

CINÉTÉ, FABRIQUE FANTASTIQUE AND CURIOUS WOLF PRESENT

MIND MY MIND

A FILM BY FLOOR ADAMS





MIND MY MIND

LOGLINE

When relying on social scripts to survive the social world, it's not easy to go off-script. Especially if you're obsessed with German dive bombers and just want to date a girl.

BRIEF SYNOPSIS

Chris, an autistic young man who camouflages his obsession with dive bombers, gets by with the help of Hans, the little guy who lives in his head and translates Chris's social scripts for him. When zoologist Gwen invites Chris to meet her favorite chameleon, Chris and Hans move expeditiously ahead with a flirt script...but then the chameleon dies and Gwen needs Chris to go off script.



Photo by Ralph Schmitz, 2019

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

BIOGRAPHY

Floor Adams (1980) is based in Nijmegen, The Netherlands. She has been an independent animator and illustrator since 2005, when she graduated cum laude at the department of Fine Arts at the ArtEZ Institute of the Arts. She also studied animation at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts Ghent (KASK) in the Erasmus program. Previously, she was employed as an art therapist in psychiatry and worked with mentally disabled people. She created commissioned works for public broadcasting, MTV, the Government of the Netherlands, publishers and documentary filmmakers. Her art was on display in museums, galleries and at film festivals. For a long time, she taught animation and was a member of several creative advice committees. For the past six years, she worked on Mind My Mind.

FILMOGRAPHY

- 2019 Mind My Mind
- 2011 24 Preschoolers (*24 Kleuters*)
MIEP
- 2010 Tokyo Hoover
- 2009 Buddy Seat (48 Hour Film Project)
- 2008 Snow White (*Sneeuwwitje*)

The Frog Prince (*De kikkerkoning*)
Hansel and Gretel (*Hans en Grietje*)
The Wolf and the Seven Young Kids (*De wolf en de 7 geitjes*)
Little Red Riding Hood (*Roodkapje*)

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Mind My Mind is a film about how having a brain that is wired differently may affect your social life, and particularly your love life. Flirting, sex and romantic relationships can be very challenging for people with autism, as they are associated with thousands of unwritten rules and exceptions.

The idea for this film is a result of my professional and personal experiences with people with an autism spectrum disorder.

Chris, the main character, deals with his social and emotional limitations together with Hans, a little guy who lives inside Chris's head and who serves as an information processor. In his own unique way, Hans tries to help Chris survive the social jungle, with sensory overload as their mutual enemy.

Mind My Mind offers insight into the autistic mind: an abstract world for most people. The 2D hand-drawn animation, changing colour schemes, expressive lighting, dynamic pacing and original score add to this experience.

It is a hopeful and optimistic film that encourages people to be patient with each other. It reminds us that if you don't judge people too quickly, you might find something beautiful inside their heads.



ABOUT THE PRODUCERS

CINETE

CinéTé is a Dutch film production company that specializes in short animation. Their best-known film is *Father and Daughter* (Michael Dudok de Wit, 2000), which won 30 international awards including, in 2001, The Oscar for Best Short Animation. CinéTé was also involved in shorts made by Paul Driessen, Evert de Beijer and Børge Ring amongst others. Founder of CinéTé is Willem Thijssen. Since 2014 Nancy Fornoville joined the company.

FABRIQUE FANTASTIQUE

Fabrique Fantastique is a Flemish animation & production studio run by Tom Van Gestel. Tom Van Gestel and co-producer Geert Torfs manage a team of 2D and 3D artists, draftsmen, graphic designers, screenwriters, up- and-coming directors and two project managers. as an animation studio realised a number of diverse projects: a BOIC publicity spot for the Olympic Games, concert visuals for Ellie Goulding and George Ezra, backgrounds for a theatre production, the short film *The Girl* by Hans Op de Beeck, the 3D animation and effects for the feature film *Urbanus: De Vuilnisheld*, and the backgrounds for the feature film *HEINZ* with Dutch production company BosBros.

