

https://dspace.org/

2D Animation: The Key to Growth and Adaptation of the South African Animation Ecosystem

Gardiner, Eric

2024
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/44674

Gardiner, Eric. (2024). 2D Animation: The Key to Growth and Adaptation of the South African Animation Ecosystem [Master's dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg]. WIReDSpace. https://hdl.handle.net/10539/44674

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

2D Animation: The Key to Growth and Adaptation of the South African Animation Ecosystem

Eric Gardiner
1851866



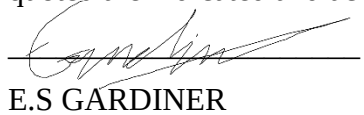
A Research Report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Digital Arts in the field of Digital Animation by Research and Creative work.

Supervisor: Stephen Cloete

2024

Declaration

I hereby declare that the dissertation submitted for the partial completion of a degree of Master of Digital Arts in the Department of Digital Arts, at the Faculty of Humanities, The University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, is my original work and has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher learning. I further declare that all the sources cited or quoted are indicated and acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references.



E.S GARDINER

1851866

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my family for their support in my academic career, my supervisor Stephen Cloete for his valuable feedback and Kieran Ried for approving my financial support.

Table of Contents

Declaration..... 2

Acknowledgement..... 2

Table of Contents..... 3

List of Figures..... 5

Chapter 1: Introduction..... 7

1.1 Background and Definitions..... 7

1.2 Aims and Objective..... 8

1.3 Structure of this Paper..... 8

1.4 Research Methodology..... 9

Chapter 2: Literature Review..... 11

2.1 History, Influences and Animation Techniques in South Africa..... 11

2.1.1 History of Puppetry in South Africa..... 13

2.1.2 History of 3D CGI Animation in South Africa..... 13

2.1.3 History of 2D Animation in South Africa..... 14

2.1.4 History of 2D/3D Hybrid, Stop Motion and Other Animation Methods in South Africa..... 15

2.1.5 The Role of Comic Art in South African Animation..... 16

2.2 Decoloniality and Indigenous Knowledge Research Paradigm..... 17

2.3 The Cultural Role of Animation in a World of Accelerating Globalisation…… 20

2.4 The Challenges Limiting Industry Growth..... 25

2.4.1 A Lack of Funding Opportunities..... 26

2.4.2 Consumption Shortfall..... 27

2.4.3 Government Support and the SABC..... 30

2.4.4 An Exodus of Skills..... 32

Chapter 3: Archiving South African Animation..... 35

3.1 Sourcing Material..... 35

3.2 Archive Data Visualisation..... 37

Chapter 4: The Adaptation of South African Animators..... 43

4.1 Supply, Demand and Value Generation..... 43

4.2 Business Model Case Studies..... 43

4.2.1 Model 1: Youtube and Self Publishing Online..... 44

4.2.2 Model 2: In-House Productions Funded from Service Work..... 46

4.2.3 Model 3: T.V. and Streaming..... 47

4.3 Key Takeaways Across the Case Studies..... 49

Chapter 5: Developing and Animated South African Short Film..... 51

5.1 Funding for First Time Animators..... 51

5.2 Support Networks..... 52

5.3 Choosing a Genre, Story and Target Audience..... 52

5.4 Defining South African Aesthetics..... 54

5.5 Animation Pipeline Development..... 56

5.6 Pitching..... 66

Chapter 6: Results and Discussion..... 68

6.1 What is the Consensus Among Industry Professionals..... 68

6.2 A Clearer Picture on the Adaptation in South Africa..... 69

6.3 A Pitch to Answer the Call for Afrimation..... 70

6.4 Being Intentional About Driving a Digital Revolution in Africa..... 71

Chapter 7: Conclusion..... 73

7.1 Summary..... 73

7.2 Further Recommended Research..... 74

List of Figures

Fig.1 *Perceived best distribution platform for 2D animated shows*..... 19

Fig.2 *Perceived ability of 2D South African animation to contribute to cultural unity and identity*..... 24

Fig.3 *Perceived limiting factors towards development in the local animation industry*..... 26

Fig.4 *Perceived South African demand for 2D South African animation*..... 28

Fig.5 *Perceived demand for 2D South African animation from outside South Africa*..... 29

Fig.6 *Perceived financial viability of South African themed 2D animated shows*.... 29

Fig.7 *Perceived preparedness of industry graduates in animation from South African institutions*..... 33

Fig.8 *Perceived animation medium with lowest barrier to entry for South African animators*..... 34

Fig.9 *Pie chart of South African produced animation by format*..... 38

Fig.10 *Pie chart of South African produced animation by medium*..... 39

Fig.11 *Histogram of South African produced animation by medium 1915 - 1999*..... 40

Fig.12 *Histogram of South African produced animation by medium 2000 - 2023*..... 41

Fig.13 *Perceived demand for factors among consumers of 2D animation*..... 53

Fig.14 *Fig.14 Left: The 1day 1day Show characters by Street Carnivore (2020) Right: characters from Rick and Morty by Justin Roiland (2013)*…….. 55

Fig.15 *Left: character design by Mogau Kekana (2023), right: character designs by Terence Maluleke (2020)*..... 56

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and Definitions

The distribution and consumption patterns of digital entertainment media play a pivotal role in shaping our societal norms and reflect the international power dynamics present in our world (Flew, 2016). Currently the cultural ideologies of the dominating players such as America, Japan and other western powers are consumed and infused into African and other cultures as their media is distributed and consumed on a global scale (Westcott, 2011, pp.253-259). The imbalance of representation is apparent when contrasting these established products with African media that has been mostly excluded from major media distribution and exhibition circuits (Callus, 2016, p.1). The imbalance of African representation in global culture needs to be challenged. Currently animation consumption around the world is booming thanks to the growing number of production technologies and distribution platforms (Mukherjee and Sobhakar, 2020, p.82). The medium of animation allows artists to create very specific messages, infuse culture and ideologies and use it as a means to bring about social change among the viewers. “Localised animation” is defined for the purpose of this paper as animation that includes visuals, characters, narrative, themes, music or any other characteristic that points towards a South African setting in such a way that a South African viewer could discern that the animation is set in their country. South Africa, being home to several specialised animation training institutions and production companies, is poised to take advantage of the global digital media market by accelerating the production of localised and high quality 2D animation. Definition of 2D animation and other techniques is included in Chapter 2. This paper highlights the role that 2D animation plays in the South African animation industry and ecosystem. Within this paper the animation *ecosystem* refers to all activities and artefacts connected to the production of animation. This includes but is not limited to training, research, businesses, hobbyist and consumer activities as well as the social and cultural effects brought about by animation. When speaking to the animation *industry,* this term refers to the economic activity of the businesses of producing animation as consumer products. *Industry professionals*, who provided questionnaire responses as part of the data collection for this paper are individuals that have been employed at animation studios in South Africa for a period longer than 5 years. These

respondents were primarily identified through Linked-In, and contacted based on their public credentials.

1.2 Aims and Objective

This paper is an active effort towards addressing the underrepresentation or false representation of Africa in the global media pool. This should form a part of the wider effort among African creatives to lift the continent onto the world stage. It has the aim of understanding and stimulating the development of locally themed intellectual property (IP) by providing a resource that entry-level animators can use to improve their chances of success in the local and international market. The aim is to collect critical information about the animation industry and ecosystem in South Africa through surveys and business model case study analysis. This information will be digested with a focus of identifying the best practices for success and the obstacles to overcome when producing South African themed animated media. Another aim is to archive the existing South African produced animation, as the few existing archives of this type of material are hard to access and often incomplete. Lastly, this paper's accompanying practical component, a pitch for a South African themed animated short film, aims to take practical action towards realising the pro-African-representation rhetoric of this paper. The overarching aim is to unearth the techniques that will be most valuable to South African animators. A greater volume of localised animation aims towards building a unified cultural identity in South Africa and a more just representation in the global, digital cultural melting pot.

1.3 Structure of this Paper

This paper opens with a brief overview of the history of each major animation technique used in South Africa. This is followed by a review of the existing theory and documentation surrounding the local and global cultural phenomena that contemporary animations operate within. This discussion revolves around the challenges limiting local growth, the agenda of decolonisation and the role of cultural values in a world of globalisation. In order to build deeper insights within

each of these topics, data from a questionnaire completed by 13 industry professional South African animators is interspersed across the chapters. The second section of the paper utilises case study analyses in combination with data on the number and frequency of local productions to build a clearer picture of what strategies South Africans have developed over time to build successful businesses. Based on the findings a design is proposed for a pipeline that uses 2D/3D hybrid methods. The pipeline aims to provide an optimal method for start-up animators that need to maximise quality, affordability and production speed.

Finally, the paper draws some key conclusions about the current local animation ecosystem and the future trajectory for animation in South Africa. The paper proposes key changes that need to occur at different touchpoints, such as government policy, educational curriculums and in industry, with the goal of stimulating the production of more South African themed content. This paper is accompanied by a practical manifestation of the theories it develops: an example pitch bible for an animated short film. The pitch bible attached in annexure: F has been developed as the practical component in fulfilment of the degree of Master of Digital Arts in the Department of Digital Arts, at the Faculty of Humanities, The University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

1.4 Research Methodology

This paper adopts a mixed-methods research design, collecting data from multiple sources. The first source of information comes from the analysis of existing research material on the field of animation in South Africa. Common findings across the existing literature are conglomerated to build a picture of the academic perceptions and knowledge on animation in South Africa. This will also provide an insight into where the gaps in knowledge exist, specifically in relation to the role of 2D animation techniques in the ecosystem. This will inform what aspects of the South African animation ecosystem will require further investigation. The second source of data is collected in a questionnaire survey that was sent to industry professionals. The identities of these individuals are kept anonymous as a part of ensuring best ethical practices in my research. The survey data is used to support or contrast the claims about South African animation trends and challenges that are made by the existing literature. The questionnaire data also aims to uncover industry insights on the resources and support structures available in South Africa. The next

source of data is extracted from the creation of an archive of Animation. Here as many existing records as I could source are compiled to form a catalogue of animated shows, films, shorts, short films and trailers. This catalogue includes animated content produced in South Africa and is divided into South African themed animation and non-South African themed animation. Where available, this archive includes links to videos uploaded to YouTube that provide a resource for reference and stylistic inspiration for artists who may be developing South African themed animation. Data on trends, such as the number and type of productions is visualised in order to form a clearer picture of history and future trajectories. The fourth source of information comes from a case study analysis that aims to uncover the business models that South African animators have used when producing localised animation. The adaptation strategies of the business models are examined, and a selection of examples are grouped into three major categories based on commonalities in how they were distributed. This case study also illustrates the pros and cons of the prominent strategies used by animators in South Africa and provides a resource for prospective animators to build an effective strategy of their own that best suits their context and access to resources. The final component of the research methodology will apply the theoretical findings to illustrate and write a pitch bible for a 2D/3D hybrid South African animated short film. This pitch bible will apply the research on narrative design, visual content development, world building, and character design from this thesis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter four prominent discourses pertinent to South African animation are explored. Firstly, the techniques and their histories. This is where the majority of South African university research output has been focused with the bulk of documentation originating from The University of The Witwatersrand by Kelly Walker (2019), Tanya Blaeser (2017), Shanaz Shapurjee (2008), Andrew Haycock (2010) and Roland Kangong (2010) followed by The University of Cape Town by Craig Lowman, Mikael Samuelsson and Geoff Bick (2020) and Arabella Rogerson (2023). Secondly the topic of industry growth and its challenges is examined. This aspect of South African animation is often the focus of national or governmental institutions such the South African Cultural Observatory (2022) whose mandate often revolves around industry analysis and supporting economic growth in South Africa. The third topic is the discourse on decolonisation and indigenous knowledge as a research paradigm. As Africa frees itself from the hegemony of western colonial powers this topic becomes pertinent to every piece of knowledge that is generated. The value of addressing this facet is to work towards undoing the deeply ingrained colonial ideologies about what is valued most in research, in our society and who is given power. Among the African theorists that research this topic are Abeba Birhane (2020), Obioha Uwaezuoke Precious (2010) and Abebe Zegeye & Maurice Vambe (2006) who build the foundational material for this topic. The last discourse pertinent to animation is the topic of culture and identity. Most literature on this topic originates from career academics and media theorists such as Alessandro Jedlowski (2016), Joseph Izang Azi (2012) and Paula Callus (2012, 2015, 2016, 2018). The discussion reveals the influences of animation on the behaviour and attitudes of people and what value lies in modernising and transforming our culture through animation as South Africans.

2.1 History, Influences and Animation Techniques in South Africa

This paper takes a broad approach to defining animation and employs the commonly accepted notion that core to animation is the enactment of illusory life or motion (Martinez, 2015). Additionally, the animation should constitute the primary effect of the production. While the visual effects ecosystem in South Africa is substantial and has crossovers with the other animation techniques, effective research into the topic should incorporate research on film,

television and gaming. While the visual effects industry is acknowledged as a key facet of the animation economy, it has been excluded from the scope of this paper.

Animation in South Africa has a diverse and rich history that arguably stretches back to the rock art of the San people. San rock art incorporated principles of animation and can be considered evidence of an ancient mixed medium form of shadowgraphy animation (Flett and Letley, 2013 p.4). Since then, techniques such as stop motion, puppetry, 2D cel and digital animation, 3D CGI animation and more have been used by South Africans to earn a living as animators and express their creativity as artists.

The history of animation in South Africa has recently been documented in a number of publications that provide details on the historical figureheads and technical development of animation in South Africa (Walker, 2019, Haycock, 2010, Rogerson, 2023, Callus, 2016). This existing research paints a picture of South African animation history as having seen significant booms in two key areas that were pioneered in distinct periods of South Africa's past. Firstly, in puppetry, and secondly in 3D CGI/VFX. Documentation that focuses on the technique of 2D digital animation and other methods is less prevalent and indicates a gap in records. Research for this paper uncovered a large quantity of 2D productions originating in South Africa. This technique has undoubtedly also played a significant role in the local industry despite a lack of documentation on it. This paper will work towards filling in this gap in knowledge by maintaining a focus on the role of 2D animation in the South African animation ecosystem.

The following sections will briefly summarise the history of the animation techniques that have been used in South Africa. Separating the history into each of the primary technologies provides insight on how adoption happened at different rates and what we might improve when adopting the newest animation technologies going forward. Discussed as well is the pivotal role of comic art in supporting animation throughout its history.

2.1.1 History of Puppetry in South Africa

Puppetry is an animation technique wherein a puppeteer creates a performance using poseable puppets, mannequins, costumes or objects used for casting shadows (Trimingham, 2011). The performance may be for a live audience or recorded and viewed electronically. Literature on puppetry places its first use in Africa by the Egyptians around 4000BC as mannequins have been found in tombs (Blumenthal, 2005). The first occurrence of puppet shows in their modern form in South Africa is said to have been performed for an adult audience sometime between 1805 and 1837 in Cape Town (Kruger, 2011, pp.13 -14). For a while puppetry existed mostly as an entertainment medium for adults in South Africa. Following the introduction of television in the 1970s the SABC animation unit supported the growth of a number of predominantly Afrikaans puppet shows for children (Kruger, 2011, p.13). *Liewe Heksie* (Vels,1978) is a prime example, an Afrikaans children's show that followed the story of a beloved whimsical witch in a fantasy world with elves. This spurt in puppetry and stop motion animation is also attributed to the techniques being accessible for creatives in a climate where formal training and expertise was limited (Rogerson, 2023). Roderick Campbell, an influential puppet maker from this period has a youtube channel (2012) with a number of videos that constitute a good portion of the limited available video material detailing the techniques used in South Africa. It should be noted that during its height, puppetry in South Africa remained reserved for the colonial ruling class. South African visual characteristics were not prominent in these shows, as they opted to emulate western themes. Post 1994 puppetry has seen a shift to being a prominent technique used in theatre performances (Kruger, 2011). It has also seen a case of success through the children's programme *Takalani Sesame* (2000) a very popular adaptation of the internationally popular *Sesame Street* (1969).

2.1.2 History of 3D CGI Animation in South Africa

3D CGI animation can trace its origins to The University of Utah in the 1960s. Its mainstream adoption began in the USA in the early 1980's (Wang & Zhong, 2023, p.2). The animation technique can be defined by the use of digital technologies to render and deform 3D models. Due to a smaller market and a lack of skills development and funding, CGI only arrived in South

Africa about 10 years later. The first documented 3D CGI animation was produced in South Africa in the form of 3D logos animated by Hilton Treves between the years 1988 and 1990 (Walker, 2019, pp.37-39). Following this, fully CGI commercials were produced in South Africa for the first time in 1991 for *Volkskas*, echoing the age-old role that advertising has played as a lifeline for animation workers in South Africa. In the early 2000s 3D computer animation proliferated in South Africa following the global adoption of the technique (Rogerson, 2023). This had been spurred by large American studios such Pixar and Blue Sky who invested heavily into the technology. The industry grew in South Africa following a boom in demand from the advertising sector and studios started to produce shows and movies in 3D. The evolution of 3D CGI technologies continues to this day. Local studios have refined their mastery and built sustainable business models by outsourcing to western productions (Rogerson, 2023, p.4).

2.1.3 History of 2D Animation in South Africa

2D animation encompasses both digital and traditional techniques used to create the illusion of motion through the rapid sequencing of two-dimensional frames (Stefyn, 2022). This technique sees its origin in China in 180 AD by Ting Huan, with the invention of the zoetrope, a cylindrical device that when spun animated a sequence of frames rendered on the inside (Warnecke, 2016). A modern version of the device appeared in Victorian England in 1834 and spread across Europe. Subsequently the flip book was patented in 1868 in England and the praxinoscope, a further evolution of the zoetrope, in France in 1892. The first of these devices is said to have been brought to South Africa in 1895 (Gutsche, 1946). Despite the presence of the technology, there is no record of animations produced locally until 1916 which came in the form of *drawtoons*, a method of sequential drawings, from the film *The Artist's Dream* by American immigrant Harold Shaw (Callus, 2018).

The first cel animation was created in America a year earlier in 1915. This technique optimised animation by separating the character body parts and backgrounds into separate layers. The technology spread rapidly and by the mid-1920s Disney was captivating audiences with sophisticated 2D cell animation (Warnecke, 2016). Cell animation made its first appearance in

South Africa in the 1940s. The technique was employed by *Alpha Film Studios* in the production of adverts, short films, titles, special effects and transitions. In 1956 *Alpha Film Studios* acquired an animation stand with an aerial image feature which streamlined their production drastically as there had previously been a lack of animation equipment in South Africa due to the high costs (Shapurjee, 2008, pp.36-39). Since then, the South African animation industry has seen the rise and fall of various studios that employed 2D animation technologies to produce animation for the local market, the high turnover in the mid to late 1900s is attributed to the international embargoes on South Africa during apartheid that prevented South African companies from providing services to developed countries (Haycock, 2010, p.74). Following the end of Apartheid and the emergence of 2D digital animation technologies such as Adobe Flash, South African studios such as *Mind's Eye Creative* have seen success in working on 2D animated shows for foreign clients. As of recently we have also seen the emergence of locally produced and African themed 2D animated shows such as *Twende* (2023). As of 2024 there has been no full-length feature film produced in 2D, excluding a 90 minute animation of a static character meditating created by Mike Scott, titled *Bru & Boegie: The Movie* (2019).

2.1.4 History of 2D/3D Hybrid, Stop Motion and Other Animation Methods in South Africa

Due to the flexible nature of the art form, animation can be produced using a broad range of materials and methods that can escape conventional groupings. South African artists William Kentridge and Naomi van Niekerk animate straight ahead, using charcoal and sand respectively. In addition to the use of claymation by local animators, Roger Hawkins created a very distinct style of stop motion animation called "Junkmation " that used stop motion puppets made from rubbish. The first known instance of 2D/3D CGI hybrid animation in South Africa was produced by *Digital Direction* in the form of an advert created for Simba Chips's *Roar With Flavour* campaign in the early 1990s. It featured a 3D background and 2D character (Walker, 2019, p.41). The use of 2D/3D hybrid animation as a medium for creating localised long form animation can be first observed in the children's show *URBO: The Adventures of Pax Afrika* (2006) produced by Octagon CSI (De Beer, 2016). The creators of the show employed a number of limited animation techniques in order to meet a restrictive budget (Walker, 2019, p.51). The presence of

this variety of niche methods is indicative of a diverse fine arts community in South Africa. Experimentation with new and mixed mediums is valuable for its potential in driving innovation and invention locally. Examples of media ecosystems that intersect with the local animation industry are film, fine arts, graphic design and comic art.

2.1.5 The Role of Comic Art in South African Animation

Comic books and comic art have played an under-documented, but key role in developing the animation ecosystem in South Africa. Jonas Lekganyane, creator of the popular animated series *Adventures Of Noko Mashaba* (2013) attributes his entry into 2D animation through an interest in drawing comics (Sidogi, 2021). An upcoming comic book *Tales of Langa (2024)* created by Raphael Griffiths and Ndumiso Nyoni is set to form the basis for an 2D animated T.V. show titled *Zwide*. *Supa Strikas (2001)*, a popular soccer comic in South Africa precipitated an extremely popular animated show of the same name. The reverse transmedia process can also be observed in the example of the 2D animated film *Kariba (2018)* that failed to see the necessary funding for production and instead was adapted into a graphic novel of the same name. These examples highlight how the South African animation ecosystem is intertwined with the comic art ecosystem. The structure of sequential frames within comic art share common ground with the animation process, particularly in the storyboarding process that consists of sequential images (Atkinson, 2009, p.265). Studies that examine the relationship between comic art and animation such as Drew Morton's article *Sketching Under the Influence? Winsor McCay and the Question of Aesthetic Convergence Between Comic Strips and Film* (2010) highlight that comics played a key role in the early development of animation in America. The link between Japanese manga and anime also demonstrates how integral the comic art ecosystem is for the development of animation around the globe. The crossover of skills and principles such as gesture drawing, narrative construction, timing and colour theory that are necessary for both animation and comic art suggest that aspiring animators can leverage comic art as a tool to bridge quickly into animation. Further research on the relationship of the mediums in the South African context could be valuable in understanding how supporting comic book artists can increase the pace of local animation development through new visual and narrative techniques. South African artist Mogau Kekana has produced shorts on his Instagram page(2024) that demonstrate the continued

presence of comic-animation crossovers in South Africa. The recent international popularity of animated films that utilise comic book effects such as *Spider Man Into The Spider Verse* (2018), its sequel *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* (2023) and *Entergalactic* (2022) demonstrate that the demand for this style is quite high. South African artists can evolve these techniques and trends from internationally popular works into their localised work in order to increase the competitiveness of their products. Because animation production can take several years it is important for artists to use an approach wherein they observe the currently popular media, and conceptualise what future media trends could be spurred by the current ones. Adopting trends from the global market comes with the significant risk of simply emulating the work of others and diluting one's own cultural authenticity. Thus, it is important for artists to maintain a South African centric mindset when conceptualising what will become popular in the future.

2.2 Decoloniality and Indigenous Knowledge Research Paradigm

The idea of "indigenous knowledge" has been spreading across discourses on knowledge production in Africa in parallel with the popular movement of decolonisation in education and epistemology since around the 1980s (Horsthemke, 2008, p.131). Consensus among academics on the definition of indigenous knowledge remains elusive (Agrawal, 2002, p.287). Proponents describe it as a framework within epistemology that can be applied across different types and forms of knowledge production with the goal of working in the interest of marginalised and indigenous people (Agrawal, 2002, p.295). Critics describe indigenous knowledge as an affront towards the concept of knowledge and an inoperable tool against discrimination and repression (Horsthemke, 2008, p.129). Francis Akena's approach towards indigenous knowledge centres on it as being a bridge between the environment and its people, emphasising that indigenous knowledge distinguishes itself from the dominant western forms of knowledge production though its focus on being context-relevant (Akena, 2012, p.601). Within the traditional perspective on indigenous people, my research paradigm would not qualify as "Indigenous knowledge" as my approach is not focused solely on the indigenous people of South Africa who make up about 1% of South Africa's national population (Jansen, 2020).

A more flexible interpretation of what it means for someone or something to be indigenous is proposed by Corntassel wherein self-identification policies can be balanced with established definitions. Part of their modernised definition of "indigenous" includes the concept of "continuously evolving cultural traditions" (Corntassel, 2003, pp.91-92). This paper takes a focus on the role of animation in the evolution of South African culture in a digital age, and in this sense can be qualified as having a modern indigenous knowledge paradigm. The attitude and sentiment of Akena's interpretation of indigenous knowledge as "context-relevant" is also something that aligns with the local focus of this paper. This research paper aims to analyse the specific methods and adaptation techniques that local animators have developed based on their circumstance as South Africans. Additionally, through the incorporation of a practical component I aim to produce a tangible piece of knowledge that can be referenced by local animation producers as it is rooted in an intimately South African context and is easier to digest than a fully written research paper.

When applying the decolonial mindset as a lens for building an image of animation in South Africa, a number of calls to action become evident. Notably the formation of a movement towards the full local ownership of production, distribution, export, advertising and merchandising of South African animation by South Africans. This alone does not constitute decolonisation but is necessary to enable it as the industry remains largely colonised by western institutions as ownership remains largely in the hands of western companies. Rogerson notes in her findings on South African animation production that:

> "much of the work is not owned by South Africa. As a result, South Africa fails to reap the benefits of the income generated from animated projects... In order to fully realize the potential of the local animation industry, the matter of content ownership needs to be addressed"
> (Rogerson, 2023, p.73)

The process of decolonising the animation industry will not be easy as it entails the construction of institutions, such as publishing and distribution networks that are strong enough to compete with their western counterparts. Not all odds are stacked against those who wish to undertake this

endeavour. With a better understanding of how media is circulated in South Africa and through the application of the very latest tools and technologies, local initiatives have the potential to change the tide. Chapters within this paper provide insight on these topics of distribution and technologies with the aim of contributing towards a shift in ownership.

Fortunately, progress has been made towards local ownership. A South African streaming platform *Showmax* has funded *Twende* (2023) a localised 2D animated series. When South African animation industry experts were asked about what distribution platforms are most suitable for 2D animated shows respondents had mixed answers but inclined towards *Showmax*, see *fig.1*.

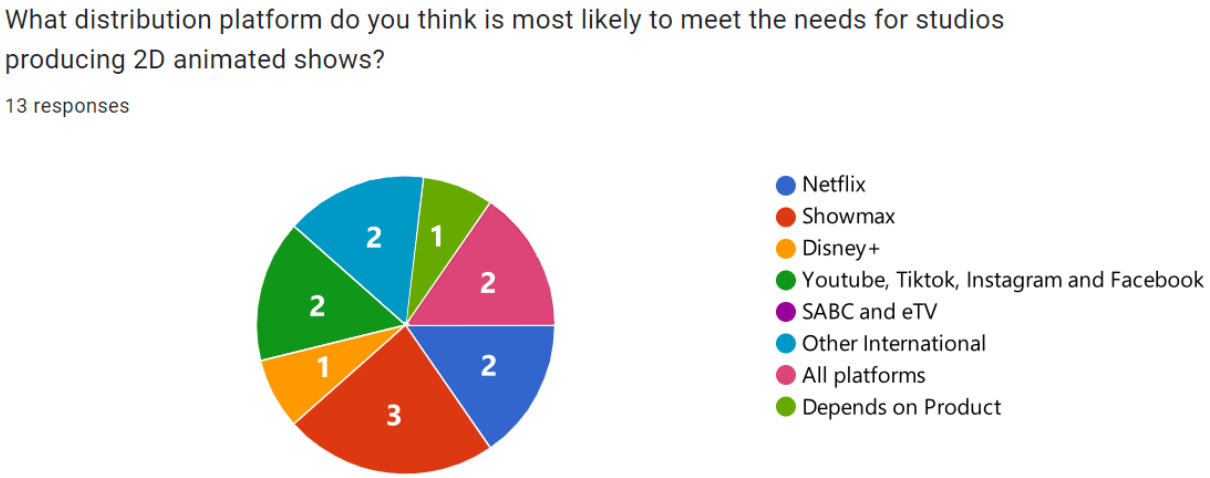


Fig.1 Perceived best distribution platform for 2D animated shows

None of the respondents indicated that SABC and eTV as suitable distribution platforms, which indicates that the shortfall of traditional television is being filled by streaming services. While international companies have made progress in colonising our media market, fortunately a locally owned company is showing signs of resistance against the global giants.

2.3 The Cultural Role of Animation in a World of Accelerating Globalisation

In his 2012 paper, *Appraising the Role of Afrimation (African-Animation) in Promoting Africa's Rich Cultural Heritage in a Digital Age*, Joseph Izang Azi coins the term *Afrimation* for "Africa's contemporary digital content" (2012). He argues that Afrimation has an important role to play in the preservation and promotion of African culture and heritage in a world rapidly undergoing globalisation (Azi, 2012, pp.37). The theme of digital technologies and their mechanisms form an underlying principle in Azi's paper as he promotes the role that African animation plays towards promoting the African Renaissance agenda. This sentiment around the need for upliftment of Africa in the global stage is prevalent among African academics that examine the concept of "globalisation" that Azi also speaks to.

Precious Obioha observes that the phenomenon of globalisation is often framed among African academics as a threat, and that it requires a response or counter from African societies (2010). It is broadly accepted by scholars that globalisation is much older than the study of the topic itself, which was first popularised in the 1980s (Eriksen, 2014, p.5). It is argued that globalisation extends back to the age of roman expansion and certainly encompasses the era of colonisation as it played a key role in forming the global trade network that exists today (Eriksen, 2014, p.5).

Through the context of colonisation, the contemporary operation of globalisation can be viewed as a system of power that echoes the violent exploitation of Africa and its mineral and human resources. While the slave trade has been abolished the networks that it established have evolved through time. Abeba Birhane describes this process as the "Algorithmic Colonisation of Africa" wherein the traditional colonial agenda of reinventing social order for its own benefit is reborn through the control of digital ecosystems by western tech monopolies (2020, p.391). The current world order is enforced through the production and consumption of digital and physical products under capitalism. In this way the unjust exploitation of Africa continues just as it did during colonisation. For example, in the industrial economy raw materials are bought at cheap prices from African nations and converted through gate-kept, advanced manufacturing technologies in developed nations into expensive products that are sold back to Africa through the global market. This system exists across all facets of society including the digital media industry where, for

example, African cultural imagery is exploited by Hollywood to produce blockbuster films such as *Black Panther* (Marvel, 2018) that, while doing some good through promoting diversity, ultimately still facilitate the further transfer of wealth from Africa to the USA. Obioha describes the effects of globalisation on African culture as generating an identity crisis among Africans (2010). If we form our identities through our life experiences, and many of those experiences occur digitally through our consumption of western produced products, our identities will become proportionally "global", but mostly western as they dominate the international media ecosystem. All the while, concepts and imagery from African cultures that are not remediated and/or digitised might be fading in relevance and forgotten from our collective consciousnesses. This phenomenon is what Azi and other scholars are urging Africans to fight against when emphasising the need for digital African cultural products such as Afrimation.

