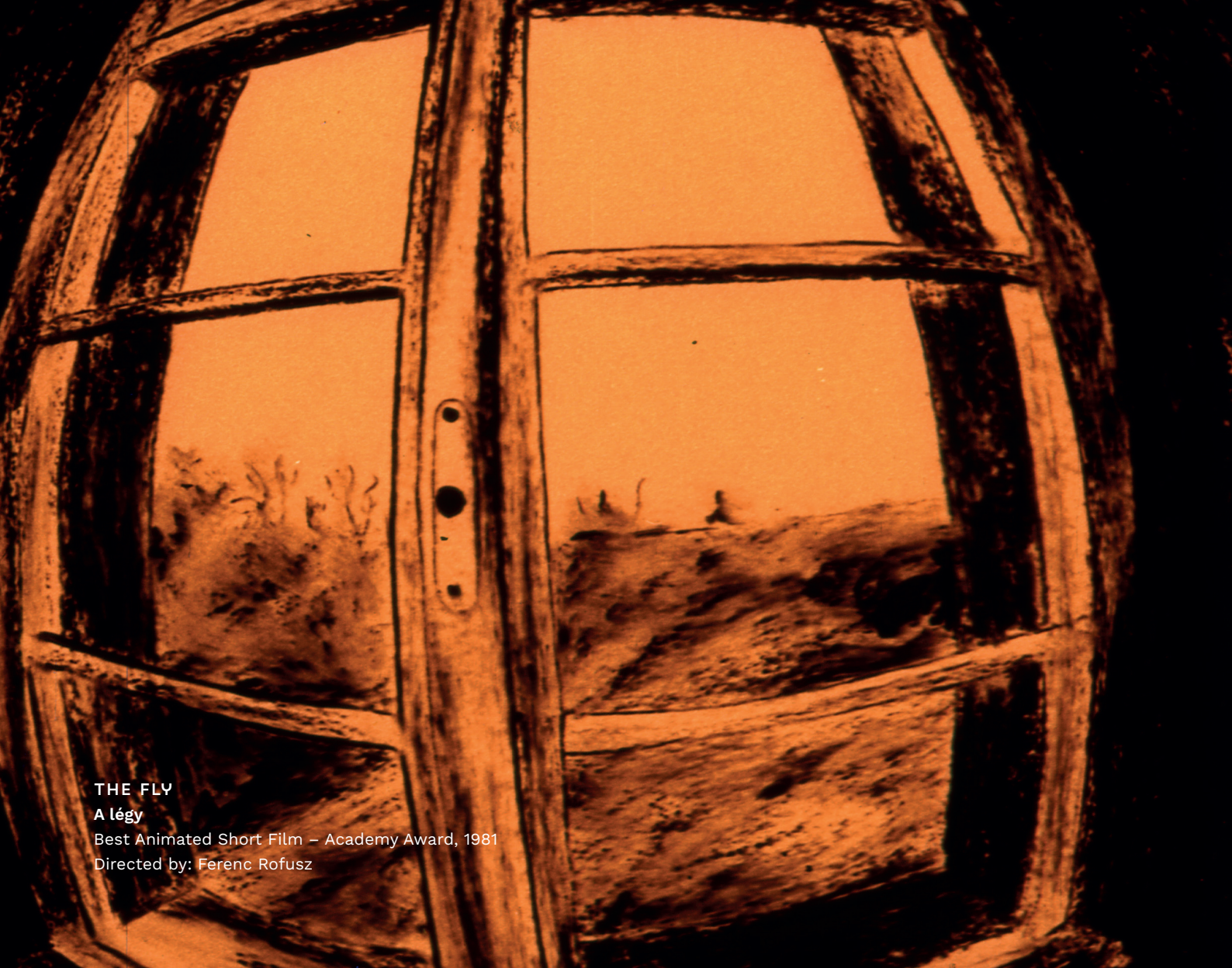


HUNGARIAN NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE 2018

GEMS OF
HUNGARIAN ANIMATION

mnaf
HUNGARIAN NATIONAL FILM FUND
FILM ARCHIVE





THE FLY

A légy

Best Animated Short Film – Academy Award, 1981

Directed by: Ferenc Rofusz

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DIGITISING THE TREASURES OF THE FILM ARCHIVE

The National Digital Film Restoration Programme was announced in 2017, when the Hungarian National Film Archive was reorganised within the framework of the Hungarian National Film Fund. 25 films a year are now being digitised and restored in cooperation with the Hungarian Filmlab. A significant part of the programme is dedicated to animated classics, running in parallel with the digitisation and the full 4K restoration of live action films. This catalogue gives account of a large selection of the animated films that are already or will very soon be

available in high-quality digital format. Within the next five years, films from outstanding animation directors including Marcell Jankovics, Gyula Macskássy and Sándor Reisenbüchler will be restored, along with a curated selection of award-winning short films made before 1989. The digitally remastered versions of Attila Dargay's *Vuk* and *Szaffi* were re-released in cinemas in 2017, the 90th anniversary of Dargay's birth, and have succeeded in attracting a significant number of viewers. A 5-piece DVD set was also published, containing Dargay's major full-length animations made for children, as well as his short films and a selection of his recently discovered and digitised animated commercials made in the 1950–60s. The DVD is a finalist of the European DVD collection box Awards at Il Cinema Ritrovato di Bologna. The 4K digital restoration of Marcell Jankovics's spectacular masterpiece, *Fehérlófia* (Son of the White Mare, 1981), is due to be completed in 2019 in a joint restoration–distribution project between the Film Archive, the Hungarian Filmlab and the Los Angeles-based Arbelos Films.

Animated films preserved and distributed by the Film Archive have appeared at major animation festivals over the past year. A comprehensive retrospective programme was dedicated to Hungarian animation at the 9th Fest Anca International Animation Film Festival in Slovakia, whilst the 41st Cinanima International Animated Film Festival in Espinho, Portugal hosted a retrospective set of children's animated short films last November.

Launched in 2017 by the Film Archive, the 2nd Budapest Classics Film Marathon will showcase around 50 films in September 2018, including a curated set of animation rarities by Hungarian émigré animated artists including John Halas, Péter Földes and Jean Image.

György Ráduly

Director

Hungarian National Film Fund – Film Archive

ANIMATED CLASSICS FROM HUNGARY

The crucial preservation of the most colourful chapter of Hungarian film is now in full swing thanks to the increasingly sophisticated digitisation techniques available. The National Film Archive is responsible for the distribution of the majority of the animated short and full-length films made before 1989, most notably those produced by Pannonia Film Studios.

This catalogue gives a peek into the animations made by some of the most prominent Hungarian animation directors, starting with Gyula Macskássy, who is often referred to as the father of Hungarian animation. While many of his films are already available digitally remastered – such as the animated advertisements he made in the 1930–40s – some of his historic children's films from the 1950s are still to be digitally restored in a highly meticulous manner due to the very poor quality of the prints available. We also plan to publish the English version of a

monograph about Macskássy in the upcoming year.

