

# GEORGES SCHWIZGEBEL



Photo: Keystone / Urs Flüheler

## BIOGRAPHY

Georges Schwizgebel, born in 1944 in Reconvillier in the Bernese Jura. Paradoxically, it is the influence of his parents which, at the age of 15, leads him to start training in painting at the School of Fine Arts. He meets Daniel Suter at the School for Decorative Arts. They soon dream of producing cartoons in their future studio – GDS, named after their initials (Georges-Daniel-Schwizgebel/Suter). Both are employed in an advertising agency. Alongside this bread and butter work, Georges, Daniel and Claude (Luyet) undertake their first attempts at cartoons in an old watch-making studio.

In 1970, an order for an animated part for two documentaries leads to the three apprentice animators turning self-employed. The team starts to produce credits for French-speaking Swiss television.

**Le vol d'Icare** earns Schwizgebel a study prize and

**Perspectives** a quality prize of sufficient importance to enable him to produce **Hors-jeu**. His career as an independent film maker takes off. After two years of Chinese as a listener at lectures at the University of Geneva, Georges receives a scholarship which enables him to spend a year in China. Films follow one after the other, recompensed, as do exhibitions. Georges Schwizgebel becomes one of the best known film makers in the world of animation whose personality is relayed by documentaries and tributes.

In 2017 Georges Schwizgebel receives the Honorary Crystal of the Annecy International Animated Film Festival. [www.studio-gds.ch](http://www.studio-gds.ch)

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## Cinema painting

### Pictorial cinema

It is the point on which every spectator agrees: the cinema of Georges Schwizgebel is intimately linked to painting. Nevertheless, as we shall see below, this field of exploration is sometimes abandoned to the benefit of other avenues, or, more simply, this specific work on visual matters, if it represents the visible part of an iceberg, is but one element amongst others.

Yes, the cinema of Georges Schwizgebel is pictorial because the most important part of his work is based on the use of large touches of vivid colours applied with a brush, image by image. The films are painted and not drawn because the contour line is rarely traced (except for **Le ravisement de Frank. N. Stein** for example): it is research on the light and texture of the acrylic media spread on the very smooth base of the celluloid sheet. The range of colours developed by Georges Schwizgebel is very personal, despite its variation from one film to another, and almost completely made up of vivid colours which are both conflicting and complementary. The visual impact is underlined by the choice of background which, made up of shades in the initial productions, subsequently darkens and becomes totally animated so that the moving characters in the picture are no longer cut out on a fixed background.

Whilst contemplating a painting, the look of an amateur artist in a museum causes him to organise his own temporality by controlling the focus of vision on this or that part of the paint-

ing: whilst allowing his gaze to wander. Now, cinema is a media which imposes its own temporality on the public, particularly because the essence of this art is mechanical. To get round this stumbling block and because Georges Schwizgebel wishes above all for his films not to include any cut, allowing an almost fluid continuity; the picture, the image projected onto the screen becomes a moving one, imposes its own way at the heart of the large painting of the film; and in consequence, this is frequently constituted by a unique and immense movement of the camera. One of the most symbolic opuses concerning the play with this composition imposed by a painting remains undoubtedly **La course à l'abîme** in which the window focussed on the image moves in a spiral leading the eye of the viewer from the circumference to the geometric centre (before zooming back to reveal the scene in its entirety).

### Musical cinema

The other primordial element constituting the fundament of a large part of the films of Georges Schwizgebel is music. This is sufficiently present in his life (although he himself does not play any musical instrument) to enable him to work while listening to classical radio and for his pianist son to have given his first concerts before the age of 10. The animation developed in the films

**"I enjoy expressing myself without dialogue, it is a means of communication accessible to all."** Georges Schwizgebel, 2004

## FILMOGRAPHY (all animation)

2017	La bataille de San Romano
2015	Erlikönig
2012	1/3/10
2012	Chemin faisant
2011	Romance
2008	Retouches
2007	Animatou (co-director)
2006	Jeu
2004	L'homme sans ombre
2000	La jeune fille et les nuages
1998	Fugue
1997	Cyclades (co-director)
1996	Zig Zag
1995	L'année du daim
1992	La course à l'abîme
1989	Le sujet du tableau
1987	Academy Leader Variations
1986	Nakounine
1985	78 Tours
1982	Le ravissement de Frank N. Stein
1977	Hors-jeu
1975	Perspectives
1974	Le vol d'Icare
1970	Patchwork (co-director)

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of Georges Schwizgebel – from his very first film (**Le vol d'Icare**) is entirely subjugated to the musical framework which is very clearly chosen upstream of the production, the cutting and the movements having to follow the rhythm and general structure of this audio tape. This principle of synchronisation can be taken to extremes. As is the case in **La jeune fille et les nuages**, the multiplicity of the musical speeds between melody and accompaniment brings a multi temporality to the screen, the decor being able to “play” at a different speed to that of the characters. It goes without saying that the author never permits himself – contrary to certain of his colleagues – editing of a pre-existing partition, or worse, juxtapositions, of collages of different own music to respond to the visual dramaturgy. In addition and with the aim of sound and narrative enrichment, sound effects can be added, mixed in order to add weight, corporality to the objects painted and animated (this is the case especially with **L'année du daim**).

