

BEYOND CARTOONS

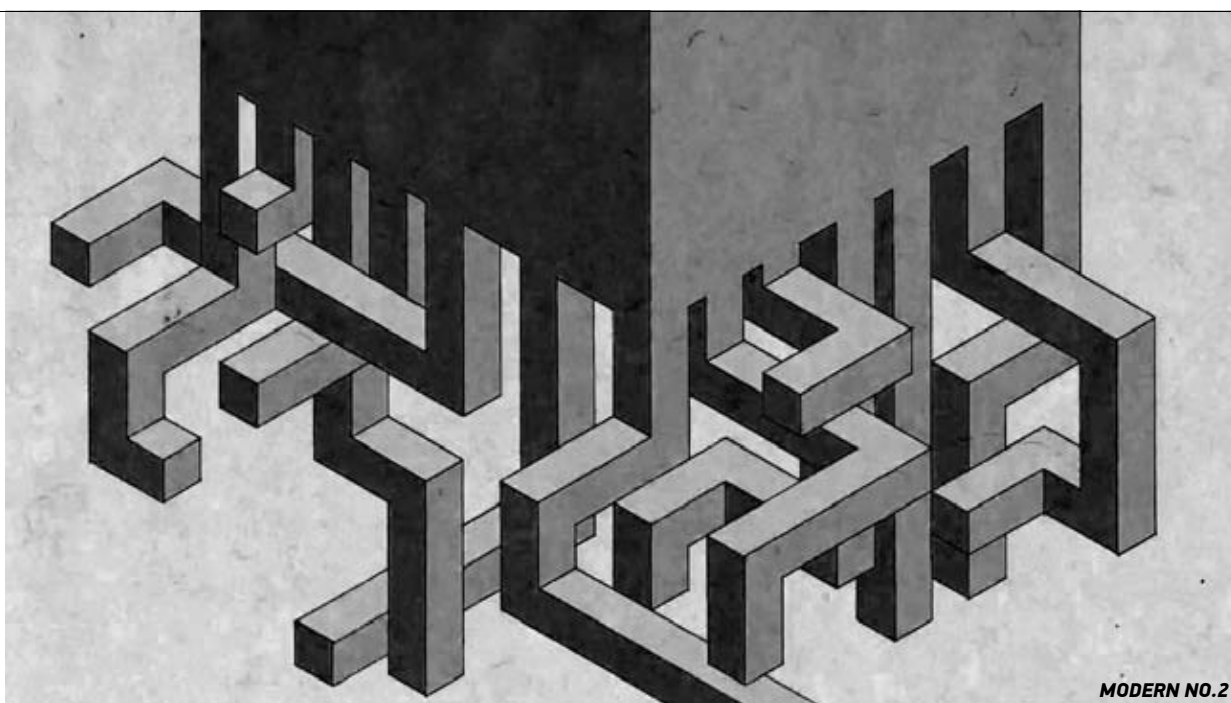
The Northwest Animation Festival makes its Eugene debut

The popular perspective on animation tends to lie within the realm of Saturday morning cartoons or late-night adult comedy like *South Park* or *Family Guy*. But Portland's Northwest Animation Festival is trying to change these classic conceptions of animation. And this year, the festival is bringing its expansive, carefully curated program down to Eugene.

"We've put a lot of effort into building our audience in Portland," says festival director Sven Bonnicksen. "We're hoping to do the same in Eugene."

Bijou Art Cinemas will host the festival May 31 to June 2, and it will feature 154 short films spanning the course of the weekend. According to Bijou programming director Edward Schiessl, Eugene doesn't have an established animation community like that of Portland. Together, Schiessl and Bonnicksen are committed to bringing this medium to Eugene's film scene.

As for the content itself, Bonnicksen explains that each short that was submitted went through a rigorous selection process, and he's confident that the festival is featuring the very best animation there is to offer. The very first film of the festival, *The Eagleman Stag* by Michael Please, "packs more ideas into 8 minutes than a lot of feature films," he says, ideas such as the potency of time and the realization of one's own mortality.



MODERN NO.2

Visually, the short is driven by stunning intricacies using a cut-out technique for animating the narrative. "It just leaves you thinking," Bonnicksen says.

Other notable shorts include *Paper Man*, which won the Oscar for best animated short, *Modern No.2*, a product of Japan's abstract animation movement and *Belly*, a "gently melancholic" story of saving a big brother from the belly of a whale. The festival also features an all-ages block on Saturday. Sunday night features a "strange and sexy" segment.

"It's an animator's perspective — you have folks that are really pushing what can be done with this art form," Bonnicksen says. "It takes a while for folks to catch on to that notion of what all that art can encompass."

"This festival is like a literary magazine for animators," he adds.

Although Schiessl didn't grow up watching Saturday morning cartoons like most of America, he does have an appreciation for the medium. "As a filmmaker and an exhibitor, I see the enthusiasm that everyone has for it, and I really enjoy it now as an adult," Schiessl says. "We've always done really well with the animated shorts for the Oscars that we play every year and I thought that this would be a really cool expansion of that."

"This is a look into the art form of animation that will expand your notion of what can be done with [it]," Bonnicksen says. "Come to have your expectations broken." ■

Northwest Animation Festival runs May 31 through June 2, at the Bijou; \$10 afternoon sessions, \$15 evening sessions; \$55 three-day festival pass. For more information, visit bijou-cinemas.com.



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Matthew McConaughey MUD MAY 31-JUNE 6
FRI, 5/31—3:20, 6:10
SAT & SUN, 6/1-2—12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 9:00
MON-THURS, 6/3-6—3:20, 6:10, 9:00

NORTHWEST ANIMATION FESTIVAL
Program 1—FRI, 5/31 7:00 PM
Program 2 (Family-Friendly)—SAT, 6/1 1:00 PM
Program 3—SAT, 6/1 7:00 PM
Program 4 (incl. "Strange & Sexy" block)—SUN, 6/2 1:00 PM
Program 5—SUN, 6/2 7:00 PM
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THE REP
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THE ANGEL'S SHARE
SAT-THURS, 6/1-6—10:30 AM, 1:30, 4:25, 7:10, 10:20
FROM UP ON POPPY HILL
SAT-THURS, 6/1-6—11:15 AM, 2:00, 4:45, 7:30, 10:00
FIGHT CLUB
SAT-THURS, 6/1-6—9:45 PM
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FROM UP ON POPPY HILL

PG
WRITTEN BY HAYAO MIYAZAKI DIRECTED BY GORO MIYAZAKI

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