Attila Dargay and József Nepp both studied under Macskássy. Their animated features made in the 1960–70–80s (the golden age of Hungarian animation) reached record-breaking audiences and their popularity has not diminished since. The digitally restored version of the Hungarian cult classic *Macskafogó* (Cat City, 1986), written by Nepp, was completed this year. Both Marcell Jankovics and György Kovásznai are distinctive voices of the world history of animated film. In 2018, the restoration of *János vitéz* (Johnny Corncob) will be completed, which was the very first full-length Hungarian animation made in 1973.

The Digitisation Programme also gives special focus to classic animated short films, which gained recognition on an international level before 1989. These include *A légy* (The Fly, 1981) by Ferenc Rofusz, which was the first Hungarian motion picture ever to be given an Academy Award. Once the digital remastering and restoration of these gems of Hungarian animated short films



is complete, they will rise from the repositories of the archive and begin a new life by returning to their most elemental environment – festivals.

Anna Ida Orosz

Animation historian, archivist
Hungarian National Film Fund - Film Archive

GYULA MACSKÁSSY



Although there were animation experiments made in Hungary long before Gyula Macskássy (1912–1971), his work made the world discover Hungarian animation. Regular animation film production began in the private commercial film studio founded by Gyula Macskássy, John Halas (born János Halász) and Félix Kassowitz (the grandfather of the well-known French actor-director, Mathieu Kassovitz) during the 1930–40s. It is also Macskássy's merit that animation film production did not come to an end after WWII – he became the leading director of the state-owned Pannonia Film Studios in the 1950s.

During the centralised communist film production of the 1950s, Macskássy's oeuvre consisted of adaptations of classical animal fables that combined elements of Hungarian folklore with the realistic styles of Soviet animated film and the live-action film effects of Disney films with *A kiskakas gyémánt félkrajcárja* (The Little Rooster's

Diamond Half-Penny, 1951) and *Két bors ökröcske* (The Two Weeny Oxen, 1955). From the second half of the 1950s, his films were tuned to harmonise with the times, and were usually parodies of classic fairy tales: *Az okos lány* (Smart Girl, 1956) *Egér és oroslán* (The Mouse and the Lion, 1957) and *A telhetetlen méhecske* (The Greedy Bee, 1958).

His film *A ceruza és a radír* (The Pencil and Rubber) gained Hungarian animation an international reputation. Created together with caricature artist György Várnai, this ten-minute animation replaced dialogue-based, fairy-tale films with a visually new animation style and epigrammatic storytelling. Macskássy describes this radical renewal of animation, both in terms of style and theme, as follows: “*Walt Disney's sentimentalism is succeeded by the distinctive emblem of the animated film. The figures are not bound by any rules, the less realistic the motion, the more authentic it is optically.*”





COMMERCIALS

Reklámfilmek

(1930s–1940s)

Directed by: Gyula Macskássy, János Halász, Félix Kassowitz, György Szénásy

Technical specs: colour, 1–2 min (19 titles)

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

The very first color animations in Hungary were commissioned films. They were produced on a regular basis since 1932 in the very first Hungarian animated film studio, “Coloriton”. Many of these animated commercials were made using the so-called Gasparcolor, a technique developed by Hungarian chemist Béla Gáspár in Berlin, which became widely used by most avant-garde animations of the interwar period, such as Oskar Fischinger or Len Lye.



THE GREEDY LITTLE BEE

A telhetetlen méhecske

(1958)

Directed by: Gyula Macskássy

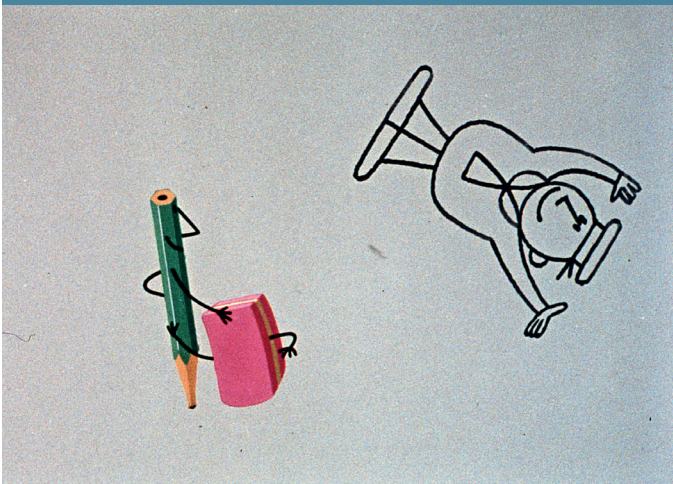
Technical specs: colour, 16 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

The wasp takes advantage of the greedy little bee, who neglects to collect nectar for the modernised beehive, only to eat it all by himself. The basic idea for this fairy tale film about the beehive, where new technologies have been put to use, came from a commercial, which popularized the honey produced in Hungary.

Screenings

1959 Cannes Film Festival – in competition



THE PENCIL AND THE RUBBER

A ceruza és a radír

(1960)

Directed by: Gyula Macskássy, György Várnai

Technical specs: colour, 10 min

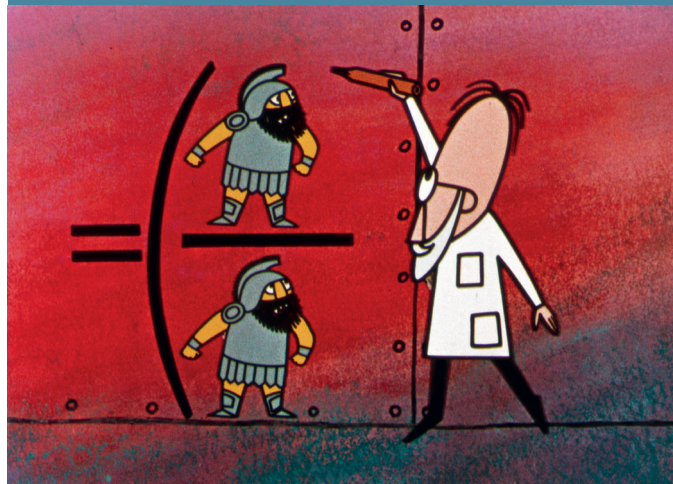
Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

Being an animated film reflecting on the process of cartoon making, the title characters are the animation artists' two basic tools: the pencil and the rubber. Like Don Quiote and Sancho Panza, the two of them conquer the blank sheets of paper.

Awards:

1960 Karlovy Vary Film Festival – Best Animation

1961 Oberhausen Film Festival – Special Mention



DUEL

Párbaj

(1960)

Directed by: Gyula Macskássy, György Várnai

Technical specs: colour, 10 min

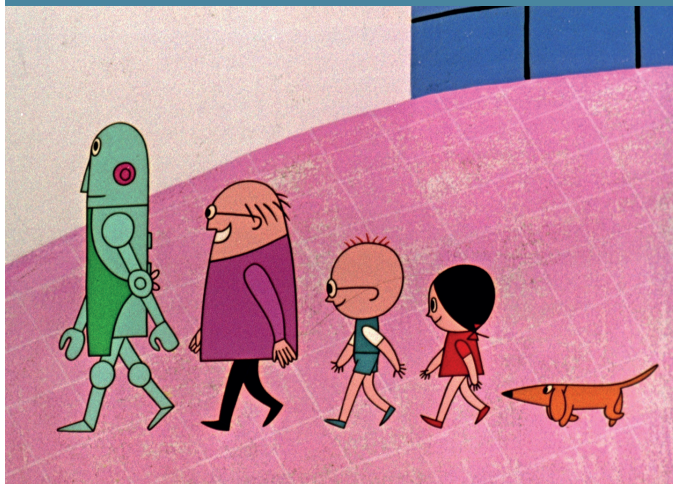
Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

Representing the duel of reason vs. retrogression, scientific progress vs. warfare, the film features the fight of the Scientist against Mars, the god of war. In the manner of Cold War-era didacticism, *Duel* supports the positive creative force of nuclear energy against its already known military use.

