

A series of short animated films

# KOYAA

YAA!



+ behind-  
the-scenes  
documentary

ZVVIKS  
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Created by **Kolja Saksida**

## → About the series

Koyaa and his friend, the wise Mr Raven, live on a rocky ledge high above the clouds. They lead an exciting life away from the urban hustle and bustle, without a minute's boredom. Koyaa stumbles into comical adventures when the everyday objects that surround him come to life and begin to act in all sorts of weird and wacky ways. Socks, scarves, books, a sunbed – you name it, they keep going crazy! The items run around, hide from Koyaa, fly into the sky or make a mess in the house. While Koyaa is trying to catch them and get things back into order, Mr Raven patiently crafts his birdhouses. He grumbles amiably about how Koyaa never lets him work in peace, but it's all in good spirit. A day spent with Koyaa and Mr Raven is always great fun!

### Koyaa

Koyaa is lanky, funny and curious – and always ready for an adventure. He lives light on his feet, looking ahead with optimism. A cheerful spirit, persistence and bagfuls of imagination get him out of trouble whenever he's in a fix. Satisfied with small triumphs, he enjoys being outdoors on the rocky mountain ledge.

### Mr Raven

Mr Raven is calm, composed and usually busy with his work, building birdhouses from all kinds of materials. He'll occasionally grumble when Koyaa is making a mess, but it's all in good spirit. The wise raven knows a thing or two about patience.



# Naughty Toy Car

2017, 2'45"

It's raining outside and Koyaa decides to tidy up his room. In the background, Mr Raven is sizing up a wooden plank for his new birdhouse. When Koyaa has finished cleaning, he proudly looks around and steps on a toy car he's missed. He takes a crazy

ride, zig-zagging around the place like a figure skater out of control. The naughty little car is taunting Koyaa, making a ruckus and refusing to behave, but Koyaa manages to trick it into playing nicely.



On a hot summer's day, all Koyaa wants to do is relax on his sunbed. As usual, Mr Raven is busy building a birdhouse, this time from straw. Koyaa lies down, shielding his face from the sun. Suddenly, the sunbed snaps shut, trapping Koyaa inside, then spitting him out like a

cannonball towards the cliff - where he just about manages to hang on to a vine! Koyaa weaves a lasso from the plant, but instead of catching the sunbed, he's treated to a wild rodeo ride on its back. It seems like he could use another clever idea ...

# Wild Sunbed

2017, 2'45"



# Flying Workbook

2017, 2'45"

It's autumn and the rocky ledge is a lovely place to be. Koyaa decides to step outside and write a few things in his workbook. Mr Raven is nearby, folding old magazines and newspapers. Koyaa opens a page, but the book slams itself shut! Surprised, he tries opening it again – but the

book just floats off into the air. Koyaa hops up onto the table. It's no use, he still can't grab it ... While giving chase, he has an idea. After hatching a cunning plan, he manages to calm the workbook down so that Mr Raven can finish building his recycled paper birdhouse in peace.



Koyaa plans to paste some stickers onto the window of his house, while Mr Raven sticks glue to the wire frame of his new creation. Koyaa tries pasting the stickers onto the glass, but they keep coming unstuck one after another. He tries holding them

down, but they slip away, floating in the air, chuckling. Koyaa is desperate to find a way to get the silly stickers to stick! Finally, he gets a brilliant idea. Soon enough, the stickers are on the window and Mr Raven's latest birdhouse is complete.



# Silly Stickers

2017, 2'45"

# Dancing Socks

2017, 2'45"

Koyaa wakes to the sound of the cuckoo clock. Mr Raven is already up, handling a huge ball of wool. Koyaa opens a drawer to take out a pair of socks. Rubbing his eyes, he can't believe what he's seeing: the socks are alive! They wiggle, slide

from his hands and start flopping about. They jump into the laundry basket and Koyaa bravely follows. He manages to catch one but the other is still on the loose ... Koyaa puts his thinking cap on, then has an idea about how to lure it out!



