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# The Dutch Animation Collection: a work in progress

## Keywords

animation  
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## Abstract

*Dutch animation film has a history that goes back to the first decades of the twentieth century. Over the course of this history many Dutch animation film-makers have been internationally successful; their work has been shown at major festivals and they have received many awards. This text observes that many of these films became unknown for contemporary audiences. The situation of the Dutch animation heritage will be investigated in more detail, and touch upon the contemporary position of animation film in the field of preservation and film archives in general. The focus of the text will be the practice of a research project initiated by the Netherlands Institute for Animation Film (NIAf) that intends to enhance the safeguarding of Dutch animation, and by doing so making films accessible and available for research and public presentations.*

Dutch animation film has a history that goes back to the first decades of the twentieth century. Over the course of this history many Dutch animation film-makers have been internationally successful; their work has been shown at major festivals and they have received many awards. This text looks at why many of these films are unknown, essentially lost to contemporary audiences and film heritage.

The specific part of the national cultural memory in the Low Countries that animated film represents is endangered at the moment, and may disappear into oblivion. Even canonical Dutch animation films such as *Moonglow* (Harold Mack, 1955) or *Once Again* (Hans Nassenstein, 1982) are only well known to a small circle of experts and they are not yet preserved adequately. Another example of the potential threat of a vanishing Dutch animation heritage are the films of animator Ton van Saane, whose films were screened at the first Holland Animation Film Festival in 1985, but now seem to be forgotten. In 2006, Hans Walther assembled a series of interviews with about thirty Dutch animation directors, which were published both online and in print.<sup>1</sup> Though this project was a worthwhile and important piece of oral history, not all pioneers of Dutch animation films have told their stories yet. And more significantly, their work needs to be seen again and discussed. Unfortunately many of these films are not available as a projection print or not yet transferred into digital formats. Consequently, programmers, critics, teachers and academics wanting to use such materials for research or presentation purposes are confronted with many difficulties concerning access to Dutch animation films.

Here we will investigate the situation of Dutch animation heritage in more detail, and touch upon the contemporary position of animation film in the field of preservation and film archives in general. We focus on the practice of a research project initiated by the Netherlands Institute for Animation Film (NIAf) that intends to enhance the safeguarding of Dutch animation, and by doing so making films accessible and available for research and further presentations.

### Why preservation of animation films is needed

The research project derived from an acute awareness that preservation initiatives are needed to safeguard animation films and artwork. Film artefacts are threatened by a number of factors, such as damage, decay of prints and unprofessional or inappropriate storage. Many films from the early period of film history are considered to be lost. Preservation begins with good storage and careful handling of the materials, and often involves conservation and restoration by making analogue or digital duplications. Since there is no extant overview or detailed information about many Dutch animated films, there is an urgent need to investigate the actual state of the known materials and the accessibility of this specific part of the audio-visual heritage of the Netherlands. The NIAf has therefore started a research project to investigate the national collection of animation films, in close collaboration with the two largest national audio-visual archives, and in dialogue with the filmmakers concerned. The ultimate goal of this project is to be instrumental in achieving optimal access to all Dutch animation films by safeguarding film materials, artwork and documentation.

A crucial part of the preservation process is the selection of the best possible source material for duplication, conservation and digitalization. In a constant dialogue with the specialists in the archives

1. H. Walther (2006), *Geanimeerde gesprekken: interviews met animatiefilmers*, Tilburg: Nederlands Instituut voor Animatiefilm, <http://www.niaf.nl> [In Dutch only].



Figure 1: Once Again (Hans Nassenstein, 1982).



we try to locate the 'best possible elements' for conservation, preferably the earliest generation element. We are searching for the best image quality, varying from 35mm masters to video originals. In many cases the best elements will be a master print: 'a general term for a film element used as the start of a special sequence of printing' (Read and Meyer 2000: 330). But in other cases we have to take what is left for us; this could be a print that was used for distribution or screenings. Due to the growing use of digital technologies in many animation production processes, analogue and digital materials coexist, both in carriers of moving images and in artwork components.

