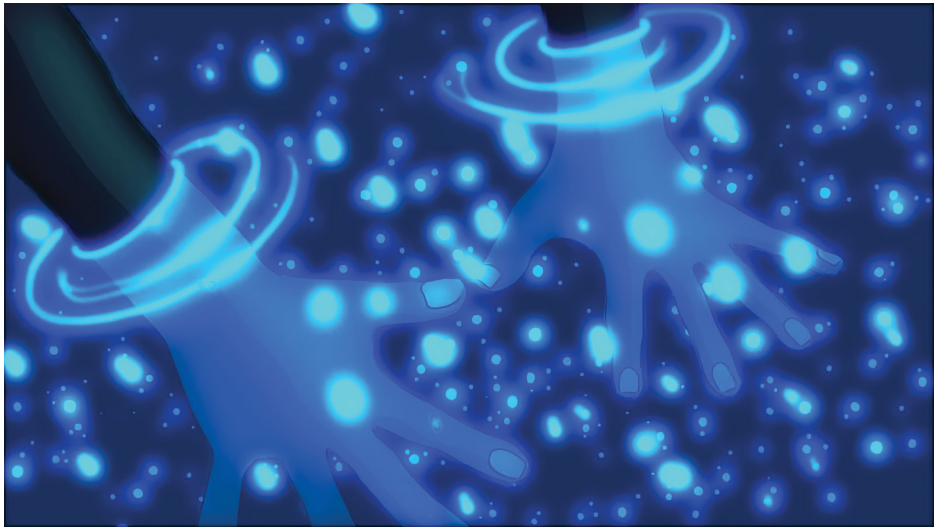
The first decade of the 2000s spoke of a promising renaissance for Australian animation with Sejong Park's student film *Birthday Boy* nominated in 2004, Peter Cornwall's *Ward 13* short listed for an Oscar and Anthony Lucas' gothic steam punk adventure, *The Mysterious Geographic Explorations of Jasper Morello*, nominated in 2005. George Miller's *Happy Feet* took out an Oscar for Best Animated feature in 2006 and Shaun Tan's *The Lost Thing* rounded off the decade by winning the Oscar for best short animated film in 2010.

To be short listed for an Oscar is a mark of excellence, to be nominated or win in this highly competitive category is an amazing international recognition of the talent, passion and perseverance required to produce these films. What all the films have in common is that, apart from the animated feature film *Happy Feet*, they are all independent Australian short form animations, aimed at a mostly adult audience.

It is no coincidence that the films mentioned above, and many other award-winning animated works, were produced in a period where the strategic long-term lobbying of the independent animation community via the Australian Screen Director's Guild (ASDA) had resulted in a more supportive government broadcaster and funding environment for Australian independent animation. Nonetheless, animator Adam Elliott has a wonderfully ironic story about dropping off his unemployment benefit form on the way to catch the plane to the Oscars, which shows how 'far' this support actually went and the unsteady nature of the industry. Elliot's anecdote also speaks to the personal commitment that independent animators bring to their films.

These filmmakers eschew the imitation often undertaken by genre-based mainstream animation and what scholar Paul Wells refers to as 'the absence of the artist'[1]. Wells describes mainstream animated features from commercial studios such as Disney as lacking the recognisable touch of their director. Whilst the cinematic sophistication and thematic content of independent animation varies from film to film, this genre is characterised by an acknowledgement of its subjectivity, a plurality of techniques and perspectives and a focus on individual expression which imbues the presence of the artist/s in each frame.

Animation's power lies in being a totally constructed space with an ability to represent concepts that sit outside the constraints of material reality. Similarly to independent live action cinema, independent animation aims to both reflect and shape culture, acting as a cultural hall of mirrors that offers up a myriad of reflections that speak to who we are as a nation, recognising our darkness and light, our pleasures and concerns.



Bright Spots © 2016 Jilli Rose

It is now twelve years since Shaun Tan's Oscar win. Where does independent Australian animation stand in 2022, and what does it tell us about ourselves? On the one hand, the support of broadcasters and government film finance organisations has been seriously eroded, leaving universities and other educational institutions as key funding mechanisms for the production and training of a new generation of independent Australian animation filmmakers. It still takes an enormous amount of perseverance and passion to maintain the life of an independent animation director. On the other hand, technology has made many animation processes more accessible, the internet puts distribution in the hands of the film maker, and Australian independent animation has become a more representative reflection of Australia as a whole.

Whilst First Nations animation is still critically under-represented on Australian and international screens, a new wave of First Nations animation has emerged since the early 2000s. Animation is being utilised in remote Indigenous communities to bridge the generation gap, pass on language, history and culture and as a way to make Indigenous voices heard. This has resulted in an exciting body of work that is both culturally and nationally relevant. Much of the work is coming out of language and training programs run by Remote Indigenous Media Organisations such as PAW Media and art centres such as Tjanpi Desert Weavers.

Animation sits well with First Nations narrative and cultural practices. In particular, the tactile materiality of stop motion animation lends itself to a collective community production model. These films are made by the community, for the community. PAW Media is the front runner in both production and training in this field and has developed a distinctive signature with its use of clay stop motion and gentle humour. PAW has also nurtured the talents of directors Jason Japaljarri Woods and Simon Fisher Junior who collaborated on the Kardiyarlu Kangurnu films in the *continuum* program.

First Nations director Jake Duczynski studied animation at the University of Technology Sydney. He employed a slightly different community model for his animated series *Cooked* (2021), where he worked with local representatives and a stellar group of First Nations creative practitioners consisting of writers, actors, live action filmmakers and animators to bring his landmark series to the screen. Jake has recently formed Studio Gilay, a First Nations-led animation studio operating in the heart of Sydney. The work of PAW Media, Tjanpi Desert Weavers and Jake Duczynski represent a variety of First Nations Australian perspectives and share a common goal of producing animation by and for First Nations communities that reflect a more accurate and nuanced representation of First Nations' history and culture on our screens.

Women are also well represented in contemporary independent animation, with many filmmakers coming through the university system. Filmmakers such as Bonnie Forsyth, Haein Kim, Sarah Hirner, Rosemary Vasquez-Brown, Genevieve Stewart, Bel Holborow, Issy Coury, Nicolette Axiak, Jelena Sinik, Jilli Rose and Steffie Yee are just some of the new generation of talented female animation directors who are forging a name for themselves on the national and international stages. These women bring strong female characters and a female perspective to our screens, while tackling topics that range from the hilarious narcissism of social media and peer pressure, to the profound impact mental health issues and the devastation of our natural environment are having on us individually and as a nation.

The films *Brights Spots* (Jilli Rose) and *Life Blood* (Nicholas Tory) continue the theme of our need to be aware of our custodian status on this planet, presenting a luminous and lovingly visualised reverence

for our natural environment without shying away from the negative repercussions of our actions as a nation. Seeing ourselves reflected in the cultural hall of mirrors that is contemporary independent Australian animation, films such as *Kardiyarlu Kangurnu*, *Cooked Episode 4: the DKI*, *Bright Spots* and *Life Blood*, highlight that our pressing needs to respect, listen and learn from First Nations Australians and respect and conserve our natural environment, are intrinsically linked to our future as a country. Although we have not won any animation Oscars for over a decade, we are producing independent animation films that should make us think and make us proud.

Endnotes

1. Paul Wells, *Understanding Animation,* Routledge, 1998

Embodying the tactile and the tangible in animation

Simon von Wolkenstein

Grace Under Water process photograph © Anthony Lawrence Plasmation 2014

There is something in the irregularity of the handmade object that speaks to our deeper selves; reviving for a moment a prehistoric human urge to manufacture things with our hands. These imperfections awaken within us an empathy of the hand, an acknowledgement of the tactile sense we all share. In our world of smooth mass-produced surfaces, perfect shapes and digital refinement, there is still room for the wonder of imperfect objects because they remind us of the person behind the hand that made them. They reveal the tacit knowledge acquired through years of practice, experimentation and craft that is expressed through the maker's fingers. This feeling is evoked in *continuum*, where we experience the visceral presence of the handmade in the filmmakers' work.

In *The Nature and Art of Workmanship* (1968), David Pye breaks down workmanship (or craft) into two streams. The first is a 'workmanship of certainty', the repetitive manufacture of the countless mass produced objects that fill our world and the 'workmanship of risk', those handmade objects where, at any moment in their creation, there is a great risk of failure; objects that are saved only by the maker's tacit knowledge and exercise of skill.

