

June 2026

SPARK

— ANIM —

Stories. Vision. Industry.

ROAD TO ANNECY !

The big marathon

Feature

Beyond visibility: what Annecy really means for African animation

In Conversation With

Minasie Terefe, founder of Behagerlij Studio

Project Spotlight
Sunday morning

Inside the Job

Christophe Pécot, Regional audiovisual attaché

On the Ground
Cross Ip at MIFA

www.lestudioka.com

EDITORIAL

The Annecy International Animation Film Festival opens its doors in just a few days, bringing together thousands of professionals from across the globe for a week.

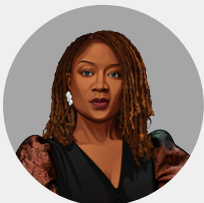
In Annecy, we celebrate the very best of animation. We discover what will shape the industry in the months and years ahead. We build our networks over coffee, pitch projects, forge partnerships, and sometimes even close deals along the shores of Lake Annecy.

Every year, hundreds of Africans also make the journey, arriving with minds and tablets full of animation projects, training initiatives, festivals, transmedia concepts..., all driven by one main objective: making deals.

In this Annecy special issue of Spark, we explore what the festival truly represents for African professionals with Richard Opoku Agyeman. We also meet Minasie Terefe, founder of Ethiopia's Behagerlij Studio, whose series Sunday Morning has been selected for the MIFA Pitches. We take a closer look at Cross IP, one of the most promising new spaces at the market this year. Finally, Christophe Pécot shares his perspective on the work that happens behind the scenes long before the market even opens.

As always, we bring you a selection of events and initiatives to follow throughout the festival. Finally, in The Notes, we explore one of the defining features of the African experience in Annecy: solidarity. In our industry, it often makes all the difference.

Welcome to Annecy.



Adja Mariam Soro
Editor-in-Chief

MASTHEAD

SPARK – Issue 4

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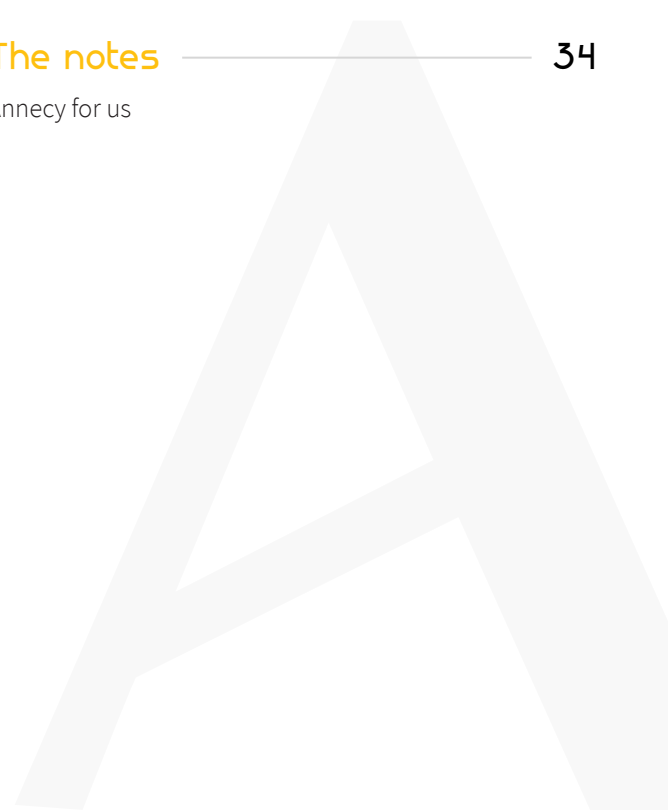
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Annecy for us





Annecy and Mifa have a long story with African animation artists and professionals. It all started in South Africa in 2012, then Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana, Benin, Togo following 5 years of incredible collaboration with Christophe Pecot and the many professionals attending our International Mifa campus workshops along the years, in those countries. Morocco, Ivory Coast and Kenya have also been quite active these last 5 years.

All those countries have had an extraordinary growth in attendance on booths and projects. Every year we now discover African series or feature films in official selection, either on the festival side for the competition or on Mifa side. It goes for South Africa, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Morocco, Algeria, Ethiopia... It is great to discover new countries coming, like Ethiopia, in selection for Mifa pitches.

I also think that we will learn a lot from African professionals in regard to the CROSS IP theme. Funding windows exist in Europe, that tend to isolate each sector, which is certainly less true in Africa. Some of the Mifa conferences will allow us to find out new models and to learn more from African professionals on those specific questions.

Let's all meet soon in Mifa ! 23 to 26 June 2026 !

Véronique Encrenaz

Director of MIFA



FEATURE

BEYOND VISIBILITY: WHAT ANNECY REALLY MEANS FOR AFRICAN ANIMATION

Every year, hundreds of African professionals make the journey to Annecy, investing considerable time, energy, and resources to attend the world's greatest animation festival and market. Yet behind the excitement, countless producers leave without securing the partnerships, visibility, or opportunities they had hoped for. Richard Opoku Agyeman, co-founder of Acute Formula, explores this paradox and sheds light on the often-overlooked strategies that can help professionals make the most of their Annecy experience.



Richard Opoku Agyeman
Co-founder & Creative Director at
Acute Formula LLC - Ghana

A growing voice in global animation

Many African animation professionals are willing to invest in attending Annecy because it offers opportunities that are difficult to find anywhere else. For many of us, the cost is significant, but the value gained through knowledge, exposure, networking and career growth makes it worthwhile.

Being at Annecy put me in direct contact with artists, producers, studio executives, distributors and educators from around the world. The festival creates an environment where a conversation, a pitch session or even an informal meeting can lead to new ideas, partnerships and opportunities.

Annecy is also a place of inspiration. It allows African professionals to see where the industry is heading, discover new technologies and storytelling approaches, and gain a clearer understanding of international standards. For many creatives, it is an opportunity to step outside their immediate environment and view their work within a global context.

The fact is that African creators are becoming more visible, and there is growing interest in stories that reflect the continent's cultures, histories and contemporary realities. At Annecy 2024, I was proud to see Ghanaian representation, including the premiere of Last Night by Poka Studios. We are no longer attending simply as observers. We are arriving as creators, studio founders, storytellers and industry leaders with unique perspectives to offer.

At the same time, I believe we are still in a period of growth. While African talent is increasingly recognised, there is still a need for more investment, stronger production ecosystems, better access to funding and wider international distribution. Many African professionals attend Annecy not only to showcase their work but also to build the relationships that can help address these challenges.



How ecosystems shape strategy

One of the main differences I have observed is that many African studios attend Annecy with a strong focus on building connections, seeking partnerships, securing funding and creating visibility for their projects and studios. Because many African animation industries are still developing.

In contrast, many European, North American and Asian studios often arrive with larger teams, established industry networks and projects that are already supported by stronger production ecosystems. Their presence at Annecy is frequently part of a long-term business strategy. They may be launching new productions, meeting existing partners, recruiting talent, negotiating distribution deals or strengthening relationships that have been built over many years.

I do think these differences influence the results that studios achieve. Success at Annecy is often built on consistency and long-term relationship building. Studios that attend regularly and have the resources to maintain an ongoing presence naturally have more opportunities to generate business and increase their visibility.