AWARDS AND NOMINATIONS

ANIMA – Brussels Animation Film Festival 2019 (Belgium)

WINNER Audience Award for Best Short Film

Go Short International Short Film Festival 2019 (The Netherlands)

WINNER Audience Award

Tribeca Film Festival 2019 (New York, USA)

NOMINEE for Best International Short

Stuttgart Festival of Animated Film 2019 (Germany)

WINNER SWR Audience Award

Festival van de kortste nacht Arnhem 2019 (The Netherlands)

WINNER Best Short Film + WINNER Audience Award

Indy Shorts International Film Festival 2019 (Indianapolis, USA)

WINNER Grand Prize

Salute Your Shorts Film Festival 2019 (Los Angeles, USA)

WINNER Best Animated Film + WINNER Audience Choice Award

Flickers' Rhode Island International Film Festival 2019 (USA)

WINNER Viola M. Marshall Audience Choice Award - Best Animated Short Film

Encounters International Film Festival 2019 (Bristol, UK)
WINNER Jury's Special Mention Animated Encounters Grand Prix 2019

Ridgefield Independent Film Festival 2019 (Connecticut, USA)
WINNER Best Animated Short

Kerry Film Festival 2019 (Ireland)
WINNER Best Animation

San Jose International Short Film Festival 2019 (USA)
WINNER Best Animation

Pittsburgh Shorts Film Festival 2019 (USA)
WINNER Best Animation

St. Cloud Film Fest 2019 (USA)
WINNER Audience Award Short Film

CINANIMA Espinho International Animation Film Festival 2019 (Portugal)
WINNER Best Short Film from 24-50 minutes



TECHNICAL DETAILS

Duration	29'40"
Release year	2019
Type of production	animated short
Genre	drama, comedy

Technique	hand-drawn animation, 2D computer
Aspect ratio	CinemaScope 2.39:1
Resolution	4K
Frame rate	24 fps
Sound	Dolby Digital 5.1
Language	English
Available subtitles	English, Dutch, French, Spanish, German
Available captions	English SHD

PROMOTIONAL

Trailer link	https://vimeo.com/300471953
Screener link	by request
Still images	https://filmchief.com/festivals/mindmymind/download/Mind-My-Mind-stills.zip
Official website	www.mindmymind.nl
IMDb	www.imdb.com/title/tt9445988
Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/mindmymind.thefilm
Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/mindmymind_thefilm
Twitter	@adamsfloor #mindmymindfilm



ENDORSEMENTS

"'Mind My Mind' is a highly original animation that portrays the experience of an autistic young man as he navigates starting a romantic relationship and coping with the challenges of conversation and social interaction. The film has a beautiful message: be yourself, and celebrate the many positive qualities of being autistic. The animation team are to be congratulated for their insight into how to convey what goes on inside the mind of an autistic person during everyday decision-making, including dealing with the stresses that arise from ambiguity and sensory overload. It is encouraging that autistic viewers themselves have endorsed this film as a way of helping others to understand their experience."

– **Professor Simon Baron-Cohen**

Director, Autism Research Centre, Cambridge University

"'Mind My Mind' offers us a way to literally see and experience how autism characteristics play their role in flirting, romantic relationships and sexuality. The movie is not only visually and auditory appealing; it offers a realistic insight in how social, communicative and sensory aspects related to autism influence interactions in daily lives, in a positive and respectful way. I think this movie can help the general and professional community to get a better understanding of adolescents and adults with autism and encourage autistic people to share how they experience the world, sexuality and relationships. I recommend this movie for everyone. Note for the sensory sensitive people among us: there is some overstimulation experienced and expressed in the movie. Be prepared."

– **Dr. Jeroen Dewinter**

Clinical psychologist and researcher, GGzE & Tilburg University

"Honestly, the most true to life depiction of high functioning autism I've seen in animation or any other popular media to date. Watching this movie gave me the feeling it wasn't created out of awareness but out of a deep understanding of the subject matter. The people who made this movie cared. I couldn't have asked for more. A must watch."