Stop motion films involve Pye's 'workmanship of risk', because they are produced in an analogue space governed by the laws of physics, where successful outcomes are not predetermined. In the digital space, animators are cradled by software and free to craft and refine impossibly perfect and repeatable moments — a 'workmanship of certainty'. Most animated films today are a hybrid of these two states of creation, however, stop motion exists in a high risk space where the animated object is made material to enable a tangible interaction between the filmmaker and their subject. These films create a space where the materiality of the world is bent and cajoled into the shape of their story; an alchemy over matter.

While digital and analogue states of filmmaking are both open to the full spectrum of human creative expression, there is another fundamental difference between them — the way that time is experienced during the crafting of a film. In the digital space, time can run forward and backwards because the animator can undo steps in software and revert to an earlier moment in the production process effortlessly. In doing so, digital films erase one timestream and create another, obscuring the manifold decisions made to reach that creative moment by forking time and creating a new clean path. A multiverse of possible perfect outcomes collapse into one.

In the real world of the stop motion animator, the arrow of time only flows forward. There is no digital undo to protect stop motion animation, no cocoon of software that shields from reality. Such a filmmaker can only redo or repair. In the manufacture of models, sets, puppets and the actual stop motion animation process, the physical redo follows a long tradition in hand crafting, where resourcefulness, ingenuity and skill are called upon to hide or fix an error, or even remake a defect into a feature. This often leaves visible marks or arrangements in the materials and textures, revealing the echoes of earlier creative decisions. Whereas the digital can erase time

and start afresh, the analogue is like a layering of translucent time, a palimpsest, where the overlaying of process reveals a wildness of untamed matter that we recognise as the implicit mark of the filmmaker's individuality and humanity.

One of the delightful things about creating animation from physical objects is the sense of visual tactility that emerges from a direct memory of surfaces and textures from our own lives. We carry within us a catalogue of remembered textures that we can recall under certain conditions: the sharp twist of dried grass; the hairiness of string; the roughness of sand. The materiality of stop motion animation provides a key to unlock this internal catalogue in ways that most other forms of animation can't access. And although all the stop motion films shown in *continuum* have passed through a digital path during their post-production and completion processes, their initial grounding in the tangible allows for a coarser human experience which is less mediated by the perfection inherent in software.

In *Kardiyarlu Kangurnu*, two stories of Indigenous contact with rabbits and bullocks are animated in a bas-relief format involving plasticine pressed onto sand-textured surfaces. This modelling clay has been shaped and moulded by hand, in some cases catching the fingerprints of the animators and leaving them visible on the skin of the characters. The roughness of the desert landscape and the smoothness of the plasticine hunters speaks to the textural contrast between land and people, a condition we as an audience understand implicitly, even if we have never visited the Australian desert.

Ngayuku Papa, another Indigenous narrative, spins a tangled world from hand-dyed desert grasses using the handiwork of the Tjanpi Desert weavers to tell the story of a beloved dog. Again, there is an ever-present red sand-textured background, but this time, it is contrasted with woven grass puppets that seem to contain a vibrational coiled energy: a life force gifted from the weaver's hands that is like a crisp three-dimensional paint stroke that circumscribes the form of the characters in a living material.

In *Grace Under Water*, we are presented with a startling version of stop motion realism. This sun bleached Australian experience captures hot summer days with water play and swimming pools. Textured with nostalgia, this near photorealistic tale draws on a collective Australian memory of suburban grass and municipal

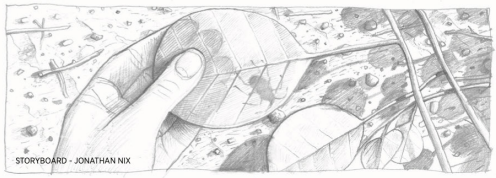
concrete to anchor it in the summers of all our youth. Here too, the animators have captured the surface and subsurface textural qualities of water interacting with light; an optical texture playing across the silicone casting seams visible on the characters' bodies. The burnt sausages on the barbecue, so common in typical Australian backyards, speak to the textural taste of food with their greasy burnt spots and overcooked hopes.

In *House Rattler*, a mischievous Japanese house spirit, similar in intent to a western poltergeist, is ignored and eventually forgotten. Discomforting, yet familiar, the coarse fraying fabrics of the spirit's clothes and wild unkempt hair all speak to a textural sense of time that spans centuries; of a tangible loneliness now folded into the worn wooden corners of an old lady's life.

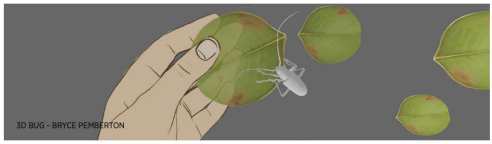
In *The Lost Sound*, Steffie Yee uses hand rolled plasticine loafs, sliced like bread, to create a series of animated moments using a process called strata cut animation. This high risk technique draws attention to the unplanned edges and artefacts that dance around the mouths and faces in this film about voices and sound. The effect is X-ray-like and mesmerising, rhythmically recalling medical scans of the human body and abstruse linguistic processes, as we slide through the 'meaty' textured slices of sonic representation.

In all these films, we are reminded of the filmmaker's hand in ways that enhance our viewing pleasure. The films become more personal, more charged; whispered stories are told intimately, reminding us of a shared human experience. The films' textural irregularities and beautiful imperfections speak to an unbroken physical tradition — a continuum — of hand skills and making, balancing the individuality and universal connection inherent in each artist's vision.

The Lost Sound film still
© Steffie Yee 2020

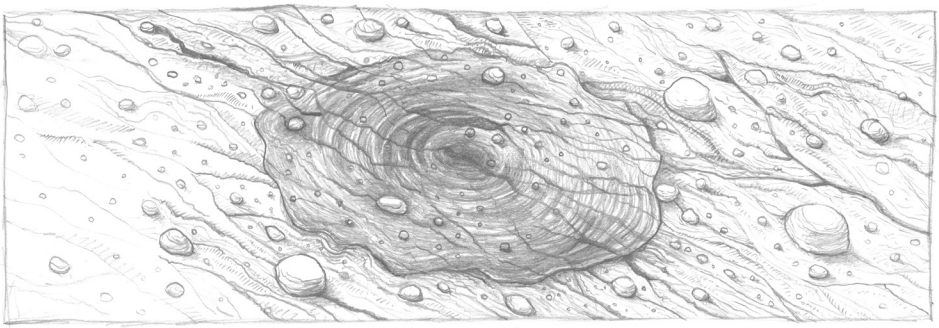


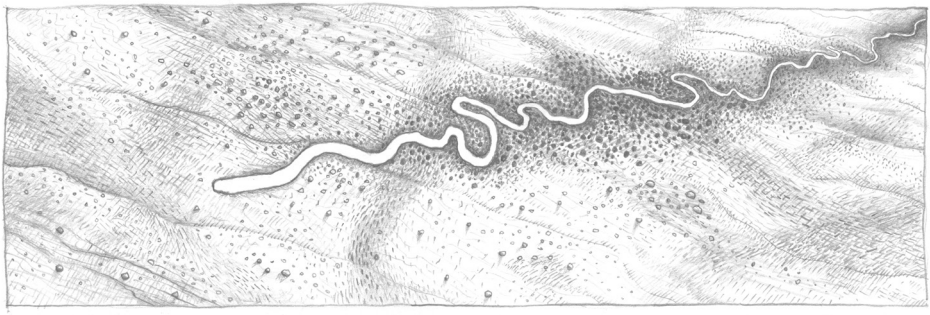
STORYBOARD - JONATHAN NIX



3D BUG - BRYCE PEMBERTON

FINAL SHOT - BRYCE AND JONATHAN





Lifeblood film stills and process works © Ample Projects

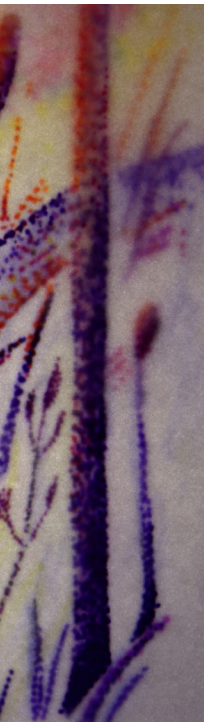
Animism in animation

Honami Yano

A Bite of Bone © 2021 Honami Yano/ Au Praxinoscope

In simple terms, animism is the idea that everything in nature contains a spiritual being that makes it alive[1]. Takeshi Umehara adds that another characteristic of animism is the notion that the spirit departs from the body and resurrects. In Umehara's view, the discovery of life does not entail gaining a new one: rather, it involves the rebirth of something that has already experienced death and is returning to this world housed in a new body[2].

