

Title: RECOVERING ART TECHNIQUES IN THE ANIMATION PROCESS

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Animation short films offer a very interesting conjunction of three figures dealing with art, narration and film language. Their definition, interaction and evidence within the works are supported by our object of investigation: how traditional artistic techniques are used and vindicated in this kind of film making, who are the main authors working in this direction and which is the importance of their work. There are a number of interesting studios about the animation process or the history of animation, but very few set their interest on an artistic focus, establishing a relation between drawing or painting techniques and film language.

We will use here the main aspects of pictorial language to analyse a group of artists and works whose common interest is a vindication of the art techniques in the animation process in the CGI era.¹

Author, narrator, artist

The concept itself, *author*, in the sense we are using it, was born in the late fifties, when a group of French critics and filmmakers vindicated certain names of the classic American cinema as creators able to leave their own marks in their works, beyond the supervision of the American film studios organization. This was important for the French and European filmmakers, because their own works were based on that authorial control, also responding to previous ways of film narrative in their respective countries. The European avant-garde movements influenced and favoured the transition from the classic film period to the modern and contemporary cinema and helped to determine which figure –usually either the scriptwriter or the director- claimed the moral and creative authority.

So the concept remains in these limits: who has the creative control? Whose name is joined to the title and the work itself? The usefulness of this concept for us deals with the artistic decisions within the animation short film, the audiovisual product that deals with the three characteristics we are interested in. First, one single artist, as an author, can develop the creative activity; secondly, the intention can be brought to the artistic domain and finally, it involves cinematographic language, technique and message. Those aspects will be completed with a distribution and exhibition system, far from the commercial intentions. That system is provided by the web and helped by the film festivals.

The narrator's territory, so close to the author in modern and contemporary cinema, remains within the text. The narrator is commonly accepted as an abstract identity controlling the narration. The author has legal identity, living in the real world, opposed to the fiction world as Laffay, Metz or Albadalejo define it.² The narrator has only a fictional identity.

¹ From 1962 when Ivan Sutherland invented the *sketchpad* to 1985 when John Lassiter (ILM) directed *The Adventures of André and Wally B.*, computer generated image gave animation the basis to follow a very commercial path, quite different from the authors and works we are treating here.

² Albert Laffay, *Logique du cinéma. Création et spectacle*. (Paris: Masson, 1964); Christian Metz, *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974); Tomás Albadalejo, *Semántica de la narración: la ficción realista*. (Madrid: Taurus, 1992).

For us the narrator is important here because it is the evident translation for the author in the text, through a neat identification between both concepts, produced by the author's will of taking the only creative responsibility of his work.

Once these figures and their territories are settled, we can focus on the author's will to identify and melt with the narrator tasks. And, as we are dealing with painting language as the author's main tool, a third figure comes along: the artist. We will analyse then the insertion of the author's marks within the artistic animation short. And we will see that painting language and narrative tools can't work separately, as the technique employed in each case will determine the terms of the narration. Also the creative decisions of the author, once this artistic narration is decided, will also determine the divulgation and exhibition process.

Though we are working here with artists dealing with figurative techniques, we can't ignore the heritage left by other authors that chose the abstract language to express and communicate their art. Abstraction in animation, more than in any other artistic expression, separates the real world from the author's world in his role as narrator. And for the spectator, trying to get into that world the author has created for him is a more intimate experience than sharing a recognizable reality. Norman McLaren or Evelyn Lambart opened a new way for other artists, interested or not in abstraction, but willing to explore a modern narrative with a more expressive gesture or a daring use of colour.³

Abstraction has been important in the development and evolution of image language because "it made relevant not only the material existence of things", As Rudolph Arnheim explains, "...but also the effects those things produced or suffered."⁴ This perspective has helped animation to become a universal language, even when we are reading moving images directly translated from Chinese painting strokes and techniques, as in Te Wei's *Where's my Mom?* (1960). Chinese painting is not naturalistic or realistic. It works with repeated conventions for rocks, leaves, animals, water or figures among other elements. And the development of abstraction in occidental painting has helped to be moved with other culture's pictorial calligraphy, no matter how different it is from the occidental representation.

