

Press release: 15 October 2009

## **AnimateTV: survey findings**

*“Culture defining, career making and groundbreaking”*

AnimateTV was founded by Arts Council England and Channel 4 in 1990, and since then has commissioned more than 100 experimental films by UK animators and artists. In summer 2009, by way of our newsletter and social networking sites, we asked our audience to tell us something about themselves, and what they think of us, through an online survey.

We received 295 responses.

- 60% were animators/artists/filmmakers who hadn't previously been commissioned by AnimateTV. Others described themselves as producers, commercial directors, writers, composers, editors, enthusiasts, and Screen Agency representatives.
- 50% of respondents were usually based in London, with others from across the UK, including 9.6% Scotland.
- 83% had seen AnimateTV films on their Channel 4 terrestrial broadcast
- 75% had seen them at [animateprojects.org](http://animateprojects.org)
- 86% had seen films at a UK or international festival

We asked whether people thought the AnimateTV open call should continue. 97.3% said it should. We asked why - and below is a small selection of the 217 comments we received. Respondents were overwhelmingly positive. We've included all the critical comments we received, and just some of the positive remarks.

## **Answers to the Question “Should AnimateTV continue - and why?”**

It represents the most ambitious and exciting opportunity of TV for artists to reach audiences. The works have been of amazing quality and are an inspiration to artists and producers internationally and show that TV can be niche and mainstream in the same frame.

It has introduced me to some of the most innovative and exciting pieces of contemporary animation. The work is always inspiring.

A mainstream audience has the opportunity to experience experimental work.

Much of the important UK animation has emerged from this scheme and the global influence of these films is significant.

It has become an identifiable strand of arts programming and promotes and supports this aspect of the British Art Industry in a recognised brand which denotes high quality creative content, supporting the work of a wide range of exceptional individuals.

Animate! in many ways has defined British animation over the last two decades. It has produced many important, culture defining, career making and groundbreaking films. These films feed both into the commercial industry and education sector and so have a life worth far more than their original funding. Animate! is simply a national treasure and should be valued as such.

It remains the pre-eminent showcase for genuinely innovative and original filmmaking, not necessarily covered by commercial work but often stimulating further commercial commissions and creative development from the same filmmakers.

There are few opportunities for creative animators to find support for their work, and still less which include a direct opportunity to place completed work before a television audience as well as a 'blue chip' curated online site.

The diverse nature of the films commissioned justifies Channel Four's public funding in an instant.

AnimateTV is a really great show.

It helps keep animation in the public's lucky eyes!

This is one of the last interesting slots for interesting original contemporary work on broadcast TV - to lose it would be shameful.

It should continue but not as a Channel four demographic narrative led agenda. It should be for experimental animation.

Because it is nourishing the UK art scene and because it is extremely popular among young people. Also, the projects are very good value for money.

Fantastic opportunity for artists work to get seen by the masses. Also it's different from everything else on TV.

It's an annual treat for animation fans that produces work that is a break from the norm.

C4 has led the way in the past for stimulating some of the most creative work ever produced within the 'culture'. This should not be lost but maintained and revised to suit the evolving digital and artistic landscape.

Animate Projects is a ray of hope.

The Animate programme has consistently produced work that is both entertaining and culturally stimulating. The open call format enables people with great ideas, but perhaps without the contacts to go with them, bring their ideas to life.

It is one of the only opportunities open to Channel 4 to screen the latest ideas and technological experiments in artist's moving image work.

There is simply no alternative.

Animate TV has commissioned some of the best recent moving image work in Britain.

We need professional opportunities for it not to become too much a nerd community, it keeps the art form more open and alive to be connected to a TV audience.

Animate has always been a bastion of great films.

Should the AnimateTV open call continue? Well lets have a look at the "Channel 4's Statement of Promises" This states that Channel 4 should "foster the new and experimental in television. It will encourage pluralism, provide a favoured place for the untried and encourage innovation in style content perspective and talent on and off screen".

Even though the animate scheme was small it was certainly better than anything else around since the demise of the Channel 4 animation dept.

The opportunities for animation in an art context have never been more exciting, especially in emerging new media. Animate is the best placed UK organisation to lead a new generation of artists working with new technology.

It is not a funding scheme for animation any more but an arts hybrid. It should be continued only if it supports animation production, which is why it was originally started.

Animate has singularly failed to encourage new talent it is a closed shop promoting a small coterie of makers most of who have received funding previously. The animate brief is unclear and its understanding of animation (in all its forms) is fuzzy. It is a pointless initiative.