When animism is found in animation, it is not a new birth, but the return of a soul from the world of the dead to this world[2]. In other words, when we breathe life into something, that life is not a new one, but a resurrection from the dead.



When animation is explained in the context of animism, it is often stated that the latter is derived from the word *anima* (spirit), just like 'animation' and 'animal'. In this essay, I would like to go one step further in reference to this particular connection and ponder the idea of animism in animation. I will use Umehara's reconsideration of animism and Norman McLaren's definition of animation as starting points.

The following is what Norman McLaren defines to be animation:

1. Animation is not the art of drawings-that-move, but the art of movements-that-are-drawn.
2. What happens between each frame is much more important than what exists on each frame.
3. Animation is therefore the art of manipulating the invisible interstices that lie between frames[3].

When we find *anima* (spirit) in animation, it is not so much that we discern it within a pictorial composition, but rather that the space between the frames — the kinetic, moving image — seems to summon forth something that is 'alive.'[3] Animism is not only found in moving images, but also in paintings, which are still images. To take an example from Japanese art, the motivation behind Jakuchu Ito's painting *Sōmoku Kokudo Shikkai Jōbutsu (All Things Have the Buddha Nature)*, as Yoshiaki Shimizu has it, was to create a painting with an animistic worldview[4].

Returning to McLaren's definition, animism in animation can be said to represent the return and rebirth of the spirit in what is drawn on paper (sometimes between frames)[3]. The sense of life or vitality that we perceive in these voids, spaces and that which is not depicted between two gaps, is something true to the spirit of animism and can be said to be distinctive to animation, while not found in painting.

On the other hand, the question that emerges here is whether this sense of animism is limited only to kinetic, moving images. Thomas Lamarre points out that "in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*[5], Gilles Deleuze says that what is interesting about the act of 'stopping' in film is that it is a 'stopping of motion.'"[6] In the medium of animation (as well as film, of course), the frame is always in a continuous state of motion, but even within that, there are expressions equivalent to a 'stopping'.

When the movement stops, the viewer perceives a stillness (or death) from this cessation of movement, and even though it is still, we feel a pause, gap or tension. In other words, when we find the *anima* in animation, we feel its absence (death) within the stillness, and this includes the moment of its rebirth or resurrection. Animism in animation is not necessarily found only in motion. When we think of the idea of rebirth from death, we might venture to say that an animistic worldview also exists within silence, 'stopping' and immobility.

So far, we have explored animism in animation starting from animism's definition and in terms of motion and stillness. To summarise, one might say that the first distinctive characteristic of animism in animation is that the space between frames, which is an empty void, serves as a dwelling place for the *anima.* The second characteristic is that although animation is an art form that depicts movement, animism is not only based in movement, but also in stillness and 'stopping'.

Another essential element of animism in animation is the worldview associated with animal worship. In Japan, the first picture scroll in the four-scroll series *Choju Jinbutsu Giga (Caricature of Birds and Beasts)* is famous for its anthropomorphic portrayals of animals — a work that 'makes us forget that human behavior is being depicted by anthropomorphic animals: we can only imagine that these animals are playing at imitating humans of their own volition'[7]. As Umehara points out, animism was the origin of Shintoism in Japan before Buddhism came to this country[2]. This is the primitive religion that Tylor refers to, as well as that which governs the relationship between animals and humans.

Toshiya Ueno suggests that animism can develop in a more contemporary context. For him, the term 'implies the act of perceiving that something lies latent or concealed in the background.'[8] In this essay, we have examined the notion of animism in animation, and this 'something latent or concealed in the background' is similar to the feeling we get when we find *anima* (spirit) in animation. This, to my mind, is precisely the magic of animation. The worldview associated with animism has resurfaced

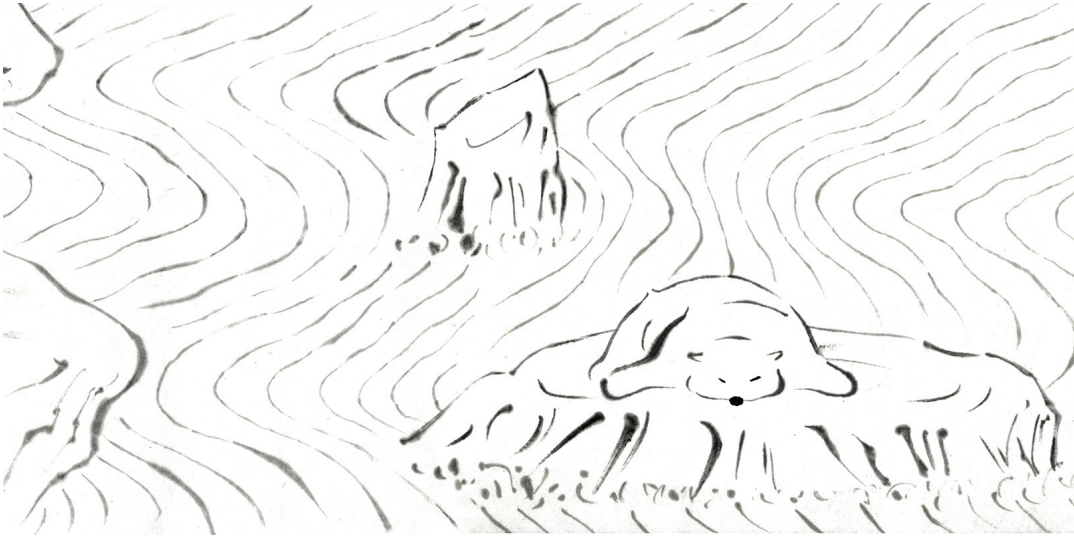
in recent years and when animism is reassessed today in the face of environmental destruction and anthropocentrism, transcending the fact that it was something 'primitive', the idea of animism in animation will also come to be reappraised.

Endnotes

1. Translated by Michiaki Okuyama, Fumiaki Okuyama, Chiyoko Nagatani, Masahiko Hori, Kokusho Kankokai, *Religious Studies Selected Masterpieces Vol. 5 and 6*, 2019 (E. B. Tylor, 1871).
2. *Animizumu Saikō*, 1989
3. *Les cinéastes d'animation face au mouvement*, Poitiers: Imprimerie Daynac, n.d.
4. *Jakuchu Itō Yomigaeru Tensai*, 2020
5. *Cinema 2: The Time-Image,* 2006
6. *Representation, Dialogue <07> 'Thinking through the 'Anime Machine'*, Association for Studies of Culture and Representation, 2013
7. *12 seiki animeishon*, 1999
   In this book, Takahata explores the roots of Japanese cartoons, manga, and anime in the 'narrative pictures' of 12th Century Heian period picture scrolls.
8. *Four Ecologies: The Thought of Félix Guattari*, 2004

Myaku-myaku to (脈々と); Or continuity in Animation

Kōji Yamamura



Polar Bear Bears Boredom film still © Yamamura Animation

The Japanese phrase *myaku-myaku to* means 'to carry on steadily and ceaselessly for a long time, like a pulse.' *Myaku* refers to the blood vessels and the term is said to have come into use because the path of our blood flow continues for as long as we are alive, while *myaku* describes something that proceeds in a continuous line. For the Japanese, *myaku-myaku to* evokes the image of flowing blood inherited from our ancestors, moving and rippling in time with a heartbeat. *Myaku-myaku to* expresses a state in which blood connections — not only our biological DNA, but also cultural genes — are inherited and passed down.

There are many other Japanese words and phrases that express the way two identical words are joined together in a row, with the same visual and sonic rhythm, such as *moku-moku to* (silently), *tsugi-tsugi ni* (one after another), and *hibi* (day by day).

The distinctive sensation of continuity found in Japanese animation can be traced as far back as the Middle Ages. China exerted a strong cultural influence on Japan at the time, and the tradition of Chinese

paintings led to the development of picture scrolls in Japan. These long rolls of paper with alternating text and corresponding pictures are viewed by unfolding them with the left hand and rolling them back up with the right hand, and this practice of feeding images horizontally and enjoying the sensation of continuity in a visual form recalls the mechanism behind video apparatuses and modern animation. Modern Japanese manga also seems to have been strongly influenced by recreational books and the genre of popular literature illustrated with woodblock prints known as *kusazōshi* published during the Edo period, which evolved to recount longer stories and narratives by combining text and pictures. The culture of manga, it seems to me, developed because Japanese people were comfortable with how text and pictures existed in parallel. In modern times, manga developed as a way to enjoy long, continuous stories, through media like rented books and weekly magazines. Japanese industrial animation, based on this manga content, developed in the same way as manga by focusing on characters and dialogue in serial and full-length works.