This does not mean African studios lack talent or quality. In fact, I have seen African creators produce exceptional work and receive strong interest from international audiences and professionals. What I believe is changing is that African studios are becoming more strategic in how they approach the festival. There is a growing understanding that Annecy is not just a place to showcase completed work but also a place to develop relationships, understand the market and position projects for future opportunities.





This is why investment in these links of the chain is essential. A well-structured festival does more than just screen films: it attracts professionals, journalists, students, buyers, institutions, and cultural tourists. At Annecy, the 2025 edition of the animation festival brought together 18,200 accredited participants from 118 countries, with 975 exhibiting companies. CITIA estimated its short-term direct economic impact on the region at €32 million.

On a different scale, FESPACO 2025 gathered more than 13,500 accredited festival-goers, including over 3,500 cinema and audiovisual professionals. While FESPACO is not an animation festival, it clearly illustrates what a major African event can generate in terms of circulation, visibility, and catalytic impact for a territory.

The challenge for African animation is therefore not to imitate the major international markets. It is to build events rooted in their organic audiences, nourished by African and diasporic productions, yet open enough to engage with the international market. When a festival is well-conceived, it becomes simultaneously a showcase, an incubator, a marketplace, a training tool, and an economic engine.

Unlike in much of the rest of the world, it is time for investors and professionals to recognize that schools, residencies, festivals, and professional networks are genuine opportunities. They are cultural and economic infrastructures. They are what transform a collection of talents into a full-fledged industry. And if African animation wants to grow in strength, continuity, and autonomy, this is precisely where we need to invest.

Where the real value lies

When people think about Annecy, they often focus on the obvious opportunities such as finding partners or promoting a film. These are certainly important, but I think some of the most valuable opportunities are also the most underestimated. One of them is feedback. At Annecy, you can receive insights from people with decades of experience in animation, production, distribution and development. Sometimes a single conversation can help you avoid costly mistakes or reveal possibilities you had never considered.

Networking is also often misunderstood. Many people attend hoping to meet someone who will immediately finance or buy their project. While that can happen, I believe the real value lies in building genuine relationships over time. Some of the people you meet today may become collaborators, mentors, clients or partners years later. Annecy is as much about planting seeds as it is about harvesting opportunities.

For African professionals, turning participation into a real lever for development requires preparation before the festival and commitment afterwards. The conversations, contacts and ideas gained at Annecy only become valuable when they are nurtured. Following up with people, maintaining relationships, applying lessons learned and sharing knowledge with local communities are just as important as attending the festival itself.

Finally, I think African professionals should see Annecy not only as an opportunity to receive from the global industry but also as an opportunity to contribute to it. The more we participate confidently and consistently, the more we strengthen our position within the international animation community.

For me, the greatest value of Annecy is the impact this experience continues to have in the projects we create, the relationships we build and the way we imagine the future of animation on the African continent.





IN CONVERSATION WITH

MINASIE TEREFE

Minasie Terefe is a creative director and the founder of Behagerlij Studio, an animation studio based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. After making history as the first Ethiopian studio to participate in Annecy, Behagerlij returns this year with Sunday Morning, a non-dialogue series officially selected for the MIFA Pitches at Annecy 2026 in the TV Series & Specials category.

In this exclusive conversation with Spark, Minasie Terefe reflects on his journey, the vision behind Sunday Morning, and the significance of this latest achievement for Ethiopian animation.



Minasie Terefe – Founder of Behagerlij Studio - Ethiopia

Looking back on your journey today, how would you describe the path that led you from your early creative interests to becoming the founder of Behagerlij Studio?

Growing up in Ethiopia, animation wasn't a path anyone talked about. So it was not something I really considered. Besides I wouldn't say I was a technically gifted artist. Still aren't, if I'm being honest. But I always had a knack for storytelling. So I just kept creating for myself. Drawing, making things up. No audience. Just the love of it.

Then architecture school happened. It gave me the lens and tools to understand design. And I was quite good at it; I even graduated as valedictorian. But the whole time, the love of storytelling was pulling at my sleeve. So when I graduated I walked away from it all to chase something that didn't even have a name yet in my country. Animation!

I started Behagerlij Studio with a small group of like-minded friends, scratch that, brothers. That was ten years ago. We started small; really small. We failed. Got back up. Learned. Pushed. The name itself means "by the country kids!" That's us! We're not a polished studio from somewhere else. We're from here. And we make work that feels like here.

The journey wasn't straight. It was messy. Still is. But I've never looked back. And every messy step led to Sunday Morning.



What inspired you to create Sunday Morning and explore themes such as children's imagination?

Honestly, it started with my own Sundays growing up in Ethiopia. Back in the day, when we were kids, Sundays were the only day we were truly free to play. The rest of the week, we belonged to school, homework, and house chores. So when Sunday came, the house would erupt with our endless games and infinite imagination. The only problem? Sunday mornings also happened to be the only time of the week our parents could stay in bed a little longer after six long days of work. That classic domestic tension, the kids' need to play versus the parents' need for peace, became the heartbeat of this entire series.

I realized years later that those messy, loud mornings were where our creativity came out. Cars made from wires, games invented out of nothing, secret missions to steal “dabo kolo” from the kitchen. I wanted to capture that. Not the polished, perfect childhood you see in a lot of kids’ media, but the real one: chaotic, imaginative, and full of heart. Children's imagination isn't just cute; it's survival. It's how we turned the mundane into magic.

Why did you choose to make it a non-dialogue series?

Two reasons. First, I wanted Sunday Morning to travel. If we rely on dialogue, we immediately build walls, especially for a country like Ethiopia where the walls are thicker and higher. But a laugh, a shush, a drumbeat, a crash. Those are universal. A kid in Brazil and a kid in Japan will both understand the silent sneaking game. Second, silence is literally the joke of the show. The mom is desperate for it, and the kids

are constantly trying to be quiet but failing spectacularly. Making the series non-dialogue turned “silence” into a character. Plus, it pushed us to rely on music, sound design, and visual comedy, which is way more fun to animate anyway.

In your opinion, what were the key elements that led Sunday Morning to be selected at Annecy International Animation Film Festival?

I think three things. First, the non-dialogue approach. Not because it's Annecy or any festival, but because narrative driven by physical humor is one of the oldest and most well-traveled storytelling techniques. Not just in animation but in film as well. Think Chaplin, Buster Keaton and Tom and Jerry. That language has no passport. Second, the handmade aesthetic. We built physical miniatures with kids. We scanned imperfections. The world feels touchable and lived-in, and I think that stood out.

Third and maybe the strongest reason of all, the high concept and universality of the engine of the story. Every parent knows the exhaustion. Every kid knows the thrill of not getting caught. Though the experience is through an Ethio-African lens, you don't need to strictly be Ethiopian or African to laugh at a mom just wanting five more minutes of peace. Anyone from anywhere relates to that. I believe that honesty crossed the line.

How important are international platforms such as Annecy and MIFA for African creators today? Do you think these spaces are becoming more accessible to emerging African studios?

They're incredibly important. Not because validation only comes from the West, but because these platforms connect you to resources, partners, and audiences you simply can't reach from home alone. Are they becoming more accessible? Slowly, yes. But there's still a long way to go. The cost, the visas, the networking expectations. It's not always built for someone coming from where we are. Sadly, it's even more challenging for the eastern side of Africa.

