

Title: Animated Auteurs: The Brumberg Sisters and Early Soviet Animation
Author: Lora Mjolsness, University of California, Irvine

According to the Brumberg sisters' account of their school days, they filled the margins of their textbooks with small pencil drawings of various fairytale heroes who came to life when the pages of the textbook were flipped. At this point the sisters knew nothing about animation technology but already their love of art and drawing pushed them towards a career in animated film. This paper will focus on the Brumbergs early career as animators in the Soviet Union, raising issues concerning the technical and aesthetic concerns of early animation and applying the principles of the animator as auteur to their work. Focusing on two early periods of production the late 1920s, *Kitai v ogne* (1925) and *Samoedskii mal'chik* (1928), and the late 1930s, *Krasnaia shapochka* (1937) and *Ivashko i Baba Yaga* (1938), I will concentrate on the Brumbergs auteur status despite apparent discrepancies. During this period the Brumbergs started as background artists but moved to roles allowing more artist control including directing and script writing. In addition, Soviet animation technique moved away from labor-intensive pen and ink and towards automated cel technology. There are obvious stylistic differences as well as their animation changed from agitational poster (adult-centered) to Disneyesque inspired characters and storylines (child-centered). However, I propose that while technique and style are often times outside the control of the Soviet auteur, the Brumbergs' interior meaning and playful artistic tendencies unite their early work.

Abol'chik, O. "Valentina i Zinaida Brumberg," *Mastera sovetskoi mul'tiplikatsii*. Moskva: Isskustvo, 1972.

Furniss, Maureen. *Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics*. UK: John Libby, 2007.

MacFadyen, David. *Yellow Crocodiles and Blue Oranges*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 2005.