The short animations shown at this exhibition are not in the mainstream Japanese style. Rather, they are influenced by Canada and Eastern Europe. Many of them do not rely on dialogue, unfolding instead through visuals, sound and music. However, the content depicted in these works is based on traditional motifs, personal history, art history and wordplay, in a way that is quite uniquely Japanese.

From the Socratic questions and the Enlightenment thought that led to Kant, Western philosophy has long recognised the value of invention, creativity and new approaches. Enlightenment thought postulated that all human beings have the faculty of reason in common between them and that there are fundamental laws in this world that one can recognise thanks to this reason. In terms of methodologies, it is the natural scientific method that has been privileged since the 17th Century.

Due to the influence of Shintoism and Confucian thought, however, Japan tends to prize and respect the achievements of advanced technology, as well as replication and repetition. The practice known as *shikinen sengu* (the transfer of a deity to a new shrine building once in a prescribed number of years), for example, has continued since the year 690, during the Asuka period. All

the shrine buildings at Ise Shrine are periodically rebuilt every 20 years, which is also the span associated with generational change: teenagers begin to establish social independence in their thirties, while thirty-somethings come into a position to pass on their accumulated social experience to the next generation in their fifties. In this sense, *shikinen sengu* is a way of passing skills and beliefs on to the next generation that is synchronised to the timing of this generational shift.

Following oral traditions such as folk tales, but also literature and film, animation now plays an increasing role as a medium for conveying tradition and culture and the transmission of stories. In an age of digital editing, all images can be adjusted and tweaked at a granular, piece-by-piece level, while the development of computer-generated imagery has blurred the boundary between live action, computer graphics and animation. Today, one might venture to say that images are 'animations' that have been imbued with creativity, piece-by-piece.

For me, the word 'continuity' seems to imply the absence of change. Does it mean that there is almost no change — or that change is just barely kept at bay, regardless of the span of time that it lasts, whether it is handed down from the past, a continuation of yesterday, or sustained for three minutes?

Living organisms, including cells, atoms and other microscopic layers that lie beyond our intention or purpose, make up what we call 'life'. Although these things are reborn and change every single day, they always seem to maintain the same appearance, thanks to genetic information. The human body is constantly changing and all of its cells are replaced with different ones after just a few months. Even in the case of the *shikinen sengu*, all the materials get replaced every 20 years. The lifespan of a human being is about 80 years, while the buildings at Ise Shrine that are more than 1,300 years old pass down and inherit 'invisible information' even when the materials themselves are changed.

For an object, however, when all of its constituent atoms are replaced, the question of identity arises, as in the paradox of the Ship of Theseus: is what existed in the past the same as what is there now? One doubts whether the ship is the same when all its parts have been replaced.

In a world where everything is in constant flux, continuity can perhaps be defined as a coherent sequence of sustained states, or the state of those continuities, aligned with a single theme. The world is always changing, and nothing stays the same. Yet we wish for sameness and yearn for continuity: we want our past and future selves to be the same. Is this a fleeting illusion? To live in this world is to exist in a state of change, cut off from and detached from the notion of eternity and to keep moving towards death, which all of us must confront.

We all want something of this life to persist, knowing that it will surely come to an end. Biologically, this is something that we leave to our offspring. Artists delegate this function to their artworks as they yearn to approach 'eternity'.

Animation creates continuous motion from intermittent frame-by-frame pictures. While each picture stands alone, a sense of movement is created through the accumulation of small differences, such as the flow of visuals envisioned by the animator, the connections between motion curves, the unity of the identities of the characters depicted, changes in feelings and emotions and fluid changes in metamorphosing forms, all of which are connected by invisible intentions.

The smallest unit of time in quantum mechanics is called Planck time and is reckoned to be about 10-43 seconds. Time is not a continuity of unbroken 'nows' of a certain length, like a scene from an animated film, but is rather made up of intermittent 'nows' generated by interrupted quantities like digital media. At the level of everyday human perception, however, we feel that it is continuously flowing.

In terms of animation, which is an art that unfolds over time and from the perspective of modern science, 'time' is discrete and discontinuous. Animation and this world would seem to be two separate universes, each with its own autonomous sense of time and space.

Animation creates time and space by providing various continuities. These continuities that connect images to each other and give shape to the whole are not the product of the creator alone: they are also

supported by the imagination of the viewer. What we call a 'story' is created by recognising the events that exist there. While the seed of the 'story' belongs to the individual, it germinates when it establishes a connection with others.

Animation is similar to the dreams we have while asleep. When you are awake, you share the world with others, but in a dream, the world and you are inseparable and seem to be the same size. When you wake up from a dream and try to communicate it to others, you impose a sense of order and time sequence on it. Experiences in a dream do not correspond with the tense of this world. There is a magma-like core of imagination made up of a mix of various emotions, events and visual images that are remembered when they appear in our unconscious during REM sleep and unravel when we wake up to align them with reality. When we share these experiences with others, a 'story' comes to life in the real world.

In my view, animation is like a dream: a chaotic, unconscious core of imagination that takes shape within our unconscious through various creative processes. At the seed stage, everything seems to be mixed in with each other and fixed in place, like some deity that grasps the entire space-time of the whole universe — in other words, eternity itself — all at once. When we bring it into this world, it becomes difficult for people to understand everything about this condensed time-space all at once, so we are forced to impose the sense of order found in reality, and show it in sequence. A 'story' is put together according to this sequence, thanks to the will of the creator. Animation, a form of artistic expression that unfolds over time, causes the seeds of the creator's inner imagination to germinate and come to life, opening up the story by sharing it with others.

Since Aristotle's theory of drama, western forms have sought to create plays that bring about a sense of catharsis at the end, by verbalising past experiences of pain, fear and guilt, as well as the emotions that accompanied them. Naturally, while there are many plays in Japan that seek out this western sense of catharsis, the Japanese tendency is to express the unconscious through visuals and sounds, without verbalising the unconscious that lies hidden within. This also seems to be linked to the abundance of onomatopoeias that express states

of being and sensations apprehended through the five senses, such as *sara-sara*, *shito-shito* and *beta-beta* and phrases that articulate a blend of meaning, sound and form in the Japanese language, such as *myaku-myaku to*, *moku-moku to*, *tsugi-tsugi ni* and *hibi*.

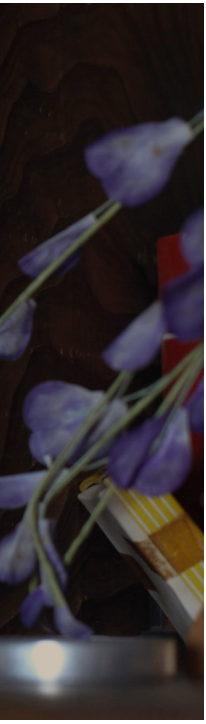
The potential of animation, as I see it, lies in the fact that it is a medium capable of expressing these pre-lingual sensations, these primitive states. Moving forward, we will continue to tell stories from the core of our imagination, day by day (*hibi*), silently (*moku-moku to*), one after another (*tsugi-tsugi ni*), and steadily and ceaselessly (*myaku-myaku to*).

Light and shadows in *House Rattler*

Shinobu Soejima

House Rattler film still © 2019 Shinobu Soejima / Tokyo University of the Arts

Since ancient times, every house in Japan has been inhabited by the spectre of a rattling house known as *yanari*. With the gradual decline of wooden construction, however, only deaf old people continue to live in these houses and nobody hears the rattling anymore. Sometimes it makes these *yanari* feel lonely.



The disappearance of homes for *yokai*

House Rattler tells the story of an old woman who lives alone in an old Japanese house in a depopulated town and the spectre (*yokai*) that shares this house with her. The protagonist of the film is a *yokai* a few inches tall called a *yanari*, which appears in Japanese folklore. It has long been believed that the mysterious creaking and other noises that can sometimes be heard in the house are the work of *yokai* trying to startle the residents. While *yanari* are *yokai* that are unique to Japanese houses, the term *yokai* originally referred to monsters that bring about bizarre and unusual phenomena that are beyond human understanding[1]. In Japan, people have long believed and feared that the world they live in has a shadowy side that they cannot see and by calling them *yokai*, they have created a boundary between their daily lives and the human world, keeping them at a distance.

