

Faith Hubley: An Interview

John and Faith Hubley broke away from Hollywood in the mid-1950s to form their own independent, small-scale studio in New York City, making animated films in an anti-Disney visual style that was closer in form and spirit to European surrealism and impressionism. They pioneered the use of name performers and of their own children with improvised dialogue. They sponsored marvelous jazz and new-music sound tracks. Their (mostly short) films were not about talking animals, but about adult and philosophical themes: the absurdity of war, the nuclear threat, environmental concerns, overpopulation, love, marriage, childhood development, spirituality, and feminism.

The highly original and straight-from-the-heart films that resulted from their collaboration have been feted worldwide—with three Oscars (out of seven nominations to date), film festival citations from Jerusalem to Zagreb, and museum anointings. Their films were never block-booked into theaters and their household ledger did not always balance, but the Hubleys became exemplars for an entire up-and-coming generation of non-traditional animated film-makers. The thirty-odd Hubley short films and two features are not only beloved by film enthusiasts, but by generations of schoolchildren, and nowadays they have a healthy “second life” on Disney and Pyramid video (see list following interview).

John Hubley was the senior artist. A noted background painter for Walt Disney on *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Pinocchio*, *Fantasia*, *Dumbo* and *Bambi*, he left Disney after the bitter strike of 1941 and was among the founders of the alternative United Productions of America, source of Mr. Magoo and of a strong “flat” graphic style featuring parody, serious subject matter, and abstract forms.

John Hubley was a staunch unionist and cultural progressive whose moonlighting included production design for the 1947 staging of Bertolt Brecht’s *Galileo* and collaboration with director Joseph Losey on Losey’s early films. When the anti-Communist blacklist descended

on Hollywood, Hubley suddenly found himself “unemployable,” and at a turning-point in his career. The blacklist precipitated his move into animated commercials and, circuitously, into marriage and partnership with Faith Hubley. Their mutual pact to produce at least one short film per year according to their own artistic standards, and to sit down for the evening meal with their children, lasted until his untimely death in 1977.

Since then, Faith Hubley has upheld the legacy, with a little help from her children. Sons Ray and Mark chip in, and Emily and Georgia, apart from working behind-the-scenes on their mother’s innumerable projects, have themselves produced a bumper crop of Hubley animation.

An optimist to the core, Faith Hubley has survived much: a Hell’s Kitchen childhood; Hollywood and the name-naming; her husband’s death; and her own ten-year brush with supposedly terminal disease. In 1986 she produced her first solo feature, *The Cosmic Eye*, in which three be-bop visitors from outer space postulate on the history and future of the human species. Although she four-walled it herself in New York City and Los Angeles, to ecstatic reviews (“enchanting, affecting and exhilarating,” wrote Judith Crist; “an ingenious work,” reported Michael Wilmington of *The Los Angeles Times*, “seraphically childlike and delightful”), *The Cosmic Eye* is presently without a distributor.

We met, for the first time, at a world peace film festival in Burlington, Vermont; we spoke for several hours, on another occasion, at her Upper East Side apartment/studio in New York City (filled with books, mementoes, Oscars and plaques, paintings by herself and others); and finally, we rendezvoused in Madison, Wisconsin, where daughter Georgia (on drums) and her husband Ira Kaplan (lead guitarist and vocalist) were on the road with their new-wave rock band Yo La Tengo.

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Faith
Hubley,
optimist
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[Photo:
Michael
Kienitz]



Your official biography says that you were born in New York City and studied theater before coming to Hollywood.

I worked as a stage manager and I studied with the New Theater League at the New School. I studied the Stanislavski Method for years—acting and directing—under Brett Warren and Lem Ward (in New York), and later with Lee J. Cobb, J. Edward Bromberg, Morris Carnovsky and Phoebe Brand in Los Angeles. These were the old Group Theatre people—which brought me full circle, because seeing the Group Theatre, while I was still in high school, is how I became interested in theatre.

While I was still a teenager, in New York City, I did some People's Theater. We put on a play, for example, for the Transport Worker's Union. It was a peace play just before the Soviet Union was attacked (in 1941). I took over the stage managing. June 22 came and we had to close because we could no longer be pacifist. We had to be more historically framed.

Were you studying art at all during this time?

This was when I was only 15 to 18. I had always wanted to be a painter or a musician, but I had to earn a living first.

Did either of your parents paint or draw?

No. My father was a dentist and my mother played the stock market, and in fact the reason I didn't go on to school was because they wanted me to be a dentist. I could only have an

education if I would agree to become a dentist.

The reason you didn't go on to college, you mean?

I also didn't finish high school. That's why I started doing theater at 15. I'm a very loyal child and I don't like to talk about my family, but I'll tell you a little bit, so you understand the context.

There was this hilarious pressure for me to become a dentist. For example, I had to pass "Hygiene" in high school but in order to pass you had to have a piece of paper signed by your parents saying your teeth had been cleaned. My father, who was a Russian-Polish immigrant Jew, was my dentist and he wouldn't sign the piece of paper unless I agreed to become a dentist. So I left home and started doing theater at 15.

I got married to a radio announcer. He knew all about music and theater. That's how I got involved in the theater. Because I was a scholarship student, I had a lot of jobs to do, so I really learned how to put on a production. For example, I booked talent for the New Theatre League.

Who did you book them for?

Mostly unions and organizations. I met people like Marc Blitzstein and Earl Robinson, all the people of that time who were so wonderfully talented. I booked Woody Guthrie—Woody was always so vague—he was very grateful to

have a teenaged girl who could tell him where to go and how much to charge. It was very exciting. I learned a lot from booking. I really got to talk to these people and to ask all sorts of questions about their work and that wonderful period of ferment in the theatre.

How did your radical politics and lifestyle spring out of your upbringing?

Through my father—in a negative way. I had joined the American Student Union, as practically anybody with half a brain did, in high school. I was very anti-fascist. My father had all of these tactics in order to get me to be a dentist and at one point he came to the school and told school officials that I was a Communist and a prostitute and I had a bad heart and I never brushed my teeth. It was part of his effort to turn me into a dentist.

I think my parents perceived me as their meal ticket. If only I would become a dentist, I could take over my father's practice and support them in their old age. So they kept turning me in to the FBI. Those kinds of experiences really had a lot to do with my becoming political, because I just had to survive.

As a teenager?

Yeah. We had a peace rally when I was 14, I think. It was in Yorkville, this Nazi neighborhood, with all these crazy German ladies and Nazis screaming, "They're dragging the flag on the ground!" The police were called and arrested us

You make it sound as if you were very together, politically, for a teenager. Was it partly the era, partly New York City . . . ?

I was a very fortunate child. I had gone to one of the great public schools in Hell's Kitchen and had had wonderful teachers there. Quite good teachers, who really taught us, when we were nine, ten, eleven years old, to think. We were told to read everything and anything we could. We could really weigh everything.

It was just a wonderful school. English was a minority language—mostly French, Italian and Greek were spoken; there were Orientals and blacks; everybody was very poor. I remember that one student was a prostitute. Our teacher said, and I'll remember this until the day I die, "None of you make fun of her. None of you be cruel to her. She had no choice. Her father's an alcoholic, her mother's an alcoholic . . ." I used to walk with her, I was proud to walk with her, and I guess my father saw me

doing that and thought I was a prostitute because I was showing solidarity with her.

That's how we were raised at PS 17.

How did your marriage come about?

