

# FAMILY SHORTS

A GLOBAL COLLECTION OF FILMS  
FOR YOUNGER AUDIENCES



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## TEACHING THE FILMS:

The **Family Films** program is a series of thought-provoking and imaginative short films, selected to engage a young audience. International in scope, the program includes animated and live-action films, with both narrative and experimental structures. The **Family Films** program will delight and entertain, while introducing its audience to the diversity of culture and technique that makes up today's global cinema. Taught in conjunction with this guide, the program will encourage young viewers to consider the processes involved in filmmaking and to approach the screen as critical thinkers.

**68 minutes, Color, English and Korean with English subtitles**

## USING THIS GUIDE

This study guide is intended to flexibly support educators in preparing for and following up on a class screening of the **Family Films** program.

Support materials are intended to facilitate group discussion, individual and collaborative creative exercise, subject-based learning and access to resources for further investigation of material. Educators are encouraged to adapt and abridge the content as necessary to meet their unique learning objectives and circumstances.

All SFFS Youth Education materials are developed in alignment with California educational standards for media literacy.

SFFS Youth Education welcomes feedback and questions on all printed study materials. Please direct all comments and queries to Keith Zwölfer, Youth Education Manager:

San Francisco Film Society Youth Education  
39 Mesa Street, Suite 110 · The Presidio San Francisco, CA  
94129-1025  
kzwolfer@sffs.org  
415.561.5040

Guide by Lizzy Brooks

**SAN FRANCISCO  
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## SERIES DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Which film in this series was your favorite? Why?
2. Which film in this series was your least favorite? Why?
3. Which film in this series do you think was the most challenging to make? Why?
4. The films incorporate a wide range of storytelling styles, from documentary to animation to narrative fiction. Which film's style was the most interesting to you? What techniques did it use that set it apart from other films?
5. Many of these films are stories about feeling like an outsider. Did you sympathize with the struggles that any of these characters went through to find their place in the world? Was there any character whom you could relate to?
  - a. What is so different about Annabelle in **Bunny New Girl**? Why does she have a hard time fitting in?
  - b. How are Moom and his pink friend different from the other memories that come out of the lake?
  - c. How does the green monster feel in **Welcome to My Life**? Do you think that he wishes he could fit in better at school?
  - d. What did you learn about fitting in from watching **Stripey**? What are some of the benefits to thinking outside of the box?
6. Another theme that recurs throughout this series is friendship. Which different kinds of friendships did you see in this series? Which of these films told the most interesting story of friendship?
  - a. What does Annabelle learn about friendship on her first day of school in **Bunny New Girl**?
  - b. What kind of a team are Nips and Porkington in

The Casebook of Nips and Porkington? How do they support one another's strengths?

c. Describe the friendship between Moom, the astronaut and the new memory in **Moom**. What kinds of fun things do they do together? How do they consider one another's feelings?

d. Describe the relationship between the dancer and the artist in **Nephtali**. Do you think they need to respect one another in order to work together?

e. What kind of friendship exists between Wallace and Gromit in **Cracking Contraptions: Turbo Diner**? Does Gromit trust Wallace? Should he?

f. Who are the green monster's friends in **Welcome to My Life**? How does the monster react to someone who doesn't want to be his friend? Would you like to be friends with the green monster?

g. Do you think Simon and his cat are friends?

7. Many of the films in this series are animated. Do you like animation? What kinds of stories are best told through animation?

a. Which films had the most beautiful animation? Which had the funniest looking characters?

b. Animation is a method for telling a story that is magical or extraordinary. Which of these stories did you think was the farthest

from reality? In which stories did the animators use their craft to talk about something real?

c. Which was your favorite animated character? What was your favorite animated scene?

8. What words would you use to describe this series as a whole? What common themes can you find? Do you think these films were interesting to watch together? Did any seem out of place?

9. Did you enjoy the **Family Films** series? What more do you want to know about these films? What questions do you have about how they were made?