Sound events can even intervene as unconventional complements of the principal audio framework (in **La jeune fille et les nuages**, we can hear strange sounds resembling perfect accidents enabling the piano work by Mendelssohn to come alive and enriching its perfection). Alongside this use of pre-existing musical material, Schwizgebel also appeals to contemporary artists to compose the audio tape in certain of his films. This is the case, for example in **Le ravissement de Frank N. Stein** whose audio framework was realised with the same

scriptwriting bases, the same structures we could say, as the film. Or, for **Le sujet du tableau** or even for **Fugue**. This desire to collaborate, independently of the fact that it enables the artist to escape from the ineluctable solitude of the animator who is the sole master of his alchemic work, offers him the possibility of branching out into territories that are musically more contemporary and to open up to new styles. This type of exchange is still not the norm as the fear of the music not working sufficiently well in the end is deeply anchored in Schwizgebel.

The musical contribution does not stop at the acoustic aspect but intervenes as a fundament of writing; for example, in the well-named **Fugue**, the different narrative elements come together in the form of a counterpoint; or even in **L'année du daim** the structure in 4 parts is interspersed with musical moments representing as many scriptwriting reference points. The visual continuity of the film, forged by that of the music, is obliged to bend to the rules of composition of the sound tape which adds to the general complexity of its writing.

“Schwizgebel is a canvass painter with great musical sensitivity. With one stroke of the brush, he creates universes of transition and passage, lyrical, global works of art. And a continuous and infinite metamorphosis, each image transforms into another, a still image becomes a moving one which effortlessly surmounts temporal and spatial limits.”

Thomas Allenbach, WOZ, 2002

## AWARDS (selection)

### Patchwork

Mention at the festival of Annecy

### Le vol d'Icare

2nd prize at the festival of Zagreb, Audience award at Solothurn Filmfestival

### Perspectives

Audience award at Solothurn Filmfestival

### Hors-jeu

Award at the festival of Bucuramanga, Columbia

### Le ravissement de Frank N. Stein

Audience award at Solothurn Filmfestival; Critic's award C.I.D.A.L.C. at Berlinale; Special Jury Prize at Zagreb Filmfestival; Bronze Medal at the festival of Chicago; Special merit at the festival of Athens (USA)

### 78 Tours

Audience award at the festival of Solothurn and Experi in Bonn; "Grand Prix" at the festivals in Stuttgart and Treviso; Golden pole at the festival in Valladolid

### Variation sur des amorces

Awarded in Cannes and Espinho

### Le sujet du tableau

Prix Canal+ au festival d'Annecy; Special Jury Prize at the festival of Varna; mention honourable at the festival of Espinho; Jury prize at the festival of Shanghai; Special mention at the festival of Bourg-en-Bresse

### La course à l'abîme

Croate critic's award at the festival of Zagreb; 2nd prize at the festivals of Hiroshima and Solothurn; 1st prize at the festival of Espinho; Critic's award Fipresci at the festival of Oberhausen; mention honourable at the festival of Vila do Conde; prize Ente Terme at the festival of Montecatini; Special Jury prize at the festival Krok

### L'année du daim

1st prize at the festival of Zagreb; Grand prix at the festival of Espinho

### Zig Zag

Mention at Utrecht

### Fuge

Special Jury Prize at the festival Krok (Ukraine); Prix José Abel at the festival of Espinho, Special diploma at the festival of Zagreb, Prix Chromoacolor at the festival of Ottawa, Nomination Swiss Film Prize 2000, Best Short Film

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#### Playful cinema

It is there to be seen, Georges Schwizgebel likes constraints. With animation making it possible to create everything, for this self-disciplined artist it is about reducing the area of exploration by setting oneself limits. There are numerous examples. For example, the game of adding a false trailer at the start of the film whose figures and visual aspects announce the film to come. Or even the idea of realising a complete film with just 144 drawings (**La course à l'abîme**). Even **Le vol d'Icare** is the result of a constraint: that of showing a movement with figures made up of some points, almost without any identifiable form. As for **Fuge**, Schwizgebel uses the geometric constructions without vanishing point, impossible forms which give rise to trompe-l'œil on the screen. Through to the opening and closing credits which pick up on the visual or semantic terms of reference of the film in the choice of the typographical character and its organisation on the screen, of the colours and the graphical treatment. Olivier Cotte, 2006

"I enjoy animation because it is a craftsman's manner of creating cinema, I do everything myself – from basic research through to final editing. My profession does not require major infrastructure. Apart from a camera and an old computer, my basic material remains that of an artist." Georges Schwizgebel, 1995



#### La jeune fille et les nuages

Diploma at the festival of Krok (Ukraine); Prix du film artistique at the festival of St. Hilaire; mention honourable at the festival of Espinho; Special mention at the festival of Zagreb; Special prize at the festival of Hiroshima; Swiss Film Prize 2002, Best Short Film

#### L'homme sans ombre

Prix Kodak, Cinéma Tout Écran, Geneva 2004; Prix regards jeunes, Semaine internationale de la critique, Cannes 2004; Special Jury Prize, Competition short films, Semana de Cine, Valladolid 2004; Nomination Swiss Film Prize 2005, Best Animation Film; Special Jury Prize from film festivals in Zagreb, Hiroshima, Rome and Seoul, Golden Sheaf Awards Yorkton festival, and others.