On the note of culture, in his dissertation *3D animation as a medium of cultural representation and education: a case study of Magic Cellar part 1,* Ronald Kangong describes the term "culture":

> "a basic sense of the term is conveyed in the notion of those value systems within a society or group of persons that are passed on from one generation to the next, representing a pattern of human knowledge, beliefs and behaviour."
> (Kangong, 2010, p.61)

Kangong goes on to note that oral storytelling is declining as it becomes replaced with electronic mediums (2010, p.62). It is clear that action needs to be taken in South Africa to preserve local culture through digital media. In her book *Global entertainment media: Between cultural imperialism and cultural globalization,* Tanner Mirrlees notes that T.V. shows and films are "carriers of symbols that communicate something about cultures" and that "People may gain a sense of themselves and the people in other countries by consuming the cultural symbols carried by TV shows and films" (2013). South Africans need localised media in order to gain a sense of themselves. Herein lies the responsibility of animators to adapt South African culture into the digital medium of animation and pass it on to the next generation.

Culture is rooted in specific societies from specific geographies, yet it is dynamic and constantly changing (Obioha, 2010, p.6). South Africa boasts a broad range of cultures. Through a multi-layer model of culture, we can imagine that these cultures feed into a national culture that subsequently feeds into a continental and global culture (Erez & Gati, 2004, pp.587-588). Due to the advent of digital media, Ideas flow through this chain faster than ever before. The balance of this flow of ideas affects how cultures on the micro level change as unmaintained ideas are replaced by more appealing ideas from other cultures. Obioha Uwaezuoke Precious proposes that in order to prevent the replacement of African culture some actions can be taken. These are namely:

> 1. The development of an appetite among the public
> 2. A cultural alignment and adaptation among people
> 3. The formation of common African languages
> (Precious, 2010, p.8)

The need for an appetite among African people highlights the small size of the consumer market in Africa. As living standards improve, more Africans may afford to consume animation. This objective is likely to resolve itself if localised animation products can be offered at a level of quality equal to their exotic counterparts. Cultural alignment refers to the absorption and perpetuation of cultural practices by people and can be fostered by increased exposure to specific cultural ideas. Harnessing digital media in an age where internet usage is growing rapidly in Africa becomes pivotal to this effort. The formation of a common language might seem counterintuitive to the agenda of cultural preservation as homogenization seems to be the very effect that global culture is having on our individual cultures. When describing the relationship between globalisation and identity politics Thomas Eriksen notes:

> Identity politics is a trueborn child of globalisation. The more similar we become, the more different we try to be. Paradoxically, however, the more different we try to be, the more similar we become – since most of us try to be different in roughly the same ways worldwide.
> (Eriksen, 2014, p.146)

Considering this, we can understand that the move among African cultures and all others around the world to become more distinct through the revival and remediation of historic cultural material is in itself a symptom of globalisation. It works to build a global culture where homogeneity exists through the common ideas of embracing one's unique geographically and socially based culture. This might account for the growing amount of nationalism as well as polarisation within countries and between the east and west despite the increasing sharing of ideas around the globe as we move through the 21st century (Mihelj & Jiménez-Martínez, 2021). As cultural ideas interact at the global level, mutually exclusive beliefs or norms, such as ones relating to religion, likely see increased conflict and result in this segmentation and polarisation. South African themed animation that is exported could see better absorption into the global culture when the themes in the animation do not exclude the cultural norms of other societies. South Africa's post-apartheid experience as a country of diverse people who strive to live in harmony can be leveraged to promote global cohesion of a similar nature that simultaneously maintains our individual cultures.

Having established the above concepts on globalisation and culture we can see more clearly how cultural products such as animation play their role. Firstly, they act as a channel that moves wealth and power into the hands of the manufacturer. Secondly, they act as a tool for sculpting and preserving cultural identities. The production of animated films by South African studios that include South African settings, themes and other aspects of culture, plays an important role for South Africans counterbalancing the theft of power from Africa by the dominant nations. The consumption of local content within South Africa works towards building unity within the nation and the consumption from outside the country works towards elevating South Africa within the global consciousness while moving wealth into the country.

The South African Cultural Observatory places particular emphasis on the importance of adapting the local industry in an age of globalisation to take advantage of its position as a developing nation and move up the value chain (2022, p.26). Developing an export of local culture lies at the core of leveraging our position and truly taking ownership of our abundant resources. The widespread consumption of mass media means that people's ideas about how the

world operates are being sculpted by writers and directors in the entertainment industry. A lot of opportunity lies within the hands of these creatives to shift politics, societal norms and nation build. This is agreed upon by cultural anthropologists:

> "Cultural value emphases shape and justify individual and group beliefs, actions, and goals. Institutional arrangements and policies, norms, and everyday practices express underlying cultural value emphases in societies." (Schwartz, 2006, p.139)

The majority of survey respondents leaned towards believing that 2D animation has a strong ability to contribute towards creating cultural unity and identity among South Africans. Results are illustrated in *fig. 2* below.

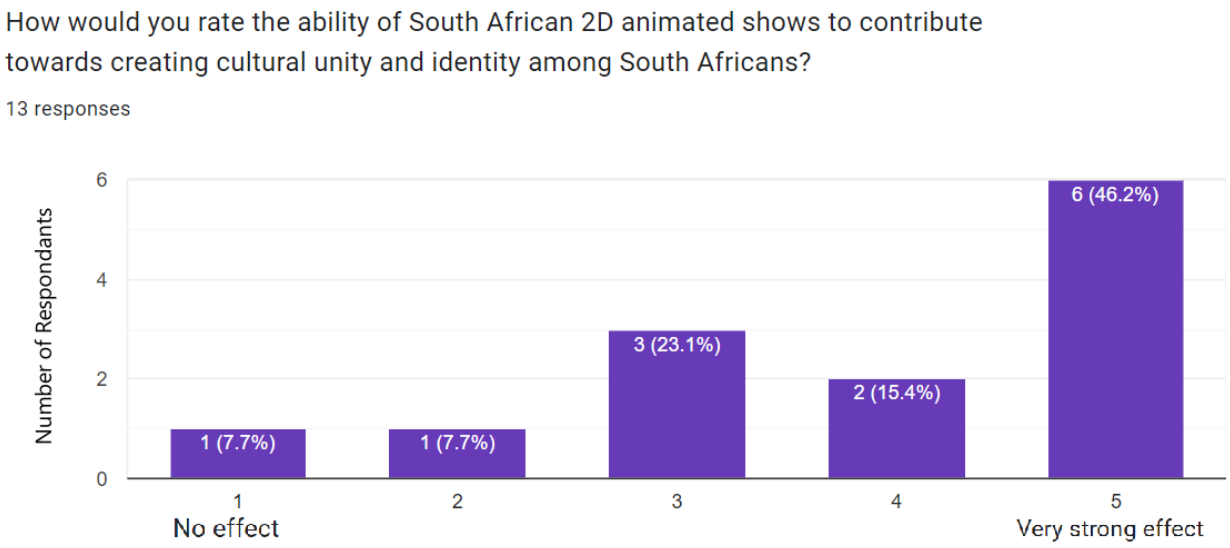


Fig. 2 Perceived ability of 2D South African animation to contribute to cultural unity and identity.

This indicates that industry professionals are not oblivious of their power and is a positive sign for the upliftment of South African society through animation. Much of the opportunity to positively develop South African cultural value is taken up by screen time of foreign media, and then by local entertainment, such as dramas and soapies, that are not particularly intentional about shaping their viewers in an impactful way. Therefore, it is the responsibility of those

creatives and educators who understand the impact of cultural value emphasis to spread the idea through the work that they produce and in the discourse happening in the entertainment community both online and in person.

The entertainment products made in South Africa for international consumption generate larger monetary value and should not be dismissed. They play the key role in physically building industry and development in South Africa's economy. The culture export potential of these productions has been limited as entertainment for international audiences tends to be bleached of its South African aspects (Rogerson, 2023). This is likely in an effort to make them more appealing to international consumers. Is this because appetite for African content is limited overseas, or is it only a perception among studios? The data on local versus international demand discussed in the following section might indicate that this whitewashing for foreign audiences is not necessary to retain profitability. There seems to be little empirical information available that paints a clear picture on this question.

It is easy for academics to call for the production of more afrimation. On the other hand, those who are positioned to answer this call face a number of obstacles in realising this idealistic picture of a thriving cultural export industry in South Africa.

2.4 The Challenges Limiting Industry Growth

A step towards facilitating growth within the South African animation industry is to identify the primary factors inhibiting development and conceptualise how to combat them. A common consensus among industry professionals is that the ecosystem faces a lack of channels and a lack of knowledge sharing. Additionally, it is perceived that there is a lack of local consumers who have the money to spend on animation and a lack of historical foundations for animators to draw from and means to connect with funders. The expertise on the subject of finding funding and producing animation are concentrated at a small number of studios in South Africa. The survey data in *fig.3* indicates that the top perceived limiting factors in the South African animation industry are a lack of funding opportunities, a lack of government support and a lack of

production capacity/training. The following sections will break down some of the most prominent perceived challenges into further detail.

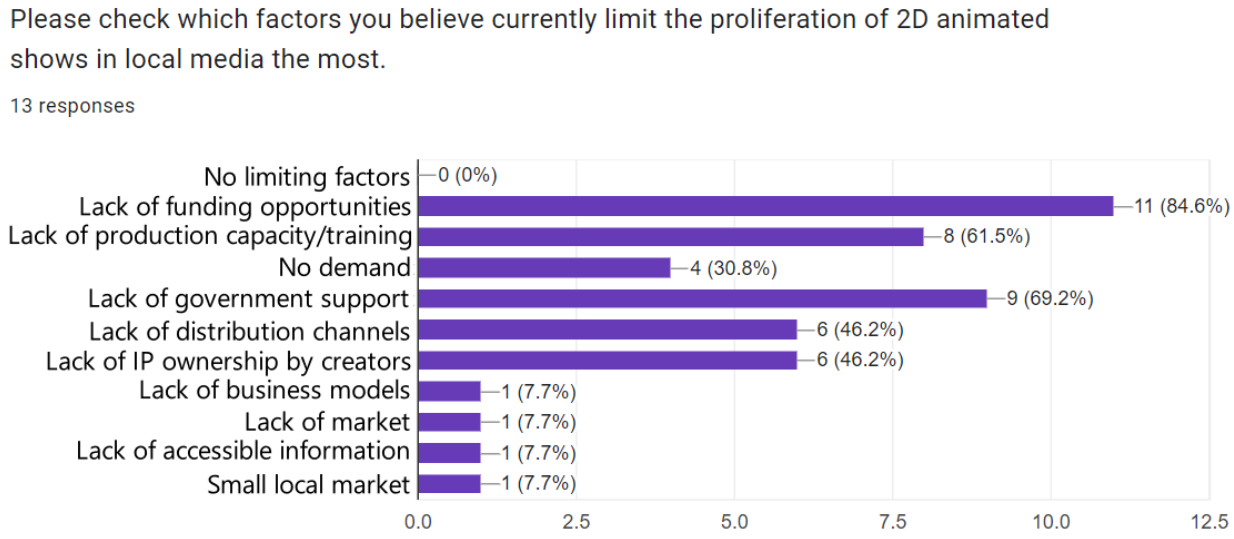


Fig. 3 Perceived limiting factors towards development in the local animation industry.

2.4.1 A Lack of Funding Opportunities

Due to its high production cost and long wait for returns, animation does not garner a lot of interest from traditional investors. In addition to this, the widely held perception that the South African economy has been facing increasing challenges has likely deterred a lot of potential investors from even looking at opportunities in South Africa. Of the handful of institutions and individuals left who are willing to invest, most are seeking the best that South Africa has to offer from the established and experienced studios (Lowman, Samuelsson & Bick, 2020). This is what likely accounts for the perceived lack of funding opportunities. Beyond the small number of opportunities there are other facets that make financing an obstacle to startup animators.

There is a distinct gap in knowledge among graduates about opportunities and the workings of animation financing. This is because the course content of training institutions focuses on the technical production of animation as an artform, and less so on the business aspects. The key point on financing for animation is that it comes in many forms, and projects often meet their funding requirements by securing a range of different investors. Rebates, equity investments, grants, seed funding and gap funding are some of the different types of funding that an animation

studio might secure (Lowman, Samuelsson & Bick, 2020). Chapter 4 of this paper explores the business models that are available to new animators in greater detail and chapter 5 describes the specific funding opportunities available to startups in South Africa.

Another obstacle to accessing funding opportunities is the limited number of networking channels between small startups and investors. That being said, a growing spirit of animation community development can be observed in South Africa. This comes in the form of animation meetups hosted by the *Animation Xchange* group that is supported by *Animation SA*. Other events such as *Comicon Africa*, *Avijozi* and the *Fak'ugesi Festival* provide opportunities for knowledge sharing and networking among members of the animation ecosystem. The attendance cost that is charged by some of these events is a prohibiting factor for increased community interaction and access to knowledge on funding opportunities.

Consensus among financers seems to be that demand from the local market alone is not enough to generate the necessary revenue to cover the cost of production (SACO, 2022, p.55). This is likely due to the small market size, lack of suitable distribution methods and the average South African's disposable income being relatively low compared to other markets.

In summary, funding opportunities are limited due to high risk. Access to these opportunities is limited due to a shortfall in education on the topic and networking events that are accessible to all. Improvements to education curriculums and free access to industry events for students will help improve access to funders for startup animators. The fastest way to increase local animation production is by improving the amount of funding available. Ensuring return on investment will be the biggest factor in motivating financers to support more local productions. In terms of reducing the risk that investors perceive, especially when considering animation that is produced for South Africans, proof of a local consumer base and developing a demand for South African animation is important.

2.4.2 Consumption Shortfall

Industry reports by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF) indicate that South Africa lacks demand for local productions (Rogerson,

2023, p.55). This conclusion can also be drawn from revenue statistics that indicate that income generated from locally produced animations amounts for only a small fraction of total earnings. For example, feature films by Triggerfish only saw 4% - 4.5% of their earnings come from Africa (Walker, 2019). Despite this challenge, there are a number of locally themed animated projects that match global production quality standards. The perceived lack of local consumers may be a symptom of the steep levels of inequality in South Africa (Francis & Webster, 2019). It is important to consider that the market return can be small despite there being a large amount of people who would be interested in watching the animation. The majority of the South African population is unlikely to have access to the platforms that the latest local content is being distributed on, namely streaming services such as *Showmax* and *Disney Plus*. Demand for locally produced content is evident on online platforms such as YouTube and TikTok. Here lower quality, but distinctly South African productions garner millions of views. This means that studios need to re-evaluate their distribution methods if they wish to reach large volumes of local viewers.

Survey results suggest that industry professionals perceive demand for African themed animated shows as marginally higher outside of South Africa than within the country. Data illustrated in *Fig. 4*, asking about demand within South Africa has a median response of 3.8 out of 5 whereas data illustrated in *Fig. 5*, that asked about demand outside of South Africa, has a median response of 4.1 out of 5.

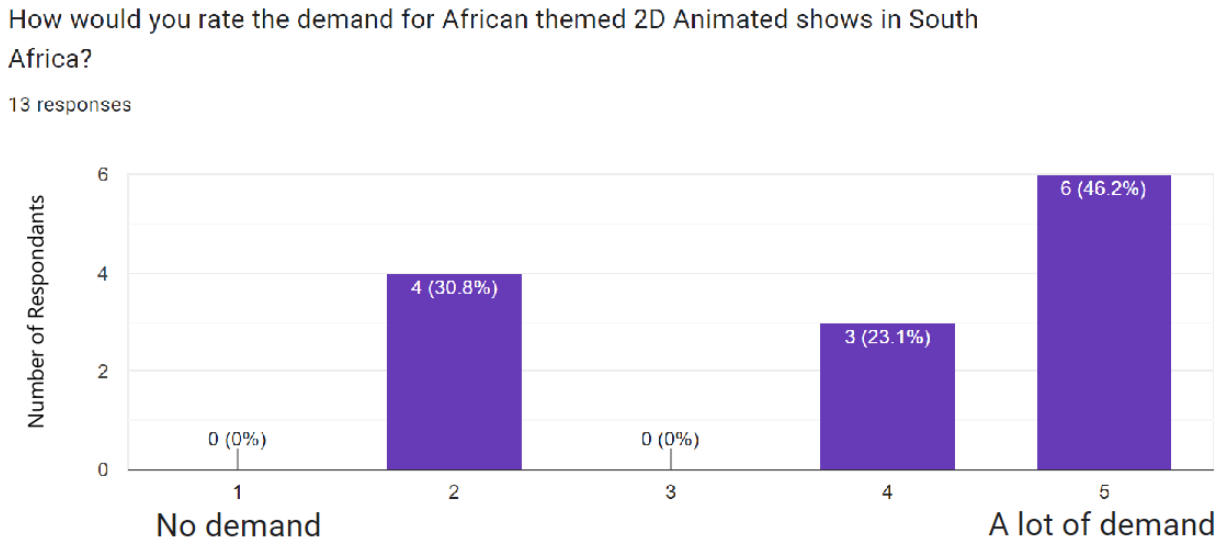


Fig.4 Perceived South African demand for 2D South African animation.

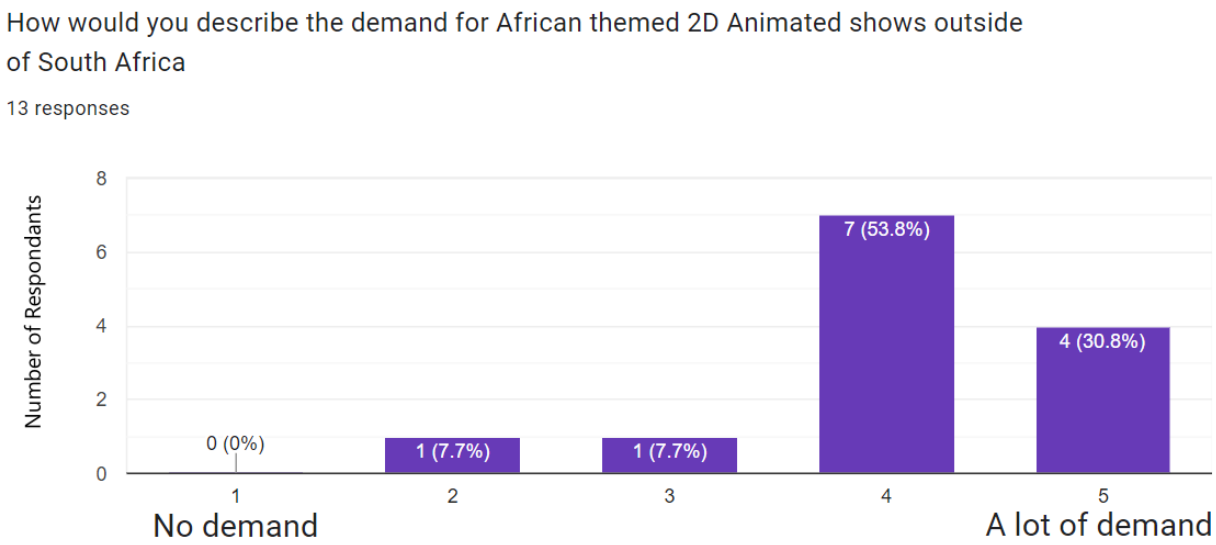


Fig.5 Perceived demand for 2D South African animation from outside South Africa.

Survey results on the perceived financial viability of 2D South African animated shows, see *fig.6*, indicate that confidence is not high with the average rating of 2.6 out of 5. This perception is likely due to the notion discussed above that the South African market is lacking in paying consumers compared to other markets. Only targeting the local audience will not generate a substantial return on the production costs.

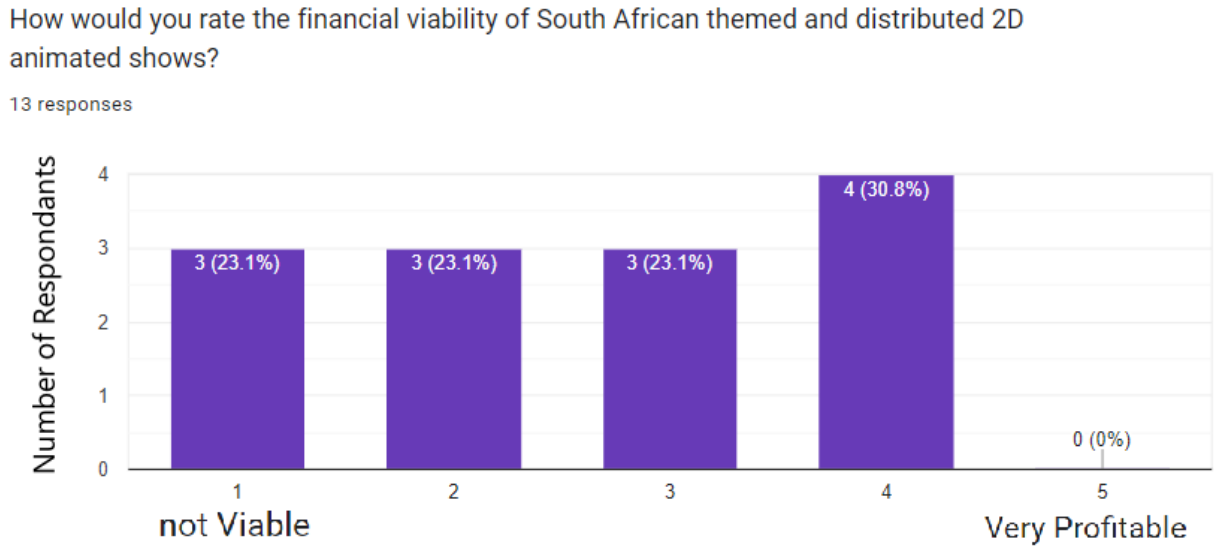


Fig.6 Perceived financial viability of South African themed 2D animated shows.

This data demonstrates that focusing solely on South African animation is not a popular idea among industry experts as they perceive there to be too big of a market shortfall for localised animation. The receptiveness among the African continent for South African animation is high as multiple shows such as *Jabu's Jungle* (2016) and *Magic Cellar* (2007) have been well received across the continent and the globe (Kharas, 2014).

Stimulating an increase in local demand would undoubtedly encourage the production of more local animation. Obioha Uwaezuoke Precious emphasises that developing an appetite among Africans for African content is integral to preserving culture from the continent (2010). Achieving this is no small feat and will require a collective effort across the animation ecosystem to promote local animation. Short form animation on social media is positioned as the key tool for this task. Shorts have a low budget and they can be self-funded, they allow for a lot of stylistic experimentation and are the perfect format for spreading an idea to a large audience (The Callsheet, 2014). Universities can take an active role by leveraging their access to large volumes of students. A South African themed short could be a practical course assessment wherein students are encouraged to post their work online. Essentially, a higher volume of local content could spark a positive feedback loop. Historically, one of the key drivers of animation produced primarily for the local market, likely with the goal of stimulating such a feedback loop of local demand has been the SABC.

2.4.3 Government Support and the SABC

One of the commonly mentioned challenges to the growth of local content has been the increasingly abysmal management and failing policies of the South African Broadcasting Company, the SABC (Rogerson, 2023, p.75). According to the South African Cultural Observatory (2022, p.23), the particular legislation hurting the animation industry is included the following bills:

The Copyright Amendment Bill

Clause 15 of this bill aims to reinstate certain copyright law from 1978 that provides exemption from copyright infringement to a list of activities involving the use of copyright material. These exemptions include activities such as education, parody or making copies for personal use (CAB, 2017, pp.11-14).

The Performer's Protection Amendment Bill (PPAB)

Page 4 of the PPAP stipulates the substitution of section 3 of Act 11 of 1967 wherein performers are granted a number of protections to their video and audio performances beyond their death. These include exclusive rights to authorise any broadcasting, reproduction, distribution or rental of video or audio recordings of their performance (PPAB, 2016, pp.4-5). This clause might make it easier for voice actors to block the distribution or transfer of rights of an animation.

While the legislation might not appear harmful to the animation production process, it does its damage by dissuading foreign investors and producers from using South Africa as a destination for producing films and animation. This is because the increased “red-tape” is seen as a risk to their return on investment. Foreign commissions make up a sizable source of revenue for many freelance animators in South Africa (SACO, 2022, p.20). While this provides much needed employment opportunities for South Africans, it does mean that much of the content produced in South Africa is devoid of any South African themes or visuals and, as Rogerson emphases, ownership and majority of the revenue remains in the hands of foreign multinationals (2023, p.73). The SABC demands full ownership of content commissioned for their platform. This means that the deal for the animator is no better than selling their work to a foreign company that will offer a much better price and permit a more flexible funding strategy. Up until recently the SABC has played a vital role as a financial partner for some of the key South African animated shows such as *Takalani Sesame* (2000) and *The Magic Cellar* (2006). In recent years, due to an increasingly severe debt buildup, the SABC is no longer in a position to fund animation which has a substantially higher production cost than film (Rogerson, 2023).

2.4.4 An Exodus of Skills

Another challenge that local studios face is an effect of the function of economies of scale, wherein manufacturers who are bigger and better resourced are able to produce a larger number of products at a lower cost thanks to their use of established and advanced manufacturing techniques. Many highly skilled animators leave the continent for better paying work at these international firms as a part of the greater brain-drain phenomenon (Crush, 2009, pp.223-224). The challenge of "brain drain", wherein an exodus of the best trained and skilled workers of a country occurs, has been acknowledged by industry players as an obstacle for growth (Gwaradzimba & Shumba, 2010). This means that in a number of cases where African IP with distinctly African character ends up being animated by studios in western countries such as Ireland or France because costs are lower than having it animated by South African studios (Rogerson, 2023, pp.71-72). This struggle of the South African film and animation industries to compete with advanced producers from the west, particularly the United States of America, stretches back to the inception of the South African industry during the turn of the 19th century (Gutsche, 1946, pp.312-320). As the modern digital economy makes it easy and cheap to move digital goods across the globe this dominance of great powers is maintained as consumers will always opt for a cheaper and higher quality product. Local producers need to offer productions that are of international quality in order to compete. Doing this is no easy feat considering the aforementioned flight of highly skilled industry professionals who could otherwise be working on producing local IP within South Africa. Measures aimed to incentivise skilled workers to remain, such as high salaries and benefits offer some solutions. Increasing the inflow of skilled workers to compensate for the outflow might be another solution that is within reach. This task befalls the training institutions in South Africa.

When asked to rate the preparedness of animation studies graduates, industry professionals indicated that they felt graduates are more unprepared than qualified. The median rating illustrated in *Fig.7* was 2.4 out of 5 on a scale from "completely unprepared" to "overqualified".

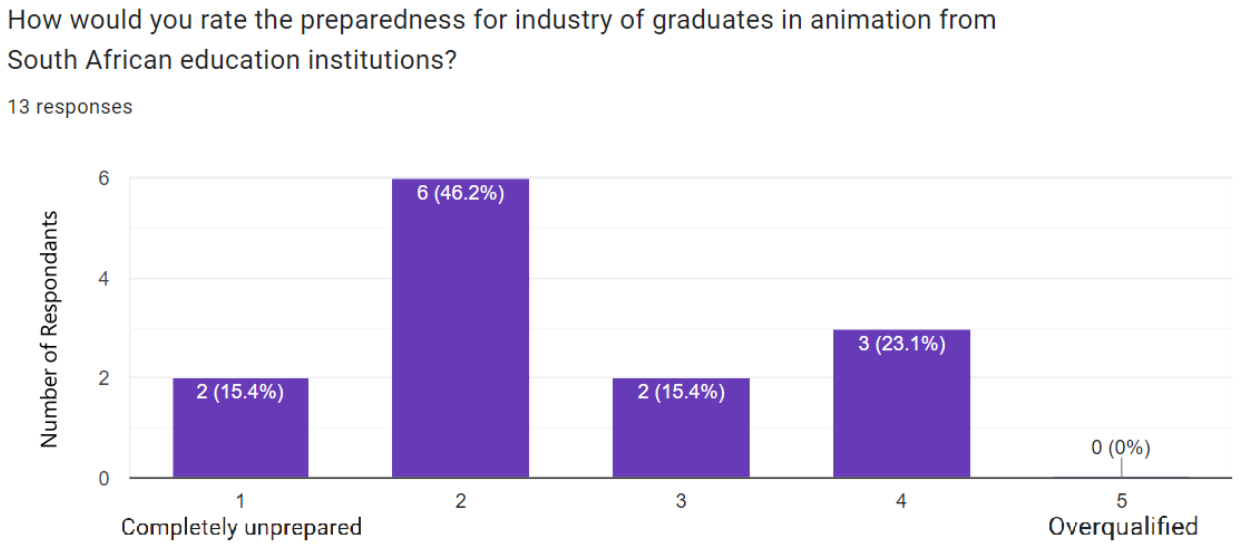


Fig.7 Perceived preparedness of industry graduates in animation from South African institutions.

The effectiveness of education institutions at bridging the skills gap is brought into question by some studies such as the South African Cultural Observatory's 2022 *Animation Industry Ecosystem Analysis* that describes the education curriculum in South Africa as out of sync, theorising that:

> "Perhaps the most obvious gap appears to be due to an emphasis in 3D when most animated films and series are made in 2D."
> (2022, p.55)

The report emphasises the need for greater collaboration between studios and education institutions in maintaining up to date curriculums and incorporating internships as a mandatory component of studies (2022, pp.56). Some studios have made a move towards building their own education platforms, such as Triggerfish Animation who have created Triggerfish Academy (2022) that provides a collection of self-study videos on their website.

Building a better knowledge channel between the South African industry and education system will be key to improving the rate at which graduates successfully transition into the workforce.

When asked about which animation technique had a lower barrier to entry industry experts inclined towards 2D Digital Animation, see *fig.8*.

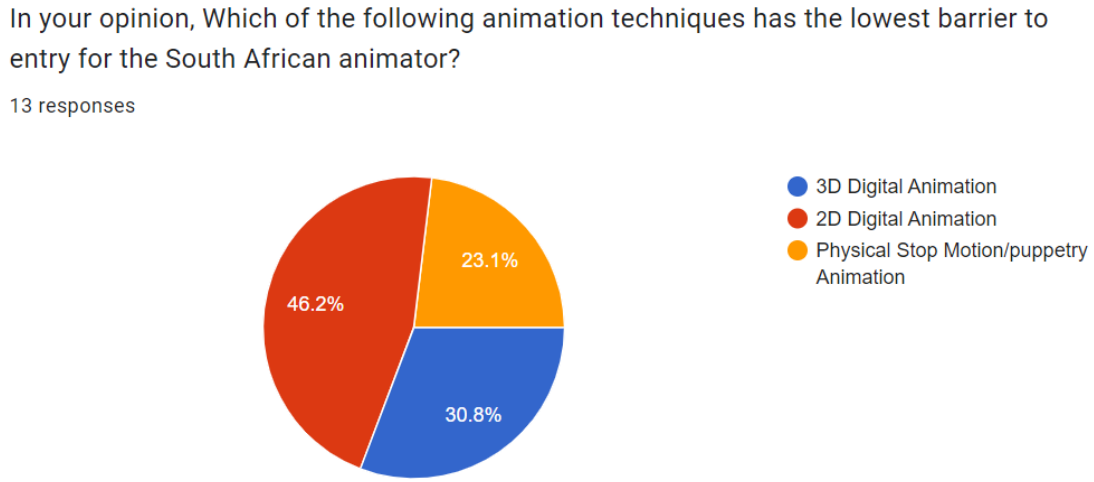


Fig.8 Perceived animation medium with lowest barrier to entry for South African animators.

In addition to the efforts made by local studios, there are some institutions such as the Tshimologong Digital Innovation Precinct[1] that offers an animation programme called Mollo wherein aspiring animators are given the opportunity to work in a studio-like environment where they can hone their skills, build their network and attend key industry events locally and abroad. Demand for these kinds of opportunities is quite high as applicants must compete in a rigorous test for positions in the programme.