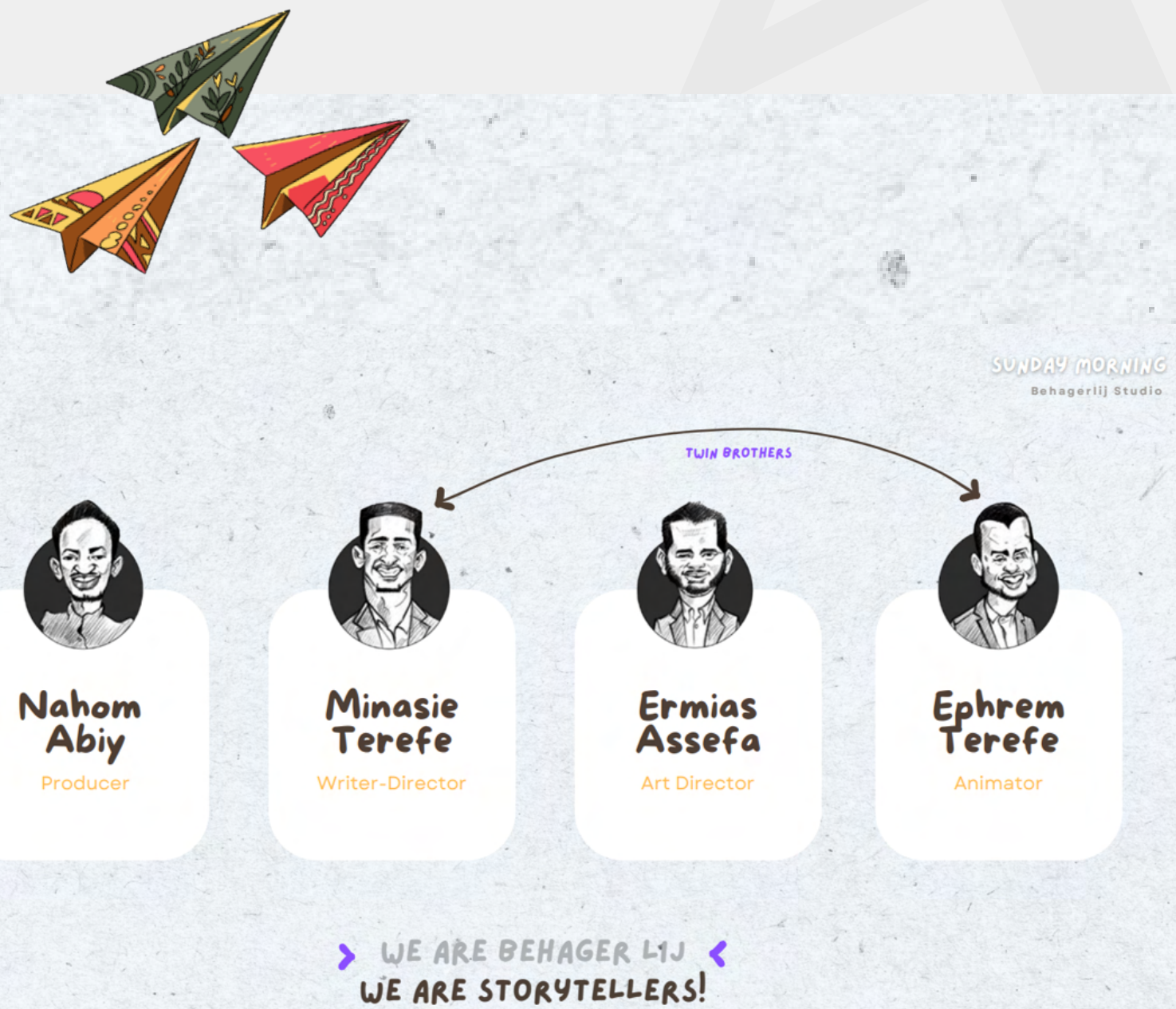


That said, I've seen shifts. More African creators are in the rooms now. More conversations are happening. Two years ago, if you had mentioned Annecy, I would have asked if it was contagious. I didn't even know what it was. Last year, I got to see for myself what it's all about as the only Ethiopian there out of 18,000 attendees. It was exciting and overwhelming all at once.

This year, me and my partner are pitching in both the official "MIFA pitches" and "East African Rising" partner pitches. Not only that, now there are eight Ethiopian delegates at the festival, representing three different studios. If you ask me, that's progress. The door isn't wide open yet, but it's no longer completely shut. My hope is that Sunday Morning being there makes it a little easier for the next Ethiopian/African studio coming after us.

As an Ethiopian representative at MIFA, how do you think this experience could impact the animation industry in Ethiopia and Africa more broadly?

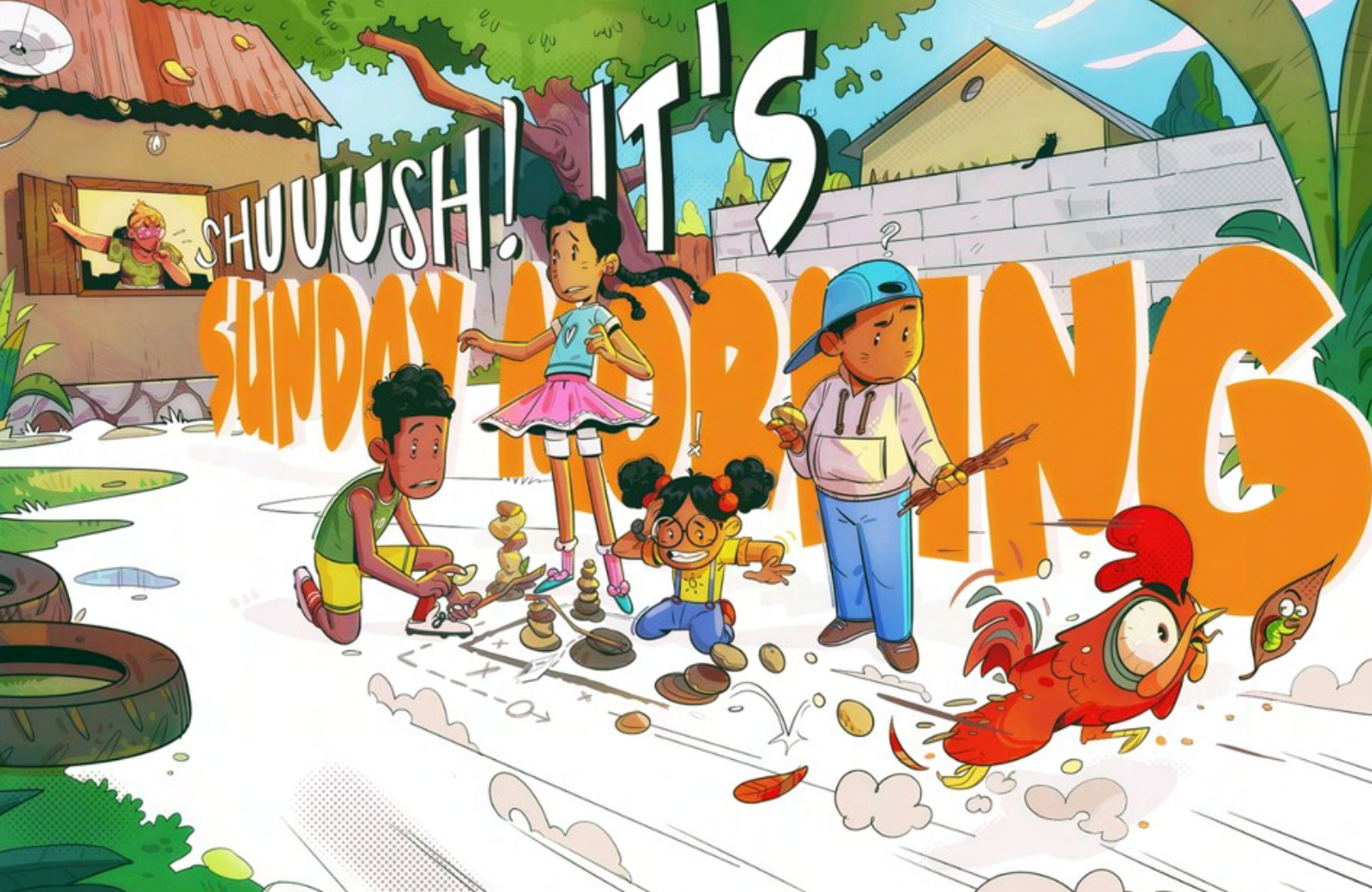
Being at MIFA showed me that the world is hungry for authentic African stories. Not the safari and poverty clichés, but the everyday joy, the family chaos, the music, the texture of real life here. I hope this opens a door. Not for me specifically, but for other Ethiopian and African animators to say: Our childhoods matter. Our streets, our sounds, our sense of humor. They belong on global screens. The industry here is young, but it's fierce. If Sunday Morning proves that a non-dialogue show rooted in an Ethiopian household can get traction, maybe the next studio won't have to look West for validation. They'll just look at their own backyard.