I decided I had to get married to obtain some legal rights, only I had never had a date in my whole life, and I had barely talked to boys. They had a musical quiz on the air at WNYC where if you knew all the answers or could identify the pieces of music you won a free concert ticket. My prospective husband was the host of the show. Because I was shy, and because I had such a passion for music, I gave the answers to my girlfriend and she was picked out of the audience. He invited her to the ballet and later, when he found out it was me who knew the answers, he took me to the ballet.

If things were normal, we would never have gotten married. Marriage kept him out of the army and it kept me out of jail.

Obviously such a marriage couldn't work because we were too young. I left him and stayed with some friends in the New Theater movement until my father came to get me with the police. I came home from work one day and at the corner of 46th St. and Sixth Avenue, there was my husband at one corner, and there were my father and two cops at the other. The cops said, "Either you go back to this man, or you go back to your father, or you go to jail." I couldn't figure out what I'd done wrong. I said, "What's my crime?"

Your crime was you weren't old enough.

I was a little under 17.

What did you do?

I went back to my parents. My parents, at least, were a familiar torture and it was just a matter of waiting it out until I was 18. I went to business school, earned money in an office, and worked in the theater at night. My father wanted me to get a divorce and take alimony. I was proud, I had a good brain and a good heart, thanks to PS 17, and I said, "I won't take alimony. It's immoral. I won't." So when I was 18, I went to Reno for a divorce.

After you went to Reno, and got your divorce, you kept going?

To Los Angeles. I wanted to be as far away from home as possible. The only people I knew there were Carl Lerner, who was working as a machinist, and his wife Gerda. This was 1943. I was so ashamed of this failed marriage that I just wanted to serve. My plan was to work in a

defense plant till the war was over. I was going to go to school at night. I got a job at a place called Faith Plating. This is still on Santa Monica Blvd. across the street from Goldwyn. I got fired for being too fast. "Slow down, and don't be so serious," they said. I said, "There's a war against fascism and it is serious. I'm not going to slow down. . . ." They gave me three chances and then they fired me. It was considered a disturbance on the assembly line. Without wishing to make trouble I was a troublemaker.

So I decided to go into the movie business. One could do training films and learn a craft. I got a job as a waitress across the street from Columbia and applied for a job as a messenger. I waited and waited, and got hired.

It was during the war and the boys were all being drafted, so it was just a matter of time before one could get picked for something else and then could move up. It took about five minutes for any smart girl to figure out what jobs were available. The studio was wide open. You could learn budget and organization. They were training actors, like Lloyd Bridges and Larry Parks, who were contract players, as young assistant directors.

Since they might need them as directors because of the war drain?

Possibly. It was a "progressive" studio—because of John Howard Lawson and Sidney Buchman, I guess. I picked Columbia because of Lawson. I knew his book on the theory of the technique of playwrighting, and I felt any studio that would hire him would have to be the best studio. There must be people there who could read and write and think. And Sidney Buchman was vice-president, so, unlike any other studio, they took young people seriously.

Being a messenger at Columbia was like going to film school because you could go any place and you were sort of encouraged to ask questions and move up. For example, as a messenger you delivered the mail to the writers' room, so you could talk to all the writers. We kids knew almost as much about the studio as Harry Cohn.

Did the studio live up to your expectations?

Yes. I would say I had a very good experience at Columbia, except that I wanted to be a music editor and the only department, in editing, that would not consider women, oddly enough, was the music department. It was hard to get into the other editing departments too, but it was

possible.

Were you aware of being discriminated against as a female?

Oh sure. You couldn't be a cameraman or a sound person.

How did they put it?

They just said, "You're a girl." (laughs)
Even the progressives?

They were a little more subtle, but same thing. Dede Allen was my roommate and still is my dear friend. We both started out as messengers. Dede and I were trying to get hired in editing and they would say, "No, you can't because you're a girl." We'd say, "Well, why not?" They'd say, "Well, you're not strong enough. . . ." Then we would gain a lot of weight and show them we could lift heavy boxes, and then they would say, "We're not relaxed with you. You don't swear. . . ." then we would practice saying 'fuck' and 'shit,' walking through the studio saying 'fuck shit fuck shit.' . . . and then they would say, "That's no way for a girl to talk."

How did the Hollywood movement differ from the East Coast movement?

What I loved about the East Coast movement was that there was little separation between theory and practice. If you believed in "people's theater," then you acted it out.

In New York we were very engaged in bringing culture to the people. One of the most exciting things was a project we cooked up with the cultural arm of the CIO where we convinced the Metropolitan Museum to do a history of labor for trade union members with parallel slides of what was going on in the history of painting.

In Hollywood, there was a double standard. In Hollywood, you made a lot of money, and then you helped the people. Even Jack Lawson wanted everyone to make a lot of money.

Was that dichotomy clear from the outset?

It was perfectly clear. I made a commitment to myself to work in the studios for four or five years and learn a craft, because I knew that it would take twice or three times as long to do that in New York at that time. I wanted to have a real strong hands-on background. I wanted to be never afraid of machines. I didn't want to be afraid of anybody. In a funny way I wanted to understand the economics, the budget and management of the studios, so that I would never be seduced by Hollywood.

The people I really loved in Hollywood were

the individuals. I loved Ben Hecht because I loved the movies he made, and I loved the fact that he was not two people, he was clearly one person. When I worked at Republic as a music cutter, because they hired women there, I was assigned to work on *Spectre of the Rose*, which was directed by Hecht. I loved George Antheil, a brilliant composer, who wrote all the scores for Hecht's movies. George let me cut stock music to make up the score for the film, then he took what I cut and wrote the score. My youngest daughter is named after George. Through him and his wife I met most of the refugees from the European community in Hollywood—Isherwood, Auden, Stravinsky, and so on.

How long did your progression up through the ranks at Columbia last?

A couple of years. I got real pissed when I found out I couldn't be a music cutter. Because I could read music, I could read and write music, and most of their music cutters were musically illiterate. When I came to a dead end (at Columbia) I went to Goldwyn, then to Republic and a couple of other studios, then I came back to Columbia.

When you went back to Columbia, did they allow you to cut music?

No. I was a script clerk, working script on Westerns and "Blondies" and the Three Stooges. I seldom worked on anything I didn't really love.

You loved the Three Stooges?

I thought it was very important training. Watching them improvise. And they weren't dumb. I tell you, that's something—to do continuity for the Three Stooges when nobody knew what they were going to do next, including them. They were fearless and funny and they cracked me up.

During all this time in Hollywood, were you doing any painting?

Yes. I took a number of courses at the People's Educational Center. I also took screenwriting from Edward Dmytryk, directing from Vincent Sherman, and a class with John Howard Lawson on the history of the American democratic tradition, based on the Parrington book [*Main Currents in American Thought*].

The screenwriting course was about the establishment of the status quo, the breaking of the status quo, and about how you resolve the breaking of the status quo on a higher level (laughs). This went on for twelve weeks. Quel

rip-off! But we took those courses in part because of the gossip. These were the guys working the creative jobs in the studios and it was a way for us to find out what was going on. And occasionally we learned something.

