

Jim's Curated List of Animated Films to Watch

June 25th 2022

Hello!

This list is a spread of some films that you may or may not have seen. Chances are, if you are relatively new to Animation, you won't have seen a lot of them but if you have, watch them, again with a critical eye.

They are a range of films made by people who are mostly now in the industry working in a proper 'money' way but equally a lot of them are films they've made off their own backs.

It is not meant to be a 'Best Of' or a 'Top Ten' (or however many there are), they are just a few from my archive which I love sharing. If you find any you think I'd like please, please email me them!

There's a huge array of different techniques, from traditionally drawn 2D to Stop Motion to CGI and some clever mixes of each. I could have made a list twice as long but it's probably enough to go on!

One of the things that makes animation so incredible is that the way a film is made (the technique) makes the story that much richer. Yes of course you can make a film about a story about a person who does this or does that. But amazing films come when you play around with a process of animation and find a story *within* it.

Most of these films simply couldn't be made in Live Action as it's the technique that forms part of the story.

What makes an animated film unique is not just the look but also *how* the director tells a story, and *what* story they choose to tell. It is also the actual skill of animation – this is something that you will always develop as an animator and is the nicest thing to play around with. Making an amazing film that has gorgeous animation (beautiful movement, convincing characters) is not a coincidence. A film is sometimes amazing because the animation is superb.

It is really important you begin to watch and re-watch these shorts. Try and pinpoint what you think works in them, whether they are your cup of tea or not. When making films it is always important to have an idea of what the film will feel like at the end. These examples begin to give you an idea of what they *could* do.

Some are very short and can be watched flippantly over a sandwich but some are longer and demand a proper sit down – if you can, play them large and loud (headphones or not) and uninterrupted. You'll get the most out of them that way. That's how the filmmaker made them to be watched.

These aren't just brilliant things to see and be inspired by, they are also brilliant things to share with your colleagues. They will then think you're that little bit more interesting than they initially thought you were. That's entirely how I've managed many of my friendships in the past. Little do they know I'm terribly dull with not much to contribute to this world.

And if you like any of these things then dig deeper and have a look at the directors' other work. You'll find some amazing things buried just under the surface.

I hope that's useful! Just ENJOY them!

All the best

Jim

18th June 2022

(oh – have a look at my work too!)

www.jimlefevre.com

Note: - Some films may not be 'rated' on Vimeo meaning, to view them, you should have a Vimeo account (which is free).

Click on the images to see the films - apologies if some links don't work. I checked them all this evening (25th June 2022) but who knows when you'll be watching!

Equally I hope all of the links to the director's pages work. Some are their websites, some their Vimeo pages but if you like what someone does it's a pretty sure thing they will have made more of a similar quality.

Dig into them and if the links are broken don't let that stop you digging!

Finally, I'm assuming you are have a grown-up mentality and will be able to judge any challenging films as they were intended.

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Stems - 2'24	Film Noir - 3'48
Bottle - 5'25	Mound - 4'23
Hi Stranger - 2'42	Wetlands (trailer) - 1'10
Mobious - 1'21	For Those I Love - 5'56
Nobody Beats the Drum - 2'50	Procrastination - 9'42
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Everything I Can See From Here - 6'58	The Ostrich - 1'45
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L'Ondée/The Rains - 7'27	The Walk - 1'37
Protecion - 1'30	The Golden Age of Insect Aviation - 0'10
(OO) - 6'13	Chronemics - 6'16
Feeling My Way - 5'38	Bees - 1'08
Nod. Wink. Horse - 4'42	The Magnificent Noodle - 1'43
Der Kleinere Raum (The Smaller Room) - 4'23	Symphony 42 - 9'42

1150 Canyon Road - 2'36

[Art & Graft](#)

2D Drawn/CGI set - Narrative



The nicest side of this film is the approach to telling a story through a single camera move. The camera is very much part of the story in the way it introduces (and hides) a variety of story elements. The sound being the second star here