SUNDAY MORNING

Created by Behađerlić Studio





PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

SUNDAY MORNING

For the past few years, Behagerlij Studio has been cooking up something special: a unique animated series about four kids who turn every quiet Sunday morning into a great adventure—without waking their sleepy mom. A fresh comedy straight out of Addis Ababa.

A story about creativity

What do you do when you're home on a Sunday morning with just your siblings and an endless imagination? That's the question Sunday Morning answers in a fun and offbeat way. The story follows four unstoppable kids who wake up every Sunday ready for adventure. Their mission? To play, sing, build, and have just enough fun to make the day unforgettable. Their obstacle? One very sleepy mom who just wants a few more hours of peace and quiet. Adding to the mayhem is a shy little worm desperate to join the fun, and a hungry rooster who sees the worm as his next breakfast. Together, this unlikely cast turns ordinary Sunday mornings into musical escapades filled with laughter, rhythm, and heart.

At its core, Sunday Morning explores the delightful clash between a child's need for play and a parent's need for peace. Its central themes are imagination, family chaos, and resilience. Warm, nostalgic, and funny, the series never mocks the kids for being loud or the mom for being tired—it simply laughs along with everyone.

From a team in Ethiopia, for the kids around the world

Sunday Morning is the work of a small but talented creative team:

- Minasie Terefe (Writer / Director)
- Nahom Abiy (Producer)
- Ermias Assefa (Art Director)
- Milkyas Yitref (3D artist)
- Ephrem Terefe (Animator)
- Michael Asrat (Music Composer)

The project was conceived as a dialogue-free series of 52 episodes, each running 6 minutes. This decision not to use a local language was a strategic one, as it allows the storytelling to rely on a truly universal language: visuals. Action and reaction drive every joke. A kid jumps, the worm hides, the rooster lunges, Mom twitches. Exaggerated expressions push the comedy even further.

The camera itself acts like another character. It tiptoes during sneaky moments, whips around during chaotic scenes, and holds still when Mom is resting. It is through these visual choices that we feel what the characters feel.

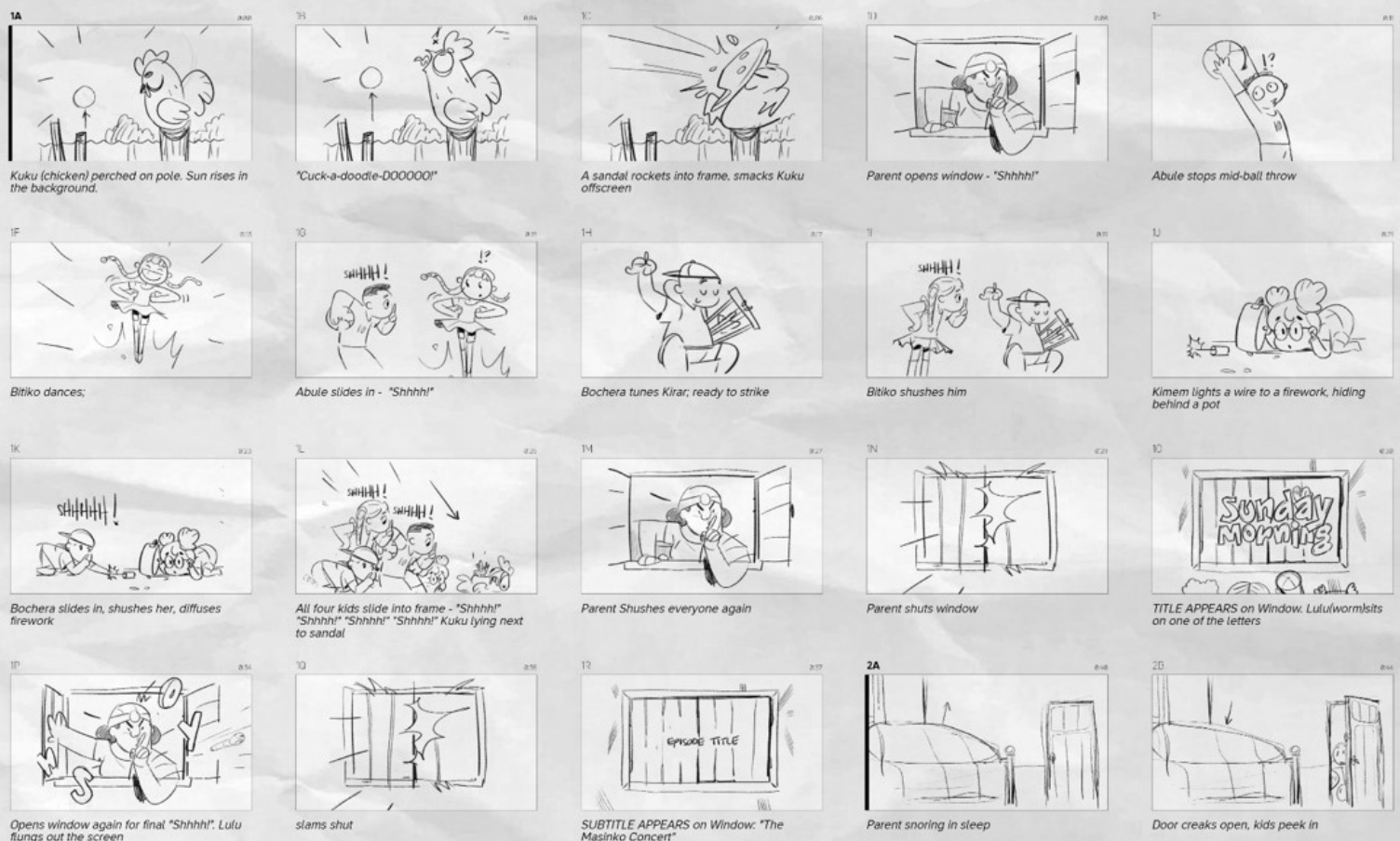
In this dynamic, universal truths are the series' greatest strength. Every parent knows the feeling of saying, "Just five more minutes." Every child knows the thrill of trying not to get caught. That tension needs no translation.

