

Animating Community

Clint Enns

Animated Self-Portraits / Autoportraits Animés (2012) is a collaborative animation in which eighty-four artists were asked to produce twelve paper illustrations to be animated into short loops forming an omnibus of Canadian animator self-portraits. The images were brought to life by Madi Piller on a modified 35mm animation stand setup in animation legend Eugene Fedorenko's living room.¹ The animators who contributed represent a wide spectrum of animation practices in Canada. Some of the animators worked for the NFB (National Film Board of Canada), others worked in animation studios, and others worked totally independent of any studio or institution. The work is both a celebration of animation made in Canada and a document of the various styles employed by Canadian animators, with the short segments forming a larger self-portrait, namely, a portrait of Canadian animation.

This work is historically significant given the legacy of Canadian animation left by Norman McLaren (whose portrait appears in the film) and the NFB. In 1942, McLaren was put in charge of the NFB's animation department, transforming the landscape of Canadian animation by hiring some of the most creative animators. Since that point, Canada has garnered a reputation for producing innovative and imaginative animation. Historically, animation has struggled to gain legitimacy among the traditional arts due to its mode of production and its association with cartoons. *Animated Self-Portraits* attempts to remove this perceived cultural divide. The diverse selection of animators (many of whom are thought of as artists not animators) eliminates notions around high and low animation or distinctions between animation as art and animation as cartoon. Moreover, by only employing twelve frames, all of the animators are forced into the position of the independent animator.

Animated Self-Portraits was a return to handmade animation techniques for many of the animators, since many of them are now working digitally. All of the portraits in *Animated Self-Portraits* were made using hole-punched paper and alignment pegs, with each image literally bearing the mark of its author. The twelve images, together with animator's instructions, were sent to Piller through the mail, further reinforcing the material nature of the work.² Finally, the individual portraits were compiled by Piller and animated on Fedorenko's 35mm animation stand.

1 Eugene Fedorenko and Rose Newlove animated the Genie Award-winning film *Village of Idiots* (1999) on this stand.

2 Interesting to note, McLaren's first animation gig was with the UK General Post Office (GPO) film unit, a division under the leadership of John Grierson, who would later found the NFB, and hire McLaren.

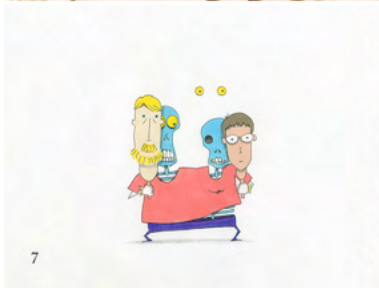
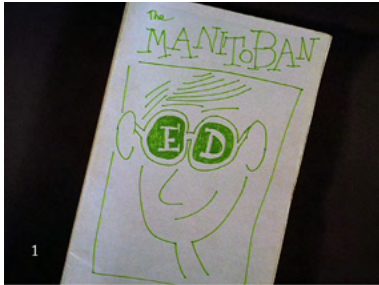
This project is clearly a labor of love and it is an understatement to say that without Piller's generosity, devotion, and community engagement, this project would not have been possible. As local animation legend Dave Cox explains,

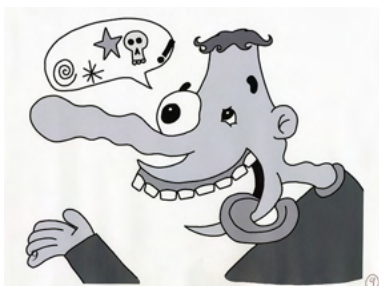
With some irony, I had titled my segment *Swan Song*, insinuating my departure from the industry, due to my declining eyesight due to the onset of my diabetes. I had resisted Madi's requests to participate in this film [*Animated Self-Portraits*] but she was adamant, more persistent, and so very encouraging that I struggled to complete my little segment, with magnifying glasses and lifetime memories.

Big thanks to Madi.