Awards, screenings:

1961 Cannes Film Festival – Special Mention

1961 Oberhausen Film Festival – in competition



PETER AND THE ROBOT MAN

Peti és a gépember

(1961)

Directed by: Gyula Macskássy, György Várnai

Technical specs: colour, 10 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

Peter, the curious little boy, his little sister, Katie, and Felix, their lively dachshund cause a terrible mess at Prof. Leonardo's house, when they switch on a humanoid robot. This is the very first episode of *Peti* (*Peter's Adventures*), which was the first cinematic cartoon series made for children in Hungary.



HUNDRED GRAMS OF IMMORTALITY

Tíz deka halhatatlanság

(1967)

Directed by: Gyula Macskássy, György Várnai

Technical specs: colour, 9 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

Resembling the simple forms and movements of cut-out animation, the film is a black satirical ode to creative imagination. The protagonist is the Pegasus of divine inspiration, who is born in an age galaxies away from Parnassus, when beauty and good are not respected, neither by the artists nor by the audience.



GRIDS

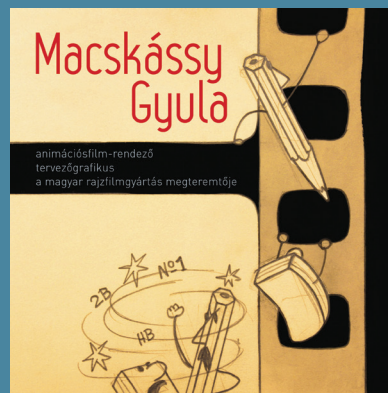
A rács
(1971)

Directed by: Gyula Macskássy, György Várnai
Technical specs: colour, 2 min
Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

Taking place in the abstract space of a rectangular prison cell, the prisoner wishes to decorate his barren room with some colour chalk graffiti. The film is a bitter-sweet allegory of one man's effort to resist oppression.

Screenings:

1971 Annecy International Animation Film Festival – in competition



GYULA MACSKÁSSY. ANIMATION FILM DIRECTOR, GRAPHIC DESIGNER, THE FOUNDER OF HUNGARIAN ANIMATED FILM PRODUCTION

Macskássy Gyula. Animációsfilm-rendező, tervezőgrafikus, a magyar rajzfilmgyártás megteremtője
(2013)

Edited by: Katalin Macskássy, Anna Ida Orosz, Márton Orosz
Budapest: Hungarian National Film Archive, With DVD.

In Hungarian, English version is expected to come in 2019!

Illustrated by a vast of visual content, this monographic book contains papers by contemporary art and film historians about the wideranging oeuvre of Gyula Macskássy, including his own essays about the essentials of cartoon film making and the production of animated advertisements. The book comes with a DVD featuring a curated selection of Gyula Macskássy's films.

ATTILA DARGAY

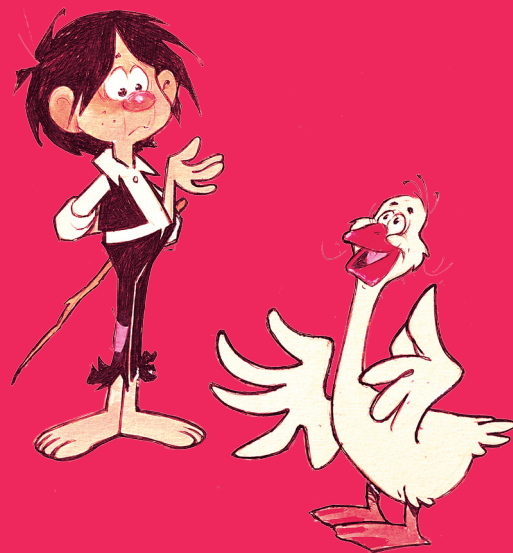
Attila Dargay (1927–2009) is the most significant Hungarian master of classical animated films. He began his studies at the Academy of Art in 1946, where, in 1949, branded an alien to the working class, he was dismissed. He made his professional debut in 1951 in the very first major product of state film production, featuring in the credits of *A kiskakas gyémánt félkrajcárja* (Little Rooster and His Diamond Half Penny) as a trace artist.

Dargay refined his own style in animation during the making of short commercials in the second half of the 1950s, which prepared the ground for the short films of the animation new wave that had such a determining effect on the decade to follow. One of the early heralds of the “nouvelle vogue” in Hungarian animation was the individual short film *Ne hagyd magad, emberke!* (Don’t Give in Little Man!, 1959) by Dargay, which was his first work as a director in his own

right. Its simplified, caricature-like characters with thick contours were typical of the commercials and fairytale films, as well as the comic strips drawn by Dargay around this time.

Dargay became one of the leading directors of the Hungarian state-run animation studio, Pannonia Film, during the 1960s, and his name can be found on many series and commissioned works produced during this period. By the late 1970s, the studio had grown to become one of the largest animation studios of Europe. The most successful works to emerge from Pannonia were Attila Dargay’s animation feature films such as *Lúdas Matyi* (Mattie the Goose-boy, 1976), *Vuk* (1981) and *Szaffi* (1984), which were all made for young viewers. These films are visually dominated by realistic space structures achieved by so-called Multiplan photography, while the protagonists are typically individualised with anthropomorphic animal characters, reminiscent of their creator’s “ars poetica”:

“I see a person, and I at once examine what animal that person looks like, I see an animal, and I look out for the person it reminds me of. My eyes distort: I see the entire world as animation.”







MATTIE THE GOOSEBOY

Lúdas Matyi (1976)

Directed by: Attila Dargay

Written by: Mihály Fazekas (epic poem)

Screenplay by: Attila Dargay, József Nepp, József Romhányi

Director of photography: Irén Henrik

Music by: Balázs Daróczy (based on Ferenc Liszt)

Cast (voice): Péter Geszti, András Kern, László Csákányi,
Gábor Agárdi, Hilda Gobbi

Genre: animation, youth film, adaptation

Production: Pannonia Film Studio

Technical specs: colour, 70 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered grading supervised by
Irén Henrik, DOP, HSC

"Attila Dargay's Lúdas Matyi is a fine example of classic, Disney-style cartoon tradition (...) that not only follows the Disney style, but completes it with specific Hungarian elements as well."

Metropolis, by Zoltán Varga, 2015/3

Based on a popular 1817 epic poem by the Hungarian writer Mihály Fazekas, 'Mattie the Gooseboy' is the adventure-packed tale of a high-spirited peasant boy and his best pal, a goose. After he refuses to give his feathered friend to the haughty feudal lord, he gets beaten up by his soldiers. Mattie swears that he will get his revenge by beating the lord up three times. By using various disguises, he succeeds. Completed as the second Hungarian animated feature film, it has become one of the most popular movies of all time in Hungary. The accompanying music score of the film is based on compositions by the composer Ferenc Liszt.