Koyaa wants some fresh air. It's winter outside and he'd like to wear his scarf. As he reaches to grab it, the scarf springs to life, slithering around the room like a snake. Baffled, Koyaa tries to catch it, but it's just too slippery! In the meantime, Mr Raven is busy building

a birdhouse out of ice cubes. The scarf wraps itself around Koyaa so that he cannot see anything. He flops around then crashes to the floor. Ouch! Sitting up and thinking, Koyaa finally comes up with a sharp solution to the sly garment's challenge.



# Freezing Scarf

2017, 2'45"

## + Koyaa the Extraordinary

pilot film

2011, 3'

A new day is dawning up on the rocky ledge. Koyaa is stretching in front of his house. Nearby, Mr Raven is reading a book. Koyaa doesn't notice that his shoelaces are untied, which causes him to take a clumsy

fall. He ties the laces back together, but they come untied again, extract themselves from Koyaa's shoes and start making a ruckus on the rocky ledge. What will Koyaa do to fix the mess?



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The documentary takes us way back, to the very beginnings of the story of Koyaa, our animated hero, which has its roots in the children's world of author Kolja Saksida. We go behind the scenes as other members of the film crew join the audience to show

first-hand how the set is made, how Mr Raven comes to life, and how Koyaa gets his voice and movement. Our entertaining narrator will tell you about Koyaa's world, and the film examines the magic not only of Koyaa but of animation as a whole.

## + Hi Koyaa!

behind-the-scenes documentary

2017, 11'20"



## → Reviews

'Children appreciate audacity and like heroes that inspire them: Koyaa does a great job of speaking to their inner world and imagination. Our hero overcomes obstacles with a spark of ingenuity, showing that nothing is impossible as long as you really put your mind to it. Hearing the children laugh and cheer, it's not hard to join in with a shout of 'More!''

*Barbara Kelbl, Film Education and Young Audiences (expert associate, Kinobalon) Kinodvor Cinema*

'Koyaa is an animated hero in every sense of the word: more than just curious and entertaining, he takes the audience by the hand and drags them into his funny adventures, into the wacky world of animation on his rocky mountain ledge'

*Martina Peštaj, Editor of Children and Youth Programming, Radio Television Slovenia*

'Koyaa doesn't let the material world sour his mood – to him, every obstacle is a challenge and every challenge an adventure! The films are sparkly, inventive, and a tribute to persistence, the magic of the imagination and the cheekiness of everyday life. Through Koyaa's eyes, life is a game and playfulness a way of life'

*Gert Hermans, Editor-in-Chief of ECFA and Head of Distribution at Jekino Distribution*

'Koyaa is a unique pre-school series with a humour all its own in which Koyaa combats unruly toys and other objects while being watched over by a very house-proud Raven'

*Phil Parker, leading European Mentor for Audiovisual Content Development*

## → Technical specifications

**Duration** 30'50"  
**Technique** puppet stop-motion animation  
**Language** no dialogue, English  
**Target audience** 3+  
**Playback format** 16:9  
**Format and sound** DCP, 5.1  
**Release date** March 2017

### Animated films

**Director** Kolja Saksida  
**Screenwriters** Marko Bratuš, Kolja Saksida, Jure Karas  
**Character design** Blaž Porenta  
**Concept design** Gregor Nartnik  
**Animators** Julia Peguet, Will Hodge, Piotr Ficner  
**Director of photography** Miloš Srdić  
**Editors** Monika Drahotuski, Tomaž Gorkič, Boris Dolenc, Gorazd Krnel  
**Music composers** Miha Šajina, Borja Močnik  
**Sound design** Julij Zornik  
**DI colorist** Teo Rižnar  
**Dubbing** Frano Mašković, Žiga Saksida, Kolja Saksida  
**Set designers** Mateja Rojc, Simon Hudolin, Leon Vidmar, Miha Erman, Marko Turkuš  
**Executive producer** Matija Šturm  
**Co-producers** Tanja Prinčič, Marina Andree Škop, Darija Kulenović Gudan, Žiga Pokorn, Teo Rižnar, Miloš Srdić

**Producer** Kolja Saksida  
**Production** ZVVIKS  
**Co-production** Radio Television Slovenia, NuFrame, A Atalanta, Studio dim  
**Supported by** Slovenian Film Centre, public agency of the RS, Ministry of Culture of Slovenia, Film Studio Viba Film Ljubljana, Croatian Audiovisual Centre  
**Development support** PRIME 4Kids&Family, HEAD, ECAL