The drawing stroke as personal signature

What do different authors working with techniques dealing not only with the creative result but with the process too, have in common? First of all, their passionate defence of drawing, not only as a sketching tool, but as technique as well. Joanna Quinn's pencil stroke defines and accompanies the nervous movement of her characters; each component of the shadowing of Frédéric Black's drawings informs us of his wrist movement when using the colour pencils; some of Koji Yamamura's works could have been the result of a non-planned drawing, almost an automatic one. It is not just the recognition that the artist gives to the first sketches; it is the use of drawing as main tool and technique.

The difficulty of defining the drawing boundaries lies in the complexity of aspects involved in the concept itself. Most of its definitions have been made to help Art

³ Both McLaren and Lambart developed their most important works under the National Film Board of Canada. McLaren, born Scottish, experimented with several animation techniques: drawing on film, visual music, abstract film and pixilation. Lambart co-worked with McLaren until the early sixties, when their different interests separated their films.

⁴ Rudolph Arnheim, *Arte y Percepción visual. Psicología del ojo creador.* (Madrid: Alianza Forma, 2007. 3^o Ed.), 156.

students to understand its limits. Gómez Molina, as coordinator of the work *Las lecciones del dibujo (Lessons of Drawing)*, notes:

El dibujo se establece como la fijación de un gesto que concreta una estructura, por lo que enlaza con todas las actividades primordiales de expresión y construcción vinculadas al conocimiento, a la descripción de las ideas, las cosas y a los fenómenos de interpretación basados en la explicación de su sentido por medio de sus configuraciones.⁵

This gives drawing a conceptual boundary more than a technical one, and that is why it is so difficult to separate techniques traditionally subjected to drawing development (pencil, dry techniques, ink or marking pens) from works carried out with pictorial techniques (watercolour, oil painting or gouache to mention some) though their intention was a gestural or pictorial result.

Through History and precisely through the teaching of Art, drawing has seen its final place in the work of art discredited. This has happened because it has been traditionally used as a sketching tool and not as the ultimate matter. The authors mentioned do not think about artistic differences but in the comparison of this traditional techniques with, in example, CGI (Computer Generated Imagery) which in fact would use, from its very beginning, traditional techniques as a project rehearsal and not as a final result.

Michel Ocelot, author, among other works, of *Kirikou and the Witch (Kirikou et la sorcière, 1998)* or *Azur and Asmar (2006)* notes the wide range of possibilities offered by the drawing, what permits it fleeing away from the dominant aesthetic created by the new traditional animation and the easiness of the software programmes. He has no doubt about drawing being the best tool to create an original style, because it challenges software and its limitations instead of subjecting to it.⁶

Through a number of authors such as Joanna Quinn (*Girl's Night Out, 1986; Wife of Bath/The Canterbury Tales, 1998*), Koji Yamamura (*The Strings of Muybridge, 2011*), Erica Russell (*Feet of Song, 1989; SOMR, 2001*), Frédéric Back (*Tout rien/All Nothing, 1978; L'homme qui plantait des arbres/The Man Who Planted Trees, 1987*), Jerzy Kucia (*Across the Fields, 1992*) o William Kentridge (*Sobriety, Obesity and Growing Old, 2000*), we can observe that drawing is both technique and result, which very different expressions in which stroke, form, colour and space take part as options for them to show themselves as artists and authors. They work within the drawing territory as Bruce Nauman would define it for the Drawing and Graphics exhibition at The Boymans-Van Beuningen Museum of Rotterdam in 1991:

Dibujar es equivalente a pensar. Algunos dibujos se hacen con la misma intención que se escribe: son notas que se toman. (...) El primer tipo de dibujos podría llamarse conceptual: fijan una idea. Se llega entonces a un cierto punto en que ya no pertenecen a ese tipo y al hacerlos, el objetivo ya no reside en la representación de las piezas sino en "cazar la energía" de las ideas.⁷

⁵ Juan José Gómez Molina, coord. *Las lecciones del dibujo*. (Madrid: Cátedra, 1999), 17. *Drawing settles as the fixation of a gesture that specifies a structure, connecting thereby with all the essential activities of expression and construction linked to knowledge, ideas description and interpretation phenomena which are based in the explanation of their sense through their configurations.* (My translation)

⁶ Paul Wells, Joanna Quinn and Les Mills. *Dibujo para animación*, trans. Laura Molina García. (Barcelona: Blume, 2010), 99.

⁷ Gómez Molina, *Las lecciones del dibujo*, 33. *To draw is equivalent to think. Some drawings are made with the same intentions of writing: they are notes (...). The first type of drawings could be named as conceptual: they fix an idea. Then they don't belong to that category any more and when they are made the point is no more the representation of pieces but the hunting of the ideas' energy.* (My translation)

And precisely that kind of energy illustrates also a relationship among the fluctuations of the line, the metamorphosis of the strokes and the trace of the tools used to mould the textures. And all this help to create the *diegesis*, creating a double speech: the act of performing the work becomes as significant as the argument or the *ethos*, a word that defines the message within the story.

Each technique establishes a certain language, a time of fulfilment, different effects, even a brand. The author's or the artist's work explore their own limits and conditions the same way the limits and conditions of the tools used for the work are explored. Aleksander Petrov paints with his fingers on a light box surface, and then he takes a photograph of each painting. *The Old Man and the Sea* (1999), based on the book by Ernest Hemingway took 29.000 painted shots and three years to complete a twenty minutes short animation. Jerzy Kucia, drawing, faced a similar work for *Across the Fields* (*Przez Pole*, 1992), which took five years to be completed after 16.000 drawings by Kucia and his wife Ewa, for an 18 minutes animation short.⁸ Besides the effort and the time, those are the chosen techniques and not other one. Fulfilment is slow and laborious; plastic beauty, unquestionable. Beyond the aesthetic, through that decision, their works have what they need: light, colour, textures, a suggestive atmosphere, the presence of the matter, realism, the original and striking image. Technique is in the service of the work and at the same time, it is part of it. The artist and filmmaker Kathy Smith defines the relation between animation and painting:

What has always fascinated me about animation is its potential to capture or provoke a thought via kinetic energy and sound. Animation, by its very nature, adds another dimension to painting by adding temporal, spatial, and aural movement and space to static images. (...) An animated film concretizes the thought process that creates a static work by incorporating the physical senses of movement and sound.⁹

If colour, shape, and space are aspects shared with the moving image as well, stroke would define the painting physics. In the pictorial means, stroke stimulates the sense of touch, the desire of feeling the matter. In the film, that physical desire is lost, but a very interesting characteristic remains: it is transformed into the author's individual calligraphy, talking to us, besides, about the process. For many centuries Occidental painting tried to hide any material trace on the picture, even the brush-stroke, but when that texture is kept and showed, the spectator has access to the artist's activity, to his energy. Stroke becomes that way the most evident trace of manual intervention.

The articulation of the stroke appears in several techniques attached to the author's mark. Filmmaker Caroline Leaf, as animation short artist, has used three different techniques in which stroke works as the main expression of her pictorial- film language: sand on a light box, finger painting on glass under the camera lens and scratching directly into film emulsion. In all three cases she has found a balance between gesture as a punctual and isolated action and texture as the skin of shapes or spaces in which the forms are held. In her first work, *Sand or Peter and the Wolf* (1969) she used beach sand to create the shapes on a light box. Those shapes were searching what any film searches: interaction between light and shadow. Just that here the image space is also the instrument space, the light box which gives the necessary light contrast to the sand on the surface. The peculiarity of this technique is that the material will be recycled and therefore each drawing is lost to the following one's advantage. The author names this process "one off-performance".¹⁰

⁸ Anima Mundi and Julius Wiedermann, eds. *Animation Now!* (Cologne: Taschen, 2007), 19, 137.