Awards:

1979 Salerno International Film Festival – Silver Cup

1979 World Festival of Animated Film Varna – Category Prize

"The book touched me deeply. I just had to visualize it."

Attila Dargay

Vuk, based upon the novel by the fine writer István Fekete, is a story of a young fox that loses his family to a hunter and takes revenge on him when he grows up. He outfoxes the hunter and forms a family – and becomes the legend of the forest. One of the most popular Hungarian films.

Awards:

1981 Hungarian Film Week – Author's Prize – Attila Dargay



VUK THE LITTLE FOX

Vuk (1981)

Directed by: Attila Dargay

Written by: István Fekete (novel)

Screenplay by: Attila Dargay, Ede Tarbay, István Imre

Director of photography: Irén Henrik

Music by: Péter Wolf

Cast (voice): Judit Pogány, József Gyabronka, Teri Földi, Gyula Szabó, László Csákányi

Genre: animation, adaptation, youth film

Production: Pannonia Film Studio

Technical specs: colour, 74 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered



SAFFI – THE TREASURE OF SWAMP CASTLE

Saffi (1984)

Directed by: Attila Dargay

Written by: Mór Jókai (novel)

Screenplay by: Attila Dargay, József Nepp, József Romhányi

Director of photography: Irén Henrik

Music by: Johann Strauss

Cast (voice): András Kern, Judit Pogány, Hilda Gobbi, Lajos

Básti, László Csákányi, Judit Hernádi

Genre: animation, youth film, adaptation

Production: Pannonia Film Studio

Technical specs: colour, 77 min

Format: 1.37:1, 2K restored grading supervised by Irén Henrik, DOP

"It will surely please young audiences, as it is as sweet as honey and as light as a feather."

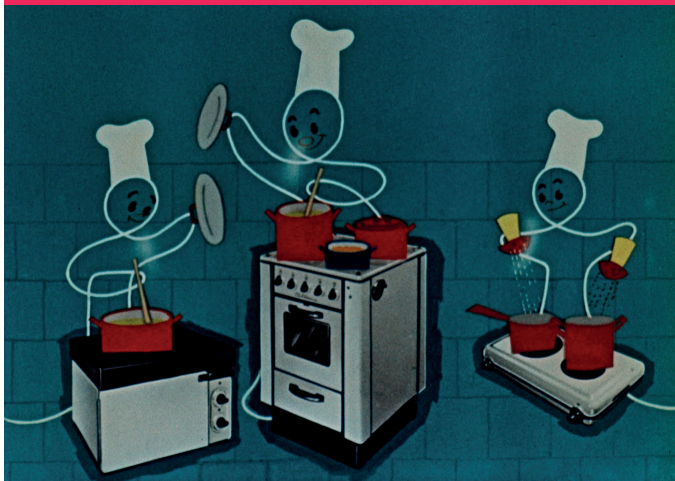
Filmvilág, by László Márton, June 1985

In the turmoil of the 18th century, during the final years of Ottoman rule in Hungary, a young and poor Hungarian aristocrat called Jonas, who was raised by Gypsies, and a pretty Turkish girl called Saffi, who is the illegitimate daughter of a pasha, fall in love with each other amid the most fantastic adventures possible. This romantic story also abounds in charming animal characters and plenty of witty dialogue. The film uses the operetta 'The Gypsy Baron' by Johann Strauss, which is based on short stories by Mór Jókai, one of the greatest Hungarian 19th century novelists.

Awards:

1985 Giffoni International Children's Film Festival – Golden Prize

1986 Hungarian Film Week – Audience Prize (joint)



COMMERCIALS

Reklámfilmek

(1950s–1960s)

Directed by: Attila Dargay, Gyula Macskássy

Technical specs: colour, 1–2 min (18 titles)

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

Following the nationalization of the film industry in 1948, animators were mainly commissioned to make public service and propaganda films, such as state insurance ads and public health service films. In these commercials made for adults, the everyday life of a modernising society and of the socialist family life unfolds from the background. The commercials were also a good field to experiment with the modern, stylised design of the so-called ‘limited animation’.



DON'T GIVE IN, LITTLE MAN!

Ne hagyd magad, emberke!

(1959)

Directed by: Attila Dargay

Technical specs: colour, 17 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

From the prehistoric era to modern times (ending in the triumphant conquest of space), this 15-minute-long film presents the age-old symbiosis and struggle between the working class (the titular skinny fellow) and the upper-class exploiting him (embodied by a corpulent prehistoric man, a Roman emperor, a medieval priest, a French marshal, a capitalist banker, etc.)



VARIATIONS ON A DRAGON

Variációk egy sárkányra

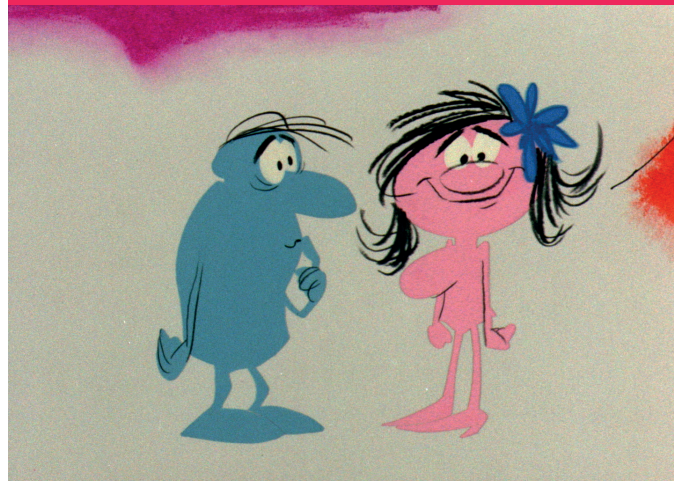
(1967)

Directed by: Attila Dargay

Technical specs: colour, 8 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

Variations of the well-known conflict of the Princess, the Knight and the Dragon. This amusing parody of the classic dragon-slayer tale is a fine example of Hungarian caricature cartoons of the 1960s.



IRREGULAR STORIES

Rendhagyó történetek

(1970)

Directed by: Attila Dargay

Technical specs: colour, 10 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

Consisting of four episodes, this epigrammatic short film exposes some age-old weaknesses of the human behaviour. It is an example of the comic social satires, which was a typical genre of Hungarian animation in the period.

Screenings

1970 Annecy International Animation Film Festival – in competition



CARRY ON, ENGINE!

Hajrá, mozdony!