#### Jeu

Special International Jury Prize, Hiroshima 2006; Silberne Taube, International Festival Leipzig 2006; Special mention, Short Film Festival Winterthur 2006; Golden Shield MovieSquad HAF, Utrecht Animation, Utrecht 2006; Best animation film, Animation Film Festival Ottawa 2006; Nomination Swiss Film Prize 2007, Best Animated Film

#### Romance

Special Mention, Swiss Competition, Fantoche Baden 2011; Jury Special Prize China International Animation and Digital Arts Festival, Changzhou 2011; Prix du Public & Prix Taurus Studio de la meilleure bande sonore, compétition suisse, Animatou Festival Genève 2011; Prix du meilleur court métrage professionnel, festival du film d'animation «Anima» Bruxelles 2012; Génie du Meilleur court métrage d'animation, Académie canadienne du cinéma et de la télévision 2012

#### Chemin faisant

Prize José Abel, Festival international de cinema de animação Espinho 2012; Special Mention Swiss Competition, Fantoche Baden 2012; Best Adult Film International Animation Film Festival Tindirindis Vilnius 2013

#### Erkönig

Prix du Public, Festival International du Film d'Animation Paris 2016; Swiss Film Award Best Animation Film 2016; Best Swiss (Swiss Competition) & Best Visual (International Competition), Fantoche Baden 2015; Jury Special Prize, Bucheon International Animation Festival 2015; Golden Jaberwocky Award, International Film Festival Etudia Krakow 2015; DOK Leipzig, Goldene Taube Internationaler Wettbewerb kurzer Animationsfilm 2015

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**You were educated at an art school. How did you come to study graphics?** As I had already been drawing regularly from a very young age, making charcoal drawings of horses and then portraits of actresses in Cinémonde, my parents encouraged me to go to the School of Fine Arts. The following year, I corrected this choice by moving to the School of Decorative Arts to learn the profession of graphic designer which I found to be more serious than that of painter.

**How did you come to be interested in animation? And how did you learn the specific techniques?** My interest in cartoons began after having attended the Annecy festival (not far from Geneva) in 1963, I think. It was during my time as a student of decorative arts. Accompanied by Daniel Suter, we began to take an interest in animation through discussions with a professor who had a super 8 camera. Then I spent five years working in an advertising agency, but before getting tired of this profession, we built a caption stand with the help of a book explaining everything about cartoons. We bought a 16 mm Paillard. It was the start of our studio – GDS. Together with Daniel and Claude Luyet, whom we had met in the meantime, we started producing small cartoons outside of our normal working hours in an old jewellery workshop. That was in 1967. Film makers from French-speaking Swiss television ordered credits of ten to twenty seconds from us for their broadcasts and that is how I (we) learned this profession with shortcomings which are still with me today.

**On the other hand, the first film to be recognised is a collective work: Patchwork...** Yes we were at the Annecy festival in 1967 and met Manuel Ortero. He later came to Geneva to view our films and suggested that they be re-filmed in 35 mm at Pantin where, at the time, he had his studio – Cinémation – and then put them all together with his thus making a fantastic community film.

**Let us talk about your personal films. They feature recurring elements. In Bienne, where you spent part of your youth, you told me there was a garden, trees, lawns, a swing... The analysis may appear easy but one must recognise that all these elements are found in your films.** Yes, but I have a great liking for green lawns with characters lit up by a setting sun; this is also thanks to the illustrations of Milton Glaser and the paintings of Edward Hopper.

**Which paintings have had a particular influence on you?** Strangely, it was only later when making films that I again took an interest in painting: Vermeer, Michelangelo, Chirico, Hopper, Marquet, Holder, Vallotton, Corot, Chardin, Ingres, Friedrich, Beckmann and those already mentioned to talk only of my favourite painters.

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***Your work also features a lot of birds. In LA COURSE À L'ABÎME, LA JEUNE FILLE ET LES NUAGES, through to ducks in LE SUJET DU TABLEAU... And, in a certain way, it is the theme of your first film LE VOL D'ICARE. It is a very geometric work. How did you come up with this idea?*** For **Le vol d'Icare**, the idea is first of all graphical, that of wanting to imitate lucid newspapers and to associate them with a harpsichord, musical notes, the luminous bulbs providing the movement. For **La jeune fille et les nuages**, the birds help Cinderella to sort the lentils, it is the story that tells it. Above all, however, I like drawing them because they resemble moving strokes of the brush.

***Le mythe de Faust is another subject frequently dealt with... Le sujet du tableau***, initially entitled "Le portrait de Faust" takes its origin from a project by Marv Newland: a long film about Faust produced by ten animators. As my sequence was well advanced, I offered to co-produce it but the project stagnated so I finished the film and sent Marv another storyboard (the long film has never been produced).

It is a transposition of the legend of Faust. An old man has his portrait painted as a young man, then this same young man attempts to enter his pictures; he succeeds and follows a young lady in red. When he finally finds her, it is too late and we arrive at the scene of Marguerite in the dungeon. The painter was Mephisto. What mattered to me in this film was to show a painting that moves and which I correct simultaneously, and to quote known paintings or fragments thereof.

***In PERSPECTIVES and HORS-JEU, the stroke of the brush is very loose, used freely. In addition, there are only one or two colours per character. You attempt to emphasise the high lights and there is a stroke of the brush that is from one sole holder. Does calligraphy have an influence on your brushwork even if you have westernised it since you do not use Chinese brushes?*** Yes, I tend to use hard brushes. Those used for oil painting. But I produced these two films well before going to China.