Space Explorers - 1'26

[Gunner](#)

2D Drawn - Narrative

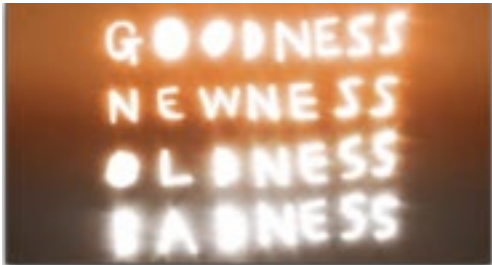


From the same people who did 'Mesh' (above) is a short 2D Drawn film mostly animated by someone called [Rachel Reid](#) who is an amazing 2D animator but obviously other people worked on it!

Goodness, Newness, Oldness, Badness - 1'30

[Mikey Please](#)

Stop motion - Narrative? Poetry?



Mikey is a stunning film maker. One of his other films, Eagleman Stag (link later in this doc) is a gorgeous narrative filmed in black and white but here, Mikey has a lot of fun with attitude, style and coolness and totally worth digging into his work.

This is almost a music video except he wrote it.

Mikey runs a studio called [Parabella](#) with his mate Dan Ojari who made a lovely film called '[Slow Derek](#)'.

Stems - 2'24

[Ainslie Henderson](#)

Stop motion - Narrative? Documentary? Heart breakingly beautiful.



Ahhhh... now this is one of those films you wish you had the skill and mentality to make.

So clever, beautiful and charming. The best thing, for me, is the way the narrative of the film is entirely expressed in the technique.

Mesh - 0'55

[Gunner](#)

3D CGI/2D Drawn/mixed - Narrative
Beautifully off-kilter



A beautifully odd short piece made by a collective called Gunner. It was just an experiment in technique which you can see a little bit of in the making of (below). The nicest thing about the making of is seeing the director 'explain' the feeling of the film just with some nonsense sounds and actions. These are actually really useful things to do when making a short.

Making of: <https://player.vimeo.com/video/195320733>

Bottle - 5'25

[Kirsten Lepore](#)

Stop motion - Narrative



This was Kirsten's graduation film. Not only is it a lovely story but also, as you watch it, think of her camped out in the locations animating it.

There's a great making of here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkgJ6ROS_H8

Click on the images for links to the films

Hi Stranger - 2'42

[Kirsten Lepore](#)

Stop motion - Narrative (I guess?)



Unsettling but just mesmerising. I love Kirsten's stuff so much.

"Do you like my butt?"



Eagleman Stag - 8'55

[Mikey Please](#)

Stop motion - Narrative



I mentioned Mikey Please earlier. This is his graduation film from the RCA I think.

The story is superbly written and the voice over just makes the film, but hidden within it are some shots that, as an animator/filmmaker, still blow me away

Mobious - 1'21

[Eness](#)

Stop motion - Choreography perhaps?



I showed this to you in the talk. It's lovely.

A group called Eness made this. It's so clever and beautiful. Shows what you can do with the simplest of ideas and animating with BIG things.

Amaro and Walden's Joyride - 1'50

[The Line \(collective\)](#)

Drawn/Live Action - Narrative NSFW.



These guys (The Line) are a really talented bunch of animators. This is a kind of 'process test' film - a simple idea they had one day and very quickly took it to the point they could make a film with.

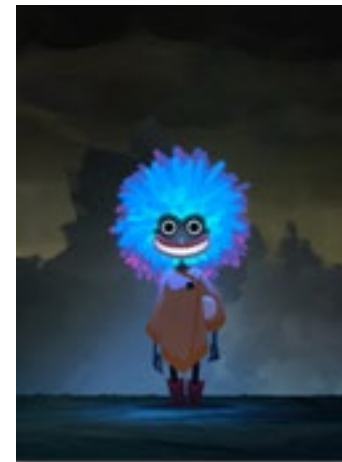
Nobody Beats the Drum - 2'50

[Rogier Van de Swaag](#)

Stop motion - Music Promo



Ok - so this is pretty full on but I love it none the less. Again, it's like the Mobious/Eness film above - simple objects pushed to their extreme - but smaller and more persistent.