This other world of shadows also existed inside houses. As described in Junichiro Tanizaki's *In Praise of Shadows*, it was believed that Japanese houses had a certain spatial depth that made full use of natural light and shadow before the advent of electric lighting. On the other hand, while the presence of light and shadow indoors created a centre for the house, illuminated by candlelight and light bulbs, a safe place for family reunions, the places where the light did not reach created a boundary between the ordinary and the extraordinary — a different world inhabited by these spectres of darkness. For example, after dark, when the light does not reach the toilets, corridors and wells, an eerie world of palpable danger emerges and the safety zone for the residents comes under threat. The daily existence of such shadowy and frightening places has given rise to a rich imagination that concerns itself with what is invisible in our lives.

Since Japan's period of rapid economic growth, however, houses have come to be brightly lit by electrical appliances, downtown areas have become filled with neon signs and window displays and streetlights have illuminated residential streets. At the same time, the number of Japanese houses built from wood has decreased and the homogenisation of space has resulted in the loss of a certain three-dimensional sense of darkness, depth and a centre, all created by light and shadows[2].

As if in parallel with this loss of darkness, with the widespread adoption of the television after the country's period of rapid economic growth, only 'daytime culture' was transmitted unilaterally by telegrams and avenues of transmission by older people who used to play an important role as the caretakers and guardians of culture belonging to darkness and the next world, were cut off. Somewhere along the line, *yokai* and demons lost their sense of reality based on actual, lived experience.

Who are these 'demons' (*oni*) in the title *Demon and the House Spirits*?

The original title of this work was *Oni to Yanari* (*Demon and the House Spirits*, or *House Rattler* in English), suggesting that there are not only *yokai* but also 'demons' in this story. There are two types of demons: imaginary ones whose stories are told and played out in fables, legends, the performing arts and games, and actual, real demons who are regarded as such, or as their descendants, by the people around them, or who they themselves believe to be demons[3]. The 'demons' in this work are the inhabitants who have been driven out of the community in the latter, ethnological sense, in other words, by those who govern that central community. Darkness represents death, the world that lies beyond, the world of the alien and the people who live on the 'other side', where the lines have been drawn since ancient times. These people are the elderly who are gradually being cut off from a modern society that is undergoing a dizzying transformation. In other words, the 'demons' in *House Rattler* seem to refer to the old people left behind in the depopulated towns. It is almost as if those who used to be the narrators of the shadow world have shifted to the position of the 'demons' on the other side of the border, among the invisible shadows of darkness.

At the end of *House Rattler*, the main *yanari* character is listening to the light, fleeting sound of her grandmother's television through the wall. As it listens to the sound, the *yanari* looks at an old black and white photo of a mother holding her child, from a past that has now been lost. The grandmother (the mother in the photo) suddenly starts singing an old Japanese folk song, 'Red Dragonfly', as if she were not listening to the sound of the TV. Her voice, however, is gradually drowned out by the cheerful laughter on the TV. Listening to the grandmother's voice buried in the sound of the TV — the world

of light, or the modern world — the *yanari* becomes lost in thought and buries its face in the head of its pet chicken. The old man singing 'Red Dragonfly', a typical song that mothers would sing to their children, signifies the end of such a tradition, a dialogue between light and darkness that was interrupted. This work was intended to portray people who live between a fragile darkness on the verge of disappearing that one can no longer depend on, and the world of light.

Yokai as transgressors of the boundary between light and shadows

The story of *House Rattler* is about the culture of shadows associated with these spectres and demons that is gradually being forgotten, juxtaposed with the image of an old woman who is gradually being left behind in modern society due to depopulation and aging. These two problems occur in proportion with the decline of the culture of shadows and light.

By using the natural light and shadows characteristic of Japanese houses, as well as the light and dark effects coming in from between the columns, this work emphatically depicts the boundaries between the bright and dark areas of the house, thereby depicting the old man in the space between light and shadow and the folkloric creatures that attempt to cross the border between them.

In the past, *yokai* were beings that transgressed the boundaries between the worlds of light and shadows. By intervening in our world of light from the world of darkness and startling us, they were a constant reminder that an invisible, other world of darkness existed within our world. Our awe of this other world of darkness stirred our imagination and created spaces with a three-dimensional depth to them. However, with a decrease in the number of people who know and talk about them, as well as places where one can sense their existence, it has become increasingly difficult for *yokai* to cross these boundaries. The loss of the experience of being in awe of darkness based on actual, lived experience means that we have also lost the ability to recognise the existence of this darkness.

Apropos of this interest in darkness, the folklore scholar Kazuhiko Komatsu argues that 'just as it is difficult to see a dark place from a bright place, whereas a bright place is clearly visible from a dark place, one can perceive quite clearly the world of centralized authority

from the "other side."'[4] This work depicts the story of those left behind in the darkness, from the perspective of the dark side. In other words, while older people are losing their hold on communicating with the shadows and light as their awareness of the specters slips away, their ability to communicate with modern society is also fading as they become an inhabitant of the other world of shadows, gradually turning invisible. In gazing at the world of light from the standpoint of the world of darkness, the main character, the *yokai*, remembers the culture of light and shadows that is gradually disappearing, feeling a slight pang of loneliness while reflecting on the culture of darkness that is no longer with us.

Endnotes

1. Shogakukan, *Encyclopedia Nipponica*, Kotobank: Yokai
   https://kotobank.jp/word/妖怪-145561
   Last accessed January 15, 2022
2. Kazuhiko Komatsu, Masatoshi Naito, *Oni ga tsukutta kuni Nippon: rekishi wo ugokashitekita yami no chikara to ha*, Kobunsha, 1991, p. 19
3. Ibid., p. 11-12
4. Ibid., p. 12

List of works

2D & 3D work

Lifeblood

1. Ample Projects
   Drawings and Video Stills:
   Dry Earth Drawing
   Dry Earth Video Still
   Frog Pushes Through Wider Drawing
   Frog Pushes Through Wider Video Still
   2021 (reproductions, 2022)
   Inkjet print using Ultrachrome pigment on Canson Velin Museum Rag
   Dimensions variable

2. Ample Projects
   Sooty in River Video Still
   Stolen Generation Video Still
   Rail Shots Video Still
   2021 (reproductions, 2022)
   Inkjet print using Ultrachrome pigment on Canson Velin Museum Rag
   590mm x 165mm

Kardiyarlu Kangurnu: Mujunyku (It Came with White People: Rabbits)

3. Pintubi Anmatjere Warlpiri (PAW) Media and Communications
   3D model: Rabbit Boat
   2016
   Mixed media
   190mm x 190mm x 30mm

4. Pintubi Anmatjere Warlpiri (PAW) Media and Communications
   3D model: Perentie
   2016
   Plasticine
   150mm x 50mm x 20mm

5. Pintubi Anmatjere Warlpiri (PAW) Media and Communications
   3D model: Goanna
   2016
   Plasticine
   150mm x 35mm x 20mm

6. Pintubi Anmatjere Warlpiri (PAW) Media and Communications
   Holding Up Rabbit Video Still
   Preparing Rabbit Video Still
   It's Not From Australia Video Still
   2016 (reproductions, 2022)
   Inkjet print using Ultrachrome pigment on Ilford Pearl
   178mm x 100mm

Ngayuku Papa (My Dog): Tiny

7. Tjanpi Desert Weavers
   3D models: Cynthia (younger and older versions), Baby, Tiny (adult), Puppy
   2018
   Minarri grass, acrylic wool raffia
   Dimensions variable

8. Cynthia Burke, Jonathan Daw, Tjanpi Desert Weavers
   Ngayuku Papa Series
   Driving Video Still
   Successful Hunt Video Still
   Guts Video Still
   2018 (reproductions, 2022)
   Inkjet print using Ultrachrome pigment on Ilford Pearl
   178mm x 100mm

CASTLE

9. Ryotaro Miyajima
   Storyboards 2-15; 3-15
   Image board 3
   2019 (reproductions, 2022)
   Inkjet print using Ultrachrome pigment on Canson Velin Museum Rag
   Storyboards: 287mm x 400mm
   Image board: 564mm x 420mm

10. Ryotaro Miyajima
    Storyboards 7-15; 8-15
    Image board 6
    2019 (reproductions, 2022)
    Inkjet print using Ultrachrome pigment on Canson Velin Museum Rag
    Storyboards: 287mm x 400mm
    Image board: 564mm x 420mm

Cooked Episode 4: The DKI

11. Jake Duczynski, Studio Hackett
    Series Poster
    Indigination Video Still

2021 (reproductions, 2022)
Inkjet print using Ultrachrome pigment on Ilford Pearl
587mm x 330mm

12. Jake Duczynski, Studio Hackett
Elders Video Stills (clockwise): Aunty, B Black, Q Steer and Kendrick
Manhra Video Still
2021 (reproductions, 2022)
Inkjet print using Ultrachrome pigment on Ilford Pearl
Elders: 230mm x 223mm
Manhra: 587mm x 330mm

