

# **ESTONIAN ANIMATION**

**In Motion**

2009 / vol 1

“Estonia is a little big nation of animation” (Heikki Jokinen)

## Editorial

Heilika Pikkov

When people talk about Estonian animation, they always talk about its long and dignified history, which is primarily tied to two studios - Nukufilm and Eesti Joonisfilm. By today, however, the complete picture of Estonian animation is much more colorful. In addition to those two studios, where mostly author films are produced, we also have the A Film Estonia studio, which has taken a more commercial course and successfully cooperates with several large European and American studios. A number of small animation studios have also appeared in Estonia, not to mention some one-man animation companies created by young directors who love to use mixed techniques in their films, clips, and commercials, creating a very modern visual language that is new to Estonian animation. The work done by the studios is highlighted by the annual Animated Dreams animation film festival, which has been active since 1999 and is now one of the largest animation festivals in Scandinavia and the Baltic countries. Three years ago, it finally became possible to study animation in an Estonian university and to receive a bachelor's or master's degree in it, because the Estonian Academy of Arts opened the doors of its Animation Department.

Animation has had some advantages in the Estonian film landscape - our three, state funds (the Estonian Film Foundation, the Cultural Endowment, and the Ministry of Culture) have all gladly supported the production of animation films in addition to features and documentaries. The financial means of a small country are, of course, limited, but since the year 2002, Estonian animation films have also received development support from the international MEDIA program, which now totals 180 000 EUR. Television broadcasters, among the three largest financiers of animation films in Finland, don't support the production of animation films in Estonia. But nevertheless, Estonian Television shows all of the new Estonian animation films and also repeats old ones from time to time. Distribution and promotion may be considered the weakest links of Estonian animation production. Author films do make the rounds at international film festivals, but they rarely make it onto cinema screens at home and sales of DVDs and international distribution have thus far been rather haphazard. We don't have any organization that is devoted to consistently introducing and promoting Estonian animation abroad. We also don't have a website that gives the full picture of what's happening in Estonian animation. Everyone does something - animation studios make their films, try to send them to festivals, and also put together retrospective programs when necessary; the animation film festival tries to show as much Estonian animation each edition as possible and to be a source of information for all things regarding Estonian animation, as does the Estonian Film Foundation; the Animation Department of the Estonian Academy of Arts helps in their own way, making the students in the international master's program “believe the religion“ of Estonian animation.

The magazine, which you now hold in your hand, aims to bring together all of these different efforts and to once again give a complete overview of the current state of Estonian animation. Which isn't difficult, as in a country with a population of 1,3 million, perceiving the whole is both possible as well as necessary.;

“The Adventures of Juku the Dog“ (1931) was the first Estonian experimental animated short film. If you wander around Old Tallinn, you will find the image of Juku the Dog cast in copper in the pavement in front of a house in Suur-Karja Street, where the first animation film was born.



## Gravitation and Financing Animation Films

Karlo Funk

Estonian Film Foundation  
Head of Production and Development

It seems like Estonian animation, and even more so drawn animation, used to be more abstract - both in line as well as content. Purely visual ideas and sketches, which could be characterized as anti-gravitational, flashed through animation, especially in the works of Preet Pärn. During the Soviet Era, this was probably one way to say to oneself, in the way Galileo did: "It does turn!" In showing us gravitation, the relativity of the specified way our life is organized, the author immediately, indirectly also calls into question the other abiding norms forced on society by an authoritarian regime. Animation films played with these borders often and with pleasure.

The large, existentialist confrontations have now disappeared from our everyday lives. It shows in our films as well. Estonian puppet animations still contain traditional, symbolic questions, but if you discount a few authors, then mostly in a much softer form than before. More and more, animation films are becoming little feature films. The gravitation is back, but it is no longer the sole power that pervades in society, but rather the main current of filmmaking. Large films are cohesive because of the story, and they also pull other, smaller genres towards them.

If we take a step further in the creative sphere, then filmmaking is inevitably influenced by financial means. Animation filmmaking has also become noticeable for its pull towards finances - we see more long and expensive

animation films in cinemas than before. The central question in financing animation films has become "who is this for" and the rhetoric of the focus group. Nevertheless, financing for short animation films remains relatively liberal in Estonia and elsewhere in Europe. In Estonia, one of the reasons is also the fact that in the absence of a strong current of experimental filmmaking, the role of the experimentation polygon is filled by animation. Technologically, puppet animations are the most experimental, at the same time as drawn animation has essentially become free from its traditional handicraft element and leans towards the virtual world.

The importance of the role of animation in Estonian film can be detected in the fact that in recent years, support for animation films has been 56% that given to full-length feature films. The support is divided into development and production support and essentially 95% of it is state support; other than the studios' self-financing, private investment is practically missing. There is next to no commercial distribution for short films; they're mostly screened at festivals. Both new, as well as older, Estonian animation films participate in the international festival circuit.