Music also plays a major role. Sunday Morning blends traditional Ethiopian instruments such as the masinqo, krar, and kebero with playful contemporary beats. With no dialogue, every plucked string and every drumbeat matters.

EP1_ THE MASINGO CONCERT_SUNDAY MORNING

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The animation technique was also carefully considered. While Sunday Morning is a 3D animated series, it embraces a handcrafted aesthetic. Everything has a tactile, handmade quality that makes you feel as though you could reach out and touch the world.

To achieve this look, the team built miniature physical models with children during art workshops, using colored paper, peeled cardboard, and stitching. They then digitized those imperfections and incorporated them into the final design. The goal was to create a world that feels lived-in rather than simply designed.

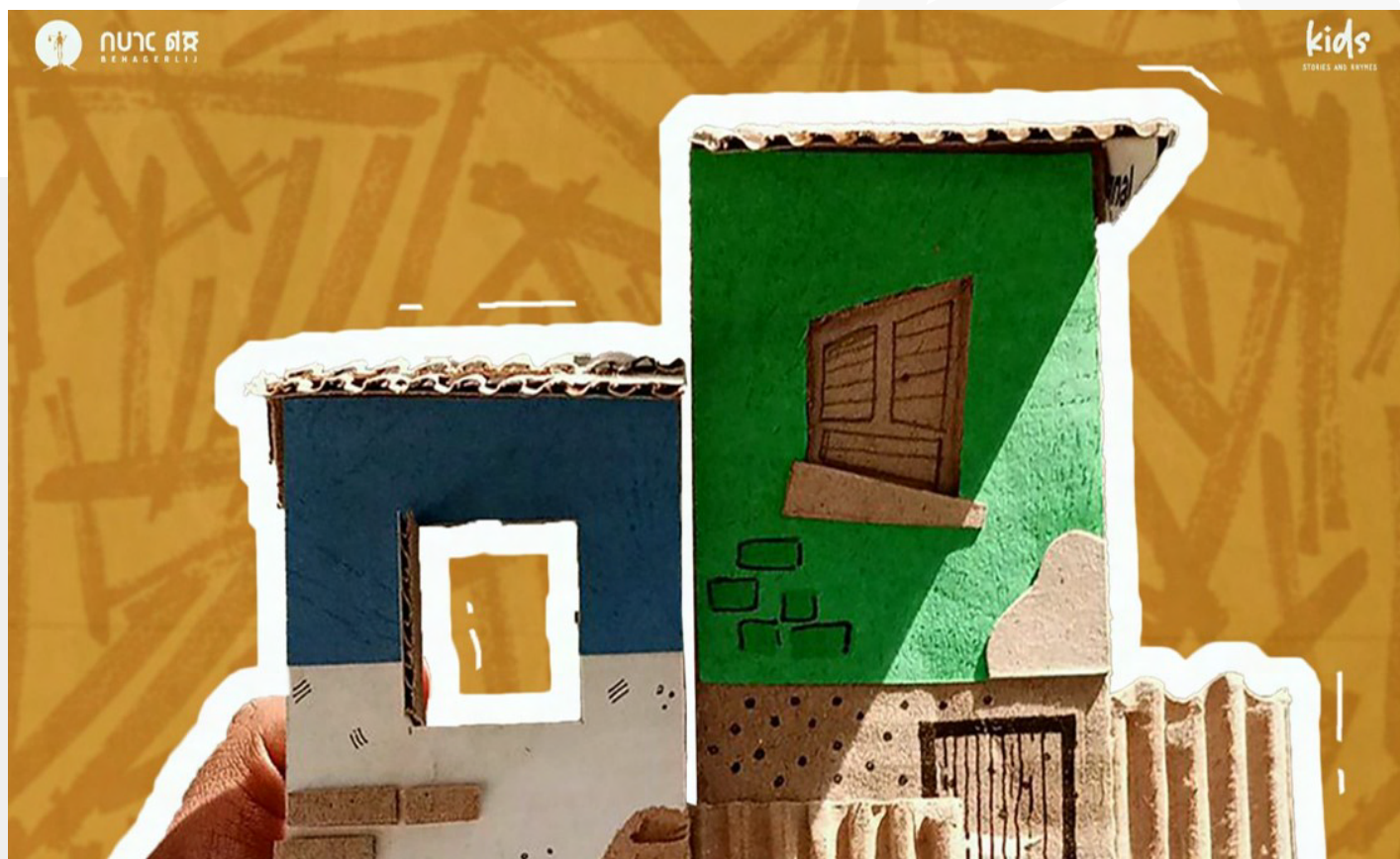
Ready for the next stage

The studio is currently in advanced stage of development. They have a complete series bible, full visual development, 13 episode concepts, and 4 completed scripts. Character design is also finished, along with set design and modeling. They also have a pilot storyboard, an animatic, a teaser animation, and a full layout. Sunday Morning is not just an idea. It's real a real series you can watch.

The next step for the team is to finalize the pilot episode and secure co-production funding and partnerships. Then begin production on the first 13 episodes and enter full production by Fall 2026.

To make this possible, the studio is actively seeking both international and regional co-production partners to strengthen its production pipeline.

The project is also looking for funding partners—whether grant providers or investors—who are interested in supporting original African IPs and preschool content. On the distribution side, the team is looking for broadcasters and platforms that recognize the value of a dialogue-free series with global appeal. Finally, Behagerlij Studio would like to see Sunday Morning showcased at international markets and festivals such as Annecy.



INSIDE THE JOB

CHRISTOPHE PÉCOT, REGIONAL AUDIOVISUAL ATTACHÉ



Christophe Pécot, Regional audiovisual attaché, France

Christophe Pécot is a Regional Audiovisual Attaché. For more than 15 years, he worked for several international sales companies, including UGC International, France Télévisions and Newen. Since 2021, his role has been to support stakeholders in the Cultural and Creative Industries sectors across Nigeria, Benin, Ghana, Togo and Cameroon in the development of their projects, while also fostering collaborations with French partners to help bring those projects to fruition.

In Spark, Christophe discusses his experience in supporting the various delegations attending the Annecy International Animation Film Festival and MIFA.

Tailored support for each studio

It all depends on the profile of the delegation members. Some studios are used to major international events and already have a network among foreign industry professionals. They are fairly autonomous and tend to reach out to me for specific issues related to the different stages of their projects. At their request, I put them in contact with broadcasters, producers, festivals and sales agents, and help facilitate meetings with them.

