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ANIMATION**

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New animated cinema

Animated series, from Chile to the world

Chilemonos, a showcase for Latin America's animation

Advertising animation in Chile



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The tip of the iceberg:

An Oscar for the Chilean animation industry

The night of the 2016's Academy Awards, Chile won its first Oscar in the national film industry, granted to Gabriel Osorio and Pato Escala, director and producer, respectively, of the animation short film "Bear Story".

Latin America's presence in the Oscar's animated film categories has been very scarce, and even when there have been one or two seldom nominations in the past, South American Animation had never won a statuette. In the particular case of Chilean cinema, including live-action and documentary genres, its only presence in the Awards is

the recent nomination of the film "No" to the Best Foreign Language Film category in 2013, but there had never been an approach to the Academy Awards in terms of animated movies. In this sense, this Oscar is a very significant landmark for the country, as it is representative of the actual state of its animation film industry.

In the film a father bear uses a tin diorama to tell the story about how he was separated from his family to be forced to work at a circus against his will, how he managed to escape, go back home and search for his wife and son.



The nomination of this short film was the result of a successful festival circuit in which it won more than fifty awards, becoming the pride of Punkrobot Studio, the animation studio behind the project, which already had a curriculum making animated series for national networks and with international co-productions. The short film, which took four years to be completed due to funding issues, gave a tough fight the night of February 28th, competing against industry giants such as Pixar, Richard Williams and Don Hertzfeldt. So the obvious question is: How did they do it?

The most human side of the answer is that “Bear Story” is the result of a profound dedication, much talent, and above everything else, the hard work of a small workgroup that was determined to create a piece of the highest narrative and technical quality. But to comprehend what is it that makes of this short film a unique piece of art we must understand the context in which its story unfolds. It fulfills a requirement that now a days seems essential: the ability to appeal to the masses in a universal way, while maintaining a personal and intimate quality that allows the audience to establish an emotional connection.

The initial idea of “Bear Story” is inspired by a family story from director Gabriel Osorio, whose grandfather was exiled during the Chilean dictatorship in 1973. The nature of this narration is dual as it talks, in first place, about the particular history of Chile and its tormented sociopolitical past, dealing with how it was to

live under a dictatorship. But on other hand, the beauty of “Bear Story” resides in the way it deals with the most universal aspect of this reality, which is simply to say that families must always stay together and there’s nothing in the world that can or should break them apart. And it was this message the one that was able to captivate the audience all around the world, no matter their sociocultural context. The main intention of the story was made clear by its director at the stage of the Dolby Theatre after receiving the golden statuette: “This one is for everyone who, as him (his grandfather), have suffered in exile. Let’s hope this never happens again”.

“Bear Story” and its well-deserved Oscar fulfill a very important role for our national industry, as it is an invitation to the rest of the world to take a look into what’s happening in Chile right now. This award must be understood within the context of the exponential progress of the Chilean animated film industry, which has, in the last ten years, reached such a point of maturity that it’s finally leaping into cinema with success, after a long process of development on TV and advertising. “Bear Story” has become the visible face of a new generation of creators who have the same technical and narrative excellence, ready to set out to the world with their own voice and powerful stories, and also reaching for victory with the confidence of knowing that nothing seems impossible anymore.

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Gabriel Osorio and Pato Escala, director and producer of the animated short film “Bear Story”.

The cinema of the future:

The newborn Chilean industry

It was Walt Disney himself, in a visit to Chile in 1941, who encouraged two architecture students to come up with the idea that a year later would be premiered at our national theaters as the first animated feature film of the country: "15.000 Drawings". Unfortunately, the movie was a box office failure, burying for decades any other initiative to make another film of such scale.

Seventy years had to pass for the premiere, between the years 2002 and 2007, of four new animated feature films, which then gave way to a new recession. The national industry grew making several TV series, but still wasn't prepared for the production burden of a feature film.

Almost a decade later, the outlook is quite different. Only this year, Chile counts with three feature films in production. But, how was this possible?

