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# → Teaching materials

When watching a film, have you ever wondered who made it? Who got the idea for the compelling story, and who came up with the animated characters that keep you so entertained? Who filmed the pictures and who added all the sound and music?

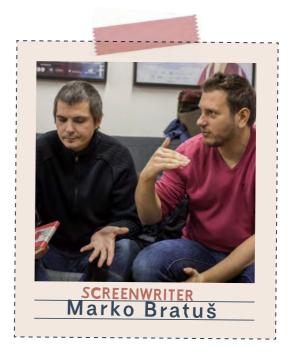
As you're watching animation, time seems to just fly by – especially in contrast to the time it takes to create it. It's no exaggeration to say that the making of an animated puppet film like *Koyαα* takes nearly a million minutes more than it does to see it. Can you imagine? Indeed, making animated film is no easy task. It's a long creative commitment involving many different people – like a team sport of sorts, where different artists cooperate to a pre-determined timetable.

### → Heroes from behind the scenes: Creators of animated puppet films

Making puppet animation is a little bit like building a multi-storey house. We start with the foundations and, before even the first scene is filmed, a solid plan is set out detailing how we're going to execute all our ideas, the people we need to call to get the help and tools we require, and all the materials we'll be using. And of course, how much time and money we're going to spend.

It all begins with a great idea. Since it must be put down on paper, the first person we call is a talented **SCREENWRITER**. This profession requires language skills and lots of imagination. Usually it's done by people who love reading books and who have the talent and desire to write. They rarely run out of ideas: some they get while looking at the world, others from personal experiences, and others still from art, dreams or imaginary worlds. No matter how they develop their story, it's important that the events are described in picturesque and precise ways; only then will the story be compelling enough to move reader and audience. The screenwriter thus writes a story rich with detail, called the 'script' or 'screenplay' in the film world, and this text provides the

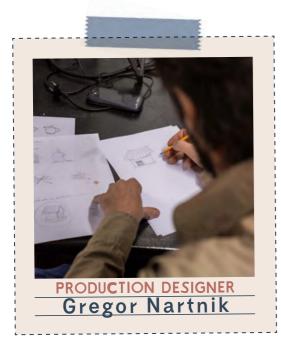
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foundation for our future animated film. During the writing process, the screenwriter needs to use a rich vocabulary and to display an understanding of non-verbal communication (gestures, glances, etc.); they also need to have a talent for writing dialogue, if the film demands it. It's almost never the case that the screenwriter writes just one version of the story; rather, they usually write many different versions until the very best one is polished and eventually becomes the film we see. The screenwriter must also consider the age of the audience. In addition to the screenplay, all the characters in the story must be outlined - their personalities and their appearance. Are they tall, short, thin or plump? Are they freckled, and do they wear glasses or a hat? How old are they? Do they laugh and like to play pranks, or are they



calm and guiet? Are they an angry villain or a hero out to save the world? Perhaps the leading protagonist isn't even human? The possibilities are endless - or, rather, as profound as the screenwriter's imagination.

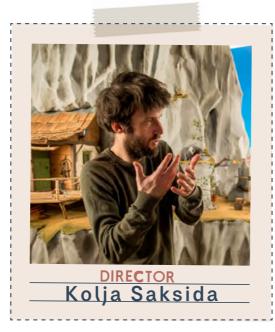


The final screenplay, along with the descriptions of all the characters ('characterisation' in film language) is then passed on to the **PRODUCTION DESIGNER.** This is a skilled artist and colourist who imagines and draws all the characters, the sets and the backgrounds, i.e. the complete visual world of the film. Since nearly anything is possible in animation, the production designer enjoys a great deal of freedom as long as they stick to the script. Animated films are created using different animation techniques (traditional drawing, stop-motion animation, computer animation, animation of various substances, cut-out animation, etc.) and the production designer must keep in mind the specifics of the film's animation technique. They also

need to be careful about the colours they use, so that the characters do not blend in with the background like a tiger does in the jungle, and understand how colours tend to affect the human mind (we call this 'colour psychology'). Did you know that each colour and colour combination encourages different impressions and moods in our mind? Amazing, isn't it? When the production design is complete, each drawing must contain scale or proportions (height, width, length), presenting the size ratios between the individual parts and the whole - for example, how big a character is compared to a tree.