The Animate scheme was one of the only schemes that actually recognised that the animators require proper support to produce the highest levels of work.

Original animation talent in this country is at a low ebb, by shutting off the avenues of development for original ideas television and even eventually online media is slowly putting its audiences off watching by serving them the same re-hashed concepts from previously successful formulae.

Animation directors whose work cannot be labelled as cartoony, commercial or conventional feel excluded from this scheme which set itself the goal of commissioning thought-provoking work. The commissions have been given to the same circle of artists for a while, who can rely on their name to attract attention - as it is generally harder to get an audience for experimental, ground-breaking work. It is a shame as there is an incredible amount of animation talent in this country, which never gets commissioned.

Because there is a lack of funding opportunities for real 'ground breaking and innovative' work - i.e. truly experimental.

There is so little adult animation on TV, all aimed at children; animate on TV is a serious showcase for animation.

If Animate! is the only scheme for independent animation films, it should aim to include a wider spectrum of genres. The films are too narrow and there is too much left to chance. Of course an artistic scheme should encourage experimentation and innovation. Some films should be experimental and abstract, but some should also be narrative, relation to what animators in the UK are actually doing. As abstract experimental films are more of a gamble to judge from a proposal, more narrative films should be commissioned. A narrative film can still be groundbreaking, thought provoking, artistic and innovative, and filmmakers can still experiment with the narrative itself!

On the whole they are neither clever nor interesting. There is always the odd one which is good, the 99% usually pointless or pretentious. Not worth funding.

How else is the Arts Council supporting the animation industry and helping new talent make significant work that will get them noticed and develop their career? Animators should not be judged alongside live action filmmakers, as this is really a different artform.

Its achievements and remit are things Channel 4 should be rightly proud of and should continue to support. It will be a huge blow to the future of animation in this country if it folds.

It's given a graveyard slot but is rare beacon of pure, unedited, experimental and, most importantly, well-prepared broadcasting.

AnimateTV has an incredible track record and over the years has become a byword for excellence.

Animate TV has been the driving force behind some of the UK's most interesting recent short films and has become an important bridge between traditional experimental filmmaking and fine art moving image practice. It's something the UK can do really well and should be supported.

#### **Selected 'Any other comments':**

Animate has allowed the imagination and technical virtuosity to converge through expert support and focused mechanisms for selection. It is widely regarded as an international exemplar and it is depressing if this is not celebrated by C4 and ACE who should be looking at ways in which it can increase exposure for these excellent works.

The fact that the channel supported the scheme at all was reason enough to rejoice.

I think animate needs a bit of an overhaul; a fresh eye, but culling funding is not going to help support the already under supported animation industry.

It has been a defining part of Channel 4's USP.

It is animate films, and the distribution, which they receive through programming in international festivals, which maintains the profile and esteem of the UK animation and film industries.

## Notes to editors:

### About AnimateTV:

AnimateTV was established in 1990 as a unique collaboration between Arts Council England and Channel 4 to support independent production of experimental and artists' work, selecting projects through an annual open call for proposals. At [animateprojects.org](http://animateprojects.org) there is additional background information, materials and essays on the AnimateTV films, and video interviews with some of the makers.

### About the AnimateTV Survey:

The survey was created using Survey Monkey web-based software and ran for two months from July to August 2010 online. The survey was aimed at the core Animate Projects audience and was publicised online via the Animate Projects site, mailing list, MySpace, Facebook, Twitter and the Animate Projects blog, as well as specialist listing sites aimed at filmmakers and animators, such as Shooting People and Imagine Animation.

### About Animate Projects:

Animate Projects commissions artists to make work that explores the relationship between contemporary art and animation, for broadcast, gallery, cinema and digital exhibition. Over 120 groundbreaking films can be viewed on [animateprojects.org](http://animateprojects.org), alongside interviews, essays and other background material. Recent projects include: Primitive, a multi-platform project by Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Jane and Louise Wilson's Unfolding the Aryan Papers, made in response to the holdings of The Stanley Kubrick Archives. Upcoming events include the premiere the new AnimateTV films on Channel 4 in November 2009 and the debut of our 3 new commissions for Shudder, a group show opening at The Drawing Room Gallery in January 2010.

Animate Projects is supported by the National Lottery through Arts Council England. Visit us at [animateprojects.org](http://animateprojects.org).

### Further press information:

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