This is an example of how the movement was in California; I taught a class in Marxism! I taught a class in my living room to elderly people from the Fairfax neighborhood. I thought they were elderly; they were probably not as old as I am now. They would come and pay attention and listen and say, "Oh, yes, uh-huh. . . ." This went on for about eight weeks, at the end of which they gave me a bottle of perfume—the only bottle of perfume anyone had ever bought me, up to that point. Their spokesperson said, "Darling, we didn't understand a word. We only speak Yiddish. But you're so nice. Every week you came, every week you talked to us. . . ." (laughs)

My painting teacher (whose name I can't remember) looked at my work and told me I was a mixture of Persian miniatures and Milton Avery. I thought I had died and gone to heaven. I said, "Do you think I can paint?" She said, "Of course you can." She was wonderful. She persuaded me to take six months off out of the year, starting in 1945, and receive unemployment while free-lancing, and to use the rest of the time to paint and write and grow. That was my education. I was a young person and I didn't need that much money. I was making a lot of money anyway, most of which I gave away, and not necessarily to the movement. To anybody who needed it.

Besides showing modern art, Clara Grossman's gallery also had the dandy film society (in Hollywood), the only film society which showed the classic films. The greats would come! Carl and Dede and I took over Clara's film society and we did a Russian series, a French series, and an American series. For the American series Irving Lerner was our mentor, so we found all the old docs of the 1930s, the independent films of Frontier Films. And we showed some Hollywood classics, like *Our Daily Bread*. We had eight hundred subscriptions.

How and where did you meet John?

I met John in Hollywood during this period, when he was in the Army. People used to say that we had the same smile and that we were apt to make the same jokes in different places. He was walking down Hollywood Boulevard one

day, with Sy Wexler, who made educational films in Hollywood during and after the war.

There was Johnny, with his big teeth. I guess everybody has the same number of teeth but his teeth seemed to jump out from his face. Then I saw his uniform, only it didn't look like a uniform, it was buttoned wrong, very creased. I walked up to Sy and said, "That's John Hubley, isn't it?" He said yes and we were introduced.

We became friends and we were friends for a long, long time before we were married. We stayed in touch and were involved in projects together. For a while we were trying to do some documentary together, with Ben Maddow, called *The American Crime*, I think. It was about lynching and civil rights, but we never made it. That was typical of Hollywood, even with the good folk. Endless dreams!

Were you beginning to think about animation?

I had seen Johnny's stuff at UPA and I thought in my heart of hearts, while never articulating it, since I knew I was meant to be a painter and I loved the cinema, how lucky he was to be in this art form that was eclectic. I thought, "Wouldn't it be wonderful to make something out of that art form, something more than meets the eye?"

Did you have a model for your thinking, at all?

No. But in our film society we showed the work of Georges Méliès, which I don't really like, but I like the idea of it because it is fantastical. I loved the avant-garde in France. I always loved surrealism and the experimental film-makers, because that is what we showed in Clara's gallery. There was a film we showed called *Menilmontant* [1926]. I loved this film. I can't tell you why. It was a surreal film, a lot of action, full of canals and steps, by Dimitri Kirsanov, a Russian emigré director. It was pretty close to a personal vision. (laughs) I just knew that someday I would direct films and it didn't matter to me whether they were drawn or photographed. I still don't like that division. I just knew I was looking for a medium that would express what I was feeling inside. Don't we all? I knew it would be in film, it wouldn't be at the studios because they were not set up for art, and I knew I'd have to be patient and work at it, and eventually it would happen.

At the time you met Johnny, he was gone

from Disney, right?

Gone from Disney, not necessarily forever. I'm not a specialist on this, but I believe they were told they could come back after the strike, but they didn't want to afterwards. By then they had finer things in their brains. At this time, Irving Lerner, who was a pal, had gotten this project to direct: a sex education film for junior high school kids. Eddie Albert was the producer and UPA did the animation of the menstrual cycle.

Eddie Albert the actor? He was a progressive?

As you gather, I have a hard time putting people in boxes. After the war, Eddie Albert thought Hollywood was dreadful and he wanted to spend the rest of his life trying to do something useful. He wanted to make educational films, so he got the money to do this film. Irving was to be the director.

It was a struggle to make that film. We were so broke at one point that I had to hand code the whole film with a bottle of white ink. We worked like dogs on the boring live-action. Johnny did the animation with UPA. He created this luminous body that looked like a Georgia O'Keefe painting—it was beautiful.

It was a very successful film. It is the only documentary I know of that had to be remade because the clothing styles changed—so they reshot it fifteen years later. It was a historic film.

At the end of this period, in 1947, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) descended, and I gather that you and Johnny were both blacklisted.

Johnny was, I wasn't. His being blacklisted was just proof positive of how absurd the whole thing was.

How did Johnny find out that he was no longer employable?

I'll tell you what little I know. Johnny had to leave UPA but I know he could have done a payoff at some point and continued to work for Columbia. Only he didn't. For one thing, it was too much money. A lot of people were offered payoffs, and some could afford it, some couldn't and some just said no. So Johnny was, as he put it, "on the lam."

What was your situation?

I was free-lancing. I had two goals: I wanted to edit one picture before I left California and I got to edit Irving's picture. And I wanted to be a script clerk on one really expensive Holly-

wood movie with a lot of people and a lot of management. So through the union I got this job on this film called *Heaven Only Knows*, a two-million-dollar picture which was at the time considered very expensive.

It was a Western with special effects, Brian Donlevy, Robert Cummings and a cast of thousands. When I finished with that job, it was time for me to do something else in life. I was still booking the next film series, which was the most important part of my life other than painting. But I hadn't clearly decided to leave Hollywood. I went back East for a vacation, and then I decided not to go back to Los Angeles because I just didn't feel like it. I was given to quixotic whims.

Did your decision have anything to do with the blacklist?

Maybe. New York was fun.

Had the blacklist descended? Was this before the October, 1947 hearings?

It was on the cusp. I remember going down to Washington and helping friends in New York. I just wanted to work in New York. And mostly I wanted to go to Europe. I also wanted to work on a serious, heavy documentary and I became Leo Hurwitz's assistant on *Strange Victory*. It's an interesting film, about how the War victory wasn't really a victory.

Did you finally go to Europe?

After I finished my work on *Strange Victory* I went to Paris and then to this international Conference of Working Youth in Poland. The first thing that happened when we got to Poland was we all had to march through Warsaw, then we went to this church where, amidst all these rococo angels, a priest gave his blessing to the international youth! (laughs) This conference was amazing. I will never forget it. It changed my life. Grew me up.

At this conference we got to meet working youth from all over the whole wide world. We learned there was such a place as Vietnam! There were children who were working in the mines whom we could talk to about their working conditions.

Then I had made this promise to myself way back in the messenger room of Columbia that, because I was a lucky girl who grew up in Hollywood, I owed the world something. I had pledged to work on a reconstruction brigade one day. And at the end of this conference, they asked, "Does anybody want to work on a rail-

road in Czechoslovakia?" and I raised my hand.

Really? For how long?

We dug trenches and we laid railroad ties—for three weeks. I got a medal for bravery! (laughs)

Because the average age, for girls on this international brigade, might have been 17, I felt very maternal. We were working in a valley surrounded by huge hills. I saw this boulder coming down the mountain toward the trenches and there was no stopping it and not enough time to jump out of the way. I saw this young girl who was going to get hit by the boulder, and I threw her aside and put my body between her and the boulder. I got hit and I still have the scar. [She shows the scar.] After they cleaned up the blood we sang anthems, they gave me flowers, and awarded me a medal.

Then you came back to New York?

