“Hannah Maitland” = Animation

A collection of animations, GIFs, video works and flicker films by Hannah Maitland Frank

Friday, October 5, 2018-Wednesday, November 7, 2018
“I’m sorry to say that all my drawings are self-portraits.” – Hannah Frank, 2013

“Hannah Maitland” = Animation. The title of this show—a raucous collection of animations, GIFs, video works, and flicker films—takes its inspiration from the artist’s first and middle names which, said together in quick succession, sounds like “animation.” This odd, coincidental correspondence between Hannah herself and the subject of her scholarly work (the history and technology of animation), is a natural association to make. As Hannah’s advisor Tom Gunning observed, “Hannah’s life and work was imbued with sparkling wit, a sense of humor and delight. She embodied animation in every sense of the word.”

Hannah’s artistic practice of creating montages, GIFs, and animations was intimately linked to her writing and research, as well as her teaching, and functioned as a way to better understand how films are put together and how they miraculously, mysteriously “work.” Enviably for fellow graduate students and aspiring scholars, even her procrastination on social media was filled with creative energy. Friend and colleague Ian Bryce Jones notes, “In her own work, Hannah was just as meticulous as the Disney inkers whose work she excavated. She watched cartoons frame by frame, with an eye toward detail....Her Facebook feed was a treasure trove of tiny GIF-based arguments...teaching us all how to use images pedagogically along the way.”

The selected works on display in this Screen Share program by Hannah Frank radiate a sense of wonder and vibrate with joyful intensity. Rowdy, poetic, sphinxlike, and adventurous, they reflect the traces of Hannah’s scholarly pursuits and offer glimpses of her understandings of life. As her friend and fellow animation scholar Misha Mihailova wrote, Hannah understood many things: “She understood art and music and photography and writing and grief. She understood cats, the biggest mystery this universe has ever produced. She understood animation in ways that elevate the field itself.” Her films convey her academic discoveries, but they are also fascinating and fun, expressive of a boundless curiosity about the nature of the cinematic medium and her love for moving pictures, questioning where they came from, what they could be, what they was uniquely able to uncover, and how many ways there are to better know the world through film and animation. Together, the works seen here—whether briefly encountered in-between classes or binged several at a time—demonstrate the playfulness, attention to detail, celebrations of contingency, and flickers and flashes of the world, as captured by Hannah Maitland Frank.

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-Tien-Tien Jong, PhD Candidate, Department of Cinema and Media Studies
LIST OF WORKS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Descriptions of the works that follow are the original descriptions provided by Hannah, wherever available.

Construction [Стройка] [00:00:35]: The music of multicolored bricks.

Cycloptics [00:01:01]: A series of 64 drawings completed late Autumn 2012 and set in motion early Autumn 2015.

Breadcrumbs [Крошки] [00:00:46]: Bits and pieces of where I’ve been, all leading to nowhere, or the wild blue yonder. Starring Bruce Willis, Homer Simpson, et al.

Ornithology, Episode 1: Whither Shall I Wander? [00:04:05]

One Boy in Four Parts [00:08:00]: Senior thesis project at Yale. Made in 2006.

Ken Burns Jacobs [00:02:30]: “All these various tactics for capturing city visual order are concerned with bits and pieces which are, to be sure, knit into a city fabric of use that is continuous and little cut apart as possible. But emphasis on bits and pieces is of the essence: that is what a city is, bits and pieces that supplement each other and support each other.”- Jane Jacobs/ Voice: Kenneth King/ Dancer: Carter Frank/ Source: Making Dances (1980, dir. Michael Blackwood)
The Rescuers Downside Up [00:02:59]: The opening of THE RESCUERS DOWN UNDER (1990), enlarged and expanded. All images and sounds come from the original film. According to Tom Sito's 'Drawing the Line: The Untold Story of the Animation Unions from Bosko to Bart Simpson' (2006), “The capability of the paint system used for THE LION KING was said to be the color palette of the classic PINOCCHIO raised to the ninth power.” Conversely—versely—this is THE RESCUERS DOWN UNDER's lowest common denominator dropped to the negative oomph. / Best viewed on a loop, fullscreen, without blinking. And perhaps while standing on your head.

Our Polyglot [00:01:09]: “I love the dreck words. The words without content. The fill words. The empty qualifiers that are used so frequently they no longer qualify. Words like just and perhaps and rather and quite and indeed and clearly; phrases like kind of and sort of and pretty sure and pretty much. Words and phrases of a crystalline purity, pure tokens without constraints.” / “Absence makes the heart grow hard. I want no hard-hearted heart, though I like the Germanic part of our polyglot. Hits home with a hammer. No connectives.” A fragment from an ongoing project about my father, Sheldon Frank, who died on September 14, 2010.