The best elements for film conservation can vary widely and involve analogue as well as digital components. Fossati argues that this also affects the practice of film archiving and preservation:

Archival practice is in many ways connected to film production practice. The most evident connection between archives and the film industry is that they make use of the same service providers (e.g. the same film manufacturers and laboratories) and of the same equipment for exhibition (e.g. projectors and sound systems). As a consequence, archivists need to know the technology used to make films today in order to be able to best preserve and restore these films tomorrow. Being familiar with current changes in film production practices is also necessary for film archivists in order to understand where changes in archival practices originate from and where they might be headed. Understanding the transition in the film medium is, indeed, the very first step for rethinking film museums of the future.

(Fossati 2009: 33)

The research project consists of the gathering of information about the location of material, films, artwork and documentation of each film title. Materials are mostly stored in archives but also in the private collections of film-makers and others involved. The research is conducted along two lines. The first line of enquiry starts with an inventory of the availability and the state of material in the archives, taking into account films, artwork, documents and current database information. If a film is not yet preserved we try to establish, in dialogue with the preservationists, the best possible elements available in the archive. If necessary we try to locate better elements and try to acquire them for the archive.

The other line of enquiry starts with a working list of around 400 film titles, compiled from a wide range of databases and printed sources, such as publications by distribution companies, film festivals or funding bodies. This list is also a starting point to find films that are not present in the archives. During the project, film-makers are contacted and made aware that their materials are best kept in one of the national audio-visual archives, since climatic conditions for storage are much better and there are possibilities for active preservation. Many film-makers and producers still have materials stored at their houses, in cupboards and attics. In this way the NIAf researchers work as



Figure 2: artwork for *Music for an Owl* (Ties Poeth, 1999).

intermediaries between the archives and the film-makers. We have a dual intention: to stimulate the archives to get more actively involved in the preservation of not yet collected Dutch animation films and to convince the film-makers of the value of safeguarding their work.

In our research project we are operating proactively by contacting and working directly with film-makers. There is a wide variety of production practices, ranging from working with a director like Ties Poeth, who produced his films mostly through his own company, Cinema Avant. He stored most of his film prints and other materials in his own house, predominantly to save the cost of storage. Another example is a film-maker like Monique Renault, who worked with different producers in several countries. Consequently, the materials from her films are scattered across a number of places. In the first case, it was possible to safeguard a whole oeuvre through one donation; in the second case, further investigation is necessary to search for the prints in several locations.

### The importance of the preservation of animation artwork

Specific to animation collections, and often a forgotten and crucial component, is the animation artwork, which served to create the film. The animator often designs and constructs every image and creates movement frame by frame. The designs an animator creates can take many forms and shapes, such as drawings, puppets, objects, etc. These artefacts are made of materials, varying from cels and paper to clay, wood, textiles and almost any physical element one can think of. Animators are very creative in developing their own techniques and with the new possibilities of digital technology this will no doubt continue. As with film materials, the preservation of artwork is equally urgent. Artwork is often made with materials that have no longevity and therefore are easily subject to decay or damage. Preservation of artwork involves good storage and conservation. In contrast to the conservation of film, the restoration of artwork involves direct intervention with the original artefact. This implies a totally different way of thinking. Conservation of artwork is a specialist job, which is closely related to the preservation, for example, of paintings or sculptures.