One of the most sizable animation films in production at the moment is Heiki Ernits and Janno Põldma's feature-length drawn animation film "Lotte and the Moonstone Secret", made at Eesti Joonisfilm Studio. The film is a

sequel to their last, feature-length, children's animation "Lotte from Gadgetville", which premiered in 2006, attracted 56 000 theatrical admissions, and made it into German and French cinemas. Thanks to the products accompanying the film, the character of Lotte continues to be visible three years after the film's premiere and completion of the 3 million euro sequel is anxiously awaited. Of course, the production of such a sizable drawn animation noticeably affects the completion of short films. Making short, drawn animations in the same studio will remain complicated until the year 2010.

Unlike the Eesti Joonisfilm and Nukufilm studios, whose production is dependent on state support, the production unit of the Danish company A Film Estonia is quite free of fluctuations in state support. A Film Estonia mostly works for larger, international projects, at the same time also developing their own, independent, short stories.

The decrease in state support next year will affect all of the cultural fields in Estonia. Despite that, I believe that the production of animation films in Estonia will remain a unique oasis, where the happy combination of creativity and public support will give birth to interesting things.

## Estonian animation retrospectives at international film festivals in 2008-2009



Courtesy of Animafest Zagreb

Preet Pärn receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2008 from Krešimir Zimonić, the artistic director of Animafest Zagreb in Croatia.

### 2008

Lucca Animation, Italy  
Animafest Zagreb, Croatia  
Warsaw Film Festival, Poland  
Festival on Wheels, Turkey  
Bolšoi Festival Multfilmov, Russia  
Cinanima, Portugal  
ReAnimacija, Poland  
Animator, Poland

### 2009

Laputa Animation Festival, Japan

## Eesti Joonisfilm

Studio Eesti Joonisfilm is one of the oldest animation production studios in Europe. Animated cartoons have been made in Estonia since the early 1930's. The Tallinnfilm Studio created its cel animation department by the initiative of Rein Raamat in 1971, laying a strong foundation for the regular production of drawn animation. After Estonia gained independence, the cel animation group of Tallinnfilm founded Studio Eesti Joonisfilm in 1994.

Eesti Joonisfilm Studio produces short and feature-length hand-drawn and computer animations and offers animation-related services including film development, art design, character design, backgrounds, lay-outs, animations, in-betweens, clean-up and film editing. The studio works with ANIMO Cambridge Animation System workstations (ScanLevel, Ink&Paint, Compositing, Special Effects, Rendering). In addition to art house films, Eesti Joonisfilm Studio also makes animated films intended for children and commercials for various customers.

### Recent projects:

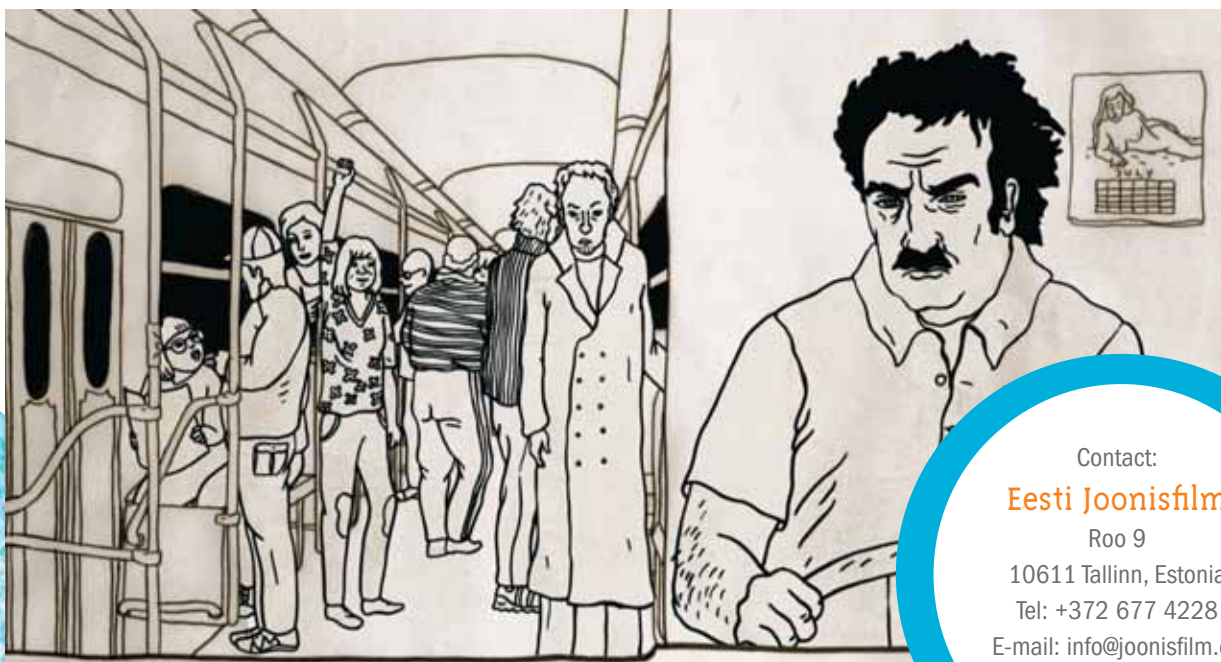
- In the Air (2009) / 8 min. / dir. Martinus Daane Klemet
- Crocodile (2009) / 13 min. / dir. Kaspar Jancis
- Kitchen Dimensions (2008) / 15 min. / dir. Priit Tender.
- Dialogos (2008) / 5 min. / dir. Ülo Pikkov
- Life Without Gabriella Ferri (2008) / 43 min. / dir. Priit and Olga Pärn