### Documentary

**Director** Marina Andree Škop  
**Screenwriter** Pavlica Bajsić Brazzoduro  
**Editors** Monika Drahotuski, Marina Andree Škop  
**Music composers** Miha Šajina, Borja Močnik  
**Sound design** Petar Milić  
**Computer animation and DI colorist** Josip Klobučar  
**Concept design** Blaž Porenta, Gregor Nartnik  
**Narrator** Julian Rhind-Tutt  
**Behind-the-scenes photography and video** Blaž Miklič, Tina Lagler, Tomaž Šantl  
**Executive producer** Matija Šturm  
**Producers** Kolja Saksida, Darija Kulenović Gudan, Marina Andree Škop  
**Production** ZVVIKS, Studio dim

# → How stop-motion animated films are made

**An animated film is born as a colourful story** written in the form of a screenplay. Puppet animation demands an especially high degree of precision when it comes to planning; this is to ensure that nothing gets lost or forgotten during the slow process of animation. Accordingly, a storyboard is created prior to filming to enable everyone to follow the same plan to the letter.

The **storyboard** is made of shots arranged one after another, as they're placed by the film's director and director of photography. The images are numbered and marked with the duration of individual scenes. It's **like a comic book** that shows, in drawings or digital design, how every scene of the film should end up looking like.

The *Koyaa* series of animated shorts is filmed using the classic technique of **puppet stop-motion animation**. It's filmed in an animation studio, using handmade puppets, sets and props crafted for each episode.

As with all animation, stop-motion is done by **shooting images frame by frame** to create the illusion of motion. To make the puppet move smoothly, we have to take a picture of each new

position alongside all the objects we wish to move. When the images are played in rapid succession, the result is a continuous animated image.

If we exclude the title sequence and end credits, every *Koyaa* film is **2 minutes and 15 seconds** long, meaning that it's made up of **3,375 images**.

The animator is the person who moves the puppet during the shoot, and so we like to say they breathe 'soul' into the character. Around **30 days of shooting** are required for one episode, and one second of film consists of **25 consecutive images** played one after the other. In one shooting day, which normally lasts nine working hours, we shoot around 125 images – in other words, **five seconds of film (material)**.

The puppets that star in the series were **made in Poland by a team of six puppet makers**. The basis for their appearance are the sketches and pictures we call '**character design**'.

*Koyaa*'s puppet is **27 cm** high and Mr Raven measures a mere **7 cm**. It's very important that we are able to set a puppet in a certain position and that it stays there. This is made possible by

the **aluminium armature** inside every puppet.

There is also an **aluminium wire** running through the puppet's extremities, hair and cap; this allows for greater adjustment. *Koyaa*'s hands are made of **silicone** and his head consists of **two plastic parts**: the upper part (forehead, nose and eyes) and the lower part (mouth).

To express emotion, we use **56 different interchangeable parts of the face**, which are replaced according to the needs of the story.

The eyebrows are fixed to the forehead with a magnet so that we can move them. If we want the puppet to wink, we use **four different plastic eyelid pieces**.

Since the puppets are used every day, parts get dirty, clothes get torn and wires snap – which is why we have to have **several costumes** and parts on hand so we can replace them.

While making the six recent *Koyaa* films, we replaced **21 pairs of hands**. The little wires in the fingers eventually break and the silicon gets grubby and cracked.

Like the puppets, the sets and props also first receive their concept design and sketches. Naturally, they all have precise measurements. **The sets** are made from materials like **wood**,

**styrofoam and various glues**.

The central setting (the **rocky ledge** with *Koyaa*'s house) is **270 cm tall** and **350 cm wide**. The props are made of wood, plastic and malleable materials that harden when dried.