The NIAf holds a collection of artwork created by more than fifty Dutch animators, dating from the 1940s to the present day. One important reason for keeping animation artwork is that it is an art in itself. When preserving the artwork, also the knowledge about animation technologies and materials is kept. This provides insight into production processes unique to animation and raises awareness about animation and showcasing it as a unique form of art. Thus the artwork reveals and stresses the fundamental difference of the animation production process compared with live action. The exhibition of original artefacts is very suitable to show for educational purposes. Artwork was, for example, used in an exhibition of the work of Dutch film-maker Gerrit van Dijk, to illustrate his specific use of metamorphosis in animation.<sup>2</sup> Artwork also proved to be a great attraction in the recent exhibition 'De Fantasiefabriek: Animate in Nederland' in the Noordbrabants Museum in 's-Hertogenbosch.<sup>3</sup>

2. An exhibition with artwork, extensive film programmes and an educational project including an instructional DVD and educational materials about Gerrit van Dijk were developed as a collaboration between NIAf and EYE (November 2004–January 2005).
3. The exhibition 'De Fantasiefabriek: Animate in Nederland' was organized by NIAf and Noordbrabants Museum (January–April 2010). <http://www.noordbrabantsmuseum.nl>.



Figure 3: Gerrit van Dijk teaching materials: booklet, CD-ROM and DVD.



science  
museum | special exhibition



# Pixar: 20 Years of Animation

© Disney/Pixar

Figure 4: The Pixar Exhibition which toured worldwide featured process art, a 3D zootrope, an animation of production designs, and a full size Luxo Jr lamp.

Worldwide, there is a growing interest in exhibitions with original animation artefacts; for example, the Pixar exhibition in the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 2005–06, which toured to London, Edinburgh, Melbourne and Tokyo, or the numerous exhibitions of South African filmmaker/artist William Kentridge in international museums of modern art. Also book publications of animation artwork enjoy a growing interest, like for instance the series of the artwork of the Pixar films, published by Chronicle Books, or the series of artwork for the films of Japanese film-maker Hayo Miyazaki, published by VIZ Media LLC (San Francisco).

### **An inventory of Dutch animation in the archives**

In 2006 the NIAf presented the initial outcomes of an inventory of a wide range of animation collections at three national institutions: the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision; EYE Film Institute Netherlands (EYE, formerly known as Filmmuseum); and NIAf. The report made clear that several initiatives have been undertaken to preserve selected parts of the Dutch animation collection, and have occasionally been part of special presentations in exhibitions and festival screenings.

The Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision and EYE, for example, preserved (international) animation films from their collection that were made on nitrate film. Since the late 1960s there has been a feeling of urgency within the archive world for the preservation of nitrate films, expressed in the widely used phrase ‘Nitrate won’t wait’. Nitrate is a film stock that was used for film production until the early 1950s, and is considered very vulnerable to decay. The need to take action was felt urgently and many archives prioritized the preservation of this part of their film collection. The greater part of the nitrate film collection of EYE has been preserved by duplicating nitrate films on safety film material. Animated films on nitrate film stock and preserved by EYE are, for example, a series of Alice comedies by Walt Disney from the 1920s and animated commercials made by George Pal in his studio in the Netherlands in the 1930s. Recently, the focus of film archival practice is shifting to other film materials from more recent periods. EYE started a project of preserving experimental Dutch film from the 1950s onwards, some of which may be viewed as experimental forms of animation. The unorthodox ways in which many of these films were made and shown makes their conservation especially challenging. For example, film materials used were of poor quality, cheap and easy to use, such as reversal 16mm film stock, and unique prints were used for projection. This project includes several animation films made by Paul and Menno de Nooijer, and the abstract films of Bart Vegter. The recent technological developments and the growing numbers of digitally created productions, in which image quality is expressed in pixels instead of grains, raise a whole new range of curatorial issues and criteria for preservation.