⁹ Kathy Smith, "Artist's Statement".
www.kathymoods.org.

¹⁰ Caroline Leaf.

<http://www.carolineleaf.com>.

The obvious contribution of animation here is the moving stroke and how it builds up the story. One of the works that makes more evident the relationship between stroke and story is Koji Yamamura's *Muybridge's Strings* (2001), a Canadian-Japanese production in which the artist uses mixed media such as ink, watercolour or gouache combined with pencil on paper, giving the image not only continuity but also showing the inner movement of objects and figures, a very dynamic effect that many animation artists look for deliberately. Yamamura uses splashing and graphic or pictorial matter to visually enrich the animation, though that resources will not be part of the figures or the objects. Film language is also present, for instance, in the panning that illustrates the settlement of the numbered strings the horse race must break to activate the cameras. Fading effects and the feeling of a continuous metamorphose of the figures and shapes have a straight relation with the plot that mixes the destinies of Muybridge and a Japanese woman and her child in two different periods. Yamamura studies time here. In its meaning of connecting dates, in its act of passing and as ultimate metaphor for mother and child (inspired on a photograph by Muybridge), pacing a staircase which design is clearly influenced by the impossible architectures of the artist Maurits Cornelis Escher (1898-1972). The use of the stop motion technique here (giving moment to a series of static images) shares intention with Muybridge pioneering work to capture motion in stop-action photographs.

Interaction between pictorial and film vision

Though colour could outstand as the main expressive element in the technique used by Joan Gratz, we must note that the stroke achieved, that one involving revelation and presence of the pictorial matter, belongs here to a technique in which Gratz was a pioneer: clay painting. It looks for the simulation of the pictorial matter, its oiliness, its bind effect, its colour mixture. Clay gives the necessary brush stroke through the apparition of colour threads, moulding by juxtaposition. It is an approaching to painting from another medium. It claims not only the pictorial looks but a will of imitation that means an extra challenge: the difficulty of keeping the moving sequence once the clay has been mixed. In her latter works Gratz makes use of software programmes to manipulate the final status while other authors choose working with more expressive and manual interventions. They are just different tools to get to the same point: homage to Art. Jerzy Kucia would develop a graphic or plastic action directly on the film, modifying it manually photogram by photogram and getting outstanding effects on a non-traditional medium.

Experimental methods have also beget an experimental result on the narration. Language and message tend to relation in an aesthetic way, what makes the work often lead towards abstraction. The same way abstraction and music tend to work together. Joan Gratz herself has chosen this option in some of her works, as *Innerplay* (2000) or *Dowager's Idyll* (2001).

In the visual experimentation works of Jerzy Kucia, the traditional narration, structured and solution do not appear. According to the difficulty of the images he offers problems, situations in which spectators must reflect on or just get astonished. *The Ring* (Krag, 1978) was already a work with semi-abstract images that Kucia was improving through the years. *Tuning Instruments* (*Strojenic Instruméntow*, 2000), also directed by Kucia, masterly mixes several elements: abstraction, figures, drawing, real action footage, textures and layers, all which is designed to visually stimulate the spectator.