### In production:

- Divers in the Rain (2009)  
12 min. / dir. Priit and Olga Pärn
- Lotte and the Moonstone Secret (2010)  
85 min. / dir. Janno Põldma and Heiki Ernits

### In development:

- Mexican Express / 80 min. / dir. Priit Tender, Andrej Pauonov and Boris Despodov
- The Door and the Window / 12 min. / dir. Ülo Pikkov



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## Nukufilm

Studio Nukufilm dates back to 1957, when the enthusiast Elbert Tuganov shot the very first Estonian puppet animation “Little Peter’s Dream” in Tallinnfilm Studio. After Estonia gained independence, Nukufilm changed from a state studio into a private company in 1993. This did not interfere with their constant production of films.

Nukufilm is one of the biggest stop-motion animation studios in Northern Europe for its size of the studio, technical supplies and number of employees. Nukufilm has produced over 200 animation films during its 50 years. Most of the puppets used in Nukufilm’s works are displayed in the Tartu Toy Museum in Estonia.

Nukufilm deals with all kinds of stop-motion techniques: puppet and cut-out animation, modelling, pixillation and computer animation. Currently there are 25 people working for the studio, most of whom are qualified directors, artists, puppet makers, decoration artists, lighting technicians, animators, cameramen and their assistants, picture and sound editors. Nukufilm produces author films, series and films for children, as well as commissioned works.

### Recent projects:

Kings of the Time (2008) / 72 min. / dir. Mait Laas – animated documentary

Carrot on the Beach (2008) / 6 min. / dir. Pärtel Tall

Inherent Obligations (2008) / 10 min. / dir. Rao Heidmets

Lili (2008) / 13 min. / dir. Riho Unt

Miriam’s Broken Picture (2008) / 5 min. / dir. Priit Tender

### In production:

Oranus (2009) / 17 min. / dir. Mari-Liis Bassovskaja and Jelena Girlin

Sky Song (2009) / 30 min. / dir. Mati Kütt

Lisa Limone and Maroc Orange (2010) / 28 min. / dir. Mait Laas

### In development:

Domestic Fitless / 10 min. / dir. Hardi Volmer

Coming of Johannes / 10 min. / dir. Rao Heidmets



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## A Film Estonia Ltd.

A Film Estonia was established in 1994 as subsidiary of the biggest Scandinavian animation studio A. Film A/S. As a production house, A Film Estonia produces hand-drawn and computer animation for feature-length movies, broadcast TV, educational productions and commercials.

A Film Estonia was mainly a sub-contracting studio up until 2005. The studio has worked for many major European and US studios including Columbia Pictures, Warner Bros. Feature Animation, Animagic, Motionworks, TerraGlyph, Egmont Imagination and Happy Life. In 2005 A Film Estonia started with their own first production: a short animated film for children of all ages "The Little Short-sighted Snake", based on a children's story by Andry Ervald. This was followed by a short animated film for young children "If I Were a Grown-up", adapted from a famous Hungarian children's book by Ęva Janikovszky. Both short films have sparked enough international interest and are currently being developed into TV-series by A Film Estonia's creative team.

A Film Estonia animators and designers have also created illustrations for various publications and designed logos and designs for different products.

### Recent projects:

Olsen Gang (2009/2010) - CGI feature film produced by A. Film Denmark, where A Film Estonia's team is producing 3D character animation.

Frog & Friends (2009) - Telescreen in Netherlands subcontracted A Film the production of 26x7 minute episodes of "Frog & Friends". The show is co-directed by Aina Järvine from A Film Estonia and the Estonian team is taking care of the entire production flow.

Niko and the Way to the Stars (2008) - CGI feature film produced by Finnish production companies in co-production with Denmark, Ireland and Germany. A Film Estonia's team produced animation for the film.

Jungo Goes Bananas (2007) - CGI feature film co-produced by Denmark, Norway and Latvia, where A Film Estonia's team produced almost 20 minutes of the animation.

Things You Think (2007) - A. Film and Magma Films produced two short films from the series "Things You Think" for WDR. A Film Estonia produced designs, storyboards and animation for both films.



### In development:

If I Were a Grown-up - animated TV-series of 26x6 minute episodes for pre-school children based on the books by Ęva Janikovszky.

Gabriel & Taz - animated TV-series of 26x13 minute episodes for 4-8 year old children.



