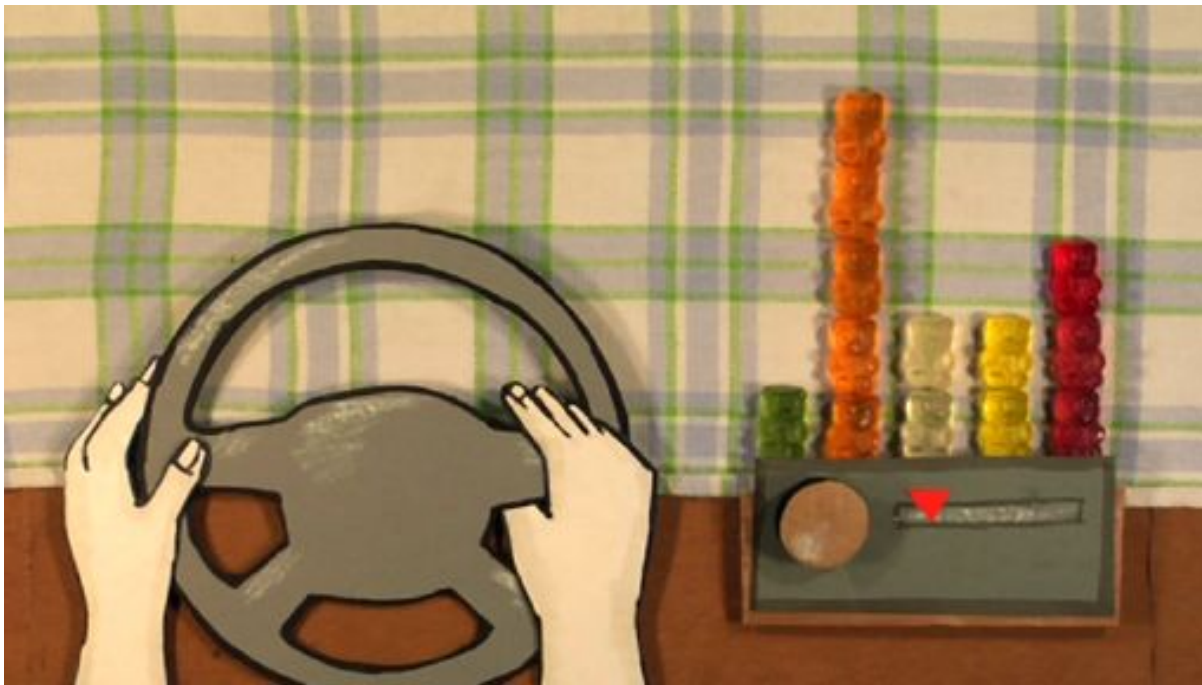


“What Do You Do?”

An example Teaching with animation,
based on a documentary series by Katrin Rothe

Ages 8+

“WHAT DO YOU DO?“ is a film series in which different people are asked about various subjects and where the different answers are illustrated with simple animation techniques.



Germany, 2008

Running time: 23 min. The series consists of 10 episodes (2 min., 30 sec. each)

Concept/Direction: Katrin Rothe

Animation: Stefanie Saghri, Andreas Dihm, Michael Schmacke, Claudia Wipfler and others.

Editing: Katrin Rothe

Music: Sascha Moser

The animated documentary, WHAT DO YOU DO? was produced by ZDF. (public german TV)

About “What do you do?”

Content

In ten short animated documentaries, people describe what they believe in, what they are afraid of, and what they wish for. Katrin Rothe asks a few completely normal people questions about personal aspects of their lives, along with questions about social subjects and problems. The people being questioned are never pictured. Instead, the words are accompanied by drawn images. “What Do You Do?” is an animated documentary film

About Documentaries

The director, Katrin Rothe, says regarding the relationship between documentary film and reality:

“The documentary film must not change facts, but it may carry its own message through the editing process which occurs in every film. One can choose precisely what to show and what to omit. Nowadays, I, as a documentary film maker, must so often juggle freedom of speech, media rights, personality rights, public relations offices, and risk anxieties of small production companies, that it is often more faithful to reality to re-enact a situation or, as in my films, to animate it.”