For others, who are less familiar with this type of market, we provide support well in advance of MIFA to help them work on their pitch or put together a deck. In previous years at MIFA, we took part in the Pitch Partenaire program, which allows five representatives from animation studios to present their projects to animation industry professionals. The project holders had been selected beforehand and had completed an intensive five-day in-person training program in Lagos with Nigerian and French experts.

Building an African footprint

There is now a stronger presence of African studios at MIFA. It is interesting to note that the Nigerian stand at MIFA has generated a certain enthusiasm among other African countries: Ghanaian, Kenyan and Ivorian pavilions are now also present at the market. We are also seeing works selected for the official competition, although there are still not enough entries coming from Sub-Saharan Africa.

The recurring presence of African studios under a clearly identified umbrella provides strong visibility among industry professionals and, in a way, helps build, year after year, a network of professionals who are receptive to African stories. Post-market follow-up is essential when it comes to building relationships with potential investors.

The work behind the meetings

On-site, I make sure that the stand is well organized and that meetings take place under the best possible conditions. All meetings must be arranged well in advance of the market. Before the market even opens, professionals arrive with schedules that are already packed, leaving very little room to arrange meetings once they are there. This is the basis of all major international markets: your schedule should already be full before the event begins.



Studios therefore reach out to me before the market to help secure certain meetings. Most of the work happens before the market itself. You need to identify the companies that may be interested in your project, get in touch with them and spark their interest in order to secure a meeting at MIFA. I must admit that after five years of attending MIFA, the studios now have their own networks and contact their counterparts directly. My previous professional experience working for international sales companies greatly facilitates making contact with the French companies attending the market.

Investing in African delegations

I have noticed a lack of support from public authorities in some countries when it comes to funding delegations, although a number of African countries do support the participation of their professionals, such as South Africa, Côte d'Ivoire and, more recently, Ghana. Of course, funding mobility should go hand in hand with investment in training and production support funds. That said, I do see positive changes taking place in some countries across the region. It will take time, but I remain optimistic.

Arrive prepared, leave connected

My advice would be to prepare well in advance of the market: schedule meetings early enough, select the panels, films, conferences and other events you want to attend. Your agenda should already be full before you arrive. And make sure to enjoy a good Savoyard fondue between two meetings.

The Nigerian delegation at Annecy 2025







MIFA CROSS IP

ON THE GROUND CROSS IP AT MIFA

At the heart of MIFA 2026, participants will have the opportunity to discover a brand-new space: Cross IP, a hub where art, creativity, and imagination converge to foster new connections between industries and storytelling formats.

A world of possibilities

Cross IP is a unique area within MIFA dedicated to bringing together a wide range of narrative forms and creative industries. Designed to encourage the adaptation, circulation, and expansion of intellectual properties, it welcomes professionals from comics, publishing, webtoons, video games, virtual reality, and many other creative fields.

MIFA has always attracted participants from industries beyond animation. However, these professionals were often present as conference attendees or visitors exploring the festival's offerings. What was missing was a dedicated space, a tangible meeting point where creators, publishers and developers could showcase their expertise, connect with potential partners, and engage in meaningful conversations with animation professionals and festival attendees.

That gap has now been filled.

New for 2026, the Mifa Cross IP will serve as a springboard for developing and adapting universes and narratives with significant international appeal, bringing together various creative industries.

A program designed to encourage connections

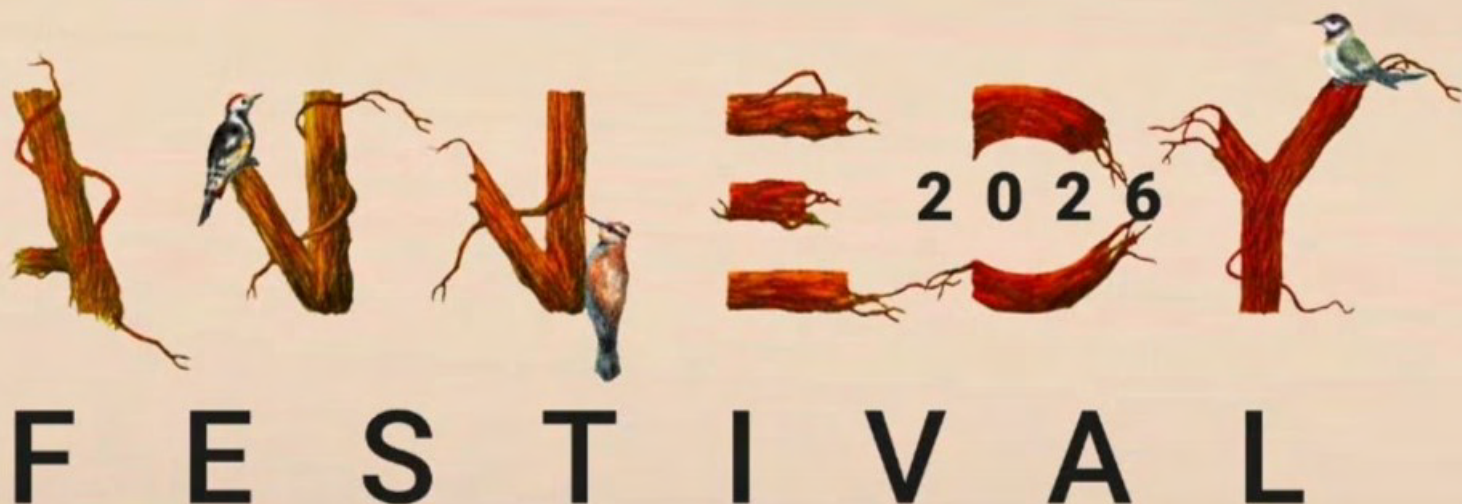
More than just an exhibition area, Cross IP has been conceived as a meeting point where professionals from different creative sectors can exchange ideas, discover new opportunities, and explore potential collaborations.

The space revolves around several complementary activities:

- A networking area dedicated to meetings between professionals from publishing, comics, webtoons, gaming, immersive media, and animation;
- Exhibition stands showcasing intellectual properties from around the world;
- The Shoot The Book Area, featuring a pavilion dedicated to French-language publishers. Organized by the SCELf, the initiative brings together dozens of publishing houses presenting novels, comics, manga, children's books, and webtoons with strong adaptation potential ;
- A dedicated Webtoon Area operated by White Dragon.
- A showroom presenting the immersive works selected in the Festival's Official Competition;
- Cocktail receptions : informal gathering opportunities to foster dialogue across industries.

Visitors will also be able to take part in publishing-animation-video game meetings organized by the Bologna Children's Book Fair, one of the world's leading marketplaces for children's publishing rights. They will also have the opportunity to attend MIFA panels dedicated to intellectual property, adaptation, and cross-media development.

The Cross IP Area will be open from Tuesday 23 June to Friday 26 June.



A Strategic Opportunity for African Professionals

Thanks to its multidisciplinary approach, Cross IP represents a valuable opportunity for animation professionals looking to broaden their horizons. Across Africa, an increasing number of young creators are turning to comics and webtoons, while growing communities of video game enthusiasts regularly come together through small competitions. One of the key advantages of Cross IP is therefore the opportunity to discover how these different forms of creativity can be integrated into animation projects, creating stronger intellectual properties and opening up new revenue opportunities.

