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11TH ANNUAL ANIMATION SHOW OF SHOWS TO LAUNCH NEXT MONTH

Hollywood, CA – The 2009 Animation Show of Shows (ASOS), curated and presented by Acme Filmworks founder Ron Diamond, will begin touring the United States and selected international venues commences during the month of October. Featuring the best animated short films produced worldwide in the past year, the Show of Shows will be screened at major studios including Pixar, Blue Sky, DreamWorks and Disney, as well as at Harvard, Rhode Island School of Design, New York University, UCLA and other universities. The program will also travel to a number of ASIFA chapters across the country.

The Animated Show of Shows was created by Diamond to give greater exposure to exceptional animated shorts that normally would receive only very limited, if any, distribution. Often these works are at the cutting edge of animation, pushing creative boundaries and using the latest technologies to achieve groundbreaking results. The Animated Show of Shows provides an opportunity for animation professionals and other artists to see these films, opening a window onto the most interesting and creative work being done around the world.

As in previous years, the 2009 program features films in a variety of styles from all over the world, most of which have won awards at major festivals. Highlights include:

The Spine - The stunning new CGI film from Oscar[®] winner Chris Landreth (*Ryan*) continues the director's explorations into the dark side of human psychology with a harrowing portrait of a co-dependent couple. At once deeply disturbing and revelatory, *The Spine* pushes the boundaries of both subject matter and computer-generated character design.

Santa: The Fascist Years - Another satirical masterwork from veteran director Bill Plympton, *Santa* uncovers and explores a dark chapter in St. Nick's history. Featuring Plympton's trademark frenetic energy, eccentric characters, and in-your-face humor, the film ensures that no one will ever think of Santa in quite the same way again.

Chick - Michal Socha's graphically stunning *Chick* is a design tour de force that casts a jaundiced eye at male-female relations, all set to an irresistible neo-Klezmer score. Featuring enough visual imagination for half a dozen films, this compulsively watchable short demonstrates Socha's complete control of his medium.

Runaway - Two-time Oscar[®] nominee Cordell Barker's new film about class war aboard an out-of-control train once again demonstrates the director's crisp, rhythmic style, talent for rapid-fire gag sequences and love of traditional animation. With an extraordinary score by Benoît Charest (*The Triplets of Belleville*), *Runaway* is both a pointed moral tale and a thoroughly engaging and very funny chronicle of love and death on the tracks.

For the complete program, please see the accompanying document.

The Animation Show of Shows has consistently featured films that have later gone on to be considered for Academy Awards[®]. To date, 18 films that have appeared in the program have received Oscar[®] nominations and five — *Father and Daughter* (Michael Dudok de Wit, 2000), *Harvey Krumpet* (Adam Elliot, 2003), *Ryan* (Chris Landreth, 2004), *The Danish Poet* (Torill Kove, 2006) and *La Maison en Petite Cubes* (Kunio Kato, 2008) — have won the Academy Award[®] for Best Animated Short.

Many of the films from past editions of the Animation Show of Shows are now available in a deluxe set of 18 DVDs, which Matt Groening, creator of *The Simpsons*, described as “dazzling” and “brilliant,” and Nick Park (*Wallace and Gromit*) called “a treasure trove of inspiration and animation magic.” Each disc includes three films and may be purchased individually for \$5, or in three different boxed sets of six for \$30 each. The DVDs are available online at www.filmporium.com. They will also be for sale at this year's presentations of the Show of Shows.

2009 Animation Show of Shows

Photograph of Jesus

Directed by Laurie Hill / U.K. / Run Time 6:42

Executive Producer: Basil Stephens

Looking for photographs of Jesus, yetis and Hitler in 1948? In this documentary-fantasy based on true stories of requests for impossible archival images, fact and fiction collide, belief runs amok and unruly images take on a life of their own.

Awards

Most Inventive Film, Odense International Film Festival, Denmark

McLaren Award for Best New British Animation, Edinburgh International Film Festival

Best Animated Short, Seattle International Film Festival, USA

Laurie Hill was born in Norfolk, UK and holds degrees in English and Art from R.H.B.N.C., Surrey; Kings College London; and Chelsea College of Art and Design, London. After working for nine years as an information designer for a mainframe computer firm, she received an MA in animation at the Royal College of Art, London. Selected for Bloomberg New Contemporaries 2007. Finalist in Jerwood Moving Image Awards 2008. Winner of Short & Sweet / Getty Images Short Film Challenge 2008.

