

## Biography

Ellen Meske is a freelance director of animated movies, a storyboard artist and an illustrator who lives in Amsterdam on a tree-lined canal. In the last twenty years she has shared her vast experience with different studios in the Netherlands and Europe. She has also given workshops in countries as far distant as Japan.

Ellen was born in Los Angeles, USA, and studied at the Los Angeles College of Design. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts from the University of California at Santa Cruz (1974). In the United States, she worked mainly as a graphic artist and an illustrator. She moved to Holland in 1977.

Always interested in animation, Ellen entered the Vrije Academie Psychopolis in The Hague where she was inspired by the world-renowned independent animation artists working there at the time. She was encouraged to make her first film by drawing on paper. Then she worked as an animation assistant for such well-known Dutch filmmakers as Hans Nassenstein and Monique Renault. She also began to work independently, exploring a variety of animation techniques in educational shorts, children's films and commercials for television.

Ellen was commissioned in 1988 to create an animated series about sharing house work called "house holding". She built a one-woman animation studio, and with the success of her clay puppets was later given a grant to make a longer film, "Capriccio". Both endeavours were rewarded with prizes at international animation festivals.

Tired of working alone with only her puppets for company, Ellen jumped at the offer to direct a team at Cosgrove Hall Films, England, in 1996 for a stop-motion children's television series. She found the teamwork invigorating, and her career took off in a new direction. She continued on with studio directing work in England, Holland and Germany, coordinating entire production crews... reviewing scripts, working closely with prop-, puppet- and set-builders, briefing young animators and supervising sound and post- production teams. She found the challenge of this new work was to inspire and encourage the creativity of others.

She directed such popular series as "Animal Shelf", "Miffy and Friends" and "Dragon".

Ellen's experience as a director and illustrator also made her invaluable as a storyboard artist for other animation directors. For several years, Ellen has storyboarded diverse series including the popular and award winning "Bob The Builder" and "Postman Pat".

Ellen is well known in international animation circles for her originality, humour and technical expertise.

Even while working in animation, Ellen maintained her interest in illustrating and cartoons. She has created children's comic strips for Dutch newspapers and other kid-pleasing projects.

Ellen Meske has worked as an advisor for the Dutch film funds, various art colleges and production companies since 2003.

She always has time to help advise young filmmakers over coffee. She has encouraged a whole new generation of Dutch animators who have been inspired by Ellen's direct simplicity and humour.