– **Niels Verhofstad**

experience expert



THE TEAM

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY Floor Adams

PRODUCED BY Willem Thijssen, Tom Van Gestel, Floor Adams

WITH THE VOICES OF Simon Hodges, Cézanne Tegelberg, Adam Fields, Faye Bloomfield, Lesley Hughes, Elias Verweken

ANIMATION Nancy Bens, Juan de Graaf, Carl van Isacker, Elie Klimis, Peter Wassink, Tim Trenson

EDITORS Dennis Pasveer, Luuk Poels

ORIGINAL MUSIC PRODUCED BY Peter Johan Nijland, Frank Boeijen

MUSIC SUPERVISOR Dennis Pasveer

CREATIVE CONSULTANT Ellen Meske

STORY CONSULTANTS Floor van Lissa, Mieke de Jong

CLEAN-UP Nancy Bens, Carl van Isacker, Paul De Blicke, Elie Klimis, Juan de Graaf, Tim Trenson, Peter Wassink

PRODUCTION DESIGN / BACKGROUNDS Floor Adams

PAINT ARTISTS Thomas Adams, Damiët Anijs, Annemie Buytaert, Esther van Casteren, Mirjam van Casteren, Micha van Dooren, Brechje Geutjes, Maik Hagens, Daan Mulder, Johanneke de Ridder, Isaac Sandoval, Kevin Vonk

PAINT AND SHADOW FX ARTISTS Eugène Arts, Kim van Engelen, Sanne Hellinga, Inti Mego, Bart van Seters, Zaou Vaughan

FINAL CHECK & PAINT Hanne Geeraert, Michaël Koning, Johanneke de Ridder

TRAINEES Emma De Bleser, Kelly De Boelpaep, Tina de Groot, Tim Verhaegen

COMPOSITING Maik Hagens, Johanneke de Ridder

LIGHTING Dennis Pasveer

TRANSLATION DIALOGUES Wilco van Eijk

CASTING AND RECORDING STUDIO INCasting

RECORDING ENGINEER Lee M. Ross

ADDITIONAL RECORDING Gonzo

RECORDING ENGINEER Hans Tourné

AUDIO POST-PRODUCTION Gonzo

SOUND DESIGNER Pieter Deweirtdt

FOLEY ARTIST Elias Verveckken

FOLEY RECORDIST Thomas De Pauw

MIX Hans Tourné

COLOUR GRADING Marco van Bergen

DELIVERIES Richard Meintjens / CineMeta

TITLE DESIGN Eugène Arts

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS Nancy Fornoville, Lisa ter Berg, Marianne Op De Beeck

A DUTCH-BELGIAN CO-PRODUCTION CinéTé Filmproductie: Nancy Fornoville & Willem Thijssen
Curious Wolf: Floor Adams
Fabrique Fantastique: Tom Van Gestel & Piet Winten

THIS FILM WAS SUPPORTED BY the Netherlands Film Fund, the Flanders Audiovisual Fund (VAF), the province of Gelderland, the province of Overijssel, Creative Industries Fund NL, Cultuur Eindhoven, the city of Nijmegen and the TAX Shelter system of the Belgian Federal Government

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Interview by Matt Fagerholm for Indie Outlook

Floor Adams on “Mind My Mind”

[August 30, 2019](#) · by [Indie Outlook](#) · in [New Releases](#) ·

Though the Oscar season has barely begun, I doubt I'll see a better film this year than Floor Adams' “Mind My Mind.” Among its numerous recent accolades, this thirty-minute marvel won the Best Animated Short prize at last month's Indy Shorts International Film Festival in Indianapolis, where I had the honor of serving on the documentary jury. There were [a great deal of exceptional selections](#), yet few were as undeniably Oscar-worthy as Adams' extraordinarily inventive psychological portrait of Chris, a young man with autism, as he finds himself attracted to a tender-hearted woman, Gwen. As he struggles to shield her from evidence of his affliction, particularly his obsession with model planes, Adams takes us inside his mind, where we see a librarian frantically trying to send him the correct social script for each incoming bulletin of information. The layers of wit and nuance evident in every interaction is worthy of a frame-by-frame analysis, warranting comparison to Pete Docter's 2015 Pixar tour de force, “Inside Out,” as well as the best work of Charlie Kaufman.

Once I saw “Mind My Mind,” I knew that I had to speak with its Netherlands-based writer/director before leaving Indianapolis. In the following conversation, Adams provided me with a wealth of insight regarding the film's origins, its basis in truth and the challenge of its editing, which is a spectacular triumph in itself.

I honestly wasn't thinking about autism during my initial viewing of “Mind My Mind.” We all have degrees of social anxiety, as you mentioned in your acceptance speech, where you told the festival goers, “Let's get a drink together,” since that would be a less stressful alternative to addressing them all at once. Part of your film's brilliance is in how it enables the affliction Chris is dealing with to resonate on a wholly universal level.

