

## **CCAC interview with Charles Badenhorst on 24/11/2020 via email - transcript** Last updated: 13 January 2020

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**Project Name:** What about the lô

**Date of interview:** 24 November 2020

**Location of interview:** Online

**Language/s of interview:** English

**Length of interview:** N/a

**Interviewer name (and acronym):** Francois Lion-Cachet (FLC)

**Interviewee name (and acronym):** Charles Badenhorst (CB)

**Name of translator, if applicable:** N/a

**Name of transcriber:** N/a

**Notes on access and use, if applicable:** N/a

**Mode of interview:** Email

**Number of recordings:** N/a

**Audio file name(s) of interview:** N/a

**List of acronyms:**

ATKV: Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurvereniging (The Afrikaans Language and Culture Association)

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### **START OF INTERVIEW**

**FLC: Please tell us a bit about where you grew up and how you became an animator and musician?**

CB: I was born in Pretoria. When I was younger we moved around a lot, but I have been living in Pretoria most of my life. Music is something that I have always had inside me, and after not being happy in the industry that I studied towards was something I could fall back into. I studied sound engineering and started to do sound design for animated films. I got involved and fell in love with animation. Our own little boutique animation studio called Fopspeen Moving Pictures was started by myself and good friend Diek Grobler in 2004. We have been making films ever since.

**FLC: Can you tell us more about how, when and why *What about the lô* was made?**

CB: It is rare that animation filmmakers get the opportunity to make a film completely on their own (it is by far the best way). With such an opportunity it is great to experiment and to try and push the boundaries of what people and audiences are used to. With *What about the lô*, I used a form of animation called rotoscoping, where I drew over a video of real hands, to create the first level of disconnectedness I needed, but kept real life timing. This creates a certain movement, look and feel that I felt would work well within my concept.

*What about the lô*, the film, was made with financial help from the ATKV, Filmverse was a ATKV Project aimed at creating a collection of animated afrikaans poems, animated by experienced animation artists, artists and first time filmmakers. The ATKV selected poems that they thought would make good films. I chose 'What about the lô' as I have always been a big admirer of Adam's work.

**FLC: To which historical and current day themes would you say *What about the lô* speaks to?**

CB: This film speaks to everybody who is separated by laws drawn up to separate people by colour, religion, tribe or culture.

**FLC: How did you arrange and/or conduct the recording of Adam Small's voice of him reading his poem? Also, how did the recording influence the overall sound design and direction of the film?**

CB: Adam was too weak to go to a recording studio and did the recording over the telephone. The only way I could use the voice over, in my mind (as a sound designer) was to put him on the radio. This forced me to rethink my original concept for the film and it evolved into what it ended up as. It was something I could react to creatively and show another level of disconnectedness of the Apartheids' era policies.

**FLC: What was Diek Grobler's contribution to this film? You work together as Fopspeen Moving Pictures, but he also co-directed the ATKV Filmverse project with Nita Cronjé from which the film sprouted.**

CB: Diek and I have been partners at Fopspeen Moving Pictures for almost 17 years, and we are still going strong. We started in this industry together and we share a passion and commitment towards animation. Diek was Filmverse's overhead art director. The ATKV's Nita Cronjé and Diek spearheaded Filmverse. Fopspeen Moving Pictures handled all the technical aspects of the project.

**FLC: How do you feel about Marlene Dumas having offered to buy and donate this artwork to the Constitutional Court Trust, for inclusion into the Constitutional Court Art Collection (CCAC)?**

CB: I was incredibly happy and honoured when I got the news that Marlene Dumas offered to buy and donate the film for the Constitutional Court Art Collection.

**FLC: How do you feel about having your work part of the CCAC today? Additionally, what does the CCAC represent to you?**

CB: It is humbling and a tremendous honour to be part of the Constitutional Court Art Collection. Without any doubt one of the highest points in my life.

**FLC: Did Adam Small share his thoughts on the completed film with you?**

CB: Adam's wife and one of his friends contacted me and shared Adam's congratulations on the film's first film competition win in Weimar, Germany in 2016, just before his death. I was told that he loved the film. I was elated to know that he saw the film and that he liked it.

**FLC: How do you see art and animation as being connected to justice or human rights in South Africa, or more universally?**

CB: Animated films have always been a form of protest throughout the world, the list is too long but with *What about the lô*, I wanted to try and open people's minds and make them feel some of the pain Apartheid caused so many people.

**FLC: What are your thoughts on animation as art?**

CB: Art is an elusive concept, it has a high degree of subjectivity. Art can be anything. But not everything is art. The visual narrative is one of the ways I use to express my art.

**FLC: You teach animation at various schools in Pretoria, with special attention to children with learning disabilities. Please tell us more about why you do this?**

CB: Many years ago while at a film festival in Europe I realised that we don't have a culture of animation in South Africa, not the way they do in the rest of the world. My mission ever since then was to try and create or stimulate a culture of animation wherever I could. I got involved with teaching animation to kids and it has been amazing. I teach kids from all ages and some of my high school kids have now gone on to study animation at University. I am very proud of all my kids who care for animation and creativity in general. I believe we are put on this earth to create. Animation is a great way to teach and introduce a wide variety of concepts to kids. It helps them understand timing, movement, balance, scale and so much more.

**FLC: Do you have any recommendations on the presentation and preservation of the artwork?**

CB: I think the more people see the work the more we can make people understand and feel a little bit more of how people suffered under apartheid. Also having Adam's voice travel through the spaces of the Constitutional Court would be amazing.

**FLC: Is there anything you would like to add to be recorded in this interview?**

CB: No thank you.

**END OF INTERVIEW**