## WHICH FILM IN THIS SERIES WAS YOUR FAVORITE?



## BUNNY NEW GIRL:

### SYNOPSIS

On her first day at a new school, seven-year-old Annabelle shows up looking a little different from everyone else—and gets an unexpected primer on compassion. (Natalie van den Dungen, Australia 2015, 6 min)

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Describe Annabelle. What kind of a girl is she? Can you relate to her?
- 2) Why does Annabelle wear a bunny mask?
- 3) How do the other kids react to Annabelle when she first enters the classroom?
- 4) What does the girl in braids do to make friends with Annabelle? How does that gesture make Annabelle feel?

## THE CASEBOOK OF NIPS & PORKINGTON:

### SYNOPSIS

A goose egg has been abducted, and two determined detectives are on the case in this clever animated caper that is, literally, ripped from the newspaper headlines. (Melody Wang, Canada 2015, 3 min)

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Who are Nips and Porkington?
- 2) How do Nips and Porkington find their cases?
- 3) What do you think of the animation style used to tell the story? Do you like this style?
- 4) What happens in the end of the story? How do Nips and Porkington solve their case?

## MOOM:

### SYNOPSIS

In a whimsical land filled with discarded objects, every item arrives embedded with the memory of its former owner. A memory stuck in limbo, little Moom awakens each day to joyfully release his brightly colored compatriots from their earthly attachments. (Robert Kondo & Daisuke “Dice” Tsutsumi, Japan/USA 2016, 14 min)

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) What happens in Moom? Summarize the story.
- 2) What do you think of the characters in this film? How are they like humans and how are they unlike humans?
- 3) Why are Moom and his pink friend stuck in the land by the lake? Why don't they disappear immediately like the other memories?
- 4) What happens in the end of the film that allows Moom to move on? How do you think the astronaut will feel now that his has to free the memories all by himself?

## NEPHTALI:

### SYNOPSIS

Renowned Disney animator Glen Keane explores the dynamic intersection of dance and drawing, working in tandem with a live ballerina. (Glen Keane, USA/France 2015, 4 min)

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) What can you learn about animation from watching this film?
- 2) How does an animated character come to life?
- 3) What is the relationship between animated movement and real life movement?



## WALLACE & GROMIT- CRACKING CONTRAPTIONS: TURBO DINER:

### SYNOPSIS

In this classic from the British animation legends at Aardman, our favorite intrepid cheese-loving inventor Wallace has another brilliant idea—this time for serving the evening meal. What could possibly go wrong? (Christopher Sadler & Lloyd Price, UK 2002, 2 min)

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Did you think this film was funny?
- 2) What were Wallace's successes?
- 3) What were his mistakes?
- 4) Describe the style of animation in this film. Do you think that the artistic style made the film funnier?

## WELCOME TO MY LIFE:

### SYNOPSIS

It's not easy being a big green monster, especially in high school. This deadpan mockumentary presents a day in the life of an oversized adolescent ogre just trying to fit in. (Elizabeth Ito, USA/France 2015, 9 min)

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) What challenges does Tkesh face on account of being a green monster?
- 2) Is he a normal student otherwise?
- 3) What happens to disrupt Tkesh's day?
- 4) How does Tkesh de-escalate the fight, with the help of his friend Lucas?
- 5) Did you like the style of this film? How would you describe the style of the narration and the animation?
- 6) Would you want to be friends with Tkesh?

## MOTHER:

### SYNOPSIS

Overwhelmed by the demands of single parenthood, a young mother is unable to cope, inspiring her children to recognize the importance of helping out. (Joan Chung, Canada 2015, 6 min)  
In Korean with English subtitles.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Describe the family in this film. Why do you think the mom is all alone?
- 2) Why is the mother struggling? What does she have to do to take care of her family?
- 3) How does the mother cope with her challenges?
- 4) How do her children react when they see that she is struggling? What lesson do you think the children learn in this film?

