

THE BUSINESS, TECHNOLOGY & ART OF ANIMATION

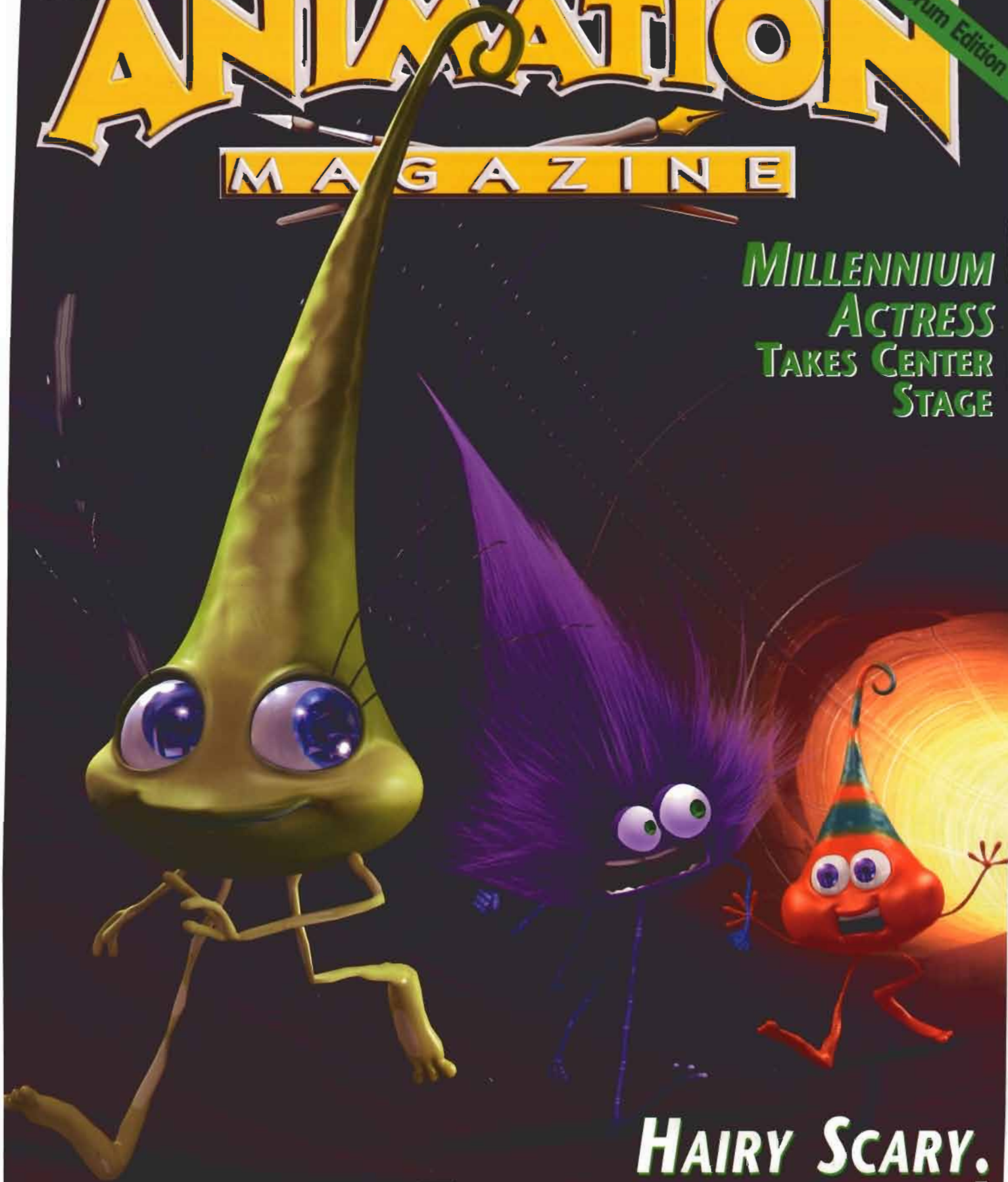
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# ANIMATION

MAGAZINE

Cartoon Forum Edition

**MILLENNIUM  
ACTRESS  
TAKES CENTER  
STAGE**



**HAIRY SCARY.  
TWO WORLDS COLLIDE !**



## Looking for Liaisons in Lombardy

Cartoon Forum puts the spotlight on 82 new European series.

BY RAMIN ZAHED

Come September, it will be tough to track down Europe's top animation players. Most of them will be tucked away in the beautiful town of Varese, located in the Lombardy province of Italy, attending the 14th gathering of the Cartoon Forum. Presented by The European Association of Animation Film, better known as Cartoon, with the support of the Media Program of the European Union, this annual event is designed to help the continent's animation producers secure production financing. And, sorry, this is strictly a European event, so Americans (or anyone else from a non-Euro spending nation) are not invited to participate.

According to the Forum's coordinator,

Annick Maes, approximately 700 participants will either be pitching or seeking to co-produce some 82 new series ideas. "These programs offer a broad and varied panorama of European creativity," says Maes. "That amounts to 535 hours and 44 minutes of programming for a total budget of 294,237,945 Euros." (Trust those Europeans to give us precise numbers!) "Thanks to steady growth and improvement over the years, the event is now considered to be the major autumn rendezvous for producers, broadcasters and investors."

