



ANIMAFEST ZAGREB

WORLD FESTIVAL OF ANIMATED FILM /
28 SEPTEMBER TO 3 OCTOBER 2020



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SYMPOSIUM FOR CONTEMPORARY ANIMATION STUDIES

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Viral Animation: Memes May Be Taking Control of Your Phone - João Paulo Schlittler (Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil)

The smallest screen is home to an animated war, looping GIFs have taken control of your mobile phone and spread fear, hack and laughter. These digital tidbits may not be even worthy of being considered as animation, and yet these tiny representations of disfigured media personalities and politicians simply don't stop popping in front of our eyes.

Brazil is known for its cultural melting pot, paradoxically, we struggle to understand our cultural identity. The answer may still be found in Mário de Andrade's proposal of "cultural cannibalism" published in the *Manifesto Antropófago* in 1928. The concept still permeates our habitat, where displaced Miami beach flats rise next to cinder block homes topped by blue water tanks, entangled in a mesh of cables and antennas: *gambiarras* allowing 210 million Brazilians to watch *Netflix* for free and post incessantly on social networks. Our popular music: techno brega, funk, sertanejo, rap, is undoubtedly shaped by the media business; however relies on a cannibalistic re-appropriation.

The viral repercussion of Brazilian memes are an important representation of how young Brazilians communicate, these often take shape as poorly photoshopped GIFs synthesizing pop culture, slang and sarcasm into a couple of frames. The importance of this mode of communication should not be overlooked – it was a catalyst in the fake news messages that dramatically influenced the right wing Bolsonaro presidency campaign in 2018. Political cartoons have evolved into "fast-food" digitally manipulated images, many of them are haphazardly animated and are distributed as low bandwidth animated GIFs. The results of this media may be catastrophic, or, on the other hand, enlightening. In this panel, a selection of Brazilian animated memes will be presented and discussed, shedding light on a current and influential form of animated subculture.

João Paulo Schlittler is a designer and researcher working in film, television and digital media since 1987. He holds a PhD in Design and Architecture from Universidade de São Paulo (USP) and a Masters in Interactive Telecommunications from New York University. Since 2004, he has been a professor at the Department of Film, Radio and Television at USP's School of Communication and Arts, where he is the coordinator of ZOOTROPO, an animation studies research group. João Paulo headed the design department at TV Cultura in Brazil, was Director of Broadcast and Interactive Design at Discovery Networks and Director of Graphics and Visual Effects at HBO in the US.