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CONVICTION
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September 28, 2010

MOVIE REVIEW | 'NINE NATION ANIMATION'

Worldwide Viewpoints With an Animated Edge

By MIKE HALE

“Nine Nation Animation” is the third installment in the series *The World According to Shorts*, anthologies of award-winning short films made outside the United States. It’s the first to consist entirely of animation, and it’s a winner, with only one or two duds among the nine [movies](#).

The simplest entry, the stop-motion “Average 40 Matches” by the Turkish team of Burkay Dogan and M. Sakir Arslan, is a lusciously colored cautionary tale set on a red tabletop holding an open matchbox and a pack of smokes. Hearing the cigarettes’ siren call, the matches crawl from their box like zombies from a crypt, sliding toward their inevitable [doom](#).

Also funny and relatively simple in technique is the Belgian animator Jonas Geirnaert’s [“Flatlife,”](#) whose title refers to both its “Cathy”-like cartoon drawing style and its setting, three apartments in which every action — pounding a nail, tapping on the ceiling with a broom, whacking a recalcitrant television — has an equal and opposite reaction in an adjoining [unit](#).

At the other end of the scale in visual complexity is Patrick Pleutin’s “Bâmiyân,” from France. Its story about a seventh-century Chinese monk who travels to see the Buddhas of Bamiyan (which the [Taliban](#) dynamited in 2001) is facile, but the ways it’s illustrated include the manipulation of piles of colored pigment — much like the creation of a sand [mandala](#).

Two of the best films use mixed-media and collage techniques to lend poignancy to true stories. In [“Home Road Movies,”](#) from Britain, Robert Bradbrook combines computer animation in a 1960s travel-brochure style, family photos and the Scottish actor Bill Paterson with a story about summer holidays with the director’s [father](#).

The Swedish filmmaker Jonas Odell brings a harder edge to “Never Like the First Time!” in which he animates four recorded interviews about first sexual experiences in distinct styles appropriate to the natures of the stories and the ages of the [protagonists](#).

NINE NATION ANIMATION

Opens on Wednesday in Manhattan.

A compilation of short films: “Deconstruction Workers,” a 6-minute Norwegian-language film directed by Kajsa Naess; “Average 40 Matches,” a 3-minute film directed by Burkay Dogan and M. Sakir Arslan; “Bâmiyân,” a 14-minute Persian- and Chinese-language film directed by Patrick Pleutin; “Please Say Something,” a 10-minute film directed by David O’Reilly; [“Flatlife,”](#) an 11-minute film directed by Jonas Geirnaert; “She Who Measures,” a 7-minute film directed by Veljko Popovic; [“Home Road Movies,”](#) a 12-minute film directed by Robert Bradbrook; [“The Tale of How,”](#) a 4-minute film directed by the Blackheart Gang ; and “Never Like the First Time!,” a 15-minute Swedish-language film directed by Jonas Odell; released by The World According to Shorts. At the IFC Center, 323 Avenue of the Americas, at Third Street, Greenwich Village. Total running time: 1 hour 24 minutes. These films are not rated.