The Da Vinci Time Code

Directed by Gil Alkabetz / Germany / Run Time 2:49

In this deconstruction (literally and figuratively) of Da Vinci's "The Last Supper," Alkabetz creates an animated film from fragments of the familiar masterpiece, allowing us to discover secret movements. The people in the picture eat, dance, discuss and argue, until finally all are silenced.

Awards

Film of the Month, Filmbewertungsstelle, Wiesbaden

Special Award: Music for Animation, Stuttgart Int. Animation Festival

Gil Alkabetz was born in 1957 in Kibuz "Mashabei Sade," Israel and studied graphic design at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Jerusalem. From 1985 to 1995, he worked as a freelance animator and illustrator and as a teacher at different art schools in Israel, and since 1995 has worked as an independent film maker in Germany. He is currently a professor in the HFF, "Konrad Wolf", Potsdam and a teacher in the Filmakademie BW. His previous films, which have won awards throughout the world, include *Bitzbutz* (1984), *Swamp* (1991), *Yankale* (1995), *Rubicon* (1997), *Morir de Amor* (2004), and *A Sunny Day* (2007).

Volgens de Vogels (According to Birds)

Directed by Linde Fass / Netherlands / Run Time: 5:26

The morning dawn reveals an great grey owl. With his arrival the birds awake, filling the woods with their sounds and movement. Their little rituals make the forest a rich and powerfull place. But as with all things, it only lasts for a moment.

Awards

Judges Award, International Competition, Melbourne International Animation Festival

First prize, Film Front Festival Gorinchem

First prize, student competition, Holland Animation Film Festival

Special Jury Prize, Kino Proba

Born in the Netherlands in 1985, Linde Faas has always been fascinated with movement and the meaning of sound. He studied animation at Sint Joost Art Academy (Breda), graduating in 2008. His graduation film, *Volgens de Vogels*, received the Sint Joost Academy Award. He has a special fascination for the concept of silence, which he tries to explore in his films and drawings. Nature is also a very important and recurring theme in his work.

Santa: The Fascist Years

Directed by Bill Plympton / USA / Run Time 3:25

Produced by Biljana Labovic / Narrated by Matthew Modine

We all think of Santa as “Jolly Old St. Nick.” But who knew that he has a dark hidden past that’s very un-jolly? This short film uncovers and explores Santa’s flirtation with politics and greed.

Born and raised in Portland, Oregon, Bill Plympton graduated from Portland State University in Graphic Design and moved to New York City in 1968. He began his career creating cartoons for publications such as the *New York Times*, *National Lampoon*, *Playboy* and *Screw*. He was nominated for an Oscar[®] in 1987 for his animated short *Your Face*, and again in 2005 for *Guard Dog*. Since 1991 he's made nine feature films, including *I Married A Strange Person*, *Mutant Aliens*, *Hair High* and *Idiots and Angels*. Mr. Plympton is considered the King of Indie Animation and is the only person to hand-draw an entire animated feature film.

El Empleo (The Employment)

Directed by Santiago “Bou” Grasso / Argentina / Run Time 6:30

Idea and characters design: Patricio Plaza

On a day like any other, a man goes to work in a world where people are employed in a host of unusual jobs.

Awards

FIPRESCI Award, Annecy International Animation Festival

Special Award, Anima Mundi Festival
Special Jury Award/Audience Award, Bolzano Short Film Festival
Best Animation, Kratkofil Short Film Festival
First Prize, International Animation, Santiago Short Film Festival
Best Animation Award, Festival de Cine Latino de Buenos Aires

Santiago “Bou” Grasso was born on March 11, 1979, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He obtained a “Designer in Visual Communication” degree in 2003 at the Faculty of Fine Arts, National University of La Plata (UNLP) and has worked as an illustrator, animator and comic book artist. His other short films include *Nuevas Tecnologías* (2004), *El Pájaro y el Hombre* (2007), and *-Hola?* (2007), which won First Prize at the 2008 Cortoons Festival (Italy). His feature film work includes *Nocturna*, *El Arca*, *Patoruzito*, and *Condor Crux*, among others. Grasso lives in San Carlos de Bariloche, Rio Negro, where he works as a freelance illustrator and makes independent animation films.

