ANIMATION INDUSTRY IN DANGER : WORLD UNIONS DECLARE EMERGENCY IN THE FACE OF GENERATIVE AI USE

PRESS RELEASE

This statement was composed and supported by a collective of international Animation Unions, federations, and organisations calling for action in regards to the usage of generative Artificial Intelligence and its destructive impact, not only on the global animation industry and the craft itself, but also on everyone who is employed by it, our culture and our planet.

It is an undeniable fact that the animation industry has been suffering greatly these last few years. The economics of streaming have been proven to be not at all lucrative and the increased spending during the pandemic led to the unavoidable burst of the streaming bubble. It is the workers that were staffed up with false promises that are feeling the repercussions through mass layoffs, the increased use of outsourcing, mergers and acquisitions that lead to the closure of studios and ever decreasing budgets. This echoes across multiple audiovisual entertainment industries and affects workers in animation, music, VFX and the gaming industry.

The rapid expansion of Generative AI in animation is propelled by the perceived beliefs that it is the answer to these developments. To work in these industries is a constant battle to prove our economic worth to a very small number of people, and to those people genAI brings an offer too good to be true: a near magical machine that can produce words and images from a simple and vague description.

Generative AI is neither a tool, nor effective, nor cheap. It is a copying machine that is flawed, destructive and expensive to run. GenAI literally builds upon and draws not only from the copyrighted works it was trained on, but also from the local human cultural values and norms embedded within those works. It poses an immediate threat to creative innovation and renewal, replacing the richness and diversity that characterize human creativity with a creativity shaped by the biases of those controlling and using it. It actively pushes creatives out of their respective industries, which will not only lead to the inevitable loss of knowledge and talent that will never be recuperated fully, but also directly leads to the privatisation of all art process and thinking.

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GenAI is a technology that seeks not to support artists, but to destroy them. The absence of humans is a feature, not a bug, of AI art. It is not a tool. We do not "use" genAi - we negotiate with it to try and make it do the things we want it to do. GenAI promises only the loss of employment and livelihood for the millions of people worldwide that work at keeping the world connected through their art.

Unfortunately, the audiovisual industry is not the only victim of this increasingly damaging tech development. This same technology is being used to foster dissent, confusion and distrust among the public and has wide-ranging implications beyond international security, including the fabrication of criminal evidence and news, new forms of sexual harassment including deepfake pornography and/or privacy violations.The computational power required to train and use generative AI models demands a staggering amount of electricity and water which directly strains municipal water supplies and disrupts local ecosystems. This unchecked growth and unjustified techno-optimism comes with incredible environmental consequences, including expanding demand for computing power, larger carbon footprints, shifts in patterns of electricity demands and an accelerated depletion of natural resources, additionally exploiting without any respect for human rights.

As such, there is a need for protection frameworks around the ethical and fair use of AI. For this we refer to the research brief of the International Labour Organization (ILO) which proposes the concept of "3Cs" (compensation, control on the use of the work of the creator, informed consent), but also for policies, nationally and internationally, to manage workforce transition through skills development, as well as the use of social protection to support workers affected by AI.

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- **Consent**: A reasonable balance between on the one hand technological innovation and on the other hand a sustainable and strong cultural and creative sector, requires that training AI with copyright-protected works should only be possible with the (informed) consent of the author(s) of those works.

- **Compensation**: Performers and creators should be fairly compensated for the use of their work including but not limited to illustrations, animations, writing, voicework, likeness, or image, in AI generated content.

- **Controls**: Creators—such as writers, musicians, filmmakers, visual artists, and other professionals—need to be able to govern how their works, identities, and creative inputs are used, adapted, or reproduced by AI systems. This control ensures that the creators' intellectual property (IP), labour, and reputations are respected and that they receive fair recognition and compensation. In order for this to be realized, creators need to have an understanding on what AI – and particularly GenAI – entails; it is also necessary to build agency among them to negotiate relevant employment conditions.

We call upon the regulators, lawmakers and governments to fight for culture and art and the value it provides, to draft and implement legislation that protects those workers and those rights.

We call upon producers, showrunners, studioheads and production staff to understand and protect our creative culture and to prioritize both the workers and our work.

We call upon all creative workers worldwide to unite. We ask that you support human made works. We ask that you speak up against the implementation of AI. We ask that you become informed and unionise with your fellow workers to protect our art and culture, our work and our livelihood.

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Signed and supported by :

- ABRACA (Belgium, animation workers union)
- AGrAF (France, directors, graphic authors and writers association)
- AWI (Ireland, animation workers union)
- CNT-SIPMCS (France, press media culture and show union)
- CSVI (Spain, video game union)
- FIA (The International Federation of Actors)
- FIM (The International Federation of Musicians)
- FNSAC-CGT (France, CGT Federation of Entertainment Unions)
- La Guilde française des scénaristes (France, writers union)
- GWUI (Ireland, videogame workers union)
- Les Intervalles (France, association against abuse and discrimination in animation)
- Kunstenbond (Netherlands, illustration, comic and animation workers)
- La Ligue des auteurs professionnels (France, authors union)
- Syndicat des Scénaristes (France, writers union)
- SFA-CGT (France, actors dubbing, comedians union)
- Snam-CGT (France, musicians union)
- SNTPCT (France, animation and VFX workers union)
- SPIAC-CGT (France, animation workers union)
- STJV (France, video game workers union)
- The Animation Guild (USA, animation workers and writers union)
- TouchePasàMaVF (France, actors dubbing association against GenAI)
- Uni MEI (International Art and Entertainment Alliance)
- Unie van Regisseurs (Belgium, directors union)
- United Voice Artists (International coalition of voice acting guilds, associations, and unions)
- Les Voix (France, association of actors dubbings and comedians)

PRESS RELEASE

**We invite all workers, students and allies,
as well as the press and media,
to join us in Annecy, to discuss concerns and defense against GenAI,
and to hear unions representatives read the statement**
on Thursday, June 12th, at 2 PM, at the Pâquier

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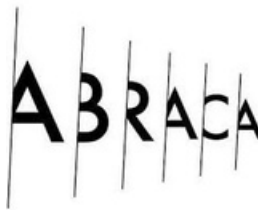
Signed and supported by :

France

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Ireland   **Belgium**   **Netherlands**
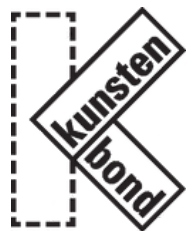
Spain   **USA**   **International**

Additionnal supports and signatures :

International   **France**