The country has given the real first step towards shaping its animated cinema industry by releasing high quality short films. The most notorious cases are "The Gift", by Miniestudio, which counts with ten international prizes in various festivals; and of course, "Bear Story", the short film by Punkrobot Studio that had been awarded more than fifty times around the world before winning the Best Animated Short Film Oscar on last February.

These short films are a small sample of the new film facet being developed in Chile, with a high level of visual craftsmanship and originality regarding storytelling. This way, the country seeks to become a creative pole in Latin America.

As a reflection of the local versatility, the three feature films in production nowadays are being thought for totally different kinds of audiences. On the vein of children and familiar entertainment



"Nahuel and the Magic Book", by Carburadores in co-production with Punkrobot Studio.

we have “Nahuel and the Magic Book”, from Carburadores in co-production with Punkrobot Studio. It tells the story of a twelve years old boy who, after the tragic death of his mother during a storm in open sea, grows up with a paralyzing fear of the ocean, which sets a gap in his relationship with his father, a artisanal fisherman. Nahuel becomes involved in a great adventure when he tries to find a magical book that will give him the power to overcome his fears and becoming an authentic seaman.

The story takes place in Chiloe, an island rich in natural resources located in the southern part of Chile. In this cold weather and thick vegetation patch of land, people still live a small town lifestyle, full of mythological tales in which the inhabitants of the island still believe greatly. “Nahuel and the Magic Book” rescues much of this local mythology to build the context and the universe in which the action takes place, but it focus lies in the human factor of the story: the relationship between Nahuel and his father, and those who surround them, making this film a highly universal tale.

Made by a 100% chilean workgroup this feature film, to be premiered in 2018, has been a gathering point between the talent of national artists and a production machinery with clear focus on internationalization.

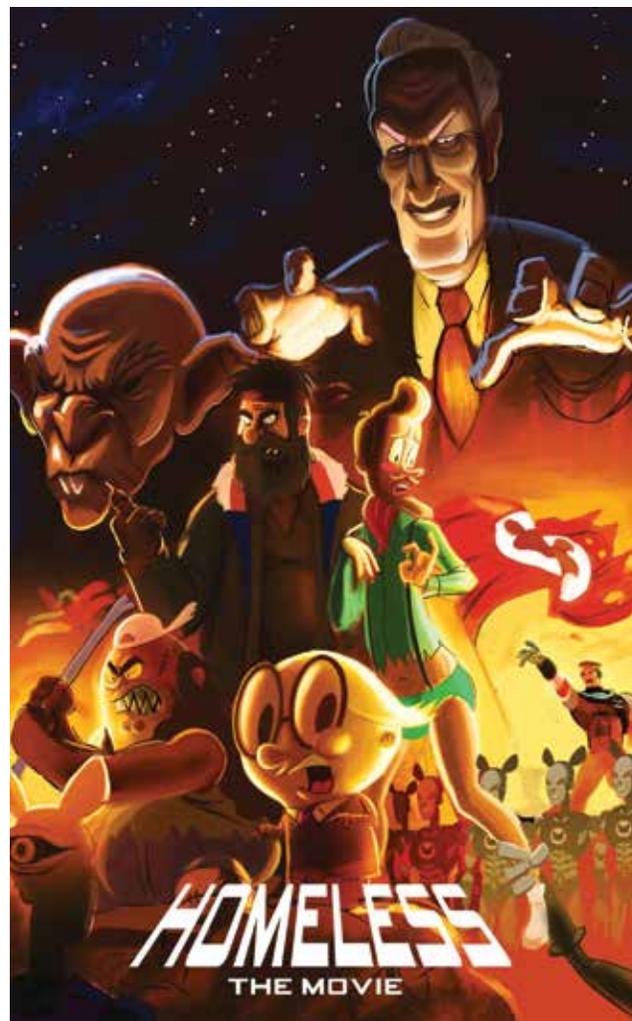
The bet of Lunes production house, to be premiered in 2017, is “Homeless”, a feature film thought for an adult audience, which continues the events of the TV series of the same name, the first adult animation series created in the country.