Animated films preserved by EYE and Sound and Vision have been presented in special exhibitions and screenings often in collaboration with the NIAf and the national film festivals ‘Holland

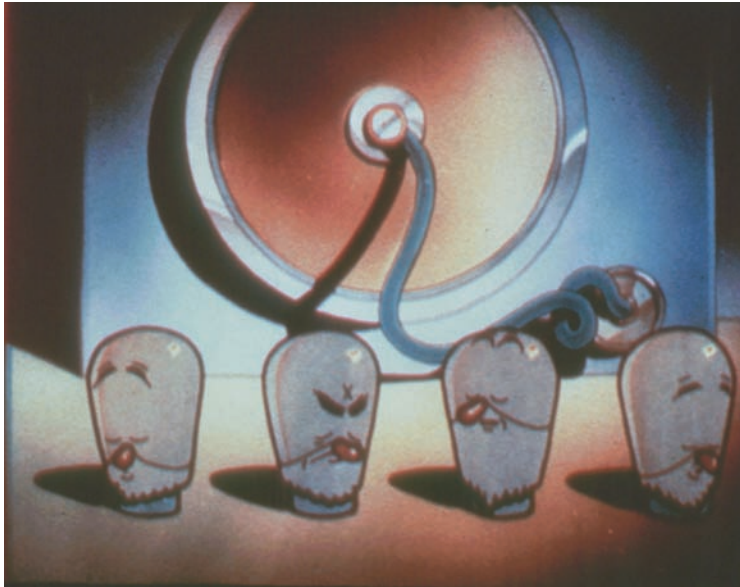


Figure 5: Two pieces of film stock of a George Pal film: one before and one after preservation.

4. A selection of programmes with preserved animation films from collections of EYE and Sound and Vision: 'Nico Crama: film-maker' (NFF and HAFF 2004); 'The Netherlands in World War II' (HAFF 2006); 'Dutch experimental film 1960–1990: Who draws the line? Looking for boundaries in re-discovered Dutch animation' (HAFF 2008); or 'Rupert van der Linden' (NFF 2010). <http://www.haff.nl>; <http://www.filmfestival.nl>.

Animation Film Festival' and 'Netherlands Film Festival'. Programmes have been organized around specific themes, such as experimental or wartime animation, or focusing on Dutch animation film-makers like producer Nico Crama or film-maker Rupert van der Linden.<sup>4</sup>

In spite of all these efforts, one of the conclusions of the 2006 inventory was that many Dutch animation films, especially from the period of the 1960s until nowadays, are not present in the national audio-visual collections, which means that they are not available for preservation and therefore not safeguarded for the future. This is why a follow-up research project was instigated in 2010, now with a team of two researchers, focusing on the systematic charting of 'missing' animation materials: films, artwork and documentation.

### Archive practice, curational views and legal deposits

Archive policies of audio-visual heritage in the Netherlands are closely linked to the origins and historical developments of the three main institutions: EYE, Sound and Vision and NIAf. The first two institutions are financed by the government to safeguard the Dutch audio-visual heritage in general and are provided with budgets for preservation. The NIAf has a specific assignment to support the production, distribution, exhibition and research of animation film. In our current research we are confronted by some practical issues regarding operating in an institutional context. During the research some practical issues and challenges emerged. First, the non-compatibility of three different databases; second, differences in the workflow of analogue and digital restoration; and third, different ways of recording preservation processes and the presentation of outcomes. Some differences in curational views still exist, but all involved are eager to overcome them. Both EYE and Sound and Vision aim to safeguard the Dutch Film Collection and its context of presentation and perception. Besides preservation of the films investigations are undertaken to know more about where the films have been shown, in which programmes and who saw them.

The history of how a collection has been put together is an influential factor in the curational practice. Collections can be donated by producers such as Nico Crama or directors such as Gerrit van Dijk. Other collections originate from distribution companies, for instance, the Animated People Collection. This collection of 375 national and international animation films was used for distribution in the Netherlands, mainly on 16mm in the period between 1978 and the early 1990s. There is also a modest history of 'legal deposit' in the Netherlands, in which films are by regulation placed in an archive, but this practice has divided the storage of Dutch animated films across a number of archives.