The Lost Sound

13. Steffie Yee
Pre-production Process Photo
2018 (reproduction, 2022)
Inkjet print using Ultrachrome pigment on Canson Velin Museum Rag
420mm x 297mm

14. Steffie Yee
Strata Cuts
2018
Plasticine
Dimensions variable

CREATIVE EVOLUTION

15. Song Yungsung
Original Paintings 1-8
2019
Gouache on paper
1-2: 148mm × 210mm
3-8: 182mm × 257mm

Bath House of Whales

16. Mizuki Kiyama
Art Design: Supermarket (early planning)
Sketches of Korean Public Bath
Paint on Glass (process photo)
2019 (reproductions, 2022)
Inkjet print using Ultrachrome pigment on Canson Velin Museum Rag
Dimensions variable

17. Mizuki Kiyama
Bath House Video Still
Mothers Looking Video Still
2019 (reproductions, 2022)
Inkjet print using Ultrachrome pigment on Canson Velin Museum Rag
587mm x 330mm

A Bite of Bone

18. Honami Yano
Original Drawings
2021 (reproductions, 2022)
Digital print on tracing paper (layered), light box
210mm x 297mm

19. Honami Yano
Original Drawings
2021 (reproductions, 2022)
Digital print on tracing paper (layered), light box
210mm x 297mm

House Rattler

20. Shinobu Soejima
3D Models: Doll and Household Objects
2019
Mixed media
Dimensions variable

Grace Under Water

21. Anthony Lawrence, Plasmation
3D Models: BBQ and Father
2014
Mixed media
Dimensions variable

List of works

22. Anthony Lawrence, Plasmation
Grace Under Water Process Photos
2014 (reproductions, 2022)
Inkjet print using Ultrachrome pigment on Ilford Pearl
178mm x 126mm

Polar Bear Bears Boredom

23. Kōji Yamamura
Original Drawings
2021
Ink on paper
1375mm x 175mm (size of individual drawing)

Animation

24. Jelena Sinik
Imagining Time
2015
2D drawn animation
1'57"
© Jelena Sinik

25. Cynthia Burke, Jonathan Daw, Tjanpi Desert Weavers
Ngayuku Papa (My Dog): Tiny
2017
Stop-motion animation
2'56"
© Tjanpi Desert Weavers 2017

26. Jilli Rose
Bright Spots
2016
2D animation
8'05"
© 2016 Jilli Rose

27. Jake Duczynski
Cooked Episode 4: The DKI
2021
2D and 3D animation
7'57"
© 2021 Jake Duczynski, Studio Hackett

28. Anthony Lawrence
Grace Under Water
2014
Stop-motion animation
8'09"
© Anthony Lawrence Plasmation 2014

29. Steffie Yee
The Lost Sound
2020
Stop-motion and 2D animation
1'54"
© Steffie Yee 2020

30. Simon Japanangka Fisher (Junior), Jonathan Daw, Jason Japaljarri Woods, Shane Jupurrurla White, Pintubi Anmatjere Warlpiri (PAW) Media and Communications
Kardiyarlu Kangurnu: Mujunyku (It Came with White People: Rabbits)
2016
Stop-motion animation
6'20"
© PAW Media 2016

31. Simon Japanangka Fisher (Junior), Jonathan Daw, Jason Japaljarri Woods, Shane Jupurrurla White, Pintubi Anmatjere Warlpiri (PAW) Media and Communications
Kardiyarlu Kangurnu: Bullocks (It Came with White People: Bullocks)
2016
Stop-motion animation
3'40"
© PAW Media 2016

32. Nicholas Tory in collaboration with Aunty Dot Martin and Phill Sullivan
Lifeblood
2021
2D and 3D animation
21'10"
Lifeblood © 2021 Ample Projects.

33. Ryotaro Miyajima
CASTLE
2019
2D animation ink on paper
4'48"
© MIYAJIMA ANIMATION

34. Song Yungsung
CREATIVE EVOLUTION
2019
2D animation paint on paper
5'00"
© 2019 ICE BUTTER / SONG YUNGSUNG

35. Kōji Yamamura
Polar Bear Bears Boredom
2021
2D animation ink on paper
7'01"
© Yamamura Animation

36. Shinobu Soejima
House Rattler
2019
Stop-motion animation
6'24"
© 2019 Shinobu Soejima / Tokyo University of the Arts

37. Mizuki Kiyama
Bath House of Whales
2019
2D animation paint on glass
6'34"
© 2019 Mizuki Kiyama / Tokyo University of the Arts

38. Honami Yano
A Bite of Bone
2021
2D animation marker on paper
9'46"
© 2021 Honami Yano / Au Praxinoscope

Cynthia Burke

Cynthia Burke is an artist belonging to the Ngaanyatjarra language and cultural group. Born in Alice Springs, she spends her time between Warakurna and Irrunytju (Wingellina) communities in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands of Western Australia. Burke's creative practice covers a broad range of disciplines including weaving, which she was taught by her mother, a fibre artist and Tjanpi staff member, Jean Burke (dec.) In 2016, Bourke began working with Tjanpi Desert Weavers. Along with co-directing *Ngayuku Papa: Tiny*, she was a key collaborating artist on the *Manguri Wiltja* project with FORM and Polyglot Theatre. Burke has worked for Ngaanyatjarra Media as a camera operator and radio announcer, winning Best Emerging Radio Talent award at the 15th National Remote Indigenous Media Festival Awards and the Festival Troy Albert Award for Excellence in Cinematography.

Jonathan Daw

Jonathan Daw is a stop motion animation director. Daw started animating while studying a Bachelor of Creative Arts (Honours) in Film Production at Flinders University, South Australia. He now lives in Alice Springs and has worked extensively in Central Australia on collaborative animation projects for organisations including Tjanpi Desert Weavers, Tangentyere Artist and Indigenous Community Television. Between 2011 and 2017, Daw worked for Pintubi Anmatjere Warlpiri (PAW) Media in the Central Australian Aboriginal community of Yuendumu. At PAW Media he worked on several animated projects including *Bush Mechanics* with Warlpiri filmmaker Jason Japaljarri Woods, Kardiya-rlu Kangurnu, and *Yarripiri's Journey* for the *Songlines on Screen* series. He also enjoys teaching the craft of animation and has conducted animation workshops for First Nations Media, ICTV, Carclew Youth Arts and The Mulka Project. Daw's solo directorial films *Daffodil, Extreme Makeover, Catch of the Day* and *The Seagull* have won numerous awards and have been exhibited internationally.

Jake Duczynski

Jake Duczynski is a director, animator and writer who is committed to cultural preservation and telling edifying Indigenous stories. A proud Indigenous Australian man of Gomeroi and Mandandanji descent, Duczynski explores storytelling through animation, working to establish cultural collaboration, facilitate cultural preservation and visualise stories unseen and untold. As a writer and director on the ground breaking series *Cooked* (2021), Duczynski uses comedy and satire to explore a collectively-lived Indigenous Australian experience and to hit home some hard truths. His collaborative works include *My Grandmother's Lingo*

(Dir: Angelina Joshua, 2016), designed to revive and preserve the First Nations language, *After the Apology* (Dir: Larissa Behrendt, 2018) and the NITV documentary *Remaking The Pathway* (Dir: Emma Hudson, 2018) about reviving connection to homeland. Duczynski is co-owner and creative director at Studio Gilay (formerly Studio Hackett), which develops a slate of original animated works and is committed to forging a pathway for a new generation of creatively driven animators.

Simon Japanangka Fisher (Junior)

Simon Japanangka Fisher is a Warlpiri man from Yuendumu community. He grew up in Yuendumu and attended high school in Alice Springs. In 2013 he began working at PAW Media in Yuendumu where his father also works as an archivist. Japanangka Fisher has directed three documentaries: *Kardiyarlu Kangurnu*, an animated film about first contact between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Central Australia, *Nyurruwiyi Yurrumpi,* about the history of the Yuendumu Community (winner of the CBF Award for excellence in Community Television at the 2016 Remote Indigenous Media Awards) and *Yarripiri›s Journey* for Screen Australia and the NITV *Songlines on Screen* Series. He lives in Yuendumu with his family.

