

Snaddon animates the industry

 By [Pasqua Heard](#)

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Daniel Snaddon - co-director of the animated short film, *Stick Man*, which won Le Cristal at the 2016 Annecy International Animation Film Festival - unpacks the animation industry's highs, lows and the must-haves to be a successful animator.

Snaddon is director and animation supervisor at Triggerfish Animation Studios based in Cape Town. Prior to animating *Stick Man*, the studios produced two well-known feature films, *Khumba* and *Adventures in Zambezia*. Read more about Triggerfish Animation Studios' success at Annecy earlier this month [here](#).



Stick Man, co-directed by Snaddon, won Le Cristal at Annecy

Snaddon lets us in on his personal journey to success below.

▣ What do you feel animation achieves that can't be achieved through any other industry?

For me, animation is about distilling an idea down to its most raw and potent form and presenting it in a way that anyone, no matter their language, culture or context, can understand and feel. Controlling the image frame by frame allows animators to consider every second of what they show you, so you're getting a lot of thought and love put into each moment of a really good animated film.

▣ How does your industry compare locally versus globally?

South Africa seems to be in a unique position: We have first-world quality and talent and third-world prices! The one thing we really lack is capacity. There are only a few thousand professionals working in South African animation currently - you can easily find the same numbers at a big studio like Technicolor in India.

▣ What have you found to be the biggest challenge in your industry?

Getting money to fund the development of new projects. You can get money if you have a great script or a character that's well known, but to create new characters, worlds and stories is a time-consuming and risky business, and not many companies and investors have an appetite for it.

At Triggerfish, we've recently put a fund together, with the help of the South African government, to develop scripts and scriptwriters. It's called Story Lab, and so far it's been a real boost to young creatives all over Africa!



The *Stick Man* team at Triggerfish Animation Studios in late 2014

■ **Triggerfish hired graduates to assist in the animation process of *Stick Man*. Where did the graduates come from and what role did they play in the animation?**

As we expand at Triggerfish, we really rely on places like The Animation School and City Varsity (amongst others) to provide us with talented young people to bring fresh ideas and skills to the studio. We've had interns and juniors in just about every department, and for the most part, they did superb work!

On the animation team for *Stick Man*, we had two graduates, Nadia Darries and Nkanyezi Masondo who had both just graduated from The Animation School. They were pretty much thrown into the deep end and were expected to animate shots alongside people with up to 10 years more experience than them! I'm delighted to say that both of them flourished and did beautiful work on the film. This is not always the case, as you can never really tell if someone with no experience and no references is going to be able to deliver animation on time and on style, but we like to give people the benefit of the doubt at Triggerfish if their work is exciting.

■ **What qualities do you look for when hiring graduates?**

The two most important things we look for are an exciting portfolio of skilled work, and a great attitude. Animation projects take a long time and can be extremely stressful, so we're looking for people who we'd like to hang out with for a long time, under a lot of stress! I'm happy to say that the team who made *Stick Man* have become a close-knit group who work extremely well together, and who hang out a lot outside work time.

■ **What advice can you give to youngsters aiming to succeed in your industry?**

I actually have a blog article on this very subject! Read [Tips for getting hired in the South African animation industry](#).

In addition to that, at a talk in Annecy, director Guillermo del Toro told us that the zen master turns everyone away, and it's

only the really stubborn people that don't give up knocking on his door that become his students!

Oh, and learn to really listen, it's harder than you might think!

■ **Will you be holding any upcoming workshops?**

Animation SA will give a series of 'introduction to drawing' classes in partnership with The Animation School and PASCAP. I'm going to be teaching some of these classes.

Find out more about Triggerfish Animation Studios here:

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