Nuvole, Mani

Directed by Simone Massi / Italy / Run Time: 8:05
Produced by Ron Dyens & Aurélia Prévieu / Sacrebleu Productions

Crossing the field, we colour ourselves from the yellow of the flower and the spit of the cuckoo.

Simone Massi was born in Pergola, Italy in 1970. After getting his degree in Animated Cinema from the State Institute of Fine Arts of Urbino, he began to work as a freelance animator.

The Spine

Directed by Chris Landreth / Canada / Run Time 11:19
Produced by Marcy Page and Steve Hoban / Co-producer: Mark Smith
Executive Producers: Robert Munroe and David Verrall
National Film Board of Canada

Dan and Mary Rutherford, married 26 years, sit unhappily in a couples’ group counseling session. Angela, another troubled participant in this group, wonders why their marriage has become so lopsided. But when Mary leaves Dan, he undergoes a transformation. What will happen when she returns? *The Spine* uses a twisted, beautiful and highly original visual aesthetic to look at the ways individuals evolve, adapt and break.

Chris Landreth received his MS degree in Theoretical and Applied Mechanics from the University of Illinois in 1986 and worked in experimental research in Fluid Mechanics before making his leap into computer animation. In 1994 Chris joined Alias|Wavefront, where, in addition to producing well-mannered software, he created the Oscar[®]-nominated short film *The End* (1995) and the Genie Award-winning *Bingo* (1998). His next film, *Ryan* (2004), a portrait of animator Ryan Larkin, was honored with more than 50 awards, including an Oscar[®]. *The Spine* continues his explorations in the use of unique imagery to represent human psychological turmoil.

Chick

Directed by Michal Socha / Poland / Run Time 5:02

Produced by Michal Socha and Platge Image

Executive Producer: Marcin Kobylecki

The graphically stunning *Chick* is a humorous true-life story about male-female relations: meeting, dancing, laughing, having sex. A man, giddy with the charm of a femme fatale, leaves a room. He is followed by failure and doom.

Michał Socha was born in 1981 and graduated from the Faculty of Graphic Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, where he received an honorable mention from the dean. *Chick* was his diploma film. Socha lives in Warsaw, where he specializes in animation and special effects for commercials and TV productions.

Partly Cloudy

Directed by Peter Sohn / USA / Run Time 5:45

Produced by Kevin Reher

Everyone knows that the stork delivers babies, but where do the storks get the babies? From cloud people up in the stratosphere, who sculpt babies and bring them to life. Gus, a lonely and insecure grey cloud, is a master at creating “dangerous” babies—crocodiles, porcupines and more. But as Gus’s creations become more rambunctious, his stork partner Peck’s job gets harder and harder. How will Peck manage to handle both his hazardous cargo and his friend’s fiery temperament?

Peter Sohn grew up in New York and attended California Institute of the Arts (Cal Arts). After graduating, he worked at Warner Bros. with director Brad Bird on *The Iron Giant*, as well as at Disney TV. He started working for Pixar in 2000, beginning in both the art and story departments for *Finding Nemo*, and later working on *The Incredibles* in the art, story, and animation departments, and as a story artist and animator for *Ratatouille* (for which he also provided the voice of Emile). He also worked as a story artist on *WALL•E*. Sohn currently lives in the Bay Area.

Runaway

Directed by Cordell Barker / Canada / Run Time: 9:15

Produced by Michael Scott & Derek Mazur

National Film Board of Canada

Happy passengers are having a great time on a crowded train, oblivious to the fate that awaits them around the bend. The ensuing crisis leads to a class struggle that is as amusing as it is merciless. Naturally there are victims, but in the end everyone is equal.

Cordell Barker was born in Winnipeg in 1957 and began his career working for “Sesame Street” and collaborating on commercials. In 1982, he joined the NFB and made his first

film, *The Cat Came Back* (1988), which garnered 16 awards and received an Oscar[®] nomination. After a return to advertising, he made his second film, *Strange Invaders*, in 2001. It too received an Oscar[®] nomination and won multiple awards. Like his earlier films, *Runaway* is an absurd comedy filled with latent social satire. As a filmmaker who focuses on pacing, action and narrative, Cordell Barker enjoys this particular form of expression because it enables him to make the most of his incisive humour.