The story of “Homeless” begins when a group of cyber-terrorists manage to steal the money of every bank in the world, bringing down the structure of society and leaving the whole population of Earth living in the streets. Now a trio of vagabonds self-rejected from society, tired of being surrounded by all the new homeless people invading their campsite, will attempt to retrieve the money so everything turns back to normal, and to recover their home. With a very acid sense of humor, political incorrectness, and a bit of a critique against society, this film is a reflection of the sociocultural context of the world nowadays with a very Latin American point of view.

Given its genre, tone, themes and target audience, this feature film is an unprecedented project in Latin America. “This project is very particular; we are doing an animated film about homeless men, with a very low budget. Every member of the staff joined the project with this in mind. They were mainly attracted by the idea and the audacity behind ‘Homeless’”, says José Navarro, co-director of the film.

Thus, the production staff counts with the collaboration of Luty Art Studio and Pablo Borghi, the responsables, respectively, of the scenario design and music for the critically acclaimed Argentinian animated movie “Underdogs” (by Juan Jose Campanella). Lunes is very decided, since this early stage of production, to internationalize “Homeless”.

Finally, and totally different to the previous projects, the third film



“Homeless”, by Lunes.

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in development is “The Wolf House”, by Diluvio, an audiovisual studio that has its founding in the visual arts, with many works in their career in the area of painting, sculpture, live action feature films, and some short films.

Co-directed by Joaquin Cocifña and Cristobal Leon, this stop motion film tells the story of Maria, a woman that seeks shelter in a house in the south of Chile, after escaping from a horrible situation in a German colony nearby. “The idea behind ‘The Wolf House’ was born as an extension of our previous work in our short films ‘Lucia’ and ‘Luis’, which took place each in a single

room. Our third short film was going to be “The Wolf”, and it was going to take place in a whole house. With this in mind, we decided it would be better to make a feature film of it”, says Cocifña.

The shooting of this film, which will also premiere in 2017, took place in studios located in several exhibition spaces and art galleries, which has allowed the public to witness the work in progress and its constant change, turning the production process itself into a work of art.

With this eclectic range of film content coming out in our national territory, Chile takes position in the map as the same creative

niche it is right now in terms of TV and advertising content. The country has received several recognitions for its originality and technical quality in the production of short films and now this format is becoming too small for so much local creativity. It’s time for Chile to tell its stories to the world in the feature film format. Both, production houses and authors are eager for their voices to be heard, and are in constant search for funding, looking for possibilities for co-production and international distribution platforms. We expect this films to become the beginning of a snowball effect that will allow the creation of new projects and to be able to have at least one animated feature film premiered each year over the next decade.

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"The Wolf House", by Diluvio.

Chilean animated series for the world

Once again a Chilean series is present at the Annecy International Animated Film Festival. This year's turn is for "Paper Port", with one episode nominated on the TV Films category.

Chile's presence is not something new to the festival, since there are two successful cases in previous years. In 2013, the series "Cagemates" was awarded at MIFA with the Disney Award for the Best Pitch for a TV series project. In that occasion, the series –which tells the story of a rabbit and a hamster that, after having being released from the pet shop they lived, must now learn to live in the world just with the information they obtain from a phone book– captivated the audience and the jury alike. Two years later, in 2015, came the success of "The Legend of Zeta and Ozz", which was granted the same award. This series also tells the story of two best animal buddies; an egocentric fox and a childish bear, who travel through a fantastic mega-continent in search of adventures and trying to show the world that they are the best at everything. "This award is not just an important boost

for the winning project itself, but also invites the worldwide industry to pay attention to Chilean animation in general", says Bambú Orellana, co-creator and writer of "The Legend of Zeta and Ozz".

In the current edition of the Festival, the already award winner "Paper Port", by Zumbastico Studios, is the one looking to make Chile triumph once again. The project tells the story of Matilde, an ordinary girl who goes out on vacations to visit her grandfather at Paper Port, and, after touching a magical coconut, wakes up everyday with a new mysterious superpower that she can't control. Now Matilde, along with her friends, must face the problems and adventures this new ability brings her. This series made in stop motion with paper toys and both 2D and 3D effects, arrives to the contest already being aired not only in Chile, but in Colombia as well. In this last country it was recognized at the India Catalina Awards with the Best Animated Series and Best Art in a Series prizes. The project is currently waiting to be premiered in Brazil



"Paper Port", by Zumbastico Studios.