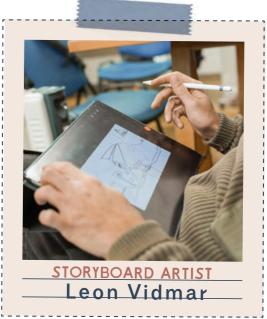
Despite the specifics of the screenplay and the production design, there is quite a bit of wiggle room for creativity in the final shape of the film.

Where a building is drawn and designed by a single architect or studio, an animated film has many people working on its planning and execution. Every creator involved in the

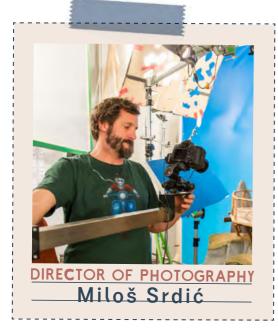


film is their own type of architect. One of the one is mostly blamed on the director because most important ones is the **DIRECTOR**. This they're ultimately in charge of the entire is the person who, after reading the script, process. The director's role is therefore one of creates in their mind a complete idea of the great responsibility, but also satisfaction and film from start to finish, and communicates fulfilment when the film turns out well and that idea to everyone else involved before and becomes a success. during production. This is why the production designer converses extensively with the The screenplay, production design and director before completing their work. The director's vision then have to be brought director must be a confident personality together in a type of comic book, which who is always sure about their vision for the shows, in a series of images, how the course of the story and the road they need individual film scenes will look. This comic to follow to accomplish this goal. This is why is called a storyboard and the person who people expect directors to be masters of film makes it is the **STORYBOARD ARTIST**. language. It's not a world language like French Just like the production designer, this or Japanese; instead, it's a special universal artist must be extremely good at drawing, language which comes with its own content possessing in their little finger an acute and rules - a particular alphabet, terminology, feeling for space, time, motion, shapes, people and animals. If they are creating their limitations and meanings that teach us how storyboard using 3D computer software, the film narrates its story, how it brings its points across and how it can be interpreted, the artist must be a master of 3D modelling and explains the particularities of film space and digital design. Their work entails lots and time. The director must also have detailed of conversation with the film's director and knowledge of the technical capacities that are with the director of photography - another available and that will enable them to achieve crucial figure in the whole set-up. the desired results. Each director gathers a team of artists to realise the idea. The director must explain their vision thoroughly and precisely so that the artists' creative expertise can bring it to life. Persistence is key in this important role since it's reasonable to expect quite a few problems and complications in the production process. While accomplishing their many tasks, the director must never lose track of the fundamental concept while keeping a cool head (and, of course, steady nerves), since they're the one who guides and **STORYBOARD ARTIST** manages the entire team of artists. While a Leon Vidmar good film requires a well-tuned crew, a poor

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#### The **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** is

the film's lead 'visionary'. They need to know how to position and operate the camera in order to get precisely the images needed. This profession plays with distance and positioning in space, moving the perspective around. Sometimes they set the camera really low to the ground (called the 'frog's-eye view' by filmmakers), or really high up in the air (the 'bird's-eye view'). Just as a pilot guides a plane, the director of photography guides a camera lens. They can also use several cameras at the same time. When they do that, it's especially important for the director of photography to know how to arrange cameras in space so that each is skilfully hidden from the rest and doesn't intrude on the shot during filming. Have you ever watched a film and noticed other cameras in the picture? Probably not. The camera is an invisible observer of events and the key device that enables the viewer to see what's going on. Next to a close understanding of technology and recording gear, the director of photography must be

familiar with the secrets of lighting. Without proper lighting, the camera cannot record a good picture, meaning that the film could turn out to be way too dark. Since we need light to see, lighting is a key element of film creation, and quality lighting reveals that the director of photography is also an experienced lighting designer.

Once the vision is fully developed, and the fundamental plans have all been laid, the door of the animation studio is finally unlocked – though shooting is still quite far away. For now, the studio remains empty. The first people to start work in there are the SET DESIGNER and the PROP-MAKER.

Their arrival turns the studio into a proper little construction site, and they also bring along a whole truckload of equipment – a bit like rock stars on tour. This is because their work demands many different materials (wood, styrofoam, paper, plastic, to name just a few), tools and accessories (such as saws, glues, knives, scissors, pliers, nails, rulers and paint ). Although the set designer follows the predefined production design plans, and the



prop-maker the list of props required by the script, their work involves quite a bit of experimentation, leaning on architectural, sculpting, design and fine arts skills to foster imaginative solutions. Before getting down to work, they join the director to look over the reference photography so that everyone is on the same page when it comes to the visuals. The set designer and prop-maker must have a deep knowledge of materials and their combinations. Props need to be durable and practical, and the set needs to be as solid as a rock. Nothing must be allowed to shift or move during the course of the animation process.



