

## **Press release for Directing For Short Film Animation, The Masterclass**

**Aardman Academy - PAFF! Advanced Training**

**The Masterclass Directing For Short Film Animation was born from the meeting and collaboration between Aardman Academy and PAFF! (Palazzo Arti Fumetto Friuli) Advanced Training. Conceived for those who want to professionally deal with animation, the course focuses on the direction of short films in stop motion with advice and guidance on how to organize the set and shoot in a small production. Perfect for those who are studying stop motion as a technique but want to improve their skills in directing and managing the set of their animated shorts.**

The Masterclass aims to meet the training needs of those who are receiving technical training, but have not yet had the opportunity to deepen the aspects of production management and direction.

The cycle of lessons develops over 3 meetings, Saturday 12 March, Wednesday 16 March and again Saturday 26 March 2022, during which the process of developing the story and approach to directing an animated short is introduced.

The first session features an introduction to the entire production workflow by Aardman Academy head and director Mark Simon Hewis. This is followed by the Masterclass of the Aardman director Will Becher on the approach to the screenplay and to the idea. The day concludes with the participants receiving a brief from Mark Simon Hewis, who will invite them to explore the positioning of the camera and the timing of the world around it. This work will be shared during the next session.

In the second session there will be a review of the works created followed by a Masterclass by Sam Horton on the storyboard process and the communication of one's ideas. The day ends with a final brief in which participants are asked to first create a storyboard for a short idea or scene and then create an "animatic" of that storyboard (a moving storyboard with sound).

The third session will consist of a final review of all participants' work with feedback from Mark Simon Hewis. The course ends with an hour and a half of questions and answers with the Aardman director, the Swiss / Italian Simone Giampaolo.

## **The Teachers**

### **Mark Simon Hewis**

Mark Simon Hewis is a multi-award winning British filmmaker. He has been making short films since he was 17 when his first film - made entirely inside a photo-booth using the built-in camera - was shown at the infamous Curzon Cinema in Brixton, London. Mark's work includes international award-winning films for the Arts Council, Channel 4, BBC and his 1st Feature Film was released in 2014 for BFI, BBC Films, Matador and Arthur Cox. He continues to work as a live-action director, executive producer, writer and editor.

Mark graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2003 with a Masters in Animation where he made two films, both of which competed in film festivals throughout the world. He was awarded Film Council funding to make *The Chihuahua Messiah*, runner-up for the BBC New Filmmaker Award 2005 and won the Fortean Times Film of the year 2006. It was used by Mark Kermode in a Review Show special on BBC2, about how to make the perfect short film. He then made a short comedy for BBC3 which was completed and aired in 2006. In 2008 Mark then made the short *The Life Sized Zoetrope* in 2008 for Channel 4, Arts Council UK and Animate. It was nominated for 8 awards at the British Animation Awards (even though it is a live-action film), won the Grand Prix at the London International Animation Festival and the Tampere Film Festival. It subsequently gained distribution deals across the world and is included in 4 DVD compilations about the history of alternation short animation and filmmaking. In 2013 Mark directed his first feature film "8 Minutes Idle" for BBC Films, BFI and Matador Pictures in 2013 which gained theatrical release streaming service release around the world. It still continues to be played regularly on BBC terrestrial television each year.

### **Will Becher**

Will Becher began his career in the late nineties when he landed a summer work placement on *Chicken Run* – building 'clay wings' in the model department. After a degree in Animation in Edinburgh College of Art, he was invited by Nick Park to join the animation team on *Wallace & Gromit: Curse of the Were Rabbit* (becoming one of Aardman's youngest ever feature film animators). He has since enjoyed a career as a freelance animator and director working with Laika on *Paranorman* and numerous commercials and series. Developing new characters remains a highlight and Will took a lead animator role on *The Pirates*, *Shaun the Sheep Movie*, and *Wallace & Gromit: A Matter of Loaf and Death*. Will directed *Shaun the Sheep Series 5* before taking the role of Animation Director on Nick Park's *Early Man*. In 2018 he co-directed the Oscar nominated *A Shaun the*

*Sheep Movie: Farmageddon*. Will is currently lead animator for "Rocky" on *Chicken Run 2*.

### **Sam Horton**

With ten years of experience, Sam has drawn storyboards for a wide range of CGI, stop motion and 2D animation projects across feature films, series and commercials. He has worked with industry leading companies such as Aardman, DNEG, Blue Zoo Animation and Jellyfish Pictures. At Aardman he has been part of the story team responsible for the newest series of the *Epic Adventures of Morph*, as well as numerous projects for the companies commercials department. He is also part of the Aardman Academy delivering storyboarding workshops to students looking to gain the skills and knowledge they'll need when joining the animation industry.