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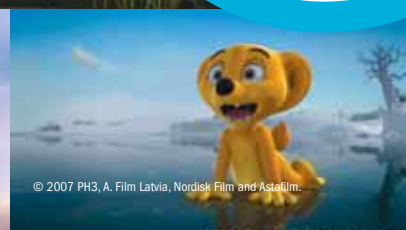
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## Tolm Studio

Tolm Studio is a small and creative animation studio working on commercials, music videos, films and experiments using all the wonderful techniques (2D, 3D, stop-motion, live action and the mix of all these) that animation has to offer. Tolm was established about a year ago - in 2008 by two talented directors and one producer. Since then Tolm has been busy creating TV openings and screen graphics for the leading Estonian TV channels; working together with local advertising agencies creating animated commercials; creating non-profit and their own projects. Depending on the project Tolm is closely working with professional designers, photographers, independent skilled animators, musicians and directors.

### Recent projects:

Mehr Wissen Wissen (2009) - animated sketches for German TV series, in co-production with A Film Estonia.

Animated Dreams (2008) / 35 sec. / dir. Matti Adoma - trailer for the 10. Animation Film Festival Animated Dreams.

Channel graphics for Estonian TV channels TV3 and Kanal 2.



**TOLM**  
Studio

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## Birds of Paradise

Birds of Paradise is an independent private capital based animation studio. The company was founded in 2007. Since then the main direction has been mixed style animation where filmed material is combined with animation. The entire team is composed of young people and most of commercial production is made to globally know brands. Making independent short animations play a great role in Birds of Paradise everyday work as well.

### Recent projects:

Kerli - Creepshow (2008) / 3 min. / dir. Daniel Müntinen and Jaagup Metsalu - music video for Universal Music artist Kerli Kõiv.

Rulers of the Deep - Planet Drum (2008) / 3 min. / dir. Daniel Müntinen - music video for the most successful Estonian house music duo Rulers of the Deep.

Animated Dreams (2007) / 35 sec. / dir. Daniel Müntinen - trailer for the 9. Animation Film Festival Animated Dreams.

### In production:

Monogamy / dir. Daniel Müntinen - short animation

Eternal Light Glowing From Their Graves / dir. Daniel Müntinen - short animation

Contact:

**Birds of Paradise**

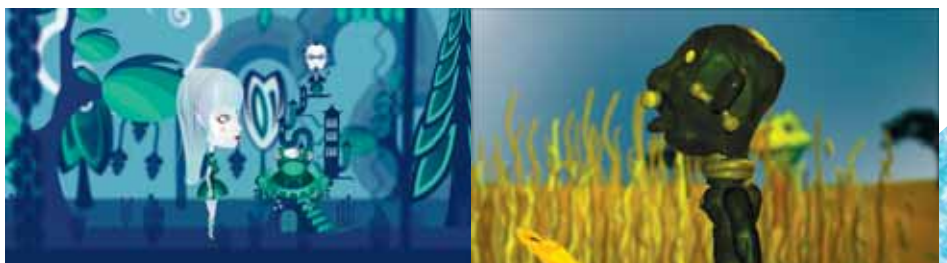
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## Filmpost

Opened first as a visual effects/3D animation house, Filmpost now offers a wide range of post-production services - from simple format conversions to color grading, building of complex motion graphics and 3D environments. Filmpost shares an office with the world-famous animation studio Eesti Joonisfilm.

Filmpost can deliver graphics to any project and accepts virtually every professional digital format on MAC/PC platforms. Their services include: 2D/3D animation, motion graphics, color grading, online editing, format conversions, compression and Blu-Ray/DVD authoring.

### Recent projects:

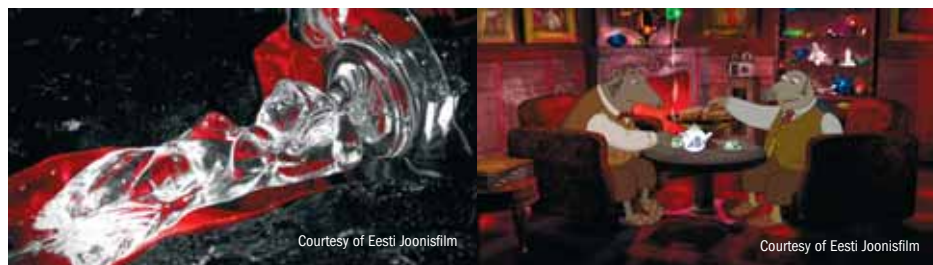
**I Was Here (2008)** / 90 min. / dir. Rene Vilbre – full-length fiction film, where Filmpost did visual effects and HD/PAL masters.

**Substantia Stellaris (2007)** / 3 min. / dir. Mati Kütt – part of the animated poetry film “Black Ceiling”, where Filmpost did all the 2D/3D animation, graphics and visual effects.

**Lotte from Gadgetville (2006)** / 80 min. / dir. Janno Põldma and Heiki Ernits – animated feature, where Filmpost did 3D backgrounds and compositing.

### In production:

**Lotte and the Moonstone Secret (2010)** / 85 min. / dir. Janno Põldma and Heiki Ernits – animated feature, where Filmpost is doing 3D animation, 3D backgrounds and compositing, previzualisation, graphics, color grading and HD/PAL masters.



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[www.filmpost.ee](http://www.filmpost.ee)

## Peata Film

The one-man studio of Andres Tenusaar experiments on different fields of audiovisuality using various animation techniques (pixilation, drawn animation, puppet animation, object animation, live-action, 2D, 3D etc).