***Were you already interested in calligraphy at that time?*** A little bit. Above all, however, I saw *Yellow Submarine* in which we experience a sequence made using this technique. You see a ballerina on a horse.

***Yes, the sequence in "Lucy in the Sky" painted by George Dunning himself.*** I found that extraordinary. It made me want to use real camerawork. And then, while carrying out trials, I realised that when you have a perfectly precise movement, you can be very liberal with the brush

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because the movement is reconstructed. The viewer imagines the precise movement. But if you are too precise with the brush, the result resembles characters covered in stains.

***Do you often use real camerawork as an aid for your animations? There has often been talk of rotoscope?*** I used real camerawork for all of **Perspectives** and **Hors-jeu** and of course for the end of **Frank N. Stein** (taken from the film **La fiancée de Frankenstein** with Boris Karloff and Elsa Lanchester). I have also used it for some parts of **78 Tours** (the little girl on the roundabout, the roundabouts, the shadow on the faces of the couple dancing). For **Le sujet du tableau**, I used it for the waves, the ducks on the water and the curtains ruffled by the wind. I think that's all; I have not used this technique any more since and I did not use it for **Le vol d'Icare**.

***On the other hand, however, for NAKOUNINE ...*** I wanted to make a film with all my photos taken in Shanghai, most on my bicycle. I also recorded the sounds of the city (from my bicycle). My initial idea (which I already had in China) was the following: to simulate a cycling trip with camera movements on fixed images whilst the sound is dynamic, and to add animations from time to time. I sorted the photos geographically, those from the suburbs and those from the city centre, as well as by season – winter, spring, summer 1984. All the shots are prints in black and white 18/24 filmed on the caption stand with some animation added (reflections in the water, traffic lights changing...). Only the last sequence in static shots is taken from the super 8 i.e. arriving at traffic lights where I had to stop, I allowed my image to run, the source of its sound continuing by itself (super 8 increased to 16 mm).

***You were in Shanghai, it should be mentioned that you studied Chinese and are married to a Chinese woman...*** I visited the interior of the country, frequently during trips organised by Fudan University at the time when I was in China thanks to a scholarship to study classical Chinese. That is where I met Yaping, the daughter of the Chinese painter Wang Meigan about whom a French student was carrying out a study. Two years later, we met again in Paris then we got married.

***Although your films are sometimes based on scenarios, the cutting is not organised in traditional style for relating. For example, there is very little "cut" in your films but rather large camera movements which smooth out the ideas, the situations. Why do you cut so little?*** Having to make a cut almost amounts to failure. I myself like to have a sequence shot. I would like to link together the shots in a film with the same ease and the same logic as found in

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dreams. Sometimes, you are obliged to make a cut in order to make the narrative comprehensible. That is the case in **L'année du daim**. There are even static shots in this film but ones that are punctuated regularly.

**How do you find your transitions between the different elements to be shown?** Paradoxically, the editing is quasi the first step in the realisation of the film. First of all, I look for scenes (images) and their succession, so as to arrive at a long sequence plan.

**That must be a delicate idea to conceive...** I spend a good part of my time with the line test in order to have a vision of the film as a whole, irrespective of whether there is music at the start or not. The ideas for linking noted on paper are tested, improved or abandoned.

**One of the films which involves the most obvious movement of the camera when reading is LA COURSE À L'ABÎME. How did you work?** In this film, the movement of the camera is primordial and I had to hire a caption stand in Zurich whose movements are computer assisted. It is also important in **Nakounine** when I attempt to suggest a bicycle trip in the city of Shanghai with the help of camera movements on the photos. But that was filmed in Carouge and even in 16 mm. On the other hand, the movements in all my other films are drawn, with the exception of a forward zoom at the start of **Le ravissement de Frank N. Stein, 78 Tours** and **Le sujet du tableau** in which there is also west-east travel on the waves. There is another rear zoom at the end of **Fugue** and in **L'année du daim** short north-south movement enables the discovery of the hunter's hands holding a baton. I think that is all. In **L'homme sans ombre**, on the other hand, approximately three minutes are made up of movements on successive decor.

**The cutting of LA JEUNE FILLE ET LES NUAGES (which, by the way, includes some cuts) is particularly based on the music. The background and the characters can move at different speeds. Why this dissociation?** In **La jeune fille et les nuages**, it is a principle, the decor moves to the rhythm of the music, three drawings every two seconds (3x16 images). It is drawn in pastel and the same for Cinderella when she is a servant. The aim is to underline her changes of status and that can also resemble a second voice (as in music).

**Yes, that is typically musical.** Cinderella moves with the decor when she is a servant. When she becomes a princess, she is animated normally. I like playing with different stories.



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***This film is extremely well made. The rhythmic and the links work perfectly. That is probably the reason why it was successful everywhere.*** When you start from music, you can be inspired by it, not only by the melody but also by the structure of the music, the rhythm. And music cannot change rhythm for everything so there are constraints. I like having this very principle in drawing, i.e. taking modules and making a sequence plan. Constituent elements of music which I respect in drawing.

***You see similarities there.*** Yes, I do.

***Very frequently in your films there are just some themes that are used and which become entangled. They can be linked to colour, can be constituted by places or objects, by actions ... And they are developed in the form of a musical counterpoint: I would like to know if this is intentional.*** Yes, its voluntary, there is a subject in the films but it is a pre-text. What really interests me is exploring formal directions (that the film is divided into four for example) and, if possible, treating a theme in an unusual manner. The fact that there are several stories, several interpretations, is voluntary. Even in **L'homme sans ombre**, which is narrative, there is a certain style of animation at the beginning, then another for the main body of the film and a third for the final part.