Legal deposit is a key moment in the final phase of film production, but simultaneously it is also the first phase of film preservation. When the final cut is finished, a master print of every film should be donated to a film archive, to guarantee that a print of the most pristine quality of both image and

sound is to be preserved, as a possible source for reference and distribution in the future. This ideal could be reached by a mandatory deposit of films, as is the case in countries like France, Italy, Norway, Finland and Denmark. However, in many countries, there is only a voluntary deposit. Gorini suggests that this is an ideological choice in cultural policy:

These varying deposit systems reflect the profound differences which exist among European countries as regards their perception of the principles which should form the basis of their national policies on cultural and historical heritage. The choice is essentially between exhaustiveness and selection. At one end lies the view, which is best represented in the French approach, that all films deserve to be preserved irrespective of their nature, quality and commercial success because each constitutes a unique element of the country's historical and cinematographic memory. At the other end is the belief that collecting and preserving all works is neither feasible nor desirable and that the only sensible option is to take a selective approach.

(Gorini 2004: 4)

The Dutch practice of legal deposit is limited to films funded or co-funded by the government.

Until 1983, the responsibilities for the exploitation and conservation of animated films that were funded by the Dutch government was assigned to the government itself, through the Rijksvoorlichtingsdienst (RVD, the Government Information Service). This meant that the original negatives of the films were preserved at the Filmarchive of the RVD, which later became part of Sound and Vision. At least 32 independent animation productions are stored at Sound and Vision, including famous films such as *Home on the Rails* (Paul Driessen, 1981), *A Good Turn Daily* (Gerrit van Dijk, 1983) or *Anna En Bella* (Børge Ring, 1984).

In 1983, the Netherlands Film Fund was instigated and made responsible for the execution of government policy for subsidizing short animated films.<sup>5</sup> The year 1983 is an important turning point, because it was decided then, that the producers were to be the main holders of copyright and, as a consequence, they were also responsible for safeguarding master prints. Legal deposit was limited to a gentlemen's agreement that a print of each film should be donated to EYE. In retrospect, it is clear that this strategy has not proved successful. There was a lack of supervision in the process of deposit, and therefore the prints donated to the archives were often in a poor state, which resulted in extra costs for the required preservation of the films.<sup>6</sup> At the moment, the Netherlands Film Fund is in the process of revising the legal deposit regulations for all films that are financially supported by the fund. It is suggested that for future productions an analogue or digital master print should be made available for the archivists at EYE and that the costs of this duplicate should be part of the initial budget of the film production.<sup>7</sup>

5. 'Fonds voor de Nederlandse Film', in 1993 renamed as 'The Netherlands Film Fund' is the national agency responsible for supporting film production and cinema in the Netherlands. The Film Fund was founded in 1993 by merging two other funds. Its budget is provided by the government. It operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture and receives most of its funds on the basis of four-year policy plans. <http://www.filmfund.nl>.
6. Report of the Raad voor Cultuur (the statutory advisory body of government) (2005), *Deltaplanning voor het Filmbehoud*, Den Haag: Raad voor Cultuur, p. 17. [www.cultuur.nl](http://www.cultuur.nl).
7. <http://www.filmfonds.nl/nieuws/artikelen/1107>. Accessed March 2010.



Figure 6: Home on the Rails (Paul Driessen, 1981).

We listed 296 animation films made between 1945 and 2000, and only 70 of them were funded by the government. As mentioned before, these films are scattered between the two national archives. Films of one film-maker made before 1983 can be found in one archive, while films by the same person from later date can be found in another. Even more unclear is the situation for animated films, which are made without governmental funding, because there is still a lack of any formal regulation regarding a deposit system. In some cases only a worn-out distribution print is available in the archives or the issue of a deposit is just completely neglected by the production company or film-maker. This implies that a lot of work is still to be done. It is one of the reasons why the research of the Dutch Animation Film Collection was started and the first findings confirmed the urgency of the project. In 2006 the ambitious preservation project 'Images for the Future' ('Beelden voor de toekomst') was launched, which generated major government funding for the preservation and digitalization of the Dutch audio-visual heritage. The current research on animation is done in addition to this project.