Techniques which solve a pictorial intention are also the tools for Georges Schwizgebel. He uses acrylic, wax pencils, gouache and pastel pencils to complete with resolute stroke and a great interest for the shapes light can evoke, one of the main subjects in animation, which is movement, treated as final result or as theme for the plot. In Schwizgebel we find another author willing to investigate the relationship

among movement, time and music. Music becomes another image, as Michel Chion shows in his work *Music in Cinema*, pacing rhythm and also predisposing the spectator to the image.¹¹

Pictorial colour gets an added quality when it tends to be solved within the film exercise. The colour-pigment becomes colour-light, though its function is just the same. Contrast (necessary to stimulate visual perception), that within a picture translates into chromatic and light levels, acts in the animation picture to give the whole story a single personality. Dudok de Wit, in his masterpiece *Father and Daughter* (2000) uses an implosive harmonization with a dominant sepia tone looking for intimacy in a story of lost and encounter.¹² In this kind of harmonization, tension is produced towards the inside, through contrast. It is based on the use of neighbouring colours, belonging to a common chromatic atmosphere. Smoothing contrast eliminates saturation and visual distractions from the tale, focusing in the sentimental story through a monochromatic aesthetic. This decision is also taken by other authors such as Regina Pessoa in *The Night (A noite, 1978)* or Frédéric Black in *All Nothing (Tout Rien, 1978)*.

On the other hand we would find the use of an explosive harmonization,¹³ get by colours which are distant among them in the chromatic circle, as those used by Alain Gagnol and Jean Loup Felicioli in the episode *A Knife Among the Forks*, belonging to their series *Minuscule Tragedies (Les tragédies minuscules, 1999)*, for instance in the sequence where the two characters are sat at the table, eating. There, complementary colours as orange and blue, added to their adjacent ones, provoke vibration and tension within the image. That same tension and colour explosion is achieved by Georges Schwizgebel using acrylic and pastel pencils in the pictorial *The Young Girl and the Clouds (La jeune fille et les nuages, 2000)*. Searching for the light and shadow he uses contrast through harmonic colour trios and harmonic groups of four, which are achieved joining the colours settled on the vortexes of a regular geometric figure on the chromatic circle.¹⁴

To define form we must note two inseparable aspects: the external appearance of the object and the mental model we have of that object created each one through reality and History of Image respectively. On the picture the form is the ultimate one: a structure, some limits and a shape. It appears before us as an unchangeable reality that may or may not make reference to a previous or posterior status, or even to parts that are off limits, out of our sight, completed by the help of our brain. In the moving image time adds history to form, transforming it, moving it apart or making it completely disappear. Picture and screen share nevertheless the rest of the qualities form possesses: rhythm, sharpness, relation with space, complexity and structure. Artists working with moving shapes in animation take these common places for granted, but the real interest of their observation is to make form evolve without losing its pictorial origin. Jerzy Kucia, Kathy Smith and Erika Russell have worked with repeated forms, exploring movement and dance. Russell uses pencil and airbrush to create dances which can't exist without the music that goes with them and which evolves in front of the spectator's eyes in a seduction exercise. In fact she considers her most important titles: *Song of Feet* (1988), *Triangle* (1992) and *SOMA* (2001) a trilogy dedicated to dance. And it is in these works where the study of form focuses all its interest, taking the whole concept: shapes, lines and volume but also its structure to make form to be the main scene element. Also in these volumes Erika Russell uses an interesting view of "form" that Arnheim had described in his works:

¹¹ Michel Chion, *La música en el cine*, trans. Manuel Frau. (Barcelona: Paidós Comunicación Cine, 1997).

¹² Gemma Guasch and Joseph Asunción. *Color. Pintura creativa*. (Barcelona: Parramón Ediciones, 2009), 14.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

La forma* no viene determinada solo por las propiedades físicas del material, sino también por el estilo de representación de una cultura o un artista concreto. Una mancha de color de aspecto plano puede ser una cabeza humana en el mundo esencialmente bidimensional de Matisse, pero parecería más plana que redonda en uno de los lienzos fuertemente tridimensionales de Caravaggio.¹⁵

The dancing forms Russell draws have ethnical references, so the forms reach their maximum meaning related with the culture they refer to. Through animation, that culture becomes universal.