***There is a much used procedure in "Fugue" beside the counterpoint: first of all, you develop certain themes, for example the man coming down the stairs and the couple who have just been watching the fish on the side of the river or the large poplar trees with their revolving shadows. Then, when these elements have been seen separately, you film them together whilst re-using the same cellulose. How did you come up with this idea of creating a graphical association of animations that have already been presented?*** Having worked on video for the film **Cyclades**, produced with Claude Luyet, and having appreciated the ease with which the images can be mixed thanks to this support, I came up with the idea of making linked, drawn fade ins – fade outs, of superimposing the shots whilst foreseeing the result. I animated a certain number of nine-second cycles. Once the editing had been decided on, a technical constraint appeared: the cycles drawn on glass paper had to be underneath. There are never more than three cycles superimposed, of the same length (nine seconds) and sometimes the same cycle is realised in two versions: acrylic and pastel. I made great use of the three primary colours in **Fugue** because I liked the result and also to control the superimpositions more easily. Then, having made this series of cycles, I attempted to find a theme: somebody writing a postcard.

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***In your films, and above all in LA COURSE À L'ABÎME, one feels a desire to play with constraints...*** I very much liked **La vie mode d'emploi** by Georges Pérec and, in a general manner, I am taken in by constraints. I enjoy learning that Bach composed using the four letters of his name B.A.C.H. or that Hitchcock filmed "The Rope" in one single shot. But I do not know Oulipo particularly well apart, of course, from Georges Pérec, Jacques Roubaud and Raymond Queneau. For me, the constraints are a vertebral column, but it is better not to notice them once the work is finished. Sometimes they are also the origin of a project and this is the case in **La course à l'abîme**: it was about telling a story lasting several minutes using a cycle of some seconds..

***How many drawings did you produce for this film?*** For **La course à l'abîme**, contrary to what one might believe, there are not several reels of animation but one single one. It is a cycle of six seconds composed of 144 large drawings ( $6 \times 24 = 144$ ). Additionally, I could have been satisfied with 72 large drawings but when the movement restarts at the end of the film, the cycle is twelve seconds and so I use all the drawings ( $12 \times 2 = 24 \times 6 = 144$ ). The camera moves in a spiral motion from the outside inwards (like snakes and ladders) at a constant speed equivalent to a screen width every six seconds. This is why it is not possible to realise that it is only a cycle of six seconds, because, when it starts over again, you frame a new portion of the large drawing. On the contrary, at the end, the camera moves back progressively to discover the entirety which moves more slowly and you realise (or do not realise) that it is in fact a cycle of twelve seconds.

***Seeing LE SUJET DU TABLEAU, one is surprised by the different picture techniques all developed in a realistic manner. How did you go about using real camerawork?*** For **Le sujet du tableau**, there is cut paper, oil painting directly under the camera and cellulose. Sometimes the three techniques are used at the same time. I took Polaroid shots of my brother for the young man and of Yaping for Marguerite. The cycle of birds, trees and fields gave me the idea for **La course à l'abîme**, third scenario on Faust.

***You are one of the rare film makers to be able to live from the films written by themselves. How do you find the financing?*** I am a producer but only for my own films. I spend two to three months producing a storyboard, a budget, a filming plan and a financing plan which I send to the Federal Cultural Office, to French-speaking Swiss television, to the City of Geneva as well as to Arte France. On the other hand, there is automatic aid calculated as a percentage of that given by the Federal Cultural Office and the French-speaking Swiss television TSR (regional fund)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Olivier Cotte spent 15 years working for cinema as a computer graphics artist, special effects director or film maker. Today, he teaches animated cinema, continues to make short films and is a scriptwriter. He is also a historian and author of almost ten works devoted to this art, including a technical and historical encyclopaedia, two monographs, one of which is devoted to Georges Schwizgebel, several technical books, including the translation of the methods of Richard Williams, and a work on the Oscars of animated film.

Olivier Cotte: *Georges Schwizgebel – Des peintures animées. Die laufenden Farbbilder. Animated paintings.* Editions Heuwinkel, 2004

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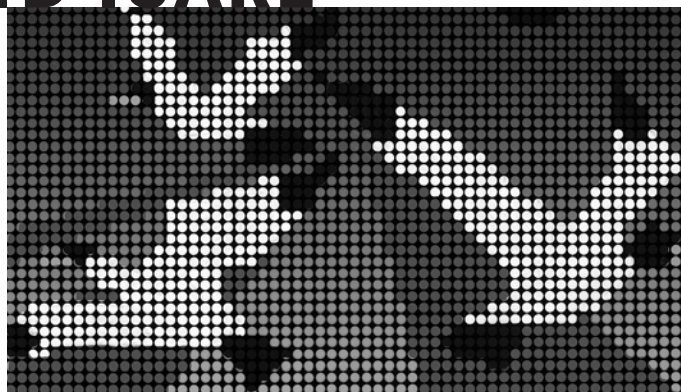
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as well as a cinema bonus and a broadcasting bonus made up of a percentage of receipts from a film shown in the cinema before a long film (in Switzerland) or shown on (Swiss) television. There is state aid for a future production to be used within three years. For the moment, this works. I am not rich but I have the fortune to be free and to do what I enjoy doing. Interview: Olivier Cotte, 2006

## LE VOL D'ICARE

1974 | 35 mm | colour | 3'

A pointillist musical illustration of the tale of Icarus wishing to imitate the birds right up to burning his wings close to the sun.