Whither Shall I Wander? [00:03:09]: A movie that never gets where it's going, or that is forever turning into something, it knows not what.

Breakneck [Сломя голову] [00:00:48]: The Russian TV show Odna Minuta and the ballet Anyuta (adapted from Chekhov's "Anna on the Neck").

Tricky Flick [00:01:00]: Black- and white-spotted. Warning: flicker.

Kind of a Symbol [00:00:27]: Richard Spencer getting punched in the face: It's kind of a symbol. WARNING: Stroboscopic effects. And Richard Spencer's stupid face.
**Seasick [Укачало]** [00:00:35]: One day after the cruise ship Bulgaria sank near the Kazan port, we headed out on our Volga cruise—from Kazan to Nizhny Novgorod and back again. 128, including 59 children, died aboard the Bulgaria; on Tuesday we were watching reenactments on Russian TV. With static, Hedgehog in the Fog, tank tops, and seagulls.

**The Test Subject** [00:00:24]: A project for an intro to digital animation class: rotoscoped guinea pig. Completed in spring 2009.

**Making A Movie Out of A Molehair** [00:00:57]: I went through John Woo's The Killer (1989) and selected scenes in which this one extremely, incredibly, amazingly long hair protruding from a mole on Danny Lee's jaw is visible. I then rotoscoped the mole hair and set the results to a song performed by Sally Yeh at the film's start.

**Framework [Остов]** [00:00:31]: A tribute to Who Framed Roger Rabbit (Кто Подставил Кролика Роджера).

**The Electronic Sound, “Leaves Me on a Tender Note”** [00:04:59]: Music by JXB, with thanks to Rondo's Volcano Song / Performed and recorded by the Electronic Sound, summer 2013 / Video by HMF / Shot on location in Deerfield, MA, with just the teensiest of help from 'Zorns Lemma' (Frampton, 1970) and 'Piranha' (Dante, 1978)
It’s A Wonderful Face [00:01:08]: A minute-long repurposing of one of the most famous freeze-frames (and one of the most infamous colorizations) in film history; or: In 1987, Ginger Rogers testified before the Senate Subcommittee on Technology and the Law of the Committee on the Judiciary, which had convened to air the "legal issues that arise when color is added to films originally produced, sold, and distributed in black and white." As part of her testimony, she read aloud a letter from James Stewart: "In 'It's a Wonderful Life,' Gloria Grahame played a character named Violet, and whoever colorized the picture thought it would be cute to color all of Gloria's costumes in that same color—violet. Well, that's art direction after the fact, and an obvious kind of visual pun that Frank Capra never would have considered. [...] A certain actor friend of mine named Ronald Reagan is fond of saying, 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it.' I agree with that kind of home-spun wisdom, and that's exactly what I'd like to say to anyone who wants to paint up my face like an Easter egg. Our black-and-white films ain't broke, and they don't need fixin'."

Arresting Animation [00:02:34]: Work-in-progress video. All footage taken from American animated cartoons released between 1920 and 1961. Warning: stroboscopic effects

Raggedy [00:00:55]: The very best four seconds of the box office bomb Raggedy Ann & Andy: A Musical Adventure (1977), looped and loopy. All images and sounds, including the occasional interpolation, taken from the film—except, of course, the two frames that come from the box office bomb The Black Cauldron (1985). / “I—I don't see anything, Andy—do you?” “This is really weird.”
**GIFs**

**Cindermarion** [00:00:09]: a montage of the *Psycho* shower scene and Cinderella's evil step-sisters.

A 17-second loop of Mickey Mouse slapping a piano's butt in "The Jazz Fool" (1929) [00:00:17]

A goose caught in a loop from "She Was an Acrobat's Daughter" (Friz Freleng, 1937), as looped by Goose (i.e., me) [00:00:32]

**Untitled**: animated from drawings of Hannah's notebooks.

**Rocket’s Mother** [00:01:06]: In which my mother describes a dance she choreographed, and choreographs a dance right there on the spot. Also starring the late, great Rocket Frank. Shot in the spring of 2001.
About the Artist

Hannah Frank (1984-2017), Assistant Professor of Film Studies at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington; author of essays on animation, labor, sound, and Soviet cinema; beloved colleague, comrade, and friend in the Department of Cinema and Media Studies. Her dissertation, “Looking at Cartoons: The Art, Labor, and Technology of American Cell Animation,” will be published in March 2019 as Frame by Frame: A Materialist Aesthetics of Animated Cartoons by the University of California Press.