Mizuki Kiyama

Mizuki Kiyama was born in Osaka, Japan in 1992. Her decision to follow a career in animation was inspired by seeing short animations made by directors from her generation at a film festival. Her film *On the Way Home* (*Kaerimichi,* 2018) was screened at numerous international film festivals. In 2019, she received her Master›s from the Graduate School of Film and New Media, Tokyo University of the Arts. Her graduation film, *Bath House of Whales* (*Kujira no Yu,* 2019) premiered at the prestigious Annecy International Animation Festival and won the Lotte Reiniger Award for Animated Film at the Stuttgart International Festival of Animated Film and the Special Jury Prize at the Pia Film Festival.

Anthony Lawrence

Anthony Lawrence is an award winning stop motion animator based in Melbourne. Inspired by animations such as *Gumby*, *The Castle* and *Wind and the Willows*, he purchased a Super 8 camera and began mastering his animation skills in high school. Early films include the Mad Max comedy spoof *Naughty Boy* and the ambitious 27-minute stop motion animation *Happy Hatchday to Plasmo*. Lawrence's film *Looking for Horses* was broadcast on SBS and won Best Animation at two Australian film festivals and was awarded a Special Distinction at the Annecy International Animated Film Festival. Lawrence's expertise

with in-camera animation effects in stop motion has been widely utilised in commercials, and in the Oscar nominated feature film *Mary and Max*. His film *Grace Under Water* has screened at numerous international film festivals and won the Yoram Gross Award at the Sydney International Film Festival (2015) and Best Short Animation at AACTA Awards (2015).

Pintubi Anmatjere Warlpiri (PAW) Media and Communications

Remote Indigenous media organisation, Pintubi Anmatjere Warlpiri (PAW) Media and Communications is a community owned and directed media and technology provider. It empowers Pintubi, Anmatjere and Warlpiri people by celebrating, recording and promoting culture and language and providing the means to assert their identity and share aspects of their culture and language that they choose to make accessible to others. Based in Yuendumu in the Northern Territory, PAW leads in animation and training in the Indigenous media sector, beginning in the 1980s with the first Warlpiri animation, *Two Janagalas* and the award winning 1990s mixed Warlpiri language children's series *Manyu-Wana*. In 2010, PAW embarked on an ambitious animation program that has produced a number of series, short films and animated documentaries. Using clay, sand and 2D computer animation, PAW Media utilises animation to tell Jukurrpa and contemporary stories, oral histories and comedies, continually innovating with media and technology to tell their stories, their way.

Ryotaro Miyajima

Ryotaro Miyajima was born in Tokyo, Japan in 1989 and grew up in Bali, Indonesia. He received a Master›s from the Graduate School of Film and New Media, Tokyo University of the Arts in 2017. He is currently enrolled in the university's doctoral program. His film, *Radio Wave* (2016), received the Graduation Film DHL Diversity Prize at the 18th Bucheon International Animation Festival, and was selected to screen at 32 film festivals in 21 countries. His film *Aeon* (2017) was nominated in Animafest Zagreb, and was selected to screen at 19 international film festivals. *The Castle*, produced in 2019, has been hugely successful on the international festival circuit, winning 12 awards and screening at 60 film festivals in 34 countries. Miyajima's work is characterised by his expressive monochromatic hand painted watercolour style. He is currently working on his next film *The Return*.

Jilli Rose

After brief careers as a croupier, archaeologist, and printing press assistant, Jilli Rose taught herself to animate and has been gleefully making things move ever since. She was an award winning co-owner, producer, director, and animator at Phleschbubble Productions before starting Bespoke Animation in 2012. Originally known for her lively and engaging multi-screen museum displays of ancient creatures and environments, Rose has also created award winning graphics for documentary features and television series including

the Emmy nominated *Defiant Requiem*, the Peabody Award winning *Silence of the Bees* and the much-loved title sequence for the Discovery Channel series *Mythbusters*. Rose's short independent films have participated collectively in over 150 film festivals, including Clermont-Ferrand, SXSW, Vimeo Staff Picks and Mountainfilm, and won numerous awards.

Jelena Sinik

Jelena Sinik is an award winning animator, illustrator and filmmaker from Sydney›s Eastern beaches. She graduated with a Bachelor of Media from UNSW, before completing a Master of Animation at the University of Technology, Sydney. Art and expression, in all their various cinematic and poetic forms, have always been a profound passion for Sinik, whose films playfully challenge structural expectations of storytelling whilst maintaining a clear progression and a strong sense of journey. Drawn to the tactile, material, crafted and artistic aspects of animation, her films aim to leave a visceral impression on their audience. Sinik's award winning animations, *My Country* (2014), *Imagining Time* (2015) and *On* (2018) have been invited to screen internationally at numerous film festivals.

Shinobu Soejima

Shinobu Soejima creates stop motion animation and sculptures that explore impermanence and fear of the unexpected. Many of her works incorporate motifs from Asian folk stories and religious ceremonies. After spending nine years in Malaysia, Shinobu Soejima enrolled in UCLA Slade School, graduating in sculpture. While working as an exhibiting sculptor, she embarked on a Bachelor of Intermedia at Tokyo University of the Arts. She also later completed a Master of Animation in the Department of Film and New Media. Soejima's 2018 film *The Spirits of Cairn* won the 4th Heisei Geijutsu Award, the Art Award Tokyo Marunouchi, also known as the Eriko Kimura (Yokohama Museum›s chief curator) Prize, the 22nd Japan Media Arts Festival Jury›s Award and the Entertainment Division of the 24th Campus Genius Contest. Her most recent stop motion animation, *Blink in the Desert* (2021) is already receiving attention on the international festival circuit.

Deborah Szapiro

Deborah Szapiro is a Sydney-based creative director, curator and academic specialising in animation for broadcast, exhibition and public projection art. Her work has been screened extensively by broadcasters and film festivals worldwide. Szapiro has received two AFI awards, Dendy, ATOM and IF awards, Gordon Bruce Award for Humour, PATHE Award, Shell Canada Award and BANFF Television Award. Deborah founded the Japanime Film Festival, was co-director of the Sydney International Animation Festival and curates animation programs locally and internationally, specialising in Indigenous animation, nationalities of animated cinema and the work of women animation directors. Szapiro is passionate about independent animation and mentoring new generations of

animators. She lectures in the Bachelor of Animation at University of Technology, Sydney, where her research looks to animation's potential as an agent for cultural resilience, social change and innovation. Szapiro is currently collaborating with the Honda Research Institute Japan, where she applies storytelling and animation principles to the design of creative content for socially responsible robots.

Nicholas Tory

Nicholas Tory is an award winning artist, artistic director, designer and project director who graduated from Sydney College of the Arts' Electronic and Temporal Arts studio. Tory's multidisciplinary practice encompasses a range of site specific collaborative art projects including sculptures, installation, light-based art and animated films. Through his production studio, Ample Projects, Tory develops both conceptual and narrative driven work about living in our world and how this world affects us, realising these themes in his award winning public art projects. Through collaboration, Tory's work utilises light, spatial and object design, electronic engineering, interactive design, sound, projection, animation, filmmaking and traditional techniques like drawing and painting. *Lifeblood* (2020) is testimony to Tory's attention to detail, his respect for Australia's Indigenous culture and his love of regional Australia. He is currently working on two more short animated films, also based in the Bourke district.

Simon von Wolkenstein

Simon is an interdisciplinary designer whose practice focuses on experimental storytelling, making and post-digital hybrid animation. He is a lecturer in design and animation at the University of Technology, Sydney, guiding students to develop their own cinematic voices in the creative application of digital and analogue making techniques. He has extensive industry experience across print, typography, image making, model-making, digital technologies and film and television production, including cinematography, editing, directing and writing. He works across documentary, motion graphics and 2D, 3D and hybrid animation projects. Simon has degrees in Visual Communication (University of Technology, Sydney) and Architecture (University of Sydney).

Tjanpi Desert Weavers

Tjanpi Desert Weavers is the dynamic social enterprise of the Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council. Tjanpi (meaning desert grass in Pitjantjatjara) began in 1995 as a series of basketmaking workshops facilitated by NPY Women's Council in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands of WA. Women wanted meaningful and culturally appropriate employment on their homelands to better provide for their families. Building upon a long history of using natural fibres to make objects for ceremonial and daily use, women took quickly to coiled basketry and were soon sharing their new-found skills with relatives and friends from neighbouring communities. It was not long before they

began experimenting with producing sculptural forms. Today over 400 women across three states are making spectacular contemporary fibre art from locally collected grasses. Working with fibre in this way has become a fundamental part of Central and Western Desert culture.

Shane Jupurrurla White

Shane Jupurrurla White is a Warlpiri man from Lajamanu Community. He was educated in Darwin and Batchelor. Jupurrurla has worked at PAW Media for many years as a videographer, video editor and radio broadcaster. He lives in Yuendumu with his family.