Script: Georges Schwizgebel  
Cinematographer: Georges Schwizgebel  
Technique: Gouache on cellulose  
Music: François Couperin, musical follies, harpsichord extracts: Guy Waschmuth

Production: Studio GDS  
World Rights: Studio GDS  
Original Version: without dialogue

## PERSPECTIVES

1975 | 35 mm | colour | 1'30"

The putting into perspective of a person walking. The points of view oblige one to make reversals of perspective, losing the viewer in a geometry brushed in large strokes.



Script: Georges Schwizgebel  
Cinematographer: Georges Schwizgebel  
Technique: Gouache on cellulose  
Music: Johann Sebastian Bach, Prelude VI, Piano: Annemarie Haeberli

Production: Studio GDS  
World Rights: Studio GDS  
Original Version: without dialogue

## HORS-JEU OFF-SIDE

1977 | 35 mm | colour | 6'

Description of a game in which one of the two teams changes the rules to its advantage. Several sports are mentioned in the film, the players, whose painting suggests a low-angled light, move from one sport to another via successive metamorphoses.



Script: Georges Schwizgebel  
Cinematographer: Georges Schwizgebel  
Technique: Acrylic painting on cellulose

Sound: Paul Bertault, François Groult  
Music: Guy Boulanger  
Production: Studio GDS  
World Rights: Studio GDS  
Original Version: without dialogue

# LE RAVISSEMENT DE FRANK N. STEIN

1982 | 35 mm | colour | 9'30"

The slow construction of an image, to a rhythm of foot-steps, ends with the meeting of the monster and his fiancée. Using a subjective vision, the viewer is literally in the position of the monster and crosses several rooms filled with objects and beings along the line of progression until emerging into the face of the loved one who lets off a cry of horror.



Script: Georges Schwizgebel  
Cinematographer: Georges Schwizgebel  
Technique: Gouache and stabilo pencil on cellulose

Music: Michael Horowitz, Rainer Boesch  
Production: Studio GDS  
World Rights: Studio GDS  
Original Version: without dialogue

# 78 TOURS

1985 | 35 mm | colour | 4'

A subjective camera and a fixed framing alternate to an accordion waltz which triggers a short story recalling the passing of time. The entire film is based on the graphic notion of circles and rings. From the cup of coffee to the children's games passing via the spiral staircase. The camera itself whirls round following the general aesthetics. The back-grounds are painted with the same title as the characters and dynamic decor.



Script: Georges Schwizgebel  
Cinematographer: Georges Schwizgebel  
Technique: Acrylic painting on paper and cellulose

Music: Alessandro Morelli, Accordeon: Patrick Mamie, Noise: Pierre-Alan Besse  
Production: Studio GDS  
World Rights: Studio GDS  
Original Version: without dialogue



# NAKOUNINE

1986 | 16 mm | b/w and colour | 6'

A bicycle trip through the streets of Shanghai between winter and summer 1984 and from the suburbs to the city centre. Some animations, discreet ones, are added to bring to life the still images by adding cellulose to the photos under the caption stand.



Script: Georges Schwizgebel  
Cinematographer: Georges Schwizgebel  
Technique: Animation stand of photos and real shot

Music: Michael Horowitz  
Production: Studio GDS, TSR  
World Rights: Studio GDS  
Original Version: without dialogue

# LE SUJET DU TABLEAU

1989 | 35 mm | colour | 6'10"

Thanks to the painter brushing his portrait, an old man rediscovers his youth and journeys from one picture to another passing an unknown person in red whom he finally finds. This is an adaptation of the myth of Faust, the character being guided, manipulated by the devilish painter who imposes on him his peregrinations and the passage through decor made up of quotations from famous paintings. The film makes simultaneous use of direct painting under the camera, painting on cellulose (the customary technique of Georges Schwizgebel) and animations on magnetised cut paper.



Script: Georges Schwizgebel  
Cinematographer: Georges Schwizgebel  
Technique: Acrylic painting on cellulose, cut paper and oil painting

Music: Jacques Robellaz  
Production: Studio GDS  
World Rights: Studio GDS  
Original Version: without dialogue

# LA COURSE A L'ABÎME

1992 | 35 mm | colour | 4'30"

At an average cycle of six seconds, an animated painting illustrates a fragment of an opera. The idea of the film was to use just 144 drawings for a fairly long film, the 144 immense cellulose drawings are seen only partially via a camera movement travelling spirally from the edges to the centre, finally to discover the entire scene and to unveil the artifice.



Script: Georges Schwizgebel  
Cinematographer: Georges Schwizgebel  
Technique: Acrylic painting on cellulose  
Music: Hector Berlioz, Boston Symphony Orchestra, conducted by

Charles Munch  
Production: Studio GDS  
World Rights: Studio GDS  
Original Version: without dialogue

## L'ANNÉE DU DAIM

1995 | 35 mm | colour | 5'30"

The tragic destiny of a young deer deceived by appearances. The visual, very illustrative and polished, is inspired by the atmospheres of the 4 seasons corresponding to the 4 musical movements. The film is made up not solely of painted cellulose but also of pastel animations on glass paper.