No, no, no. I went to Prague. Later when I was running out of money, I went to Rome, contracted meningitis and nearly died, spent four months in a clinic and nearly lost my vision. Afterwards I bopped around Italy with a friend of mine. Wrote a screenplay about the Mafia with Basilio Franchina, a director I met. Went to a lot of movies, met a lot of people. I had the best time.

Was this the first writing you had done?

Yes. Because these near-death experiences made me feel as though life was not forever. Then I went to a Peace Congress in Paris and spent four months in Paris (at the Cinémathèque Française) as part of what I consider my home-made education, looking at movies and reading books.

My mother cabled me that I had a job waiting for me back in New York on a feature that was going to be shot. The director, Bernard Vorhaus, was blacklisted. So I came home and worked on Bernie's picture about delinquent girls, *So Young, So Bad*, with Anne Francis, Anne Wallach, Rita Moreno and Paul Henreid. I script-clerked it, in short order I became an assistant cutter, and before long I was editing a feature called *Go, Man, Go*, about the Harlem Globetrotters, directed by Jimmy Wong Howe.

Where was Johnny all this time?

In Hollywood. What he did as a solution to the blacklist was to set up a commercial company, Storyboard, and he started making a lot of money doing commercials. He had a front man, but he was making it big. The front was

getting the business and signing the contracts. But everybody in town knew it was Johnny doing the commercials. They were good commercials by the way—among other things, it was Johnny who brought jazz to commercials.

Ah, so he was the big jazz enthusiast.

Well, I was a jazz enthusiast too. Anyway, he had started to gain as much weight as he was making money—

Why?

Why do people over-eat? Probably because he was unhappy. He was buying expensive clothes and he looked like hell. Here was this really good-looking, wonderful-looking man—now he was fat and overdressed and drinking too much and miserable. I started writing him letters telling him he needed to get out and move to New York.

Then Johnny was hired by Yip Harburg to do *Finian's Rainbow* as an animated feature. But Johnny was a fella who was famous for never being on budget, and certainly never being on schedule. So Yip, whom I knew from my youth in Hollywood, asked me if I would be Johnny's assistant in Los Angeles.

I said I had to think about it and asked if he had talked to Johnny. He said, "No, but everybody knows Johnny loves you and you love Johnny." I said, "That's different. That's friendship. You have to ask him." So Johnny was in New York doing something on *Finian's* and we met. He said he wasn't sure I should come to Los Angeles because we both knew that we had controlled our friendship for ten years and after all he was a married man with three kids. But we decided I would take the job and so I went to Los Angeles again.

Then the picture blew up. All the preparations were done, the storyboarding was done, the score was recorded, the animation was in progress; we went out to lunch one day and came back and there was a padlock on the door. That was it. The official word was the blacklist. They said it was because of Johnny. But I think it had something to do with some power struggle among the backers of *Finian's*. . .

How far along was the film?

The sound track and all the dialogue were finished—it had Frank Sinatra singing "Necessity" and "Old Devil Moon" and Ella Fitzgerald and beautiful Louie Armstrong, all kinds of great people, doing jazz versions of the songs. There are bootleg records of this track.

I am surprised someone like Frank Sinatra was willing to work with you, even though he must have known that Johnny was blacklisted.

Oh, Frank was always okay.

Lionel Stander once told me Sinatra was the only actor he knew who not only read Marx, but could comprehend it.

Frank was and still is partly wonderful. I know the things that he does for people and it's not all sentiment. He is trapped; he made a mistake with the Mafia and I don't think he had any choice after that; he was naive and he was captured by the Establishment.

But if we talk about politics in a profound way, I think Frank lived out his politics. One can get shot for saying this, but Frank practices a lot that is decent, and never mind who he endorses, politically, because he has no damn choice. There isn't a jazz musician in need in this country who hasn't been helped by him.

So . . . after Finian's?

Then we went off to Europe on a trial marriage. We thought we should travel together first. And we fought and fought and fought, but we did find out there is such a thing as a middle road, so we decided we were going to get married. Johnny went off to get his divorce, which was hard, but he did. This was 1955. Johnny opened up a New York office of Storyboard and soon after sold the Los Angeles one.

That seems like quite a leap.

At the time it seemed simple. I didn't know all about doubt and uncertainty; all I knew was that this was the luckiest moment in my life, and that one could influence the outcome of one's life if one was clear about what one wanted to do. When you're so in love, anything seemed possible. I'm sure it was different for Johnny—he's not here to tell his side of the story—and I do know he was crushed by *Finian's* exploding.

Everything seems a greater leap for him, greater than for you, since you had always been more on the fringe.

I've got to stop talking about Johnny, because he isn't here to talk for himself, and the anniversary of his death is coming up, and if I don't stop I'll start to cry.

His grandfather was a painter from England, and everybody laughed at his grandfather because he didn't make his money brewing beer like other members of the family. He was a beautiful spirit, the oddball, and he gave

Johnny his brushes and easels. Clearly Johnny loved this man and his love for him was like a sustaining force.

Johnny never finished art school because the Disney seducers came around and offered him money and training. But he was always open. He always knew there was more to life than Disney and being clever in Hollywood, and he had a very profound feeling about art and literature and music. He always thought there was something beyond, something around the corner, that he was missing.

But wasn't it your influence, initially, that pulled him in such a radical direction?

It's broader than that. I think moving to New York was the big question. Moving out of the small industry town to where there is an intellectual and social life in the true sense of the word. I think if you look at Johnny's evolution as a human being, his coming to New York, where he led a pretty isolated life as a pioneer in his chosen art form, allowed him to revive his goals. There *was* a pull. But for him to leave his whole past life and move to New York, where, in the beginning, he felt a lot like a country yokel, was very courageous.

Now, it was never total, he needed support and a lot of push, but I don't want to underestimate what he brought to it in the beginning, because from the beginning he was adventurous. He was a Renaissance person and always hungry.

How did you envision your partnership at the outset?

When Johnny and I got married, and we wrote our wedding vows, the agreement stated that we would make one short film a year, and eat with our children. We would really try to have a family, meaning, we would eat at home and share and be regular human beings, which is not the way people in Hollywood raise their families.

How did you finance your early avant-garde animation?

To begin with, Johnny had a commission on the way from the Guggenheim, to make *Adventures of an Asterisk*, a film about a child's vision. We had just had a new baby and we tried hard to capture all that intensity in this film. The film turned out to be a visual experience about the vision of a little child, which is so pure and so wonderful, about how what is perceived by those eyes for the first time is tactile

and felt, and about how that pure vision, as the child slowly grows in society, is made to follow certain rules.

For us, on a personal level, it was like starting over, because we were a new couple, newly partners, with this new baby—

It was a metaphor for your own careers.

Exactly. I've never enjoyed anything as much, and that enjoyment, that new release of energy, was sustained for five or ten years.

Were there other grants and commissions over the years?

Johnny and I never got a grant in our whole married life. Not one. *Moonbird*, for example, we financed ourselves and it took about 25 years to pay off and only now is it making a little bit of money. There were some commissions certainly, but they would not be vast sums of money, not like in advertising, but it was money. And if UNICEF commissions one to make a film about how hunger affects the world's children, that's like performing your social obligation, and getting paid for it.

I gather you have always done a little moonlighting.

In the beginning, I continued to work in live action for financial reasons, working on *Twelve Angry Men* and other movies, and also to give Johnny a little breathing space. Johnny kept up his commercial activity in New York and I hated advertising and I still do with such a passion. I would've thrown those people out of my office.