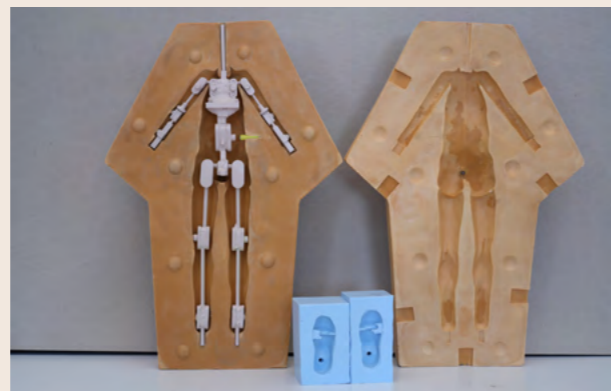
Different kinds of sound appear in the film: **Foley, special effects and an original music score**. The Foley artists record their magic in a sound studio, using all kinds of materials.

**Voice actors** make **sounds and noises** as the film is played in the studio; we then record them, and finally edit and use the best parts to compile *Koyaa*'s sonic world.

**Original music** is composed for each individual episode, with the genre matching the events of the plot. Sometimes *Koyaa* is accompanied by wild jazz music and sometimes by jumpy ska, playful funk or whatever vibe suits the image.

In total, **over 35 artists** help make *Koyaa* come to life. Since they are busy working in various fields, such as direction, production, set design, puppet manufacture and post-production, not all of them work together. However, **an average of 15 people are working on the series** on any given shooting day.





## → About the author

Kolja Saksida received his Master's degree in Film Studies from the ECAL University of Art and Design, Lausanne. He works in filmmaking as a director, producer and educator, and is one of Slovenia's most prominent creators of animated film. His works have been screened at numerous festivals all over the world, and he has been an artist-in-residence for several major international cultural organisations. Kolja transfers his knowledge and experience to bring people of all ages closer to the boundless expressive possibilities of stop-motion animation, a great storytelling medium accessible to practically everyone. Kolja is also an assistant professor at the Academy of Arts, University of Nova Gorica.

### Filmography

- 2017** KOYAA – Naughty Toy Car
- 2017** KOYAA – Wild Sunbed
- 2017** KOYAA – Flying Workbook
- 2017** KOYAA – Dancing Socks
- 2017** KOYAA – Silly Stickers
- 2017** KOYAA – Freezing Scarf
- 2013** KOYAA – Flower
- 2012** Azulejo or visual illusion
- 2011** KOYAA the Extraordinary
- 2009** Kiddo – Slingshot
- 2005** KOYAA – puppet animation TV series
- 2003** Bright Future
- 2002** Lab Party
- 2002** Mosk
- 2000** Let' ssss go



## → Creator's notes

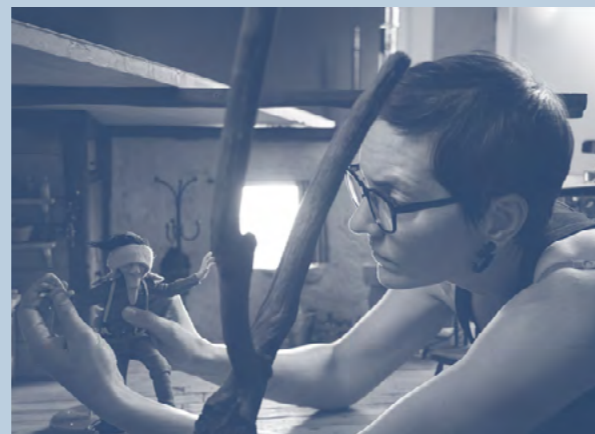
'The Koyaa films are aimed at both children and adults, as they carry a universal message: that situations that at first glance appear insurmountable can be turned to your advantage with imagination and good humour, and be resolved in an interesting way. I wanted that message to come across in an entertaining context, with unexpected complications and a big dose of situation comedy resulting from the hero's creative approach that saves the day every time. I want to emphasise through the films that it is always worth persevering and searching for new ideas even though they might not work at the first attempt'

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'Koyaa is a really fun series to animate. The story-line is packed with action that is mostly slapstick, which requires excellent timing and bold movements, two elements which add a lot of excitement in our minimalist job. The acting part, on top of the two main characters, also involves inanimate objects who take a life of their own. Giving life to objects is a challenge that is especially interesting to an animator because objects don't have facial expressions or even a body per se and yet we need to apply human acting to draw empathy from the spectator. This series enables me to perform some of my favourite types of animation'



