

IN BULGARIA ,TOO ARE PRODUCED TRICK-FILMS

At the Bulgarian Walt Disney- The story of a chance idea- The springy artist- The future of the trick film in Bulgaria

The name of Walt Disney- the creator of the American trick-film –is well known. Also well known is the great significance of the trick film as a means for entertainment, education and propaganda. Could not we also make trick films in Bulgaria? One Bulgarian – the teacher and artist from Sofia Todorov-Jarava- is trying to do that. Our reporter met the invention of the Bulgarian Walt Disney

What type of films are mostly liked?

The Americans are very fond of the different types of polls. In the states there is one special institute- GALLUP, which does polls of the public opinion on different questions and then publishes the results. At one such poll to the question:“What type of films do you like most?”, there was a rather unexpected answer. The movie-lovers answered that they like best not the films by a famous director, but.....the trick-films by Walt Disney. Probably everyone, who has been to the cinema, has seen before the showing of the main film, how the famous Disney characters-Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck,etc.come to life on the big screen .

In Bulgaria, too are produced trick-films

Could trick films be also produced in Bulgaria? Certainly, says the Bulgarian Walt Disney- Dimitar Todorov-Jarava, who has already achieved successful results in this field. They say that Disney had huge studios, an army of painters and millions of dollars capital, etc. The painter Todorov does not have all these things, but he has plenty of ideas and zeal to work.

The essence of the work

“ The first part of my work consists of making of a doll-my main character” says the painter Todorov. “Let’s say that I want to make a film about a boy playing ball. I put the boy doll on a special stand and with the help of springs and levers I can make real every movement. I take photos on the film reel of the movement of the doll according to the screenplay. I put this reel onto a magnifying projection apparatus and the obtained pictures in colour onto celluloid sheets (scripts) . I take photos of the pictures on the celluloid sheets (scripts), placed over another celluloid sheet (script), together with the décor at which the action takes place and then again I take photos on the film reel. My trick film is already finished.

The studio of the Bulgarian Walt Disney

Our conversation takes place at the modest “studio” of the Bulgarian Walt Disney. Black windows. On a small stage, on a special stand -a small doll, made of wood, wire and fabric. A small camera, with which are taken photos of the doll’s movement. In a separate with carton small room- a table, on which the painter sketches the movements of his character-the doll. The studio represents at the same time and the cinema hall in

which Todorov shows his pictures of the characters. In the darkness the only thing that stands out is the small white screen. The Bulgarian Walt Disney starts spinning the projection apparatus. The screen comes to life. The small duck is playing with the ball. With the movement of the head and the neck the duck follows the ball and hits it with the beam. On the film reel there is only the duck, there is no décor, because these are only preliminary pictures of the doll. What is now to be done by the painter is the sketching of the different movements and to give them flexibility. In such a way the movements shown by pictures on celluloid will again be taken onto the film reel and the film will be ready.

When coming out of the room-the studio, we notice an enclosed by carton smaller room with a closed door.

“What’s inside?”

“This is my secret- the secret of giving flexibility of the movements of my characters” says the Bulgarian Walt Disney, smiling.

Did Walt Disney start his work like that ? Were Mickey Mouse ,Donald Duck and the others characters from the trick-films born in such a cold room- “studio”? Probably! Dimitar Todorov was born in Shoumen in 1901. He went to school in Yambol and later entered the Academy of arts in Sofia. A teacher by profession. An illustrator of child magazines for many years. How did the idea of making trick movies occur to him? In 1938 he got a patent for one invention- paper film reel. Later came the idea to sketch on celluloid sheets (scripts). The war stopped him from finishing the begun work .

2 500 photos and 1000 pictures

“Why do you first take photos of the movements of the doll and you don’t start sketching right away?”

“I think that also the American trick-films of Walt Disney are not done directly from separate pictures, but the doll is used. In such a way is saved a lot of work” continues the Bulgarian Walt Disney, ”besides, the human hand could never exactly reproduce the different movements of a character from a trick-film. For a 300m film, which is shown for 15 min, I must to make around 2500 photos of the doll”, goes on with his explanations the painter. “ Also necessary are another 1000 pictures to give the final touch to some of the movements.”

The future of the Bulgarian trick-film

So far the work of the painter-pioneer in this field are not left unnoticed. Alexander Vazov- the chairman of the section for cinema at the Chamber of the national culture, has approved Todorov’s idea and has given him moral support and valuable instructions . the management of the Chamber of the national culture is also benevolent towards Todorov’ work and has granted him a modest material help. With loans from here and there the diligent and inventive painter managed to make a “studio”, if we could call like that the simple, cold as a fridge room, where he sits for hours ,with his coat on, sketching the different movements of his characters, which could maybe tomorrow come alive on the screen. In order to finalize his first trick-film, the Bulgarian Walt Disney needs 45 days, 4 painters for the making of all the pictures, and.....around 400 000 leva. Will he find all this? We think that he will. Maybe the Bulgarian trick-film could not compete with the American one, but if it is successfully produced, it could well serve as a means for education, propaganda, useful activities and entertainment. The Bulgarian trick-film has a future. The beginning must be endorsed.

Pictures: one of the main characters “strikes a pose” in front of the camera

The small screen, onto which are first shown the trick films. In the down corner one of the “actors’ is watching with an great interest

The painter Todorov- Jarava at his working desk, putting the final touch to the movements of his actors

The Bulgarian Walt Disney and one of his characters

Over celluloid sheets(scripts) are shaped the movements of the actors