Jason Japaljarri Woods

Jason Japaljarri Woods is a Warlpiri man. He grew up in Lajamanu and attended high school in Darwin. Japaljarri has been working for PAW Media in Yuendumu since 2006. While working for PAW he studied at Batchelor College and received a Certificate 3 in Media. Japaljarri has directed and animated several short films while working for PAW media, including films in the *Animating Jukurrpa* series and *Bush Mechanics*, which won Best Australian Animation at Flickerfest 2015 and screened at Melbourne International Film Festival. In 2016 he worked with the National Motor Museum to help create a *Bush Mechanics* exhibition, which toured nationally. Outside of filmmaking Japaljarri is interested in photography and graphic design. He lives in Yuendumu with his family.

Kōji Yamamura

Kōji Yamamura started working on animated films in the late 1970s at the age of 13. During the 1990s, he explored various styles and techniques while mainly working on films for children. When Yamamura's film *Mt. Head* was nominated for Best Animated Short at the Oscars, the artist joined the world's most renowned animation filmmakers. His films have been awarded more than 100 prizes, including grand prizes at the four most important international animation film festivals: Annecy International Animation Festival, Animafest Zagreb, Ottawa International Animation Festival and Hiroshima International Animation Festival. Yamamura has been part of many international juries and has held numerous retrospective screenings around the world. He was awarded the National Medal with Purple Ribbon in 2019. At Animac International Animation Film Festival, Catalonia in 2021, Yamamura was named second in the 25 top short animated film directors of the last 25 years. Yamamura is currently a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and Professor at the Tokyo University of the Arts.

Honami Yano

Honami Yano was born in 1991 on a small island in Japan. During her college years she went on an exchange program to the Rhode Island School of Design, which led her to discover independent animation. At the Graduate School of Film and Media, Tokyo University of the Arts,she studied under Kōji Yamamura and created her graduation project,

Chromosome Sweetheart(2017), which received a nomination at Frameline Film Festival and many other film festivals. After graduating, she worked as a research assistant for three years and also made her first film after graduation. Produced and supervised by Kōji Yamamura, it was the first work for his studio and gallery Au Praxinoscope. The film, *A Bite of Bone* won the grand prize for short animation at the 45th edition of the Ottawa International Animation Festival. Yano currently works for Nagoya University as a Designated Assistant Professor and is currently producing a new work, *The Story of my First Love and the Rainbow Ferry that was Sold* (provisional).

Steffie Yee

Steffie Yee is an animator, designer, and director working in Sydney (unceded Gadigal land) and in the Hunter Valley region of Australia (unceded Wonnarua land). Yee sees animation as a combination of visuals with sound. She works with materials such as plasticine, ink, pencil, and 2D & 3D animation. Her work has screened internationally at film festivals, including the Atlanta Film Festival, Melbourne International Film Festival, and Palm Springs ShortFest, where her film *The Lost Sound* (2018) received two nominations for Best Animated Short and Best Animated Student Short. Yee has created visual installations for live music events and worked on music videos for major artists including Sam Smith, The Free Nationals, Justin Bieber, TOKiMONSTA and The Naked and Famous. Her other clients include ABC TV, McDonald's, Red Bull Music, the University of Technology, Sydney and Opera Bar Sydney, among many others.

Song Yungsung

Song Yungsung is an independent animation filmmaker born in South Korea. His approach to filmmaking is based on early 20th Century art concepts and painting styles of Wassily Kandinsky, Robert Delaunay and Henri Matisse. He studied filmmaking at the Graduate School of Film and New Media, Tokyo University of the Arts where he completed two films, *Part Blue* (2010) and *QQQ* (2012), which have been screened at several animation film festivals over the world. His graduate film *Creative Evolution* has screened at numerous international film festivals, winning Special Prize at 15th Indie-AniFest 2019, First Place in Frame by Frame/Traditional at the Florida International Animation Festival (2020) and Best Animated Film at 15th San Francisco International Festival of Short Films.

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Exhibition

The Japan Foundation Gallery
continuum: Independent animation from Japan and Australia
February 18 - July 2, 2022

Artists
Cynthia Burke
Jonathan Daw
Jake Duczynski
Simon Japanangka Fisher (Jr.)
Mizuki Kiyama
Anthony Lawrence
PAW Media
Ryotaro Miyajima
Jilli Rose
Jelena Sinik
Shinobu Soejima
Nicholas Tory
Tjanpi Desert Weavers
Shane Jupurrurla White
Jason Japaljarri Woods
Kōji Yamamura
Honami Yano
Steffie Yee
Song Yungsung

Curated by
Deborah Szapiro
Honami Yano

Presented by
The Japan Foundation, Sydney
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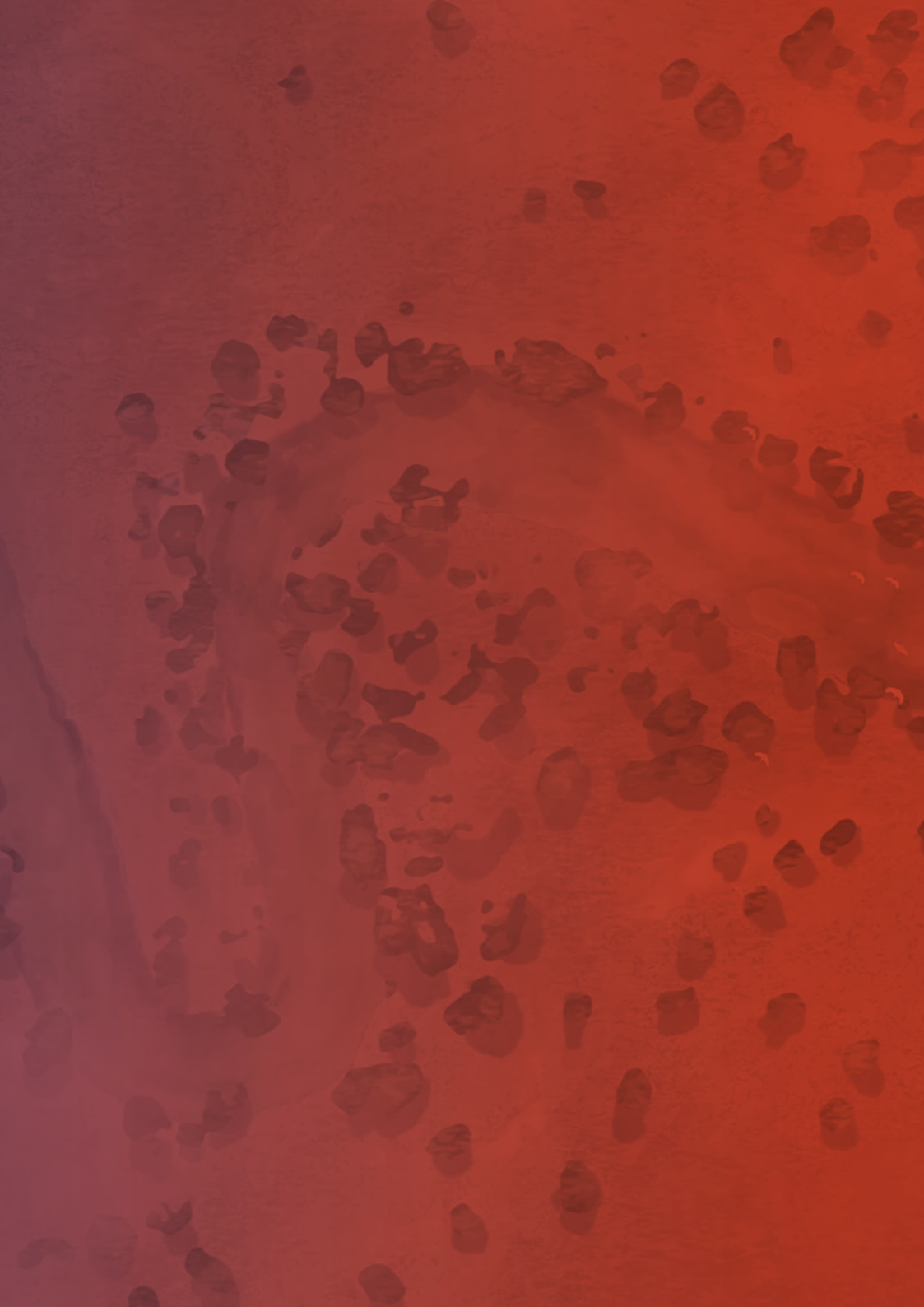

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continuum

Independent animation from Japan and Australia

The Japan Foundation Gallery