Then along came Markie Maypo, which was different. (laughs) Are you old enough to remember Markie Maypo?

It rings a bell.

This was an amazing advertising phenomenon. Maypo was a cereal made by a little company in Vermont which was bought by a liquor company, Heublein, to offset their profits. The company wanted to do a commercial that was a non-commercial. So we did a commercial about this little boy wearing a cowboy hat who hated the cereal and goes "Yuck!" and his father has to force-feed him—"Here comes the aeroplane!" We named him Markie, after our son, who did the voice. It was a little one-minute documentary on feeding a child. And it took off, though it wasn't supposed to. It was supposed to NOT sell the product. We got paid a lot of money, and were able to finance at least half of *Moonbird*. We lived from film to film like that for a very long time, until we began

work on a feature (*Of Stars and Men*) on which we ended up owing an awful lot of money.

It seems to me that when you and John were working together, ironically, you had more of an upper hand when it came to actually choosing the subject matter. In the sense that, given his background as a more traditional and commercial animator, the films you began to work on seemed to spring more out of your sensibility. Privately, it seems, you were very, if not dominant, at least very assertive in terms of what you were doing together, and that's one of the things that kept John on track.

I think I have a natural ability to enthuse. It's genuine, I have to believe in what I'm doing, and when I have that enthusiasm, it's irresistible. So I think that's what happened, although being flexible, we couldn't work around a theme until we found that part of the theme that Johnny felt good about, and that's what made the collaboration very strong.

Why were you, and are you, so opposed to a narrative form?

For my taste, I think the obligation of animation is to deal with material that live action can't, and to look for that form and content which is beyond an actor, which is beyond the adaptation of even a very fine book.

Was it easier to be abstract, than to be linear, to go from A to B to C to D?

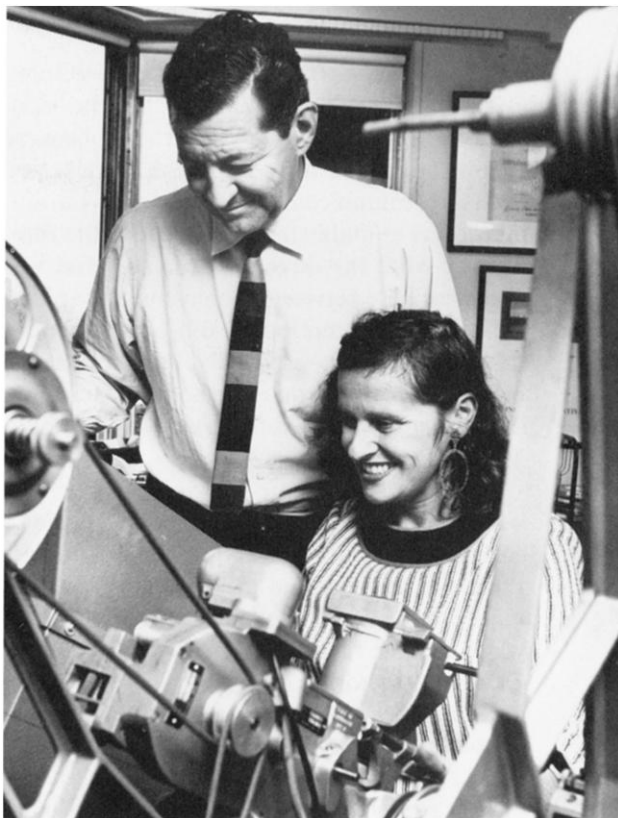
It was easier because a lot of it was free association. But if a film took us a year to make, six months of that time we spent working from the interior out.

How did your collaboration work, in terms of the initial writing?

It just evolved very naturally. We would discuss the structure, then we would each do a draft. The rule of the game was that if there was anything that either of us were violently opposed to it, it was just out the window. You could fight for something you really loved a lot, but if the other person really hated it, you had to give it up. After a while there would be something like three or four pieces of tape on a roll with John's name or my name, pieces that we had given up that we really hadn't given up in our heart of hearts, hoping that when the whole thing was put together, maybe the other person would change their mind.

How much of what we see in the joint Hubley films are your own drawings?

Hard to say. Less than half. We would get



John and Faith Hubley at the Moviola

the visual expression together, even if a lot of it was done in the privacy of our boudoir, then Johnny would usually do the amalgam. Especially in the films that deal with children or were about being a mother—I knew how certain things should look—but Johnny knew animation. Having had all the Stanislavski training, I also had really strong feeling for how the characters should act, in some cases. Because it was not just drawing, it was character analysis, writing with the characters.

The story and the storyboard, how the picture looked, were joint. It was a two-person vision. Even though Johnny was a better artist and certainly had all this experience, I was like a primitive working with somebody who was very trained. There were great advantages.

There wasn't anything in the picture we didn't discuss together, but there was a conflict between the public and private image. The private image was fine. Working together was no problem; we could argue yet have a healthy, strong collaboration. Whereas the public image was more Johnny. Johnny would do the public end, the handing out of the work to other people, till we got back to the editing at the end. That coincided with my training in live action

because I had worked with a lot of directors.

The meeting with the animator, and the hand-out of the animation, is very crucial, because even though you have all the drawings, you need to communicate the timings, and the animator has to understand the spirit of the film. That is what the director explains. That was always private between Johnny and the animator, with the exception of Bill Littlejohn, because sometimes, especially on *Carousel*, I wanted to act out some of the characters.

I gather Johnny was always doctoring your scenes.

Yes, which made me feel very inferior. He was the senior artist and he was ten years older. The turning point for me was *Carousel* because I was sick by then and there were certain passages that I painted, really in my own hand, and which (for the first time) Johnny didn't change. Or didn't doctor.

You were sometimes treated like a pupil. On the other hand, what a good school to be going to!

That's right. On balance, it was all okay. The big question was sharing the directing credit which happened for the first time on *Cockabooody* [in 1973]. It was the first time I ever got a co-credit, a co-directing credit, which was very upsetting to him. It was difficult for Johnny to share as much as he had to. Later on, of course, Johnny began to change of his own accord.

Is there a way you can generalize for me the Hubley technique and approach, in animation, as opposed to the more traditional ways and means?

This is a good chance to say something that has to be said: Johnny was not an animator. Johnny was a designer-director. For years, we were scrupulous about saying, "No, we don't animate." An animator draws meticulously, and makes this magic of things moving and turning and taking shape. Bill Littlejohn animates, or Shamus Culhane animates. We design and are film-makers.

You should explain the difference to me.

There isn't a word for an animated film-maker, but they're really two things. There's animation, the craft, and there's animation, making the whole film. In the Disney studios the craft people were the animators. Disney knew exactly what he was doing when he emphasized the craft separation so that nobody

would have the film-making power; that's not only a political observation, it's an artistic one. People who did animation would start at Disney as little apprentices and spend fifteen years learning to do "in betweens" and if they lived long enough or were lucky enough to become animators, they would think they were on a pinnacle. Johnny, at Disney, was a background painter and a layout artist.

For the uninitiate, what is layout as opposed to background?

Layout is like staging a scene, designing how the scene is going to move, the action. But the layout person would probably have nothing to do with the sound, for example, he would just take the drawings from the storyboard artist and say, "How does this scene work?" It's like being a second-unit director. It's not conceptual.

So Walt Disney was really the film-maker.