## SIMONS CAT: OFF TO THE VET

### SYNOPSIS

British animator Simon Tofield's YouTube-famed feline demonstrates another familiar challenge of stubborn cat ownership. (Simon Tofield, UK 2015, 13 min)

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) What is Simon's cat like? Do Simon and his cat get along?
- 2) How does Simon's cat get in an accident?
- 3) Why doesn't the cat want to go to the vet?
- 4) Does Simon's cat remind you of any other cats that you know? Do you think that Simon's cat's behavior is typical of cats?
- 5) What did you think of the style of animation? Was this story funny to you?



## STRIPPY:

### SYNOPSIS

When a worker in a mass-producing factory decides that painting stripes is just too straightforward for him, a charming lesson in nonconformity and independent thinking ensues.

(Babak Nekooei & Behnoud Nekooei, Iran 2015, 4 min)

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Describe the factory in **Strippy**.
- 2) What are the workers supposed to do in the factory?
- 3) How does the painter rebel?
- 4) Do you think there is a message in this film? What do the stripes and the non-stripes symbolize?

## TAKING FLIGHT:

### SYNOPSIS

The Oscar-winning director of *The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore* (SFIFF 2011) and *The Numberlys* (SFIFF 2014) returns with a tale of intergenerational imagination inspired by an enchanted red Radio Flyer wagon.

(Brandon Oldenburg, USA 2015, 6 min)

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Describe the relationship between the son his dad in the beginning of the film.
- 2) Why doesn't the boy want to spend the day with his grandpa? What does he mean when he complains that his grandpa only knows how to do grown-up things? Can you relate to this complaint?
- 3) What happens when the boy discovers the red wagon?
- 4) What does the boy's father discover when he returns to pick up his son? What lessons does he learn?

## POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES:

### 1) Create Your Own Story:

Drawing inspiration from the films, choose a moment in your life or a story you have heard, and transform it into a plan for a short film.

- Write a logline—a brief outline of the plot, meaning and message of your film (3 sentences)
- Decide on a genre for your film. You might choose to make narrative fiction, like **Bunny New Girl**; animation, like **Taking Flight** or some combination of the two, like **Nephtali**. A story can be told in many ways, so think carefully about which format is right for your subject.
- Make a list of the characters who appear in your film. Include a brief description of each character.

As a homework assignment, students might write scripts or create storyboards for their films. If time and interest allows, they may be encouraged to film a short clip from each story idea, using phone cameras or available resources.



## MEDIA LITERACY RESOURCES

### SCREENING WITH MEANING

We live in a world where technology mediates a large portion of human interaction and the exchange of information. Every projected image, every word published on a page or a website, and every sound from a speaker reaches its audience through the medium, through the language of the device. The ability to parse the vast array of media messages is an essential skill for young people, particularly in a mainstream commercial culture that targets youth as a vulnerable, impressionable segment of the American marketplace. Most students already have a keen understanding of the languages different media use and the techniques they employ to inspire particular emotions or reactions, but they often lack the skill or awareness to fully deconstruct the messages they continuously receive.

Analysis of a media message—or any piece of mass media content—can best be accomplished by first identifying its principal characteristics:

- (1) **Medium:** the physical means by which it is contained and/or delivered
- (2) **Author:** the person(s) responsible for its creation and dissemination
- (3) **Content:** the information, emotions, values or ideas it conveys
- (4) **Audience:** the target audience to whom it is delivered
- (5) **Purpose:** the objectives of its authors and the effects of its dissemination.

Students who can readily identify these five core characteristics will be equipped to understand the incentives at work behind media messages, as well as their potential consequences. Media literacy education empowers students to become responsible consumers, active citizens and critical thinkers.