Another major benefit lies in the possibility of making objective comparisons with more established markets. By learning more about the business models that have enabled these sectors to thrive elsewhere, African professionals can identify approaches that could be adapted to their own realities, taking into account local strengths, limitations, needs, and capacities.

The exchange is equally valuable in the other direction. African creators and producers also bring unique expertise, insights into local audiences, and an understanding of emerging markets that can enrich international discussions and support new initiatives. Ultimately, Cross IP creates a space for the sharing of knowledge and experience across disciplines, offering a broader understanding of the cultural and creative industries while encouraging meaningful African and international collaborations.

In this sense, Cross IP becomes a bridge, allowing African producers to connect with other artistic practices and creative industries, expanding both their networks and their ambitions.

As storytelling formats continue to evolve, Cross IP is naturally expected to evolve alongside them. The challenge now is to remain open to these emerging forms of expression, which are spreading rapidly across the world, and to ensure that African creative industries are fully equipped to embrace, adapt, and benefit from them.

“This question of reaching out to other creative industries is anything but new, but today it has been completely brought back into focus by new uses and habits, by the circulation of content between print, screens, and all the devices we have in our domestic environment, the kitchen, for example, along with other modes of consumption. Thanks to this, we now have enough perspective to realize that it is time to embrace these more cross-disciplinary, broader approaches to storytelling.”

Sébastien Célimon,
Founder of White Dragon
and Organizing Committee
Member of Cross IP, France.



AFRICA AT ANNECY

Annecy 2026 welcomes exceptional animation projects from every corner of the world, including Africa. Here is a selection of African projects to keep an eye on during this year's festival.

East Africa rising: five pitches to watch

Five animation studios from Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda are bringing their original projects to the Mifa.

From features to series, these creators are translating local mythology, history and the grit of contemporary life into a new cinematic language. The East African animation scene is blooming and these five studios are at the forefront of its global evolution.

Meet the teams, hear the pitches and find your next international collaboration.



The ebony witch - Lydia Mwangi



Ziryab: Strings of time –
Ghita Amrati

Morocco in motion

Five Moroccan animation projects, spanning feature both fiction and documentary, short and series formats.

The selection of 5 Moroccan animation projects to be showcased highlighting Moroccan talent across feature films, short films and animated series. The filmmakers will present their projects during a dedicated pitch session.

Come and discover unique voices for your next

The travails of Ajadi

After surviving a violent storm at sea, a frustrated fisherman confronts a divine voice to demand answers for his life of hardship, only to discover that his suffering was a divine preparation for his true purpose.

Discover the stop-motion film by Nigerian director Adeoye Adetunji, selected in competition in the Short Films category.



The Travails of Ajadi –
Adeoye Adetunji

But projects are not the only highlights of the festival. Beyond the exhibition stands and pitch sessions, African professionals are also taking part in the conversation, sharing their experiences and insights across a range of MIFA conferences and panels.

Strategies for African IP

This session brings African creators and producers together to share practical insights on building sustainable IP.

Industry leaders will unpack real-world strategies – from licensing structures and distribution pathways to emerging revenue streams – highlighting how studios are retaining ownership while scaling across local and international markets.

The session brings together leading animation professionals : Nosipho Maketo Van Den Bragt, Founder of Chocolate Tribe, Hamid Ibrahim from Kugali Media, Eric Calderon from Lion Forge Animation, and Louisa Olafuyi, producer at Kunda Kids. The discussion is moderated by Vanessa Ann Sinden, producer and founder of Amahle Media.



Nosipho Maketo Van Den Bragt
(South Africa)

Setting your compass: how to navigate an early career in an unpredictable industry?

How do you find your place in this fast-moving industry? What traits stand the test of time?

Besides skills and a great portfolio, what mindsets are critical to develop? How do you navigate the challenges of an early career and bridge the space between artistic goals and your professional reality?

Join a panel of international experience and voices, like Karen Dufilho, Multi-Academy-Award winning Executive Producer, Leslie Ezeh, Director of Operations at ASIFA Hollywood, and Adja Mariam Soro, CEO of Studio Kä and Editor-in-Chief of SPARK.



Adja Mariam Soro
(Côte d'Ivoire)

Pathé Touch Afrique: leading distributor in Africa

Discover the editorial strategy and projects sought after by Pathé Touch Afrique, the leading film distribution in French-speaking Africa.

Pathé Touch Afrique is developing a dual editorial strategy: supporting films with high commercial potential (blockbusters, animation, family films) and promoting projects led by African talent or linked to African issues..

The session is moderated by Sebastien Onomo, President and Producer at Special Touch Studios.



Sébastien Onomo
(Cameroon)



Somto Ajuluchukwu
(Nigeria)

Augmented creativity: redefining the animation studio with AI

How AI changes the studio operating system, without replacing the artist.

This panel map the new roles, the checkpoints that protect originality and the pipeline logic that makes high-quality output repeatable, so studios scale production while keeping creative authorship intact.

The panel features experienced professionals such as Somto Ajuluchukwu, Founder of Vortex Animation, Coco Nitta, Founder and President of Kamikai, and Quentin Auger, Co-founder and Head of Innovation at Dada ! Animation.

When animation goes live

Designing and animating creatures for live-action films.

This panel brings together character designers and heads of animation to explore the artistic and technical bridges between animation and VFX, as well as the specific challenges of bringing creatures to life in a live-action environment.

Sidney Kombo, Senior Animation Supervisor at Weta FX, will share his experience alongside industry professionals such as Arslan Elver, Senior Animation Supervisor at Framestore, and Yvon Jardel, Creative Director at Rodeo FX Originals.



Sidney Kombo
(Congo)

France: animation co-production with cinémas du monde

An overview of how the Aide aux cinémas du monde scheme is being overhauled (2026) and the new opportunities this opens up for the funding of animation films.

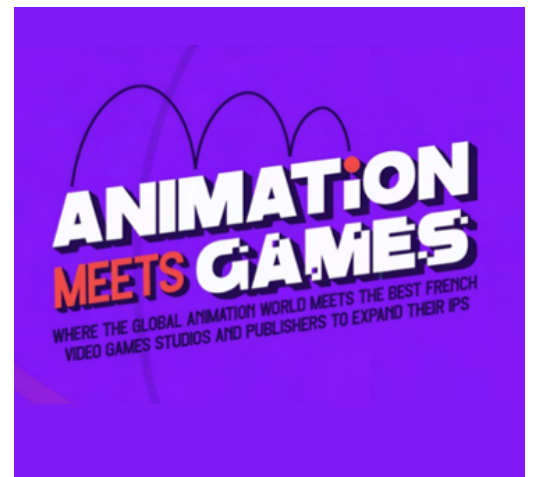
The ACM serves as a gateway to co-production with France by supporting animation, fiction or documentary film projects that are inspired by an auteur's vision and conceived for both theatrical release as well as major international festivals.



Animation meets games – matchmaking session

Are you an animation studio looking to meet video game professionals? join a dedicated matchmaking day bringing together animation studios and video game industry players. The goal is to create opportunities for collaboration around intellectual property (IP).

You will have the opportunity to meet video game studios that may offer to adapt their IP, or that have the expertise to adapt yours.



Mifa Invest

An exclusive program intended for animation executives, studios, producers, investors and international financing partners, focusing on the shifting balance between public and private funding in the animation industry.