Creating animated TV series with small workgroups based on original ideas, many times co-producing them with neighbor countries, and then being recognized by TV networks and international producers has become the usual routine.



"The Adventures of Muelin and Perlita", by Punkrobot Studio.



"Super Bit Quest", by Punkrobot Studio.



"Hostal Morrison", by Pájaro.

and Argentina, both countries that along with Chile and Colombia have taken part in this four-sided co-production.

"This project was made thanks to an effort in production that was way bigger than the resources we counted with. I mean, there's more will to do things than money. And a great amount of local talent. It counts as well with a very Chilean element that I find very difficult to analyze; maybe someone can define it in the future. In Chile we work with a very particular sense of humor while we make content for children. For foreign producers, this characteristic element results very appealing", says Alvaro Ceppi, "Paper Port" co-director.

The formula isn't something new in Chile. Creating animated TV series with small workgroups based on original ideas, many times co-producing them with neighbor countries, and then being recognized by TV networks and international producers has become the usual routine. There are multiple successful cases that have been originated in the country, and with a regime of at least three animated series released per year; they are a precedent to the future of Chile as a creative development location.

Punkrobot Studio itself, winner of the Academy Award for "Bear Story", has a series being exhibited right now on Netflix, and two brand new projects under development. "The Adventures of Muelin and Perlita", their second pre-school series, is the one available at the online streaming service, while the studio is also working in a co-production with Breakthrough Entertainment, from Canada, in the project "Super Bit Quest", and is in charge of the executive production of the aforementioned "The Legend of Zeta and Ozz".

"Super Bit Quest" tells the story of a group of friends abducted by an old console into the videogames world, where they must learn the laws of the place so they can get back home. This way, the project seeks to appeal the young audiences not only by its narrative content and its technical quality, but also addressing them as videogame consumers, an industry that's even bigger than the animation one; while opening the way, from the very origin of the project, to the potential development of multiplatform content.

Another interesting case is "Hostal Morrison", from Pájaro productions, which was acquired last year by Cartoon Network LA. This series, produced with local funding and the support of Paka Paka, the Argentinian network, already counts with two seasons and has been very well received by international audiences.

Finally, Chile has been present in the digital platforms too. Such is the case of "Fin Punch", by Marmota Studio; a production house specialized in Internet content. This fun and surrealist series takes

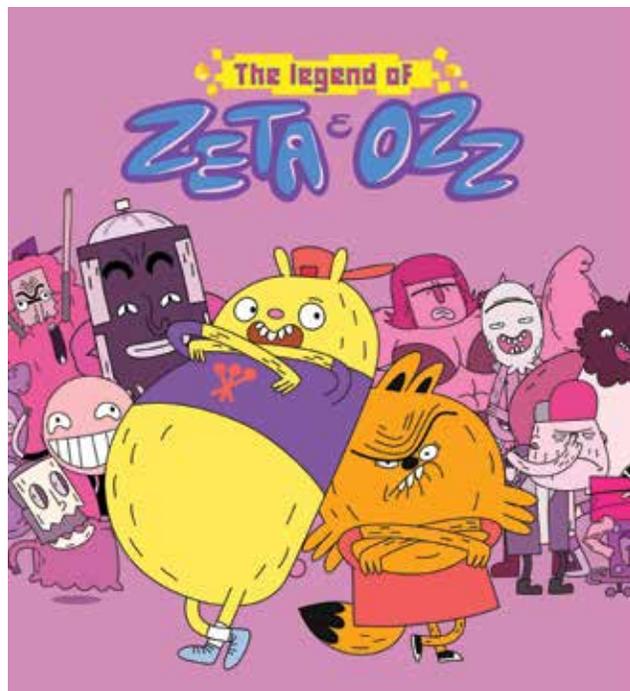
place in a universe where cetaceans form part of human society, where an office working dolphin dreams about conquering the world, and it was selected by Cartoon Hangover to be dubbed into English and broadcasted in their multiple platforms. This channel, which is like the adult animation division of Frederator Studios, is home to many acclaimed projects such as “Bravest Warriors” or “Bee and PuppyCat”, and they saw such a quality level and originality in “Fin Punch” that they couldn’t help to invite them to form part of their broadcast programming.