Right! The set has been built and the animation studio is ready. Now all we need are the cameras and lights, and shooting can begin!

Actually, it's not that simple ... We still need to wait for the leading characters. In the case of puppet

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animation, these are, of course, the puppets, created by the puppetmakers according to the specifications of the production designer.

The **PUPPET-MAKER** is another in the line of animated film creators who must be extra precise and resourceful in their work. In fact, puppet-making requires the skilled hands of several people, who craft the puppet according to instructions: a sculptor, a painter, a costume designer and a machinist. The puppet is the most vital material component of puppet animation since it is the medium of all the action, which means the audience will be highly attentive to its features and movements. Gestures must be especially convincing and artfully designed so that the puppet expresses a full range of emotion and encourages the viewer to suspend their disbelief. All this rests in the hands of the puppet-maker.

The puppets must also be sturdy and flexible, since many of the shots require different positions that place a strain on the puppet or cause wear. Stop-motion animation requires





several replaceable pairs of hands, heads and clothes for the leading protagonists, as these get damaged or dirty during filming. A good puppet-maker will prepare their puppets to be as flexible and long-lasting as possible. Though puppets might appear quite big on the screen, they're normally pretty small. The puppet-maker must therefore have a sense of fine craftsmanship, detail and patience.

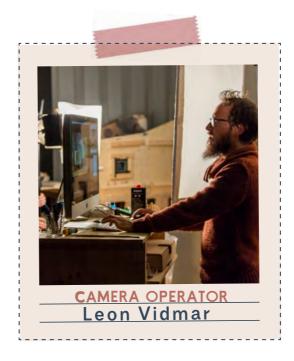
Now that the puppets have arrived in the studio, filming can finally begin! The lights are turned on, the puppets are placed on set, the camera is powered up, and ...

Nothing. Nothing happens. The puppets, you see, can't just move by themselves! If we want to create some action, we need another essential member of the film crew – someone an animated film can't be made without, the person who breathes life into the puppets and objects. This is the **ANIMATOR**. The animator is an incredibly patient and meticulous individual, dealing with the precise repositioning of the puppet, which results in smooth motions and requires tremendous concentration. They must know anatomy and kinaesthetics inside out and be a good observer of the world. If, for example, they need to animate two characters, a kid and their grandparent, who are climbing a tree, each of them would look different doing it and climb at different speeds. Managing the range of motion in a given time period is a key feature of high-quality animation. With years of experience, the animator also learns skills that allow them to trick the viewers with optical illusions. When emotions are involved, though, it takes a genuine connection to reach out through the screen. To get feelings to resonate in the audience, the puppet must be making the right faces at the right dramatic moments (and sometimes even exaggerating).





In addition to the animator, the director and the director of photography, there are the **ASSISTANT DIRECTOR** and the

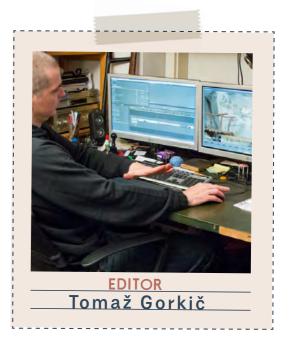


**CAMERA OPERATOR**, who is the director of photography's right-hand man or woman. Both these individuals make sure that work in the animation studio runs smoothly, that all the necessary equipment and materials are on hand, and that no unnecessary delays occur in the shooting procedure. There is often also a **PHOTOGRAPHER** present to provide behind-the-scenes stills.



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There. When all the film material has been recorded, it's like our house has been covered by a roof. Everyone breathes a sigh of relief. Now it's time for post-production. We call the team that handles the processing of the images.



The first to receive the materials is the **EDITOR.** Even though they've been present in the previous phases already, their work really starts when it's time to arrange all the images into the proper sequence, as dictated by the storyboard they've also helped to create. The editor camps in a dark room, where manipulating moving images is easiest. With a refined feeling for combining images, they insert breaks and transitions so that the film - which is of course a series of images - runs smoothly. The secret lies in rhythm, pace and duration. Naturally, a good understanding of dramatic concepts and theory is a great asset in this line of work.





#### The **DIGITAL COMPOSITOR** is the

animation crew's chief digital expert. They are able to erase the crane and other technical stuff, such as the wires used by the animator to hang or move objects around, and correct any bugs or errors in the picture. If the image requires special effects, such as smoke or fog, the digital compositor is here to do the job.



