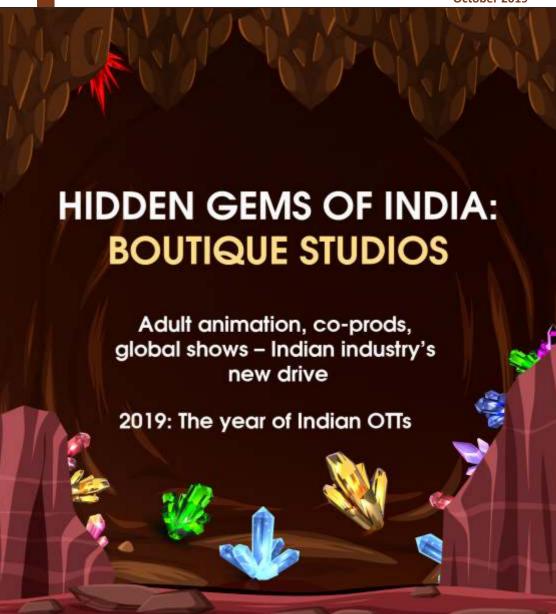
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annes ahoy! It's that time of the year when the video content creation and distribution industry heads down to the French Riviera just before winter begins to set in for the world's largest content market MIPCOM. And it's the time when we at AnimationXpress.com take the efforts to come out with a special issue of this magazine to make international buyers and sellers more aware about what's going on in India

A lot has happened since the last issue. Economies, the world over are groaning and moaning, following the spats between China and the US and Brexit. In India, growth which was going at F1 race car speed, has seen a slowing down. Banks are in trouble, courtesy many bad loans. Sales almost in every sector have seen a slow down, automobiles being the most obvious.

But the buoyancy in entertainment continues. Investment in TV shows, premium originals, documentaries and animation, continues even though most brands have slashed their ad budgets. Thankfully, subscription revenues from cable TV and DTH have risen for the TV channels.

Hence, new animation series continue to launch on kids channels. New animation genres are being examined and the desire to create programmes that will appeal to Gen Y has arisen within broadcasters. This story has been documented on page 06.

Boutique creative animation hotshops or boutiques are seeing tremendous success. The founders of these love their creative independence and you can find out more about their rationale on page 22.

TV ads have used animation in the past, but the latter is seeing a little more rapid uptake, even though higher volumes and lower budgets have led to quality being compromised. One of the pioneers of the use of animation in Indian TVCs, Suresh Eriyat of Eeksaurus, discusses their evolution on page 15.

OTT is the buzzword all over the world as the sector has been booming in almost every country with platforms popping up by the minute. How is the sector doing in India?

This and other questions are answered on page 29.

MIPCOM this year is special for India because two country pavilions – the SEPC India and the Electronics and Software Council pavilions have come up- giving a great opportunity to smaller studios and distributors to participate in MIPJunior and MIPCOM at subsidised rates. This is well documented in the article on page 40.

Of course, there are several other profiles of studios which can be found in this issue of Spark.

The young team at AnimationXpress.com have put their heart and soul putting together this issue. Here's hoping the efforts they have put in will resonate with you.

Happy reading!

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Adult animation, co-prods, global shows – Indian industry's new drive

Parth Kaushik

ndian animation is at an inflection point. From being outsourced service providers to content creators and intellectual property owners, Indian animation industry has gone through quite a metamorphosis.

With a flurry of channels like Disney, Pogo, Cartoon Network, Nick, Discovery Kids and Sony YAY! catering to more than 200 million kids, the kids genre has seen a conspicuous rise in viewership over the years.

Big players in the Indian animation industry, like Green Gold Animation, Cosmos-Maya, DQ Entertainment, Toonz Animation and others are increasingly gaining recognition globally, thanks to their continuous efforts to penetrate international territories with their original IPs, or acquisition of local companies, or setting up outposts in those regions.

Amid the glory and success, the sector has had its own share of highs and lows. Animation enthusiasts and aficionados continue to pose questions like: can the Indian animation sector enter the mainstream of animated content globally, just like any series or movie emerging from the US, Japan, Canada or France? Additionally, when will the studios, broadcasters and OTT platforms expand the animation landscape from a purely kids category to a diversified mix of family-oriented animated content or a genre that also caters to older audiences?

"We started our journey in 2010 with local content. And we have come a long way exploring different genres, formats, target groups. However, we still have many more miles to go in terms of genres. In the next few years I think the time will come when animation will no longer be perceived in India as a medium for kids because I think a generation which has grown up on animation is ready for adult animation," says Nickelodeon programming head Anu Sikka.

The generation she is referring to is Gen Z that consumed a diet of Indian and western animated content in the nineties. They





Motu Patlu

were kids then; they are in their twenties now and have witnessed a paradigm shift in the zeitgeist. Having tasted kids animation, observers believe that they could have an appetite for adult animation as well, which spells opportunity for those in the sector.

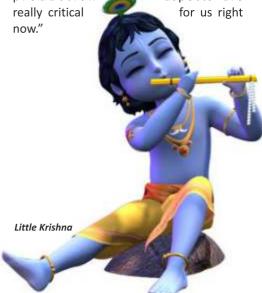
Sikka goes a little further. Says she: "I think animation as a genre is something that is ready now to be consumed not just by kids, but it should be presented in a manner so that families and teenagers can also consume it."

While animation content has progressed by leaps and bounds from 2D flash and cell animation to 3D CGI, a larger share of kids eyeballs, revenues and the bottom lines have not kept pace.

Sony YAY! Programming head Ronojoy Chakraborty says the advertisers will have to step up their investments in marketing to kids: "Animation as an industry is growing at a healthy pace of 10 per cent but producers depend on broadcasters

who in turn rely on advertisers for financing. The kids category is one-fourth the size of the entire general entertainment channel category and it only gets one-tenth of the overall advertising revenue. Once the monetary aspect improves, more animation programmes will be commissioned including a variety of programmes which is eventually going to help the entire industry. We are ultimately appealing to the citizens of the future."

Reliance Animation COO Tejonidhi Bhandare gives another perspective. Shares he: "A lot of things are opening up for animation. When we talk about animation there are three separate categories- one is preschool, then we have a six to nine years category and then there is a slightly older age-group which has actually not been tapped in India. Above all, we have family-oriented animation. We need to focus on the talent and how we build up that talent. Talent and preproduction aspects are





Creating a global IP: Over the past decade, India has given rise to a fleet of original IPS; out of which many have managed to strike a chord with the global audience, yet media observers feel that's merely the tip of the iceberg. Notwithstanding the enormous success, there is still a whole lot of ground to cover and inputs to absorb in the animation space before we can conceive many IPs capable of resonating beyond our borders.

How do we tell Indian stories that appeal to international audiences? Sharing insights about the ways in which Indian animators can appeal to overseas viewers, DQ Animation COO Manoj Mishra says: "The demands vary from country to



Berry Bees

country. As far as the US is concerned, it's more of a demand for original programming which is coming in. As far as Europe is concerned, it's all the classic shows that play an important role. If companies are not getting the desired ratings and monetisation domestically, you've got to go after the audience that goes beyond India."