Script: Georges Schwizgebel  
Cinematographer: Georges Schwizgebel  
Technique: Acrylic painting on cellulose and dry pastel on glasspaper

Sound: Denis Séchaud  
Music: Philippe Koller  
Interpretation: Quatuor Ortys  
Production: Studio GDS, TSR, La sept Arte  
World Rights: Studio GDS  
Original Version: without dialogue

## ZIG ZAG

1996 | 35 mm | colour | 1'

Zigzag journey inspired by the drawings of Rodolphe Töpffer. The film is designed to be shown continuously with the first and last images being identical. The film is produced entirely as pastel animation on glass paper.



Script: Georges Schwizgebel  
Cinematographer: Georges Schwizgebel  
Technique: Dry pastel on glasspaper  
Sound: Jean Keraudren

Editing: Georges Schwizgebel  
Music: Ludwig von Beethoven, Bagatelle Op. 119 No.9  
Piano: Louis Schwizgebel  
Production: Galerie Papiers Gras  
World Rights: Studio GDS  
Original Version: without dialogue

# FUGUE

1998 | 35 mm | colour | 7'

A person dozing in a hotel room allows himself to be invaded by memories which form an escape expressed in drawings. The film is one of the most complex by Georges Schwizgebel. The use of vivid colours, the counterpoint of the interwoven images, the animation of impossible geometric figures combined with a contemporary sound tape make this film one of the best and most interesting in filmography.



Script: Georges Schwizgebel  
Cinematographer: Georges Schwizgebel  
Technique: Acrylic painting on cellulose and dry pastel on glasspaper  
Editing: Georges Schwizgebel

Music: Michèle Bokanowski  
Production: Studio GDS, Television Suisse Romande  
World Rights: Studio GDS  
Original Version: without dialogue

# LA JEUNE FILLE ET LES NUAGES

2000 | 35 mm | colour | 5'

The story of Cinderella is punctuated by clouds. The tale is modernised and Cinderella dreams of clouds and ends up fleeing by plane with her prince charming. Here too, animation on cellulose and on glass paper come into contact with each other. The image is animated simultaneously at various speeds (decor, moving elements, characters) in connection with the sound tape played by Georges Schwizgebel on the piano. It is an intelligent variation on a well-known story with which the viewer can identify.



Script: Georges Schwizgebel  
Cinematographer: Georges Schwizgebel  
Technique: Acrylic painting on cellulose and dry pastel on glasspaper  
Sound: Louis Schwizgebel

Music: Félix Mendelssohn, Pete Ehnrooth, Piano Louis Schwizgebel  
Production: Studio GDS, Television Suisse Romande, Arte France  
World Rights: Studio GDS  
Original Version: without dialogue

# L'HOMME SANS OMBRE

| 2004 | 35 mm | colour | 10'

A man exchanges his shadow for richness, then, disillusioned with the result, has to be content with seven-league boots which help him find his way. The film, very ambitious, benefits from the quality of the production by the NFB with rich sound effects. Schwizgebel takes advantage of the occasion to install the mysterious atmosphere with one of the longest and most beautiful opening sequences of his career. The use of metamorphoses makes it possible to carry out semantic shortcuts in order to deliver the story to the public. To this day, the film is the author's most accomplished production.



Script: Georges Schwizgebel  
Cinematographer: Georges Schwizgebel  
Technique: Acryl painting and oil on cellulose  
Sound: Olivier Calvert

Editing: Georges Schwizgebel  
Music: Judith Gruber-Stitzer  
Production: Studio GDS, NFB Canada, Television Suisse Romande  
World Rights: Studio GDS  
Original Version: without dialogue

# JEU

| 2006 | 35 mm | colour | 4'

From the detailed account announcing the beginning of the film to the rigid appearance of the word END, "Jeu" provokes a magnificent vertigo with its uninterrupted running which is full of surprises. The most recent film by Georges Schwizgebel is a furious race towards final immobilisation, like a metaphor of modern restlessness, the illustration of a world resting on a succession of forms which become distorted to deceive the senses again and again in a pirouetting and playful choreography. Everyone plays their own game in this mise en abyme and the film maker is not the least of the players to take account of these men having fun with balls or the musicians playing the scherzo of Prokofiev's second piano concerto. With its breathless rhythm, **Jeu** is an exercise in virtuosity, a circular and cyclic race unfurling via the multiple changes of scale orchestrated by a great visual artist.



Script: Georges Schwizgebel  
Cinematographer: Georges Schwizgebel  
Technique: Painting on cellulose  
Sound: Jean-Claude Gaberel

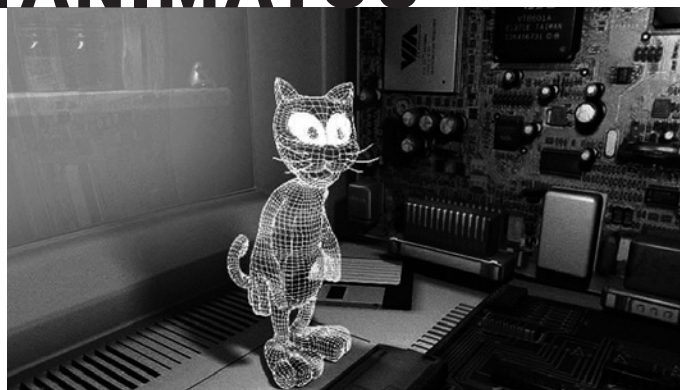
Editing: Georges Schwizgebel  
Music: Serge Prokofiev  
Production: Studio GDS, NFB Canada, Television Suisse Romande  
World Rights: Studio GDS  
Original Version: without dialogue