About Animation

Katrin Rothe describes her reasons for working with animation:

“It was an obvious choice. I found that what people told me was often incredible. I always tried to visualize their descriptions in my head. Then I asked them further questions. In a documentary film, showing this process would use up a lot of valuable film time. Therefore, I had the idea to show my visualization of their stories as animation with their answers. [...] Because when people tell their stories they also often explain what they believe them to mean. In the images I can carve out the details. [...] If you use animation in a documentary one must not arbitrarily change reality. For the animations I ask for detailed descriptions and use sketches.”

The selection of the protagonists

“We searched for 12 normal people that we felt represented a cross-section of the German. First we looked in our locality but that was not enough. Then we made a wish list for the producer who found us the people. In the end we asked the questions to about 20 people, so we have between 8 to 12 statements per episode. The editors of ZDF also took part in the selection process. Sometimes I could convince them to wait for the animation before the selection. At first impression the answers often sounded trivial or like something you have already heard several times. But because I knew the people quite well, and because the answers were usually much longer than what was shown I knew that there was a whole and complex worldview underneath them. I knew I could show that with the animation.”

The Filming

“First we only recorded the sound. That was important to me because I wanted the answers as truthful as possible. And the camera only interrupts the communication. Furthermore, I wanted to represent the opinions of people who do not want to show their faces on television. Many people are skeptical about the media and I respect that.”

Finding Questions

Questions about the Themes, about choice of protagonists, about format, about animation, about music

- * Which questions would you like an answer to?
- * Or are there groups, which in your opinion, were not represented?
- * Which people would you seek out if you wished to make a film which represented all of society?
- * What roles do the editing and selection of certain scenes play in a documentary film?
- * Where is the line between carrying a message and changing the truth?
- * How were the animations used here? Do they merely illustrate what is said or do they go further?

The Subjects (A selection)

What do you do when there is an election? How do you inform yourself about the world?

What do you do against violence?

What do you do when there is an election?

Many answers relate to differences between elections in the past and now. It becomes clear that today many people think very little about the opportunity they have to change something through an election.

- * What meaning do elections have for your life?
- * How do you rate the chance to change society through elections?
- * Do you believe that the answers in the film are representative?

How do you inform yourself about the world?

Many sources of information appear in the answers. Classic media represent only a small fraction of total sources and conversations with other people are seen as at least as important.

- * Which sources of information were mentioned?
- * How do you inform yourself about the world? Which sources, which media do you use for this?
- * Which news stories interest you? Which subjects do you find off-putting?
- * Does the source of information matter to you? If so, why?
- * What differentiates the media of internet, radio, television, and newspaper from one another?
- * How would our world look without such media?

What do you do against violence?

The answers to these questions reflect how different people deal with fear and how difficult it can be to show civil courage in everyday life.

- * Do you find the question about violence to be an important?
- * Do you occupy yourself with the question of what you can do against violence?
- * Have you had any personal experience with violent situations?
- * Have you ever been violent? For what reasons?
- * How is violence socially assessed? How does the media represent it?

Useful Links :

What do you do? Episodes with English subtitles

What Do you do at election time? <https://vimeo.com/109384974>

HowDoYouFindAboutTheWorld <https://vimeo.com/109387148>

HowDoYouReactToViolence <http://vimeo.com/109387147>

Animations by children workshops: <http://www.saek.de/dok-leipzig-und-saek-helfen-nachwuchs-beim-filmdreh/>

What do you know about GDR? <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9i8T8INsLsw>

Katrin Rothe Born in Thuringia. From 1992 to 1998 she studied experimental film design at the Berlin University of the Arts. Meisterschüler of Heinz Emigholz. She received the NaFög-stipend from the state of Berlin. Since 2001 she has been working as a freelance animator. She is the founder of the Berlin label www.karotoons.de. Since 2003, she has been working as a freelance director. She is the recipient of the Adolf-Grimme-award in 2007 and 2014. She does nonfiktional animation-workshops with children, young adults and students for several institutions since 2000. She lives in Berlin.

More Films from Katrin Rothe with and without Animation:

***Concrete Gold** – how the financial crses fluttered into my living room

52min, ARTE RBB, 2013 original title: „Betongold – Wie die Finanzkrise in mein Wohnzimmer kam“

*„**Job wanted**“ – 4x30min, ZDF 2006, original Title „Stellmichein“

full list and texts, clips: www.karotoons.de

short animated films; music videos, or free artwork on vimeo: <http://vimeo.com/katrinrothe>