It turned out to be a very universal story. I had always planned for the film to be about autism. I taught animation to autistic students for a couple of years, and there was this moment during break time when one of my students began talking about the Tokyo subway system. He was so intrigued by it that he knew all about the trains, the tracks, the stations and how many suicide attempts there had been per month. He knew everything about it and as he kept talking, my mouth was hanging open. I asked him, “Where do you keep all of this information? Why do you remember all of these facts and figures?” And he said, “Well, I don't know. I just read them or hear about them, and then I store them somewhere. It sounds marvelous, but it's not because I don't have room for the other stuff. I don't know how to plan my day, and I have difficulties being on time for appointments or remembering to do my homework.”

He wasn't talking about the whole social aspect of autism, just the practical things because he was still my student. His experiences struck me as something I could potentially visualize within the realm of film. I was animating at the time, mainly doing commissioned work for Dutch television and documentaries, and this seemed like the perfect subject for my first movie. Around that time, I had fallen in love with a man—who happened to be a person with autism—though neither of us knew it. He knew that he was different, and my thinking was, “Well, everybody's different!” He was an archaeologist as well as a bass

player in a band, just a cool guy. I had been in a relationship with someone who wasn't open about how he felt, and this man would freely express his feelings, which was really attractive. We talked about everything, and he kept analyzing his behavior. I thought, 'Dude, you're okay—we all have difficulties at parties.'

We were together for a couple months, during which he revealed his diagnosis. That got me thinking about what was happening on the inside, in his mind, that I wasn't aware of. As I began thinking about this film, I asked if he—along with my former student—would answer some questions. Since he was so dear and close to me, he'd open up about his special interests. He'd say, "I have to watch the results of games. Not *every* game, but soccer, because my father used to play it. I don't care about the game itself, I just have to see the results." Then I asked, "What if you're out with friends?" and he said, "I'll go to the bathroom and check the results on my phone." All these secrets were being unearthed about what people do in order to make a good impression, and the affliction was more severe than I had ever imagined.

Then I read a book that his mother had written about his childhood. He had blocked many of those memories because he was bullied, like many people with autism are. The fact he cried very easily made him an easy victim. When he touched something with his left hand, he then had to touch it with his other hand. That sort of neuroses and the need for anger management weren't anywhere near as visible in his thirties as they were during his childhood. Then it dawned on me: he's *adapting*. He's growing, in a way, but he's also camouflaging his own problem. Kids who have severe problems during school can appear normal as adults, but they are hiding things that they are trying to manage from the inside, so that you don't see any of it. These social interactions are so tiring for them that they need time alone, in the dark of their bedroom, to absorb themselves in the things that they love—like building airplanes or reading about WWII—in order to keep their mind at ease.

Whereas "Inside Out," is more about emotional balance, this film is focused on brain chemistry, with one librarian occupying the protagonist's mind, straining to keep his thoughts in order.

When people say that the librarian character looks like a penis, I think, 'Well, it's a shape I'm used to...' [laughs] He's the only character in the film whose look remained consistent ever since my early sketches. He doesn't require the human attributes of the other characters. He doesn't need ears or a mouth, he just needs a pair of eyes, which is cute, in a way.

His eyes reminded me a bit of Gromit's—the dog in Nick Park's classic stop-motion shorts—which convey everything we need to know without the need for dialogue.

Yes! I, along with the other people who made "Mind My Mind," refer to this character as Hans, which is a reference to Hans Asperger, the pediatrician whom Asperger's Syndrome was named after. It was only last year that he was found guilty of sending disabled children to their deaths during WWII. You could say that the Hans of our film is an information processor, since people with autism process information in a different way. They're wired differently. What do you do with all the information coming in at all times, not just sensory stimulation, but also the things that other people do and say? Hans needs to categorize everything and some things happen to go automatically, like daily routines. It's the things that you cannot predict, like social situations, that prove more difficult to control.

I came up with an idea of placing Hans in storage rooms or some sort of library. Though I researched the science of autism, I realized that the imagery I created from this film had to come out of my own head. I had to invent it myself. It was a long journey to figure out how to visualize the mental space where Hans resides. Where does he keep the information, where does he live? Autism is not limited to one place in the head, it's everywhere, but in the end, that would be too hard to show. So I decided to have Hans live in a neuron, where he's capable of sending signals to the main character about what to do at any given moment, while trying to make sense of what he's feeling.