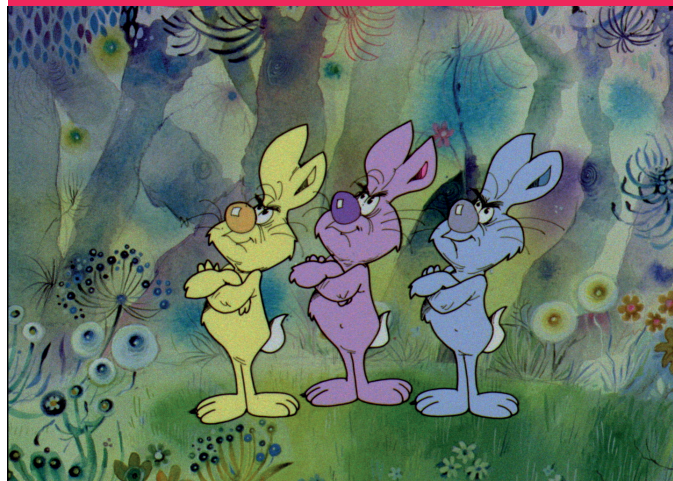
(1972)

Directed by: Attila Dargay

Technical specs: colour, 8 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

A satirical allegory about the obsolete and provincial governance mechanisms: the passengers of an old steam-engine wish to outpace the other trains running on the parallel rails by any means. They take turns in conducting the old train, but all their efforts are in vain.



THE THREE RABBITS

A három nyúl

(1972)

Directed by: Attila Dargay

Technical specs: colour, 7 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

The three rabbit siblings tell the magpie that they will eat a fox for dinner. The magpie tells their plan to all the inhabitants of the woods and as the rumours are circulating, the little bunnies' figures grow dreadful in the imagination of the otherwise most fearful animals of the forest, even the hunter runs away from them. This amusing short animation is based on a Hungarian poem for children.

MARCELL JANKOVICS



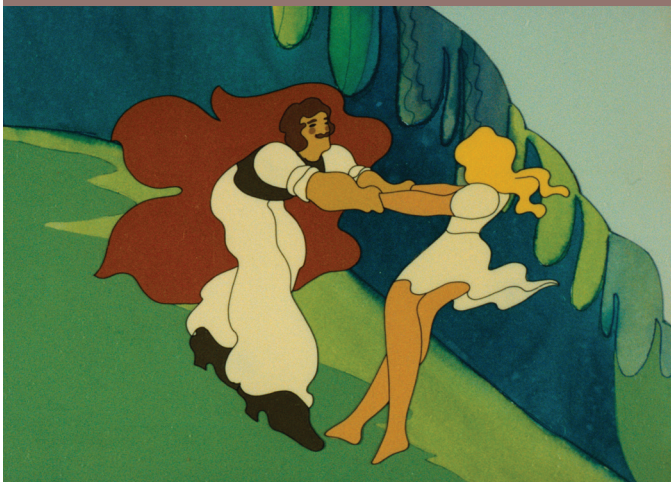
Marcell Jankovics (b. 1941) is a unique voice in the world of animation, and an emblematic figure in the Hungarian art world. Originally wanting to become an architect, he was rejected from university due to his upper-class descent, and so, at the age of just 19, he went on to join Pannonia Film Studios, which was the country's only animation studio during the Soviet era. In a mere five years, he progressed to the rank of director and in so doing became the youngest animation director of his generation. He worked as co-writer and co-director of the popular animated series *Gusztáv* (Gustavus) in the 1960s. He was then appointed to direct the full-length animation *János vitéz* (Johnny Corncob, 1973).

His full-length animations, including *János vitéz* (Johnny Corncob, 1973), *Fehérlófia* (Son of the White Mare, 1981), *Ének a csodaszarvasról* (Song of the Miraculous Hind, 2002) and *Az ember tragédiája* (The Tragedy of Man,

2011), as well as the series launched by him as a scriptwriter and director, *Magyar népmesék* (Hungarian Folk Tales, 1977–2012), *Magyar mondák* (Legends from Hungarian History, 1986), have all tested the limits of the genre of the animated film. They are ambitious compositions that reflect Jankovics's deep appreciation of folklore and mythology and constitute distinctive interpretations of aspects of Hungarian culture stretching back many centuries.

Unlike his visionary feature animations, Jankovics's short films are epigrammatic, black-and-white pieces that depict the complex challenges of human life as concise allegories. The visual style of these short films, such as *Mélyvíz* (Deep Water, 1970) and *Sisyphus*, (1974), is reminiscent of dashing ink illustrations, while *Küzdők* (Fight, 1977) and *Prometheus* (1992) are more readily likened to naturalistic etchings.





JOHNNY CORNCOB

János vitéz (1973)

Directed by: Marcell Jankovics

Written by: Sándor Petőfi

Screenplay by: Marcell Jankovics, Tamás Szabó Sipos, Péter Szoboszlay

Design by: Marcell Jankovics, Zsolt Richly

Director of photography: Zoltán Bacsó, Attila Csepela, Irén Henrik, Klári Kassai, Csaba Nagy

Music by: János Gyulai Gaál

Cast (voice): György Cserhalmi, Anikó Nagy, Erzsébet Pártos

Genre: animation, youth film, adventure, fantasy

Production: Pannonia Film Studio

Technical specs: colour, 80 min

Format: 4:3, 4K restored grading supervised by Marcell Jankovics

"The visuals blend Peter Max pop and traditional Hungarian folk art into a bright, vibrantly-hued world."

Spectacle Theatre, NYC, 2016

The very first full length animation to be completed in Hungary, the film was commissioned by the government for the 150th anniversary of national poet Sándor Petőfi's birthday, and based on his epic poem of the same title. It was premiered on May 1, 1973. The production took 22 months, that is, almost 2 years.

The story follows the great adventures of titular János, a shepherd, who leaves his village to become a hussar and in quest for his beloved Iluska. Visually it bears strong stylistic affinities with the Art Nouveau, pop art, and the decorative Hungarian folk art. Both the hallucinogenically colorful visual design and the psychedelic road movie-like narrative of the film is highly reminiscent of the cult film of the hippie era, *Yellow Submarine* from 1968.

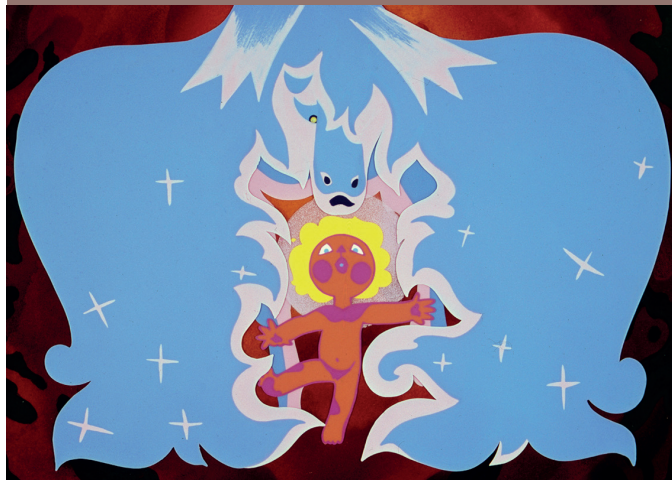
"A glorious work of unparalleled brilliance, Fehérlófia melds ancient legends of the Steppe people into a kaleidoscopic rumination on the cyclical nature of time and space."

Spectacle Theatre, NYC, 2016

Jankovics's cutting-edge masterpiece is an adaptation of the ancient legends of the early nomadic Steppe people (such as the Huns, the Avars and the Magyars). The film has a rather special position in the history of animated films, because it can be best described as an abstract version of tales, both in its visual representation and its storytelling. Being a radical example of the ornamental style, the film produces a dream-like visual world, which is created from the continuous presence of metamorphoses, changing of colours, and recurring images of lightnings, shatters, and mandala.