Absolutely. And he didn't allow other people to make films, and that's really what the strike [in mid-1941] was about, I think, about money and conditions and the control of the films. To these young men Disney was king, a god, and they had to kill the king in order to make artists of themselves. It was amazing to me, because I remember after old Walt died, I couldn't believe my husband and [director of Famous Studios] Bill Tytla were sitting around watching television talking about Disney with tears in their eyes. And I thought, "I thought this was the enemy!"

How would you generalize about the differences between the Disney style of animation and the technology and the technique that you pioneered on a small scale?

The big change was that we figured out how to make films in a very small space. It's as simple as that. Personal films that required half a dozen people.

From a technical point of view, since John didn't have to deal with the studio, he didn't have to use conventional ways, so we could do anything we wanted to do. Anything! We explored reticulation and paper as a medium, and it was the beginning of eliminating the hard-cel and the hard-line that I've always felt was ugly.

And cel-animation is, was, inhibiting. One would have to have a certain kind of skill to do it as handmade mass production. I'm not a specialist in it; I just know I hate it—I hate the way it looks and I don't like the feel of it. I hate the

hard edge and I don't see why anyone should learn to be tidy. I am a bit of a slob and I like a free-flowing line and texture. That was our contribution—aside from content and the amazing changes in sound, using children, using jazz and wonderful composers, using improvisation—to liberate animation from itself, and to go to watercolors and to paint pastels. It was a big, big liberation and resisted by the industry.

Your sources for films—from Harlow Shapley to Erik H. Erikson—are so, for want of a better word, esoteric. Is there any way you can generalize for me where you sought and derived your intellectual inspiration?

Remember, we had this ten-year friendship, followed by a very brief and intense courtship. The floodgates opened during the courtship and we discovered we both always had this feeling about science. You know, for example, that Johnny always wanted to do the story about Galileo's life. He did the stage design for the Los Angeles production [directed by Losey], and helped block the scenes.

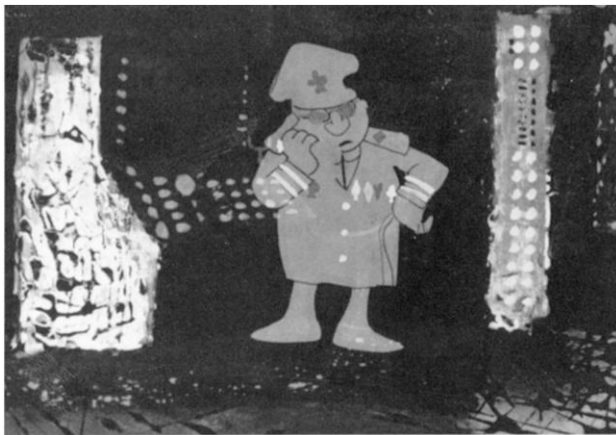
It was like being kids again and we started asking each other what we really wanted to do in life. A lot of what we really wanted to do revolved around taking the ideas that were new, the emerging visions of the planet, which were being presented to the public in very technical jargon, almost in another language, a high-priest form—and to break down the gulf between insiders and outsiders. It was a shared obsession. We wanted to be that bridge. I think we had very hungry minds.

One of the things that strikes me about your films is their relationship to jazz. They are very sensory and you can let them wash over you and really enjoy them, and sometimes feel more than know something about what they are trying to tell you.

They're physical, almost like a good massage.

And of course some of them have such fabulous jazz sound tracks. I want to ask you about the jazz people—like Benny Carter and Dizzy Gillespie. When and where did you meet them? You've had such a long collaboration with both of them.

Bennie I met independently of Johnny the first year I was in Hollywood. We were trying to raise money for an inter-racial hospital, and this classical pianist named Lucille asked me if



THE HOLE (1962)

I would go backstage with her to ask Benny Carter for some money. I said, "Of course!" Because growing up in Hell's Kitchen, where there was a lot of jazz in the street, there was nothing more beautiful to me than a horn player.

When Johnny and I did our first film, *Adventures of an Asterisk*, there was no question that Benny would do the score. In fact at one point we wrote a feature called *Jazz Beat*, about the history of American jazz—a love story with two abstract characters. Benny was the musical consultant. But we never made it because we couldn't raise the money.

At one point, when we first got married and had these explosions of feelings, we did a film called *Date with Dizzy*, which is a live action film, a satire on advertising. That was one of the first times we worked with Dizzy. It had live action and some animation. We shot it in one day and we had so much fun. An advertising agency paid for it. I'll never know why. It's an underground treasure, a record of Dizzy in 1957.

I gather you and Johnny were both profoundly influenced by the leading art of your generation, that is, by the surrealists and the modernists, the leading French painters.

Picasso, very strongly, for Johnny. For me, more Paul Klee and Miro. For me, I was influenced by the side of them which is primitive and childlike and by how they allowed that to stay a part of their sophisticated vision. I like the directness and the passion of a child's vision.

You see, Johnny, in his heart of hearts, was a surrealist. John's humor and his interior were totally surreal. So once he perceived that life was getting short, that there wasn't much time left, the surrealism became dominant, or he

wouldn't have survived. It was a joy for him to let go of "boy meets girl" and all of the rules of the game.

What was difficult, because there were difficulties, was in making a film like *Stars and Men* [in 1961], which I still think is a beautiful film, finishing it and putting everything we had in the whole wide world into it, borrowing the money to finish it, having critical acclaim from Bosley Crowther of *The New York Times*, and then no distributor. Then, Johnny would say, "I don't want to be an educator. I want to be seen."

Why did you feel the need to take the financial and creative risk of a feature?

Johnny always wanted to handle a longer length. And we wanted to do something that related to the marriage of science and art. Then we read this book by Harlow Shapley, *Of Stars and Men*, which was an overview of evolution. Dr. Shapley thought the next stage of evolution was psychic and that we had to start preparing for it. The first thing we had to do was stop destroying the planet and get rid of weapons, then we really had to work on a new development, and he went through a kind of history of western science to make that statement.

Of Stars and Men was a wonderful film. It played for all of a week in New York and then totally disappeared. We ended up owing all this money which we eventually paid off, but it left Johnny with a sense of incompleteness, because I think he really wanted it to succeed.

That haunted him. As time went by there were more debts and there were more children. There was a middle period of work, including *Tijuana Brass*, which won the Academy Award, which is not our best work. It was commissioned by Herb Alpert and his partners, and they're lovely people. But the film represented, artistically, the compromise of those years.

Was Johnny giving voice to this compromise? Was it a struggle between you, behind the scenes, or was it inarticulate?

It was half and half. I know it was something we used to talk about. It coincided with a period where we had a policy not to do commercials, and we were doing a lot of stuff for Children's Television Workshop, Electric Company and Sesame Street, which was like a refined form of one-minute commercials, selling education to children. But it's not work from the heart and I think if you do a lot of it, it corrodes the eyes.

There were some nice films during this period, like *Eggs*, but generally there was a lot of effort to launch features.

For example, we tried to do *Gulliver's Travels* with [poet-documentarist-screenwriter] Ben Maddow. Johnny and Ben were best friends.

Yet this was after it became known that Ben Maddow had cooperated with HUAC. Wasn't that awkward or painful, considering that John himself had been blacklisted?

No, the painful part is what Ben did. I always find this discussion very interesting because I don't believe in permanent guilt. There's some people I'll never talk to because I don't really like them. But I feel some people were victims, they were weak and they became victims, and I believe they punish themselves enough, so I don't have to punish them.