Having paved the way for domestic content with India's most popular homegrown IP *Chhota Bheem*, Green Gold Animation has championed the IP revolution and made massive waves worldwide. Especially with its recent benchmark IP *Mighty Little*



The Jungle Book

Bheem that has been rocking on Netflix at number one in the preschool category.

Notes Green Gold founder Rajiv Chilaka: "What I would love to see is more successful studios. As someone who has been running a studio, for the last 18 years or so, I realise their pain. In the sense, at first you have to deal with the cash-flow problem which every studio has. On the other hand, we have challenges like having to constantly keep on upgrading.

Every year, the hardware that releases is far better than before. We also have software upgrades. Pretty much, by the time you do all this, you know, you can't pay salaries. Then there are new technologies being invented. New creative ideas are coming through. We will make content for teenagers to sixty year olds to young adults; all that will happen, Yes, but most importantly, we need more successful studios."

Highlighting the problems that afflicts the animation scene, he says, "Another problem that we want to eradicate is that we need more young guys coming in who are as passionate as we saw in the batches of 2005-2010. We need more young blood coming into this industry. The advantage for India is that we have so many kids channels and OTT players looking at us. We have the opportunity to reach out to the Indian diaspora. I think we need to do global shows."

Co-productions: The world is steadily shrinking into a global village and co-productions treaties are testaments to that. Digital platforms have played a key role in facilitating the reach of content to different parts of the globe. Cosmos Maya's content has aired in more than 150 countries, reaching almost all corners of the world.

Says Cosmos Maya senior VP revenue and corporate strategy Devdatta Potnis, "We produce to the tune of 50 half hours of animation per month. And the fact that India is growing so much on all fronts, digital is coming up, broadcasters are also growing, there are many opportunities. So that's really a great area for us to be there

in. We just finalised nine new shows in the domestic market. Couple of months before that, we had signed three European coproduction deals. As far as co-productions are concerned, there are virtually 12 new shows going on at the moment."

Addressing the regnant need to go up the value chain in the co-production space, Mishra expresses: "What I feel very strongly is that we don't need to be the minority co-production partner on international shows; we need to be the lead producer. We need to have stories coming out. We need to have those partners getting tied up from Europe or US or other parts and we need to have those anchor broadcasters from the international community. And we have been successfully doing it. On our



The New Psammy Show



Pakdam Pakdai

shows like Jungle Book, Robin Hood, Peter Pan or The New Psammy Show which we just released in China on CCTV and it's the number one there at this moment."

Reflecting on the subject of creating globally-relatable content, Sikka points out, "The only way we can go up the value chain is when we start telling our stories. With the belief, that our stories are strong enough."

Demand for Government Subsidies: While the governments in the west have facilitated the cause of animation with enormous amount of subsidies, the same can't be said about India. Speaking about the importance of government subsidies in the animation sphere Potnis says, "In the last couple of years I have had conversations with studios from Ireland. Canada and Australia. And just to compile the kind of support that they get by way of subsidy amount; the tune of the volume that they get is like 30 to 40 per cent of the budget. And we stand nowhere in that sense. What these international producers find fascinating is the volumes that we deliver because one has to play on the strengths. We don't have the government support, as evolved an audience and spending power. One thing that coproductions have helped us do is, scale up on the quality front. I think the greatest story ever has been an Indian story. It has all the masala. In the era of OTT platforms, there are many opportunities."

While roaring successes like *Pakdam Pakdai*, *The Jungle Book* and *Mighty Little Bheem* have managed to capture imaginations across the globe, the Indian animation industry is yet to ride the international wave in the larger scheme of things.

Indian storytellers are beginning to get a firmer grasp over global sensibilities; traces of which can be found in the OTT specials and co-production deals that are being increasingly stitched in service of richer and resonant animated content streamed for global consumption.

Given the rapid digitisation, efficient workforce, cheap data rates and cost-effective production environment, we are sure the industry will scale greater heights in the years to come!



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Tavrohi Animations: An indie studio with a heart

n February 2018, in Gurugram, a former army man and a signal and image processing entrepreneur, Colonel Rohit Kataria, was mulling over what he would do now that he had sold his software company to an international firm. An opportunity popped up in the form of an existing animation studio which had 12 animation professionals on its rolls.



Kataria along with cofounder Nidish got together these 12 storytellers to form the core team and created a new studio named as Tavrohi, combining the names of their daughters Tavishi and Arohi.

Their first assignment came from the Rajat Sharma run India TV in the shape of a show Oh My God (OMG) which was a series of short spoofs of all things political. Thus began the journey of Tavrohi Animations.

Since then, Tavrohi has grown rapidly and the 12 have swollen to more than 100. With a heart solely driven by the stories they tell, it comes as no surprise that the studio bagged the award for, 'The Best Indie Studio' at AnimationXpress.com's ANN Awards in the very first year of its inception. The studio takes pride in being an artist and a story driven studio.

The environment in the company brims with positivity, kindness and a zeal that is generally rare. "This workplace clearly stands out in a corporate world, full of stringent hierarchies and talent withholding politics, Tavrohi feels like home," says Tavrohi Animations creative director Ankur Chauhan.

An intern further adds, "It feels like working with teachers, who have patience and vision that looks beyond mere insecurities and fear. Everyone is willing to teach just as much as they are willing to



Oh My God



Star Screen Awards 2018 animated nominations

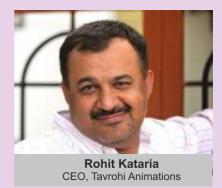
The driving force unquestionably has been Rohit, an Indian army veteran. He infuses the values of honesty, integrity, discipline and order to this wonderfully creative but chaotic group of artists. His "never say die!" attitude is what drives them, added with his sense of humour as he walks around spreading joy and cheer in the room.

Tavrohi Animations' head of production Asrar Khan, reveals that the content emerging from the studio straddles the world of satire, politics, cricket, bollywood and the wonderful world of kids entertainment, expanding into yoga, adult and family entertainment, e-learning and edutainment, AR/VR and gaming. He elaborates that Tavrohi specialises in working under stringent deadlines and can handle the most challenging of animation projects. "We'd like to really grow and know we can produce world class content."

Following the popular political satire - *OMG*, the studio also hit a 'six' by creating the much loved series of cricketing spoofs for the Indian Premier League (IPL) and ICC cricket World Cup. Creating the animated nominations for the Star Screen Awards was great fun, the team recalls. Tavrohi received much praise for the 'Khelo India' mascots—Jaya and Vijay.

Rohit reveals that Tavrohi's very first

original TV series is soon to be broadcast by a top kids TV broadcaster. Adding another feather in its cap, is the series *War Stories - Stories of Valour*, an anthology of movies featuring war heroes from India which will soon be released on an OTT platform. With a clientele as diverse as Google, India TV, NFDC, Star Sports,



Patanjali, Byju's, Star TV and more, the studio has clearly traversed some distance in a very short time.