### Defining a corpus of films

One of the first steps in the current research was to define the corpus of films we wanted to investigate. Considering limited time and funding, and in order to keep the research manageable, it was decided to concentrate on 'independently' produced animation films made from the early beginnings of film itself until 2005. Since the Netherlands has no tradition in animated features, the first draft of a working list contained nearly 400 animated shorts. The ultimate goal of the two-year project is to investigate all films on the list, to ensure that the best possible elements are safeguarded and available for active preservation in one of the national archives.

In selecting titles for our working list we were covering yet more unexplored ground, because there is no extant filmography of all Dutch animation films. We made use of the data already collected in the databases of the archives. There is valuable work done by publicists, focusing on specific periods or film-makers, but we still lack a complete overview with exact and complete information on all animated films made in the Netherlands.<sup>8</sup> In our research, we do not intend to write the definitive filmography of Dutch animation, but throughout the process we make data available to the national archives in order to complete the information on Dutch animation in their databases. For the compilation of a working list we further used a wide range of reference materials: for instance, printed sources published by organizations like the Holland Animation Association, active in the period 1973–2002, the Holland Animation Film Festival (from 1985 onwards) and the NIAf (since 1993), and annual reports and other publications produced by governmental and funding bodies, like the Netherlands Film Fund and the RVD Filmarchive. These remain important archival documents in their own right.

8. A selection of publications with filmographic information on Dutch animation are: Borsboom (1995), who presented a first draft of the period before 1940; the period of World War II is covered extensively by Peters and Barten (2000); and the period after the war is covered by, for example, Vries (1983). Further publications on specific film-makers: George Pal (Schepp and Kamphuis 1983), Joop Geesink (Vries and Mul 1984), Marten Toonder (Bishoff 1986), Nico Crama (Hogenkamp 2004), Gerrit van Dijk (Gloude-mans 1990), Paul de Nooijer (Elligens 1991) and Paul Driessen (Glassmann and Gloude-mans 2002).



Figure 7: HAFF catalogues.

One important reason to focus on independent productions first was the fact that in this category of films most information was available through a range of sources and contexts. More difficult to find is information about commissioned films, such as commercials or educational films made by animation studios like Dollywood, the Toonder Studio and many smaller production companies. The same problem is to be noted in the case of student films from the growing number of art academies offering animation in their curriculum, or the countless animations made for Internet applications and distribution. All information on categories of films we did not include in our current research will be made available for a follow-up research project, which undoubtedly is needed.

The working list includes 400 Dutch auteur films made between 1932 and 2005, and is intended to be a starting point for the practical research. During the project film-makers and producers are traced one by one, contacted, and they are requested to collaborate with the archives while their complete filmic oeuvre is being researched. In the process of selecting and discussing the storage of their original materials, often new information is gathered: from newspaper clippings, content on the Internet, administrative papers in personal archives of film-makers, production files and through the examination of film prints. The gathering of data is an ongoing process during the research. If conflicting data is found, for example the year of release or the exact length of the film, the scattered information is compared and evaluated in order to encourage the circulation of correct filmographic data.

### **Selecting material: a closer look at a few considerations**

During the research we focus on 'independently' produced Dutch animated films. When researching one oeuvre further information is found on titles already on our list, but often also on new titles. This calls for a continuous decision-making process about what to include in our research. Here we will briefly mention some of our considerations and our pragmatic solutions.

One of the issues encountered is the not always clear distinction between independent artistic productions and commissioned work, such as educational films and commercials. In theory, we observe on the one side total freedom of expression, and on the other side commissioner's control and restrictions. In reality, however, 'auteur art' and 'applied work' are often indistinguishable. An educational film such as *De goochelaar ontgoocheld* (Rupert van der Linden, 1958) was made for screenings in schools and was shown as a silent film on 16mm. In retrospect it is a forgotten drawn animation that marks the start of an interesting oeuvre of a professional artist. Recently the film was restored, and shown at the Netherlands Film Festival in 2010 as part of a retrospective for the senior director. After 52 years, he was invited to make a new music score to his debut film, which was originally commissioned as a silent film. Another example: *Drawn People* (1985) is a commissioned information film about drug addiction. It was produced at the Toonder Studio and directed by Harrie Geelen with great artistic freedom and it was rewarded the prize for Best Documentary at the



Figure 8: La donna è mobile (Monique Renault, 1993).

