



'2021 is about **HOPE**'

Florida Animation Festival goes live for three screenings

Amanda Sieradzki Council on Culture & Arts

While Kris Petersen, festival chair for the Florida Animation Festival, edited together the trailer for the 2021 festival, she reflected on the rollercoaster emotions of the past year. * She combed through films submitted during the virtual 2020 festival, pulling out scenes of cartoonish characters pulling up masks and cramming into home offices. Petersen says this year's sixth annual festival promises both in-person screenings and streaming from wherever you are in the world.

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From top; 2020 submission: "Fierce," 1st place, audience fave; 2020 submission: "Heatwave," best in show.
FLORIDA ANIMATION FESTIVAL/GETTY IMAGES

Festival

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"It's neat to pluck out these little moments and weave together another tapestry for storytelling," says Petersen. "The story of 2021 is about hope. Hope that everybody is feeling a little more comfortable and confident while staying cautious and remaining optimistic."



Petersen i

The three in-person screenings will take place at the All Saints Cinema and the online festival will take place from June 10-27. The cinema is keeping attendance below half-capacity and will continue distancing for safety.

150 to stream: 'Watch everything'

Petersen says the entire selection of 150 films will also be available for streaming during this time and includes programs that range from mystery, kid-friendly fun, fantasy, love and loss and artful demonstrations of animation techniques.

Part of Petersen's job is to group together films based on their stories and aesthetics. She says this year's films come from every continent, with the exception of Antarctica. Petersen is always amazed by how content blocks end up building themselves, as well as the range of ages and experience, with some animators as young as 6 years old.

"I would encourage people to watch everything," says Petersen. "What's most fascinating is how many people go back to the basics and do frame by frame traditional animation and create stuff with paper and a pen. Sometimes you can see the trail left behind of what they erased, and sometimes it's crisp and perfect."

Petersen, who works professionally as Vice President of Digital Media Services at The Pod Advertising, can vividly recall her first entre into film. In her 10th grade U.S. History class, she watched a classmate create a claymation on the Civil War for a class project.

Petersen went home and grabbed her family's camcorder from their living room, took a hunk of plasticine and filmed a stop-motion animation of a worm.

Animation journey started early

This began her journey shooting music videos with friends and using every excuse to make films in place of papers in school. She focused on documentary work during her undergraduate degree at Sarah Lawrence College, and earned her master's degree in communications from Florida State University.

For 10 years Petersen worked in live events, filming weddings, bar mitzvahs, sports and everything in be-



2017 submission: "Little Thing," best in show, third place. FLORIDA ANIMATION FESTIVAL

tween. Eventually, she went back to school to study internet marketing and landed at her current company. She's enjoyed all the challenges and lessons learned in video production, from the hours that go into editing to turning projects around quickly.

"Anything that falls under the animation umbrellas is something I'm willing to try and hopefully succeed at," says Petersen, who works mainly with motion capture animation. "As an introvert, it's a cool way to express yourself by having a character move onscreen."

She's most proud of a video her agency produced that won an Emmy. They filmed during a cold day in February, her feet freezing in the water in order to obtain film of the sunrise and fish swimming around. Petersen is a photographer in addition to videographer and spends a good amount of her free time out in nature capturing pictures of local wildlife for St. Francis Wildlife as well as astronomical events.

Clicking with Tallahassee Film Society

She joined the Tallahassee Film Society around the time of its inception. Petersen produces trailer disks that play before film screenings and manages the cinema's projector for various programming. Her work on the Florida Animation Festival has grown exponentially in the six years she's served as festival chair.

The films each year highlight the limitless possibilities of the animation genre with categories spanning

If you go

What: 6th Annual Florida Animation Festival

When: June 10-27

Where: All Saints Cinema 918 Railroad Ave & streaming online

Cost: \$5 per program or \$30 for an all-access pass

Contact: For more information, visit floridaanimationfestival.com.

3D, 2D, stop-motion, frame by frame and mixed media approaches.

One year, Petersen was amazed by one stop motion frame by frame animation that used painted glass and was synced precisely with the music. She is continually inspired by the ingenuity she sees from filmmakers and looks forward to each new film and opportunity to have the festival grow and change.

"Every year after the festival concludes, I think I'm going to take a break, but in a week or so I'm already dreaming about what we're going to do the following year," says Petersen. "I love it."

Amanda Sieradzki is the feature writer for the Council on Culture & Arts. COCA is the capital area's umbrella agency for arts and culture (www.tallahasseearts.org).