This being said, South Africa is in no way completely devoid of highly skilled animators. A number of high-quality productions are animated in South Africa as outsource work for international studios. A particular example is the work of Mind's Eye Creative who have worked on shows such as *F Is for Family* (2015) and *Trailer Park Boys: The Animated Series* (2019). The question of why quality of local animation has not been to international standards might be less to do with a lack of local skills and more to do with a lack of budget and funding directed towards such locally themed projects that are seen by investors to have low demand (Rogerson, 2023, p.54).

[1] Tshimologong Digital Innovation Precinct is a digital innovation institution based in Braamfontein, Johannesburg, that provides start-up funding, incubation and other opportunities for digital businesses that are entering the digital economy.

Chapter 3: Archiving South African Animation

3.1 Sourcing Material

When documenting the history of stop motion animation, Andrew Haycock notes a lack of archiving material and the presence of challenges in accessing national archives, if the archives even exist (2010). Shanaz Shapurjee (2008) echoes this sentiment when researching the SABC animation unit.

> "During the preparatory stages of the research-gathering process, it became apparent that there was a very limited amount of documented material concerning The SABC Animation Unit, and indeed concerning the entire history of animation in South Africa."
> (Shapurjee, 2008, p.1)

The available papers, such as ones written by the abovementioned academics, that document the history of South African animation, tend to each focus on a specific medium of animation for a select time period. They often only describe or mention a handful of animations, instead they focus more on the development of specific studios and animators. There is no comprehensive dataset of the total animation produced in South Africa. While lists of South African Productions can be found on sites such as *Wikipedia* or *IMBD*, these lists are incomplete and feature errors such as incorrect titles. Many productions published on YouTube are missing from existing lists altogether and have been under-documented in research on the South African animation ecosystem.

Although much of the animation produced earlier than the 1990s has been lost, it is documented that since the early 1940s large animation studios operated in South Africa such as *Dave McKey studio* and *Glenn Coppens Cartoons* that employed up to 60 animators (Shapurjee, 2008, p.52). The majority of the animation that was produced during this time consisted of advertisements and have not been archived or documented.

Listed in annexure A are animations produced in South Africa that include some aspect of South African localisation. Animations that meet the requirement of "localisation" can include a local language, setting, accent, story, character design or any other audio or visual component that points to a South African context. Some productions meet this requirement loosely, for example *Jungle Beat* (2003) is set in a non-specific African environment rather than specifically South African. Considering that they have played a role in shaping techniques and the local animation economy, and are more African themed than not, they have been included in the localised category. There are approximately 77 entries in this list.

As discussed in chapter 2, the majority of commercial animation produced in South Africa are projects that are commissioned by foreign studios or advertising agencies. These projects play a vital role in sustaining the economy in South Africa despite providing less societal and cultural value to South Africans. Provided in annexure B is a list of animations that South African companies have produced or assisted in production in some capacity that are not African themed. They demonstrate the international reach of South African animation studios. There are approximately 93 entries in this list. Conglomerating all the finds into one dataset of animations aims to provide a clear top-down picture of the ecosystem.

The content of the lists has been compiled through the conglomeration of all available existing lists, productions documented in research papers, content from online archives and other content found online on distribution platforms such as *Vimeo, YouTube* and *TikTok*. Animations produced for advertisements are known to constitute a large proportion of animation produced in South Africa. Most of them have been omitted from this list as there are few records of them available. The relationship between the advertising and animation industry in South Africa emerged as early as 1916 and has been a backbone for South African animators ever since as they provide financial stability (Shapurjee, 2008, p.41). Archiving of animations produced for advertisements remains a task recommended for further research.

Combined, the two lists consist of approximately 170 animated shows, movies, short films, adverts, trailers, shorts and skits. It is the largest catalogue to date of animation produced in South Africa that will be freely available online. The South African Cultural Observatory's paper

South Africa's Animation Industry: Ecosystem Analysis (2022), a partnership of four South African universities, provides data on only 44 animations produced in South Africa and was the most comprehensive report of its kind. This illustrates that the collection of material in this paper is valuable for filling a gap in recordkeeping.

In order to maximise the value of the archive, a readily available online version could also be hosted on the Animation SA website (2006), given the opportunity for collaboration. This organisation stands as a central point of information sharing and cooperation among the key industry players.

3.2 Archive Data Visualisations

The material of the archive consists of a diverse range of productions that can be grouped by various characteristics. While the range of formats can be quite broad, especially for content that has been purposely produced for specific online platforms such as TikTok or YouTube, there are four primary formats based on the length of the animation that can be used for grouping. A *series* is an animation that consists of multiple distinct episodes, *shorts* are single animated skits that have a length up to a few minutes, *short films* are standalone animated stories that range from a few minutes up to 40 minutes in run time, *films* are standalone animated productions that run for longer than 40 minutes. The series within the archive are listed individual data points for each series and not as individual episodes. A breakdown of the archive into these formats is illustrated in *fig.9.*

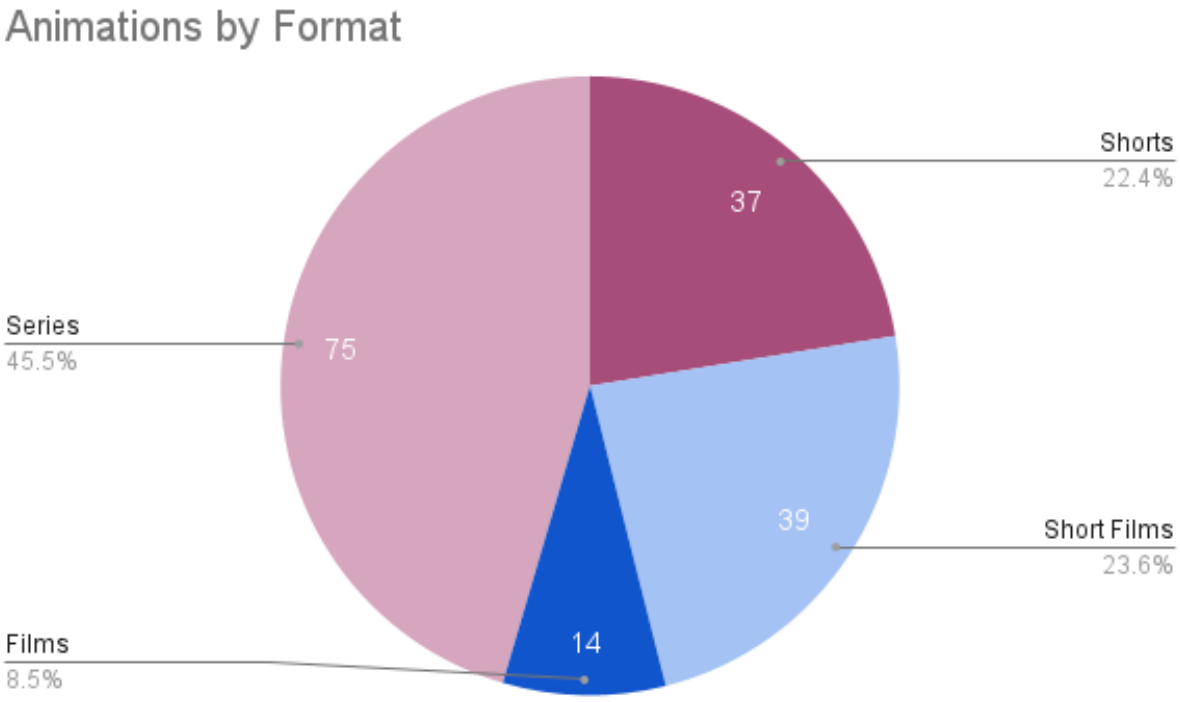


Fig.9 Pie chart of South African produced animation by format.

Series make up the most popular format while films are the least common. It is likely that series have been produced more as the production complexity and overhead costs can be much lower than films (Lowman, Samuelsson & Bick, 2020). Their ability to captivate and develop an audience over many years, as new episodes are produced, is also a likely contributor to their popularity.

Breaking down the archive into the four primary animation mediums, visualised in *fig.10*, reveals that 2D animation plays a dominant role, making up 60.3% of the total material. The medium's flexibility, lower cost options and relative ease of access compared to other techniques has evidently resulted in the medium's popularity.

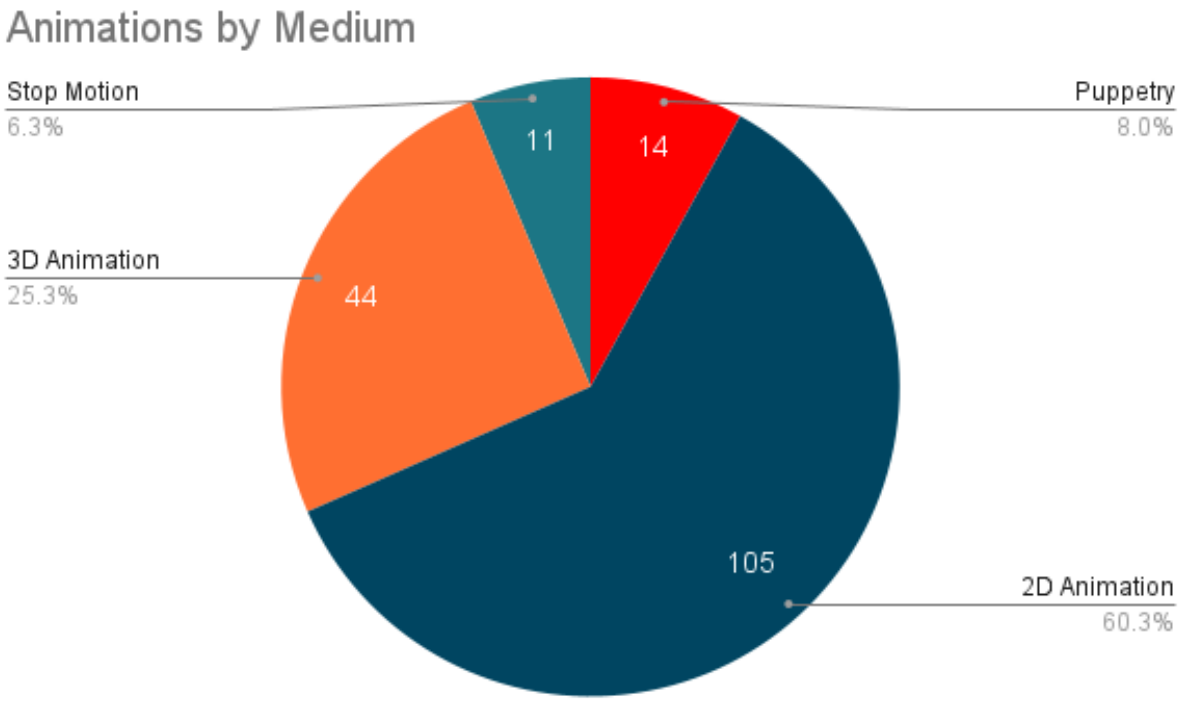


Fig.10 Pie chart of South African produced animation by medium.

It is evident that 2D animated series have played the biggest role in the South African animation ecosystem, despite this, they have not found proportional focus within the existing literature that documents animation in South Africa.

Consistent records of animation produced in South Africa earlier than the year 2000 are hard to source and it is likely that a large volume of animation has been lost to time. There are large gaps in the timeline, the largest being between 1917 and 1965. The proliferation of war around the globe during this time may have had an impact on animation production. As discussed in chapter 2, there are records of large-scale studios existing during the 1940s and 1950s that were producing substantial volumes of animation. Nonetheless, plotting the archive data by medium for this time interval on a histogram in *fig.11* visualises the history of twentieth century animation in South Africa. One can observe an early boom in 2D animation followed by the growth of puppetry in the 1970s to 1980s.

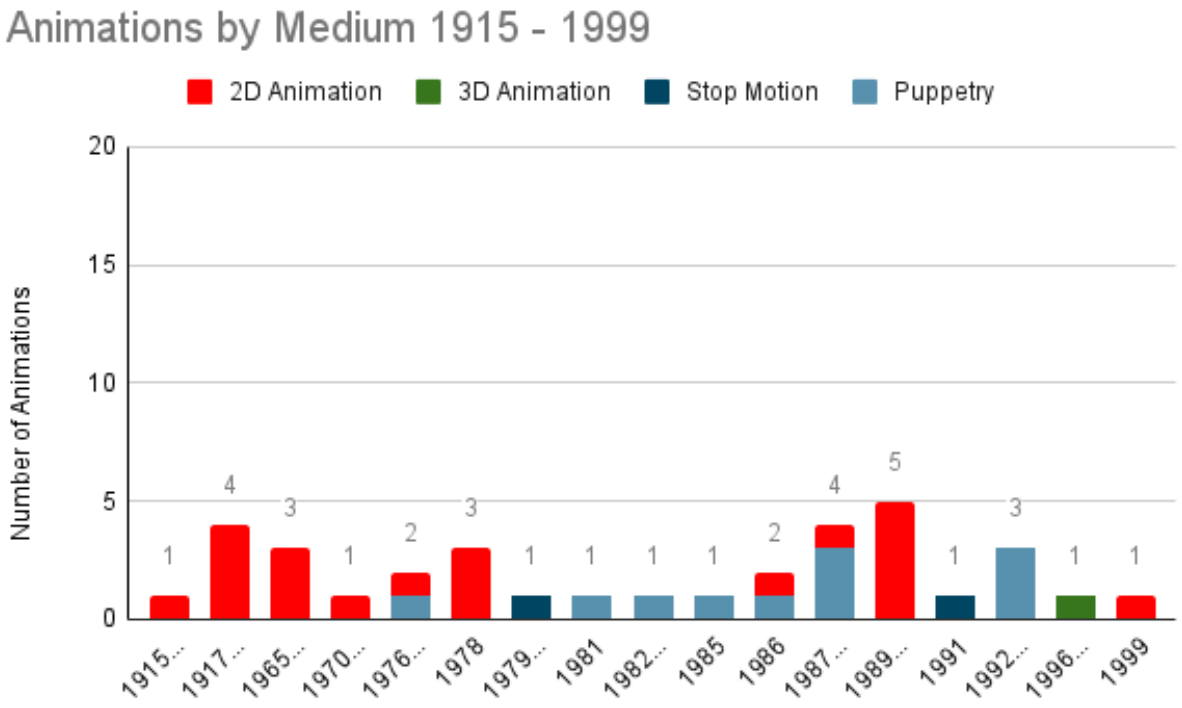


Fig.11 Histogram of South African produced animation by medium 1915 - 1999

A more continuous record of animation from the twenty-first century can be plotted on a histogram provided in *fig.12*. The better availability of data for this time period could be attributed to better record keeping practices, the development of the academic field of South African animation studies and the advent of the internet which has allowed creators more channels for publishing their work. A distinct growth trend in 3D CGI and 2D animation techniques can be observed. The decline of puppetry can be noted as well, while stop motion animation maintains a small but consistent presence. The greater volume of 2D animation produced in recent years can be attributed to the growth in the service work[2] industry for such material and the greater use of online platforms by independent animators.

[2] Service work is defined as animation production commissioned by a client that is external to a given animation studio and who retains all ownership of the intellectual property.

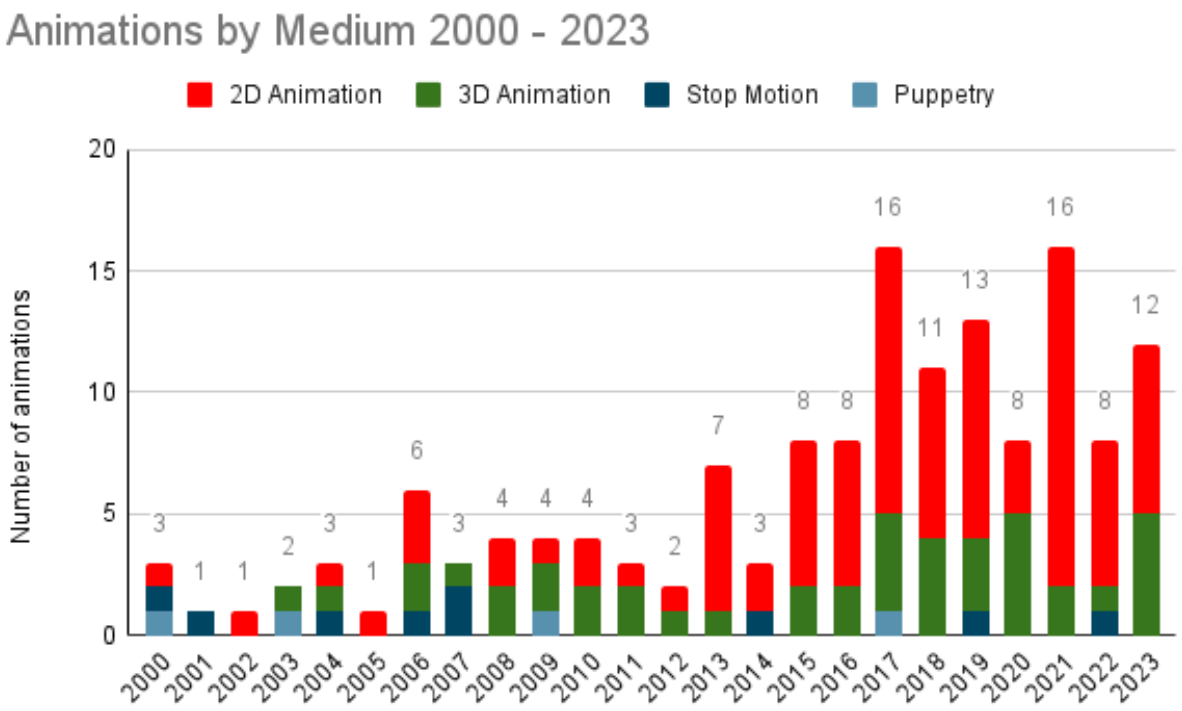


Fig.12 Histogram of South African produced animation by medium 2000 - 2023

This growth trend is indicative of how technologies develop over time as resources are invested into learning and refining tools and techniques. This will determine the quality and global competitiveness of the products that firms can generate (Lall, 1992). Major global players, such as *Disney*, are able to produce world leading animation thanks to the technologies as well as visual styles that they have built over decades of continuous investment and evolution. If South African animation startups wish to compete in the era of globalisation, even for local viewers, they need to focus on playing a more active role in evolving and developing animation technologies and visual styles in South Africa.

South African studios have already been leveraging the work of others as a springboard. This is evident from the products of major South African studios such as Triggerfish, that have been developing their technologies and visual styles on the model of the global industry players. This development though emulation has not come without criticisms. Tanya Blaeser might frame some films, such as *Khuma* (2013) as drawing too heavily on western design techniques, to the degree that they come across as “cheap knockoffs” (2017). In order to step out of the shadows,

South African animation technology, such as pipeline design, visual development, writing and sound design need to draw on local references in order to produce animation that is truly distinct to South Africa. The material in Annexure A should act as a resource for prospective animators to draw inspiration from, particularly for the visual development of their own work.

Chapter 4: The Adaptation of South African Animators

4.1 Supply, Demand and Value Generation

Profit as a measure of success has been ingrained in our society through decades of subjugation to colonial value systems that place revenue above ethics. It is evident when analysing the documentation of South African animation that value has primarily been assigned to animations that generate a lot of revenue. A number of productions emerge from the cracks of the local media ecosystem when considering aspects such as the potential for cultural remediation, societal alignment, cultural development, identity formation and development of appetite for local animation as metrics of value and success. These productions will be included in the below business model case studies as the aim of developing more South African animation should not be overshadowed by a lack of profitability. While some animators have produced locally themed animation as passion projects, few South Africans possess the resources to produce animation at a financial loss. Ideologies of alternative value come up against a harsh reality of a South African economy that has been suffering the effects of brain drain in recent decades. Fortunately, there are a number of cases where locally themed animation projects have been funded in the past. The following sections will break down in more detail the different models that local animators have employed to make South African themed animation a reality.

4.2 Business Model Case Studies

A selection of examples is organised into three primary models. Although the analysis divides the examples into distinct categories, there are cases that overlap, and the different models do not have to be mutually exclusive. The size of a given studio is what primarily determines which models have been used. Solo creators or smaller teams have more flexibility and less risk allowing them to be more experimental in style and format, whereas the bigger, established studios need a secure stable revenue and have thus adopted more traditional funding models. The technical and thematic effects of the different models are analysed in each case study as well as the financing and distribution methods. The pros and cons of each model are summarised so that prospective animators may easily ascertain which model would best suit their needs.

4.2.1 Model 1: YouTube and Self-Publishing Online.

A prominent source of locally produced animation comes from independent creators, often solo individuals, who publish their work online at a very low production cost. Pfunzo Sidogi documents one of the major online successes of local animation in his paper *(South) Africa's online animation revolution: the case of Jonas Lekganyane's The adventures of Noko Mashaba* (2021). *The Adventures of Noko Mashaba* (2013) is an example of how South African content has emerged and found high viewership and commercial success in the face of challenges such as a lack of formal training or access to conventional distribution networks. The YouTube series created by Jonas Lekganyane follows the life of Noko Mashaba, his uncle Donald Mashaba and various other South African characters. The narrative draws on South African experiences and jokes to create funny and relatable scenarios. The show illustrates how high the demand for local content is as the episodes have each ranked up millions of views online, for example the episode *Noko Mashaba - Makhi's Chicken* (2021) has been viewed over 6.5 million times. It also illustrates how conventional distribution models that have a paywall, are likely a barrier for the majority of South African consumers. The same model can be observed in the *The 1day 1day Show* (2021) created by "Streetcarnivore", *Unhappy Husband* (2013) created by "Mducomics" and *Mzansi's Got Magic* (2020) by "4OUR HD". These are all South African shows on YouTube that have similarly found success.

Characters in *The Adventures of Noko Mashaba* speak in a mix of South African languages while the show has English subtitles. The use of local language likely plays an important role in making the show popular among the local viewer base. South Africa's biggest language is isiZulu, spoken by approximately 30 million people. Content that is directed to the South African market is likely to reach more isiZulu or even Afrikaans speakers that number some 17 million, than English speakers that number 16 million (Alexander, 2019). It might be argued that due to the better socioeconomic position that English speakers tend to be in in South Africa (Casale and Posel, 2011), the demographics of the portion of the South Africans that consume animated TV shows is likely to have a larger proportion of English speakers than the nation's overall demographics. English is still very likely to be a minority first language among local animation consumers as it is a first language among only 10% of South Africa's population (Alexander,

2019). Nadia Bulbulia notes in her dissertation, *Children's programming on South African public service television: filling the gaps in policy and practice,* that stakeholders in the The Department of Communications (DOC) and the communications regulator Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA), identified that there is limited African languages and a predominance of English in programming for children in the SABC (2007, pp.118-119). While some efforts on a national level have been made to address this issue since 2007, the gap of local languages in animation is being filled by these independent animators on YouTube. One of the benefits of animation as a medium is that dubbing it into other languages can result in a more seamless effect than live action dubbing. The popularity of the isiZulu shows on YouTube indicate that there is a market for dubbing existing animated shows. Affirming this, DStv, a local satellite television broadcaster, has recently started a channel dedicated to Bollywood movies dubbed in isiZulu (Ramalepe, 2023).

This model shows the most promise in terms of providing local consumers with authentically relatable animation as the creators retain full control over the story and writing. The use of local humour speaks to the South African experience and plays a pivotal role in how Jonas Lekganyane manages to captivate local audiences. The humour of the show draws on South African archetypes and personalities. The writing incorporates running jokes and metaphors from the South African popular culture, such as reference to incompetent policing, witchcraft, or topics such as the illegal alcohol market in South Africa during the Covid-19 lockdown. Another common aspect of the humour of the show is the persistent use of insults and comebacks between Noko and his Uncle. This illustrates the role of animation as a mirror of our society and culture when writing for the local audience. Episodes that reflect current debates or viral events are more likely to tap into trending media and better leverage their online platform (Nahon & Hemsley, 2013).

The key defining characteristic of this model is that the animations are published online for those with an internet connection to watch freely on YouTube meaning that these productions have excellent reach to local audiences. Adverts served on the website generate revenue, of which a portion is transferred to the creators of the content. Unfortunately the use of YouTube means that an American corporation still gets a cut of revenue. Locally owned and free to access online

video streaming services such as eVod and SABC Plus utilise a similar monetisation model as YouTube and could offer an alternative distribution platform for local animation. The lack of community networks, and stricter content curation policies have likely been inhibiting factors.

A key drawback for this model is that revenue can only be earned at very high view counts and earnings are often only received after a delay. This model also has a barrier towards production quality, as pilot and early episodes are unlikely to generate sufficient revenue for a full team of animators that could provide high quality animation. Production costs need to be covered by the creator themselves. Despite these downsides, this platform provides access to a larger group of viewers in South Africa than streaming services or DStv (Rogerson, 2023, pp.74-79). An online audience can be leveraged to provide additional income streams for creators. This can be achieved through merchandise sales or by channelling the users towards additional "paid-for" content. The trump card to this model is that animators retain ownership of their IP. It is critical to leverage the IP through the aforementioned merchandising in order to maximise revenue. Earnings on YouTube can vary a lot because advertisers will pay more for higher value audiences. For example an audience of Americans interested in finance videos will generate more revenue than South Africans interested in comedy (Martin, 2023). Nonetheless for a solo animator or very small team the revenue can be well worth it, particularly if individual videos surpass half a million views.

4.2.2 **Model 2**: Commissioned Work

An alternative source of localised animation is produced within medium sized studios that rase capital through commission work and use it to develop their own IP. Cabblow Studios is a small 2D animation studio that primarily produces medical animations. The studio founders, Dr Tshepo P. Maaka and Kabelo Maaka, leveraged their connections in the medical industry to secure commissions for animating promotional and educational materials. The studio has used their earrings from this work to fund their own projects, namely *Rorisang and the Gurlz* (2022), a story that follows a group of South African high school girls who are trying to start an AfroPop band. One of Cabblow Studio's short films *The Little Teaspoon of Sugar* (2021) that tells a story of a South African school girl who develops diabetes has seen international recognition as it

builds awareness about diabetes. Thanks to the studio's resources the quality of these animations are high. These projects are valuable contributions to the pool of South African themed work but are unlikely to provide a return on investment as they have not found significant viewership. This highlights that local animators face a challenge when independently distributing personal projects. Fortunately, because the projects are not required to provide a return to any external investors, the lack of revenue from them is not an existential issue for the studio.

The model that Cabblow Studios uses can be observed at a larger scale across a number of South African studios such as *Triggerfish* and *Chocolate Tribe*. When direct investment into South African animation is not available, a studio will work as an outsource resource on projects destined for other markets by leveraging the relatively lower cost of labour in South Africa. Excess revenue from these jobs is then used to fund in house productions. This is the most common business model in South Africa as many studios focus solely on external projects. The limited revenue return does unfortunately mean that these animations are worked on intermittently and are not as prolific as the animation produced by independent creators described in model 1.

Craig Lowman, Mikael Samuelsson and Geoff Bick examine how the challenges of financing have influenced the production of locally themed animated content in their paper *Triggerfish animation studios: the challenges of financing digital entertainment* (2020). These studies examine content produced by the larger studios in South Africa. Their research finds that this model has some shortcomings when it comes to the distribution of bigger projects through media corporations. The earring waterfall puts the creators at the very end of the line and while a movie might gain a lot of purchases globally, the small percentage of earnings destined for the creators can sometimes only arrive years later (Lowman, Samuelsson & Bick, 2020).

4.2.3 Model 3: T.V. and Streaming

Mike Scott and John Vlismas created *Jozi Zoo* in 2004, a 2D children's animated show that aired on South African television in the early 2000s. The show followed the adventures of a group of animals in the Johannesburg Zoo and was directed at a young audience. A number of other locally produced shows targeted at a local audience have seen successes locally and

internationally, such as Pixcomm studio *Jabu's Jungle* (2016) and *Urbo: The Adventures of Pax Afrika* by Octagon CSI (2006). A common thread among these shows is that they target children and that they were able to reach them through the SABC channels. This indicates that when producers did manage to find engagement and successful negotiation with the national broadcaster, some excellent outcomes can be achieved. If the SABC were to see reforms and re-engage with the animation community at some point in the future, then we could see a very quick boom in the number of successful South African themed animations.

As an alternative to the T.V. broadcasting model that has been eroded, some streaming platforms have in recent years invested in African themed content. Some examples include Disney Plus' *Kizazi Moto: Generation Fire* (2023), an anthology of short stories that incorporate afrofuturism and Shomax's *Twende* (2023) a children's show that follows the life of a pangolin and his various animal friends. The quality bar for these platforms is high and in the case of Disney Plus, due to a lack of capacity in Africa, some of the animation had to be outsourced to European studios. This model is less suitable for independent creators but is likely to show good long-term growth following an improvement of economic conditions in South Africa and industrialization across the continent. The high production budget that these companies are able to source means that the quality of animation produced is high and the amount of employment opportunities are bigger and last for longer periods of time.

It is likely that over time streaming will replace traditional T.V. (Kohli, 2020). In the case of South Africa, the return of animation commissioned by the SABC in the near future is unlikely. Streaming platforms that commission South African themed animated series could benefit from the content driving more subscriptions in the emerging markets in Africa. Building up a catalogue of locally themed shows will give any particular streaming platform a competitive edge. The key drawback of producing content for these platforms is that distributors have a brand image to insert into the content, and animators will not enjoy the same creative liberty as when producing animation using the first two described business models. Ownership and merchandising rights are not retained by the creators and reach to local audiences is limited as not many South Africans can afford the high subscription fee.

4.3 Key Takeaways Across the Case Studies

2D animation as a technique provides a lower barrier to entry. Most of the productions that were described across the three models were 2D digital animation. Bridging from 2D illustration into animation is simply an easier learning curve than 3D animation. The use of techniques such as basic puppets and simple mouth flaps provide solo creators with the capacity to produce a story in a shorter amount of time, allowing for more content and a faster growth in audience.

Financing and distribution options vary and need to be tailored to fit the production. It is not a "one solution fits all" situation when it comes to financing 2D animated content. The success stories have all found financing channels that are unique to their context and relative to the type of animation that they are producing. Financing will vary greatly, and the size and capacities of a studio will determine what types of projects they are capable of receiving financing for.

The demand for South African animation exists. The viewership garnered by the case studies discussed above illustrates that there is a substantial demand within South Africa for animated media. Given the variation in resources available to local animators, they have found different ways to adapt in order to produce and distribute their content. 2D animation has played the largest role in meeting the local demand.

Financing for high quality productions is outpacing supply of skilled animators in South Africa. The effects of brain drain, as well as a disconnect between the industry and education institutions in South Africa has led to a lack of highly skilled animators in South Africa. While there are limited opportunities for novice animators, there is a high demand for experienced animators. This means that there is a gap in the ecosystem of opportunities for upskilling graduates to a level of skill that would allow them to be absorbed into the industry. Startup studios such as *Sonnix Studios, Katanimate Animation Studio* and *The Hidden Hand Studios* as well as incubators such as one facilitated by the *Tshimologong Digital Innovation Precinct* and *Animation SA* are positioned to play a valuable role in this process. An alternative strategy that graduates could employ is sourcing entry level opportunities from abroad and then returning to

the local industry once they have sufficiently developed their skills. This strategy does risk the loss of animators to foreign industries if they are not fully motivated to return to South Africa.