Awards:

1984 Olympic Arts Festival, Los Angeles – selected among the 50 greatest animated films of all time



SON OF THE WHITE MARE

Fehérlófia (1981)

Directed by: Marcell Jankovics

Screenplay by: Marcell Jankovics, László György

Design by: Marcell Jankovics, Zsolt Richly, László Hegedűs

Director of photography: Zoltán Bacsó

Music by: István Vajda

Cast (voice): György Cserhalmi, Vera Pap, Mari Szemes, Gyula Szabó

Genre: animation, youth film, mystical fantasy

Production: Pannonia Film Studio

Technical specs: colour, 80 min

Format: 4:3, 4K restored grading supervised by Marcell Jankovics

Expected to be available from May 2019.



JÁNOS HÁRY

Háry János (1983)

Directed by: Zsolt Richly

Based on the folk opera by: Zoltán Kodály

Animation director: Marcell Jankovics

Screenplay by: László Marsall

Design by: Zsolt Richly, Gizella N. Csathó

Director of photography: Zoltán Bacsó

Cast (voice): Gyula Szabó, Éva Szabó, Angéla Császár, Péter Haumann, Péter Balázs

Genre: animation, musical, adventure

Production: Pannonia Film Studio

Technical specs: colour, 62 min

Format: 4:3, 4K restored grading supervised by Zsolt Richly

Digital restoration executed by MTVA Archivum with the participation of MMA (Hungarian Academy of Arts)

"The brilliance of Zsolt Richly's films lies in his ability to convey a meaning through the entire image, not only with the characters or their facial expressions."

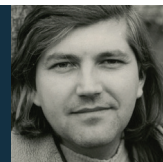
Marcell Jankovics, 2017

Based on the folk opera in four acts about the Hungarian Baron Munchausen, this fascinating made-for-TV animation is a fine example of animation made for music. While both the story and the character design is not free from grotesque humour, folkloristic ornaments are the main source of inspiration in the construction of the visual design of the film.

The film was renewed with the support of Hungarian Academy of Arts in connection with the Kodály Memorial Year.

ZSOLT RICHLY

Zsolt Richly (b. 1941) graduated from the Budapest College of Arts and Crafts (now Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design) in 1966 as an animation director. He began working at Pannónia Film Studios the same year. Since 1987 he has taught animation at the College of Arts and Crafts. He designed and directed a number of popular animated children's series, such as *A kockásfülű nyúl* (Bunny with Chequered Ears, 1975), *Fabulák* [Fables, 1987], or the *Kíváncsi Fáncsi* (Inquisitive Elephant, 1985; 1989). His autonomous short films can be best described as lyric etudes, which draw their subjects from popular myths, folklore literature and art (*Indiában* [In India, 1966]; *Szvit* [Suite, 1968]; *Medvetánc* [Bear's Dance, 1971]; *Molnár Anna* (Anna Molnár, 1972); *Magyar Képek* [Hungarian Pictures, 1998]; *Kőműves Kelemen* [Stonemason Kelemen, 2009]).





SISYPHUS

Sisyphus
(1974)

Directed by: Marcell Jankovics

Technical specs: b&w, 2 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

Sisyphus's superhuman effort to roll the rock to the top of the hill becomes evocative through the freestyle animation of the dynamic lines of ink. The film was inspired by the immensity of the undertaking Marcell Jankovics faced in the creation of the full-length animation *János vitéz*.

Screenings, Awards

1975 Oberhausen International Short Film Festival – in competition

1975 Nominated for the Academy Award for Best Animated Short Film



FIGHT

Küzdők
(1977)

Directed by: Marcell Jankovics

Technical specs: b&w, 2 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

The film is a symbolic gesture of self-reflection, the theme of which is the struggle between composer and composition, a struggle that shapes both the work of art and the artist.

Screenings, Awards

1977 Cannes International Film Festival – Short Film Palm d'Or
1977 Oberhausen International Short Film Festival – in competition

GYÖRGY KOVÁSZNAI



György Kovásznai (1934–1983), a painter, writer, film director and playwright, was originally a student at the Academy of Fine Arts in Budapest during the 1950s. He was very soon expelled because of his rejection of the autocratic, political surveillance of the party state, which made social realism an obligatory style to follow by all artists. From there he went on to join an artists' colony of other isolated figures, most notably Dezső Korniss, a distinctive member of the so-called European School, the post-war Hungarian avant-garde movement of the 1940s.

Kovásznai joined Hungary's only state-run animation production base, Pannonia Film Studios, as a scriptwriter in 1961. As political control slowly became less restrictive, Kovásznai was given a free hand in creating individual short films in collaboration with Korniss, who was 26 years his senior. Between 1963 and 1968, the two of them made eight

experimental animated short films together.

Kovásznai's boldly expressive experimental films, created in the period between 1963 and 1982, blur the lines between the visual arts and the art of film. He was the first person in Hungary to experiment with under-the-camera animated painting improvisations. His films are associated with the concepts of the "total film", in which live action and animation are mixed, and "anima vérité", his special method of "animadoc", which translated the then contemporary live action documentary style of "cinéma vérité" into animation.





FOAM BATH

Habfürdő (1979)

Directed by: György Kovásznai

Screenplay by: György Kovásznai

Director of photography: Árpád Lossonczy

Music by: János Mási

Cast (voice): Katalin Dobos, Katalin Bontovics, Albert Antalffy, István Wisinger

Cast (singing): Anna Papp, Tamás Berki

Genre: animation, musical

Production: Pannonia Film Studio

Technical specs: colour, 76 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

"Audio and visual are almost inseparable, melodies appear as colours and rhythm as pulsing lines."

György Kovásznai

"... Animation is capable of producing a Gesamtkunstwerk or rather, a synthesis of the arts. Foam Bath is certainly an outstanding attempt at it and indeed a success as a film, which certainly speaks to everyone. It perhaps even says: 'Change your life!'"

István Kristó Nagy, Voks a béka mellett. Habfürdő. Filmvilág, 4/1980.

György Kovásznai was an outstanding figure of Hungarian animation at its prime in the 1970s.

This modernist feature film is characteristic of his work in that painting and documentary are intertwined: it is an entertaining slice of life. "A musical trick film timed to the beating of the heart", as he himself put it. This painted musical animation is centred around a love-triangle, while painting a picture of the streets of Pest. A man about to get married realizes that he actually belongs with his fiancée's girlfriend. The music was composed by János Mási from Kex.



MONOLOGUE

A Monológ
(1963)

Directed by: György Kovásznai, Dezső Korniss
Technical specs: colour, 12 min
Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

This collage “memoir” film is a subjective and satirical overview of the history of Hungary in the 20th century. A young woman from the 1960s’ Communist Hungary takes a critical look at the life of her grandparents (living during the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy) and parents (living during the interwar period). The film marks the idealism of the New Left of the early 1960s.



DOUBLE PORTRAITS

Átváltozások
(1964)

Directed by: György Kovásznai
Technical specs: colour, 12 min
Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

The film depicts an improvisatory metamorphosis of a painting, which shows the portraits of a man and a woman in various styles. Kovásznai’s film is an early example of frame-by-frame ‘under-the-camera’ animation.