When they're finished, it's the turn of another artist called the **DI COLOURIST**. This is a colour composition specialist who harmonises and enhances all the colours in the image. If any object requires a special focus, they can pronounce it by increasing the colour intensity. The colourist works closely with the director of photography, who tells them what colour range and tone the animation is aiming for.

#### Tone isn't a property just of colour but also of sound! The team that equips the film with sound and music is quite large and diverse.

One important member is the MUSIC COMPOSER, who creates and writes down the film score. This requires an ear for pitch, melody and rhythm, bags of creativity and



a thorough knowledge of music theory. Each genre of music conjures up a different emotional atmosphere, and it's important for

the composer to have a clear goal in mind If you listen carefully, you'll notice other before crafting their art. Does the film need sounds appearing in the film as well: the a lively atmosphere, or perhaps a calming rustling of leaves, the echo of footsteps, background rhythm? Does it want to create the howling of wind, things like that. This is because the SOUND DESIGNER comes up suspense or provide a catchy tune for the audience to remember? Music has a profound with the complete sound arrangement - the influence on the atmosphere of the film, sonic backdrop of the animated film. They and the composer must take care not to look at the picture very carefully several overwhelm the film with music at the wrong times, and write down any missing sounds moment. The composition is then performed that need to be recorded. They then gather in the recording studio by the MUSICIANS, their team, which includes the FOLEY who are normally selected personally by **ARTIST, RECORDIST** and **EDITOR**, the the composer according to the instruments SOUND EFFECTS EDITOR and the REneeded to perform the score. The musicians **RECORDING MIXER.** Quite a crew, isn't it? must, of course, be excellent at playing their instruments and reading music. Sometimes, it's handy if they're also able to improvise on the spot, spicing up the music with some unexpected bells and whistles if the composer thinks they'll fit. The musicians must also be in harmony and time, so they meet for rehearsals before recording. Once the tape is rolling, there's no room for mistakes.



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While watching the images, the Foley artist recreates sounds from unusual props, coming up with custom-made noises like the flight of a bird, the sound of glass shattering or old doors creaking. Complementing the Foleys, the sound effects editor also pitches in with their own sounds, gathered from an archive called the 'sound bank', where special sound effects are found - for



example, thunder, the sound of crickets or the chugging of a locomotive. The other guys record any remaining sounds, which are then edited together into a whole that appears genuine and life-like. All this mastery takes many pairs of highly sensitive ears.



Then it's the turn of the **DUBBING ARTIST** to work their magic. They also work with sound, though their instrument is their own voice. The dubbing artist is a master of speech and of creating noises, cheers and interjections for the animated characters. A highly skilled dubbing artist can speak in various registers and pitches to suit different characters and creatures. They can mimic animals, children's voices, or a person with a deep, raspy voice, or perhaps a high, squeaky one. If need be, they will also sing - anything from lullabies to arias. When a film character speaks a foreign language, a dubbing artist can be found abroad. At any rate, for this job, the most important thing is to be able to immerse oneself in the character and

stay consistent with the delivery. If another season is being made next year, the voice mustn't change too much in between.

Alright, we've made it to the end! We called the crew and everyone did their part of the job. Hurray! Wait ... we didn't call them, actually. Did you? You didn't? Who did, then ..?

Surely, it must have been the PRODUCER! A very important link between everyone else. The producer manages and oversees the entire creative operation and everyone in it, from the concept to the end-result you see on the screen. It's certainly no easy task, and the producer needs to have lots of energy and a basic knowledge of all areas of film creation so that they can guide, organise and take care of the numerous crew profiles. The producer also signs various documents, taking on themselves the responsibility for finishing the film and providing payment on time to everyone involved. In such a highly demanding job, they need extra help. Various colleagues sharing the production office assist the producer – the **EXECUTIVE** PRODUCER, the ASSOCIATE PRODUCER, the **PRODUCTION ASSISTANT**, the **PROJECT** MANAGER and the ORGANISER.

A good production team makes it possible for the development, realisation and postproduction of the film to run smoothly and without disruption. Most importantly, they make sure that the film receives sufficient financial support and additional project partners, who are called the 'co-producers'. The production team is constantly up to their necks in work and mountains of documents and papers. They manage the legal, insurance and other paperwork, oversee finances and are responsible for the promotion and distribution of the film in order to ultimately bring it before the FILM AUDIENCE. The audience, then, is like the people in your house who give it sense and meaning. Just like your family members, each viewer has a slightly different character and worldview, and thus their own subjective experience of the film action. Someone can be laughing at the gags while another person is perhaps curious or really absorbed in the narrative. Like animated films themselves, the viewers are a colourful bunch.