The animators who participated in the project are represented on the following pages and include:

1. Ed Ackerman
2. Kimberly Anderson
3. Stephen Andrews
4. Willy Ashworth
5. Shira Avni
6. Cordell Barker
7. Carol Beecher & Kevin Kuritnik
8. Ellen Besen
9. Marc Beurteaux
10. Jim Caswell
11. Luc Chamberland
12. Martine Chartrand
13. Elisa Chee
14. Marilyn Cherenko
15. Claude Cloutier
16. Richard Condie
17. Dave Cox
18. Siloën Daley
19. Paul Driessen
20. Jacques Drouin
21. Félix Dufour-Laperrière
22. Ann Marie Fleming
23. Nick Fox-Gieg
24. Mike Geiger
25. Suzanne Gervais
26. Joseph Gilland
27. John Halfpenny
28. Bryce Hallett
29. Heather Harkins
30. Chris Hinton
31. Co Hoedeman
32. Larry Jacobs
33. Patrick Jenkins
34. Susan Justin
35. Sharon Katz
36. Jody Kramer
37. Pasquale LaMontagna
38. Elizabeth Lewis
39. Arnie Lipsey
40. James MacSwain
41. Amy Lockhart
42. Craig Marchall
43. Wrik Mead
44. Margaret Moores
45. Lisa Morse
46. Norman McLaren
47. Martha Newbigging
48. Marv Newland
49. Gail Noonan
50. Diane Obomsawin
51. Luc Otter
52. Iriz Pääbo
53. Alan Pakarnik
54. Sylvie Paradis
55. Ishu Patel
56. Michèle Pauzé
57. Janet Perlman
58. Madi Piller
59. Kaj Pindal
60. David Ratzlaff
61. Rick Raxlen
62. Aubry Reeves
63. Richard Reeves
64. Janice Schulman
65. Joseph Sherman
66. Clive Smith
67. Lynn Smith
68. Michael Snow
69. John Straiton
70. Malcom Sutherland
71. Suzie Synnott
72. Hélène Tanguay
73. Paul Teglás
74. Jeff Tran
75. Almerinda Travassos
76. Marie-Hélène Turcotte
76. George Ungar
78. Mike Weiss
79. Craig Welch
80. John Weldon
81. Barbara Whitmer
82. Lynn Wilton
83. Bob Wiseman





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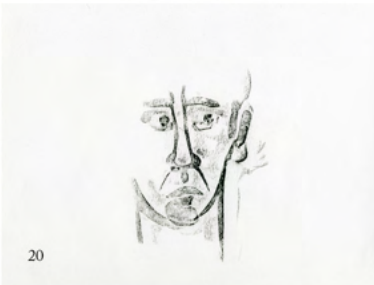
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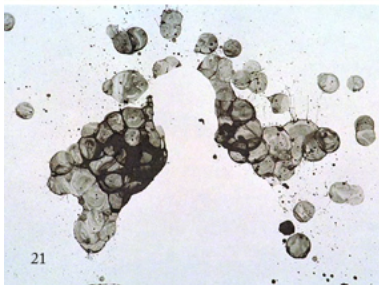
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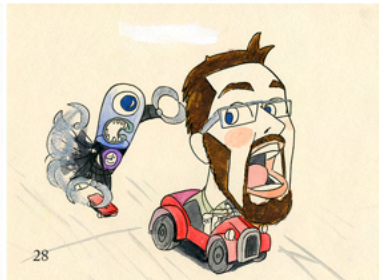
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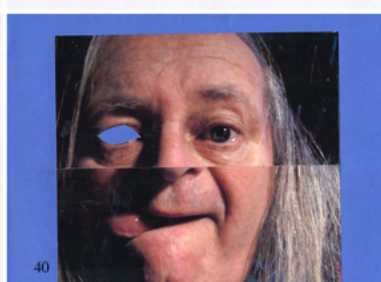
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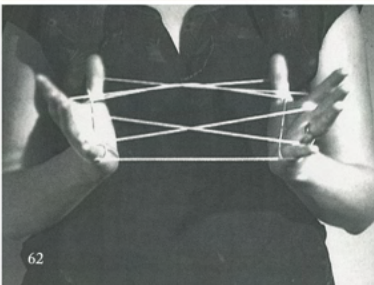
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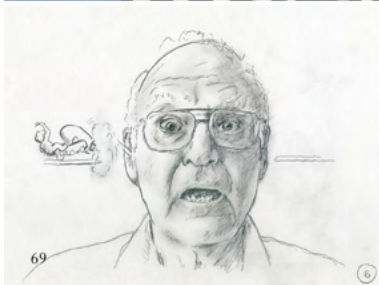
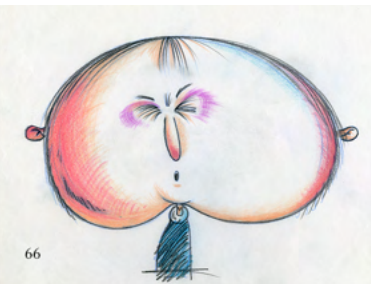
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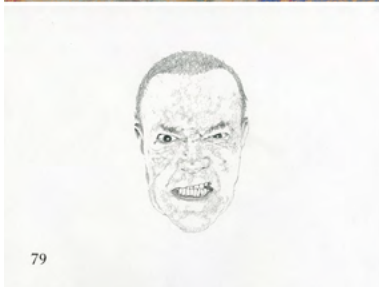