Netherlands Film Festival in 1985. We do not investigate the films of Harrie Geelen in the current research project because the major part of his oeuvre is considered to be commissioned work and produced by a commercial studio. But we certainly recommend his oeuvre to be the subject of research in a follow-up project.

In our research we focus on the Dutch Animation Collection, therefore the issue of nationality is inevitable. There are many cases of migrations, both Dutch directors who went abroad (such as Paul Driessen, Co Hoedeman, Piet Kroon) as well as foreign directors who came to work and live in the Netherlands (for example, Børge Ring, Monique Renault, Ellen Meske). Monique Renault is considered to be one of the auteurs of Dutch animation, but a film like *La donna è mobile* (1993) was commissioned by a French broadcast company. We decided to include her entire oeuvre and not dismiss the work she made abroad. Besides the mobility of people, there are also many international co-productions to be noticed. For instance, *3 Misses* (Paul Driessen, 1998) was produced by Nico Crama on behalf of the Flemish company CinéTé, in association with Channel 4 Television and La Sept ARTE. Still, this film belongs without question to our list. While some film festivals use complex scoring tables to decide on the nationality of a film production, we are inclined to be flexible and pragmatic in our distinction of Dutch versus non-Dutch animation films: a Dutch person is anybody who lived and worked for several years in the Netherlands and if any Dutch person was part of the crew and got one of the major credits in a production, we consider the result as part of the national film heritage. Some highlights of the Dutch film heritage might well be safeguarded in foreign archives, as is the case with the Canadian film productions of Paul Driessen, which are kept at the archives of the National Film Board of Canada.

On the level of the crew there is a distinction to be made between professionals and amateurs. However, the boundaries between these groups are often indistinct. For a long time, there was no formal training to be an animator in the Netherlands. Therefore many pioneers of Dutch animation could be seen as amateurs, such as Ed Tietjens, Emile Brumsteede or Maarten Visser. Since the 1980s animation film is part of the curriculum of an increasing number of art academies. The result is a growing amount of graduation films, which forms a category of its own, again with indistinct boundaries. Many student films have professional quality and could be seen as the starting point of a professional career as an artist. An early example is *Gerard* (1979), the graduation film of Evert de Beijer, which he made at the Netherlands Film Academy. For the moment, we have decided not to incorporate graduation films in our research, because it requires extended research to have a complete overview of all productions in this category. Again, follow-up research will be needed urgently to eliminate this lacuna and safeguard graduation films in a systematic way.

Another category that needs further attention in a follow-up research project is animation made for Dutch television, a history that goes back to the beginnings of Dutch television in the 1950s. Animation made for children has produced outstanding work, for example in the children's television

slots of 'Villa Achterwerk' for broadcasting company VPRO. A few examples of children's series are *Purno de Purno* (Marcus Vlaar, Hans Wessels and Michael Bas, 1989), *Verhalen van de boze heks* (Didi Hovingh, 1992), *Dat heeft ik weer* (Jola Hesselberth, 1993), *Sientje* (Christa Moesker, 2000) or *The White Cowboy* (Martin-Jan van Santen, 2000).

The choice to focus on independent shorts as a starting point, and not the above-mentioned categories, does not mean we exclude them. Once we encounter them during our research process, we act pragmatically and expect to include some commissioned films, student films and films made for television.