At Tavrohi Animations the team believes in two pillars, each as vital as the other.

- **Creative innovation**: To tell stories like never before. To make and create an everlasting impact as the studio strives to perfect the art of storytelling.
- Technological innovation and excellence: The idea is to strive to set benchmarks in 3D animation and storytelling to improve productivity and communication quality.

Each member of this talented family resonates with these ideals. To further elaborate Tavrohi managing director Arti Kataria says, "We do not fear challenges, we fear an unsatisfied audience. We do not fear impossible deadlines, we fear a lost smile and a story left untold."



Star Screen Awards 2018 animated nominations

"We will be scaling up and expanding our catalogue by adding co-production and outsourcing partners to produce more original content," adds Rohit.

A sentiment echoed by creative director, Ravi Rao and creative producer Anand Pandey. The trio claims that this confidence is backed by a dedicated team of creative minds having varied experience and a reputed body of work, ranging from production managers, script writers, sound and FX experts, animators, modelers, lighting and surfacing artists, riggers, compositors and production coordinators.

the world."

He adds, "We want to build artists whose creativity is nurtured, where all of them continue to learn and grow together. Where there are no breaks on one's creativity as they explore the far and

beyond, the inside and the within."

Rohit says that "Tavrohi is not as much of a

studio as it is an artist, it is a living,

breathing, dreaming human being with the

soul of an artist. Tavrohi is a storyteller with a beautiful soul. It's a weaver of dreams,

who knows no bounds like the stories she

tells, as she goes around sharing them with



The gleam on his face is evident as he speaks of the qualities he looks for, when collaborating with companies and other studios. He says that it is very simple, in order to become a part of Tavrohi, one needs to dream and breathe creativity. "We, at Tavrohi Animations Studio always welcome young, creative and energetic people and equally passionate partners. We have built a place to nurture art, and all we ask is to never stop dreaming. Or as we like to say it at the studio, 'The bigger the dream, the better."

Animation in TV ads: A historical perspective

Suresh Eriyat

nimation in advertising is a good idea to begin with! Being in the Indian advertising industry both as an animation film maker and a live action director, I have witnessed a wavering trend in the way animation is perceived by the industry folks.

I don't think the audience has had any preference for or against it, as they have consumed whatever was fed by the industry folks who are constantly double guessing on their behalf.

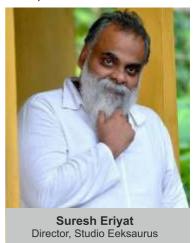
Then: In the year 1998, when I started off, animation was used as a decoration or an embellishment in ads. A cute character would sign off the ad with a chipmunk tone or a few motion graphics would be used to help demonstrate a product's sections.

CGI or 3D animation was extensively used for product stories. But very rarely animation was used to tell an entire story! One of the reasons was, and still is, that animation is perceived largely as 'cartoons' and not for the grown ups. If there is a kid's product to be promoted, somehow animation was preferred.

So in our early days at Famous House of Animation, (a company I founded in collaboration with Famous Studios) we pushed animation through many creatives. One of our first films (that was fortunately not for kids!) was for Novartis's fertiliser division, through ad agency FCB Ulka.

There was a trend in looking down at animation film makers as purely 'technical' people who would know the craft of animation well but not the art of film making. So those days we were not allowed to design music and sound tracks for our own films. The agency used to take our visual line up and created a sound track on their own. Many a times the 'unholy marriage' never worked out as the audio tracks didn't compliment the animation. With a lot of persuasion and 'show and tell' to convince them otherwise, they opened up to giving us the full film's production. And with one success following another, we were able to introduce a lot of advertising styles and mediums especially in animation.

Then there was a flurry of ad films that used animation in the first decade of this century. We introduced stop-motion animation with Amaron, Smirnoff, ICICI Chintamani along with many other firsts.



People started opening up to using different animations styles other than the classical Disney, and it was according to me, the golden period for animation in ads.



Vodafone Zoozoos ad

More and more animation studios got into this, from 2000 to 2008. We could see many animated ad films from India every year, lifting the quality standards each time.

Today: The speed of productions and requirements have grown multifold. With deadlines shrinking, the general quality expectations have also come down. With digital intervention in advertising, the requirement for more films per product has become the priority than making one great film that could do all the talking. Budgets that were spent on one single spectacular film are split across the production costs of many. So the quality that one could boast of

is on a bit of a downswing. I think this spiralling due to evolution will happen till there is a state of stability.

The films released during the Indian Premier League (IPL) some years ago by Mondelez's Cadbury Gems, using stopmotion animation of real candies was probably the trend starter. Even the Vodafone

Zoozoos series is a good example.

Increased media budgets that will allow wider exposure with lower production costs has become the mantra. But this also gets shortchanged when the international awards giants like Cannes Lions, Clio or D & AD trends showed trends otherwise.

Somehow Indian advertising trends are heavily influenced by what happened world over the previous year simply because awards play a huge part in terms of inspiring the clients as well as agency creatives. Some of our films for Rajasthan Tourism, Rotary won many international awards and they kind of inspired many to think more animation films. Chulbuli films by Vaibhav Studios, Zoozoos by Nirvana Films played a big role in bringing back animation as a mainstream popular medium. Even though Zoozoos were shot live with people wearing special costumes, the widespread perception that they were animated, really made many wonder and choose animation. Many of our briefs eventually were to create a family of characters like Zoozoos. Again when you set a trend you get a lead and when you follow a trend you trail. Few campaigns fell flat when they tried to ape the success of Zoozoos.



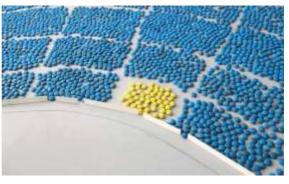
Rajasthan Tourism ad



The idea matters: While animation as a

medium can make extremely complex concepts simple to communicate, the confidence amongst the clients is still low compared to use of celebrities. Celebrity endorsements always work well in advertising as the reachability with a celebrity can in no way be comparable to that of a silly animated character who is unknown. But what they don't get is the power of an animated character when you bank on him. Disney's Mickey is a very good example of that.

inclined animation's popularity too.



Cadbury Gems ad

Still, the success of the Madhya Pradesh tourism ad by Hungry Films which used animation brilliantly to take one through MP's magical plains and some other examples have surged the artistically



Apple ad

Again while being a jury at the D&AD or Adfest, one sees animation in India as a very nascent medium as the brilliance of international animation both in terms of idea and execution is way too evolved for

us. The brilliant animation ad for Tinder or the stop-motion promo for Channel 4's 'The Great Bake off' or the hugely popular *Dumb ways to Die* campaign are some of the examples. The global trends in animation with Apple's recent animated ad among several others also is pushing India to think of animated ad campaigns. We are seeing some films of late after a few years of a lull.



The budgets and timeline: Internationally, an animated ad or a VFX heavy film would normally command at least double the budget of a regular live action film. In India it is absolutely the opposite. If it is animated, pay half and VFX heavy films are also not spared.