Now, you have an idea of all the people who work on the creation of an animated puppet film, something you can view in one sitting before brushing your teeth and heading to

bed. Animation creators are men and women, young and old, enthusiasts from all parts of the world. There are quite a few of us around and we are united by a single mission: to foster passion and love for the medium of animation while observing and exploring the world. It's a creative field filled with imagination, resourcefulness, patience, precision, daydreaming, responsibility and artistry. Animation is a long-term artistic commitment in which the crew play with puppets for a living from dawn till dusk. Some have always known that this is what they wanted to do, others discover their talent for animation later, and some combine several vocations they like pursuing and find themselves working on animated film. However they arrive in this enchanting and enchanted world, there's a fundamental motto underlying the art for all those who want to become the best: practice makes perfect, and perfection takes practice!



### → KOYAA: Animation observatory

# Conversation and creativity cues

The Koyαα series of animated films presents our hero's many curious adventures, encouraging the audience to explore their own inner world of creativity and imagination.

We've provided some handy cues that can be used by parents or teachers to foster conversation with children and engage in play activities after watching the series, individually or in groups. They aim to promote careful observation, reflection, critical thinking and creative output.

Koyaa wants you to pay close attention! For starters, did you notice what letter lies in the post-box at the start of each individual film and what message it contains?

# Questions for the best observers

Koyaa and Mr Raven live in a mountain cottage on the rocky ledge.

- How many fingers does Koyaa have on each hand?
- Koyaa always wears his signature cap. Does Mr Raven wear one, too? Compare the two.
- Koyaa and Mr Raven live alone, but there are many objects found around the house. Some are shaped like animals. Did you notice them? What are they?





Like any other house, Koyaa's mountain cottage has different rooms: a kitchen, a bathroom and a bedroom.

- How are the individual rooms furnished?
- Can you name some things you have at home but Koyaa doesn't?
- What do we normally do in the kitchen? In the bathroom? The bedroom?

Some *Koyaa* films happen outdoors. In the language of animation, we call this the 'exterior'. The surface outside the house is pleasant – and tidy as well.

- What objects and things are found around Koyaa's house?
- Look through your own window and tell us what you see.
- What kind of games can we play in the garden or in front of the house?

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Each individual *Koyαα* film contains lots of music, sound and noises we call 'Foleys'. For a change, try playing the film and closing your eyes. Listen carefully.

- Is the music the same in every film?
- In what way does the music contribute to the events?
- When Koyaa gets a clever idea, he shouts 'Aha!' and leaps into the air. What do you say when you get a really good idea?



### **Elusive Paper**



### **Jumpy Eraser**

- What painting accessories has Koyaa prepared before painting?
- What item is causing Koyaa problems?
- What shapes does the paper sheet transform itself into?
- What does Koyaa do to finally catch it?
- Do you think this was a clever solution?
- What material did Mr Raven build his birdhouse from?
- What tools can we use to draw on paper? What things can we make using paper as a material?
- Koyaa and Mr Raven are each busy with their own activities. What are they doing?
- What do you like to do in your free time? Do you prefer to be by yourself or with your friends?
- What mood is the naughty eraser in? Can you remember the items it touches? What are they?





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Could the eraser have caused damage by acting the way it did? Does Koyaa manage to calm the eraser down? If so, how? What tool does Mr Raven use to help build his birdhouse? Look through your pencil case. What's in it right now?



### **Slippery Soap**



# **Trippy Trashcan**

- Why are Koyaa's hands dirty?
  Do you ever get your hands dirty? When?
- What happens to Koyaa while he's washing his hands? Has this ever happened to you?
- Koyaa has many things in his bathroom. Do they all belong in there?
- Which winter sport comes to mind when Koyaa is sliding around on the soap bar?

- What about when he's trying to get the soap back into the bathroom?
- Which sports do you know? Which ones are played in the winter, the spring, the summer, the autumn?
- How does Koyaa reward himself after solving the problem? How do you like to reward yourself?

- What is Koyaa doing this time?
- What colour paint is he using? What colours do you know and what ones do you like best?
- What tools is Koyaa using today?
- What did Koyaa do to feed the hungry trashcan and make it stand still?
- How would you paint the naughty trashcan?