Chapter 5: Developing an Animated South African Short Film

This chapter will document the design of my short film pitch and provide a rationale for the creative and technical choices that I made for the production plan. It will draw on the insights from the interview information, case study analysis and other resources related to funding in order to design a short film that meets the need for decolonised media that contributes to greater cultural cohesion and national identity among South Africans.

5.1 Funding for First Time Animators

The pitch bible accompanying this research paper is designed to accommodate for the funding requirements set out by institutions such as the National Film & Video Foundation (NFVF) and the Gauteng Film Commission (GFC). These institutions have strict funding categories based on the director's level of experience. They rate experience in three tiers, 1 being the most experienced and 3 being new entrants to the industry. Different project types are permitted based on a given applicant's tier.

Newcomers are only permitted to apply for a short, animated film grant up to R 250 000 for production. The NFVF application criteria for development of an animated short film is detailed in annexure C.

If an NFVF applicant is successful they will receive their funding and should proceed with achieving the milestones. The creator needs to build out all the material necessary for starting an animation project. Once all the pre-production milestones are completed, the applicant should then apply for further funding for production form all relevant institutions. In addition to funding films the foundation also provides bursary opportunities for students.

For applicants from Gauteng, the GFC provides a funding opportunity for script development of R90 000, and funding for production of a short film of up to R130 000 for first time directors. Directors are encouraged to apply for this in addition to their other applications. Most funders allow directors to receive support from other institutions, and having proof of investment from other funders will likely further boost confidence in a given application. Required documents for completing the online application form for the GFC are detailed in annexure D.

5.2 Support Networks

The NFVF and GFC are the two most actively involved funders in the industry and are a good place for first time directors to start applying and are especially helpful for newcomers as parts of their funding are considered as grants and are not required to be paid back to the funders as a return on investment. Outside of these institutions there are other local and international organisations that could provide funding to animators. Listed in annexure E are some noteworthy organisations that industry professionals identified in their survey response as institutions where animators could find support for their production. It is a valuable activity to share your project with as many of these institutions as possible. Creating the connection is a useful exercise as these organisations may be interested in supporting future projects if they are too risk averse to fund a startup animator. It is also worthwhile to send your completed film to these institutions as they may be able to provide assistance in distribution or connect you further with representatives from film festivals.

5.3 Choosing a Genre, Story and Target Audience

The GFC's funding guideline requires that a production "positively and objectively promote patriotism" (2022). In order to best meet this requirement of local funders the animation should be a South African themed short film. From here one can narrow down the genre, target audience and other key defining characteristics. Market research in an important activity within the early development phase of an animation. It involves identifying the current market trends and identifying what products are currently popular and in high demand. The theme of *African futurism* and futuristic technologies in Africa stands out when observing the latest African themed animated productions such as *Kizazi Moto: Generation Fire* (2023) and *Supa Team 4* (2023). The theme of futuristic Africa has a deeper role to play in decolonising the global image of Africa. Eugene Mapondera explains how this happens:

> "Through Afrofuturism, people can entertain ideas about what could have become of Africa if it were not for the deprivation and disruption caused by social, academic, political, and military infringement—that is, colonialism."
> (Mapondera, 2023, p.291)

The colonial propaganda that portrays Africa as backward and inferior to other societies continues to be spread in the global media space. The theme of Afrofuturism could not only reshape the currant image of Africa but also play a role in shaping the actual future of the continent by building a positive image for the next generation to work towards.

The top grossing animated movies of 2023 were *The Super Mario Bros. Movie* (2023) and *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* (2023). These films indicate that a convergence between animation and video games or comic books is also popular among the global consumer market. Additionally, the visual appeal of anime has played a key role in supporting a steep increase in consumption of the Japanese export (Adeel, 2023). Using the high-quality visual effects from anime as a benchmark for a local production would help support the competitiveness of the animation.

Illustrated in *fig.13* Industry experts indicated that local stories and ease of access are primary factors that consumers are looking for. Additionally, the results suggest that family friendly content is more important than adult targeted content and that quality visual production and humorous writing will both play an important role in reaching consumers.

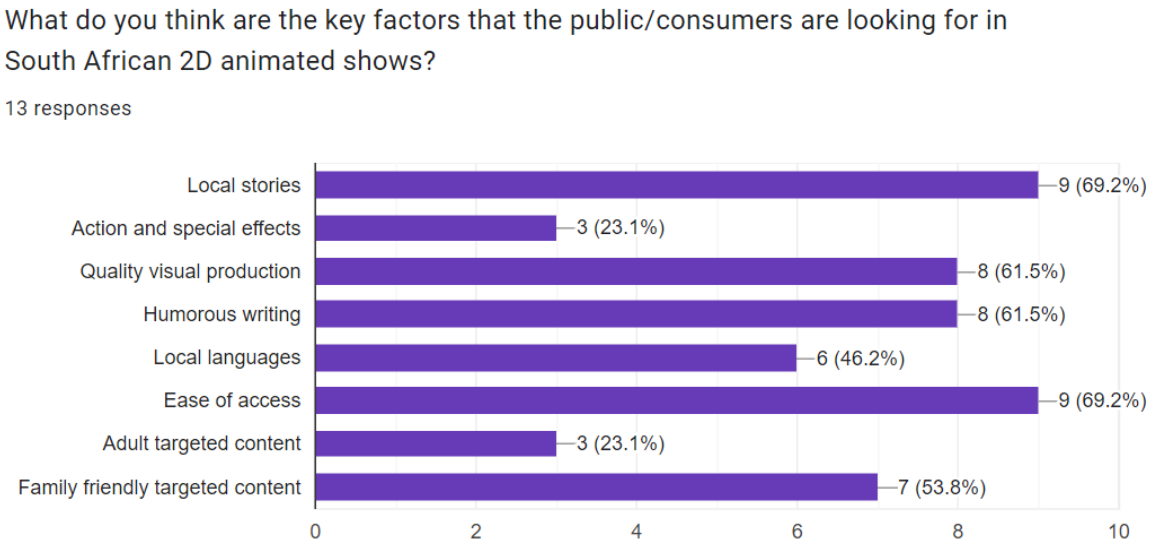


Fig.13 Perceived demand for factors among consumers of 2D animation.

Considering the above-mentioned trends of the animation market I decided to create a short film directed at children ages 9 to 14. The setting is a high-tech South Africa where magical creatures from local mythology and folklore form as much of a part of everyday life as drones and robots. The plot revolves around the story of reconciliation wherein a group of three racially diverse protagonists must overcome their differences in order to defeat a demon that represents the hatred and division caused by the colonial atrocities of the past. The script should accommodate moments of comedic relief along with exposition and action. A more comprehensive synopsis is detailed in the pitch bible accompanying this paper.

5.4 Defining South African Aesthetics

Production of animation that is considered distinctly "South African" by academics and critics makes up a smaller portion of the total volume of animation produced in South Africa. This can be attributed to the tendency for local studios to take on service work from international clients. Some conflicting attitudes towards South African animation can be found among academics. On one hand, productions such as *Khumba* (2013) and *Adventures of Zambezia* (2012) face criticism for their western production techniques and for echoing western ideas about Africa being an untamed wilderness (Blaeser, 2017). While, on the other hand, these films and service work is seen as a valuable activity in upgrading a given studios' production quality to an internationally competitive standard through the exposure to refined techniques (Rogerson, 2023, p.48).

While a given pipeline will impact the visual style of animation, Animators that intentionally draw on local resources will be able to create a distinctly South African look. Local studios have dedicated time into research on South African animation aesthetics. In cases where budget is more limited a pattern of emulation starts to emerge when examining the stylistic characteristics of some local productions, particularly in character design. *Fig.14* illustrates the use of character

design emulation as a technique by South African animator “Street Carnivore”.



Fig.14 Left: The 1day 1day Show characters by Street Carnivore (2020) Right: characters from Rick and Morty by Justin Roiland (2013).

Using and fusing foreign aesthetics and character formation strategies is a valid method for quickly and affordably creating new products. It can run the risk of being perceived under a negative light when it is not distinct enough from its inspiration. Nonetheless A shift towards a more distinct South African style can be observed as established South African artists such as Mogau Kekana and Terance Maluleka fuse the contemporary South African fine art motifs into animation, see *fig.15*.



Fig.15 Left: character design by Mogau Kekana (2023), right: character designs by Terence Maluleke (2020).

Distinctly South African writing can be observed more broadly across localised productions, particularly when they use a local language other than English. This is likely supported by the greater tradition and foundation of storytelling in South Africa (Mdlalose-Dyantyi, 2019). A historic music tradition, particularly music that has strong poetic and storytelling characteristics, is also positioned to support the animation and other tech ecosystems in South Africa (Lebaka, 2019, p.23). This facet of animation has a lot of potential for offering consumers an alternative to the current, western centric, themes that have dominated the global animation media market.

South African aesthetics in animation are still in the process of being defined. In order to shift their work towards a more localised aesthetic, artists have drawn on the existing body of work in visual arts, music and storytelling that remediate localised themes, culture and traditions.

5.5 Animation Pipeline Development.

While the quality of animation will be determined by the skill and experience of the artists, their work is in vain without an effective method for combining each component into a finished product. New studios that want to become competitive as quickly as possible will need to develop pipelines that are efficient for producing high quality animation. This can be a challenge

as the exact technicalities and knowhow on industry leading pipelines is often protected by established companies. Major South African studios have developed pipelines that produce a standard of animation that is globally competitive. This can be observed in the 3D animated films produced by *Triggerfish* and *Sunrise Productions* and in the 2D animation produced by *Minds Eye Creative*.

While the animation pipeline takes a general form, every studio develops a specific pipeline that is suited to the talents and production requirements of that studio. The software products that studios use can also range broadly. Most often they include products that come with a hefty subscription fee. Effective training for using these paid-for tools is often only available at private education institutions or through premium online courses. This means that self-taught animators or students from public education institutions can face financial challenges that are not an obstacle for animators from more privileged backgrounds. In this way the colonial power structure is maintained in the animation ecosystem. Addressing this issue is possible through knowledge sharing on newer, open source and free software. The creators of these software are rapidly developing tools that are increasingly able to compete with established premium software. This being said, one key factor that influences the continued use of premium software by major studios is the support services provided by the software distributors such as *Maya Support Services* that go so far as to provide a phone app for receiving software support. For a small team or solo creator, free software such as *Blender 3D* provides an opportunity for new studios to experiment with animation methods that can save time and resources.

Described below is a pipeline that employs free software that can be accessed by any person with an internet connection and a suitable desktop computer. Unfortunately, hardware, internet infrastructure access and data costs still enforce a divide between the wealthy and poor South Africans. This issue needs to be addressed in order to truly make any pipeline accessible to all who would benefit the most from it. Through the zero expenditure on software this pipeline aims to provide a solution tailored for South Africans. The pipeline can be adapted as needed for specific productions, as it is designed to suit the needs of the 2D animated short film detailed in the attached pitch bible.

Writing

Software: Google Docs, Trelby

Talent: Writer

The story, world and characters form the foundation of an entertaining animation. A writer should be hired at the start of a project to produce the screenplay. This is one of the mandates of the NFVF's funding criteria. There are a myriad of ways to tell a good story, but often writers can perform well when they are able to draw from their personal life experiences or build upon existing narratives. To produce a culturally relevant story to South Africa it is important to incorporate localised themes and language. Adaptations of South African folklore and traditional stories is a valuable endeavour in preserving and modernising parts of local culture and I sought to achieve this when designing my pitch. In their book, *Writing for Animation*, Beaumont and Larson explain that it is integral for a writer to think visually in terms of shots (2021). It can be of great value for the writer to cooperate with an actor, sketch artist and director in order to visualise the script during writing. A distinguishing factor between film and animation is that any imaginable scenario can be animated as we are not tied by the laws of physics. In my storyboard I attempted to harness the opportunity to leverage the medium's capacity for outlandish visual comedy or otherworldly action scenes and so forth. That being said, the writer needs to consider the budget. It is important that the writer can demonstrate a solid understanding of the entire production. This means that the writer needs to carefully consider where they incorporate action and effects in order to not go over the production timeline and budget limitations. The writer needs to understand that dialogue scenes with static characters are a cost effective way to fill out the production, and action scenes should be used at key intervals to retain the viewers interest.

Technical Research and Development

Software: Blender

Talent: Technical artists, animators, effects artists, riggers and director

During the early stage of concepting the animation it is important to begin a technical research and development process when the team experiments and refines a method for rendering the animation using their chosen software. The technical and art teams need to cooperate to develop methods for animating elements such as the characters, backgrounds, liquids, effects and more. Here it can be valuable to measure how long it takes to produce a sample duration of animation

that includes a spread of all the elements that will be used in the final animation. This can be used to calculate how long it would take to animate the full project and will help with creating a realistic timeline for your budget. I used the free software *Blender 3D* to test techniques using the grease pencil feature that offers a quick way to use rigs and frame by frame animation in combination.

Character design

Software: Krita, Blender, Google Docs

Talent: 2D Character Artist, Writer

Creating believable, relatable and localised characters will necessitate cooperation between the director, writer and character artist. The character design should incorporate aspects such as the character's personality, visual appearance and technical build for rigging and animation. A good, localised character design should draw on local fashion and ethnicities. Batsirai Freddy's paper *A study of an 'African aesthetic' in character designs for animation through an analysis of the work by Kenneth Shofela Coker* offers valuable insights on designing characters specifically for African animation (2015). He breaks down the character design pipeline in great detail while also discussing African specific considerations such as religion, myths, oral traditions and how drawing inspiration from African masks and sculpture can contribute towards creating an African aesthetic. Efficiencies in character design for 2D animation lie in the simplification of detail using basic shapes and the creation of interchangeable and reusable components such as mouth shapes. I aimed to achieve character designs in my pitch that represent the diversity of South Africa and maintain a level of detail that is easy to reproduce and animate.

Worldbuilding

Software: Google Docs, Blender

Talent: Writer, Director, Concept Artist

This process involves developing the world of your story. Important to producing afrimation is situating the story in an African context. The world of the animation should incorporate indigenous plants, architecture and other localised scenery. The African continent provides a plethora of exciting biomes from jungle to desert that can be incorporated into your design. While extensive research on the locale should be performed, the world you build does not have

to be a replica of our own and it can incorporate fictional societies, locations, timelines and physics or magic. In her paper *The Art of Crafting Imaginary Worlds: How Worlds Are Built for Animated Feature Films* (2021) Katerina Coronado emphases that the world in an animation needs to transport the viewer into a reality that only exists within the animation. It is also valuable to keep the character designs in mind when developing your world as they are a part of it as well and should visually and thematically compliment their world. The character's motivations, beliefs and personalities will be shaped by the world they live in.

The world that I created for my pitch is a futuristic South African city that aims to reflect a positive image of modernity that embraces cultural mythology and modern technology. Incorporating greenery and solar energy infrastructure along with architecture inspired by African designs aims to develop an African implementation of the "solarpunk" aesthetic.

Once the general world has been built out, the specific locations that the story unfolds in need to be tabulated and focused on. These locations will need to be described in detail so that the background artist has a good resource for creating a visually striking background with a lot of detail that complements the characters. The process of world building can involve the whole team as the details of a fictional world can be infinite. A concept artist can use written descriptions to draft up concepts of how the environments might look. Additionally, character design sheets, key art, lighting samples and effect frames can be created by the concept artist. This will be valuable for the other artists further down the pipeline.

Shot list

Software: Google Sheets

Talent: Writer, Director

The shot list should be based on the script and should include all the information needed for storyboarding such as a description of the action, shot duration, sound effect, music, dialogue, camera action, camera angle, camera zoom, lighting, visual effects and location. Each shot is a change in the camera position.

Storyboarding

Software: Storyboarder

Talent: Storyboard Artist, Director

Once supplied with the shot list and other pre-production material, the storyboard artist should roughly sketch a frame of each shot. Some longer shots should be broken down into multiple frames that illustrate the key actions. This is the stage where the director and cinematography lead should provide frequent feedback on the composition, character action and shot design. The storyboarding process is the key transition from written ideas into a visual representation and plays the role of a blueprint for the animation. I have included a storyboard for my animation pitch that aims to demonstrate the style and tone of the animation by demonstrating the visual humour, sequencing and settings.

Spending time refining the storyboard and ensuring good planning at this stage of development will significantly aid in reducing the number of adjustments and fixes that happen further down the pipeline. “Retaking a shot” in animation requires a lot more effort and resources than in film. The role of the storyboard artist is to interpret the script and shot list to visually synthesise the narrative flow and create a first pass at directing the film (Tsai-Yun, Tay-Sheng & Chien-Hsu 2013, p.1036). The boards should be set up so that they can be easily cut into the animatic. This means they should include the exact timing for each frame, all key poses, action lines to indicate movement and block out shading to create a clear separation between the characters and backgrounds.

Audio Recording

Software: Audacity

Talent: Voice Actor, Sound technician, musician

The creation of audio is a continuous process that can occur throughout the pipeline. It consists of several distinct layers such as voice acting, music, and sound effects for character movement, the environment ambiance and the special effects.

It is useful to have at least a preliminary recording of dialogue acted by the director as a reference for timing the shots in the animatic. The final voice acting should be recorded before the lip-syncing animation begins. Ideally Recording the dialogue to the animatic will help ensure that the timing is good and that the voice acting is appropriate for the given scene. Voice actors should be selected based on their ability to accurately convey the character's personality and accent. It is important to find voice actors from the given region that you wish to portray in order to ensure the authenticity of the project.

Mikhail Lebedev's paper *Animation and Sound* (2018) provides some useful analysis into the two-way relationship between sound and visuals in animation. He notes that the sound designer can promote the character's reliability within the setting by creating sounds of the character interacting with the environment and sounds that accompany the movements of the character. The design of sounds should match the cartoon effect or realism of the animation.

Music plays an important role in setting the mood of a given scene. Rhythm melody and dynamics contain cultural codes that can be used to situate the animation and support the narrative (Lebedev, 2018, p.17). As touched on in Chapter 5, harnessing music from local sources and genres is a good way to enforce the localised aesthetic of the animation while preserving culture.

Animatic

Software: Storyboarder

Talent: Storyboard Artist, Director, Animator

The animatic builds the next layers onto the blueprint for the animation. In this regard it is the foundation of the animation's art. It is essentially a storyboard that has been timed to the shot duration and played as a video. During this stage the team needs to ensure that all the timing, action and shot design is correct. The more revision and attention to details such as the timing and direction of the animatic will reduce the amount of time spent in production (Hong, 2010, p.1391). The shots of the animation should be broken down into their key frames in the animatic. A high quality animatic will also include further breakdowns and shadow contours to aid in the line art, colouring, shading and visual effects processes.

2D Character Rigs

Software: Blender

Talent: 2D Rigging Specialist

Character rigs are a virtual skeleton that can be used to control a character as if it were a puppet. They are a useful way to speed up the 2D animation process so that the animator doesn't need to redraw the character each frame. 2D rigs can be entirely optional and their use should vary based on the needs of a production. For example, it would not be worth the resources to rig a character that only appears for a short amount of time. 2D rigs are most useful for animated series wherein a cast of characters are frequently reused in many scenes. Creating the rig, connecting it to the character and making the controls are some of the most technically challenging processes of the animation pipeline. Fortunately there are a number of free tutorial resources available online such as this one created by South African Animator Thomas Leyland Torr (2020) that demonstrates a variety of 2D rigging options in Blender. A good 2D rig should have multiple layers for different angles and should have face controls that allow for a broad range of expressions. Having multiple sets of 2D character rigs that are set at different scales will also increase the production quality of the final animation. A variety of bones should be included in the rig that allow the animator to not only move the character's body parts but also stretch, squash and warp the character in a variety of ways.

Backgrounds and models

Software: Blender

Talent: 3D prop artist, 2D Background Artist

The animatic and world building materials should be used by the backgrounds team as a framework for creating the backgrounds of the animation. The backgrounds should be integrated in parallel with the character animation to ensure stylistic consistency and make the character's interaction with the environment believable.

In her paper, *Hybrid animation: the process and methods of implementing 2D style in 3D animation* (2019), Jerina Kivistö demonstrates that combining 2D and 3D animation techniques

can allow animators to capitalise on the advantages of each medium in a way that diminishes the respective disadvantages. This approach is supported by recent advancements in animation technologies and South African animators who adopt it will improve their competitiveness in the global market. 3D objects are most useful for vehicles, robots or machinery that needs to maintain a consistent scale when viewed from multiple angles or used in shots with dynamic camera movements. Distant details such as mountains or cityscapes can be layered behind the 3D foreground objects to give additional perspective without the need for modelling complex scenery.

Using outline shaders, cell rendering or custom painted textures on 3D objects can be an effective way of creating environmental objects that appear 2D and blend with the other components in the shot (Kivistö, 2019). The Blender *Grease Pencil* tool allows animators to daw 2D stokes onto 3D props which can be used to good effect. When using this technique, it is important to ensure that all 2D and 3D assets blend seamlessly otherwise the final animation quality can be compromised. It is important to test the efficiency of using these methods against traditional techniques in the research and development phase of the project. This is to ensure that you are not adding any unnecessary complexities.

3D Rigs

Software: Blender

Talent: 3D Rigger

3D model rigs might be useful for some components of the animation, they are most commonly used for vehicles that are shaded to appear 2D. Similarly, to the 2D rigs, more sophisticated 3D rigs that have a variety of controls will result in higher quality animation. Free resources such as this tutorial by Royal Skies (2022) on 3D rigging in blender are more numerous than that 2D rigging tutorials.

Animation

Software: Blender

Talent: Animator, Keyframe animator, In-between artist

In this phase the animator will need to begin by keyframing the rigs to match the movements in the storyboard. In places where the rigs are not suitable, they should be substituted with frame-by-frame drawings. The rest of the animation process involves filling in all the in-between frames, colouring and shading. A studio with enough resources will assign each of these tasks to an individual specialist as it can be a lot of work for one person to complete on their own. Animation of environmental objects and VFX can happen in parallel as well. Automating certain animation tasks can offer efficiencies and reduce costs. One example is automatic lip synching that can be configured in blender. A custom add-on such as Rhubarb 2D Lipsync can be used to automatically read audio files and assign mouth shapes on the timeline. For the highest quality result a manual pass should be performed after any automatic processes in order to ensure the lip sync is accurate.

VFX

Software: Blender

Talent: VFX Animator, Technical Artist

Effects such as rain, dust or explosions need to be animated by a VFX and technical artist. Some effects such as water or crumbling buildings will require sophisticated simulations. In the 2D pipeline effects are generally more straightforward to achieve as they mostly consist of 2D straight ahead animations. Joseph Gilland explains in his book, *Elemental magic: the art of special effects animation* (2012), that key to creating believable special effects is careful observation and interpretation of the natural phenomena that the artist wishes to represent.

Colour & light

Software: Blender

Talent: Lighting Artist, director

Shadows, lighting and colour grading are vital to making the animated world feel coherent and believable. Here the mood of the shots is finalised, and screen overlay effects can be added. Having consistent lighting across the character and environment is important and in the 2D/3D hybrid pipeline it is important to ensure that the 3D volumetric effects and shadows match the

2D shadows. Here the director has the opportunity to curate specific moods and atmospheres for selected shots. Colour has a strong link to emotion and can be used as a tool to intentionally evoke certain feelings in the viewer. The director should be aware that there are cross cultural, and culturally specific colour associations (Broeder, 2022, p.18) that they can utilise to communicate in different ways with their viewers.

Compositing

Software: Blender, Davinci Resolve

Talent: Compositing Artist, director

Here the various layers of the animation as well as audio and effects are stitched together, and the final colour grading can be performed. In order to manage the size in virtual memory of the project, animators can separate each shot into its own project file. This means that the compositor will be provided with a collection of clips that will need to have transitions added and adjustments made to ensure visual consistency. The credits list and title sequence and any other overlays can also be added at this phase. It can be useful to develop the compositing project file throughout the production process by starting with the animatic layer and gradually adding each subsequent layer of animation on top as it is being produced. This way the director can have a clearer top-down vision of how the animation is progressing and where certain shots may need adjustments.

5.6 Pitching

If you are unable to concisely and effectively communicate the idea for an animation and convince the investor that you are capable of realising the project, you will not be able to take the project into production. Integral to pitching an animation is a pitch bible. This is a short document that illustrates your concept, the art style, world building, storyline, synopsis, character designs and bios. Generally, it should have a 50/50 split of visual and written material and can also include information about the value of why your story should be told. Supporting the pitch bible with additional material such as evidence of market research and a portfolio of previous work can greatly improve investor confidence.

Part of pitching your animation is pitching yourself, the team and your abilities. It is important to create a concept that you are realistically capable of producing. Christopher Sutton emphasises that the key to successful pitching is finding the appropriate company or audience for your animation. One should ensure that their concept aligns the kind of material that the funder is interested in (2022, p.17). Demonstrating a realistic budget and timeline will aid in creating a convincing pitch. Pitching can be a very daunting task; repeated rejection is inevitable and should not deter the creator from pitching again to other investors. A rejected pitch is a useful opportunity to ask the investor what you need to improve in your pitch to meet their standards. Pitching opportunities can occur unexpectedly when a creator meets investors at conferences, expos or festivals such as the *Cape Town International Animation Festival*. This means that one should be familiar with their pitch and be prepared to pitch from memory. It can be useful to practice a 1-minute pitch before attending networking events. Having a memorable business card to hand out to potential investors is good, but in most cases the responsibility lies on you to reach out to them. It is valuable to send an email to all contacts you collect to initiate a relationship.

Chapter 6: Results and Discussion

6.1 What is the Consensus Among Industry Professionals?

The questionnaire results considered in conjunction with the existing theory on animation in South Africa and the dataset of animations produced in the country provide some key insights into the local animation ecosystem.

The key finding is that the 2D animation medium is a good entry point for novice animators as it has a lower production cost and lower barrier to entry. Transfer of drawing skills makes the medium more accessible to artists who wish to transition from other media sectors such as comic art or illustration. 2D animation plays a substantial role within the South African animation ecosystem and makes up the majority of locally produced content. Despite this there seems to be a shortfall in training to meet the industry demand as the prominent animation training centres such as *The Animation School*, *SAE* and *Oakfields College* focus largely on teaching 3D CGI animation techniques. This could be because 3D animation equips graduates for a more diverse set of professional environments such as the advertising, multi-media production or film GGI sectors. It appears that despite a shortfall of 2D animation courses, it does not seem to pose a serious challenge for the growth of the South African animation industry. Artists and designers are transcending various limitations and barriers to entry that presently exist in the industry and they should be commended for their resilience.

It should be noted that in some cases the opinions of the industry experts conflicted with what the dataset and case study analyses illustrated. Notably, there is no clear confidence in the financial viability of producing South African themed animation for the local market. This highlights that tapping into international markets is key to realising a healthy return on investment. That being said local animators can be observed to subvert this perception though using very low-cost production techniques and monetising their products through online platforms such as YouTube that are more accessible to the average South African. The importance of ease of access is also highlighted by industry experts. If animators are to have a

substantial effect on building cultural cohesion and identity in South Africa it is key to adapt to distribution methods that are more accessible to the general population.

Another key consensus is that the lack of funding opportunities, government support and the necessary quality of training are the standout challenges facing local animators who wish to enter the industry and produce local content for the first time. The perception on funding opportunities and government support conflicts somewhat with what funders seem to indicate, which is that there is a lack of capacity to produce the quality of animation that will provide a return on investment. What this does ratify is the skills gap in South Africa that is being exacerbated by the effects of brain drain.

It is a consensus among the questionnaire respondents and academics that locally themed animation plays an important role in building cultural unity in South Africa. Locally themed animation positions itself as a valuable investment for a government that is interested in building national cohesion. Unfortunately, gross mismanagement of the national broadcasting companies has left them straddled with enormous debt that prohibits them from making any kind of investments in animation or even commission live action content (Skinner, 2017, p.116). Additionally, the necessary policies and networks for government cooperation in animation production are seen to be prohibitive.

6.2 A Clearer Picture on the Adaptation in South Africa.

Despite a range of challenges, localised content is still being produced. Animators in South Africa have adapted and developed a range of models that allows them to produce locally themed content. This paper identified three prominent ones, namely YouTube distribution, financing through commission earnings and T.V./streaming broadcasting. Some projects might not see a return on investment, despite this they still produce non-monetary value in the form of preserving culture and stories as well as building unity among South Africans.

The discussion in this paper that focused on the challenges and limitations that local animators face, might paint a picture of a struggling industry. Yet, when we take a step back from

scrutinising the challenges that South African animators face, and examine the industry output as a whole, a much more positive outlook becomes visible. It is clear that there is growth ahead as hundreds of graduates pour out of education institutions across the country. Industry players continue to develop their services and grow their employee count. New studios are starting up each year, and while some of them do not survive, there is a constant increase in small companies that will grow to be larger, and these saplings will turn into trees over the course of time. Achieving faster development should be possible through identifying and building solutions to the challenges that start-ups face. The tech industry as a whole in South Africa positions itself as our best tool for revolutionising our economy. This is due to the instant access across many markets through the internet. Digital industries position themselves as the pinnacle economic sector in an age of globalisation. Digital products and services from Africa are poised to storm the global market as we improve our production quality. This is because labour costs in Africa can be lower than in the countries that currently house the biggest markets but have higher cost of living. In their paper *Production and political economy in the animation industry: Why insourcing and outsourcing occur* (2004), Feichin Tschang and Andrea Goldstein note that outsourcing from the United States of America is largely in the form of 2D animation. Emerging economies that take advantage the latest technologies to provide a good cost to quality product will stand a good chance of competing for these commissions where many outsource locations such as the Philippines are seeing a rise in labour costs (Tschang & Goldstein, 2004, pp.12-15).

6.3 A Pitch to Answer the Call for Afrimation

The resulting pitch bible that I produced as the practical component to this research paper aims to incorporate the learnings from my research in order to best position itself to be approved for development funding from the NFVF and other investors. The pitch aims to meet the core criteria such as the appropriate format for a first-time director and incorporating themes that promote South Africa. Pitching a story that represents South African culture in an authentic manner without creating harmful stereotypes or appropriating local culture is high on my agenda and this research paper aims to demonstrate the due diligence.

Realising the financial potential for locally themed animation hinges on its export potential. The thematic content matters less than production quality when competing in the global animation market. In fact, African themed content and animation with diverse representation appears to be growing in popularity around the globe (Krings & Simmert, 2020). The primary step that I have made towards ensuring a high-quality production is researching and designing a pipeline that best leverages the resources available to local animators. The next important step will be to form a team of talented creatives that can execute the pipeline. This task presents itself as a great challenge that all animation studios in South Africa face. Leveraging a connection to the training institutions to provide resources on curriculum design or special workshops on the specific skills that are in high demand in the animation industry is my best hope at improving my chances of finding and developing the talent needed to produce internationally competitive animation.

In order to support the pitch, I have developed some additional supporting material. This includes a Tiktok account (2023) onto which I have posted animation samples for the short film. The account has accumulated over 441 000 views and 4482 followers. Here the aim is to provide evidence of demand for the short film. Other supporting material includes various technical tests in blender for rendering 3D objects with 2D shaders, as well as 2D and 3D character rig tests. Additionally, I created a sample of a storyboard that aims to provide a basic impression of the visual comedy I would like to employ in the short film. Some mood boarding for futuristic African technologies and other basic worldbuilding materials such as environment treatments have also been developed to support the pitch bible.