When I worked on *Twelve Angry Men* as script clerk, I would be on the set with Lee J. Cobb. Now, I had been at Cobb's studio as a student, and we had a very close relationship; I babysat for him when he went in the Army and stayed with his wife, Helen. And on the set Lee would look at me and burst into tears and say, "How could you sit there looking at me? Who ever thought that I would be this disgusting person and you would be watching me?" So [director] Sidney Lumet and Henry Fonda would say, "Take that script and go hide!" There was no pleasure in that.

I didn't hate Lee. Later on, I went to see him backstage in New York in *King Lear* and I'm glad I did because he died shortly thereafter. I told him he gave a wonderful performance and he said, "You can't think I am wonderful. How can you? I am nothing. I am disgusting." I said, "Look, that was twenty years ago. . . ."

In Ben's case the blacklist probably came up, but I don't think we talked about it, and if we did start to talk about it, the subject was changed. Somehow, the idea of working together had come up and at the time it seemed pleasurable.

Perhaps it is easier for you to forgive the excesses of the blacklist because you left Hollywood behind, and you have said to me that you were not really blacklisted, per se. Whereas, Johnny was.

And Johnny had a sense of loss about it. On the other hand, and I know this sounds totally irreverent, but I think Johnny's life was made by the blacklist. I really believe that. It was very

harmful to him of course but in a practical way it got him out of being a successful director in the studio system to being an independent, and I don't think that would have happened otherwise.

Watership Down was another stab at a commercial animated feature. I know that sometime during the latter stages of production, John was relieved, in some fashion, as director. I am puzzled by the name of Martin Rosen, someone I have never heard of as an animator, who is credited as director.

At one time he was our agent.

He's not an animator?

No. He asked us if we'd do *Watership Down* with himself as producer. I read the book and I didn't like it and said I wouldn't do it. Johnny said he liked the book—I think he genuinely liked it—and this was his chance to do a picture and get paid very well. It was a bonafide offer, but it meant giving up his independence.

Martin came to see me. By this time I was a terminal cancer patient and I had all the freedom that you think you have when you're going to die soon. I said, with some rancor, "This doesn't interest me." He said, "Would Johnny do it without you?" and I said, "Ask him." It was a hard time for everybody, we had family discussions about it, and finally I said, "Johnny, you held out all these years, you've been a good pop, a good partner, and if you really feel this is what you want to do, you have a right to do it." He took the job and went to live in London. I ran the studio, and he would come back at intervals, and stay for a week or two and help out.

Johnny was trying to live in both worlds, and I don't know, maybe it can be done, but he got sicker and sicker while he was commuting, and then he had a minor heart attack. I think *Watership Down* was ready to be mixed when I came over for a week of vacation and we went to Norway.

He was getting sicker and you had been diagnosed with terminal cancer.

Right. What a romantic couple! When that vacation was over, I flew to Venice, where we had spent many, many happy summers, where John was going to meet me and the two girls for one last weekend before going home, and he called up from London and told us he had been fired. For a person of Johnny's mentality, a kind of perfectionist, a golden boy, being



EVERYBODY RIDES THE CAROUSEL (1976)

fired was devastating.

What was the creative basis of the dispute?

It had nothing to do with creativity.

You told me that, previous to Watership Down, there was a final period of working together which ended with an artistic flourish.

It started with *Eggs*, when Johnny's spirit was returning, and for my taste it continued with *Voyage to Next*, the last short film we made together. By then I was sick and there was the major work, *Everybody Rides a Carousel* [in 1976]. It was commissioned by CBS during a period when they must have been under some pressure to do something decent for families and especially for children and it is based on Eric Erikson's life cycle and *Childhood in Society*. It was just before *Watership Down*, it's 72 minutes long, and it's wonderful! . . . though it wasn't a theatrical film, and it did have educational overtones.

I can remember when we finished it and we took it to Cape Cod where Erik and Joan Erikson lived for a showing at a lovely little theater. The last stage of the film is about the old age of wisdom, and we ended the film with the metaphor of a merry-go-round, this carousel, with the last horse going off into the fields to die. I had practiced learning death, or befriending death, and I remember sitting next to Johnny and starting to cry at the end because it was like I was saying goodbye to everybody. It was so ironic, in a way, that Johnny died, and I was supposed to die, and didn't.

You and John had actually started work on The Cosmic Eye, am I right?

We had started a project with Carl Sagan which I later turned into *The Cosmic Eye*. If we had gotten the money for *The Cosmic Concert*,

as we were calling it then, we would not have done *The Doonesbury Special*. *Doonesbury* was the backup if *Cosmic Concert* didn't get financed. But if we had done *Cosmic Concert*, John was going to let me do one, maybe two sequences of my own as part of what he called my "witch act"—because he didn't go along with all this mythology.

And spirituality and metaphysicality.

He thought it was interesting and privately he would say to Bill Littlejohn that she has something none of us know about, and we should let her go with it. So Johnny and I signed the contract for *Doonesbury*. We did the storyboard, Garry Trudeau wrote the script, we recorded the tracks and then we took a vacation. After which, Johnny went into the hospital for this so-called simple bypass, and never came out. He hemorrhaged and died on the table.

Can I ask you about your own illness? I understand you were diagnosed with terminal cancer over ten years ago.

In 1974 the first lumps were found. I was teaching the storyboard class with Johnny at Yale, preparing *Voyage to Next*. I'm not going to say cancer is fun, it isn't. But it has been an opportunity for growth. On occasion, I would have my sessions with students in the chemotherapist's waiting room, which in a way was wonderful for them because, especially in the 70s, cancer wasn't talked about. The students would practice telling their storyboards to the other patients so that in a sense they were practicing performing and getting other people's input. I could almost see the room change from a funeral parlor to a place with a real life force.

I had a mastectomy and the initial assumption was everything was going to be fine. Then after the operation my doctor said, "I think you should have radiation." Then after I had radiation I went in for a check-up and he said, "I don't like your lymph count. It's terrible. Take a deep breath, because I think you have to start preparing to die. I would give you, if I were being generous, a year, and if I wasn't being generous, six months."

So for a while I was just living six months at a time. A lump was found in the remaining breast and my doctor's partner told me he was going to book me a hospital room to have my other breast taken off. And I said no. I felt it was just stress-connected and that I was too mixed up about everything in life and that what

I really needed was a rest. So I rented a cabin in Maine and went away for a month in the summertime, leaving Johnny with the children. When I came back, the lump was gone. I changed my eating habits a lot, I had this very strong Italian chemotherapy program, and I kept growing more lumps, which I kept making go away or they would turn out to be benign.

Up until Johnny's death I was still in and out of the hospital, with these lumps coming and going. The last time I was in the hospital was '77. After that I just went back every six months for check-ups. After about ten years I took myself off the list of the doomed. I'm just now beginning to think I'll live. It's only in the last year that I have decided to plan for old age.

How did John's death and being diagnosed with terminal cancer influence what you began to do as a film-maker, individually, without John?

There's something about accepting mortality that gives one courage. It certainly stood me up straight.

Finishing *Doonesbury* without John was honestly the hardest thing I've ever had to do in my whole life. I had to deliver one sequence at a time to NBC and go through censors and committees, and all the time suffering from cancer. They were trying to fire me because I was a mere woman. Garry [Trudeau] was very, very supportive. It was just a horrendous period.