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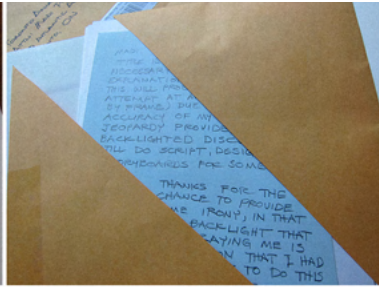


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FEB 13/10

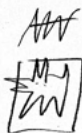
Hi Madi!

HERE YOU GO - ME IN 12 DRAWINGS! HA!
THESE ARE MIXED MEDIA INCLUDING CHALK
PASTEL AND COLOUR PENCIL, SO THEY'RE
SMUDGY. I'VE PUT A TRANSPARENCY
OVER EACH ONE AS A PROTECTOR SHEET.
HOPEFULLY THAT WILL HELP. IF YOU'RE
COVERING THEM WITH A GLASS PLATE
WHEN SHOOTING, YOU MAY NEED TO WIPE
THE GLASS - SORRY FOR ANY INCONVENIENCE.
IT'S THE ONLY TECHNIQUE THAT CAME TO MIND!
HAVE FUN WITH ALL THE ANIMATIONS!
CHEERIO -
BARBARA WATNER

Feb. 10

Hi Madi

Here are my little drawings.
Because I've been creating
everything in the computer these
past years, and I work pretty
much alone, I had no way of
testing these. Your eye will be
the first to see them on me!
Hope they don't suck!
You never know!



Madi Piller
T A I S
60 Atlantic Avenue
Suite 102
T.O. ON M6K 1X9

Greetings Madi

Here is my contribution to your portrait project. If you will allow me to stipulate shooting instructions I will suggest the following. Field to will be fine. Edges of the paper in the field of view is fine, perhaps desirable. a rough registry of the drawings can be achieved by using any corner of the paper. They are to be single framed. Enclosed with my drawings you will find a sack of 108 sunflower seeds (black oil). These are to be dropped by your hand on to my drawings from a height of 6 inches. No platten is required when shooting these images. Your enthusiasm and hard work are an inspiration to me and I look forward to the results of your selfless effort. Best ——— C. hinton.

CASWELL DESIGN
ILLUSTRATION

Hi MAD!,
THESE MOVE A LITTLE FAST
BUT HOPE THEY WORK FOR YOUR
PROJECT
10 FED - FED incl

THANKS,

JIM CASWELL

DOPE SHEET ON
OTHER SIDE. ↘

MADI,

TITLE IS NOT ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY, BUT HELPS THE EXPLANATION. AS IT APPEARS, THIS WILL PROBABLY BE MY LAST ATTEMPT AT ANIMATION (FRAME BY FRAME) DUE TO THE FAILING ACCURACY OF MY EYES & THE JEOPARDY PROVIDED ME BY BACK-LIGHTED DISCS. I CAN STILL DO SCRIPT, DESIGN, TIMING, & STORYBOARDS FOR SOME TIME.

THANKS FOR THE CHANCE TO PROVIDE SOME IRONY, IN THAT THE BACKLIGHT THAT IS BETRAYING ME IS THE REASON THAT I HAD DECIDED NOT TO DO THIS LITTLE VIGNETTE.

