

BERGAMO FILM MEETING

International Film Festival

43rd edition, 8 - 16 March 2025

Animation cinema: *AnReal*

«Now that it is accepted that all cinema is "animation" of single frames in sequence, be they photographs/live frames, drawings, digital processing, scratched black film and so on, reality can be documented through any cinematographic technique».

Lawrence Thomas Martinelli, *The Animated Documentary. A new genre of non-fictional storytelling and its international protagonists*, Tunué, 2012.

In the last decade, the interest in animated non-fictional storytelling has become increasingly evident, carving out an important space for itself even within sectoral festivals such as DOK Leipzig (for documentary cinema) or Annecy (for animated cinema): evidence of how, both from the documentary and animation point of view, this hybrid form of storytelling arouses a particular fascination, as well as a desire for investigation, not only in those who study cinema but also in those who produce, create it and watch it.

Consequently, following the ever-growing desire of the Bergamo Film Meeting audience to explore the **new trends of animated cinema**, this year the BFM 43 animation section is a **journey of discovery through animated documentaries**.

The first example comes from **Winsor McCay's** 1918 *The Sinking Of The 'Lusitania'*, in which the author used animation to document the tragedy of the sinking of the English ocean liner by a German submarine in 1915, using reconstructed facts. The title that brought the definition of animated documentary to prominence is also part of the selection: **Ari Folman's** *Vals Im Bashir* (*Waltz with Bashir*, 2008), presented in the official competitive section of the 61st Cannes Film Festival, contributed to the official acknowledgement by critics of this type of filmic narrative: animation as a mode of documentation became, thus, part of the festival programs, gaining legitimacy and a strong interest from the audience as well.

In recent years, many documentary short film productions have taken advantage of the versatility of animation to emphasize messages and emotions to reconstruct the stories of ordinary and extraordinary people or significant historical events. The program thus aims to present, through a plurality of themes, a selection showcasing how animation is, in a pretty exceptional way, a means of accompanying the viewer to the fruition of reality in an even more creative and timely manner.

The selection also includes filmmakers whom Festival audiences over the years have gotten to know through solo or special screenings in previous editions: **José Miguel Ribeiro**, with *Viagem a Cabo Verde* (2010), a film where the voices of the city's inhabitants blend with the director's thoughts, and sketches drawn on location come to life alternating with 2D animated sequences; the **Alexandra Ramires/Laura Gonçalves** duo, with *Percebes* (2024), a film highly rooted in the culture and customs of the Algarve (the southernmost region of Portugal) that is receiving significant international recognition (including the Crystal for best short film at Annecy in 2024).

Percebes, then, becomes simultaneously a representation of an entire community and a warning: *Percebes* (in Portuguese, "you understand") calls for respect for traditions and the need for a thorough understanding of them. **Regina Pessoa**, who was featured in an individual focus in 2001, also returns with her latest work, *Tio Tomás, a contabilidade dos dias* (2019). An anomalous form of documentary filmmaking, the film is based on the memories the filmmaker retains of her uncle, also making use of her own diaries filled with numbers that she once was fascinated with as a child.

The selection also features many titles unreleased in Italy: *Brand* (2019) by **Jan Koester** and **Alexander Lahl** is a film that makes tangible, through 3D animation and a structure that winks at virtual reality, a community's hatred of "otherness." **Anastasiia Falileieva's** *I Died In Irpin* (2024) is a personal tale in which the inexorable and increasingly dramatic passage of days turned a visit to relatives into the director's decision to abandon of her city, Kyiv to escape the war. Finally, another cornerstone of animated documentary, *Tussilago* by **Jonas Odell**: an author with a distinctive style, his filmography includes several award-winning animated documentaries (among others, *Aldrig som första gången!/Never Like the First Time!*, Golden Bear recipient for best short film in 2006) and animated music videos for artists such as Franz Ferdinand, The Rolling Stones and U2. In *Tussilago*, Odell tells the story of "A", arrested because she was the former partner of Norbert Kröcher, a West German terrorist who in 1977 was imprisoned on suspicion of planning the kidnapping of Swedish politician Anna-Greta Leijon. In this case, animation fosters the need to hide the woman's identity: remaining in service, yes, but simultaneously elevating the subject matter at hand. The same criterion is used in the second feature film in the selection: **László Csáki's** *Kék Pelikan* (2023), which premiered at the 41st Turin Film Festival, is the incredible story of Ákos, Petya and Laci who, in 1990s Hungary just after the end of communism, come up with an ingenious method to obviate the impractical cost of train tickets by forging them using dishwashing soap and Pelikan Blue carbon paper.

The subtitle of the Animated Cinema section of BFM 43 is *AnReal*: as much as, at first glance, they may appear as imaginary, *unreal* tales, two intersecting forms coexist in these films. Documentary and animation, in their respective universally recognized statutes, here feed off each other and bring stories cut from reality to take on a new form that does not distort them but, instead, renews them.

[Jonas Odell and Alexander Lahl will attend the Festival.](#)

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Section's movies

The Sinking of the 'Lusitania' by Winsor McCay (USA, 1918, 12')

Semesterhemmet by Birgitta Jansson (Sweden, 1981, 14')

Tussilago/Coltsfoot by Jonas Odell (Sweden, 2010, 13'42'')

Viagem a Cabo Verde/A Journey to Cape Verde by José Miguel Ribeiro (Portugal, 2010, 17'28'')

Kaputt/Broken: The Women's Prison at Hoheneck by Alexander Lahl e Volker Schlecht (Germany, 2016, 7'02'')

Tio Tomás, a contabilidade dos dias/Uncle Thomas, Accounting for the Days by Regina Pessoa (Portugal, Canada, France, 2019, 13'01'')

Brand/Ablaze by Jan Koester and Alexander Lahl (Germany, 2019, 5')

Esperança by Cécile Rousset, Jeanne Paturle e Benjamin Serero (France, 2019, 5'25'')

C'était pas du Bourgogne by Mathias De Panafieu (France, 2020, 6'38'')

Discussions animées entre entendeurs de voix by Tristan Thil (France, 2022, 12'15'')

Percebes by Alexandra Ramires and Laura Gonçalves (Portugal, 2024, 11'30'')

Inside, The Valley Sings by Nathan Fagan and Natasza Cetner (Ireland, 2024, 15')

I Died in Irpin by Anastasiia Falileieva (Czech Republic, 2024, 11'30'')

Vals Im Bashir/Waltz With Bahir by Ari Folman (Israel, France, Germany, USA, Finland, Switzerland, Belgium, Australia, 2008, 87')

Kék Pelikan/Pelikan Blue by László Csáki (Hungary, 2023, 79')

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