

new. Some of my friends are executives, textile workers, real estate salesmen, not just actors. I've worked as a cab driver and as a waiter — great opportunities to see and meet different kinds of people.

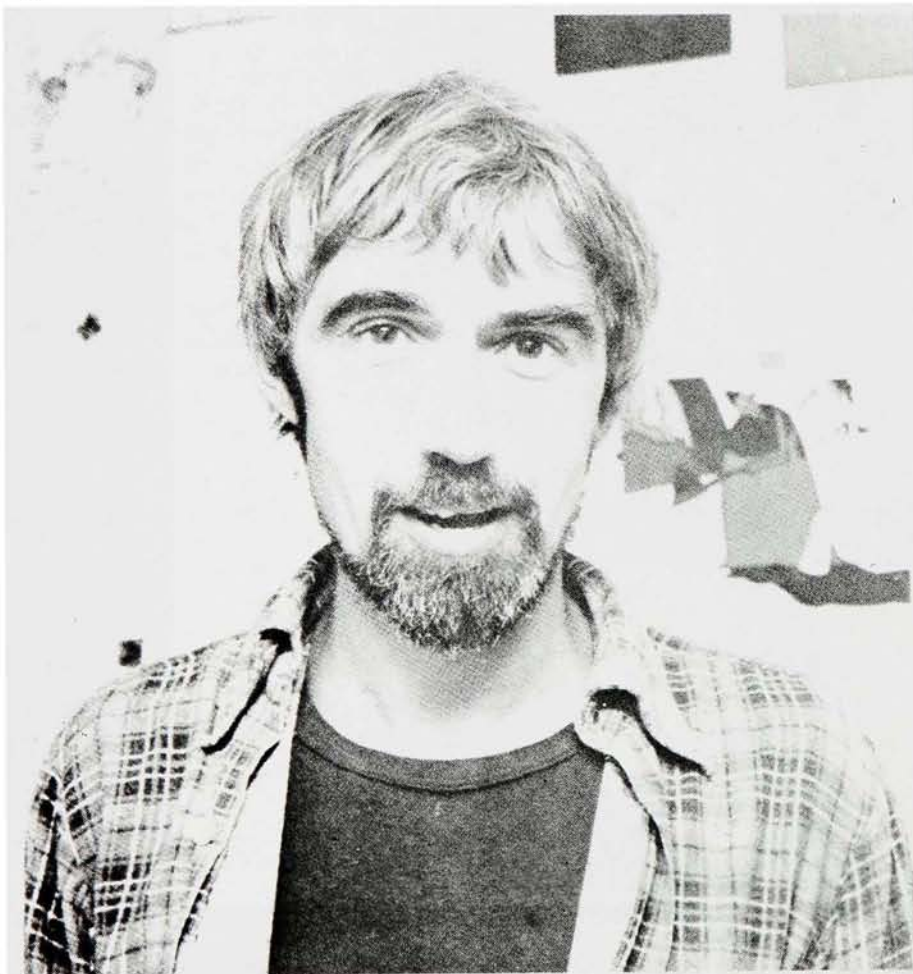
"I've learned to play the trumpet: there's great discipline in that. And I run marathons. Marathon running clears your mind and your psyche and cleans out the poisons in your body. It's a tremendous source of inspiration. I don't want to be an 'Actor.' I want to be other things that I can develop from. I want to be a human being first, and the acting will look after itself."

In the meantime Tony has also been gathering some material for future screenplays he hopes to write, on the humorous incidents of being tall, and keeps a tongue-in-cheek attitude toward directors who try to limit his size.

"I've had people say I'm too tall to be an actor, which is ridiculous. Life is made up of many different kinds of people. But it's a unique thing about me anyway. It makes for good headlines at least, don't you think? 'Tall Actor Struggles in Career.'"

Krystyna Hunt

paul driessen



unexpected endings

Right now he lives and works in The Hague, in a "starving artist's garret" overlooking the sea. One of several foreigners working at the National Film Board, Paul Driessen has gone home for awhile to be closer to his family. He lived and worked in Montreal for five and a half years and for the past two has worked back and forth between Holland and Canada, adding to his already celebrated reputation as an animator with a style and a sense of humour that are unique.

