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Nicole Lohfink: nachgefragt: Rasmus A. Sivertsen, norwegischer Animationsfilmer

Beitrag aus Heft »2019/02 Computerspiele in der Jugendarbeit«

Nicole Lohfink hat mit Rasmus Sivertsen über das Genre Animationsfilm, über Norwegens Filmfinanzierung, die Medienlandschaft heute und die Schwierigkeit, mit den vielen Möglichkeiten umgehen zu lernen gesprochen. Bereits 2016 war er mit dem Stop-Motion-Animationsfilm Solan Og Ludvig: Herfra til Flåklypa zu Gast auf dem Berlinale Filmfestival, Sektion Generation. Der diesjährige Teilnehmerfilm Manelyst i Flaklypa, (Solan und Ludwig – Auf zum Mond), basiert ebenfalls auf Geschichten des norwegischen Autors Kjell Aukrust aus den 60er Jahren über die fiktionale norwegische Stadt Flaklypa und seine liebenswert eigenwilligen Figuren.

merz With technical progress and so many new possibilities in the past decades, why did you choose to use a relatively 'old-fashioned´ style like stop motion animation for your film?

Sivertsen I grew up in a very rural, small place in the middle of Norway and my father was making short films at home when I was a kid. He was sitting in the living room drawing and making 2D animated short films. And for me and my brother – the only thing we were talking about was animation. Everything we did was watch animation films frame by frame and discuss them. So it was an interest from an early start on.

merz With a market share of 30 percent, family movies are quite popular in Norway. That should make it easier to get financial support for these projects, shouldn´t it?

Sivertsen It´s true. When I started out in the nineties there was not much going on in the animation industry. Nobody was making features in anima tion and you almost had to explain to people what animation was. So it is very interesting now that this is actually the format that people are watching the most. And the reason why we get funding for our film is because our previous animationfilms have done pretty well at the box office.

merz 'Manelyst i flaklypa' is an animation film based on a well-known existing book but how is financial funding for original stories?

Sivertsen That is actually very hard and a big frustration. Because it results in a whole business now just chasing around for famous books or intellectual property that is known from before. The situation is that the funding system had a political side to it that said it has to be more original but at the moment it is not. There has been a debate in Norway: Why are there so many films about the Fifties and Sixties, basically old Norway? What about now, what about the rest? So it is a really interesting dilemma.

merz But in terms of financial support systems the basics would be there in Norway for helping projects of all sorts to come along, is that correct?

Sivertsen Yes, in fact we have very good investment systems in Norway. There is an incentive for producers: If you produce a children's film then the government will pay you double the amount of what you make in the cinemas. So that means producers can take a risk in producing a film and they know whatever it makes in the cinema, they

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will get back double on their investment. So this is a very nice incentive for producing films for kids.

merz There are also a lot of new platforms to choose from – streaming services like Netflix, YouTube, the a miniature screen or the screen of a classic movie theatre. How does this influence your work and your choice of film making?

Sivertsen I have made things for all platforms. You basically have to choose your platform according to your project. It seems like cinema has to be more spectacular than you get at home. At least in Norway people don´t go and watch drama films in cinema. They prefer something like action movies and actually animated movies for families are quite popular. But if you have another project it can be different. For example a couple of years ago we made a satire TV series and that was made for streaming and for Internet. So you have to choose a platform according to your project or an idea, I think.

merz How important is the classic movie for young people today?

Sivertsen In Norway cinema numbers are stable. Going to the cinema, has not gone down or up the last couple of ten years. That´s quite interesting. When I talk to the cinemas they have to renew themselves, they do a lot of refurbishing, better seating, creating experiences for people and try to compete with the home market. So far it looks like they have succeeded in getting people off the sofa and into the cinemas. So young people do go to the theatre. They make arrangements, meet up and go and see a movie. The reason they do this is the different experience I guess, because it is not like the small screen. We will see in the future.

merz A big interest for young people today is gaming, for example the computer game Fortnite is very popular at the moment. How important are the different media platforms for young audiences today? What is your experience in Norway?

Sivertsen It is the same here. I have a 16-year-old son and this is the way he operates: he is at the computer, playing a game, talking to his friends over a chatting system, and it seems that is the way they communicate. And it is really hard for a parent to decide how much you should interfere with this, and also how to set ground rules for kids in terms of duration of use. For my own sake it is about understanding what they do, try to play some games together with them and be interested in what they are doing – and make sure they get enough sleep and don´t stay up all night. But it is an interesting challenge.

merz What is your vision for the future of story telling?

Sivertsen It´s very hard to say, of course. At our studio in Norway, we have a collaboration with a VR (virtual reality) company we work with. It is really hard to say what will be in ten years time when it comes to story telling. I think that it takes some years before you can watch movies in VR. But this company has quite interesting technologies. Especially with this specific team – you can put on glasses and get the impression that there are characters appearing in the real world. So that looks very intriguing, because then you can tell stories in the environment you are. But still, the story must come first and technology second!