This year, 14 European countries will present their goods, including Forum first-timers Slovakia and Poland. Compared to the top five large territo-

ries (U.K., France, Germany, Spain and Italy), the nine smaller countries attending usually receive lower levels of state funding and support from their national TV channels. That's why they need to attend these markets—to find their ideal partners to secure financing.

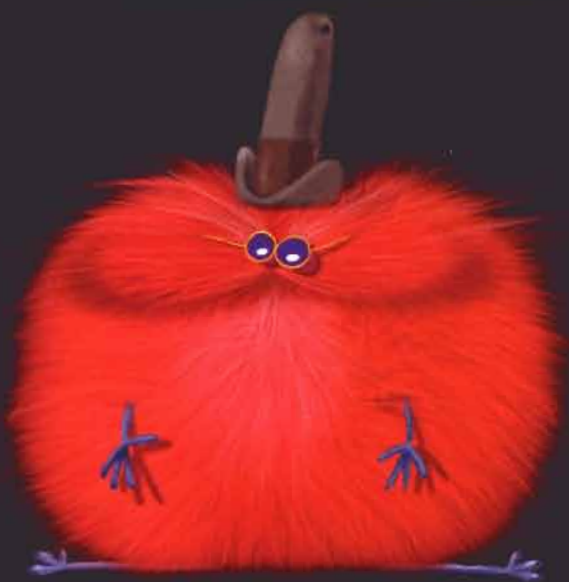
According to Maes, in addition to increased attendance by hopeful boutique shops, the economic situation in the animation sector is making producers more cautious. Another visible trend is the popularity of shorter formats. "We have 16 series with five to seven-minute episodes, six series under five minutes, and five TV specials," she says. "But the cost by minute is lower than last year. In 2002, it broke down to 10,555 Euros per minute, while this year it's 9,146 Euros per minute."

Judging from this year's contenders, Maes concludes that adventures and comedies are still the most popular genres for series, two-thirds of which are targeted at children ages five to 12.

Although the financing picture for many of these projects might be unclear, there is one thing that's certain. The creators of many of these toons are certainly not afraid to go beyond what's considered safe and traditional. Reading some of these pitches can be the best part of the show. To help you get an idea of the range, here are excerpts from some of our favorite pitches:

"*Angels and Devils* is an absolutely hilarious series that turns typical everyday situations into nightmarish absurdities where the pace is as frenetic as it is irresistible!" How about "*Animal Pharm*: What seems like an everyday sitcom about a bunch of animals in a mental hospital turns out to be far more disturbing!" (We can't wait!) And this one just cracked us up! "*Anna and the Moods*: One day, Anna, the perfect child, wakes up with a horrible illness: She looks like Marilyn Manson and has become terribly moody!" There's also one show which should be funded just because of its name—*Hairy Scary!* We wish them all the best of luck in Varese! ■

To find out more about this year's Cartoon Forum visit [www.cartoon-media.be](http://www.cartoon-media.be).



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BIG KAHMNA

## Cultures Clash in Alphanim's *Hairy Scary*

In our crazy conflict-ridden world, you don't have to go far to find out how the creators of Alphanim's new cartoon *Hairy Scary* came up with their premise! The show, which is being presented at Cartoon Forum this year, tells the story of two opposite civilizations who have ignored each other since the dawn of time. The Hairies are peaceful and refined, while the Scaries are stressed-out and driven nuts by their latest technologies! Things take a turn for the worse when their chief decides to turn all Hairies into Scaries.

"The initial idea was to create a show which talked about different cultures and the way they live together and deal with the things that set them apart," says the show's creator Jan Van Rijsselberge (*Spaced Out*, *Cosmic Cowboys*). "In this case, the difference is not only cultural, but physical. One world is full of hairy creatures who are very advanced and spiritual, while the other is crude and materialistic."

Billed as the French animation house's first foray into the CG universe, *Hairy Scary* presented a set of particular challenges for the producers. "The worlds depicted in the show are completely abstract, so it was tough to make the characters and issues believable," says Van Rijsselberge. "On the technical side, animating CG characters with lots of long hair is not exactly the easiest way to go."

According to the top brass at Alphanim, Cartoon Forum offers the best exposure for finding co-producers and broadcasters, not only on the European level, but even on a global scale. "Alphanim likes to show promos at Cartoon Forum as kind of a surprise," says Van Rijsselberge. "The projects pitched at the event are always kept pretty secret until the presentation. It's no different this time: No one has seen more than 15 seconds of the show!"

When asked about his favorite toons of all time, Van Rijssleberge

says Disney's *The Jungle Book*, *Les Shadocks*, *The Moomins*, *My Neighbor Totoro*, director Tom Burton's films and Looney Tunes regular Foghorn Leghorn have all influenced him at one point or another. And what does he really think about the financing situation in Europe? "We will give you the answer right after we come back from Cartoon Forum," he replies. ■

