

The Museum of Modern Art

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The Art of the Animator: The Storyboard, currently on view in the Auditorium Gallery of The Museum of Modern Art, is presented in connection with the Department of Film's recent cycle of short animated films from the Zagreb Studio in Yugoslavia. It includes the sketches and storyboard sequence for two works: "Far Away I Saw Mist and Mud..." (storyboard by Zlatko Bourek), the grand prize winner for animation at Belgrade in 1964; and "The Masque of the Red Death" (storyboard by Pavao Stalter), a film now in progress.

The storyboard represents the first step in the creation of an animated film. A series of sketches outlining the action and suggesting the style of a particular film story, the animator's storyboard is both a rough draft of the finished work and an act of discovery--as it takes on a concrete shape, the artist's original "idea" changes, hints at new possibilities, becomes another form of reality. Boris Kolar, one of the leading artists of the Zagreb Film Studio, describes the special significance of the storyboard in animation: "Once it is finished, a storyboard becomes a model and guide for making the film itself. But it is also something more: the artist, transferring his idea into storyboard form, expresses it in visual terms rather than verbal and is therefore also forced to think primarily in terms of pictures, which is of fundamental importance in the animated film medium. The animated film 'story' is most often not written out in words, it is the 'story' first. It emerges as the result of making a storyboard and cannot be separated from it." The technique is not, of course, limited to the field of animation; live-action films often use a storyboard to plan individual sequences.

"Far Away I Saw Mist and Mud..." was made by Zlatko Bourek in 1963. He adapted the scenario from the poems of a contemporary Croatian writer, Miroslav Krieva. The story deals with the wars that followed the Turkish invasion of the Balkans, and Bourek, who has a gift for mordant, surreal satire, has tried to recapture the nightmare qualities of the original in his drawings. Pavao Stalter's "The Masque of the Red Death" is, of course, adapted from Edgar Allan Poe, and the form of
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stylization he has given this horror story--Stalter used a technique of animated paper cut-outs--provides an interesting contrast to Bourek's expression of the Croatian horror story.

Zlatko Bourek was one of the group that founded the Zagreb Film Studio in 1956. He graduated as a sculptor from the Art Academy in Zagreb, where he lives and works as a designer, painter and graphic artist in both film and theatre. Pavao Stalter is also a veteran of the Zagreb Film Studio; before going on to design and direct his own shorts, Stalter did the backgrounds for more than twenty films (among them, Bourek's "Far Away I Saw Mist and Mud...").

In speaking about the exhibition, which will run through March 17, Boris Kolar said: "Sometimes--although that was not the aim of the artist in doing them--storyboards have enough graphic intensity of their own to be well worth viewing as individual works of art."

Additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, and Gary Arnold, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. 245-3200.