6.4 Being Intentional About Driving a Digital Revolution in Africa

For centuries Africa has been playing catchup to the rest of the world. This is evident in South Africa when looking at the time it takes for the local animation industry to adopt the newest animation technologies. What can be observed is that the time taken is becoming shorter, from a 25-year gap in adopting cell animation in the early 20th century to a 10-year gap in adopting 3D CGI in the late 20th century. It is now time to close this gap even further. Important to achieving this is actively researching and adapting the latest techniques and methods to our needs. The ultimate goal is to catch up, and then overtake, by creating new methods and technologies in

South Africa. Access to free or open-source tools is particularly valuable to local animators as our circumstances motivate us to innovate new methods for creating high quality animation at low costs.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Summary

Animation is placed as an important tool for evolving South African culture in an increasingly digitised and globalised culture. The local animation industry is very fractured and has a number of shortcomings, notably in the readiness of graduates and the lack of government investment and the limited local market. Despite these challenges, animation plays a valuable role in the South African economy, providing a source of earnings at a variety of levels. This is a pattern observed throughout the history of animation in South Africa. Another pattern is that the lag in adopting the latest technologies has reduced over time and with the right cooperation between government, industry and academics, we could likely reach a point where South Africa is a producer of new techniques and styles that get adopted by other nations. This can be achieved through the alignment of animators in an effort to merge the best characteristics of existing productions into a visual language distinct to the country.

Funding opportunities for local startup animators are more numerous than one might anticipate, and it is mostly the lack of information sharing events and initiatives that have let these opportunities go untapped by graduates. It is imperative for animators to reach out and build connections with studios, support institutions and distributors in order to gain access to the resources required to produce localised animated films and series. It is also important to observe and mimic the techniques developed by local animators and studios. There are various recipes for success in South Africa that have nuances distinct to other regions of animation production around the globe.

A successful animated project will require specific talents and technologies. The details and processes of a well-considered market strategy and technical pipeline for high end animation production are not easily accessible to the public or education institutions. This highlights the need for better knowledge sharing and cooperation. An archive of all South African animation aims to be an instrumental piece in the puzzle of creating a globally competitive and recognisable South African export.

An accompanying pitch bible demonstrates a practical application of the key insights from the paper and hopes to provide the basis for further economic and cultural development in South Africa and across the content.

7.2 Further Recommended Research

The relationship between the comic art and animation ecosystem in South Africa requires more attention from academics. It is likely that greater cross pollination between the communities will be beneficial for developing new styles and supporting new careers. Further research on what business models local comic artists have used might unveil tools that animators could adapt to overcome their own challenges.

Focusing on visual trends in character design and environment art will allow animators to develop a more distinct South African aesthetic in their work. Incorporating design characteristics that are common across the best localised productions provides a valuable activity in building a brand for South African animation that can be distinguished from Japanese or American animation. The archive in this paper provides a useful springboard for future researchers to conduct comprehensive visual analysis and design development research.

The archive that I have created focuses on animation exclusively produced in South Africa. While the country is a leader on the continent, there are a number of other African countries such as Nigeria, Egypt, Kenya, Uganda and Ghana that are historical and emerging producers and markets for animation. These countries have their own histories that are lacking documentation and require analysis and preservation urgently. Additionally, there are likely to have been a number of South African animations that I did not discover as well as upcoming animations that will need to be archived for future generations.

It is well known that the advertising industry has played a key role in supporting the development and evolution of animation in South Africa. Further research on the inner workings of this sector could help provide more information that education institutions can employ to better prepare graduates for seeking employment in the sector. Additionally, there is a lot of

animated material that has been produced for advertising that has been lost to time. Locally targeted adverts often employ local themes and contemporary cultural references. An effective archive would also act as a reference of cultural adaptations and act as a mirror of the history of cultural norms in South Africa. Animation for advertising can be well funded and high quality, the methods and technologies developed within this sector could be adapted by studios to produce higher quality animation.

Reference list:

Adeel, S. (2023). *Why anime is more popular than ever* [Online]. Available from: https://movieweb.com/why-anime-is-so-popular/#:~:text=The%20popularity%20of%20anime%20has,and%20a%20range%20of%20genres. [Accessed: 26 January 2024].

Agrawal, A. (2002). Indigenous knowledge and the politics of classification. *International social science journal*, *54*(173), pp.287-297.

Akena, F.A. (2012). Critical analysis of the production of Western knowledge and its implications for Indigenous knowledge and decolonization. *Journal of Black Studies*, 43(6), pp.599-619.

Alexander, M. (2019). *The 11 languages of South Africa* [Online]. Available from: https://southafrica-info.com/arts-culture/11-languages-south-africa/#:~:text=IsiZulu%20is%20South%20Africa%27s%20biggest,%2C%20and%20isiNdebele%20(2%25). [Accessed: 23 November 2023].

Animation South Africa (2006). *Animation SA Home Page* [Online]. Available from: https://animationsa.org/ [Accessed: 06 September 2024].

Atkinson, P. (2009). Movements Within Movements: following the line in animation and comic books. *Animation*, *4*(3), pp.265-281.

Azi, J.I. (2012). Appraising the Role of Afrimation (African-Animation) in Promoting Africa's Rich Cultural Heritage in a Digital Age. *International Journal of Computational Geometry and Applications*, 2, pp.37-54

Beaumont, L. and Larson, P. (2021). *Writing for Animation*. USA: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Birhane, A. (2020). Algorithmic colonization of Africa. *SCRIPTed*, *17*, p.389.

Blaeser, T. (2017). *A postcolonial analysis of colonial representations in Triggerfish's animated films Khumba (2013) and Adventures in Zambezia (2012)*. Doctoral dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Blumenthal, E. (2005). *Puppetry and Puppets: an illustrated world survey*. London: Thames & Hudson.

Broeder, P. (2022). Colours of emotion, trust, and exclusivity: A cross-cultural study. *Cultura e Scienza del Colore-Color Culture and Science*, *14*(02), pp.14-21.

Bulbulia, N. (2007). *Children's programming on South African public service television: filling the gaps in policy and practice*. Doctoral dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand.

Callus, P. (2016). *Animation in Sub-Saharan Africa: trajectories of ideas and practice*. Doctoral dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies University of London.

Callus, P. (2018). Animating African History: Digital and Visual Trends. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*.

Callus, P. (2012). Reading animation through the eyes of anthropology: A case study of sub-Saharan African animation. *Animation*, *7*(2), pp.113-130.

Callus, P. (2015). Animation, fabrication, photography: Reflections upon the intersecting practices of sub-Saharan artists within the moving image. *African Arts*, *48*(3), pp.58-69.

Campbell, R. (2012). *Roderick Campbell YouTube Channel*, *YouTube*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/@RoderickCampbell/featured [Accessed: 06 September 2024].

Casale, D. and Posel, D. (2011). English language proficiency and earnings in a developing country: The case of South Africa. *The Journal of Socio-Economics*, *40*(4), pp.385-393.

Corntassel, J. (2003). Who is indigenous? ‘Peoplehood’ and ethnonationalist approaches to rearticulating indigenous identity. *Nationalism and ethnic politics*, *9*(1), pp.75-100.

Coronado, K. (2021). *The Art of Crafting Imaginary Worlds: How Worlds Are Built for Animated Feature Films*. Honors Thesis, California State University.

Crush, J. (2009). The global raiders: Nationalism, globalization and the South African brain drain. *Journal of International Affairs*, pp.147-172.

De Beer, A. (2016). Animating a South African identity? The case of Urbo: The Adventures of Pax Afrika (SABC. *Communicatio*, *42*(4), pp.47-62.

Erez, M. and Gati, E. (2004). A dynamic, multi-level model of culture: from the micro level of the individual to the macro level of a global culture. *Applied Psychology*, *53*(4), pp.583-598.

Eriksen, T.H. (2014). *Globalization: The key concepts*. London: Taylor & Francis.

Flett, A. and Letley, P. (2013). Style and stylistic change in the rock art of the southeastern mountains of southern Africa. *The South African Archaeological Bulletin*, pp.3-14.

Flew, T. (2016). Entertainment media, cultural power, and post-globalization: The case of China’s international media expansion and the discourse of soft power. *Global Media and China*, *1*(4), pp.278-294.

Francis, D. and Webster, E. (2019). Poverty and inequality in South Africa: critical reflections. *Development Southern Africa*, *36*(6), pp.788-802.

Freddy, B. (2015). *A Study of an'African Aesthetic'in Character Designs for Animation Through an Analysis of the Work by Kenneth Shofela Coker*. Doctoral dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand.

Gardiner, E. (2023). *Vetkoek Studios Animation Tiktok*, *TikTok*. Available at: https://www.tiktok.com/@vetkoek_studios_animate [Accessed: 06 September 2024].

Gilland, J. (2012). *Elemental magic: the art of special effects animation*. New York: CRC Press.

Gutsche, T. (1946). *The history and social significance of motion pictures in South Africa, 1895-1940*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town

Gwaradzimba, E. and Shumba, A. (2010). The nature, extent and impact of the brain drain in Zimbabwe and South Africa. *Acta Academica*, *42*(1), pp.209-241.

Haycock, A. (2010). *South African Stop-Motion Animation from 1980-2005*. Doctoral dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand.

Hong, I.Y. (2010). A Study on the Efficient Improvement of the Animatics for Animation Production in Education. *Journal of Korea Multimedia Society*, *13*(9), pp.1391-1398.

Jansen, L. (2020). Indigenous World 2020: South Africa. *The Indigenous World* [Online]. Available from: https://www.iwgia.org/en/south-africa/3593-iw-2020-south-africa.html [Accessed: 12 October 2023].

Jedlowski, A. (2016). Studying media "from" the South: African media studies and global perspectives. *Black Camera: An International Film Journal (The New Series)*, *7*(2), pp.174-193.

Kangong, R.N. (2010). *3D animation as a medium of cultural representation and education: a case study of Magic Cellar part 1*. Master's dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand.

Kekana, M. (2024). *Untitled Video, mogau_k.* Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/C1uYjKANWFL/ [Accessed: 06 September 2024.

Kharas, F. (2014). *Our work, Chocolate Moose Media* [Online]. Available at: https://chocmoose.com/portfolio-item/magic-cellar/ [Accessed: 31 January 2024].

Krings, M. and Simmert, T. (2020). African Popular Culture Enters the Global Mainstream. *Current History*, *119*(817), pp.182-187.

Kivistö, J. (2019). *Hybrid animation: the process and methods of implementing 2D style in 3D animation*. Bachelor's thesis, Tampere University of Applied Sciences.

Kohli, C. (2020). The replacement of conventional television by streaming services. *International Journal of Research in Engineering, Science and Management*, *3*(10), pp.59-67.

Kruger, M. (2011). Puppets and adult entertainment in South Africa: a tale of a tentative start, evolving prejudices, new and lost opportunities, and a fresh momentum. *SATJ: South African Theatre Journal*, 25(1), pp.13-34.

Lall, S. (1992). Technological capabilities and industrialization. *World development*, *20*(2), pp.165-186.

Lebaka, M.E. (2019). Misconceptions About Indigenous African Music and Culture: the Case of Indigenous Bapedi Music, Oral Tradition and Culture. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, *2*(2), pp.18-30.

Lebedev, M. (2018). Animation and Sound. *AKV St Joost*.

Lowman, C., Samuelsson, M. and Bick, G. (2020). Triggerfish animation studios: the challenges of financing digital entertainment. *Emerald Emerging Markets Case Studies*, *10*(3), pp.1-31.

Mapondera, E.R. (2023). Exploring Contemporary Southern African Culture through Animation and Video Games. *Narratives Crossing Boundaries: Storytelling in a Transmedial and Transdisciplinary Context*, *17*, p.281.

Martinez, O.O.L. (2015). Criteria for defining animation: A revision of the definition of animation in the advent of digital moving images. *Animation*, 10(1), pp.42-57.

Mdlalose-Dyantyi, N.H. (2019). *Transformation in South African Storytelling Tradition: Stylisation and New Genre in Storytelling NGOs*. Doctoral dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand.

Mihelj, S. and Jiménez-Martínez, C. (2021). Digital nationalism: Understanding the role of digital media in the rise of 'new' nationalism. *Nations and nationalism*, *27*(2), pp.331-346.

Ministry of Trade, Industry and Competition, (2017). *Copyright Amendment Bill B13D-2017*

Mirrlees, T. (2013). *Global entertainment media: Between cultural imperialism and cultural globalization*. Routledge. London: Routledge.

Morton, D. (2010). Sketching Under the Influence? Winsor McCay and the Question of Aesthetic Convergence Between Comic Strips and Film. *Animation*, 5(3), pp.295-312.

Mukherjee, A. and Sobhakar, M. (2020). Latest Trends in Animation Industry. *Brainwave: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, *1*(1), pp.82-85.

Nahon, K. and Hemsley, J. (2013). *Going viral*. Cambridge: Polity.

Precious, O.U. (2010). Globalization and the future of African culture. *Philosophical Papers and Reviews*, *2*(1), pp.1-8.

Ramalepe, P. (2023). *DStv is now dubbing Bollywood content in isiZulu – here's what you can expect* [Online]. Available from: https://www.news24.com/news24/tech-and-trends/news/dstv-is-now-dubbing-bollywood-content-in-isizulu-heres-what-you-can-expect-20230831 [Accessed: 12 January 2024].

Rogerson, A. (2023). *(Re)Defining Local Animation: An Exploration of South African Animation in Terms of Local Production, Local Relevance and Local Ownership*. Master's Dissertation, The University of Cape Town.

Schwartz, S. (2006). A theory of cultural value orientations: Explication and applications. *Comparative sociology*, *5*(2-3), pp.137-182.

Shapurjee, S. (2008). *A historical enquiry into the animation unit, situated within the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) 1976-1988*. Master's dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand.

Sidogi, P. (2021). (South) Africa's online animation revolution: the case of Jonas Lekganyane's The adventures of Noko Mashaba. *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, *12*(5), pp.702-718.

Skinner, K.A.M. (2017). *Public Service Broadcasting and Diversity in the Digital Age: Policy Lessons and Options for SABC Television*. Doctoral dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand.

South African Cultural Observatory, (2022). *SA's Animation Industry: Ecosystem Analysis.* Port Elizabeth: Nelson Mandela University.

Stefyn, N. (2022). *What is 2D animation?: How to become a 2D animator: CG Spectrum*, *What is 2D Animation? | How to Become a 2D Animator* [Online]. Available from: https://www.cgspectrum.com/blog/what-is-2d-animation [Accessed: 06 September 2024].

Sutton, C. (2022). *Burning the earthen beasts.* Doctoral dissertation, Massey University.

The Callsheet (2014). *Short Form Animation Can Africa Find Its Own Voice?* [Online] Available from: https://issuu.com/thefilmmakersguide/docs/callsheet_issue_7_ebook_2014 [Accessed: 12 November 2023]

Triggerfish-Academy, (2022). *Triggerfish Academy*[Online]. Available from: https://www.triggerfish.com/academy/ [Accessed: 06 September 2024].

Trimingham, M. (2011). How to think a puppet. In *Forum Modernes Theater*. 26, (1), pp. 121-136. Tübingen: Forum Modernes Theater.

Tsai-Yun, M., Tay-Sheng, J. and Chien-Hsu, C. (2013). From storyboard to story: Animation content development. *Educational Research and Reviews, 8*(13), pp.1032-1047.

Tschang, F. and Goldstein, A. (2004). Production and political economy in the animation industry: Why insourcing and outsourcing occur. *DRUID Summer Conference, Elsinore, Denmark, 14-16 June 2004*. 1-21

Walker, K.K. (2019). *A Comparative Analysis of the Transition from Stop-Motion to CG Animation at Two South African Studios: Sunrise and Triggerfish*. Master's dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand.

Wang, X. and Zhong, W. (2023). Evolution and innovations in animation: A comprehensive review and future directions. *Concurrency and Computation: Practice and Experience*, p.e7904.

Warnecke, E. (2016). Animation: A True Art. *ESSAI*, *14*(1), p.39.

Westcott, T. (2011). An overview of the global animation industry. *Creative industries journal*, *3*(3), pp.253-259.

Zegeye, A. and Vambe, M. (2006). Knowledge production and publishing in Africa. *Development Southern Africa*, 23(3), pp.333-349.

Annexure A:

Localized South African Animation

Creator	Year	Title	Medium & Format	Link to animation
African Film Productions	1915	Artist's Dream	Drawtoon (Film)	A historical enquiry into the animation unit, situated within the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) 1976-1988
African Film Productions	1917	The Adventures of Ranger Focus, Don't You Believe, Crooks and Christmas, The Adventures of Ben Cockles	2D animation (Shorts)	A historical enquiry into the animation unit, situated within the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) 1976-1988
Butch Stolz, Gerard Smith	1965	Wolraad Woltemade, Bremenstadmusikante, An Introduction to Dickens	Presumably 2D Animation (Short)	No material https://archive.org/details/cartoons00gian/page/394/mode/2up
Peter Templeton	1970	My Eye	Presumably 2D	No material

			Animation (Short Film)	https://archive.org/details/cartoons00gian/page/394/mode/2up
Louise Smit	1976	Wielie Wielie Walie	Puppetry, 2D Animation (Series)	Wielie Walie episode 1
Dave McKey Animation Services	1978 ?	The Story of Bath	Presumably 2D Animation (Short)	No material https://archive.org/details/cartoons00gian/page/394/mode/2up
Rentastudio Gerard Smith, Denis Purchase	1978	Bobby the Cat	Presumably 2D Animation (Series)	No material https://archive.org/details/cartoons00gian/page/394/mode/2up
Rentastudio Gerard Smith, Denis Purchase	1978	Rachel de Beer	Presumably 2D Animation (Special/Short)	No material https://archive.org/details/cartoons00gian/page/394/mode/2up
Johann Beukes	1982	Interster	Puppetry (Series)	Interster | Episode 01 Proxima Encounter | AI Upscaled to HD 4K - English Subtitles

Annie-Mation Studios	1987	Jock of the Bushveld	Presumably 2D Animation (Pilot/short)	wiredspace.wits.ac.za/server/api/core/bitstreams/76af6b4a-859c-451f-bc96-e44648921042/content
Louise Smit	1987	Pumpkin Patch	Puppetry (Series)	Pumpkin Patch intro song
Verna Vels	1987	Liewe Heksie	Puppetry (Series)	Liewe Heksie Chapter 01
Riccardo Capecchi	1989	Walk Tall, Cotton Ghost Pops II, Mondi Rotarim, Yogi Sip	Presumably 2D Animation (Short Films)	No material https://archive.org/details/cartoons00gian/page/394/mode/2up
William Kentridge	1991	Mine	charcoal and pastel on paper (Short)	1991 Mine (HIGH RES) by artist William Kentridge
Delapse	1996	Tube	3D Animation (Series)	Tube - Holiday Promo
Triggerfish	2000	Takalani Sesame	Puppetry, Stop Motion, 2D animation (Series)	Zoe Feels Nervous | Takalani Sesame
Lara Foot Newton, Gerhard Marx	2001	And THere in The Dust	Mixed Media Stop Motion (Short Film)	And There in the Dust - promo

SABC2, Alf Montso	2003	Thabang Thabang	Puppetry (Series)	Thabang Thabong 9 Episode 241 SABC 2
Brent Dawes	2003	Jungle Beat	3D Animation (Series)	Complete Season Two! | Jungle Beat Retro | Kids Animation 2022
Mike Scott	2004	Jozi Zoo	2D Animation (Series)	Jozi Zoo Episodes
Pippa Lugg	2005	Guess Who's Coming For Dinner	2D animation (Short)	Guess who's coming for dinner? by Pippa Lugg
Jacquie Trowell	2006	Beyond Freedom	2D animation (Short Film)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VR39D1dNftk
Diek Grobler	2006	Sanna's Garden	Stop motion (Short Film)	Sanna's world
Fridaus Kharas	2006	The Magic Cellar	3D Animation (Series)	Magic Cellar Zulu (Jackal and Hare)
Octagon CSI/ Clockwork Zoo Sean Rogers	2006	URBO: The Adventures of Pax Afrika	2D & 3D animation (Series)	Urbo The adventures of Pax Afrika
Michael J. Fix	2007	Tengers	Claymation (Film)	Tengers (Official Trailer)
Diek Grobler	2007	Agenda	Stop motion	agenda

			(Short Film)	
The Animation School	2007	Various animation school projects	3D animation (Short films)	The Animation School - YouTube
Alex Kramer	2008	Supa Strikas	2D animation (Series)	The Supa Strikas - Kids Soccer Cartoon - YouTube
Matthew Brown, Jonathan Shapiro and Thierry Cassuto	2009	ZANews/ Puppet Nation	Puppetry (Series)	ZANEWS THIS IS PUPPET NATION
Jock Animation, Duncan McNeillie	2011	Jock the Hero Dog	3D Animation (Feature Film)	Jock The Hero Dog - Where to Watch and Stream - TV Guide
Mike Scott	2011 2012	South Africa, Climate Change Public Service Announcement	2D Animation (Short)	South Africa, Climate Change Public Service Announcement
Triggerfish Animation Studios, Wayne Thornley	2012	Adventures in Zambezia	3D Animation (Feature Film)	Adventures in Zambezia Trailer
Jonas Lekganyane	2013	The Adventures of Noko Mashaba	2D Animation (Series)	Noko Mashaba - Makhi's Chicken
Mdu Ntuli	2013	Unhappy Husband	2D Animation (Series)	Unhappy Husband 6

Urban Brew Studios	2013	YOTV Mvubu and friends	2D Animation (Series)	YOTV Mvubu and friends
Triggerfish Animation Studios, Anthony Silverston	2013	Khumba	3D Animation (Feature Film)	Khumba Trailer - Official SA Trailer
Naomi van Niekerk	2014	n Gewone Blou Maandagoggend	Sand and Paper Stop Motion (Short Film)	Naomi - Film Director, Art Director & Animator
Charles Badenhorst	2014	What about the law	2D Animation (Short Film)	What about the law, a film by Charles Badenhorst.
Andile Radebe, Carl Stemmet	2015	Systraat	2D Animation (Series)	Systraat: Ep 1
Kabelo Maaka	2015	The Cave	2D Animation (Short Film)	The Cave - Graduation Animation (2015)
Matt Torode, Lebogang Mogashoa	2016	Squeers	2D Animation (Trailer/Short)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0TgPDBH2Gtw
Mike Scott	2016	Itchy Pitchy	2D Animation (Short)	Itchy Pitchy - Africa Animated! 2.0
Khona Penbretien P-man Seabela	2016	Limpopo and the rivals	2D animation (Series)	P Man Comics - YouTube

Hanli Brink	2016	Lollos 08 - Skaterlag	2D Animation, Live action and costumes (Series)	Lollos 08 - Skaterlag
Pixcomm	2016	Jabu's Jungle	2D Animation (Series)	Jabu's Jungle - the Eco-Warrior
Bugbox Animation	2017	Musi & Cuckoo	2D Animation (Series)	Musi & Cuckoo - TV series - Éloïse Rauzier https://vimeo.com/123740360
Urban Brew Studios	2017	YOTV Ntunjambili	2D Animation (Series)	Ntunjambili (Thembi and Themba at the Library)
Urban Brew Studios	2017	YOTV ILitha Lethu YOTV Land	2D Animation, Puppetry (Series)	YOTV ILitha Lethu S27 Ep40
Khoth Ekhothayo, Mell	2017	Khoth Ekhothayo Skits	3D Animation (Shorts)	Khoth Ekhothayo Skit002 #Khothagram
Mike Scott	2017	Bru & Boegie	2D Animation (Series)	Bru & Boegie - Forest Creature
Mulaudzi Tshilidzi Respect	2017	Various Shorts on Youtube	2D animation (Shorts)	https://www.youtube.com/@lasvendascomics6158
Rishane Rajkoomar	2017	Ubuntu Village	3D animation	Animated

			(Trailer/Short)	productions gaining momentum in South Africa
Lwazi Msipha	2019	The Adventures of Aylzee and Imaginary Friends Nurse Thandi	2D Animation (Series)	https://www.youtube.com/@oldfashionedyoungin4972/videos Nurse Thandi (@nurse_thandi) • Instagram photos and videos
Erentia Bedeker	2019	Ruby and Roach	Paper Stop Motion (Short Film)	Dorette Nel
Kabelo Maaka	2019	3 Teaspoons of Sugar	2D Animation (Short Film)	3 Teaspoons of Sugar (2019)
4OUR HD	2020	Mzansi's Got Magic	2D Animation (Series)	4OUR HD - YouTube
Tlatso-Son	2020	MODIMOLLE: The Missing	3D Animation (Series)	Tlatso-Son - YouTube
Fun Art Entertainment	2020	Stixo	2D Animation (Series)	Stixo | S01 EP01 | Epowini
Brent Dawes	2020	Jungle Beat: The Movie	3D Animation (Feature Film)	Jungle Beat: The Movie | Trailer | Kids stuff on Showmax

Manzini Zungu	2020	Shaka Inkosi Yamakhosi	2D animation (Film)	Shaka - iNkosi Yamakhosi (2020) - Trailer
Greg Philip Davies	2020	Khusela: The Cradle's Haven	2D Animation (Short Film)	Khusela: The Cradle's Haven
Kabelo Maaka	2021	The Little Teaspoon of Sugar	2D Animation (Short Film)	The Little Teaspoon of Sugar (2021) // 2D Animated Short Film
Kabelo Maaka	2021	When it's Riskey	2D Animation (Short film)	When It's Risky (2021) TEASER CLIP // Cabblow Studios Short Film
Kabelo Maaka	2021	Kasi Riders	2D Animation (Short Film)	Kasi Riders FREE ON Afro+ App // Cabblow Studios
Street Carnivore	2021	The 1day 1day Show	2D Animation (Series)	Street Carnivore - YouTube
Visionasty Visuals	2021	Various Animated Shorts set in South Africa	2D Animation (Shorts)	https://www.youtube.com/@visionastyvisuals
Deidré Jantjies, Na Aap Productions	2021	Stories in die die Wind	2D Animation (Short Film)	Stories in die die Wind: Full Film
Triggerfish	2021	Seal Team	3D Animation	Seal Team Trailer |

Animation Studios, Greig Cameron Kane Croudace			(Feature Film)	Netflix After School
Thabani Hlela	2021	Various Shorts on Tik Tok	2D animation (Shorts)	The Cartoon Guy (@thabanihlela) | TikTok
Thomas Leyland Torr	2021	Clifford and Dexter	2D animation (Series)	Clifford and Dexter Episode 3 - The Bafana Bafana Problem
Nick Cloete	2022	The Snake Chief	2D animation (Short Film)	The Snake Chief - Noble Pictures - Animation Trailer
Nic Buchanan	2022	Zizi and Hannibal	2D animation (Series)	Zizi & Hannibal - Season Premiere
Kasified comics	2023	Various Animated Shorts set in South Africa	3D Animation (Shorts)	Kasified comics - YouTube
Charlie Maas, Kayla Archer, Mike Scott and Regan Riskas Maas, Greig Cameron	2023	Twende	2D animation (Series)	Meet Twende, the boda boda-driving pangolin | Teaser Trailer | Showmax Original
The Hidden Hand Studios, Lola Aikins	2023	Naledi	2D animation (Trailer/Short)	Naledi Trailer

Triggerfish Animation Studios, Ahmed Teilab, Lesego Voster, Tshepo Moche, Nthato Mokgata, Isaac Mogajane & others	2023	Kizazi Moto: Generation Fire	2D and 3D animation (Short Films)	Kizazi Moto: Generation Fire | Official Trailer | Disney+

Annexure B:

South African Produced Export and Commercial Animation

Lindsay Van Blerk	1979	Michael the Visitor	Claymation (Series)	Michael The Visitor promo
Butch' Stoltz	1980	Die Bremenstad se Musikante	2D Animation (Short film)	Bremen se Stadsmusikante - Afrikaanse Sprokie - Simsala Slim - Subscribe @bezties - Storiehuis
SABC	1981	Cheesecake	Puppetry (Series)	Cheesecake 1980s TV show. SABC/BBC Collaboration.
Klaybow Films	1981	The Adventures of Dr. Kleiman	Claymation (Series)	https://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/items/442ddc08-d53f-4680-a41f-7f5caaadfb25 Page 60
Klaybow Films	1982	The Wonderful World of Dr Kleiman	Claymation (Series)	https://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/items/442ddc08-d53f-4680-a41f-7f5caaadfb25 Page

				60
Klaybow Films	1985	Bimbo's Books	Claymation (Series)	https://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/items/442ddc08-d53f-4680-a41f-7f5caaadfb25 Page 60
Louise Smit Produksies	1985	Mina Moo	Puppetry (Series)	Mina Moo
SABC	1986	Mannemerak	Puppetry (Series)	Mannemarak - Papegaaie
Pieter Smith	1986	Dawie die Kabouter	2D Animation (Series)	Dawie die Kabouter S01E01 - Aangename Kennis
Norman Dahl, SAUK TV1, IDTV	1987	Oscar	Puppetry (Series)	Oscar met Knersus - www.Afrifiksie.com
The Little Film Company	1992	Uz Adibalz an Fingz Zoot's Rooty Toot Toot Show U'Nkathazo	Paper Puppetry (Series)	The Little Film Company - YouTube

Minds Eye Creative	1999	Rescue Heroes	2D Animation (Series)	Rescue Heroes™ - Tornado of Fire | Cartoons For Kids | Fisher-Price | Rescue Heroes | Episode 3
Minds Eye Creative	2002	Cyberchase	2D Animation (Series)	Cyberchase
Lindsay van Blerk	2004	The Velveteen Rabbit	Claymation (Film)	The Velveteen Rabbit | Clay Animation | Full Length Feature (2003)
Chris Schoultz	2004	Once Upon a Stable	3D Animation (Feature Film)	Once Upon A Stable Trailer - www.lionofjudahthemovie.com
Bernie Roux	2006	ChildLine Love me Love me not	2D Animation (Short/Advert)	Bernie Roux(Director/Animator)-2006| ChildLine |"Love me Love me not"| Animation | South Africa | ZA
Nico Steyn	2008	Ed & Eppa	3D Animation (Series)	https://www.redpepper.tv/playing/ed-eppa/stream/fc7acf

				fc51c0b442c8b2cd95d9c5b4e2
Triggerfish Animation Studios	2008	The Rise and Fall of Tony The Frog	3D animation (Film)	The Rise and Fall of Tony the Frog Trailer
Mike Scott	2008 - 2023	Various Animated music videos	2D Animation (Music Videos)	Mike Animation - YouTube
Luma Animation	2009	Bun & Bunee	3D Animation (Series)	Bun & Bunee Last Laugh
Clockwork Zoo	2009	Mr. Baby	2D Animation (Series)	Mr Baby - Opening Credits - Season 1 (HD)
Tim Argall	2009	Adventures of Toby: Crunch Time	3D Animation (Films)	The Adventures of Toby - Crunch Time
Clockwork Zoo	2010	Caillou Season 5	2D Animation (Series)	Caillou - Caillou's Cricket (S05E01) | Videos For Kids
Clockwork Zoo, Sean Rogers	2010	Florrie's Dragons	2D Animation (Series)	Florrie's Dragons - 'A Rainy Day'
Martin Sen	2010	New Digs	3D Animation (Short Film)	NEW DIGS
Deryck Broom	2011	The Lion of Judah	3D Animation (Feature Film)	The Lion of Judah (Official Trailer) ||