### Recent projects:

**So Long (2009)** / 4 min. / dir. Andres Tenusaar – mixed media (pixilation, drawn animation, puppet animation, object animation).

**Simulation of Ritums Ivanovs (2009)** / 3 min. / dir. Andres Tenusaar – mixed media (live-action, 2D).

**Physical Education (2008)** / 6 min. / dir. Andres Tenusaar – mixed media (live-action, object animation, drawn animation, 2D, 3D).

### In production:

**On Strike!** - a shortened version of Sandra Zaneva’s experimental performance as a stereoscopic film version in collaboration with the Russian Cinema and Photo Research Institute (NIKFI).

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## Estonian Academy of Arts

Estonian Academy of Arts (EAA) is the only public university in Estonia providing higher education in fine arts, design, architecture, media, visual studies, art culture and conservation, working uninterrupted since 1914. Estonian Academy of Arts aims to become a leading national and international centre of innovation in the field of visual culture. In addition to active study and research, the EAA also offers lifelong learning opportunities through Open Academy. Currently, 1130 students are enrolled at the EAA, taught by 83 professors, associate professors, teachers and lecturers. Additionally, 38 workshop managers assist students at all times. The EAA prides itself in a small student-professor ratio, which allows personal one-to-one attention between the instructor and learner. Studies take place in small groups of carefully selected students. Many of the students participate in exchange programmes at partner international universities during their studies. The EAA cooperates with almost a hundred universities abroad and belongs to several international networks.



## International MA Programme in Animation

Animation Department in the Estonian Academy of Arts was founded in 2006. Leading professors of the animation programme are award-winning animators **PRIIT PÄRN** and **ÜLO PIKKOV**. 27 students from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Finland are currently studying in different courses of the Animation Department. Each year around 10-20 new students are accepted to the course.

The background of the international MA programme is trans-disciplinary, it includes several disciplines e.g. animation, scriptwriting, history of animation and media theory. An important part of the study includes production of films and realisation of various exercises connected to the filmmaking process. The coursework mainly concentrates on classical and experimental techniques i.e. drawing animation, stop motion, cut-outs, sand animation, painting under the camera etc. In the professional sense, students will direct independent projects of animated films, and will also experience the role of the film producer. Lectures, seminars, intensive modules and projects are intertwined in the two-year MA. Essay writing, script writing, animating, directing, editing, sound engineering and research are core activities to be learnt and practiced throughout the courses, leading to a final diploma-film project.



ESTONIAN  
ACADEMY OF ARTS



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## 11th Animation Film Festival Animated Dreams

18 - 22 November, 2009 in Tallinn

The one and only international animation film festival in Estonia, Animated Dreams, is a tiny, but a strongly viable part of the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival. Animated shorts were first screened in 1999 as preludes to the main features of the Black Nights Film Festival programme. It gave birth to the first animation festival in Estonia, the country of "a little big nation of animation".

The core of Animated Dreams is the international competition programme

which is judged by an international jury. To add variety to competition entries, numerous special programmes of Animated Dreams include retrospectives of a filmmaker, genre or studio, focus on a country, and an overview of the latest Estonian animations. Around 100 animated films from 25 countries are shown at Animated Dreams annually. In recent years, Animated Dreams has been fortunate to welcome internationally acclaimed animation filmmakers, critics and historians to sit on the jury. The patron of the festival is Priit Pärn, Estonia's best-known animation film director and the leading figure of the Estonian Academy of Arts Animation Department.

In 2008 Animated Dreams celebrated its 10th birthday and lecture programme "Keyframes" was put together to provide an overview of the diverse uses of animation in various creative fields. "Keyframes" was an excellent opportunity for people interested in animation, new media and modern visual culture to meet professionals in their field. Animated Dreams is active internationally as well, being a member of ANOBA, the animation film festival network of the Nordic and Baltic countries, and promoting Estonian animation through programme exchanges. Since 2006 Animated Dreams organises special events on the International Animation Day each year in October.

Animated Dreams is a cosy meeting place for all who are interested in artistic animation.

animated  
dreams



**Application deadline: 15 august, 2009**

### Eligibility criteria:

- short and medium-length (-45 min) animated films;
- premiered after 1 January, 2008;
- in original language with English subtitles;
- screened in 35 mm or broadcast video formats.

### Accreditation:

1 september - 31 October, 2009



**Black Nights  
Film Festival &  
Animated Dreams**

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## Animatheque

Since April 2008, Animation Film Festival Animated Dreams in co-operation with Animation Department of the Estonian Academy of Arts is organising monthly screenings of animated films in the auditorium of Kumu Art Museum in Tallinn. The series of animation events called "Animatheque" aims to bring artistic animation to a wider public more often than once a year during the main festival. Every month the Estonian animation fans can meet one internationally well-known animation director, watch films and ask questions after the screening. Recent guests include Katariina Lillqvist, Andreas Hykade, Denise Hauser, Chris Shepherd, Run Wraake and Gésa M. Tóth.