Rave

SHORT DOPE SHEET-

Page#

Frame	ARTWORK							camera	action
	6	5	4	3	2	1	BG		
01-72								SP TITLE	10 Fφ
73 74								SP 0	
75 76								SP 1	
77 78								SP 2	
79 80								SP 3	
81 82								SP 4	
83 84								SP 5	
85 86								SP 6	
87 88								SP 7	
89 90								SP 8	
91 92								SP 9	
93 94								SP 10	
95 96								SP 11	
97 98								SP 12	
99 100								SP 1	
101 102								SP 2	
103 104								SP 3	
105 106								SP 4	
107 108								SP 5	
109 110								SP 6	
111 112								SP 7	
113 114								SP 8	
115 116								SP 9	
117 118								SP 10	
119 120								SP 11	
121 122								SP 12	

Dave COX .98 CONFEDERATION ST. GLEN WILLIAMS. ONTARIO. L7G 3R8.

HOPEFULLY, A HELPFUL DIAGRAM:

THE DIFFERENT LEVELS

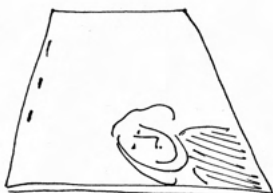
TOP



DIFFERENT
ACETATE SHEETS
WITH CRAPAS CRAYON
DRAWINGS.



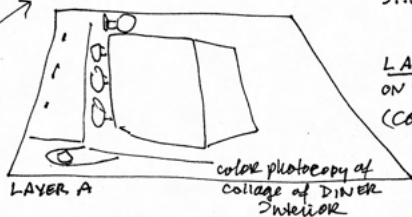
TISSUE PAPERS (# 1-6)
VARYING IN
NUMBER. AT ONE
POINT: ALL SIX
TISSUE SHEETS ARE
ABOVE LAYER B



SHEET OF ACETATE
WITH COLLAGE
PORTRAIT (SCREEN
LEFT) PASTED TO THE ACETATE.
LAYER B GOES
ON TOP OF LAYER A
FOR MOST OF THE
SHOOT

LAYER B

BOTTOM



LAYER A ALWAYS IS
ON THE BOTTOM.
(COLOR PHOTOCOPY
OF A COLLAGE
OF THE INTERIOR
OF A DINER.)

* BUT:

NEAR THE END, TISSUE SHEETS
GO BETWEEN LAYER A + B

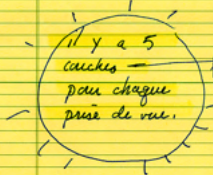
Fiche de tournage d'animation — Animation Dope Sheet

PORTANT : main - H2121 En 3

Production N°	Séquence	Shot / Plan	Length / Durée	Frames / Cadres	Frames / Cadres
			a) start la couche des doigts	a b c Bg1 Bg2	
			5 layers par frame.	1a 1b 1c Bg1 Bg2	
			"	2a 2b 2c Bg1 Bg2	
			"	3a 3b 3c Bg1 Bg2	
			"	4a 4b 4c Bg1 Bg2	
			"	5a 5b 5c Bg1 Bg2	
			"	6a 6b 6c Bg1 Bg2	
			"	7a 7b 7c Bg1 Bg2	
			"	8a 8b 8c Bg1 Bg2	
			"	9a 9b 9c Bg1 Bg2	
			"	10a 10b 10c Bg1 Bg2	
			"	11a 11b 11c Bg1 Bg2	
			"	12a 12b 12c Bg1 Bg2	
			a) la couche du dessous : cheveux et herbe		
			b) Les Robes couleur		
			c) Les Robes tracés à mains		
			d) Bg1: jambes faiblement peaux		
			e) Bg2: jupiers (cache du dessous)		
			Mette les Bg1 et Bg2 à toutes les prises de vue.		
			EN 3		

Bg1 et Bg2
même layers
for all frame.

NB :



change

change pour toujours (change de Robes)


Dear Madi

Thanks so much for the box + stamps.

Wanted to put more color on it
but all my old felt pens were dry

hope the whole thing works out.

thanks for including me.

Richard 

SHOOT
ON 2'S
EXCEPT
#9 - SHOOT
ON 1.

Hi Madi!

Here is my animated
self-portrait. It works
as a cycle.

Take Care!
and Thanks!

AMY LOCKHART