				Heritage Films
Minds Eye Creative	2013	Kid iKawe	2D Animation (Trailer)	Kid iKawe Trailer
Mike Scott	2013	Bobo	2D Animation (Short Film)	https://youtu.be/4qx2l95ajAE
Mike Scott	2013	Happy Land	2D Animation (Shorts Series)	Mike Scott's Happy Land
Mike Scott	2014	Heaven's Countryland	2D Animation (Short Series)	Heaven's Countryland Ep 1 | Animated Short
Red Rabbit Media	2015	Silly Seasons	3D Animation (Series)	Silly Seasons - TV Series | Red Rabbit Media
Minds Eye Creative Blue Forest	2015	Kariba	2D Animation (Trailer/Short)	Kariba Teaser (Official)
Minds Eye Creative	2015	F Is for Family	2D Animation (Series)	F is for Family Trailer (HD) Bill Burr
Minds Eye Creative	2015	Adam Ruins Everything	2D Animation (Series)	Adam Ruins Everything - The Disturbing History of the Pilgrims | truTV
Triggerfish Animation Studios	2015	The Case of the Disappearing	2D Animation (Short Film)	The Case of the Disappearing

		Daddy		Daddy
Triggerfish Animation Studios	2015	Stick Man	3D Animation (Short Film)	Stick Man: Official Film Trailer
Minds Eye Creative	2016	Camp WWE	2D Animation (Series)	Camp WWE - Premieres May 1 on WWE Network
Triggerfish Animation Studios	2016	Revolting Rhymes	3D Animation (Short Series)	Revolting Rhymes - Trailer
Minds Eye Creative	2016	The Last Library	2D Animation (Trailer/Short)	The Last Library
Brent Dawes	2016	Munki and Trunk	3D Animation (Series)	Jungle Beat is all about friendship! | Jungle Beat: Munki and Trunk | Kids Cartoon 2023
Minds Eye Creative Nick Cloete	2017	The Great Escape – Adventures of the Talking Pizza, Llama Drama, Smarter Phones, The Doodling Duo	2D Animation (Short Films)	Imagination Studios | The Great Escape | Cartoon Network Africa
Minds Eye Creative	2017	If You Give a Mouse a Cookie	2D Animation (Series)	If You Give a Mouse a Cookie Season 1, Part 3 - Clip: Ice Cream |

				Prime Video Kids
Triggerfish Animation Studios	2017	The highway Rat	3D Animation (Short Series)	The Highway Rat was a baddie! @GruffaloWorld: Compilation
Mike Scott	2017	Beatboxing Dave - Forbidden Dance	2D Animation (Short Film)	Beatboxing Dave - Forbidden Dance
Lung Animation	2017	Go2Africa - The Great Wildebeest Migration	3D Animation (Short)	Go2Africa - The Great Wildebeest Migration on Vimeo
Minds Eye Creative	2018	Dallas & Robo	2D Animation (Series)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZmGBQIq5Zpg
Cabblow Studios, Kabelo Maaka	2018	Dazit Nasal Film	2D Animation (Short)	CLIENT PROJECT - Dazit Nasal Film I Cabblow Studios
Patrick Garcia	2018	Body Defenders	3D Animation (Trailer/Short)	Body Defenders (The Movie)
Triggerfish Animation Studios	2018	Zog	3D Animation (Short Series)	Watch Zog! Welcome To His World Of Imagination | Zog Movie
Mike Scott	2018	Moosebox	2D Animation	Moosebox | Nick

			(Series)	Animated Shorts
Mike Scott	2018	Slide Into the DMs: The Gameshow! | CH Shorts	2D Animation (Short)	Slide Into the DMs: The Gameshow! | CH Shorts
Mike Scott	2018	MTV - 'Greatest Party Story Ever'	2D Animation (Short)	MTV - 'Greatest Party Story Ever'
Mike Scott	2018	A Dogshow with Cat	2D Animation (Short Film)	https://youtu.be/4UDuzL1E_n4
Triggerfish Animation Studios	2018	belly flop	3D Animation (Short Film)	Animated Short Film 'Belly Flop'
Lung Animation	2018	Myanmar's Sediment Super Heroes	2D/3D Hybrid Animation (Short)	https://vimeo.com/281456730
The Hidden Hand Studios	2019	Primal	2D Animation (Series)	PRIMAL Episode 4 - Colour, Shadow and Lighting Work
Tim Keller	2019	Team Jay	3D Animation (Series)	Team Jay by Juventus - YouTube
Minds Eye Creative	2019	Trailer Park Boys: The Animated Series	2D Animation (Series)	Trailer Park Boys: The Animated Series - The DECENT Season 2 Trailer

Maan Creative	2019	The Dayton Market	2D Animation (Advert/Short)	The Dayton Market - Summer on Vimeo
Minds Eye Creative	2019	Majitu	2D Animation (Short)	Majitu
Mike Scott	2019	Olympics Channel – Kriss Akabusi	2D Animation (Short Film)	The incredible story of the orphan who made it to the Olympic podium | Words of Olympians
Mike Scott	2019	How 8chan Became The Worst Place on The Internet	2D Animation (Short)	https://www.mikescottanimation.com/8bit-pixel-animation-for-vice-8chan-doccie/
Lung Animation	2019	EDEKA Water Stewardship	3D Animation (Short Film)	EDEKA Water Stewardship on Vimeo
Lung Animation	2019	Windy Wrappers	3D Animation (Short)	https://vimeo.com/377071207
Dewald de la Rey	2019	E.I.E Animated Horror Adventures	2D Animation (Series)	E.I.E ANIMATIONS - YouTube
Minds Eye Creative	2020	Isaura	2D/3D Animation (Trailer/Short)	Isaura Trailer on Vimeo

Cabblow Studios, Kabelo Maaka	2020	HealthForce Animation	2D Animation (Short)	Client Project: Healthforce Animation // Cabblow Studios
Cabblow Studios, Kabelo Maaka	2020	Be The one	2D Animation (Short Series)	CLIENT PROJECT - Be The One - Altron Values Animated Series (PART 1)
Gottfried Roodt, Lloyd Wilgen	2020	Noodle and Bun	3D Animation (Series)	Noodle and Bun MEGA compilation!
Lung Animation	2020	WWF Fish Migration	3D Animation (Short Film)	WWF Fish Migration on Vimeo
Minds Eye Creative	2021	Kajko and Kokosz	2D Animation (Series)	Kajko i Kokosz | Zapowiedź premiery | Netflix
Minds Eye Creative, Maan Creative	2021	My better World	2D Animation (Series)	My Better World Trailer
Maan Creative	2021	Tamani. The bird who wished for teeth.	2D Animation (Mini Series)	Tamani. The bird who wished for teeth. on Vimeo
Maan Creative	2021	Sam the Hedgehog	2D Animation (Short Film)	Sam the Hedgehog - YouTube

Andy Glynne, Kerrin Kokot	2021	Temzu Town	2D Animation (Series)	Temzu Town — Mosaic Films
Triggerfish Animation Studios	2021	Snail and the Whale	3D Animation (Series)	The Snail Sets Sail On The Whales Tail! | Gruffalo World: Snail & The Whale
Robin Myles	2021	Shelter	2D Animation (Short Film)	https://www.etsy.com/shop/ShelterFilm?ref=seller-platform-mcnav
Kay Carmichael	2021	Troll Girl	2D Animation (Film)	CGI Animated Short Film: "Troll Girl" by Kay Carmichael, Giantslayer Studios | @CGMeetup
The Hidden Hand Studios	2022	Blood of a Fellow	2D Animation (Teaser/Short)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GENadpGeBXw
Minds Eye Creative	2022	The Great Wolf Pack	2D Animation (Short Film)	The Great Wolf Pack: A Call to Adventure Feature Film
Minds Eye Creative	2022	Intergalactic Ice-Cream	2D Animation (Short)	Intergalactic Ice-Cream

Cabblow Studios, Kabelo Maaka	2022	Dr T's Nuggets	2D Animation (Series)	This ones for the Nurses // Dr T's Nuggets // S2 Ep4
Maan Creative	2022	Purr Factory	Stop Motion (Trailer)	https://vimeo.com/731341921
Nicolette Mashile	2022	Coco the Money Bunny	3D Animation (Series)	Coco the money bunny Animated series | TEASER
Cabblow Studios, Kabelo Maaka	2023	The Gift of Time	2D Animation (Short)	The Gift of Time | Christmas Short Film (2023)
Cabblow Studios, Kabelo Maaka	2023	Mask, Sanitiser, Zoom Call	2D Animation (Announcement/ Short)	We're MAKING AN ANIMATED SERIES about the Pandemic
House Down Animation Studio	2023	IMPAACT4TB Animated Explainer	2D Animation (Short/Explainer)	https://vimeo.com/892525081
House Down Animation Studio	2023	The Man and his Machine	2D Animation (Short)	https://vimeo.com/857841794
Triggerfish Animation Studios	2023	Aau's Song	3D Animation (Series Episode)	Star Wars Visions Volume 2 Episode 9 Aau's Song
Triggerfish Animation Studios Malenga	2023	Supa Team 4	3D Animation (Series)	Supa Team 4 | Official Trailer | Netflix

Mulendema				
Triggerfish Animation Studios, Kelly Dillon, Marc Dey, Robert Vargas	2023	Kiya & the Kimoja Heroes	3D Animation (Series)	Kiya & the Kimoja Heroes Official - YouTube
Luma Animation, Paul Meyer, Gerhard Painter	2023	Headspace	3D Animation (Feature Film)	'Headspace' official trailer
Allison Craig, Lucy Heavens	2023	Kiff	2D Animation (Series)	Kiff Official Trailer | NEW SERIES 💥 | Kiff a NEW @disneychannel Cartoon

Annexure C:

NFVF application criteria for development of an animated short film

An allocation of R 20 000.00 for a story editor
A creative treatment.
Motivation Does the filmmaker have the required passion and commitment to see the film through? Why are they best suited to tell this story and what is its relevance?
Story Is the style and tone of the story suitable for the medium of short film?
Originality Does the concept entertain, educate, or capture the viewer's attention?
MILESTONES: May include but are not limited to: ● The outline (including character bios) ● The character bible ● The screenplay ● The art design plan ● The sound design ● The storyboard ● Animatics

Screenplay An application is evaluated on the strength of the originality, uniqueness and structure of the story idea within the chosen genre. The premise must be compelling and must explore a human value successfully while consistently carrying the theme throughout the narrative. Characters,

dialogue and visual storytelling will also be considered.
Audience insights and impact The applicant will be assessed on the detail of their understanding of the intended market beyond generalities such as adults or teens. The applicant must detail, even at conceptualisation phase, a strong understanding of platforms and indicate what level (if any) of research has informed their project and how the audience will resonate with the project.
Presentation The scripts, the director's treatment and other supporting documents are presented professionally.
Global positioning strategy For films aimed at international markets, the application will be assessed on the quality of the cast, sales agents, and sales estimates supplied.
Production budget and finance plan The budget must be in accordance with South African market conditions and should be attractive to prospective investors. The finance plan must be detailed and realistic and the ratio between recoupable and non-recoupable budget must be suitable for the genre.
Impact on the local film industry The application should incorporate information on how the funding of the production will assist local industry development initiatives. It must include a clearly thought-out plan for making industry opportunities accessible to individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.
Marketability and return on investment The application must demonstrate that research has been undertaken on how the film will be delivered to its potential audience and the project’s potential to earn return on investment. ROI includes but is not limited to: commercial, social, and historical yield.
Transformation Race, gender, key black management positions, disability, and underserviced provinces are all factors that are considered when evaluating applications.

MILESTONES

Milestones may include but are not limited to:

- The shooting script
- Viewing of rushes
- Viewing of the assembly
- The first cut
- The final cut
- A presentation of a cost report.

The above requirements are extracted from the NFVF 2022 funding policy. The policy is a comprehensive documentation of all funding categories and requirements across a range of formats from animation series to live action documentaries.

Annexure D:

Required documents in addition to completing the online application form for the GFC application to be considered are as follows:

Certified IDs
Tax Clearance Certificate
BBBEE Certificate
Certified Company Registration Document
Certified Share Certificate (Where Available)
3 Months or newer bank account confirmation letter
Detailed Biography of CV of applicant
Completed Declaration of Conflict-of-Interest form (SBD)

The above has been extracted from the GFC 2022 funding guideline document.

Annexure E:

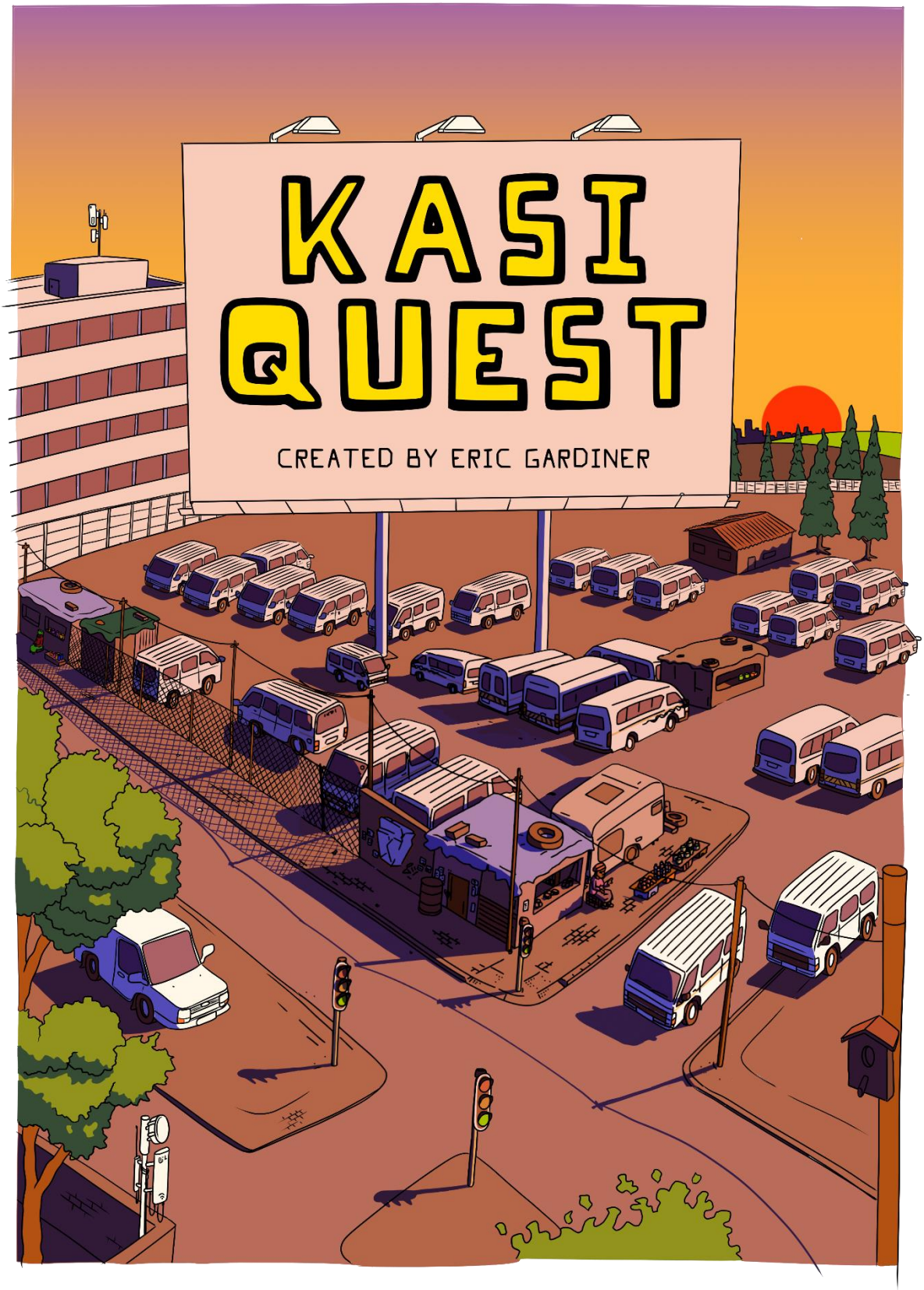
noteworthy organisations that industry professionals identified in their survey response as places where animators could find support for their production.

Institutions:
Animation SA
IDC (Industrial Development Corporation)
DTIC (Department of Trade, Industry & Competition)
KZN FC (Kwa-zulu Natal Film Commission)
NAC (National Arts Council)
NFVF (National Film and Video Foundation)
GFC (Gauteng Film Commission)
Hollard
Wesgro
Film Finances
Business and Arts South Africa (BASA)
French Institute of South Africa (IFAS)
French Development Agency (AFD)
Tshimologong Digital Innovation Precinct
Goethe Institut
GAP (Gauteng Accelerator Program) Innovation Competition

Studios
Laika Studios
Illumination Studios
Cartoon Network Studios
Warner Bros Animation
Blue Sky studios
Aarman Studios
Dreamworks
Pixar Studios
Titmouse Studios (Animation Studio)
Sony Pictures Animation
Mind’s Eye Creative
Luma animation
Wunderkindt studios
Wunderkindt studios
Housedown animation
Rooftop (Film/Animation Studio)
Sea Monster Entertainment (Animation Studio)
Trigger Fish (Animation Studio)
Bolland Studios (Animation Studio)

Distribution, media and marketing:
Showmax
Netflix
Disney+
Nickelodeon
Annecy
Cape Town Animation Festival
Animation World Network
Kidscreen
Cartoon Brew
Catsuka
Nairobi Comic Con
Afrogeeks
Accra IAF
Lagos IAF
Cadif IAF Whales
ITFS Stuttgart
Afro Animation
MIP junior

Annexure F:



SYNOPSIS

THIS SHORT FILM INTRODUCES US TO AN ALTERNATIVE, YET FAMILIAR VERSION OF SOUTH AFRICA. IT IS TARGETED TOWARDS CHILDREN AGED TEN TO FIFTEEN FROM ACROSS AFRICA AND THE GLOBE. THE FILM CHRONICLES A STORY OF RECONCILIATION AND AIMS TO TEACH PEOPLE ABOUT THE HISTORY OF AFRICA AND THE VALUE OF FORGIVENESS AND COOPERATION IN SOLVING CHALLENGES. THE FILM INCORPORATES ACTION AND ADVENTURE WITH THEMES OF MAGIC AND SCI-FI TECHNOLOGY.

THE STORY OPENS WITH JACO AND STEP, TWO CHARACTERS FROM CONTRASTING RACIAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS MEET ONE ANOTHER THROUGH A SKATEBOARDING ACCIDENT.THEIR ENCOUNTER ESCALATES INTO AN ANIME-STYLE FIGHT THAT IS BROUGHT TO AN END WHEN THE POWER OF THEIR FIGHT FORMS A DEMON THAT STARTS TO WREAK HAVOC IN THE CITY.

AT THIS POINT, AROBA ARRIVES ON THE SCENE AND SCOLDS THE BOYS. SHE EXPLAINS THAT THE DEMON WILL NEED TO BE CAUGHT BEFORE IT CAUSES FURTHER DESTRUCTION. THE THREE CHARACTERS HEAD TO THE DEMON-HUNTING HEADQUARTERS ON A DRONE FLIGHT.

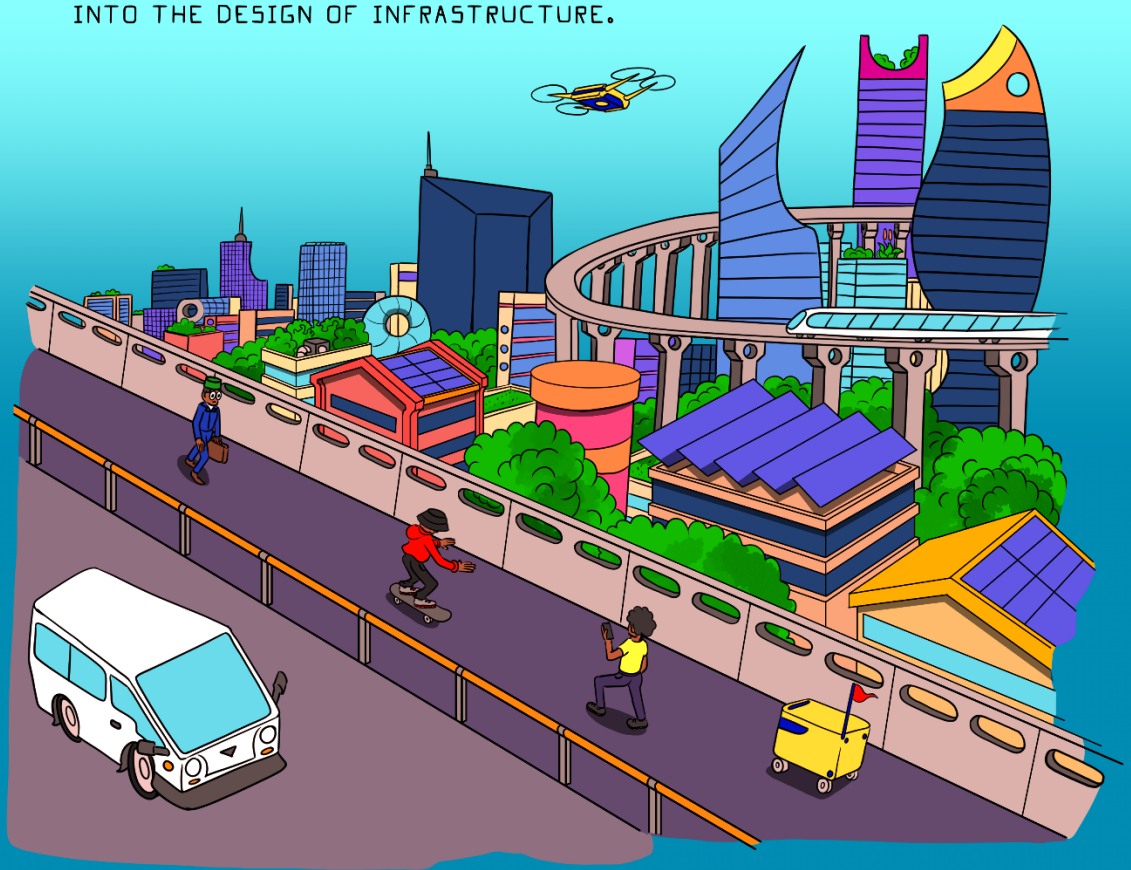
AT THE HEADQUARTERS THEY MEET WITH THE WISE MASTER. IN A FLASHBACK SCENE HE CHRONICLES HOW DURING COLONISATION DEMONS FEASTED AND MULTIPLIED ON THE CONFLICT AND DEVASTATION. OVER ELITE MONSTER HUNTERS SUCH AS AROBA WERE TRAINED TO DEFEAT THE DEMONS AND RESTORE PEACE.

JACO AND STEP ARE REPREMANDED AND SENT TO ASSIST AROBA WITH TRACKING DOWN AND CAPTURING THE DEMON. FOLLOWING A TRAIL OF SECURITY CAM FOOTAGE AND DESTRUCTION THE THREE FIND THE DEMON AND ENGAGE IN A BATTLE. STEP AND JACO CLASH AGAIN AS THEY STRUGGLE TO FIGHT THE DEMON.

IT IS ONLY ONCE THE TWO BOYS LEARN TO WORK TOGETHER THAT THEY MANAGE TO TRAP THE DEMON AND CAPTURE IT. BACK AT THE HEADQUARTERS THE BOYS FORGIVE EACH OTHER AND CELEBRATE THEIR SUCCESS. THE WISE MASTER OFFERS THEM AN APPRENTICESHIP AS DEMON HUNTERS AND THEY FORM A SQUAD UNDER THEIR LEADER AROBA WHO IS PROMOTED TO MASTER DEMON HUNTER.

AN ALTERNATE AFRICA

IN THIS WORLD, ANCIENT MAGIC AND SCI-FI TECHNOLOGY FORM A VERY TANGIBLE PART OF OUR CHARACTERS' JOURNEY. THE STORY PLAYS OUT IN THE BUSTLING CITY OF JOHANNESBURG. THE CITY BOASTS A SCENERY OF NATURE BLENDED WITH A MIX OF OLD AND NEW INFRASTRUCTURE. THE HISTORY OF THIS WORLD IS VERY SIMILAR TO THE REAL HISTORY OF COLONISATION, BUT IN THIS WORLD, THE SCARS OF THE PAST HAVE HEALED FURTHER. NEW TECHNOLOGIES SUCH AS DRONES, SOLAR ENERGY, HIGH-SPEED RAILWAYS AND URBAN AGRICULTURE ARE PREVALENT. MAGIC IS ALSO PRESET, SPIRITS AND DEMONS COME AND GO AS STRAY ANIMALS MIGHT IN A VILLAGE. AFRICAN CULTURAL ICONOGRAPHY IS INCORPORATED INTO THE DESIGN OF INFRASTRUCTURE.

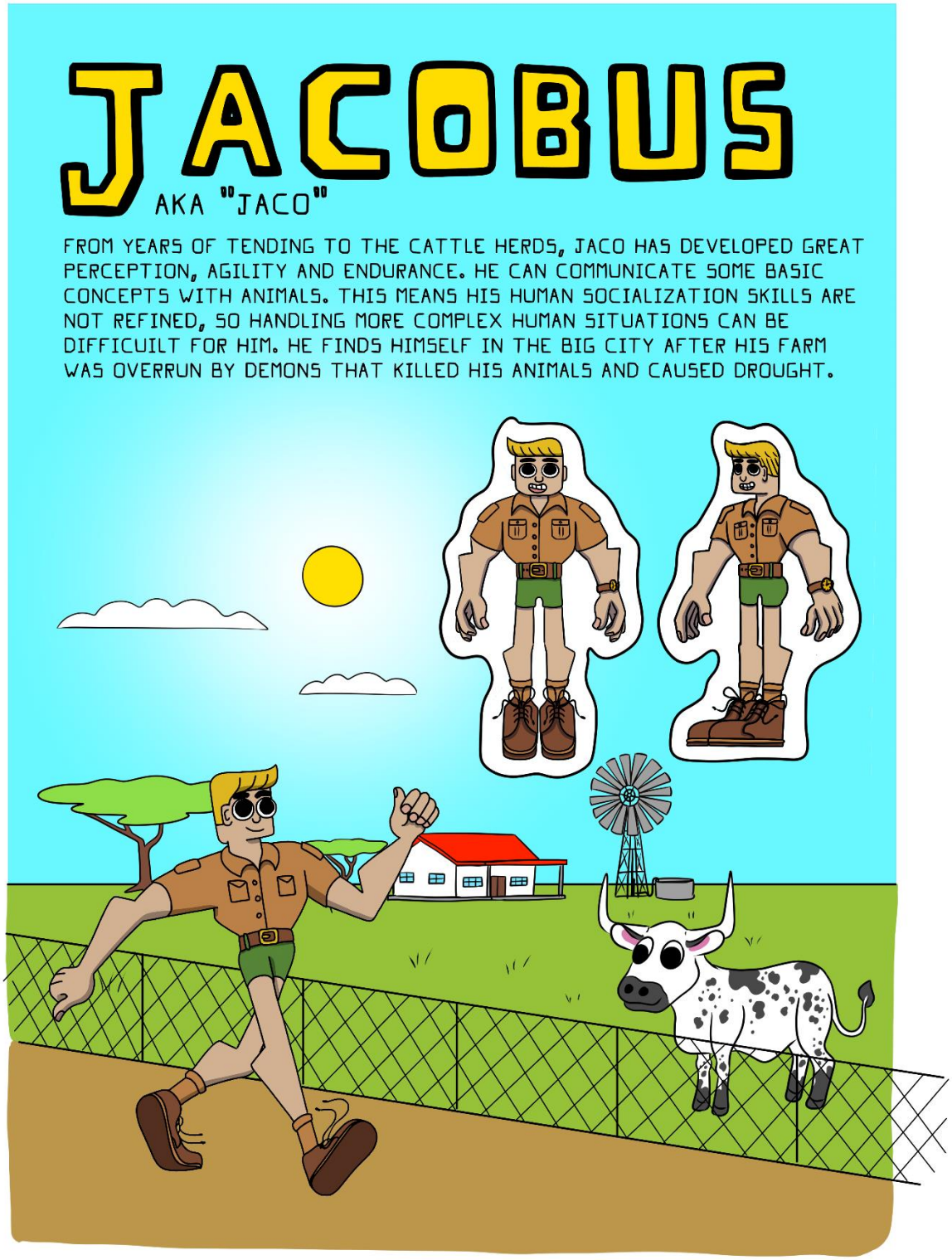


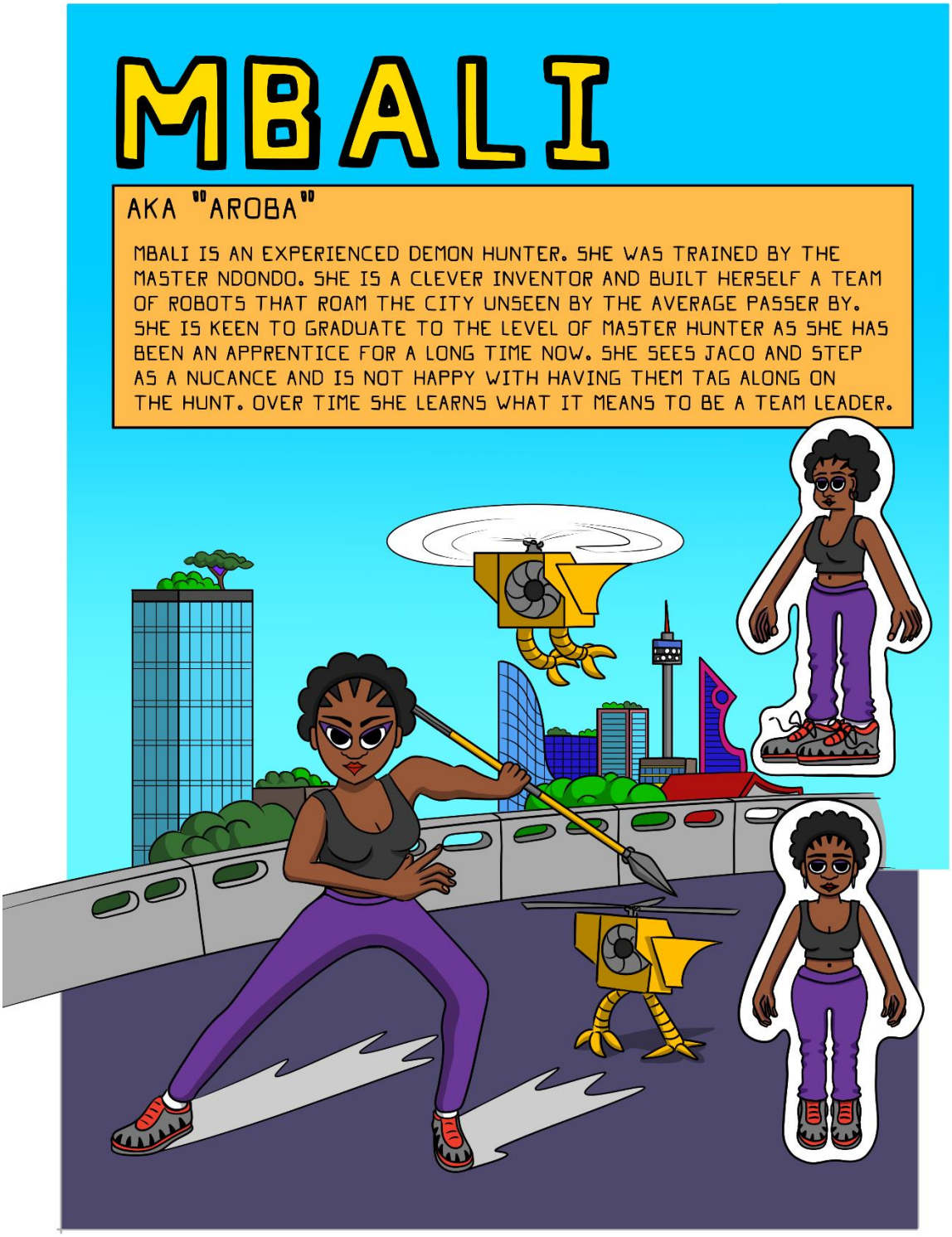
ANTAGONIST

MAGICAL CREATURES LURK IN THE DARKNESS. THEY ARE ANCIENT BEINGS BORN FROM THE COLONIAL WARS.