The biggest resistance for the ad folks to go for animation is the timeline. If John Lewis would be locking their script in January 2019 for their Christmas 2019 release, our scripts would be going through iterations even a week before Diwali for a pre Diwali

release.

Where would one make an animation film in such situations? The clients in India are also not into planning way ahead in terms of their marketing and product launch timelines. So their predicament is passed on to ad agencies who will further burn their midnight oil to come up with some brilliant ideas for the campaigns and the same pressure is percolated down to the production houses who will have to churn out the films in impossible timelines and if it is an animation studio at the receiving end, then there is no question of even burning the midnight oil but they will have to burn, (without any oil), all through the day and night for weeks to crack something great!◆◆

(This article has been contributed by Studio Eeksaurus director Suresh Eriyat and AnimationXpress.com does not necessarily subscribe to these views).



Infobells Interactive Solutions: Perfect place for edutainment and infotainment

ith the changing times, the ways of education and educating minds are also changing. Now, it's more of pictorial or visual impressionistic teaching. With extreme digitisation and slashing down of data rates, the internet penetration has cut across the tier two and tier three cities as well. Thus, it has become the perfect time for content creators who are experimenting with different ideas and creating video content that attracts and retains audience



attention, including that of kids.

Videos are becoming an extremely effective medium for infotainment. They are much more effective in instilling thoughts and ideas in vibrant minds. Here's where Infobells Interactive Solutions comes in to entertain and educate young minds with enthralling videos. They make learning fun and take the experience to the next level.

Helmed by Kuber Natarajan and his wife Jayalakshmi Kuber, Infobells Solutions offers the simplest learning solutions for young children with colourful videos and captivating music to keep them hooked. The creative and interactive videos introduce various concepts easily in a fun way that makes a lasting impact. The team ideates and comes up with extremely

attractive and interesting products to promote cultural and moral values for children of all ages. With the finest infrastructure for video production, Infobells produces animation videos that cater to a diverse audience. They take their video projects to the next level with the experienced team of researchers, content development experts and animation specialists who have massive experience in animation design.

The studio has created a sizeable number of followers through its infotainment videos on YouTube. The Infobells channel collectively has over 44 Million subscribers making it the largest regional edutainment channel in India. The interactive videos are dubbed in various languages like Hindi, Tamil, Kannada and Telugu, so that children remain connected to their roots.

Altogether, the Infobells Youtube channel has a massive consumption of approximately 50 million views daily, it



and acts as a bridge to develop great bonding between parents and their little ones, where they engage in singing and playing together.

Featuring popular characters, the channel's regional rhymes are sure to capture and stimulate the minds of young ones. Rhymes instilling local cultural and moral values will grab the child's attention instantly and make them watch again and again. The rhymes also showcase positive family relationships, and make a child feel relaxed through melodious music and adorable animation.

The channel's creators have their concept

development experts who finetune any idea to perfection followed by the content and script writing team Chinnu, Chitty developing the flow of the video to ensure a smooth storvline. Then the designers begin working on the animation and graphic part of the videos to provide rich content which engages the target audience. Infobells caters to different industries and

has assisted organisations to create videos that are used for marketing as well as inhouse learning and training.

The studio produces myriad and expansive content like popular nursery rhymes, stories told in a humorous way, thrilling songs, entertaining anecdotes and episodes. Throughout the intent is to

incorporate elements of creativity and technology to ensure audience appeal and effective engagement.

Infobells' characters Chinnu, Chitty, and Pappu and Lalaji are hugely popular and have a massive following among kids as they keep following the trio's new adventures or songs. Big brands have started to feature these characters in their advertisements as young parents spend quality time watching the videos together.

The team is currently working on a series that consists of 20 episodes, titled *The Adventures of Chinnu & Crazy Pappu*. Each episode will be of seven minutes, based on

real life challenges filled with adventures, mysteries and chances to laugh out loud.

Infobells is also looking for partners to expand and take the content to other platforms and OTT services and to coproduce new IPs which are under development or in production. Infobells Solutions' mission is to create attractive and creative products that help children imbibe cultural and moral values. It believes in making learning fun and are

continuously finding new ways to make it so.

Supervised by the creative minds of the Natarajan duo, the studio aims to deliver quality edutainment products that instil cultural knowledge in children at a young and impressionable age and ensure that they grow up with a strong value system.



INDUSTRY TESTIMONIALS



Been a fan of AnimationXpress since its inception. As an industry, we are very proud that we have somebody to represent and you are doing a great job representing us. Fabulous Work Animation Xpress!

Rajiv Chilaka
Founder & CEO
Green Gold Animation



Animationxpress is a great way to look at the industry, great way to keep up with the news projects and updates. It's great to have you guys putting it all together.

Tim McGovern

VFX veteran

DNEG



Animationxpress is perhaps the only portal that not only showcases AVGC stories from India but highlights major projects from all across the world; be it Hollywood or Indian film Industry.

Harry Hingorani VFX Supervisor redchillies vfx



AnimationXpress has aggregated a relevant community of industry professionals, artists & technicians in animation, gaming & VFX.

Biren Ghose
Country Head
Technicolor India



AnimationXpress has been a pillar of support for the comic industry which covers the domain through research and insights. I consider this as a one-stop destination to read about the happenings in the world of Indian comics.

Abhijeet Kini Comic Artist



Animation Xpress is the defacto voice of the animation and gaming industry in India and pretty much the gateway for international companies to be aware about Indian creative industry.

Rajat Ojha Founder & CEO Gamitronics

Boutique Creative Studios : India's Hidden Gems

Sharmindrila Paul

ven as the big boys of Indian animation – the Green Golds, the Cosmos Mayas, the DQs, and Toonz Animation – are making waves globally, a new breed of studios is emerging all over India. Run by feisty entrepreneurs with a flair for animation creativity and a streak to develop world class content, these boutique studios are gradually spreading their wings outwards and beginning to get noticed.

Not just by Indian broadcasters, but by international TV channels and production houses who have been scanning India's animation ecosystem in search of talent oozing chutzpah. Unlike their larger brethren which have 500 or more professionals on their rolls, the boutiques work with small teams of between 50 to 250. One such boutique studio which has been finding solutions in this challenging environment, is philmCGI. Five years in the industry, it has collaborated with noted filmmakers, producers and artists, on characters and narratives that last and has been focused on creating content that is relatable and has international appeal.

Says philmCGI managing director Anand Bhanushali, "We (myself and my business partner Arpan Gaglani) wanted to have our own studio. In 2013, we finally put our idea into reality. We really wanted to bring our own stories to life and produce content that we are proud of. Since we didn't have any investor backing, we started looking for service work for

financial sustainability.

"In October 2013 both of us started with our car as our office. We got our first break in January 2014 which was to supervise a VFX shoot and VFX for an ad film. With that work, we were able to rent a small place in Malad, Mumbai and started our operations."

With the service work, co-production opportunities came and they explored those spaces and have two successful co-productions in their bag till date. One with a big production house in France. Being a self-funded studio, they approached a bank and even mortgaged their house to fund the projects and have full freedom on creative decisions.