“Our experience with ‘Fin Punch’ was very rewarding. Working with Frederator Studios allowed us to grow as a studio and we learned how developing content for the internet worked at a much more massive scale than our previous experiences. From that moment on, the series has become our introduction card both on the web as in the real world”, says Matías Latorre, director of the project. And of course, the relationship between national and foreign entities when producing contents has allowed our local industry to grow exponentially and become each day more confident in the fact that the ideas being produced in the country work perfectly at a global scale.

These bonds between Chile and other countries when it comes to producing animated works have strengthened the development of extremely original content, which is being coveted by different broadcasters around the world. It’s not a coincidence that even when being in a relative disadvantage in comparison with Brazil in terms of animated productions, considering the size of their industry and their laws ensuring a certain percentage of Brazilian content being aired, which demands foreign networks to invest in local productions, Chile manages to stand out anyway at a Latin American level, with networks such as Cartoon Network LA making efforts to fund the development of Chilean content to make them part of their broadcasting schedule.

Nevertheless, while the progress of the creative industry in the country is at an unquestionable effervescence point, fundraising is still an obstacle hindering its definitive consolidation. This is probably the last limitation to overcome in the country and in the continent. Keeping this issue in mind, there’s no doubt that at this point, Chile is a creative promise that should be about to erupt in any moment.

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“The Legend of Zeta and Ozz”, by Piñata Corp, Punkrobot and Niño Viejo.



“Fin Punch”, by Marmota Studio.

Chilemonos International Animation Festival

A showcase for Chile, Latin America and the world

Last month, in May, we celebrated the 5th version of the Chilemonos International Animation Festival, which broke its own record of attendance in five days full of exhibitions, conferences, seminars, and workshops with special guests. More than 200 audiovisual works were exhibited, and a new edition of the MAI (Market, Animation, Industry) forum also took place.

Since 2012, Chilemonos has consolidated its audience, and has become a referent at international level as one of the most important gathering points for Latin American animators, with a higher worldwide presence each year. Along with its marketplace, MAI, the festival maintains a perfect equilibrium between the showcasing of artistic quality pieces, and industry development.

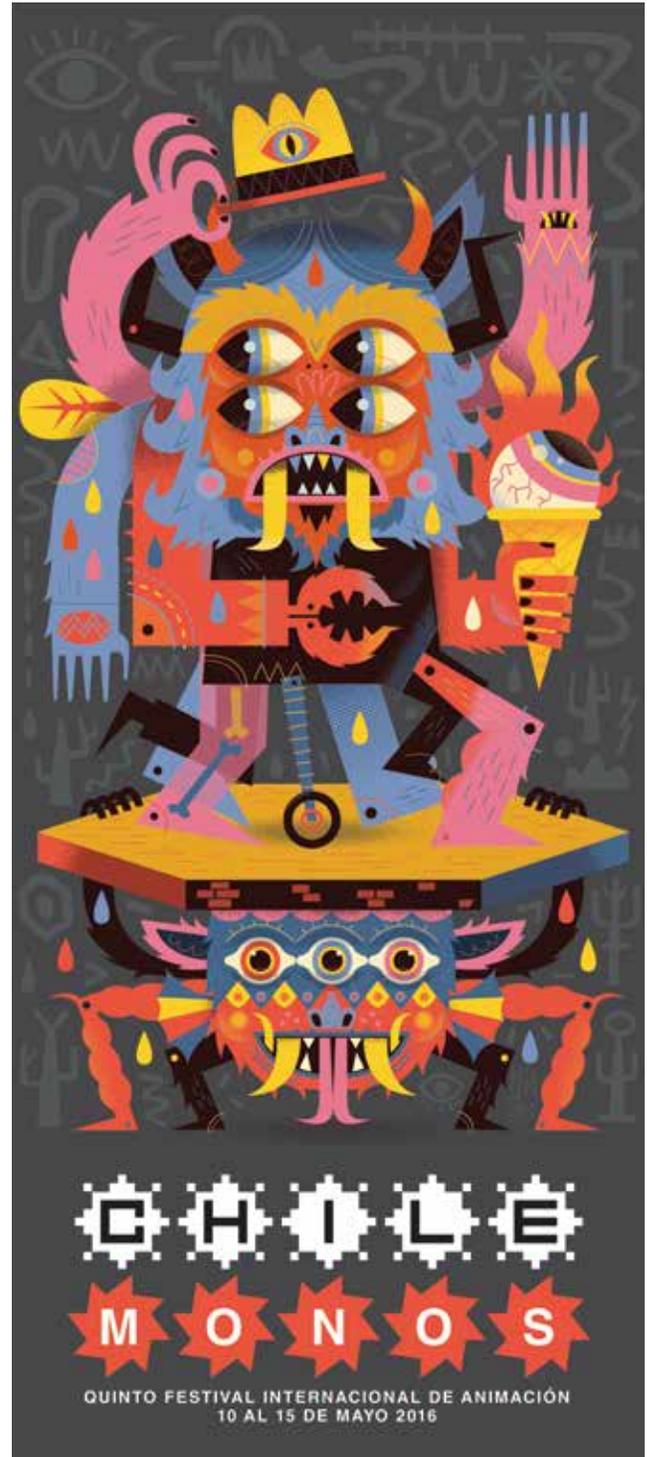
In its labor of promoting the growing animation industry in the continent, MAI counted with formative activities for the different agents of the local animation industry, and it also had a focus dedicated to the opening of commercial opportunities through negotiation meetings, in which once again, agreements were established for co-production and creation of new projects.