But to be serious, I felt I had no choice. I could not afford to be unafraid. I could not threaten to commit suicide, because I was already dying. Every neurotic behavior pattern was just cut off.

How did facing death affect your subsequent choice of material?

I always felt that every film had to make a statement, a serious statement, but now I felt I could waste no time. I felt very guilty about not finishing *Cosmic Concert* after Johnny died. But I didn't want to give up the idea entirely because I still wanted to do a long piece that was a continuation of *Of Stars and Men* about how creatures from another another planet must view us.

In time I finished *Whither Weather*, a film about the effects of weather on our planet. Then the Year of the Child inspired *Step by Step*, which dealt with the history of child abuse, the condition of the earth's children, and

what their yet-to-be-gained rights are. After *The Big Bang and Other Creation Myths* and *Sky Dance* I began to see how I could shape these elements into a feature film. I planned *Hello* as a short which would work as the climax and in this roundabout fashion, after eight years, I completed *The Cosmic Eye*.

Has it been a problem, distributing as well as financing your films?

Most of the time. It has been up and down, down and up, up and down.

Would they be ever shown with Hollywood movies?

In the past, rarely. *Windy Day* played with *The Odd Couple*, I think. *Of Men and Demons* played with something, but I don't remember what. My film *Hello* played with Tavernier's *Sunday in the Country* at the Paris Theater, and that was nice, although I received no fee. Since then, promises, but no distribution.

Isn't that discouraging?

No, I swear I don't care.

Isn't that a paradox? To make movies that are about things which people should become aware of, or think about, or become concerned about, but the films do not reach them.

It's a paradox. But, how much can you do? I know a lot of film-makers, and Johnny used to be one of them, who would go to waste worrying about that paradox. You can't really lose your life's blood agonizing over the state of money or distribution. Either it will get better or it will get worse; it's out of our control. All we can do is do our best work.

But it sounds like it always got bad or worse—never really better.

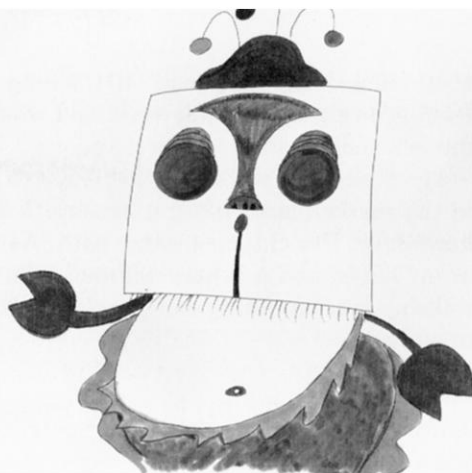
But something would always come along. Nowadays I run into second-generation people who say, "You know, that film changed my whole life!" So maybe it was shown through churches or in schools or at a lot of Sunday schools, I really don't know. But the quality of the viewing was so serious that it could really touch a fellow human being. And the quality of an audience is much more important than the numbers.

That's not a very populist viewpoint.

Well, I'm not very populist person.

That sounds elitist.

I don't think so. What I mean is, it's not the quantity of the audience, it's the quality of the contact with the audience. If a film is shown in a quiet place where people can really see it once



THE COSMIC EYE (1984)

or twice, and think about it and talk about it, and contribute their personae to the film, if there are ten such people seeing the film, then to me that is worth more than 20,000 in a big moviehouse. But I think all good ideas, and this applies to science, religion, philosophy, or politics, are shared first, intensely, and then it is exponential dissipation, or communication. I think that we're very misled by the electromagnetic force into thinking that we have to be on a screen simultaneously everywhere at once.

I believe my situation is changing, maybe because of the availability of the Disney home-video cassettes. In any case, maybe because I'm older and wiser, I don't lose energy agonizing over why there aren't more audiences in the United States. One has to have a personal adjustment and a social adjustment. My social adjustment is one of rage, and my personal adjustment is one that enables me to work.

For example, I've just begun work on a new short titled *Amazonia*, inspired by two South American myths and a shaman's warning that we must save the vanishing rain forest. I have shared the experience of developing the storyboard with my 18 students at Yale this semester, who have designed their own visual pleas on behalf of the rain forest. If I stopped working to think about the problems of distribution or where I will find the rest of the budget of *Amazonia*, I would be paralyzed.

One of the things that I'm so grateful to Johnny about is that he was really brave and walked out on the mainstream. His insistence that the medium could handle—handle is the wrong word—but *express* much more has; I think, taken animation down a different road than the main one, in other directions. I am

continuing down that road. It's a long way from growing up in Hollywood and what we thought then or what we perceived.

My choice as a working artist is not to play to the marketplace. It's not because I don't know how. I've chosen another path. As hard as my life is, and it is hard without Johnny, I wake up every morning and I can't wait to get to work.

THE HUBLEY FILMS ON VIDEO

All Hubley films are available in 16mm, VHS, Beta, and 3/4" video for non-theatrical, educational, and institutional use from Pyramid Films and Video, Box 1048, Santa Monica, CA 90406-1048. To order, call 1-800-421-2304.

From Walt Disney Home Video, six volumes are available. To order, call 1-800-225-550, ext. 480. All films are available in VHS or Beta, and are in color.

THE COSMIC EYE (1984), 71 min., by Faith Hubley

THE AGES OF HUMANKIND, 53 min., by John and Faith Hubley

Contains: *The Tender Game* (1958), *Dig* (1972), *WOW (Women of the World)* (1975),

People People People (1975), *Cockaboodie* (1973).

FLIGHTS OF FANCY, 54 min., by John and Faith Hubley

Contains: *Windy Day* (1967), *Zuckerkanal* (1968), *Moonbird* (1959), *Adventures of an ** (1956).

OF STARS AND MEN (1961), 53 min., by John and Faith Hubley

URBANSCAPE, 41 min., by John and Faith Hubley

Contains: *Of Men and Demons* (1968), *Harlem Wednesday* (1957), *Urbanissimo* (1966), *The Hole* (1962).

A DELICATE THREAD, 49 min., by John and Faith Hubley

Contains: *Eggs* (1970), *Children of the Sun* (1960), *The Hat* (1964), *Second Chance: Sea* (1976).

From Pacific Arts Video Records, two titles are available. To order, call 1-800-538-5856.

EVERYBODY RIDES THE CAROUSEL (1976), 72 min., by John and Faith Hubley

A DOONESBURY SPECIAL (1977), 30 min., by John and Faith Hubley and Garry Trudeau

In Canada, for all non-theatrical use of Hubley films, call Canadian Learning Company, 1-416-265-3333.

CHARLES EIDSVIK

Machines of the Invisible: Changes in Film Technology in the Age of Video

Until the early 1970s, critical discussion of film technology and practice was a preserve monopolized by film-makers and by theorists such as André Bazin and Jean Mitry who were in close contact with film-making communities and often served as intellectual spokesmen for views commonly held by film-makers. The film-making community, in trade journals such as *The American Cinematographer* and *J.S.M.P. T.E.*, traded secrets, discussed craft, and cele-

brated its lore, myths, and mystique. Theorists and historians such as Bazin and Mitry—Mitry was himself a film-maker—built film-makers' perspectives into their views of how new technology catalyzes change in film history. This view, which permeates Mitry's *Esthétique et psychologie du cinéma* and can also be found in essays such as "The Myth of Total Cinema" by Bazin, posits an "Idealist" and "technologically determinist" view of history, with film technol-