Adds Bhanushali, "The most important part would be funding. Internationally there are government funds available, but in India, unfortunately we don't. So we had to pump in our own money for our IP. Thus, our choices were very carefully taken and we focused on quality driven content and good storytelling. The idea was to create something unique and for us, it was important because if we are collaborating with anyone, it has to be global. Fortunately the IP was released last year in MIPCOM





Monster App and got an overwhelming response. We're thinking of funding season two."

philmCGI specialises in 2D/3D animation - from conceptualisation to screen writing to designing to delivering the final frame for feature films, series work, OTT, and edutainment. It also provides VFX services right from shoot supervision to delivering high-end VFX shots for all formats.

"We focused on quality driven content, good storytelling and compelling scripts. We studied the IP if that was something that we wanted to really work on including the budget and made sure it was internationally relevant," says Bhanushali.

The studio operates out of a spacious rented house away from the hustle bustle in Pune's Koregaon park area, surrounded by trees with open space, garden. There are high chances one would find an artist sipping a cup of tea/coffee on a regular day



Bombay Rose

and doing his work.

Another studio that is getting a lot of mentions in the right circles is Paperboat Design Studios which delivered an internationally co-produced film *Bombay Rose*. A 2D hand-painted animated film, it went on to become the first Indian animation film to open at the Venice Film International Critics' section on 29 August. Paperboat's partners in the film included Cinestaan Film Company, France's Films d'ici and UK's Goldfinch Entertainment.

Directed by actress and animator Gitanjali Rao, the animation blends in such a way with the story that looks like a poetry in motion.



Goopi Gawaiya Bagha Bajaiya

Earlier Paperboat had delivered the highly acclaimed animated film *Goopi Gawaiya Bagha Bajaiya (GGBB)* directed by animator Shilpa Ranade.

Comments Paperboat Design Studios creative director Aashish Mall: "We are really proud of considering ourselves as a boutique studio. We started with three artists, grew to 30, then grew to 90 and

then to 150. We are expanding slowly in terms of content and other aspects, but from heart we are still boutique."

Lately, the studio has also produced an extremely funny, engaging and adorable animation series for Discovery Kids titled Fukrey Boyzzz. Mall points out that continuing to create top end series can be challenging. Says he: "The main challenge in the industry is the workforce. We have very few animation institutes that equip their students to work in studios. In effect, we have to train these youngsters when we employ them and that's a burden on our budgets. To address this we are starting animation education programmes with prestigious universities across the country to bridge the gap between animation education and profession. We need to create this system that constantly



generates new talent. This will not only help our own studio but will also help other studios."

Focusing on animation education, Paperboat has a plan to open an animation school along with a studio in Kashmir. They are optimistic and hopeful that it works out soon. Paperboat prioritises on quality content and thinks co-production helps in many ways.

CG animation studio Assemblage Entertainment founded by industry veteran AK MadMax Madhavan has taken the route of co-production with likes of Mike Young's Splash Entertainment (for Norm of the North), Ozzie studio Flying Bark Productions and Telegael Teoranta (for Blinky Bill the movie), Ambi group, AIC Studios, Locus Creative Studios (for Arctic Dogs).

MadMax started the studio in 2014, along with Upen Desai, in a very small office in Mumbai with a contract to work on two international films. Soon the employee roster swelled to 70 and thanks to his long-standing experience in animation (he was the CEO of the now shut Crest Animation) he delivered the films on time. Today, the studio has expanded to 280 and is working on several projects — both domestic and international.

Assemblage is probably the only Indian animation studio to enjoy access to completion financing from international markets. "Those in the animation industry know of our impeccable focus on delivering on quality as well as our ability to meet deadlines," says Madmax. "We have also bitten only what we could chew."

Currently, Madhavan is co-producing a show about the very popular newspaper daily cartoon character in the Times of India called the *Common Man*. And Assemblage is in conversation with several international studios for co-prods, as well as working on original stories in house.

For the boutique studios, the path has surely not been a cake walk as they face creative and financial challenges. Vaibhav Studios founder and director, Vaibhav Kumaresh, the creator of *Lamput* – a series which has found traction across Cartoon Network channels in several markets asserts, "Our greatest challenge is to encourage and nurture unique storytellers and make their visions happen. We do not create content keeping in mind a global audience. In fact personally I don't even 'know' the global audience so I don't know what works for them. I create content that works for me and for the Indian audience. If a global audience respond favourably, it's a bonus! In fact, post any success the path gets tougher. It's because you try to aim even higher the next time. Lamput is no exception."

Mall further describes how they have coped with the issues."We thought to create our own IPs, the kind of stories we want to tell. We found animation as a tool to tell stories and parallely create for channels because we can't fight with them. Bandbudh and Budbak on Discovery Kids was edgy content and the first one to get blurred on a Kids channel. Even, Bombay Rose is mature animated content."

In a country where animation is still considered as a kids medium, these creators are trying to break that norm with



their unique and trendsetting concepts. Mentions Bioscopewala Pictures managing partner Nishith Takia, "We are storytellers and for us animation is just a medium and tool to tell different stories. I'll be 60 in a couple of years and will obviously not write or appreciate enjoy anything that a four year old will do. Our sensibilities are naturally different and designed that will suit the audience here rather than ones sitting in kindergarten. What OTT platforms like Netflix have done is amazing with limited content for adult consumption, I think slowly people will believe and adapt to the market for adult animation. India has 26 states and minimum of 26 different design points. So, if we focus on these, I think we can attract more adult and mature audience."

His studio was behind *Delhi Safari* — an animated feature film — which has done well at the box office. Not only in India but in select international markets.



He also reveals that he has been pitching some interesting work with a number of big names in the OTT industry.

With that, we turn our focus to various OTT platforms which are also eyeing animation as a genre to attract masses and the market. Several animation shows both acquired and original have surfaced on OTT platforms, garnering zillions of views and appreciation.

"Content is really in demand. The next 10 years are going to be great in terms of content. The OTT factor or space that has opened a lot of avenues as lot of content explosion has happened on Netflix, Amazon and others are investing in this genre. They're venturing into the unknown and the budgets are also good," Bhanushali exclaims.

Industry veterans point out that Indian studios must focus on original story-telling and not imitate the west. Notes Mumbaibased iRealities CEO Prasad Ajagaonkar, "I think we are not looking within ourselves. I experimented in 2007 by making an animated film called *Bird Idle* and sold it to Warner Bros. It was the first Hollywood film made in India, but unfortunately YRF Animation bombed, and WB decided not to release it. *Chaar Sahibzaade* came next and became a huge success."

Former Turner International executive director and head kids vertical for south Asia Krishna Desai recently got together with two other TV and film industry executives to set up 369 – a production house to deliver short films, fiction and non-fiction shows, and feature films. He has chosen to abstain from producing kids animated content under the startup. Desai gives the reasons why.