Space, as part of that common language between picture and moving image, holds and includes the rest of the necessary qualities to explore this relationship. Its perception depends on two elements, which are both a simulation of reality: light and perspective. While light is in charge of establishing contrast and definition, perspective (which also takes part in definition) takes care of distances with the help of the laws of scales and vanishing points. In short distances overlapping and focusing help to understand the space between objects. While authors as Petrov use a classical visual narrative, others as Caroline Leaf in *Two Sisters* choose a forced perspective that help to intensify the relationship between characters. Piotr Dumala in *Crime and Punishment (Zbrodnia i Kara, 2000)* uses space as a mysterious dark environment, almost disappeared, wrapping up that way the psychological charge of the characters. In some occasions, those are almost merely guessed moving across the diegesis, which as in other works of Dumala's explores the dark side of human being. Dumala uses a technique coming from his experience as sculptor, when he discovered that scratching on painted plaster plates could produce for animation drawings of special beauty. Like in other authors we have already mentioned, this creative strategy which destroys the picture to create the following one (in this case the plaster is repainted) requires an interesting act of generosity as the author will never keep the originals, only their translation to the final work.

In William Kentridge's works as *Sobriety, Obesity and Growing Old (1991)* or *Weighing... and Wanting (1997)* space holds landscape as another character and also holds words and sentences which completes the characters' thoughts and moods. The prize winner Joan Gratz' *Mona Lisa Descending a Staircase*, does not develop a conventional animation. There are not characters or action on screen. The virtuosity of the technique (clay painting) is the main character. Pictorial simulation through clay manipulation is an art that few film makers use and control. To support the underlying message: evolution of painting from Da Vinci to contemporary art (the title refers to Marcel Duchamp's *Woman Descending a Staircase*), Gratz uses a synthesis offered by the possibilities of morphing, technique which permits the transition from one figure to another completely different in a aesthetic metamorphose. So it is within the frame where painting evolution happens in both its spatial and temporal dimensions.

Other artists like Alain Gagnol and Jean-Loup Felicioli use space to avoid emptiness. The lines describing the buildings and objects do not follow a conventional perspective in *Minuscule Tragedies*. Their irregularity underlines the ideas of critical situations, the unexpected and fable which are the themes these authors are interested in. Space is descriptive, but also psychological because of the fortuitous fugue of lines.

Exploring the third dimension enriches the pictorial possibilities. Caroline Leaf's *The Metamorphose of Mr. Samsa (1977)*, adaptation of Franz Kafka's book is also focused

¹⁵ Rudolph Arnheim, *Arte y percepción visual*, 151. Form* is not only determined by the physical properties of the material, but also by the way of representation of certain culture or artist. Looking flat colour shading can become a human head in Matisse's bidimensional world, but it would look nothing but flat in Caravaggio's strongly three-dimensional pictures. (My translation). Note: Arnheim uses form with * when he refers to the invented form.

on combination between pictorial and film language. The need of a previous storyboard is obvious when we discover the total control Leaf has on the “camera movements”. The forms Leaf draw with sand on the light box are forms in continuous evolution and change, getting adjusted to the story: the main character’s transformation into an insect. Film language is present along the whole short film. The change of the bird’s-eye shot into medium shot when the woman is setting the table; how the camera crosses the space from one room to another surrounding the separating wall, the nearly worm’s-eye view in which the insect is about to be squeezed by a character’s boot; the simulation of a fading transition which represents the passing time or the treatment of perspective, not changing the size of the shot from the camera but making the figure approach to it: the hand knocking at the door that is placed where the camera belongs.