## Art Exhibition on Priit and Olga Pärn's New Film "Life Without Gabriella Ferri"

In the autumn of 2008, Priit and Olga Pärn finished their 43 minute, drawn animation film "Life Without Gabriella Ferri", produced under Eesti Joonisfilm Studio. The film has already received many accolades at different international animation festivals. Tallinn's Animation Film Festival Animated Dreams put together an exhibition to go with the film, which introduces the materials that were part of the process of making the film to a wider audience. Pieces include drawings, sketches and blow-ups of film frames. The exhibition shows 55 extremely fascinating and multi-layered works; of which 30 are carefully chosen, blown-up film frames and the remaining 25 are original drawings. The first international stopping point for the exhibition will be Animafest Zagreb in June 2009.

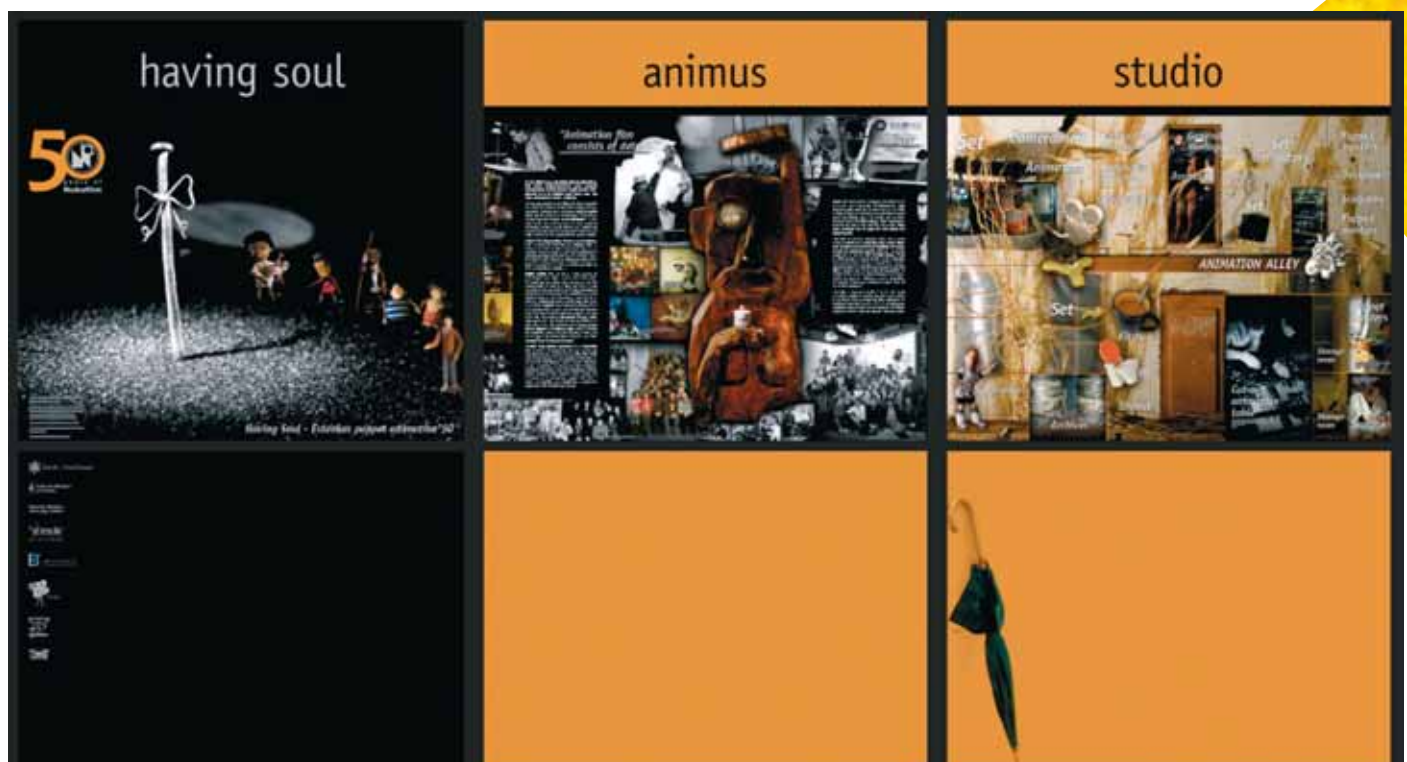
Interested parties, please contact Margit Säde from Animated Dreams:  
[margit.sade@poff.ee](mailto:margit.sade@poff.ee)



## Nukufilm's 50th Anniversary Exhibition "Having Soul"

In 2007, the renowned Estonian stop-motion animation studio Nukufilm celebrated its 50th anniversary. Nukufilm was one of the first stop-motion animation studios in Eastern Europe, created in 1957. For the jubilee, the studio put together an exhibition "Having Soul" that has now traveled all around Estonia and Europe. The exhibition consists of 5 boxes with staged scenes from different films and panels to be hung on a wall, which tell the story of Nukufilm throughout the 50 years and introduce stop-motion animation in general. It offers the opportunity to peek into the mindset of puppet animation, how an idea leads to a film, how puppets are made and how the puppets literally come to life and are "given soul".