Says he: " Indian animation is still an insignificant part of the Indian GDP as we know it, at least compared to other industries. Where is the profitability in the ecosystem? Then you have challenges in terms of creativity, story wise or talent. We know the quality of talent that's available especially when we talk about the 'boutique' studios. There's high demand but low supply. Thirdly, the IP and rights ownership fight. Now everybody from distribution platforms to content producers to creators to broadcasters - everyone wants to own the IP. Finally, we know the kids genre commands seven per cent of viewership but gets two per cent of revenue, which means that kids channels have very small content budgets.

So there are a lot of things to think and find solutions about before any one gets into animation."

However, there are others like Kumaresh who continue to plod on with their animation dreams in their eyes, no matter what the cost. His studio Vaibhav Studios is responsible for the creative concepts, backgrounds, music and storylines of each 15 second *Lamput* short. But the animation production is done by a studio in Malaysia Inspidea. It was Desai who helped get the project greenlit by the Turner Asia Pacific office. Today it airs on several Turner owned kids channels globally.

Kumaresh has been behind some iconic characters like that of Simpoo, who was a very important part of music channel Channel V. To keep the home fires going he has worked on several TV commercials for which he provided the animation.

He swears by the concept of boutique studio and today his team is only 17 strong. He opines that being small and creative is like working with pure essence with little or no impurity, which is ideal for creative freedom. There are only pros, no cons in this model.

"You decide the kind of work you wish to do and stick to it. This creates a larger sense of ownership. The work created is fresh and unique and is more likely to attract a steady clientele. Also, you get to collaborate with a variety of artists and feed off each other's energies, and avoid monotony. It encourages multitasking resulting in a better understanding of the entire process for each artist. Good artists learn to be good managers which is an ideal combination.

The structure allows team members to also be come decision makers and stakeholders."

Today, his team is working on their own feature film. "We are doing very well," he says. "So much so that we are funding it ourselves."



There are others too who aver that being creative and small is the best to be. Amongst these figure Mumbai-based E Suresh's Studio Eeksaurus, Pune-based Brio Studios which has been developing an original IP *Tibu and Tiblooz* with a team of 20 in a rented office space of around 5,500 sq ft.

"We believe in our project and have invested all our savings in developing *Tibu* and *Tiblooz*. Being small has hellped us and we have been agile," says Amit Ranekar, an ex-Dreamworks employee, and one of the partners of Brio Studios. "We want to create world class animation."

That's what sets the creative boutiques apart. More power to them! ◆◆



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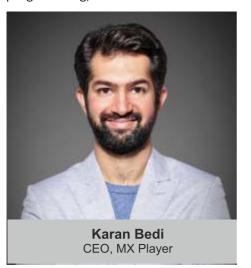
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2019: The year of Indian OTTs

Krishanu Ghosal

s the world increasingly shifts towards a digital paradigm, content creation and consumption is following the same trail. India as a country has an insatiable hunger for content and as the hyper competitive telcos slash prices and bring in lucrative data offers, the online consumption of content is on a steep rise and the OTT gambit is reaching an inflection point.

In comparison to the developed OTT markets, the biggest differentiator is the fact that while digital consumption is on the rise in India, it is not cannibalising traditional media consumption like print or TV. Additionally, in terms of the content programming, OTT content in western



countries is not very different from cable content. However, India never



saw short format series on TV, all it had was long running daily soaps and now OTT has jumped straight to 10-15-20 episode season-based series.

With the rise of multiple OTT players in the system in a short span of time, 2019 has been of utmost importance for the Indian content market

Says MX Player CEO Karan Bedi, "The market is growing like never before but to survive in this ever-changing environment, OTT platforms need to conquer the one important audience the Real Bharat! Indian sensibilities are driven by culture, region, and language. So, the first thing you need to ask is does it appeal to the sensibilities of the audience? If it does not, then they won't come back for more and this is where we as a platform have learnt to leverage our ability to personalise via technology - be it with acquiring and producing more regional content, dubbing, subtitling."

2019 even witnessed O m unconvention al happenings in India's OTT ecosystem. One of such was the collaboration between two major players in the market. In the month of July, this



year, Zee Entertainment Enterprises owned OTT service Zee5 joined hands with Balaji Telefilms owned platform ALTBalaji. The two players, in accordance to the partnership will co-create original content which will be available on both the platforms. This can be crucial in terms of increasing the user base of both the platforms which would like to grow by the SVoD model. ALTBalaji recently also partnered with Microsoft to bring online streaming to offline users with peer-to-peer local Wi-Fi.

Another event that brought in a change in the Indian scenario was the introduction of sachet pricing by the streaming giant Netflix in India. While the scale in India is unparalleled, monetisation seems to be a much more significant challenge in India versus the developed markets, as those markets have traditionally had much more robust monetisation systems in the traditional media sector.

A Netflix spokesperson said, "Our members in India watch more content on our mobiles

than members anywhere else in the world. Recently, we launched our fourth plan in India, in addition to the existing basic, standard and premium plans, for Rs. 199 a month. With this plan, our members can now enjoy all o f Netflix's content—uninterrupted and without ads—in standard definition (SD) on one smartphone or tablet at a time. We strongly believe that this plan broadens

access for Netflix and better suits the audience who prefer watching content on smartphones or tablets. Our other existing plans enable our members to watch Netflix on multiple devices, with multiple concurrent streams in SD, HD, Ultra HD, and 4K."

Very recently, the platform is also allowing non-subscribers to watch the first episode of one of its latest originals, Bard of Blood, possibly in a bid to bring in more subscribers.

70 per cent of Netflix subscribers watch at least one film a week in India and as a percentage of overall time spent on Netflix, film viewing in India is the highest for any country worldwide. The number of films watched per month/per member in India has grown 50 per cent since January 2018. Hence, Netflix is increasingly creating and licensing more and more original content. The immensely popular series, *Sacred Games*, worked wonders for the platform. Two out of every three *Sacred Games* viewers were from outside India.

In addition to subtitles in 24 languages, the show has been dubbed in English, Brazilian Portuguese, Latin, Spanish, Turkish, and is, of course, available in its original language, Hindi. Apart from that, created by Indian animation studio, Green Gold Animation, Mighty Little Bheem had the largest launch of any preschool original to date, and was the second largest launch of any kids original animated series on Netflix.

All the players in the market are pushing for originals. For instance, the platform Hotstar, majorly known for streaming sports content, especially the famed cricket series Indian Premier League has also delved into creating original fiction content. Since June of this year, the platform has launched five originals. Other players like VOOT and Sony Liv have streamed some of the country's biggest esports tournaments. Lesson: Everyone is trying to lure the user with a unique mix of content so they keep coming back to the brand for more

While the subscribers are increasing in numbers and the SVoD model is prevailing in almost all scenarios, a fresh entrant into the market, the aforementioned MX Player, has chosen the AVoD side of things. Says Bedi, "We believe that for an AVOD model to exist effectively, one must have scale. We have over 700 million downloads, 175 million monthly active users with an



average of 42 minutes spent per day on the app by each user. This kind of scale is almost unparalleled in the OTT business and therefore, MX and appeals to potential advertisers, making it a viable business model. For the consumer, our promise was to offer premium content for free and we are living up to that."