Many people with autism say that it takes a while for emotions like anger and sadness to build up within them, which is why I had Hans store them in a basement. As Chris has difficulty processing things, or changing from one situation to another, I felt like Hans would occasionally need to distance himself from all the social scripts piling up on his desk, and that's when the stairs came in. In the beginning, Gwen also had a character in her head. He was more laid-back, and you'd see him in his morning gown and slippers with a newspaper and a cup of tea. It was really nice to think about his world, which was more like "Inside Out" in its high tech design, but ultimately I realized it would be too difficult and unnecessary to cut between four characters, so I wrote it out of the script.

The editing is extraordinary in how it juxtaposes Chris and Gwen's budding attraction with Hans frantically trying to make sense of it all. How did you go about nailing the proper pace for each scene?

I made a rough storyboard, which my husband [Dennis Pasveer] and I then put into an animatic with sound, which was really awkward since I took some sounds off the internet. Some sentences were in Dutch, others were in English, and I still had to do the translations. Once I cleared that up, it was a tough process to determine, in general, when the audience should see what Hans is doing inside the head. When is it too much or too educational or too literal? Luckily, Luuk Poels, a sound editor on many big Dutch productions, had recently moved to my area, and wanted to continue his involvement in the film industry. He ended up editing the film along with my husband, who makes film festival management software.

Most of the time, people say that in animation, you have to do all your editing at the beginning. A brilliant animatic won't require the need for any editors. When you are shooting live-action, an actor can walk in and out of the frame, and you decide afterwards where to cut it. In animation, there are no additional options or alternate takes for the editor to work with. Yet Luuk showed how we could tweak certain moments by making them just a few frames longer. If you used this technique on footage with human actors, it would make the people onscreen look dead, but in animation, the character simply appears to be staring for a slightly longer period of time. Independently made animated projects tend to be abstract and experimental, but this film takes an approach to its storytelling that is more in line with live-action. That being said, this never could've been a live-action film.

Before this movie, I had only made animated shorts that [you can find on my website](#). About ten years ago, I did a series of shorts that each lasted a minute or two and took a different perspective on a familiar fairy tale. One illustrates how Snow White's stepmother may have had borderline personality disorder, while another suggests that the wolf may simply have wanted to marry Red Riding Hood. Like all my previous shorts, these were made in the context of something else—in this case, a fairy tale exhibition. I was a bit fearful of making a film where I would be creatively free, and that's what "Mind My Mind" is. The story fueled everything, and I wanted it to reach a wide audience. I asked people with autism how they

thought the story should end, since a lot of autistic people are having difficulties sustaining romantic relationships. A stable relationship is not common for most of them, and yet, the people I asked told me that Chris's story should end well, inspiring others to have faith.

Chris stops hiding from Gwen in every sense, and she accepts him. The optimism at the end rings true because the characters remain true to themselves.

It's wonderful to have made something that everybody seems to agree on, in terms of the people with autism who've seen the film and supported it. The autism community is a hard audience to please because they are very critical about how they are being represented in films and on shows like "Atypical" or "The Good Doctor." As for films I've seen about the subject, I thought [Max Mayer's] "Adam" was beautiful, while [Adam Elliot's] "Mary and Max" was a brilliant animated film about a man who has many layers to his character, in addition to his Asperger's Syndrome.

Is filmmaking what you want to continue pursuing?

Yes! I just finished a commissioned job for an elderly home. I was busy interviewing people living there who suffer from dementia, and I worked with all these photo albums.

For the next couple of months I've decided to invest in new personal film projects rather than doing commissioned work and delaying my personal plans. It's truly an investment because you are not guaranteed to get funding in the end. You have to apply for funding, and it's a long process. Now is the time to proceed and I'm working on a new concept as we speak. But, I've no idea where "Mind My Mind" is taking us and I'm open for anything interesting that comes along!

For more information, check out the official sites of [Floor Adams](#) and "[Mind My Mind](#)." You can also follow the film [on Facebook](#). "Mind My Mind" screens next at the [Fantoche International Animation Festival](#) in Baden, Switzerland (for a full line-up of upcoming festival screenings, click [here](#)).