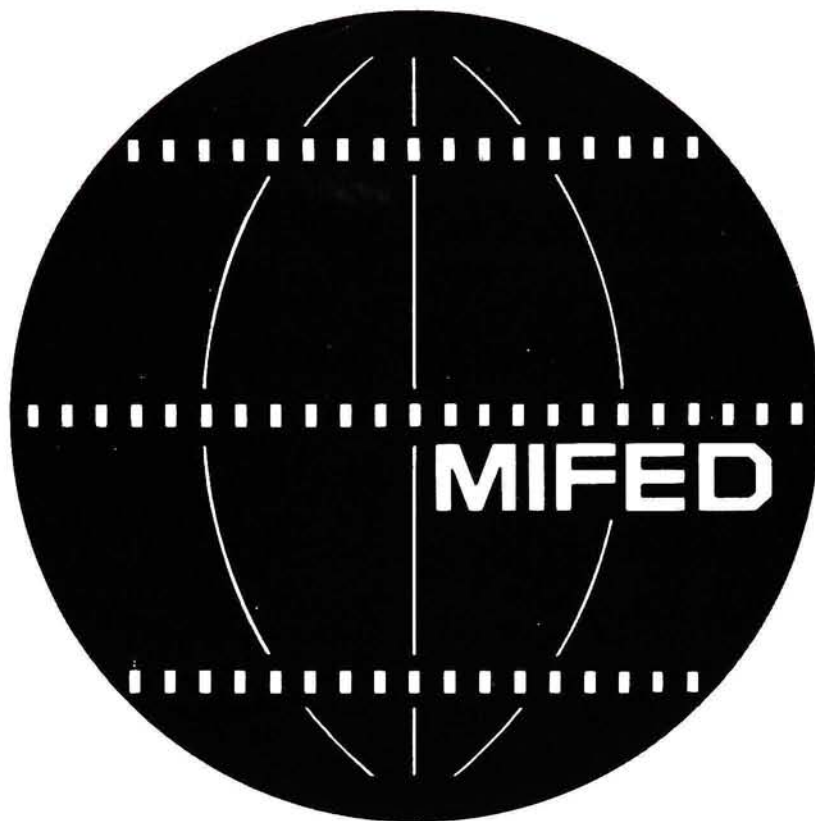
Driessen has been drawing all his life. He began to animate his characters after art school, when, desperate for work and attracted in good part by its idyllic location in the forest, he applied to a studio run by American Jim Hiltz. Hiltz liked his drawings and gave him work, allowing him a free hand in all he did from idea, to design, to final product. His first job was a series of glue commercials for Dutch television.

While at the studio Driessen met George Dunning, a Canadian working in England, and when Hiltz returned State-side, Driessen, with classically perfect timing, went to England. **Yellow Submarine** had just been slated for production, and next thing you know, he's brainstorming ideas for the script and doing some of the animation. The experience was "loose and easy and brilliant and nice."

Meanwhile, Dunning had let slip the good word about the NFB, so, when offered work on **Tiki Tiki** at Montreal's Potterton Studios, Driessen grabbed it. In his off hours he knocked on the Film Board doors. Presented with his idea and storyboard for **Le bleu perdu**, the French Animation Dept. accepted it. It's a colorful and touching fantasy about an enterprising child with a convenient set of wings stored in his pockets who discovers paradise and blue skys beyond the pollution layer.

After that, he made **Air!**, **Cat's Cradle** (already a classic), and **An Old Box** at the NFB and worked on Potterton's production of Oscar Wilde's **The Happy Prince**, a TV special, directed by Mike Mills.

Among other things, Driessen is noted for his use of off-screen action. In **Cat's Cradle** there is a sequence in which we follow a line as it travels around the



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INTRODUCING...

edge of the screen until at last the camera pulls back and reveals a big snake coiled around the space. And in **David**, his latest completed film – which shared the Grand Prix with Co Hoedeman's **The Sand Castle** at Annecy last spring – the main character is a fellow so small he's invisible. The often blank screen is filled instead with sounds – the effect is rivetting.

"What I like to do is to show something that isn't there perhaps. Or it might be there but in a different faculty somehow, so you don't really know what you're looking at until I show it. To keep an audience attached to the screen so they're looking for something... it means that something's alive."

Because his drawings are indicative rather than explicit – there are many spaces in the lines – animating his films is far more elaborate than cel animation. "It's not less drawing, but more planning... Usually you can get away with half of the drawing. If you shoot every drawing twice you get a sort of fluid image. It works nicely."

Not schooled in film or film technique, and not being used to traditional modes of continuity and whatnot, Driessen is as he says "open for any-

thing", and is free to try those things one theoretically "shouldn't do." The results are consistently refreshing. "If it works, I use it."

There is, in all of his films, an underlying sadness because of the transience of things and a great feeling for the quality of life – the environment; the treatment of children by adults. "I'm concerned about that. It's with me all the time I guess, but it doesn't depress me. But if I can show it in some way, I will."

Driessen has also worked briefly for the CBC, and they want him back. He almost worked for the Canadian Association of Mental Health. They approached him with an idea but rejected his final storyboard because he had altered their idea and it was no longer the family story they wanted. He was firm: "As long as I can choose, I do my films my way."

Happily however, the Film Board liked his story board, and **Le rejeton (The Offspring)** – working title – is currently in progress. It is being animated by Martin Langlois. Driessen was in Montreal in August acting as consultant to Langlois on the film.

Back in Holland he's working on a film funded by a municipal cultural program in The Hague. He's also finishing a script for a feature animation for children (with a wider audience in mind of course) which he hopes to coproduce with Canada. With several job offers he may very well be back here come March though nothing is definite as yet.

For Driessen, the content of an animated film is as important as its design. While his drawings are simple – and idiosyncratic – the ideas behind them are very complex, rich in myth, fantasy, and moments of utter madness.

Another of Driessen's trademarks is unexpected endings – sarcastic and somewhat disconcerting. For example: God leering at a centrefold inside the "Big Book" (**Le bleu perdu**). "Usually it's nasty, it's true. I used to tease people a lot when I was in school... Usually I apologized after (I think), which you can't do in a film." But these "cruel twists" have no deep meanings. "It's not my view of the world. It's so easy to think of something like that – for me anyway, because I'm trained." Then he laughs.

He loves spiders too.

Jane Dick

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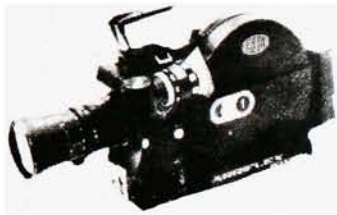
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