

EDITORIAL

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By publishing this first issue of the International Journal of Film and Media Arts—IJFMA, the Department of Cinema and Media Arts of Universidade Lusófona and CICANT (The Centre for Research in Applied Communication, Culture, and New Technologies) of the same university take another crucial step in implementing its internationalisation process and strengthening their capacity for research and development. This open access online journal intends, in the medium term, to establish itself as a reference for the dissemination and discussion of science in various fields of cinema and media arts. The creation of this journal resulted from the fact that internationally there is a space for scientific dissemination and discussion in this area that none of the existing publications have covered in full. The growing emphasis on research and doctoral education in film schools and higher education institutions at an international level made such a publication a matter of urgency. We hope this journal will be a success and we commit ourselves from this first issue to ensuring the diversity and richness of contributions that make the film and media arts a single area of knowledge and artistic and contemporary cultural practices.

For this first issue, IJFMA has decided to focus on a specific subject area: animation documentary.

Animation documentary is not a recent practice: in 1918 Winsor McCay made the first author-animated documentary *The Sinking of the Lusitania*,

which recounts the sinking of the Lusitania liner, torpedoed in 1915 during World War I. At this time, animation was already being used in institutional, educational, and propaganda films, whereas theoretical reflection on animation documentary only took its first steps in the last decade. In 2011, Jeffrey Skoller edited an issue of the journal *Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal* (Vol. 6, No. 3) dedicated to the theme, which addressed the resistance to documentary animation by critics and theoreticians still faithful to the idea that the documentary genre is only possible with the use of "real images." The following year, Judith Krieger published *Animated Realism: A Behind-the-Scenes Look at the Animated Documentary Genre* (Focal Press, 2012), which focuses on the analysis of works by filmmakers and animators today linked to the genre such as Yoni Goodman (responsible for the animation of Ari Folman movies), Bob Sabiston, John Canemaker, Marie-Josée Saint-Pierre, Dennis Tupicoff, Chris Landreth, and Paul Fierlinger. The existence of a freer and more creative approach to documentary practice that did justice to the definition John Grierson gave it in the 1930s as a "creative treatment of actuality" was evident in this book.

Sustained by a set of animated documentary feature films of great international repercussion such as *Waltz with Bashir* (Ari Folman, 2008) and *Persepolis* (Marjane Satrapi, 2007), Annabelle Honess Roe wrote the fundamental *Animated Documentary* (Palgrave, 2013), institu-

tionalising the animated documentary as a new field of study. A new set of films followed that substantiated this claim, highlighting new technical and aesthetic approaches as well as autobiographical universes expressed through animation, sometimes through a hybridisation with real images. Films by Sheila Sofian, the production of *Guantanamo Diary* by *The Guardian*, the autobiographical *Approved for Adoption* (Jung Henin and Laurent Boileau, 2012), and *A Journey to Cape Verde* (José Miguel Ribeiro, 2010) are examples of the aesthetic and content diversity of documentary film animation.

With this group of films and theoretical approaches, the corpus of animated documentary becomes aesthetically mutant. It not only actualises Grierson's definition, but also makes apparent what Cesare Zavattini had already said when discussing the subject of Italian neorealism: that film is an "art of meeting"—the meeting of directors (and spectators) with the Real. Accordingly, the documentary is increasingly performative, as Stella Bruzzi stated in *New Documentary* (Routledge, 2000), because it admits the construction and the artificiality of a truth that emerges from this meeting, not just a mere observation of an objective and immaculate reality, as the most conservative theory insists on affirming.

In the papers published here, these ideas come to the fore. In "Against Animated Documentary," Annabelle Honess Roe analyses the impact that her book had on criticism and academia and updates

some of her ideas against the formal resistance still in place regarding the documentary genre. In "Writing Animated Documentary: A Theory of Practice," Paul Wells proceeds from his experience as a screenwriter in the film *The Oil Kid* (Hakim Farai, forthcoming) to highlight the importance of animation practitioners reflecting on documentary from their own activity. In "Animation Documentaries and Reality Cross Boundaries," Filipe Costa Luz addresses the frontiers between documentary and fiction in animation film and analyses the use of the rotoscoping technique in animation. In "Animation documentaries and biodiversity issues—Is 'plant blindness' a concept worth keeping? Insights from the Portuguese animation documentary *A Journey to Cape Verde* (2010)," Alexandra Abreu Lima starts out from the analysis of José Miguel Ribeiro's film to address the teaching and creative relevance of the animated film, in this case on the illustration of biodiversity from the concept of 'plant blindness'. In "Drawing the Unspeakable: Understanding 'the other' through narrative empathy in animated documentary", Jan Erik Nâls also emphasises the educational character of the documentary film animation, analysing the case of *Kosovo Fairytale* (2009), a film that deals with the highly current topic of a host and the cultural integration of a refugee family. Finally, Pedro Serrazina speaks of his pedagogical and conceptual experience with students studying for a degree in Digital Animation at Universidade Lusófona in Lisbon in the creation of animated documentaries.