One of the biggest lessons from the boom in the OTT video sector since the past couple of years is that the country's demand for entertainment is insatiable. This has been a supply constrained market,



and it's an exciting time to enter this market at a time when the number of screens is exploding and the supply chain is actually catching up. While MX Player is a late entrant, its scale places it in a formidable position. The platform already has 17 originals and the plan is to release another 15 by the end of this financial year, including some 'very big ticket releases'.

Even Amazon Prime Video is raking up its pitch in the originals' front. The platform recently released its 13th original, *The Family Man*. Further to this, the streaming powerhouse is reportedly working on 30 more Indian originals and will release them one in a month, in 2020.



Apart from delving into creation of originals and heavy marketing tactics, all the major platforms of the country like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Zee5, MX Player, Hotstar, ALTBalaji, Sony LIV and some more are trying to reach out further into the regional audience bases of the country. Indian audiences have a strong affinity to their native language. One of the key propositions is to allow the users to consume entertainment in a language of their choice.

Keeping this in mind MX Player has already launched five shows in the south. The brand

has not limited itself to the metros - it has 65 per cent plus users from non metro cities as well. Even Netflix is members can already watch local content in several languages, including Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati, Marathi, Malayalam, Kannada, Bengali, Sikkimese, Urdu and Punjabi. Amazon Prime Video is offering content in multiple languages - Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Bengali, Punjabi and Gujarati and providing user interface in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu. Other platforms are following the same route parallel to the already existing regional OTTs like Hoichoi and SunNXT.





The OTT market in the country is growing by the day and the supply of fresh content is the need of the hour. The number of production houses is also springing up by the day and that is giving an impetus to the content creation ecosystem. Many rather boutique studios are also springing up throughout the country specifically catering to the burgeoning needs of the OTT industry.

Furthermore, success of platforms like Indiantelevision dot com's VidNet and the conglomeration of industry leaders in the space of online video streaming further strengthens the pace of India's OTT ecosystem.

Taking a dekko at the events that have already ensued in 2019, in this space, it seems like the year can definitely be construed as a major stepping stone for the industry. However, it also seems evident that 2020 and going further will only bring in more prospects and bigger happenings.

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Distributor Ginger Media's international focus

ndia is a land of stories and storytellers. From a long time now, it has remained a favorite hub for a veriety of content and the numbers are on the rise. With the digital flourish and affordable internet, content is easily accessible to millions of population through OTT platforms.



As per the FICCI EY report, digital media in India grew by 42 percent to reach Rs 169 billion in 2018. Estimates are that video consumption has been growing at 500 percent per

annum and most of it is coming from mobile handsets.

The report further states that the number of smartphone users has reached 340 million in the past year and is predicted to touch 925 million by 2023. The digital subscriptions are expected to hit Rs 20 billion by 2020 and over 500 million Indians are expected to have watched videos online by then.

While the market for local content is growing every passing day, appetite for international content has been steady. It's very much welcome to break the monotony and give the cosmopolitan audience the taste of global content. One such content aggregator is Ginger Media.

Though Ginger Media is a fairly new entrant in this media ecosystem, the management of the firm consists of executives who are old players in the business. Over the years they have gained experience in the field and decided to utilise it with Ginger Media. They curate content for their partner platforms, as their aim is to provide quality over quantity with a proper strategy and tracking the markets using a structured approach.

Informs Ginger Media founder Swaraj Kate, "Content is truly the king and getting the right kind of content is our key interest and this thought was exciting enough for us to launch Ginger Media. Fortunately, with the



Swaraj Kate Founder, Ginger Media



digital boom in India, we have hit the market at the perfect time. With new platforms being launched every year, we as Ginger Media, are present to help them with strategy, planning and curating the right content for the platform and their audience in the languages they need. We are here to provide our partners with end to end solutions."

Ginger Media is in touch with many global players, and it aggregates relevant content as per demand as the possibilities of content from other regions to enter the Indian market is huge.

Adds Swaraj: "Currently for some ongoing deals, we are aggregating content from Korea, Japan, Turkey, and Latin America. We are happy to announce that our last deal was with Zee5 for Korean content and we are also working with Bang Productions and other top Korean companies for this deal."There's a shift in the trends of the syndication and distribution ecosystem in the country, mostly because the audience is in control of the content that they want to consume and have innumerable options

available for the same. Initially, it was TV, now Indians have access to about 40 OTT platforms where they can watch according to their taste.

"These platforms are here to entertain the audience and fulfill their demands. The audience is not only looking at Indian content but is eager for foreign content as well. This has helped the industry a lot by creating more syndication and distribution opportunities. And Ginger Media is playing an active part in it. Our job as Ginger Media is to curate the right fit for the platforms. With so many options and types of content out there, our aim is to find out what exactly is needed and provide the same," notes Swaraj.

The founder of Ginger Media further states, "We are thinking on a few ideas for the expansion of Ginger Media and working on a plan of action but right now we are focusing on building strong relationships. We want to get Ginger Media familiarised in the industry so that the syndication and distribution wing grows strong and continues the business."

Paperboat animates a diversified future

t's been pretty smooth sailing for Mumbai-based Paperboat Animation Design Studio since its founding in 2011.

ation kids segment.

1011.

"What is unique about us is the faction bave, worked on completely in



"Since the studio is headed by artists, the core competence of Paperboat is conceptual thinking along with an understanding of different mediums because of which we have been able to achieve this truly unique position of straddling seamlessly across animated feature films, live-action feature films, documentaries, animated TV series, animated audio-visuals, children's books, nursery rhymes, apps and games," asserts Paperboat Animation Design Studios cofounder & chairman Soumitra Ranade.

Throughout its nine years, the studio has successfully delivered projects to clients like Disney India, Discovery Kids, Sony YAY!, Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network, Cinestaan, McCann, Ogilvy, Zee, World Bank, IIT Bombay, Harper Collins, Coca-Cola, Mondelez, Nestle, Burger King, Reebok and many more.

Besides many awards and accolades for its work, its animated series *Bandbudh Aur*

"What is unique about us is the fact that we have worked on completely indigenous feature films, something that no other studio has done. Film directors who come to us, trust us. They know that their most precious child will be looked after well at Paperboat. They know that this is as big a passion for us as it is for them," adds Ranade.

Budbak was one of the most popular in the

The animated feature executed at Paperboat, *The World of Goopi and Bagha*, premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and then went on to be screened at numerous other prestigious international film festivals like Busan, Dubai, MAMI and more. The feature has also triumphed at AnimationXpress.com's Ann Awards pocketing the best animated feature film honour.

The live-action, animation/VFX film *Ghode Ko Jalebi Khilane Le Ja Riya Hoon* (I am taking the horse to eat candies) was







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screened at Sundance, Curritiba Brazil, OIFFA, IFFSA, Reaktor Film Festival Vienna, and many more.

