

DOK Industry Podcast Episode 4: Animated Docs – True, False & Floating!

Press Release
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Jorge Villalobos, Camrus Johnson, Carlos Hagerman, María-Christina Villaseñor, Pedro Piccinini (fttr)

The latest episode of the DOK Industry Podcast takes a deep dive into the richness of animated documentary and the ways it reimagines how to connect audiences to meaningful stories with empathy and imagination.

Filmmakers Carlos Hagerman and Jorge Villalobos (“Home Is Somewhere Else”) and Camrus Johnson and Pedro Piccinini (“Grab My Hand: A Letter to My Dad”) join the podcast, curated and hosted by María-Christina Villaseñor. The podcast comes as DOK Leipzig works to give greater prominence to animation at the festival. This year, DOK Leipzig is introducing a new award for feature-length animated films and is further expanding its industry activities to the animation sector.

The episode opens up fascinating perspectives on animated documentary film that interrogate the relationship between form and emotional exploration and expression. The filmmakers discuss how animation offers playfulness and freedom in their creative process, expanding and elevating true-to-life storytelling. The filmmakers also address questions of representation on and off screen in animated film, and how animation can reflect the universality of human life, transcending personal stories into stories of experience that are intimate yet relatable by audiences worldwide.

Johnson and Piccinini discuss their award-winning animated short documentary “Grab My Hand: A Letter to My Dad”, a very personal story of Johnson’s grieving father who has lost his best friend, his little brother, which turns into a beautiful testament to familial bonds and emotional expressivity as well as, at large, into a positive representation of black stories and an exploration of masculinity. The co-directors share insights about their collaborative work, which they see as an artistic exchange between the two creative minds, where animation is used as another layer of feeling over a personal story.

Co-directors of “Home Is Somewhere Else” Hagerman and Villalobos also talk about their collaborative work in the film and how their friendship of

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over 30 years helped develop the project. “Home Is Somewhere Else” is their first animated feature documentary following their long track record of successful short films and documentary features. Centring their film on the stories of three immigrant families living in fear of separation in the US, the co-directors turned to animation not only as an aesthetic choice to visualise their experiences but also as a way to enrich the narrative with a diversity of subjective truths.

Camrus Johnson is an actor, director and writer. His twice Academy-Award-qualified animated short film “Grab My Hand: A Letter to My Dad”, which he co-directed with Pedro Piccinini, has won over 20 awards at film festivals around the world. His NAACP Image Award-nominated animated short film “She Dreams at Sunrise” was an Official Selection of Tribeca Film Festival and was included in its “8:46 Films” collection which in response to George Floyd’s death presented stories of Black love and joy.

Pedro Piccinini is a visual artist and animator. In his work, he always seeks to find different ways of telling stories. Before finding his passion in animation, he worked in award-winning editorial designs and illustrations, producing on both digital and physical media, such as paper illustration and stop motion.

Carlos Hagerman is a director and producer. He has produced and (co) directed award-winning documentaries, including “Those Who Remain” (IDA Humanitas Award 2009), “Back to Life”, and “No Place Like Home”. He is the co-founder of [Brinca Taller de Animación](#), alongside Jorge Villalobos and their colleagues.

Jorge Villalobos de la Torre is a writer, director and producer of animated and live-action projects. His animated and fiction short films have picked up over 20 international awards. He is the co-founder of [Brinca Taller de Animación](#). “Home Is Somewhere Else” is his first animated feature documentary, which he co-directed with Carlos Hagerman.

María-Christina Villaseñor is a curator, film programmer and writer. Key focal points of her work are Latinx cinema, animation as filmic and art-installation practice, and a commitment to expanding access to and inclusion in the arts across underrepresented communities. She is the Programming Director for the New York International Children’s Film Festival (NYICFF). Her previous work includes serving as film and media arts curator at the Guggenheim Museum.

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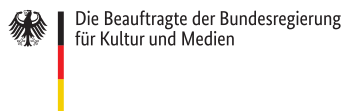
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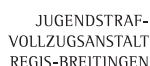
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