TSEPO
AKA "STEP"
STEP IS A STREETWISE SOWETO KID WHO LOVES HIS MOM VERY MUCH. HE TAKES A LOT OF INSPIRATION FROM AMERICAN POP CULTURE FOR HIS LINGO AND STYLE. HIS PRIMARY MEANS OF TRANSPORT AND MOST VALUED PERSONAL POSSESSION IS HIS SKATEBOARD. STEP SEES HIMSELF AS SLICK WITH THE LADIES, BUT OFTEN FAILS TO CONVINCE ANY OF THEM THAT HE'S WORTH THEIR TIME. STEP'S OUTWARD BRAVERY IS CONTRASTED BY HIS INWARD NERVOUSNESS. HE LOVES COCO POPS FOR BREAKFAST. STEP ALSO ENJOYS DOING THE DISH WASHING FOR HIS MOM IN THE EVENINGS AND HELPING HIS DAD WITH THE GARDENING, DESPITE HIS DAD CRITICIZING HIS FASHION CHOICES. HE HATES GETTING TEASED AND CAN GET ANGRY QUICKLY IF HE THINKS SOMEONE IS THREATENING HIM. STEP'S GOAL IS TO BECOME SO WELL KNOWN FOR HIS SKATEBOARDING THAT SOMEONE MAKES A VIDEO GAME ABOUT HIM.


JACOBUS
AKA "JACO"
FROM YEARS OF TENDING TO THE CATTLE HERDS, JACO HAS DEVELOPED GREAT PERCEPTION, AGILITY AND ENDURANCE. HE CAN COMMUNICATE SOME BASIC CONCEPTS WITH ANIMALS. THIS MEANS HIS HUMAN SOCIALIZATION SKILLS ARE NOT REFINED, SO HANDLING MORE COMPLEX HUMAN SITUATIONS CAN BE DIFFICUILT FOR HIM. HE FINDS HIMSELF IN THE BIG CITY AFTER HIS FARM WAS OVERRUN BY DEMONS THAT KILLED HIS ANIMALS AND CAUSED DROUGHT.

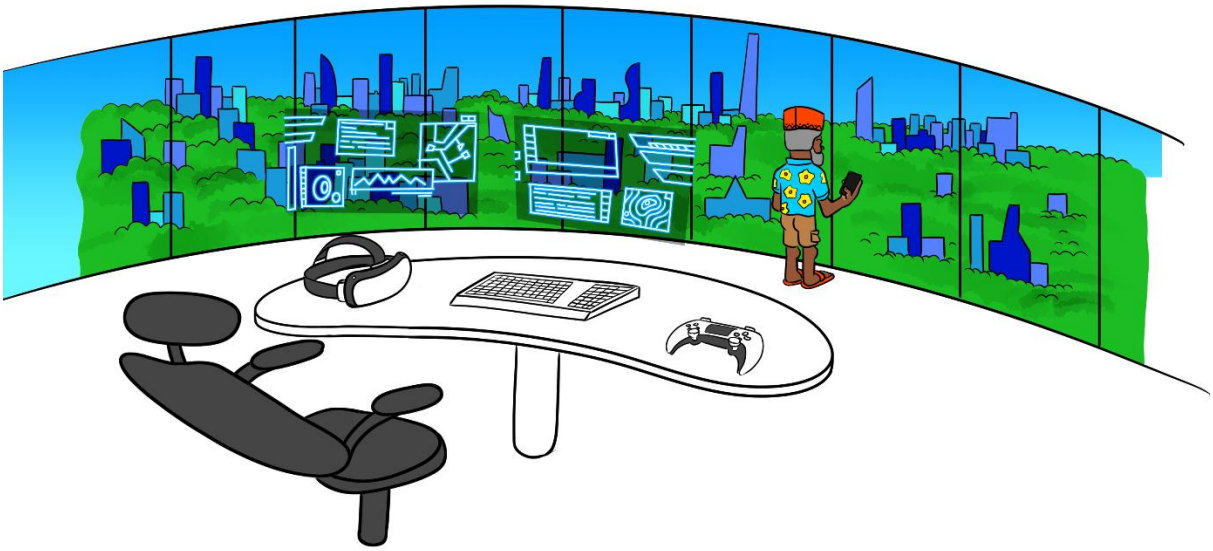

MBALI
AKA "AROBA"
MBALI IS AN EXPERIENCED DEMON HUNTER. SHE WAS TRAINED BY THE MASTER NDONDO. SHE IS A CLEVER INVENTOR AND BUILT HERSELF A TEAM OF ROBOTS THAT ROAM THE CITY UNSEEN BY THE AVERAGE PASSER BY. SHE IS KEEN TO GRADUATE TO THE LEVEL OF MASTER HUNTER AS SHE HAS BEEN AN APPRENTICE FOR A LONG TIME NOW. SHE SEES JACO AND STEP AS A NUCANCE AND IS NOT HAPPY WITH HAVING THEM TAG ALONG ON THE HUNT. OVER TIME SHE LEARNS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A TEAM LEADER.

NDONDO

AKA "THE WISE MASTER"

NDONDO IS THOUGHTFUL AND STRATEGICALLY MINDED, BUT NOT AS PHYSICALLY CAPABLE AS OTHER CHARACTERS DUE TO HIS OLD AGE. HIS BODY MAY BE OLD, BUT HIS MIND IS STILL SHARP AS A KNIFE. IN HIS YOUTH HE WAS A DEMON HUNTER AND REACHED THE LEVEL OF GRAND MASTER. NDONDO IS ABLE TO SURF THE WORLD WIDE WEB DATA BASE WITH EASE AND RECALLS THE HISTORY AND MAGICAL KNOWLEDGE OF AFRICA. THEY DO SO BY MEDITATING IN AN AUGMENTED INTERFACE STATION. NDODO CAN SOMETIMES BE UNSYMPATHETIC BUT MAKES UP FOR IT BY BEING A GOOD TEAM PLAYER WITH WHITTY HUMOUR. NDODO WILL BECOME GROUCHY IF THEIR MEDITATION IS INTERRUPTED.





EXTENDED STORY

THIS SHORT FILM AIMS TO BUILD OUT A WORLD AND CHARACTERS THAT COULD BE EXTENDED INTO AN ANIMATED SERIES, GIVEN THE SUCESS OF THE CONCEPT. ADDITIONAL EPISODES WOULD INCLUDE BATTLES WITH OTHER DEMONS THAT REPRESENT DIFFERENT SOCIAL CHALLENGES. THE STORIES OF ALL THE CHARACTERS' DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS CAN ALSO BE EXPLORED IN ADDITINAL EPISODES. CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE EXPRESSED THROUGH THE TEAM LEARNING HOW TO WORK TOGETHER AS A UNIT AS EACH CHARACTER BECOMES BETTER AT THER RESPECTIVE SKILL.






Sandton City



Mood Board for Afrofuturism

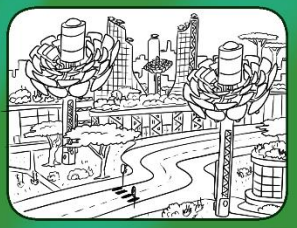


Technologies of Afrofuturism

Concentrated Solar Power

Fast growing technology in SA. Cheap energy + Visually inspiring





Air borne Wind turbines



Wind energy that is cheap to produce and has a low material cost. Solar punk vibes



Maglev Rail System

Most efficient rail system in development operates high speed and low speed





Recycling

An existing informal industry in Africa that will grow with user friendly systems





Arcology

Ecology based Architecture using natural cooling systems and designs inspired by nature

Masdar City Abu Dhabi





Agriculture

African agriculture will develop to become very efficient and resilient



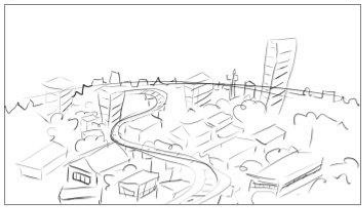


Storyboard

KASI QUEST 1

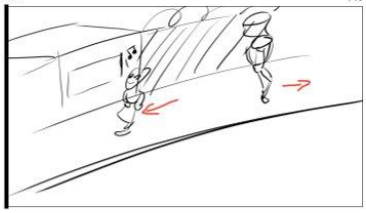
Boards: 223 | Shots: 182 | Duration: 7:26 | Aspect Ratio: 16 : 9
DRAFT: MARCH 24, 2024

1A



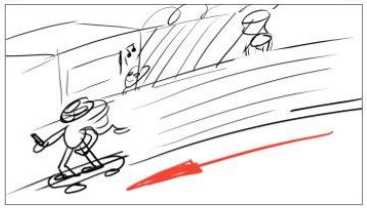
Establishing shot. Camera pans down onto city scene.

2A



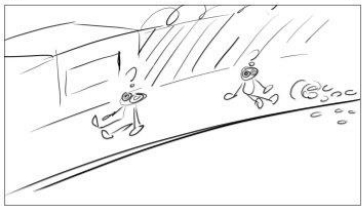
people walk along the street

2B



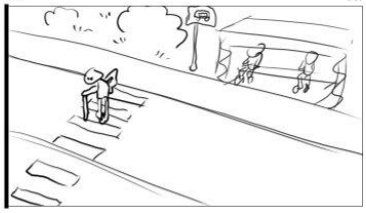
A skateboarder zooms past

2C



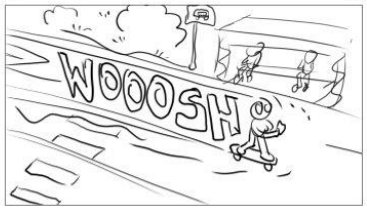
The people are are thrown about and left dizzy.

3A



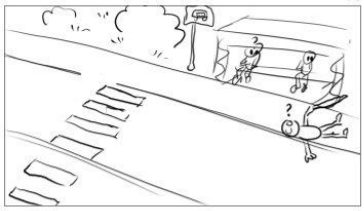
An old man slowly crosses the street.

3B



The skateoarder blasts throgh the old man.

3C



The old man has been knocked over and thrown down the street.

4A



Step: Whoooohooo! Hello to all my followers! It's your favouraite boy Step! On the streets and in your feed 24/7!

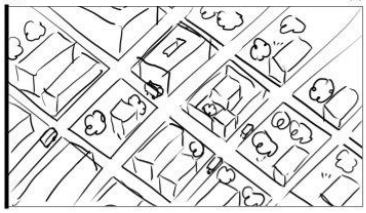
Step films himself on his phone while skateboarding.

5A

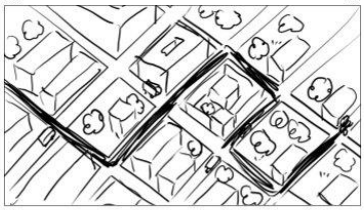


Step peforms a bunch of skateboarding tricks and takes selfies of his poses.

6A

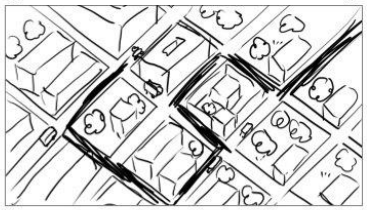


6B



Step is seen darting around the streets all day.

6C

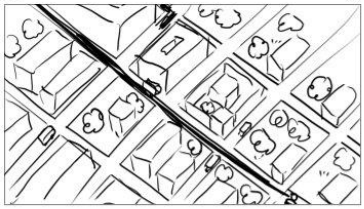


Storyboarder

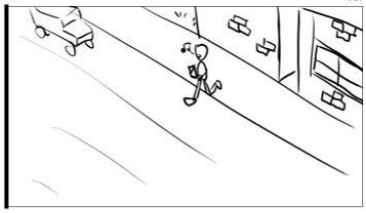
KASI QUEST 1

Boards: 223 | Shots: 182 | Duration: 7:26 | Aspect Ratio: 16 : 9
DRAFT: MARCH 24, 2024

6D

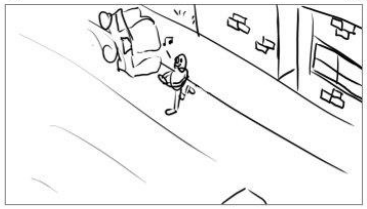


7A

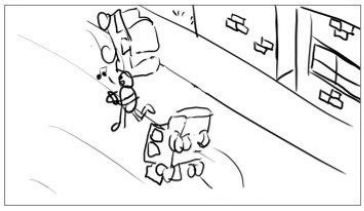


Jaco walks casually onto the street while focused on his phone.

7B



7C



While ignoring his surroundings Jaco causes the traffic to crash as drivers try not to hit the pedestrian.

8A



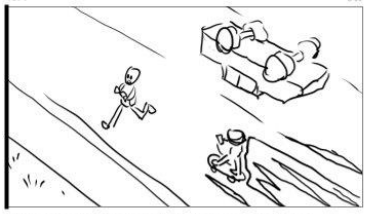
Step approaches at high speed while he also only focuses on his phone

9A



Jaco is oblivious to the destruction he has caused as he continues across the street

10A



In slow motion the two characters approach on a collision course.

10B



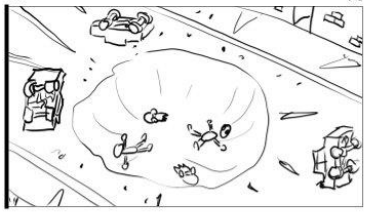
Jaco and Step Collide

11A



A large explosion revrbatates across the suburb and the hadida birds fly off

12A

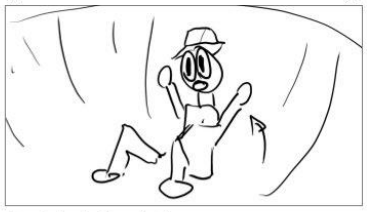


13A



Step lifts himself up

13B



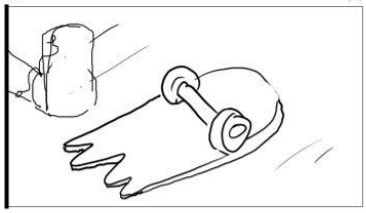
Step is shocked by what he sees.

Storyboarder

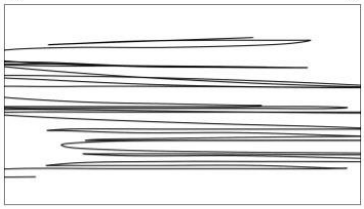
KASI QUEST 1

Boards: 223 | Shots: 182 | Duration: 7:26 | Aspect Ratio: 16 : 9
DRAFT: MARCH 24, 2024

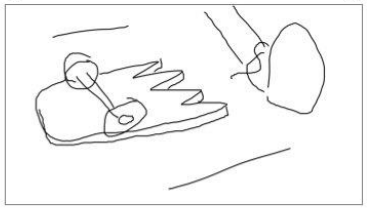
14A 0:48



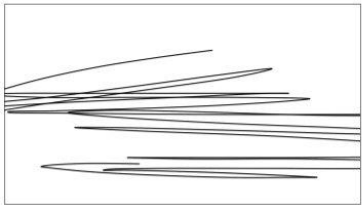
14B 0:50



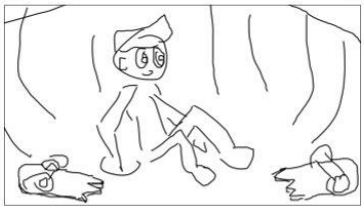
14C 0:52



14D 0:54

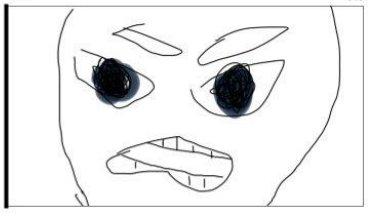


14E 0:56



Jaco gets up

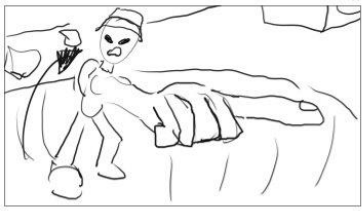
15A 0:58



Step: Hey! My skateboard is destroyed!

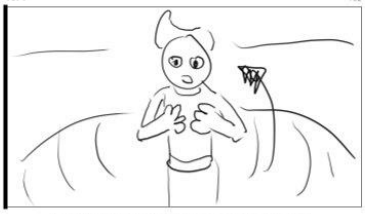
Step gets angry and starts to yell.

15B 1:00



Step: You destroyed my skateboard! You are gonna pay for this you careless mampara!

16A 1:02



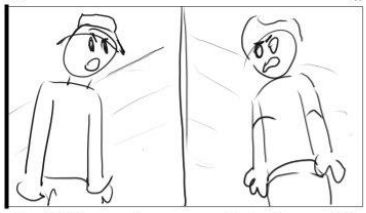
Jaco: Me? I didn't break your skateboard.

16B 1:04



Jaco: And how dare you call me a mampara! You are the one who crashed into me! You weten't looking where you were going at all!

17A 1:06



Step: No! You people never care about other people's things! You are so self centered!

Jaco: You people think the world belongs to you, but you don't even deserve your mother's love!

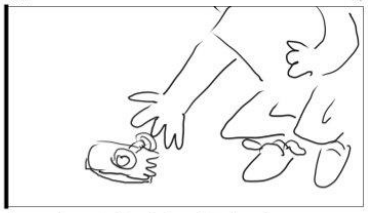
17B 1:08



Step: Your ego is so big it's going to block out the darn sun!

Jaco: You are so dumb that my grandma's toilet would beat you in a quiz!

18A 1:10



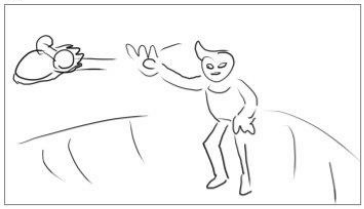
Jaco grabs part of the broken skateboard.

Storyboarder

KASI QUEST 1

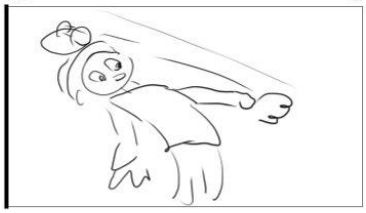
Boards: 223 | Shots: 182 | Duration: 7:26 | Aspect Ratio: 16 : 9
DRAFT: MARCH 24, 2024

18B 1:12



Jaco throws the broken piece at Step.

19A 1:14



Step scucessfully dodges the piece of broken skateboard.

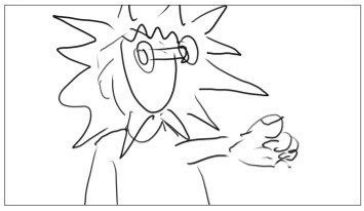
19B 1:16



Step: Ha Ha! Your aim is so skew you couldn't hit a tree if it was right in front of you!

Step mocks Jaco.

19C 1:18



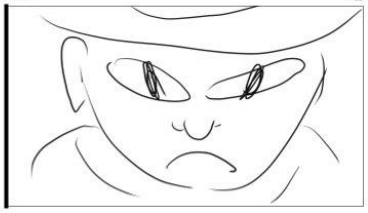
Step is hit in the face by the other half of the skateboard.

20A 1:20



Jaco: Ha ha!

21A 1:22



Step: Mmmmmhh!

21B 1:24

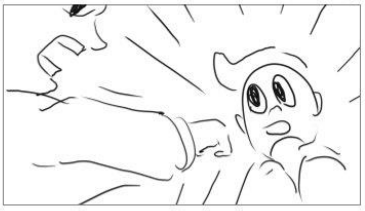


Step lunges for a punch at Jaco.

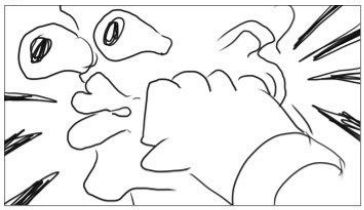
21C 1:26



21D 1:28



21E 1:30

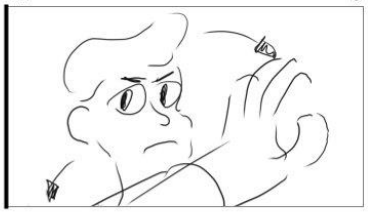


Step scores a punch that causes Jaco's face to stretch out like elastic.

21F 1:32



22A 1:34



Storyboarder

KASI QUEST 1

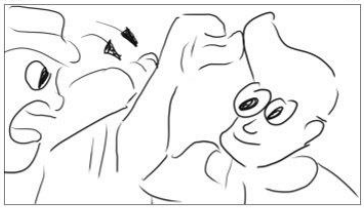
Boards: 223 | Shots: 182 | Duration: 7:26 | Aspect Ratio: 16 : 9
DRAFT: MARCH 24, 2024

22B 136



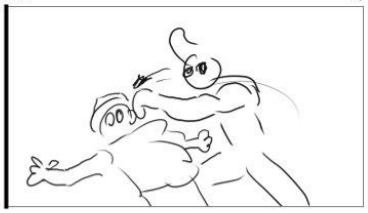
Jaco dodges the second punch that step throws.

22C 138



Jaco blockes the third punch.

23A 140



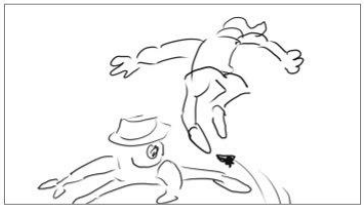
Jaco tries to throw a punch at Step, who dodges it.

23B 142



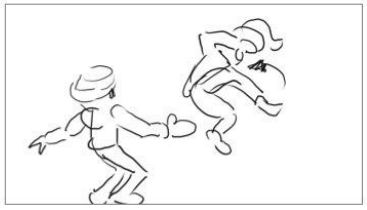
Step spins back to kick at Jaco

23C 144



Jaco jumps to dodge the kick from Step.

23D 146



Jaco spins to kick.

23E 148



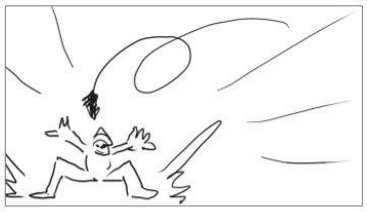
Jaco's kick hits Step square on.

23F 150



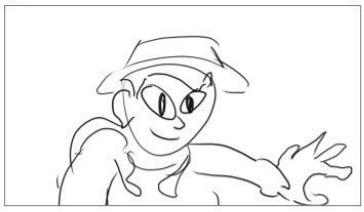
Step is thrown back by the kick.

23G 152

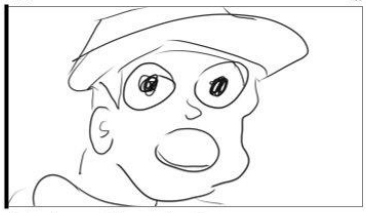


Step flips and recovers by landing on two feet.

23H 154

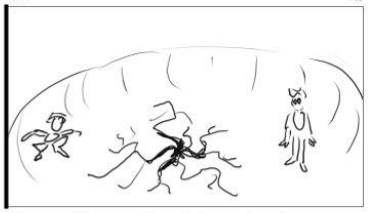


24A 156



Suttendly something suprises Step.

25A 158



The ground between them shakes and cracks open.

Storyboarder

KASI QUEST 1

Boards: 223 | Shots: 182 | Duration: 7:26 | Aspect Ratio: 16 : 9
DRAFT: MARCH 24, 2024

25B 2:00



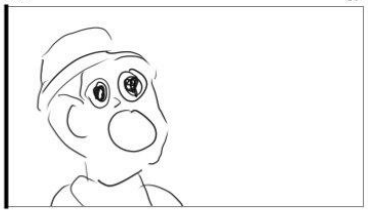
A monster emerges from the crack.

25C 2:02

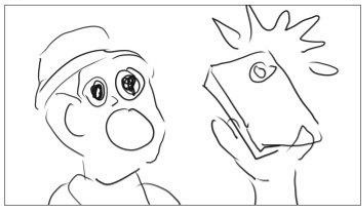


Monster: Raaaaarrghh!

26A 2:04



26B 2:06



Step takes a photo of the monster

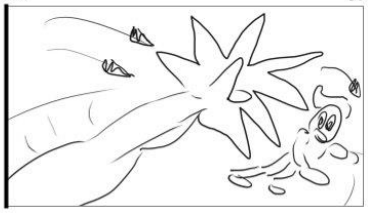
27A 2:08



Monster: Raaarrrrggghh!!

The monster becomes agrivated!

28A 2:10



The monster swings an arm with a spikey hand at Jaco who jumps out of the way.

28B 2:12



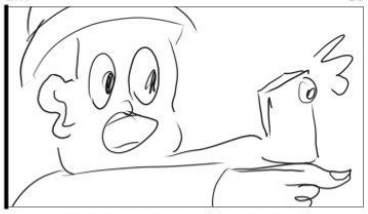
The monster's hand slams into the ground.

28C 2:14



The monster lifts its spikey hand to reveal an imprint in the crator.

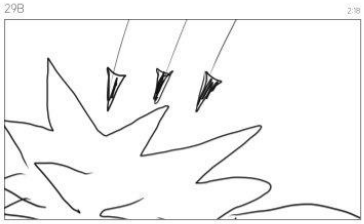
29A 2:16



Step: Wow! Did you see that damage!

Step ponts at the damage and takes another picture.

29B 2:18



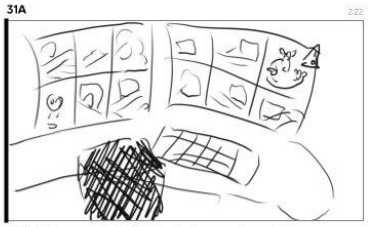
The monster swipes its other spikey hand at step

30A 2:20



The scene of the monster and the boys is reflected in the lense of a nearby security camera.

31A 2:22



A CCTV netowk display is being monitored by a shadowey figure.

Storyboarder

KASI QUEST 1

Boards: 223 | Shots: 182 | Duration: 7:26 | Aspect Ratio: 16 : 9
DRAFT: MARCH 24, 2024

31B 2:24



The figure expands the view of the monster and the boys on his screen.

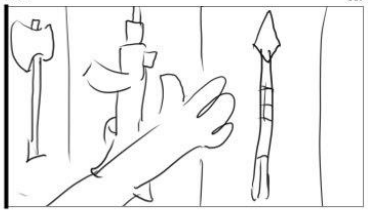
31C 2:26



Ndondo: Hello. We have a code orange anomaly. I'm going to need you on site right away!

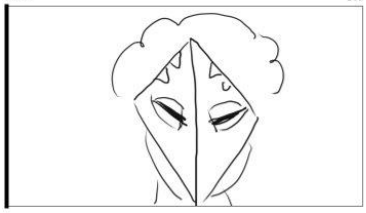
The shadowey figure makes a phone call to a contact titled "Agent X"

32A 2:28

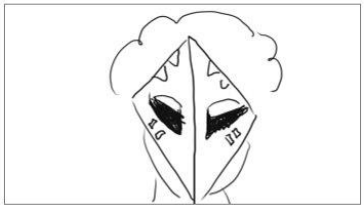


An arm reaches for and grabs a spear from a case of assorted weapons.

33A 2:30

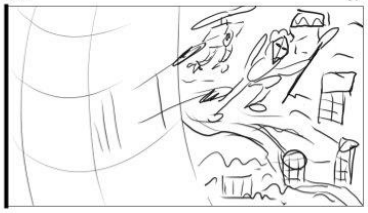


33B 2:32



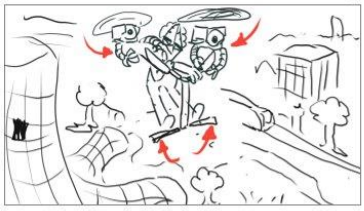
A masked figure activates.

34A 2:34



A warrior figure and some small drones burst through an open window of a sky scraper.

34B 2:36



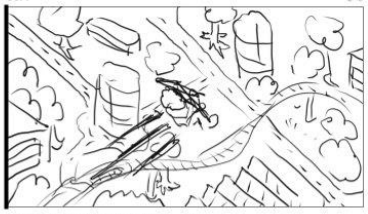
The warriors spear unfolds into a I shape and the drones grab the top handles.

34C 2:38



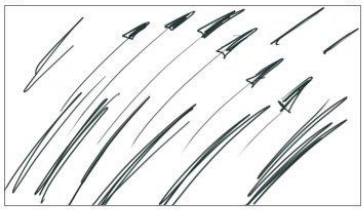
The warrior flys up using the drones and spear frame.

35A 2:40

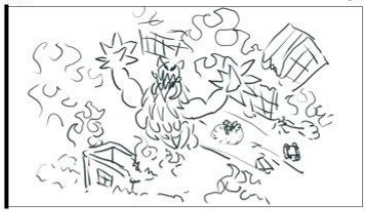


The warrior flies above the city.

35B 2:42



36A 2:44



36B 2:46



The monster slams its spikey fits into buildings causing destruction.

Storyboarder

KASI QUEST 1

Boards: 223 | Shots: 182 | Duration: 7:26 | Aspect Ratio: 16 : 9
DRAFT: MARCH 24, 2024

37A 2:48



Step: Whoah! Where did that creature even come from?

Step investigates the crack in the ground that the monster emerged from!

38A 2:50



Step: It's like it materialised from the dirt, how could it have even fitted in this hole?

38B 2:52



Jaco: Actually it's probably magical and teleported from somewhere.

Jaco rases his head and finger to interrup Step.

39A 2:54



Step: Dude! How are you still alive right now?

Step turns to Jaco in suprite.

40A 2:56



The monster lunges a strike at the old man from earlier.

40B 2:58



In slow motion the warriour bursts through the monster's fist shattering it into shards.

40C 3:00



A zoom in onto the warrior.

40D 3:02



Monster: Arggghhhh!

The drones swoop in towards the old man.

40E 3:04



The drones lift the old man off his feet.

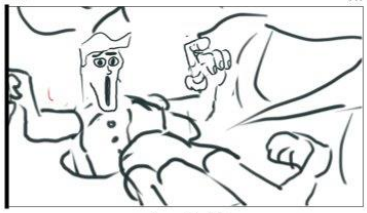
40F 3:06



Old man: I'm flying!

THe drones carry the old man to towards a beuatifull sunset.

41A 3:08



Jaco: Woah!

Jaco's jaw drops in amazement.

42A 3:10



The warrior makes a superhero landing.

Storyboarder

KASI QUEST 1

Boards: 223 | Shots: 182 | Duration: 7:26 | Aspect Ratio: 16 : 9
DRAFT: MARCH 24, 2024

43A 3:12



Step: Woah! Who are you? Have you come to save us from the monster?

Step's jaw also drops in amazement.

44A 3:14



Mbali: Who I am is not important. What is this creature? Did you summon it? Answer me now!

45A 3:16



45B 3:18



45C 3:20



While the boys and Mbali speak the monster grows its spikey hand back.