Then, *Bombay Rose* was the opening film at the International Critics Week at Venice Film Festival 2019 and then went on to be screened at TIFF and is scheduled to be showcased in many other festivals such as Busan, Animation is Film, MAMI, Chicago and so on.

"We have also worked on our own IPs. Albert Pinto Ko Gussa Kyun Aata Hai? was a live-action feature film that released successfully all over India in 2019," highlights Ranade.

Recent projects: "After finishing Bombay Rose, we moved to a very exciting children's series for Discovery Kids. Fukrey Boyzz! It will launch in October 2019," says studio cofounder Aashish Mall. Alongside that, the studio is also working on Sab Jhol Maal Hai (Everything is cooked up) for Sony YAY! with few more shows in the pipeline. Paperboat has also explored many commercials including the one with two frogs for Mondelez's Cadbury 5-Star, which has received many awards including an Ann Award.

Challenges of Indian animation studios:

The studio is also looking at innovative solutions to help bridge the animation talent gap that is plaguing most creators. "We have very few animation institutes that equip their students to work in studios. In effect, we have to train these youngsters when we employ them and that's a burden on our budgets," reveals cofounder Mayank Patel. "To address this we are starting animation education programmes with



Bombay Rose

prestigious universities across the country. We want to bridge the gap between animation education and the profession. We need to create this system that constantly generates new talent. This will not only help our own studio but will also help other studios."

Patel points out that the government has a crucial role to play in this area. "They should give tax cuts and other benefits so that the animation industry broadens exponentially," he says.

Future Plans: According to team Paperboat, the studio is at its most exciting phase where it has started working on its next feature Kabuliwala, based on Noble Prize honoured Rabindranath Tagore's classic short story bearing the same name. In addition to that, work is on an animated web series. An animation/design innovation company UtSide based out of Toronto has been set up which will be concentrated on creating IPs for the international market. A new VFX division Occult has popped up within the company that will be focusing on cutting edge VFX work.

On the educational front, Paperboart also hopes to open an animation school attached to a studio in Kashmir soon.

The India thrust at MIPCOM

Parth Kaushik

here's no inoculation against the MIPCOM fever that has been increasingly plaguing droves of Indian content owners, animation studios, broadcasters, programmers and distributors who are rushing to grace the French Riviera's largest content gathering.

MIPCOM, the annual trade show, has long been a well-spring of content with global players and storytellers jetting down to buy for 900 odd channels and an emerging set of OTT players, syndicate and license features, drama series, kids' shows or explore co-production deal-stitching opportunities.



B. S. Srinivas Secretary, ABAI

While oldtimers can't wait to make their attendance at the market, there is a host of emerging companies that are itching to traverse the content boulevards and acquaint themselves with the ebbs and flows of the international market dynamics.

Green Gold Animation founder Rajiv



Rajiv Chilaka Founder, Green Gold Animation

Chilaka, Applause Entertainment head of acquisition and operations Mansi Darbar, Victor Tango Entertainment director Vaibhav Modi, Zee Global Content sales business head- Global Syndication and International Film Distribution Vibha Chopra, DQ Entertainment COO Manoj Mishra, VedAtma Animation Studios & Purple Arrow Film and ABAI secretary B.S Shrinivas are just some of the many names that will be participating this year.

India's leading animation studio Green Gold Animation's founder Rajiv Chilaka who has been a regular participant extols the importance of the market saying, "If you are in the content business, you just can't afford to miss MIPCOM. The annual trade show brings in producers, broadcasters, new media platforms, distributors from all across the globe, matching and meeting their business requirements. It also gives you the opportunity to meet and interact with industry stalwarts and keep abreast with emerging trends and future opportunities."

Echoing this is DQ Entertainment's Mishra who has been a devoted old timer at the MIPCOM market, "Being the biggest television market of the year, MIPCOM is a very important market for us to attend. We always look forward to meeting potential buyers and partners for our IPs while also focusing on establishing new relationships with broadcasters, producers, OTT players etc. This is a market we would never want to miss."

With a repository consisting of 3,000 episodes of high quality animated content, DQ is all set to ink more deals with international outlets.



Vibha Chopra
Head business sales, global syndication
and film distribution, Zee Global Content

Chopra states, "Zee Global Content Sales has a robust line-up at MIPCOM this year. Zee will unveil Hindi and regional films including India's Oscar selection titles as well as India's official Oscar entry - *Gully Boy*. Zee will also showcase top rated family dramas, documentaries and travelogues and health and wellness shows from different parts of the world".

While some delegates will be scouting for

content, many are also looking forward to co-production opportunities.



Mansi Darbar
Head acquisition & operations,
Applause Entertainment

Says Darbar, "MIP market is one of the biggest content markets in the world. It brings together different people from different ecosystems to diversify and unify and collaborate and do great business. What I am expecting from the market this time is a lot of content of different genres. Genres that haven't been explored before in terms of horror, comedy, romance, sci-fi. These are the unexplored genres and are rarely available for adaptation. Second is looking for partners whom you can collaborate with in terms of coproductions; co-production synergies which is again rarely there. Different countries can come together and produce content together. Third is meeting new partners, untapped talented content creators who can actually work on paper formats even if the finished tapes are not ready for adaptation."



Vaibhav Modi Founder, Victor Tango Entertainment

Throwing light on the salience of the MIPCOM market, Victor Tango Entertainment's Vaibhav Modi asserts, "As a boutique content company we have our eyes trained on showcasing our nonscripted formats for the international markets. Some of these formats have been applauded in forums like ATF Singapore. We are also looking forward to picking up interesting scripted IP from other territories to bring back for OTT remakes. The OTT business is at a very interesting inflection point globally and we are very excited to gather others' learnings and knowledge from the sessions."

Having had the distinction of creating the first ever regional OTT Original *Bhinna* in Kannada language which premiered on Zee5 recently, Purple Arrow Film's Srinivas has expectations from this year's MIPCOM. He says he will be more focused on creating co-production opportunities between Karnataka and other countries for both animation and live action genres. Also as the Secretary of ABAI, an association

supported by the Karnataka government working towards the growth of AVGC sector in the state, he will also be creating awareness and promoting the AVGC Centre of Excellence created in Bengaluru which is run by ABAI.

What's interesting this year is the popping up of two Indian pavilions. Joining the ranks of the India pavilion under the Services Export Promotion Council which set up its flag at MIPCOM last year, is the Electronics and Computer Software Promotion Council which is making its debut with a pavilion, albeit a smaller one. More than 35-40 small and medium sized companies are slated to be housed under the umbrella of the two country pavilions.

Says MIP markets India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka



Anil Wanvari
MIP markets India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka
& Bangladesh representative

and Bangladesh representative Anil Wanvari: "The Indian entertainment sector is increasingly looking outwards for platforms to partner. And the presence of two pavilions — apart from the 10 independent stands — will go a long way in giving a leg up to these efforts to both the big players as well as the smaller ones. The more noise and messaging India puts out about its content at MIPCOM, the greater the thrust its sales efforts will get." ••

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