Interested parties, please contact Nukufilm Studio:  
[nukufilm@nukufilm.ee](mailto:nukufilm@nukufilm.ee)



## Old and New Stereoscopic Stop-motion Films in Nukufilm

In 2007 Nukufilm Studio in co-operation with Russian Cinema and Photo Research Institute (NIKFI) produced the first digital stereoscopic stop-motion puppet film in the world. NIKFI has come up with a special innovative technology for making stereofilms and they were awarded an Oscar for it in 1991. Nukufilm's latest stereofilm is a 5 minute children's animation "The Scarecrow". A giant screen IMAX version has been made out of it too.

Nukufilm Studio has actually made stereoscopic films even before: "The Souvenir" (1977) and "Apple-Roan" (1981) by Elbert Tuganov and "When the Men Sing" (1979) by Heino Pars. These films were filmed in an old-fashioned way on the film stock and were presumably the first stereoscopic puppet animations in the Soviet Union and in the world.

Nukufilm is currently restoring and digitizing the old stereofilms in order to show them with modern 3D equipment. One new digital stop-motion stereofilm is in production as well - a 30 minute musical animation "Lisa Limone and Maroc Orange" directed by Mait Laas.

Interested parties, please contact Nukufilm Studio:

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## Animated Poetry Film and Book "Black Ceiling" from Eesti Joonisfilm

"Black Ceiling" is a unique, hybrid project of poetry and film, in which eight Eesti Joonisfilm Studio animation directors from the younger and older generations animated the poems of seven well-known Estonian poets. The authors of the films are Prit Pärn, Olga Marchenko, Ülo Pikkov, Kaspar Jancis, Prit Tender, Heiki Ernits, Janno Pöldma and Mati Kütt. Each one animated a two-three minute piece of poetry. The selected poems include both works by classics of Estonian poetry, as well as younger authors. The 18-minute-long, delicate and acute film unites animation and poetry - Animus and Pegasus. It premiered in 2007 at the Nordic Poetry Festival in Tallinn. The poems used in the film were also compiled into a bilingual (Estonian and English) book, which, in addition to the poems, also includes introductions about the authors. The hard-cover book comes with a DVD of the poetry film.

Interested parties, please contact Eesti Joonisfilm Studio:

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## It Wouldn't Be Real Without Animation

### Of two, new, Estonian animated documentary films

Raimo Jõerand

Estonian Film Foundation  
Documentary and Development Consultant

Director Mait Laas has thus far made puppet animation films, and good ones at that. His first, feature-length documentary film, "Kings of the Time", is a portrayal of two, old men - Elbert Tuganov and Heino Pars - who started playing with puppets 50 years ago and established a unique stop-motion animation studio, which was also one of the first in the Eastern Europe. Animation and documentary are tightly intertwined in the film. The main characters appear in the film as themselves, as drawings, and also as puppets that were specially made for the film. The film has a spirited and curious tone. Animation joins together old photos, chronicles, and film frames into one, lively, playful whole, which sheds light on Estonia's complicated history at the same time as into the depths of the souls of two, antithetical characters. The author's virtuosic playing with the symbols of time and the components of various film techniques creates a multi-layered world on screen. This is an utmost, contemporary sign of deference towards his teacher.

In contrast, in portraying the famous semiotician, Yuri Lotman, director Agne Nelk no longer had the scholar, himself, nor possibility to make interviews with him. The basis for it all could only be an Idea. In the five years it took to make the film, one filmmaker after another got lost in the fascinating labyrinths of trying to systematically describe the world. Thanks to 2D puppet-animation, old chronicle frames and Jewish humor, the impossible became possible - the animated documentary film "Lotman's World" does in one, completely reverence-free hour what some take a whole course to teach at university. It's an intelligent and seemingly fun look into the life of an old man with a Jewish nose who sometimes wanted to be a bug. The animations of the sordid events in his life reveal the bases of semiotics and it's more than probable that, after watching this film, the world will no longer be the same.



#### Kings of the Time (2008)

/ 72 min. / produced by: Nukufilm & Exitfilm

#### Awards:

Association of Estonian Film Journalists – Film of the year 2008  
Cultural Endowment of Estonia – Best documentary of the year 2008  
12. Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival, Estonia – FIPRESCI Award  
27. AsoloArtFilmFestival, Italy – Best artist's biography film

Contact: Anneli Ahven, producer / [anneli@exitfilm.ee](mailto:anneli@exitfilm.ee)



#### Lotman's World (2008)

/ 56 min. / produced by: Eetriüksus

#### Awards:

6. International Film Festival Jewish Motifs, Poland – Best film showing Jewish culture  
15. Minsk International Film Festival Listapad, Belarus – Best documentary directing

Contact: Kiur Aarma, producer / [kiur.aarma@ruut.com](mailto:kiur.aarma@ruut.com)

## Lotte – Most Successful Estonian Animation Brand

Eesti Joonisfilm

The cheerful puppy girl character Lotte was introduced to the Estonian audience in the year 2000, when animation studio Eesti Joonisfilm released a television series “Lotte’s Journey South”. It was sold to 30 territories in Europe, Asia and South-America. After that, the creators of the series, Janno Põldma and Heiki Ernits, who have been directing short animations since the late 1980’s, decided to make their first feature film and bring Lotte in again. The film “Lotte from Gadgetville”, co-produced by Latvian Rija Films and supported among others by Eurimages and MEDIA programme, premiered in 2006. It reflects the choices facing children today, stressing the importance of non-violence, creativity and learning in life.