This high-level, selective event will bring together key industry players, entrepreneurs, investment experts and institutions to examine the shifts in financing and discern the economic models shaping the future. Through keynote presentations, case studies and expert panels, speakers will share their insights, strategies and views on new business models that are transforming the industry.



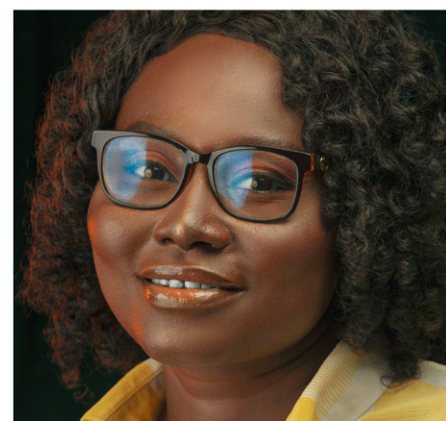
Conférences Mifa

MIFA CONFERENCES

New voices in stop motion

Come and discover the upcoming artist in stop motion from across the world as well as the training scaffolding that makes it all possible.

Esther Kemi Gbadamosi is a Nigerian creative director and recognized stop motion filmmaker. She is also the founder of Radioxity Academy, an initiative dedicated to advancing stop motion animation and creative technology education in Africa.



Esther Kemi GBADAMOSI
(Nigeria)



Kachi Benson
(Nigeria)

Animating resistance: responsibility in nonfiction storytelling

Exploring animation as a language of witness, empathy and ethical storytelling in unprecedented times.

Animation has long tackled hard truths, visualised complex realities and conveyed deeply human experiences. Today, it plays a leading role in how nonfiction storytelling functions as a form of resistance and resilience, as filmmakers increasingly use the medium to challenge silencing forces, bear witness and build empathy.

This session explores how animation serves as a vital language for impact-driven narratives, the creative and ethical responsibilities involved in working with participants, and why animation remains essential for uplifting voices that might otherwise go unheard.

With the participation of Joel Kachi Benson (Creative Director JB MULTIMEDIA STUDIOS) to talk about his first hybrid feature-length documentary.

Animasyros Mediterranean Spotlight

Highlighting exciting new short film and tv series projects from Greece, Croatia, Lebanon, Albania and Tunisia.

The Animasyros International Animation Festival proudly presents the second Animasyros Mediterranean Spotlight — a vibrant showcase born from the International Mifa Campus Pitching Workshop held during the Agora Pitching Forum 2025.

This exciting initiative empowers emerging talents from the Mediterranean region offering them a unique opportunity to pitch their projects at the Mifa in Annecy.

The event is made possible with the support of the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the French Institute in Paris, the French Institutes of Greece, Croatia, Lebanon and Tunisia, as well as the French Embassy in Serbia and Albania.

Animation journeys take flight — starting in the Med!



“For me, the greatest value of Annecy is the impact this experience continues to have on the projects we create, the relationships we build, and the way we imagine the future of animation on the African continent.”

Richard Opoku Agyeman

Co-founder of Acute
Formula LLC

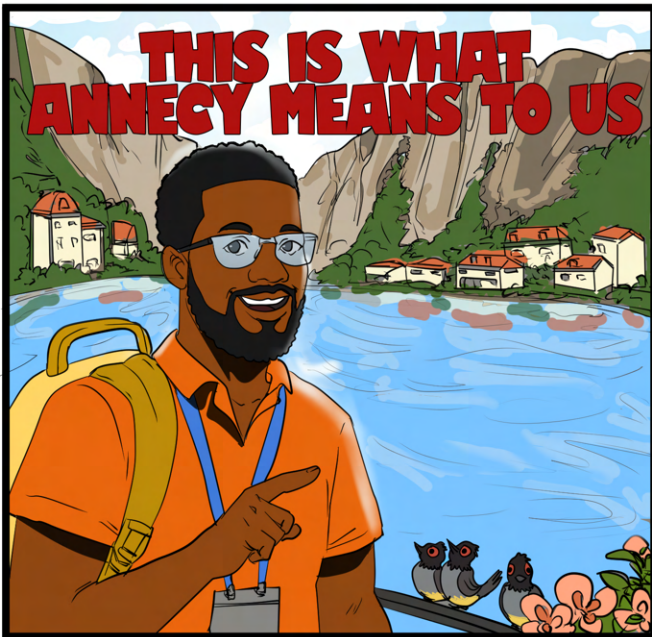


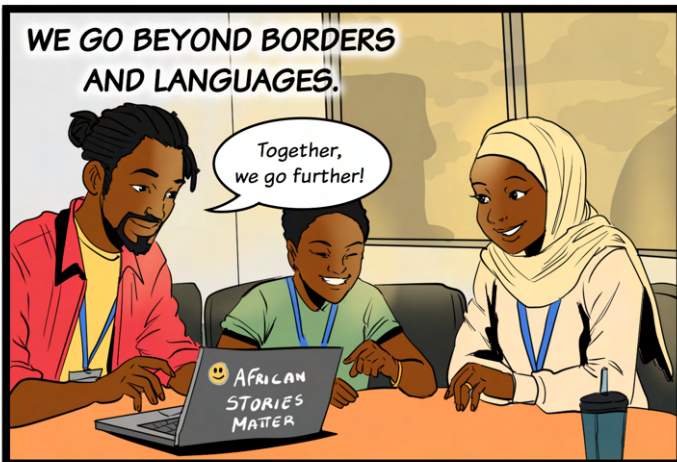
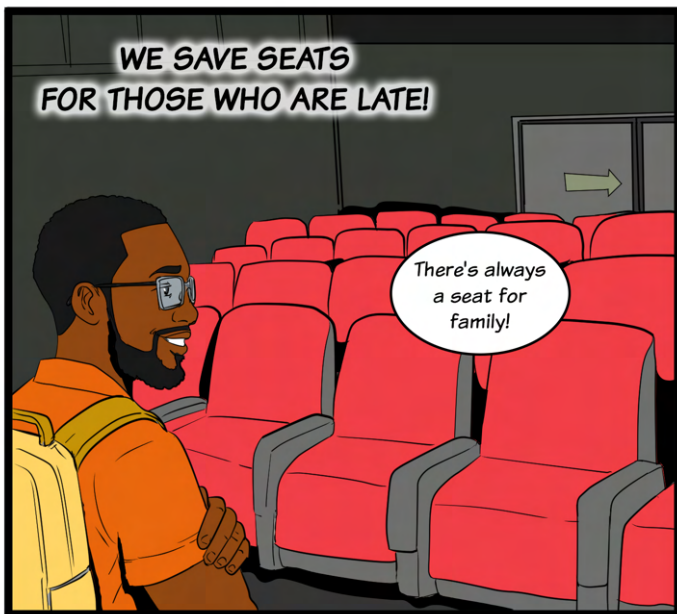
ANNÉE 2026

FESTIVAL

INTERNATIONAL DU FILM D'ANIMATION

THE NOTES





“ Being at MIFA showed me that the world is hungry for authentic African stories. Not the safari and poverty clichés, but the everyday joy, the family chaos, the music, the texture of real life here. ”

Minasie Terefe

Founder of Behagerlij Studio
Ethiopia