Awards

1965 Mannheim International Film Festival – Golden Ducat Award for Animation



THE JOY OF LIGHT

A fény öröme

(1965)

Directed by: György Kovásznai

Technical specs: colour, 12 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

In the 1950s Kovásznai worked at the nationalised Hungarian mines and observed, wrote about and made drawings of the life there. While the screenplay is a symbolic story constructing a universal picture of the depths of the mines, the film also applies documentary-like methods in using authentic location sound recordings.



DIARY

A napló

(1966)

Directed by: György Kovásznai

Technical specs: colour, 10 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

In a *Jules et Jim*-like story, the film is a peek into a day of three young people from the Hungarian capital, who are visiting the typical scenes of the 1960's downtown Budapest. Visually the film consists of re-painted photographs which alternate with abstract and "overall" graphic or painterly compositions.

Screenings

1967 Cannes International Film Festival – in competition



LIGHT AND SHADOW

Fény és árnyék

(1970)

Directed by: György Kovásznai

Technical specs: colour, 10 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

The film attempts to construct a new filmic structure that is not based on a narrative. By deconstructing the audio and visual elements into their basics, the film consists of spontaneous line drawings, which are made to follow an improvisational song.



ÇA IRA – SONG OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Ça Ira – A francia forradalom dala

(1973)

Directed by: György Kovásznai

Technical specs: colour, 9 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

Being an homage to the 1968 French Revolution, the film consist of a series of individual paintings, which are employing various art historical styles. The portraits of the idols of the Enlightenment (such as Robespierre, Saint-Just, Danton, or Marat) succeed each other and this witty eclecticism results in an individual interpretation of the then current Pop Art style.

Screenings

1973 Annecy International Animation Film Festival – in competition

JÓZSEF NEPP

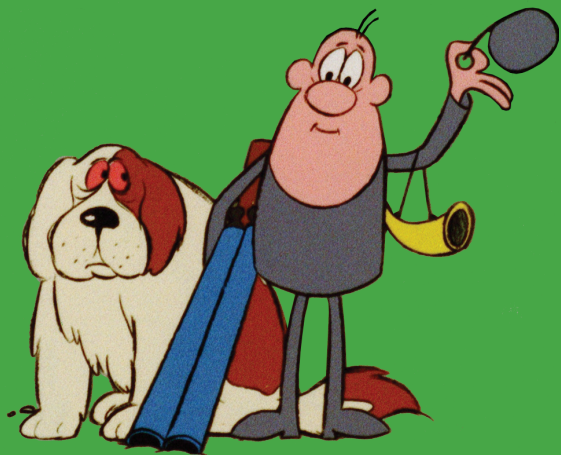
József Nepp (1934–2017) was one of the first to work as part of the atelier of Pannonia Film Studios at the end of the 1950s, having completed his studies in puppet design at the Hungarian University of Fine Arts. He was one of the creative minds behind some of the most popular works of Hungarian animation of all time. Snippets of dialogue from the movies *Macskafogó* (Cat City) and *Hófehér* (White as Snow) have gone on to become household sayings in his home nation.

He began his career at the dawn of Hungarian new wave animation, when he directed several short films of dark comedy including *Szenvedély* (Passion, 1961), *Mese a bogárról* (Tale of the Bug, 1963) and *Öt perc gyilkosság* (Five Minute Murder, 1966). However, he preferred to be a man-of-all-trades, nurturing the work of others as creative contributor, writer, dramaturge, animator, background designer, and sometimes even as a

composer (his name frequently appears in the films of Béla Ternovszky, Attila Dargay, Ottó Foky, and József Gémes). According to rumour, his drawers were full of great ideas for movies and script outlines for grotesque comedies.

He once said in an interview: *"I always create films for adults, I can't make tales for children."* One of the obvious examples of this statement is the first Hungarian animated series, *Gusztáv* (Gustavu), with its clumsy, selfish, small-timer protagonist, the Eastern European version of Monsieur Hulot and Mr. Bean.

Beware! As a critic for the Hungarian film journal *Filmvilág* once said: *"When watching Nepp's movies, one runs the risk of being 'too occupied with things to laugh!'"*







WHITE AS SNOW

Hófehér (1983)

Directed by: József Nepp

Screenplay by: József Nepp, József Romhányi

Design by: József Nepp

Director of photography: Irén Henrik

Music by: Tamás Deák

Cast (voice): Judit Halász, Ilona Béres, Ferenc Kállai, János Körmendi

Genre: animation, parody

Production: Pannonia Film Studio

Technical specs: colour, 88 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered grading supervised by Irén Henrik DOP

"Being a grotesque homage film, White as Snow seems to be an uncommon tribute to Walt Disney."

Typotex, by Éva M. Tóth, 2014

Being a liberal adaptation of Grimm's classic, the film offers the bitter parody of Disney's classic version of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and the age-old traditions of fairy tales and magic stories. Snow White in József Nepp's version is a tall, muscular, clumsy, unattractive creature, who is reminiscent of the figures of the Golem and the Mowgli stories, while the dwarves are not at all hospitable with her. Critics also praised the film to give a satiric interpretation of the Communist establishment, where the titular character is the allegory of the Soviet Union, while the seven dwarves are the satellite states.

Screenings

1984 Giffoni Film Festival – in competition

"In Cat City also the minor characters, who only pop up for a few seconds, are outstanding."

Apertúra, by Zoltán Varga, 2016

This animated action comedy is a parody of many mainstream film genres (action and crime movies, sci-fi, horror, disaster films) and it also refers to specific films, mainly the James Bond series. Featuring cats, mice, and rats in the main roles, the protagonist is an anthropomorphic mouse secret agent named Grabovsky, who is sent to the city of "Pokyo" to get the secret plan of a machine which could save the mouse civilization from the evil cats. The film has become a cult classic among Hungarian viewers.

Screenings

1984 Giffoni Film Festival – out of competition



BÉLA TERNOVSZKY

Béla Ternovszky (b. 1943) graduated from the Fine Arts High School Budapest in 1961, and in the same year he joined Pannonia Film Studios.

He soon became one of the leading animators of the theatrical and TV-series of the 1960s, and from the 1970s he worked as a co-director of series like *Kérem a következőt!* (Next, Please!, 1974); *Gustav* (1975–76; 1977); *Vakáció a Mézga család* (The Mézga Family on Holiday, 1978) and the widely popular *Pumuckl*-series (1982–83) made in co-production with West Germany. His first animation feature film *Macskafogó* (Cat City, 1986) was the Hungarian Oscar nominee that year. Its sequel *Macskafogó 2: A Sátán macskája* (CATcher – Cat City 2) was released in 2007. Characterised by firm storytelling and funny moments, his most popular animated films were created in collaboration with writer József Nepp.