Everything I Can See From Here - 6'58

[The Line \(collective\)](#)

Drawn - Narrative

To really comprehend how different this film is **you really should watch it on an ipad in portrait mode**. They were nominated for a BAFTA for this but didn't get it and I think the reason being that most BAFTA members would have watched it on a TV screen. Stunning story too.

Click on the images for links to the films

Travelling Light - 1'53

[Jane Aaron](#)

Stop motion - Narrative



An old film (1985 I think) but superbly clever, doing things that make you think deeply about how she does them as much as what story she is telling.

So very very clever.

Five Minutes to Sea - 7'07

[Natalia Mirzoyan](#)

2D Drawn - Observational Narrative



There is a strand of animation which is loosely termed as Observational Narrative. Here, a simple narrative (in this case a girl being forced to wait until she can go back into the sea) is used as a landscape to drape some wonderful character observations.

Just lovely.

Peripetics - 3'20

[Zeitguised](#)

CGI - Abstract



This is what happens when you just enjoy and explore what something can do with no limitations. I absolutely love this film even though it is quite abstract. It can't help but delight and confuse you.

L'Ondée/The Rains - 7'27

[David Coquard](#)

2D Drawn - Observational Narrative



Another example of what sound (and music) does for films. With this one you really must make sure you set aside an uninterrupted time to watch it – go full screen, whack the volume up, close the curtains and just enjoy.

What is the main character? The city or the storm?

His other film '[Periphéria](#)' is amazing too, although a little more harrowing.

Protecion - 1'30

[Steve Briand](#)

2D drawn - Documentary/Motion Graphics



Cool process exploration of stop motion to a good beat.

(OO) - 6'13

[Seoro Oh](#)

2D Drawn - Narrative (sensory)



Cleverest title award (you'll get it).

A fabulous little film about what it's like to sneeze.

This is the kind of film that uses animation to convey something any other medium can't.

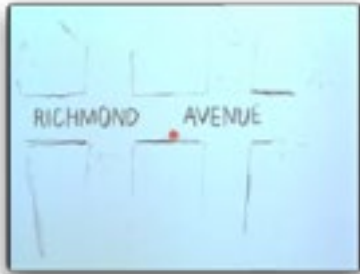
Also check out [Afternoon Class](#). So good.

Click on the images for links to the films

Feeling My Way - 5'38

[Jonathon Hodgson](#)

2D Drawn/Live Action - Narrative



In the mid 90s to early '00s there was an influx of amazing filmmakers such as Stuart Hilton, Richard Kenworthy, Smith & Foulkes

Feeling My Way (and Hilton's '[6 Weeks in June](#)') was one of those that changed people's approaches to what you could do forever.

Coda- 9'00

[Alan Holly](#)

2D Drawn - Narrative

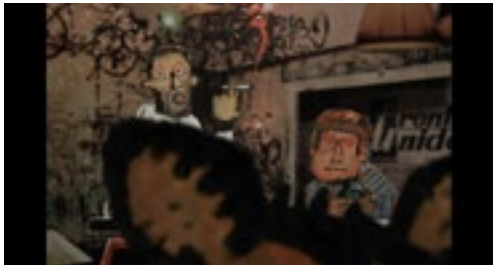


There are so many traditional films that hit amazing spots but there's something that pulls me back to Coda if I want a fix of calm, emotionally powerful quiet and beautiful characters.

Nod. Wink. Horse - 4'42

[Ollie Magee](#)

Cut Out/Stop Motion - Narrative



I truly love how disconcerting this is.

Ollie discovered he wanted to make a film that was pretty much entirely obscured by a horse and it is superb.