### CORE CONCEPTS OF MEDIA ANALYSIS

<b>MEDIUM</b>	<p><b>All Media Is Constructed.</b>                  How is the message delivered and in what format?                  What technologies are used to present the message?                  What visual and auditory elements are used?                  What expectations do you bring to the content, given its medium and format?</p>
<b>AUTHOR</b>	<p><b>All Media Is Constructed by Someone.</b>                  Who is delivering the message?                  Who originally constructed the message?                  What expectations do you have of the content, given its author(s)?</p>
<b>CONTENT</b>	<p><b>All Media Is A Language.</b>                  What is the subject of the media message?                  What information, values, emotions or ideas are conveyed by the media content?                  What tools does the author employ to engage the viewer and evoke a response?                  To what extent did the content meet your expectations, given the format/author?</p>
<b>AUDIENCE</b>	<p><b>All Media Messages Reach an Audience.</b>                  Who receives the message?                  For whom is the message intended?                  What is the public reaction to the media content and/or its message?                  What is your reaction to the media content and/or its message?                  How might others perceive this message differently? Why?</p>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<p><b>All Media Messages Are Constructed for a Reason.</b>                  Why was the message constructed?                  Who benefits from dissemination of the message? How?                  To what extent does the message achieve its purpose?                  What effect does the message have on the audience it reaches, if any?</p>



## THE ANIMATED FILM WHAT IS ANIMATION?

Animation is a process used to create motion pictures through the combination of still images (e.g., digital graphics, photographs of drawings, photographs of objects, etc.) which, when played in sequence, create the illusion of movement. All television cartoons, for example, are animations, and are made up of thousands of still images (drawn by hand or on a computer) that are played sequentially, along with a soundtrack, to tell a story.

### TYPES OF ANIMATION

#### 2D Animation Techniques

- Classic animation (e.g., Disney's *The Lion King*, most TV cartoons)
- Rotoscope (e.g., *Star Wars* lightsabers)
- Flip books

#### 3D Animation Techniques

- 3D animation (e.g., Pixar's *Toy Story*, *Wall-E*, *Up*)
- Stereoscopic 3D (e.g., *Avatar*)
- Cut-out / Silhouette animation (e.g., *South Park*)

#### Stop Motion Techniques

- Claymation (e.g., Nick Park's *Wallace and Gromit*)
- Puppet animation (e.g., Tim Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, *Coraline*)

### HISTORY OF ANIMATION

The world's most famous animator, Walt Disney, began making short animated cartoons based on children's stories in 1923. In 1928 he introduced Mickey Mouse in the first animated sound cartoon, *Steamboat Willie*, which became an immediate sensation. Throughout the next decade, Disney would add such elements as carefully synchronized music (*The Skeleton Dance*, 1929),

Technicolor (*Flowers and Trees*, 1932), and the illusion of depth with his multi-plane camera (*The Old Mill*, 1937), a device that allowed for animated cels to be photographed against a three-dimensional background. Although not the first animated feature, Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) was the first to use up-to-the-minute techniques and the first to receive widespread release. The film's success can be attributed in part to Disney's willingness to use animation to create a profound dramatic experience. He strove for photographic realism in films such as *Pinocchio* (1940), *Dumbo* (1941) and *Bambi* (1942).

The success of television cartoons led to the virtual disappearance of animated shorts produced for theatrical release. Animated feature-length films, however, flourished, especially after the release of Disney's *The Little Mermaid* (1989), regarded by many as the studio's best animated feature in decades. Other Disney blockbusters followed, including *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *Aladdin* (1992), *The Lion King* (1994) and *Lilo & Stitch* (2002).

The development of computer animation was another great advancement in the form and resulted in feature films of astounding visual sumptuousness. In 1995, *Toy Story* was the first film to use only computer-generated imagery (CGI). In 2001 the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences added a new Academy Award for Best Animated Feature Film. The first recipient of the award was *Shrek* (2001). Other major animated features were *Toy Story* (1995) and *Toy Story 2* (1999), *A Bug's Life* (1998), *Monsters, Inc.* (2001) and *Finding Nemo* (2003).

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