45D 3:22



The monter grins and turns to the group of people.

46A 3:24



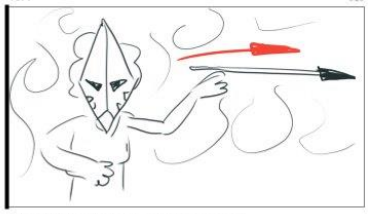
The monster swings at the group.

47A 3:26



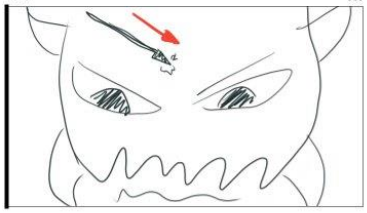
The monster punds the two boys while Mbali jumps anout and dodges the fists.

48A 3:28

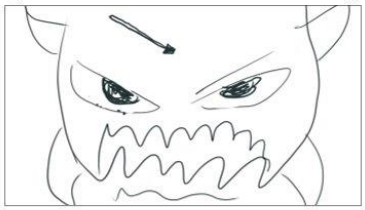


Mbali throws her spear at the monster.

49A 3:30



49B 3:32



The monster is engrages by the spear.

50A 3:34



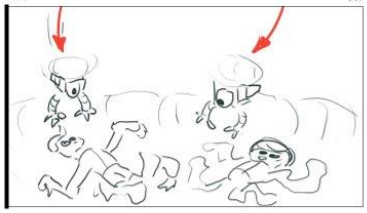
The monster shifts its attention to Mbali as she runs along it's arm and grabs her spear.

Storyboarder

KASI QUEST 1

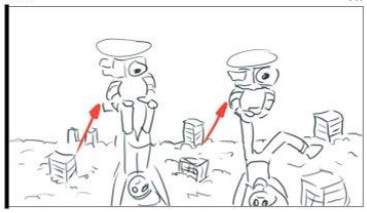
Boards: 223 | Shots: 182 | Duration: 7:26 | Aspect Ratio: 16 : 9
DRAFT: MARCH 24, 2024

51A 336



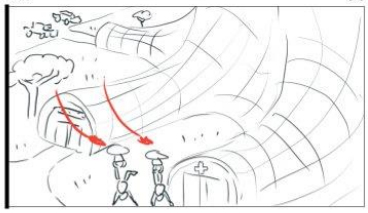
The two drones swope in.

52A 338



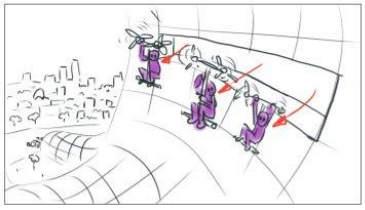
the drones pick up the mangled looking boys.

53A 340



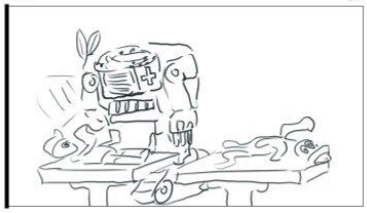
THe drones bring the boys to a large structure with a medical entrance.

53B 342



Further up the structure a team of backup warriors are dispatched to go assist Mbali with fighting the monster.

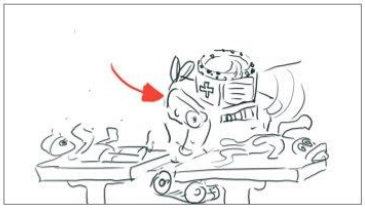
54A 344



MedBot: Detecting 205 Broken bones.

In the mdical room a large robot scans the boys.

54B 346



MedBot: Detecting 206 Broken bones.

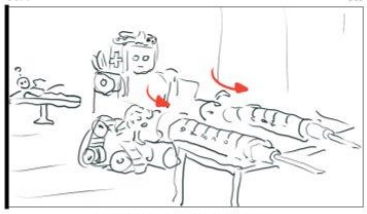
54C 348



Jaco: Haha! I broke less bones than you!
Step: Whaterver man!

The medbot turns to approch a table in the wroom whith giant syringes on it.

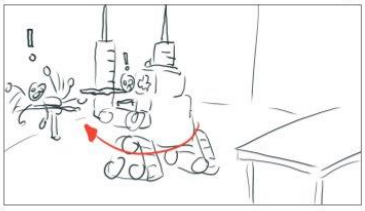
55A 350



Step: Wait, What are those?
Jaco: what?

THe medbot attaches its arms to the syringes.

55B 352



Jaco: Ahhhhh!
Step: Ahhhhh!

The medbot turns towars the boys with the giant syringes.

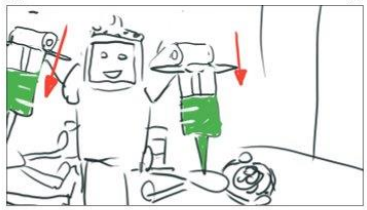
56A 354



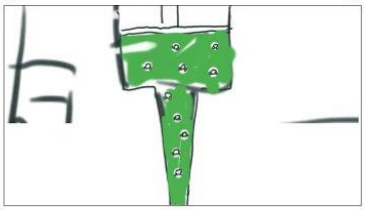
Jaco: Ahhhhh!
Step: Ahhhhh!

The medbot pins the boys down and stats to inject them.

56B 356



56C 358



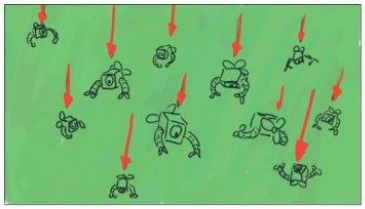
A joomin on the syringes reveals the syrum.

Storyboarder

KASI QUEST 1

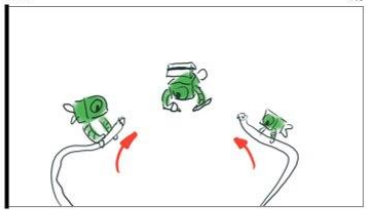
Boards: 223 | Shots: 182 | Duration: 7:26 | Aspect Ratio: 16 : 9
DRAFT: MARCH 24, 2024

56D



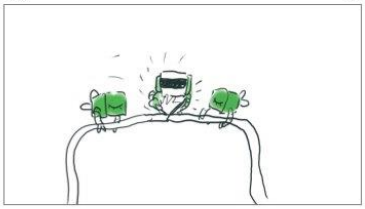
Hundreads of micro bots swarm downwards.

57A



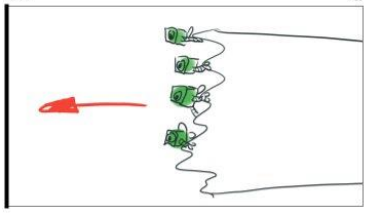
The microbots grab broken blood veins

57B



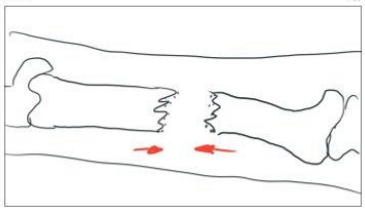
The migrobots weld the broken veins togeter

58A

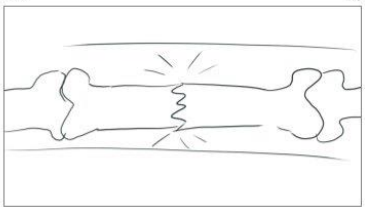


The micro bots pull a broken bone.

58B

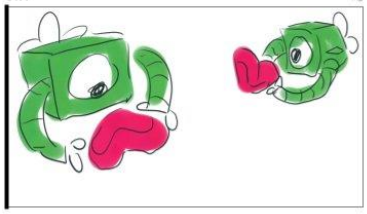


58C

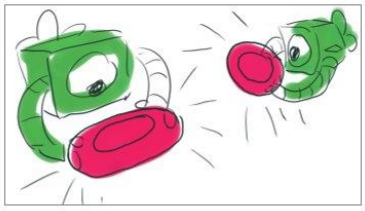


The microbots piece the bones togeter perfectly like a puzzle

59A

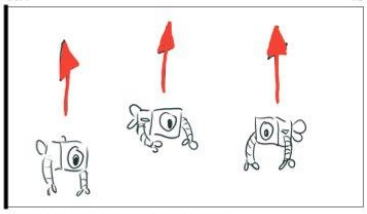


59B



THe microbots unbend red blood cels.

60A



The microbots are sucked upwards.

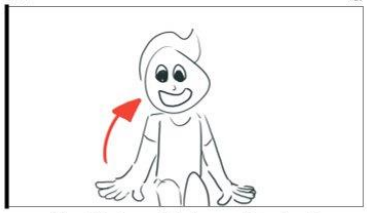
60B



Step: Wooooaah!
Jaco: Wooooaah!

The medbot extracts the syrum back out of the boys.

61A



Jaco: Woah man! I feel compleltey freah!

Jaco sits up.

61B



Jaco: Fresh like a milk tart!

Storyboarder

KASI QUEST 1

Boards: 223 | Shots: 182 | Duration: 7:26 | Aspect Ratio: 16 : 9
DRAFT: MARCH 24, 2024

61C



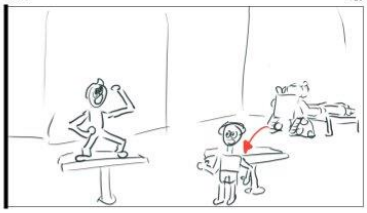
Jaco: Fresh like I could take down that beat in one punch!

62A



Step: Ugh! A cockroach could take you down in a fight.

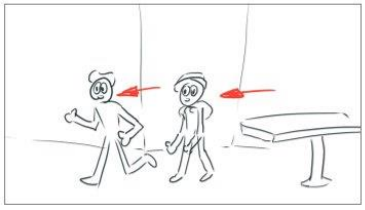
63A



Jaco: I feel so fresh, fresher than a new bottle of deoderant.
Step: Come on man, we gotta get to the bottom of this.

Step glimbs off his med table while Jaco contines to pose.

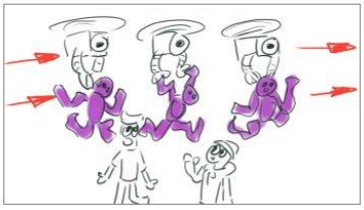
63B



Step: What is this place even?
Jaco: Jeah, where are we, is this some kind of special hospital for monster victums?

The two boys head for the exit.

63C



Step: Woah, looks like they din't have much luck with the monster.
Jaco: Dont worry guys! They will have you feeling fresh in no time!

Drones come past in the opposite direction carrying the mangled bodies of the backup that had been dispatched to help Mbali.

64A



Mbali: I failed to defeat the monter. Its too powerfull. It knoked out your beast mean in seconds! What in the world is it?

65A



Mbali: It regenerates itself! I can't defeat it, its impossible to kill.

65B



Ndondo: Yes, I saw, It's quite a frmidable beast. It has been many years sice ive seen one. It is connected to thos two boys.

THe shadowey figure from earlier spins around to reveal himself to be an old man.

66A



Mbali: I don't understand. Even if the whole agence were to fight it, It would win. I give up!

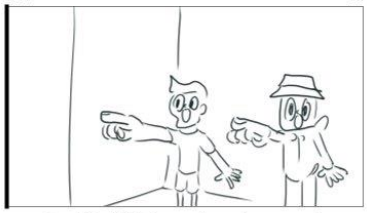
Mbali begins to remove her mask.

66B



THe elevator opens with the two boys. Mbaly is suprided and puts her mask back on straight away.

67A



Step: Woah! It's the warriour who saves us!
Yaco: She was going to take her mask off! Please show us your face!

The boys point rudely at Mbali.

68A



Mbali: Not you two nitwits! Dodn't your mothers teach you that pointing is rude!
Ndono: Ah! Boys, I have been expecting you!

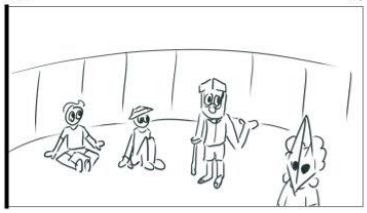
A crack in mbali's mask grows bigger.

Storyboarder

KASI QUEST 1

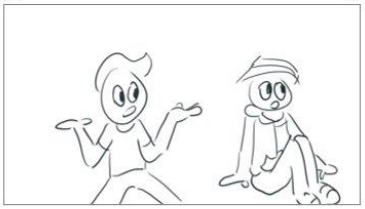
Boards: 223 | Shots: 182 | Duration: 7:26 | Aspect Ratio: 16 : 9
DRAFT: MARCH 24, 2024

69A 4:48



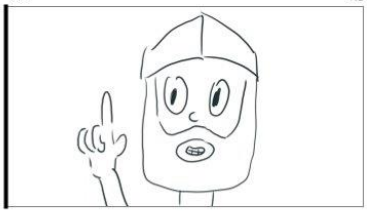
Ndondo: You boys must be quite confused. Let me give you all the explanation you deserve. You see what we are dealing with here is no ordinary monter. It is tied to you two boys, and without you we will not bea able to stop it from reaking chaos.

69B 4:50



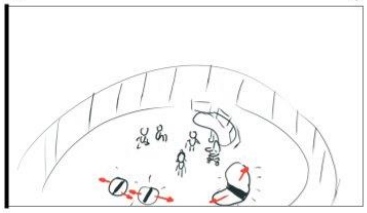
Step: But we don't stand a chance against it!
Jaco: Yeah, you should have seen the way it destroyed us. Well, It boke more of his bones than mine.

70A 4:52



Ndondo: I have just the thing!

71A 4:54



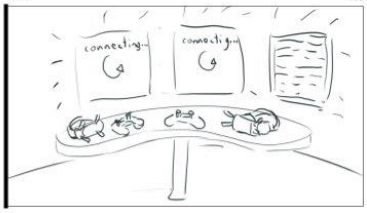
Ndondo types a command and some of the floor panels open.

71B 4:56



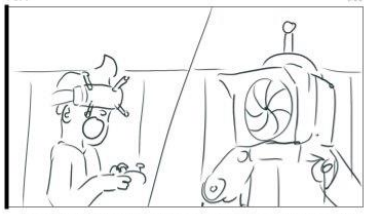
Mech suits and a table emerge from the floor.

72A 4:58



The table has VR gear and monitors that load.

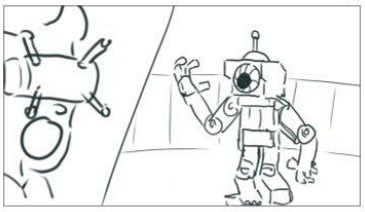
73A 5:00



Jaco: Woah! I knew all those hours of gaming would come in useful!

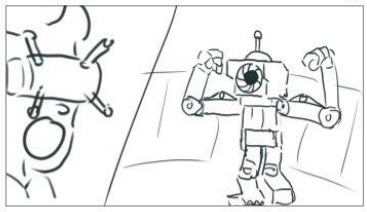
THe boys put on the VR geah.

73B 5:02



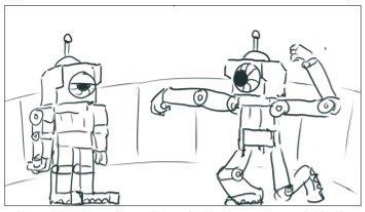
Jaco: I feel fresh and strong!

73C 5:04



Jaco: So strong I could crush that monster in no time at all!

73D 5:06



Jaco: So strong I could send that monster packing!
Step: Whatever man.

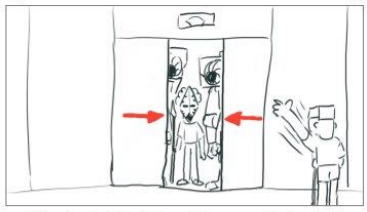
74A 5:08



Ndondo: Good luck!

THe tro akwardly squeeze into the elevator.

74B 5:10



Ndondo: And don't forget! Teamwork is the key!

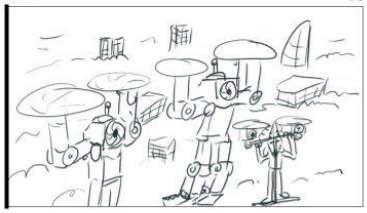
The elevator doors close!

Storyboarder

KASI QUEST 1

Boards: 223 | Shots: 182 | Duration: 7:26 | Aspect Ratio: 16 : 9
DRAFT: MARCH 24, 2024

75A 5:12



The trio fly off to find the monster.

76A 5:14

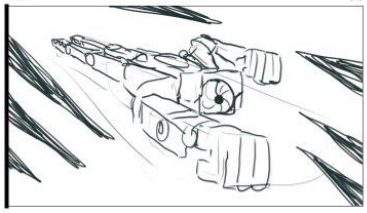


76B 5:16



Tey approch a part of the city that is destoyed and burning.

77A 5:18



Jaco switches into a dive and lunges downwards.

78A 5:20

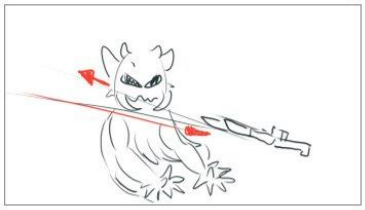


78B 5:22



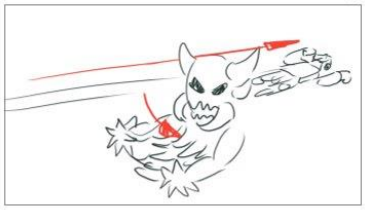
The monster truns from its destruction to notice them.

78C 5:24



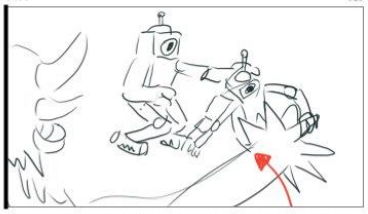
The monster dodges Jaco.

78D 5:26



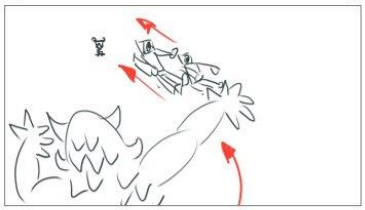
The monster dodges Step.

79A 5:28



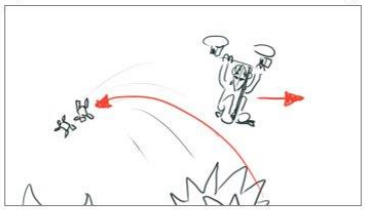
The monster swings its arm around to where they have landed.

79B 5:30



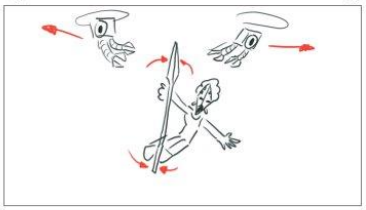
THe monster throws the two robots back towards Mbali in one motion.

79C 5:32



Mbali Dodges the ribos as they fly into the distance.

79D 5:34

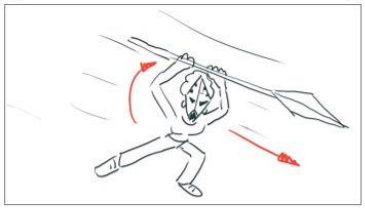


Mbali detaches from the drones.

KASI QUEST 1

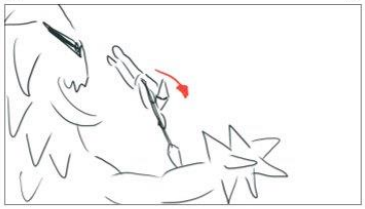
Boards: 223 | Shots: 182 | Duration: 7:26 | Aspect Ratio: 16 : 9
DRAFT: MARCH 24, 2024

79E 5:36

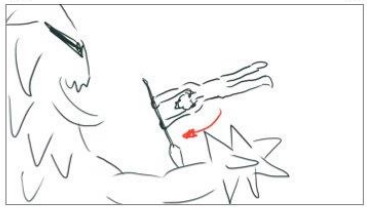


She dives towards the monster with her spaer.

79F 5:38



79G 5:40



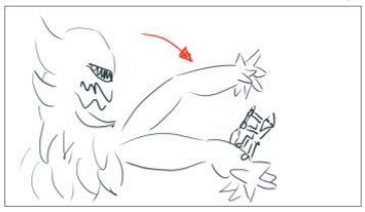
She imaples the monster on the arm and swings around the sprar.

79H 5:42

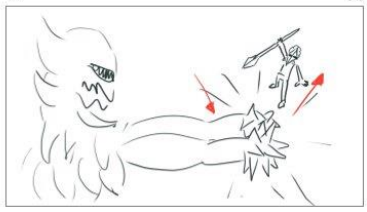


She lands a kick in the monster's face.

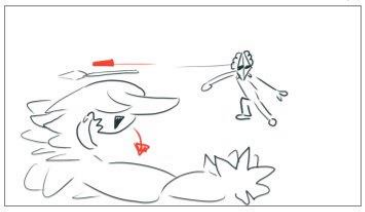
79I 5:44



79J 5:46



79K 5:48



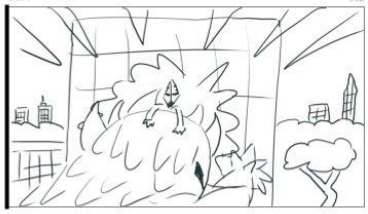
THe monster dodges a spear throw.

79L 5:50



The monster catches Mbali with its horns.

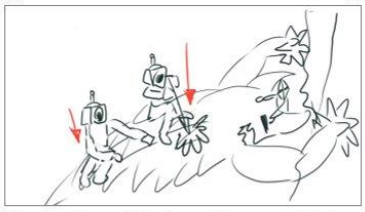
80A 5:52



81A 5:54



81B 5:56



The robot Jaco and Step jump ont the monster's back stabbing it with the spear.

81C 5:58

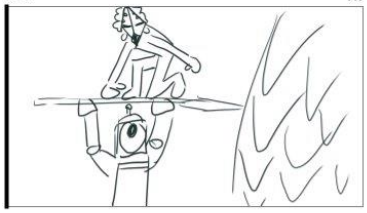


As the monster lurches up mbali frees herself and one of the robots falls off.

KASI QUEST 1

Boards: 223 | Shots: 182 | Duration: 7:26 | Aspect Ratio: 16 : 9
DRAFT: MARCH 24, 2024

82A 6:08



Mbali: Who said you could use my spear!

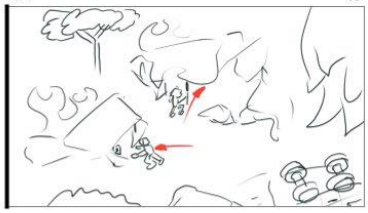
82B 6:82



Mabli: Give it here!

The other two fall of.

83A 6:24



All of them crawl into cover to hide from the monster.

84A 6:26



The monster looks aound believing that the trio have fled.

85A 6:88



Mbali: This creature is unstoppable! I don't know what to do!

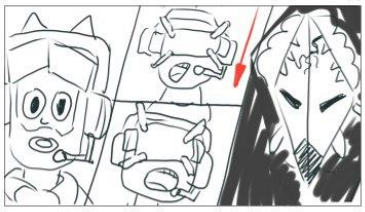
Mbali Calls ndondo.

85B 6:10



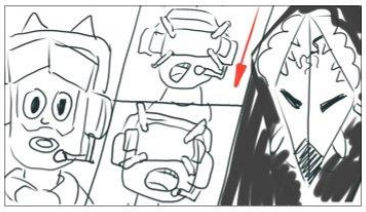
Jaco: It's so fast,It keeps dodging our strikes!

85C 6:12



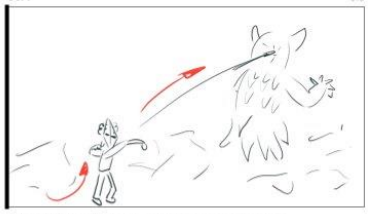
Step: It's so stong that it's taking two of us out in one blow!

85D 6:14



Mbali: Can you not interrupt for 1 second!
Ndondo: The monster thrives off your disision and gets stronger when you fight amoung yourselvs.

86A 6:16



Mbali throws her spear at the monster agian.

86B 6:18



THe monster turns and uses its fits to hurl debris at Mbali.

87A 6:28



Mbali's mask crack apart.

87B 6:22



Storyboarder

KASI QUEST 1

Boards: 223 | Shots: 182 | Duration: 7:26 | Aspect Ratio: 16 : 9
DRAFT: MARCH 24, 2024

87C 6:24

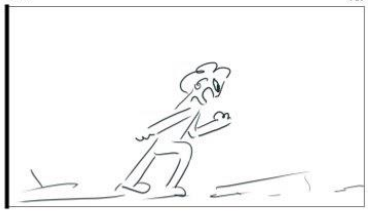


87D 6:26

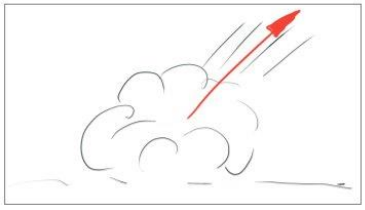


Mbali: Now you've evoked my true rath!

88A 6:28

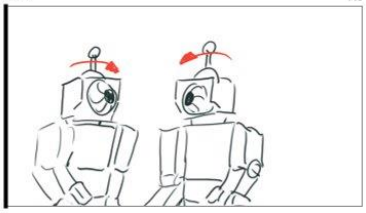


88B 6:38



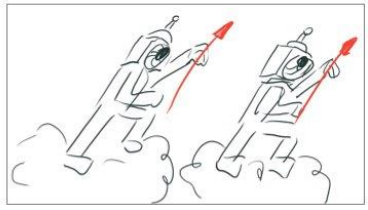
Mbali Leaps at the monster, leaving a cloud of dust.

89A 6:32



The boy robots look at eachother.

89B 6:34



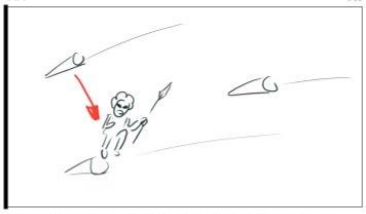
THey follow Mbali's lead.

90A 6:36



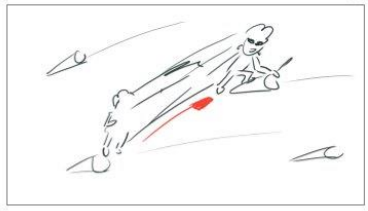
THe monster Hurs spikes from its fists at the trio.

91A 6:38

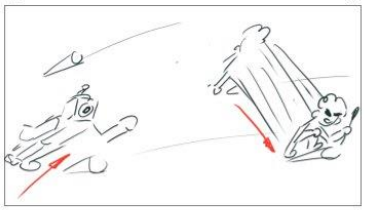


Mbali Jumps form slike to spike towards the monster.

91B 6:40

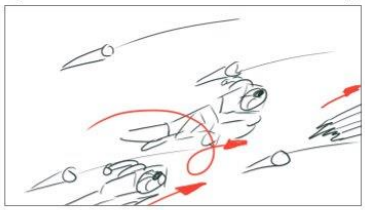


91C 6:42

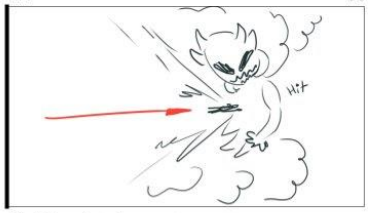


The robots follow and dodge the spikes as they fly.

91D 6:44



92A 6:46

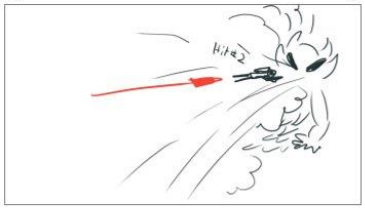


Mbali Slams into the monster.

KASI QUEST 1

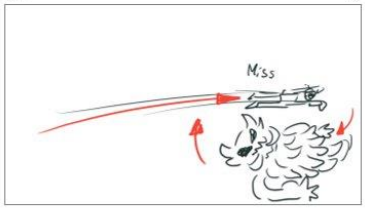
Boards: 223 | Shots: 182 | Duration: 7:26 | Aspect Ratio: 16 : 9
DRAFT: MARCH 24, 2024

92B 6:48



Step slams into the monster.

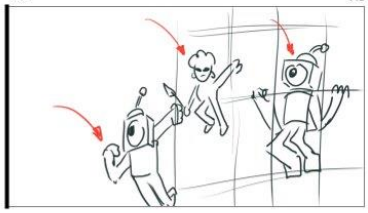
92C 6:50



Jako: What how come I can never get a hit on it!

The monstor dodges Jaco.

93A 6:52



The trop lands ont the side of a building to look back at theor work.

94A 6:54



The monster regenrates from an orb within it's chest.

94B 6:56



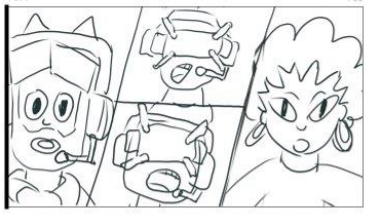
Jaco: That must be its source of power!

94C 6:58



Mbali: That's where we need to hit it! Can you two hold its arms for me?

95A 7:00



Ndondo: No that sound like a plan of action:

96A 7:02



THe robots make a bull horn manuver.

97A 7:04



THe robos cross past each other, confusing the monster, and grab its arms.

97B 7:06

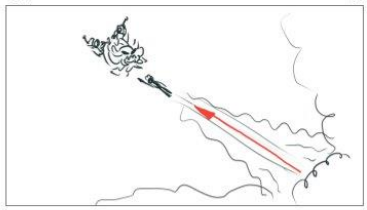


98A 7:08



Mbali launches at the monster.

98B 7:10

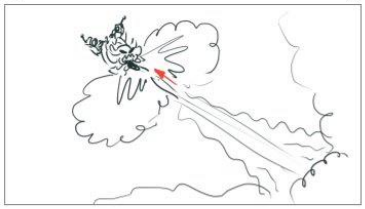


Storyboarder

KASI QUEST 1

Boards: 223 | Shots: 182 | Duration: 7:26 | Aspect Ratio: 16 : 9
DRAFT: MARCH 24, 2024

98C 7:12



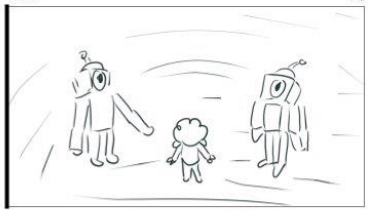
Mbali strikes the monster in the chest with great force.

99A 7:14



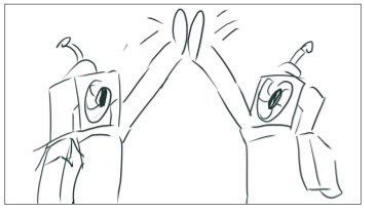
A gigantic explosion erups over the whole city.

100A 7:16



The trio observe that the monster is gone.

100B 7:18



Step: We didi it!

The robots high five!

100C 7:20



Jaco: We are the best!

Match cut to the boys high-fiving.

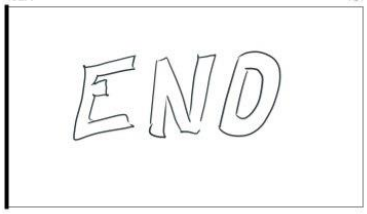
101A 7:22



Jaco: Great work man! I'm Jaco by the way. What's your name?
Step: Thanks! I'm Step! nice to meet you!

Everyone gets together for a braai to celebrate.

102A 7:24



Storyboarder