This combination effort of both languages is also in another adaptation: the tale Adalbert von Chamisso wrote in 1814, *The Strange Story of Peter Schlehmil*, which Georges Schwizgebel turns into a short animation film titled *The Man Without a Shadow (L’homme sans ombre, 2004)*, with a clear interest for colour as main element of the pictorial language, but also taking advantage of the fact that movement introduces two additional factors to painting: direction and velocity. Using paint on glass, relationship between language and story (a man sells his shadow in exchange of wealth, a decision that will bring misfortune to his life) is there from the initial credits, with those geometric figures offering in black and white a play of light and shadow, and introducing that way a constant effect that Schwizgebel uses along the short film: deformations create new spaces. Though the short begins in black and white, when the main character arrives to the party where he will find the weird man who offers him the deal, colour floods the scene. And under that promise of visual joy in which brush stroke honour Impressionism, the author uses a sequence where surroundings, forms and characters move towards the destiny the main character is going to find. The lack of shadow will make a socially unaccepted element of him, also fearsome, rejectable. Then montage changes its initial fluency to a series of static shots supporting the idea of the main character being stuck in his own decision. It is also useful to indicate the passing time until the main character finds a place for his misfortune in a solution which is not in the original tale.

The major comprehension of film language and narration combined with art techniques has made another author, William Kentridge, to addecuate animation interests to his own “political art”. Kentridge explains this way the conjunction between drawing and narration:

The films started off initially as a way of examining the drawings, but then the narrative element came in, and the drawings were at the service of the film. (...) The drawings and the films interrelate in two ways: first, the drawings are the leftovers from the making of the films. There are not thousands of drawings, only 20 to 40 different ones, whatever is left at the end of a major sequence. Secondly, the actual demands of the film, its actual narrative, bring into being a whole new set of images that I would never arrived at otherwise.¹⁶

Conclusion: Cultural influence

The fact that these artists claim the total responsibility and control of their works has not prevented them to create modest film studios or production houses to be able to

¹⁶ Lilian Tone, “William Kentridge: Stereoscope”.
<http://homepage.mac.com/studioarchives/artarchives/liliantone/tonkentridge.html>.

assume more ambitious projects and try to optimize the time of fulfilment. Aleksander Petrov with Panorama Animation Film Studio, Abi Feijoo with Filmografo, Joanna Quinn with Beryl Productions International Limited or Georges Schwizgebel with GDS pretend to control and communicate an aesthetic which place them into author's animation and, at the same time, permits them to get into other exhibition circuits for their commercial survival. In this respect they have also inherited from the Art's world the practice of combining investigation and alternative narration with commercial works which give them funds to continue with their research.

Exhibition and distribution of this kind of works we are analysing have found in the web the main window to show and spread their influence. All the artists we have mentioned here use web to show their work and even talk about the technique they use. This activity offers the possibility of making contact with a massive audience among which a great number of other artists, students, researchers, teachers and potential spectators interested in art and films have access to works which could be difficult to find in commercial media such as television. While prizes and presence in Film Festivals such as Anecy or Zagreb means acknowledge the web means knowledge and distribution of these works, even before they have been acquired by television channels. Though there are few works and only a select number of artists available through television programmes. But before that work is shown to the world a way of production must be found, because, as we have already seen, work process is long, difficult and expensive. One of the oldest and more important institutions supporting this kind of creative work is the National Film Board of Canada which "works in collaboration with creative filmmakers, digital media creators and co-producers in every region of Canada, with Aboriginal and culturally diverse communities, as well as partners around the world."¹⁷

Every country has major and minor supports to animation production inside film production, but in very few ones there is a systematic interest to help authors to explore new narratives and techniques. Commercial production advantages investigation and though the authors we have been studying have meant a significative advance in animation narrative they have often found trouble to continue their work. As Petrov himself, who in 2011 had stopped activity because of the lack of funds or sadly gone Sarah Watts, who abandoned animation because of its difficulty and little reward. And they are just an example of the well-known artists.

Art exploration, interaction between pictorial and film language and personal effort is the legacy of these and other artists working in the same direction. In animation films there seems to happen a huge division between artistic techniques and the evolution of CGI, which seems to be the best choice for commercial films. And that could be why artistic or pictorial short animation films are but an anecdotal epigraph in major studios about history or animation process, even when narrative and artistic evolution lies on them.

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