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## Catalogue PAF 2018

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## Anssi Kasitonni's Offbeat, Alien Creatures

Anssi Kasitonni (aka Anssi 8000) is a Finnish artist known for his low-fi DIY sculpture and film work drawing on popular culture, often in combination with retro-aesthetics and absurdist narrative turns. Born in 1978, he was the 2011 recipient of the Ars Fennica prize awarded in recognition of distinctive artistic output, and also has a side-career as a musician.

Kasitonni's short films selected for screening at PAF 2018 – *The Knockers* (2003), *Glders* (2005), *The Investigators* (2008), *Masa* (2009), *Butterfly's Effect* (2013), *The Wapiti* (2014) and *Finnish Midsummer 2169* (2016) – all feature key nonhuman, animal protagonists. On the one hand, their squirrels, guinea pigs, seagulls, caterpillars, vampire bats, wapitis, foxes, and members of species difficult to identify yearn for freedom, rebel against family expectations, plan escapes and bank robberies, and engage with science and high-tech in highly human-like or anthropomorphic vein. On the other hand, these films explicitly question, and disturb, both our human perceptions of animals and our ways of relating to nonhuman beings, hence undermining anthropocentric understandings of sensation, affect, and cognition alike across the range of species.

My own interest in Kasitonni's films – starting with, but not confined to *Masa* – has to do with how they render visible gaps and glitches in understanding animal others while also explicitly playing with the framework of anthropomorphism. The animal figures in

question can be wild, as in *The Wapiti's* elk-costumed performers and in the bizarre, near-horrific squirrels of *Glders*; or seemingly domesticated specimens of companion species, as in *Masa*.

Balancing somewhere between the categories of media art, puppetry, home movies, and stop-motion animation, *Masa* addresses the experience and actions of a domestic guinea pig of the same name. Trapped in a cage, and attended to by an evidently devoted young woman – his owner, keeper or warden – *Masa* dreams of and plans an escape with his engineering skills, only to fail.

Watching the freedom on the road, as depicted in the film, *Easy Rider*, *Masa* bursts into tears, dies and is buried in a scenic garden spot. In the final image, *Masa* re-emerges from the ground, back from the inanimate dead. Gendered male through name – *Masa* standing for Matti, a common Finnish first name – *Masa* is a heroic male protagonist of what Kasitonni titles "the greatest escape story ever told." Animated by a desire for freedom, it eventually overcomes the constraints of his environment, even if this happens through, or in, death.

Susanna Paasonen

This text is shortened. For the whole text, please refer to the festival website 2018.pafpa.fi/cz

8 Dec | 11 pm | AI  
Anssi Kasitonni's Offbeat, Alien Creatures  
screening, Introduction – Susanna Paasonen (FI)

*The Knockers*  
FI | 2003 | 13'16"

*Glders*  
FI | 2005 | 15'02"

*The Investigators*  
FI | 2008 | 15'18"

*Masa*  
FI | 2009 | 10'49"

*Butterfly's Effect*  
FI | 2013 | 9'05"

*The Wapiti*  
FI | 2014 | 2'49"

*Finnish Midsummer 2169*  
FI | 2016 | 10'21"

7 Dec | 2:30 pm | T  
Encounters with Alien Creatures  
lecture – Susanna Paasonen (FI)