### **Simone Giampaolo**

Simone Giampaolo is a London-based director from Switzerland with an insatiable appetite for storytelling and humor. In 2013, he graduated with distinction from the BA (Hons) Computer Animation Art & Design course at the National Centre for Computer Animation in Bournemouth (UK). Throughout his career he's directed, storyboarded and animated on over ten multi-award winning animated films, including the successful *Only a Child* (currently on its festival run). Between 2014 and January 2018, Simone worked as animation director and computer graphics generalist in the commercial department at Blue-Zoo Animation on a multitude of projects for clients such as Cartoon Network, Disney, LEGO, Nickelodeon, Marvel, Lucasfilm, and BBC. In the past few years he's been crafting short films and mini-series at Jellyfish Pictures, Ritzy Animation and Aardman Animation (which has been representing him as short-form director since 2018), among other projects.

### **Stefano Tambellini (PAFF's Tutor)**

Stefano Tambellini graduated in Animazione Tradizionale at Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia di Torino, where he attended Barry J.C. Purves' Stop-Motion courses. Since 2009 he has worked in London as an illustrator for animation and publishing. As an illustrator he has published among others with Bloomsbury, Harper Collins, Rizzoli Lizard, Workman Publishing, Oxford University Press, Solferino / Corriere della Sera, Il Castoro, Milan Jeunesse. Since 2005, when he co-founded the independent production label SenzaTesta with his sister Alice, he has produced and directed Stop-Motion animated shorts. Their works have been selected and won awards at festivals around the world. They have also been included in DVD

anthology collections both in Italy and in France. Between 2013 and 2014 he was tutor for degree projects in animation at the IED in Milan. With his sister Alice he periodically holds Stop-Motion workshops at industry festivals and cultural associations and is currently working on his own animated film produced by SenZaTeStA.

### **Aardman Animations**

Aardman, based in Bristol (UK) and co-founded in 1976 by Peter Lord and David Sproxton, is an independent and multi-Academy Award® and BAFTA® award winning studio. It produces feature films, series, advertising, games and interactive entertainment – current animated productions include; 2021 holiday specials Robin Robin and Shaun the Sheep: The Flight Before Christmas, CGI series Lloyd of the Flies, a new stop motion series for pre-schoolers The Very Small Creatures, feature length sequel Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget and a brand new Wallace & Gromit film for 2024.

Its productions are global in appeal, novel, entertaining, brilliantly characterised and full of charm reflecting the unique talent, energy and personal commitment of the Aardman team. The studio's work – which includes the creation of much-loved characters including [Wallace & Gromit](#), [Shaun the Sheep](#), [Timmy Time](#) and [Morph](#) – is often imitated, and yet the company continues to lead the field producing a rare brand of visually stunning content for cinema, broadcasters, digital platforms and live experiences around the world. Recent celebrated projects include the 'visually astonishing' (Guardian), BAFTA® nominated console game, [11-11: Memories Retold](#), the four-times Gold Cannes Lions-winning [StorySign](#) app, AR experience Wallace & Gromit: The Big Fix up - and innovative attractions for both the domestic and international market, including a [4D theatre attraction](#) at Efteling in the Netherlands.

The studio runs the [Aardman Academy](#) which has a commitment to nurturing talent by delivering excellence in film and animation training and mentoring. The Aardman Academy offers a variety of courses from intensive one-day workshops teaching production skills and storyboarding, to comprehensive twelve-week courses for professionals in craft based subjects from model making to animation. In November 2018 it became an Employee Owned Organisation, to ensure Aardman remains independent and to secure the creative legacy and culture of the company for many decades to come. [www.aardman.com](http://www.aardman.com)

## **PAFF!**

In 2021: 13 exhibitions, 55 collateral events to the exhibitions (guided tours, inaugurations, press meetings etc.), 35 Events, 67 Courses and workshops, 40 Radio episodes. Acronym of Palazzo Arti Comics Friuli, PAFF! is a special project of Vastagamma, a Social Promotion Company, of Pordenone, Italy. Countless exhibitions of national and international appeal such as, in chronological order, "Gradimir Smudja: from Leonardo to Picasso, a comic journey in the History of Art," Giorgio Cavazzano: SIDE by SIDE ", " Pencils and handcuffs - The Police in comics ", "Leonardo's World: interactive codes, machines, drawings", MECHA-DESIGN in comics - Lorenzo Pastrovicchio", "Masters of Black and White - Milton Caniff", "Masters of MARVEL & DC", "MANARA Secret Gardens ", " FREE HUGS - The cartoon embrace ", "Möebius - In search of time ". Some of the most recent could also be visited on a virtual tour. PAFF! is located in the nineteenth-century Villa Galvani and in the two new and modern exhibition wings and is a cultural container dedicated to comics and more, recognized and supported by the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region and the Municipality of Pordenone. In addition to the aforementioned temporary exhibitions, with over 1,000sqm of modernly conceived exhibition spaces, here are held educational and training courses, as well as professional ones (such as "Contemporary Comics", 200 hours of lessons in 12 modules) laboratories and workshops on creativity, but also event presentations, seminars and shows. The permanent exhibition dedicated to all forms of comics is at an advanced stage.

[www.paff.it](http://www.paff.it)