The Lotte films and television series are at the forefront of a very successful brand of items. DVDs and VHS cassettes of “Lotte from Gadgetville” and “Lotte’s Journey South” are continuously well sold. After the films, two Lotte books were written as well. These are both written by well-known Estonian writer Andrus Kivirähk and richly illustrated by Heiki Ernits. There are also Lotte-themed exercise and coloring books for children, as well as an audio book. In addition to the films and books, the Lotte brand was extended to a wide variety of games and items meant for children. There is a Lotte wall calendar and official Lotte postage stamps created at Estonian Post. Other Lotte products include garments for children ages 2-10, plush toys, shower products, and various food products. In 2008 a musical “Detective Lotte” was produced by the Vanemuine Theatre in Tartu.



Character of Lotte was created with a clear statement in mind - “No!” to violence. The most important principle that the tandem filmmakers Põldma and Ernits promote with Lotte is that of strong family values. They also want to emphasize friendship and respect for the elderly. This message is promoted by Lotte’s friendly disposition, which also carries into all other aspects of the brand - the colorful clothing, the fun, interesting games, and nutritious snacks.



More than 30 international film festivals that have screened “Lotte from Gadgetville” are located all over Europe, in the United States, as well as more exotic locations, such as South Korea, Uruguay, and Argentina. The film’s rights for cinema, television, and video/DVD distribution have been sold to more than 50 countries around the world, which includes territories in Europe, the Balkans, the Middle East, Asia, and the Americas. Lotte has thus made her way to just about every corner of the world. At the moment new feature-length animation, an adventure road movie “Lotte and the Moonstone Secret” is in production and will be finished in the end of 2010.



## Estonian Film 100 Restores Animation Treasures

Annika Koppel

Estonian Film 100 Project Manager

The brightest minds from the offices and institutions of the cultural and film worlds once came together and decided that a worthy celebration of the 100th anniversary of Estonian film in 2012 requires action. Therefore, the program Estonian Film 100 (EF 100) was born and has been active for four years already. The birth of Estonian film is considered to have been in 1912, when Johannes Pääsuke and his film camera recorded Sergei Utotškin's stunt flights. The first Estonian feature film was "Bear Hunt in Pärnumaa", made in 1914, and the first animation film was "The Adventures of Juku the Dog" from 1931.

EF 100 is a developmental program and its primary activities are geared towards restoring and modernizing Estonian film heritage, creating opportunities to study film history, and widely presenting and promoting Estonian film. By May of 2009, 4 feature films, 9 documentary films, and 14 animation films will have been restored under the auspices of EF 100.

As far as animation films, attention was quite logically given first to the classics. Priit Pärn's first, six drawn animation films produced by Tallinnfilm during the Soviet era have been restored: "Is the Earth Round?" (1977), "...And Plays Tricks" (1978), "Some Exercises

in Preparation for Independent Life" (1981), "The Triangle" (1982), "Time Out" (1984) and "Luncheon on the Grass" (1987). The first puppet animation films in line were creations by Estonian puppet animation pioneers Heino Pars and Elbert Tuganov. "Cameraman Kõps in Mushroomland" (1964) and "Nail" (1972) from Pars's oeuvre and "Little Peter's Dream" (1958), "Toad from the North" (1959), "Ott in Outer Space" (1962), "Mousehunt" (1965), "Park" (1966) and "Inspiration" (1975) from Tuganov's legacy.

The restorations were done based on the intermediate positive print, which was bought from Gosfilmofond in Moscow. A large collection of the base prints for Estonian films is being kept there. The animation films' image was restored in the Nukufilm studio, who also cooperate with the TrickWilk studio in Germany. The sound was restored by Film Audio studio.

There are new 35mm film prints of Priit Pärn's films and "Cameraman Kõps in Mushroomland"; the rest of the films are still waiting their turns for new exhibition prints.



From the puppet film "Mousehunt" (1965) by Elbert Tuganov

ESTONIAN ANIMATION in motion magazine

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Layout, design: Matti Adoma / Tolm Studio

Photos by: Olga Logvina, Tõnu Talivee, Ülo Pikkov, Animafest Zagreb, Estonian Academy of Arts, Estonian Film Foundation, Estonian animation and film studios.

Supported by: Estonian Film Foundation and Cultural Endowment of Estonia.  
Produced by: OÜ Silmviburlane.

This magazine is the first edition.  
Available as a PDF document on Estonian Film Foundation's webpage:  
[www.efsa.ee](http://www.efsa.ee) (English version)  
Printed in Tallinn, May 2009.