Nowadays, Latin America is, without a doubt, a niche in terms of content generation with an unprecedented originality, and Chile, in particular, has become a creative focus, having already published several international co-productions, and lending its workforce to other countries with a higher developed industry. In this context, Chilemonos has become a significant platform that allows the country to show the world what's been produced locally, and receive nourishment from the new tendencies that are flourishing in the international industry.

The most notorious reflection of this fact was the presence of Cartoon Newtork LA in this edition of the festival, a TV channel that collaborated with its own brand new contest, in search of original short termed content to be aired in their station.

Antonio Villamandos "Mantequillo" was the winning project, receiving a prize consisting in \$3,000 USD, and the opening of a negotiation window for the development of the project.

This way, having existed only for five years so far, Chilemonos and MAI go forward with giant steps to become the most relevant animation festival in Latin America.



Advertising animation in Chile

The most consolidated part of animation industry

While the content for TV and cinema are both still in different stages of development, the most consolidated part of animation industry in Chile lies in advertising, with several studios working with a high creative and technical quality both for local and international agencies.

A little over thirty years ago, animation positioned itself as a capital tool in local advertising, and over the last fifteen years the number of studios has considerably grown, reaching a status of worldwide relevance. Some of the most important names in that list are Leyenda VFX, Believe, Smog and Fluor, which stand out for their growth and range, having established a list of clients from every area, working not only for the private sector, but also for different social or governmental campaigns, and even movie titles.

One of these companies, Fluor, decided this year to test the waters getting into fiction animation, and in their first attempt they managed to become part of the Out of Competition exhibition at Annecy, with their short film “Love”.

The short film has a simple yet concrete and effective structure,

build upon a sequence of independent moments that work like icons of different ways to express love.

“‘Love’ was born in a very spontaneous way, almost like an exercise around a concept. The whole crew sat at a table to suggest scenes that came to our mind when we thought about love. I think we spent a whole day just talking, laughing and discussing the topic. We took notes and drew sketches of everything, and then we selected the best scenes and the short film took form”, says Carlos Munita, director of the project.

For Munita, to have been selected for the festival’s exhibition was a surprise, and it’s the first opportunity the studio has to share in a more artistic and narrative aspect within the animation industry. And just like the case of Fluor, there are many other advertising animation studios in Chile that are now focusing their efforts in developing their own contents. This seems to be an inevitable step in the local context, in which the creative aspect is inherent. Chile is growing as a creative niche where even people who have been lending their talent for years to shape the voices of third parties, now seem to be developing a voice of their own, and they have stories to tell.



Images of the short film 'Love', by Fluor.