CAT CITY

Macskafogó (1986)

Directed by: Béla Ternovszky

Screenplay by: József Nepp

Design by: Zoltán Maros, Béla Ternovszky, József Gémes

Director of photography: Csaba Nagy, Mária Neményi, György Varga

Music by: Tamás Deák

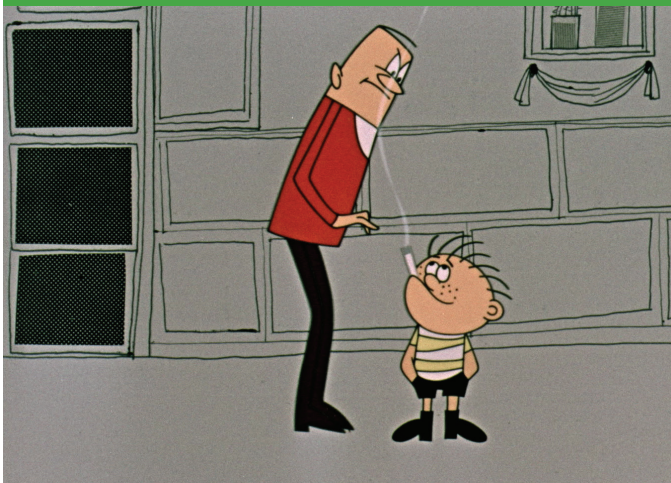
Cast (voice): Miklós Benedek, Péter Haumann, László Sinkó

Genre: animation, youth film, parody

Production: Pannonia Film Studio

Technical specs: colour, 92 min

Format: 4:3, 4K restored grading supervised by Béla Ternovszky



PASSION

Szenvedély

(1961)

Directed by: József Nepp

Technical specs: colour, 8 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

Being an amusing caricature of nicotine addiction, the film is an allegorical accounting of the last day of an ordinary man. The protagonist of the film later became the most popular cartoon (anti)hero of Hungarian animation, Gustav.

Screenings:

1962 Annecy International Animation Film Festival – in competition



FIVE-MINUTE MURDER

Öt perc gyilkosság

(1966)

Directed by: József Nepp

Technical specs: colour, 8 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

The film aims to fulfill the desire of moviegoers to watch crimes with showing a never-ending jumble of murder scenes, in which the murderers become the murdered ones in a domino-like series of killings.

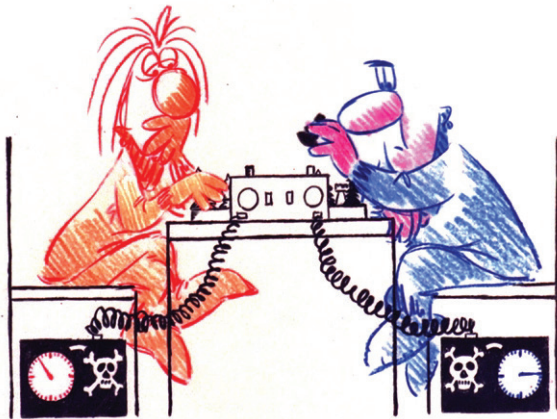
Screenings:

1967 Cannes International Film Festival – in competition

1968 Oberhasuen International Film Festival – in competition

HIGHLIGHTS OF SHORT FILMS





MODERN TRAINING METHODS

Modern edzés módszerek

(1970)

Directed by: Béla Ternovszky

Technical specs: colour, 8 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

The film is about the absurd accumulation of violent scenes, in which the trainer has some odd methods to make the athlete go “faster, higher, stronger”. The script was written by József Nepp.

Screenings, Awards:

1972 Zagreb International Animation Film Festival – award for the best narrative

1971 Oberhasuen International Film Festival – in competition



THE YEAR OF 1812

Az 1812-es év

(1972)

Directed by: Sándor Reisenbüchler

Technical specs: colour, 12 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

Using cut-out collages, Reisenbüchler’s powerful vision of history was composed to the music of Piotr Ylich Tchaikovsky’s 1812 and inspired by Leo Tolstoy’s War and Peace.

Awards

1973 Cannes International Film Festival – Jury’s Special Mention



SCENES WITH BEANS

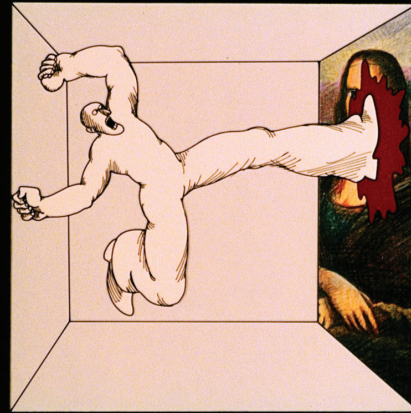
Babfilm
(1975)

Directed by: Ottó Foky
Technical specs: colour, 12 min
Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

This fascinating stop motion film is a comic social allegory, which was made using 3,000 beans, and presents a vision of the inhabitants of this world (played by beans) from the perspective of an extra-terrestrial. The script was written by József Nepp.

Screenings, Awards:

1976 Cannes International Film Festival – in competition
1976 Krakow International Short Film Festival – Golden Dragon



HEY, YOU!

Hé, te!
(1976)

Directed by: Péter Szoboszlay
Technical specs: colour, 7 min
Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

Set in the allegorical space of an abandoned room, Szoboszlay's short film is a complex masterpiece, which captures the distorting effects of aggression and paranoia from the perspective of a frustrated mind.

Screenings, Awards:

1977 Annecy International Animation Film Festival – in competition
1977 Oberhausen International Short Film Festival – in competition
1977 Chicago International Film Festival – Silver Hugo Award



THE FLY

A légy

(1980)

Directed by: Ferenc Rofusz

Technical specs: colour, 3 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

Consisting of 4,000 wax crayon drawings, *The Fly* is a paradigmatic example of background animation, which presents the last three minutes in the life of a fly.

Awards

1980 Ottawa International Animation Film Festival – 2nd Prize for a Film Shorter Than 3 Minutes

1980 Academy Award for Best Animated Short Film

1981 Cannes International Film Festival – out of competition



MOTO PERPETUO

Moto perpetuo

(1981)

Directed by: Béla Vajda

Technical specs: colour, 8 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

A homunculus wishes to enter the paternoster of an office building, but every booth is occupied: the constantly moving elevator is filled with more and more shocking scenes, ranging from mundane situations to tabloid stories and the confusing drama of high-politics.

Screenings, Awards:

1981 Cannes International Film Festival – Short Film Palm d'Or

1981 Annecy International Animation Film Festival – in competition



AD ASTRA

Ad astra
(1982)

Directed by: Ferenc Cakó

Technical specs: colour, 2 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

This epigrammatic clay film depicts oppression through the metaphor of a man with wings who has been paralyzed by the masses.

Awards

1983 Cannes International Film Festival – in competition

1983 Annecy International Animation Film Festival –
International Critics' Award



MIND THE STEPS!

Vigyázat lépcső!
(1989)

Directed by: István Orosz

Technical specs: b&w, 5 min

Format: 4:3, HD digitally remastered

The film depicts the M. C. Escherian, no-way-out, paradoxical spaces and the residents of a mouldering apartment building in Pest, amidst the ornaments of collapsing socialism. The film was made just before the wall came down in 1989.

Screenings, Awards

1990 Berlin International Film Festival – in competition

1991 Mediawave International Film Festival, Hungary – Main
Prize

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Still photo on the front cover page:
Fehérlófia / Son of the White Mare
1981
Directed by: Marcell Jankovics

Still photo on the back cover page:
Macskafogó / Cat City
1986
Directed by: Béla Ternovszky



MATTIE THE GOOSE-BOY

Lúdas Matyi

1976

Directed by: Attila Dargay