A great interview on the [process and approach here](#).

Glass Onion - 5'56

[Alasdair and Jock](#)

Stop Motion - Music Promo



A gorgeous exploration of lots of stop motion tricks for a reversioned music video for the Beatles 'Glass Onion' track from the White Album.

They seem to have done quite a few other Beatles reversioning amongst toher films and they are all wonderful so it's worth digging here.

Also of interest is [the 40 second making of](#).

Der Kleinere Raum (The Smaller Room) - 4'23

[Cristobal Leon and Nina Wehrle](#)

Stop Motion - Narrative (allegorical)



What do you mean you grew a forest of wolfs and jackdaws out of your mouth as an allegory for childhood innocence?

Creepy but utterly seductive showcasing the balance of technical approach to the mise-en-scene of a place.

Two other shorts [Luis](#) and [Lucia](#) are as amazing but wait until you watch the Feature length [Wolf House](#). Absolutely beggars belief that they made this.

Foggy Bumner - 0'35

[Barnbrook](#)

Typography - Documentary



These were made in Scotland in the late 90's and were a series of typography based films during a huge resurgence of this approach with [David Carson's Emigré](#) magazines and the record label 4AD who released all of the Pixies and Breeders albums.

If you like type you will like [Barnbrook](#).

Getting Started - 2'01

[Willam Crook](#)

Pixillation - Narrative



2 minutes and one second of utter joy. This is exactly what Animation can do for the audience. Clever, funny, poetic, smooth. I just love showing people this.

The technique is called 'Pixillation' for some reason (coined many decades ago before computers) and refers to stop motion with real humans. Check these ones out - [Pascel Baers' '46 bis'](#) and [Norman McLaren's 'Neighbors'](#)

Film Noir - 3'48

[Osbert Parker](#)

Collage/Stop Motion - Narrative?



A very clever, well plumbed idea with a mesmerising approach.

Osbert has made another film like this called '[Yours Truly](#)' which I can't find the full film but it's beautiful.

Mound - 4'23

[Allison Schulnik](#)

Stop Motion - Fine Art



Allison Schulnik is a multi-disciplinary (uses lots of techniques) artist. Mound is a wonderful jump into movement of which she regularly explores in different ways. Worth digging into if you're quite Fine Art-y.

Wetlands (trailer) - 1'10

[Jane Cheadle](#)

Stop Motion - Experimental



Such a delicious piece of animation. Jane Cheadle's stuff may initially feel so very different but as it unfolds you understand where she's going and just delight in seeing her explore the forms.

Bizarrely this actually made me salivate. Too much info? Sorry.

For Those I Love - 5'56

[Brent Patterson](#)

Photogrammetry - Music Promo



I love Photogrammetry - the process of using scanned scenes (mostly from photos) to construct a CG set but when I saw this I just had to watch it in a dark cinema with the lights turned off and the music loud.

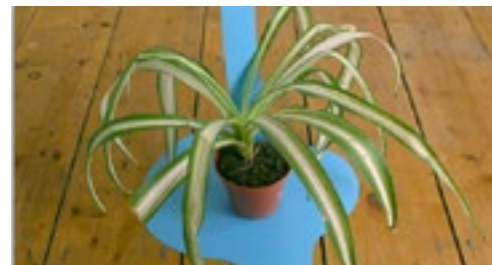
Incredible.

Also worth digging into his tests and experiments on his Vimeo page.

Procrastination - 9'42

[Johnny Kelly](#)

Mixed Approaches - Narrative



The voice over and script beautifully pull you along in this film. This was Johnny's RCA graduation piece and is a delight to watch over and over again. I love showing this to all ages as literally everyone finishes the film feeling so rewarded.

He has made so many other films and commercials of equal charm and varied approaches and are all worth chasing through his site.

