Animators to offer insights to local creatives

With the work of more African animators featured on the global stage, the need for quality, creative and captivating content is growing. Providing insight into the industry as well as the various career paths creatives can follow, the Cape Town International Animation Festival offers a dynamic programme featuring African and international speakers to stimulate curious, new, novice, and established creatives, highlighting the globally recognised work that is coming from the African continent, while inspiring more animators to join those ranks.

Bill Masuku's work on Afrofuturism. Image supplied

Esteemed facilitators will engage fans, students and industry professionals in a curated four-day programme aimed at developing the industry by providing the necessary skills and insight into its various facets through talks, workshops, demonstrations, and pitching competitions.

This festival, taking place from 27-30 April 2023 at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC), celebrates the achievements, development and emerging talent found on the African continent and also looks to educate interested or up-and-coming animators across the four days. Various career options are available in a 3D animation production pipeline which requires different skill sets.

Africa's animation industry to gather at Cape Town International Animation Festival
30 Mar 2023

In addition, there is a growing need for African content and narratives, creating more opportunities for those also interested in becoming a Storyboarder, Concept/Visual development artist, Asset Artist, Rigger, Lighting and Rendering Artist, as well as Producer within this evolving industry.

"Currently, we have a great need for good animators, lighting and rigging artists. With the current content war and the flood of digital media consumption, companies in South Africa and abroad are constantly looking for artists across the animation pipeline to join their projects," says Kaydee de Villiers, a visual producer best known for her work on *Professionals* (2020), *Around the World in 80 Days* (2021) and *Grant* (2020).

Considering that the creation of visuals is only one part of the animation process, some of the other facets and skillsets to consider within the animation field include editing, sound design and composition, project management, technical pipeline support, game engine support/structure, customer relation management, and more. And bringing all these elements together is the technology that powers this industry, which will also be highlighted during the festival.

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Historically, "animation has always relied on technology in some form to assist with the core process of capturing and moving images. In today's world, animation is very much a digital/technology-based skill using technological advances in both hardware and software to support the process. Though with this support, animation remains an extremely labour-intensive process, including traditional (or 2D) animation, 3D animation or stop frame, all these disciplines require both technology and man hours to produce the final product," comments de Villiers.

Some technology partners that drive the industry include Software company Autodesk, which supplies animation software, production tracking software and other programs that support the industry. Unreal Engine and Unity provide game engine software, and Adobe supplies creative and editing software to trailblazers in the field. All aiming to elevate the creative experience of innovative and industry professionals.

Global insights

An incredible array of local and international talent will facilitate conversations with industry leaders who occupy various roles as highlights to the Cape Town International Animation Festival programme. Visitors can look forward to engaging with speakers, including:
Annike Pienaar, an animator and VR enthusiast who has worked on *Revolting Rhymes*, *Sing 2*, as well as *The Smeds* and the *Smoos*, where she took on the role of animation supervisor.

Ariane Suveg is a content expert working in production, programming, and marketing and reaches broad and engaged audiences. She has worked at Canal+ (French pay TV group) in the Programming Department, as Media and TV Programs Marketing Consultant at Carat (Aegis Group), at Nickelodeon (Viacom) as Scheduling Director, and then Gulli (French free-to-air kids channel) as Programming Director.

Bill Masuku is a Nommo Award Nominated African comic book artist and writer born in Harare, Zimbabwe. He is the

creator of the comic books *Razor-Man*, *Welcome to Dead World*, and *Captain South Africa*. In the urban fantasy genre, he is the author of the *Misfortunism* series. He has been a guest speaker at events such as MCM London Comic Con, Comic Con Africa, Afro Comic Con and was selected as British Council's Design Futures Africa Storyteller for Zimbabwe, a project centred around sustainable development, the green future, and the informal economy.

Daniel Snaddon is a highly acclaimed South African animation director known for his work on several award-winning BBC Christmas Specials, including *Stick Man* (2015), *Zog* (2017), and *The Snail and the Whale* (2019).

Danson Njoka leads Kugali Media as the newly announced CEO of the company. The highly talented Kenyan-born and London-based executive with a living and working experience across Africa, North America and Europe is the fresh face of the Kugali brand. He will present *Iwaju*, due to be released on Disney + in 2023.

Samantha Cutler, a self-taught character modeller and animator from South Africa, has worked on all of *Magic Light*'s adaptations of books by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler and served as an animation and modelling lead on *The Snail and the Whale*, which was recently nominated for three BAFTA Young People and Children's awards including best animation.

Simon Browne is a Houdini Tutor for Escape Studios, the UK's premier training centre for the VFX, Animation and Games industries. As a 3D Generalist, Browne combines creative animation skills with coding and maths experience to create stunning simulations.

Rob Van Vuuren is a multi-award winning actor, writer, comedian and director whose career is founded in his training as a physical performer and clown with a strong emphasis on multiple characterisations on an epic scale narrative. This is suited to animation, and his work in this field includes various characters and comedy development for Triggerfish's *Khumba* and *Seal Team* as well as a turn as Trey the Dinosaur in Sandcastle Studios and Sunrise Productions *Jungle Beat 2. The Past* coming out later this year.

Peter Hangelbroek is a Certified Production Management Professional with over 15 years of experience in post-production and IT. As a Video and IT Engineer, he is well-versed in workflow design, implementation, support and troubleshooting. His love for technology, and his hands-on approach, allow him to identify client requirements and develop solutions that align with their needs.

Roland Reyer is an experienced Technical Sales Specialist working in 3D Animation software industry who is skilled in MEL, Python, Modeling, SpecialFX, 3D Visualisation and Animation, Maya, MotionBuilder and Arnold.

Karan Parikh is the founder and CEO of Green Rain Studios. He is an immersive technologist with expertise in real-time workflows. Karan is India's first Unreal-authorised instructor and is a master mentor in Unreal Engine's Virtual Production Fellowship program. He is also joined by a host of other speakers across the four days to highlight the ever-growing industry on the continent.

Supporting current and aspiring industry professionals, the festival aims to ensure that local youth are equipped and encouraged to go into animation as "festivals like CTIAF, and outreach programmes to youth in underprivileged areas, are both informing and educating the youth on what opportunities there are in animation. We also have some schools locally that have provided scholarship programs for those who struggle to get the resources to start their chosen careers in animation," concludes de Villiers.

For more, go to https://www.ctiaf.com/