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Mr Raven likes to grumble a lot. What do you think this means? At the very start of the episode, something is happening with the weather. What is this event called? Why does it happen? Have you ever seen one?



### **Creepy Blanket**



- What part of the day is it in the story? Is it morning, afternoon or evening? Can you guess the season? How?
- How can we tell Koyaa is sleepy?
- What does Koyaa do before going to sleep? What is your bedtime routine like?
- What is on Koyaa's nightstand?
  Did he turn off all the lights before going to sleep?
   Is that smart? Why not?
- Which object comes to life this time around? Is Koyaa scared of it? Do you ever get scared? How do you stop yourself from being scared?
- How does Koyaa solve the situation?
- Why is Mr Raven up so long? What is he doing?

# Happy Fork

- What did Koyaa decide to do in front the house? Is he in a good mood? How can you tell?
- What is his snack for the day? Which meals do we know and when do we eat them?
- Did you notice Mr Raven also had a little snack? What was it? What do animals eat in general?
- What object is causing Koyaa







trouble this time? What is it doing? How does Koyaa manage to catch the happy fork? Does the scene remind you of anything? Mr Raven is making a house from corn husks. Can you guess what month it is on the rocky ledge?



# → KOYAA: Film encyclopaedia, film make-a-media

Now that you've seen all the films and thought about and discussed them a little, try answering the questions below. What new things have you found out about animated characters and the processes that go on behind the scenes? Here are some subjects that can remind you how an animated film is created:

- Who writes the story of the animated film and where do they get their ideas from? Can you imagine what technology and accessories are needed in their line of work?
- Are there any differences between stories created for kids and those created for adults? If yes, what are they?

- In live-action films, we see living actors. Who are the actors in puppet animation? Who draws them and who builds them? What can they be made of? Unleash your imagination!
- What do we call the immovable backdrop (houses, roads, land, etc.) in the animated film? What must we be careful of when we're choosing the materials to construct it?
- Who makes all the moving objects and props (like kitchen utensils, toys and books) in the film? What skills are needed in this line of work?
- What does the animated film's director do? Are directors only men, or can they be women too?
- What do we call the comic book that shows the film stor in a series of images? Who works on making it?

- What do we call a person who brings puppets to life? What personal traits are useful in their profession?
- Who is present in the film or animation studio? Can you name all the artists?
- Which professions in animated film require knowledge of various types of computer software?
- Who is part of the team that creates the film's music and sound?
- What does the production team do?
- Who works on the film from first to last minute, managing everything?

If you created your own animated film, what would it be about? What would the title be?

Based on your story, try and come up with a main character.

What do they look like? Try and draw them! If there are several main characters in your film, draw these as well. Try to make three drawings for each one, to get a 3D impression: from the front, the side and the back.

Draw a storyboard that narrates the events in your film through a series of images. Don't forget to include the characters, the set and the props.

At www.koyaa.net, we've prepared some materials to help you create your own animation. Yaa!

The website also contains lots of information on the making of Koyaa, as well as photographs of scenes, sets and puppets.



#### KOYAA - Jumpy Eraser Photo comic of the film















#### **Animated films**

Director: Kolja Saksida Screenwriters: Marko Bratuš, Kolja Saksida Character design: Blaž Porenta Production design: Gregor Nartnik Animators: Julia Peguet, Bartosz Kotarski Director of photography: Miloš Srdić Editor: Tomaž Gorkič Music composers: Miha Šajina, Borja Močnik Sound design: Julij Zornik DI colourist: Teo Rižnar Dubbing artists: Frano Mašković, Žiga Saksida Set designers: Mateja Rojc, Simon Hudolin -Salči, Leon Vidmar, Marko Turkuš Co-producers: Tanja Prinčič, Teo Rižnar Producer: Kolja Saksida

#### **Teaching materials**

Text: Sara Živkovič Slogan: Milan Dekleva Review: Barbara Kelbl, Martina Peštaj, Petra Slatinšek Translation: Jeremi Slak Design: Pikto Editor: Kolja Saksida

#### Production: ZVVIKS

**Co-production:** RTV Slovenija, NuFrame **With the support of:** the Slovenian Film Centre, Viba Film Studio Ljubljana, the Slovenian Ministry of Culture, the European Union (European Social Fund), the Employment Service of Slovenia, and the Slovenian Ministry of Public Administration

#### Zavod ZVVIKS

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www.koyaa.net

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