Fresh Guacamole - 1'41

[PES](#)

Stop motion - Narrative



You've probably seen this guy's work before but if not then just enjoy the beauty of his cleverness. Also a perfect example of what sound does for films.

Dig into his work.

I Live In The Woods - 3'26

[Max Winston](#)

Stop motion - Narrative



This is a little gory but it's a very strong piece. Max is as mad as a bag of frogs but as talented as a set of kitchen knives.

NSFW-ish

Geile Weine - 0'26

[Lucas Zanotto](#)

Model/Live Action - moments



I love Lucas' stuff. This one and the one below are on the outliers of animated films as they are obviously part puppet/model. But to me this is still animation and such a clever skill to create emotive scenes with such little 'movement'.

Animation is about building worlds and this fulfills that brief with elegance and simplicity.

CNN Colorscope - Orange - 1'30

[Emmanuelle Walker](#)

2D drawn - Documentary/Motion Graphics



From a wonderful series commissioned by CNN. Emmanuelle is an illustrator foremost and a fabulous animator second. Her books are worth following too.

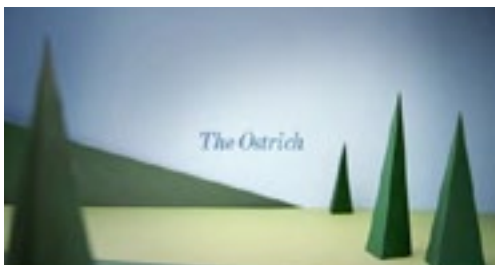
Check out the rest of the CNN colourscope stories too for some other superb motion graphic films. There are about ten.

<https://edition.cnn.com/specials/health/colorscope>

The Ostrich - 1'45

[Lucas Zanotto](#)

Puppet - Narrative



As above, a very simple, charming use of models with a tiny bit of animation to make it that much sweeter.

Tough - 1'30

[Jennifer Zheng](#)

2D Drawn - Documentary



A truly remarkable, quiet film based around an interview Jennifer did with her Mum about her childhood.

Documentary and animation go so well together, as you can see, in ways that traditional Live Action and Documentary simply can't even touch.

Click on the images for links to the films

The Walk - 1'37

[Art & Graft](#)

Drawn - Narrative



I use this a lot when talking about composition and compositing. It's a truly charming piece using the artworks of an artist called Eric Ravilious as its style base. Look at the timing and pacing, especially the length of shots and when the action happens in between them.

Bees - 1'08

[Ricard Badia](#)

CGI - Narrative



With a tight design sensibility and a charming use of textures this communicates such beautiful characters in a super short space of time.

Ricard is actually also part of Animade, the collective who made Chronemics (the previous film)

The Golden Age of Insect

Aviation - 0'10

[Wayne Unten](#)

Live Action/2D Drawn



Short (very short) and very sweet.

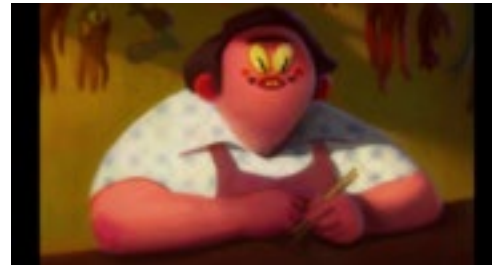
The Magnificent Noodle - 1'43

[Anat Efrati \(& Yannay Matarasso\)](#)

2D Drawn (I think) - Surreal

A super surreal sensibility and wonderful pacing.

Magnificent it surely is.



Chronemics - 6'16

[Animade \(collective\)](#)

2D Drawn - Narrative



A superb 2D drawn film which has style at the heart of the story and some excellent character animation.

Symphony 42 - 9'42

[Reka Bucsi](#)

2D Drawn - Documentary

Here is a longer-ish film of such beautiful construct it should send you off with a warm, if not strange, glow.

A series of strange vignettes unconnected yet somehow connected.



All the best
xxx Jim

www.jimlefevre.com