# ANIMATOU

2007 | Digi Beta | colour | 6'

**A** cat and a mouse chase through five different animation techniques.



Script: Alexandre Lachavanne,  
Claude Luyet  
Cinematographer: Claude Luyet,  
Georges Schwizgebel, Dominique  
Delachaux-Lambert, Claude Barras,  
Roméo Andréani, Alexandre Lachavanne

Editing: Valérie Perriraz  
Music: Gabriel Scotti, Vincent Hänni  
Production: Studio GDS, Télévision  
Suisse Romande  
World Rights: Studio GDS  
Original Version: without dialogue

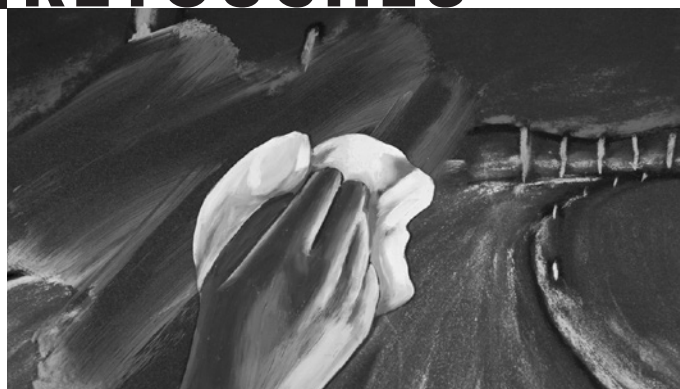
# RETOUCHES

2008 | 35 mm | colour | 6'

**B**etween a wave's rhythm and the breath of a young woman in her sleep, some animated paintings go on modifying each other.

**"Georges Schwizgebel, internationally known master of the short film, returns with a pictorial jewel, in which he uses brushstrokes to evoke the materialization of reality. In this visual poem, the artist captures the metamorphosis of dot and dash into living, moving forms caught up in the vortex of the creative hand by pairing the undulating, rhythmic movements of a wave with those of the breathing of a sleeping woman."**

Jean-Louis Kuffer, *24 heures*, La Côte



Script: Georges Schwizgebel  
Cinematographer: Georges Schwizgebel  
Technique: Acrylic painting on cell, pastel and ink on paper  
Sound: Serge Boivin

Editing: Georges Schwizgebel  
Music: Normand Roger  
Production: Studio GDS  
World Rights: Studio GDS, NFB Canada  
Original Version: without dialogue

# ROMANCE

2011 | 35 mm | colour & b/w | 6'

**A**n airplane passenger falls asleep while watching a movie and dreams of his pretty neighbour. A pretext for a visual interpretation of a Rachmaninov scherzo where fantasy and reality are fitted together.



Script: Georges Schwizgebel  
Cinematographer: Georges Schwizgebel  
Technique: Drawn animation  
Editing: Georges Schwizgebel

Production: Studio GDS, NFB Canada, Radio Télévision Suisse  
Music: Sergej Rachmaninov  
World Rights: NFB Canada  
Original Version: without dialogue



# CHEMIN FAISANT

| 2012 | DCP | colour | 4'

**T**hrough paintings that interact on the principle of Russian dolls, we are drawn along the swirling path of the thoughts of a pilgrim, a solitary walker.



Written and directed by: Georges Schwizgebel  
Techniques: Acrylic and pastel on cell  
Music: Jacques Robellaz  
Production: Rita Productions, Geneva;  
Haute école d'art et de design –

Geneva; RTS Radio Télévision Suisse;  
Studio GDS, Carouge  
World Rights: Rita Productions,  
Geneva  
Original Version: without dialogue

# 1/3/10

| 2012 | digital | colour | 1'

**F**reedom for Jafar Panahi and all imprisoned Iranian film-makers.



Written and directed by: Georges Schwizgebel  
Cinematography: Georges Schwizgebel  
Techniques: Acrylic on cell

Production: L'Unité Centrale,  
Montreal  
World Sales: Vidéographe, Montreal  
Original Version: Without dialogue

# ERLKÖNIG

| 2015 | DCP | colour | 16'

**A** father rides through the dark forest with his son. The sick child thinks he sees the Erlking, who both charms and frightens him. Based on Goethe's poem Erlkönig and the music of Schubert and Liszt.



Written and directed by: Georges Schwizgebel  
Cinematography: Georges Schwizgebel  
Technique: Drawn animation  
Music: Franz Schubert, Franz Liszt

Production: Studio GDS, Carouge;  
RTS Radio Télévision Suisse  
World Rights: Studio GDS, Carouge  
Original Version: Without dialogue

# LA BATAILLE DE SAN ROMANO

| 2017 | DCP | colour | 2'

**A** movement within a painting, which begins with the savagery of a battle and comes to a halt in a rendition of a masterpiece of the 15th Century; The Battle of San Romano by Paolo Uccello.



Written & directed by: Georges Schwizgebel  
Cinematography: Georges Schwizgebel  
Technique: Drawn animation

Music: Judith Gruber-Stitzer  
Production & World Rights: Studio GDS, Carouge  
Original Version: Without dialogue