### **Presenting film heritage in a digital age**

Each country has its own solution for the choice between protection of intellectual property versus the stimulus of free access to cultural goods. The dilemma is to choose between either defending artists against unpaid and uncontrolled use ('piracy') or giving unlimited possibilities for film viewings on demand. Consequently, there are several different national copyright laws in existence. At the same time there is an uncontrolled development of global free access through the growth of the amount of websites containing international user-built collections of moving images, based on file sharing for free, such as YouTube. 'Both users and funding entities expect archives to make use of the possibilities offered by digital in terms of accessibility' (Fossati 2009: 63). The digital developments forces the film heritage institutions to rethink their primary tasks and functions, and to redefine the definition of qualified preservation and presentation.

The increasing possibilities to make film heritage accessible through the Internet at the same time poses the question of retaining the authenticity of the original source material and the loss of income issues that result from this. An animation film that was made on 35mm film loses its fundamental quality when it is transferred into a low-resolution digital file, the transformation means facing a reduction of scale and texture and sometimes even shape (the aspect ratio of the frame). On the economic level, a director or producer rarely takes a profit from this form of digital distribution through streaming video sites and social networks.

Film archives present their workflow of preservation and conservation at festivals and seminars, and also during in-house screenings and on the Internet. Online access to an audio-visual collection can take many forms and shapes: from putting information retrieval systems online to Internet formats with streaming media content or possibilities to download footage, to websites that contextualize film collections or where applications are developed to reuse archive material. An example of presenting the international animation film heritage on the Internet is the website <http://www.europafilmtreasures.eu>. As of summer 2010, it has streaming video versions of sixteen animation films, ranging from films made in 1912 to 1970. In this way archival appraisals can be shared with an

audience. In 2008, Sound and Vision launched a special application of Wikipedia, <http://www.beeldengeluidwiki.nl>, where Internet users are invited to help describe the collections. And at the same time the online Immix database offers professional users streaming video access to the digitized parts of the collection. EYE has developed web pages where the consumer can experience the film restoration process and is developing a context and streaming video website about film in the Netherlands, called <http://www.filminnederland.nl>. More Internet applications to access the Dutch film heritage are being developed at the moment.<sup>9</sup>

### To be continued ...

Technological developments in digital communication offers us both benefits and threats: information retrieval and storage are made easier but attracting attention for film heritage in the midst of an abundance of audio-visual stimuli is getting more difficult. The ultimate goal of all heritage researchers will be to keep memories alive, which implies also creating hierarchies and genealogies. Our research of a national collection of a specific part of film heritage is therefore not just an isolated inventory, but it is situated in a globally shared background of shifting values in the process of making meaning. Besides the question of how animation films are produced and distributed, another important question is how animation films are understood and experienced through the years. This involves knowledge of technology, aesthetics and social structures. To be able to answer this complex question, it is first of all necessary that animation films are archived and kept accessible for future generations.

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9. Several organizations, including EYE and Sound and Vision, are collaborating on an initiative that aims to make the Dutch audio-visual heritage available for consumers: <http://www.filmotech.nl/en/>. The website was launched at the end of 2010.

What it is like to restore old films can be experienced at the EYE web pages [http://filmrestauratie.filmmuseum.nl/index\\_uk.html](http://filmrestauratie.filmmuseum.nl/index_uk.html). At the time of writing a pilot version of the website <http://www.filminnederland.nl> is online, it will be developed further in 2011. Sound and Vision developed <http://waisda.nl>, an online game in which users are invited to describe film fragments from the collection.

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### Internet recommendations

<http://www.niaf.nl> (Netherlands Institute for Animation film)

<http://www.eyefilm.nl> (EYE Film Institute Netherlands)

<http://www.beeldengeluid.nl> (The Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision), see also <http://instituut.beeldengeluid.nl/index.aspx?ChapterID=8532>

<http://www.beeldenvoordetoekomst.nl/en> (Images for the Future)

<http://www.europafilmtreasures.eu/films/genre/animation-6-0.htm> (Europa Film Treasures)

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