*Kolja Saksida, director and producer*



*Julia Peguet, animator*

'As a figure, Koyaa undoubtedly arises from the archetypal foundations of our predominantly mountainous landscape, in an idealised as well as a traditional way. When creating its exterior imagery, we gave careful consideration to how far we could go into fiction and how far we wished to stick to the local architectural design characteristics of the Alpine world. The director guided the proposals precisely until we arrived at a unique image of the world to which we wished to transport the young viewer. This is analogous to the real world in the life of every child. It offers a range of feelings: from inner security (the cavern that protects against every storm), via the warm home of the romantic wooden hut, modest but equipped with everything one needs for self-development, to an outer world of magical views (but with strict limits)'

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'I first saw an image of Koyaa 15 years ago. It immediately spoke to me in the warm and living colours of film. These feelings were why I opted for my old electric piano to create the films' basic musical palette - because it has a nice colour to it and the tones are playful. I wanted the basic film melody to be simple and accessible and, at the same time, attractively 'awkward' in a way that would brighten Koyaa's daily life'

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YAA!



*Gregor Nartnik, concept designer*



*Miha Šajina, music composer*

'The music for Koyaa is 100% organic, which is quite different from all the other music I do because I can't condense even a single chord. It's all about combining Miha Šajina's musical proficiency and my sense of what works best and where it works best. My own musical taste, interests and knowledge mean that my starting point is usually some form of jazz or funk (and reggae in this instance). That said, once we start working, we stop thinking about genres. The music must ultimately be simple and effective; this is a particular challenge because it means that one has to work extremely precisely. The selection and input of the musicians is also vital, of course, as it is they who are responsible for adding a personal sound and style'

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'I have been collaborating with Kolja Saksida since 2003, which is why I have been following Koyaa from the very start. As Director of Photography, I make sure Koyaa's world isn't shrouded in perpetual darkness, regardless of the weather, season, or time of day. Sometimes, the ledge on the mountain is covered in winter snow, at other times, it's so hot that Koyaa not only needs a strong light (i.e. the sun), but also a shadow. My favourite moments are at day's end, when night falls. Koyaa locks himself into his little cottage and turns on the night lamp he uses to read a book. And when he turns that off, well, then it's time we all go to bed anyway'



*Borja Močnik, music composer and editor*



*Miloš Srdić, director of photography*

## → About ZVVIKS

ZVVIKS is a production house established in 2001. Our driven and passionate production team, headed by Kolja Saksida, directs its efforts into the development and realization of animated films and series. We also like to challenge ourselves with the ideas of external authors who knock on our doors, helping them carry their synopsis through to a polished original animation, whether stop motion or 2D.

In 2016 for example, we realized the short puppet animated film *Farewell*, a debut by Leon Vidmar that was featured across a number of top international festivals (Annecy International Animated Film Festival, Animafest Zagreb, Festival Stop Motion Montréal) and excelled in competitive sections as well (Primanima - World Festival of First Animations, International Animation Festival Chilemonos, Festival of Slovenian Film ...).

Our flagship project is the puppet animation series *Koyaa* by Kolja Saksida, which not only contributed to the growth and development of ZVVIKS but left an encouraging mark on the domestic animation industry as a whole. *Koyaa's* adventures are created

for the most demanding of publics – the children, though they've also proven to entertain youth and festival audiences. When it comes to international festivals, *Koyaa* is quite the adventurer indeed. Its pilot episodes already, *Koyaa the Extraordinary* and *Flower*, were met with resounding success, having visited over 120 international festivals and stages across the world. We're especially delighted by the year 2017 when we released six new *Koyaa* films – *Wild Sunbed*, *Naughty Toy Car*, *Flying Workbook*, *Dancing Socks*, *Silly Stickers*, and *Freezing Scarf*, complete with three short *Koyaa* gags and the behind-the-scenes documentary *Hi Koyaa!* All this and more about the *Koyaa* animated series is available on its website [koyaa.net](http://koyaa.net).

ZVVIKS makes animated films and series in cooperation with a number of home and foreign artists, creatives, partners and co-producers. We cherish the work and connections we've made in the past and look forward with confidence to future challenges.

ZVVIKS is a member of the European Children's Film Association (ECFA).

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