

EBELE OKOYE

[OMENKA ULONKA]



Animation Entrepreneur
Equity Consultant
Community Builder
Ethical AI Advocate
African Animation Pioneer
Interpreter & Translator

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COMPACT BIOGRAPHY

TRAINING | LEADERSHIP ROLES

JURY | PANEL | INSTRUCTOR ROLES

COMMUNITY | MEMBERSHIP | FILMOGRAPHY

JOB EXPERIENCE | PAST EMPLOYMENT

AWARDS | PRESS | CONTACT

SELECTED WORK | KEY LINKS

EBELE OKOYE | COMPACT BIO

Also known as “Omenka Ulonka,” I’m a Berlin-based Nigerian/German, animation producer /designer/director, and VR artist with over 16 years of experience. I take pride in being often referred to as the “Mother of African Animation.” in recognition of my pioneer status in the industry.

My journey in animation began in Nigeria with a foundation in Fine and Applied Arts (Graphic Design/Illustration, Copywriting and Branding). Followed by a PG in African studies at the University of Cologne, Communication Design at the Fachhochschule Düsseldorf, a traineeship at the West German Broadcasting (WDR) and finally in 2003, an intensive training in traditional 2D cartoon animation at the International Film School (ifs) Cologne, thus, realizing a dream I had nurtured since age 7: to make animation films.

After my graduation, I worked in studios before going independent in 2006, heading Shrinkfish Animation Studios from 2009 and Jolly Squid Ltd since 2021.

Over the years, I’ve been privileged to lead international co-productions and collaborations with notable clients and partners including giants like Universal Music Group, Universal Pictures, Nickelodeon, ZDF/ARTE, Deutsche Welle, the City of Hamburg, Goethe Institut and more. My work has been blessed with an array of awards, including two Africa Movie Academy Awards, the DEFA prize, the Robert Bosch Foundation Prize as well as recognitions from esteemed bodies like Amnesty International, United States Congress and the German Federal Ministry of International Cooperation & Economic Development (BMZ)

I’ve passionately co-authored and contributed to industry publications (*including “Animation: A World History” by the late Ginnalberto Bendazzi*), taught animation in academic institutions (like Bauhaus University Weimar, Germany) I also curate film-related screenings, jury in festivals, moderate and speaking at industry events globally, under these; CANEX@IATF, AfroBerlin@Berlinale, European Film Market, Durban Film Mart, Interfilm Berlin, Zuma Film Festival, Nigeria, ANIMASYROS, Poetry Prize Weimar, Zebra Poetry Film Festival Berlin, Africa International Film Festival (AFRIFF), Festival of Animation Berlin, Fakugesi Digital Arts Festival, “SCHLiNGEL” Children’s and Youth festival, Weimar, Chitrakatha Animation Festival, Ahmedabad and numerous others.

My dedication to the animation community has birthed impactful initiatives, including “The Animation Club Africa” (2010), [Shrinkfish Media Lab \(smedDLAB\)](#), (2013), Nigeria’s pioneer animation course, “OpenToonz Animation Lab” (2015), [“Motion to the sound”](#), (2022), and [“Ani-JollyGIRLS”](#) (2023).

In 2022, resulting in winning the Business Ideas for Development competition of the German Federam Ministry of Internatiional Cooperations (BMZ) I took a step into the world of EdTech and founded [Spunky Toonz](#), a startup creating materials that nurture healthy, communal, and ecology-friendly mindsets in preschoolers and young children.

Beyond animation, I’m also a seasoned web and UI designer, branding expert. I also own and run the art and ethnic fusion labels “Kalodei Berlin®” and “Olomenka®.”

Full CV on the next page



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EBELE OKOYE | CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL DATA

Name: Ebele

Surname: Okoye

Alias: Omenka Ulonka (@omenkaulonka)

Date/Place of Birth: 06.10.1969 / Onitsha, Nigeria

Nationality: German/Nigerian

PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

Animation Entrepreneur

Equity Consultant

Community Builder

Ethical AI Advocate

African Animation Pioneer

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- University of Applied Sciences Düsseldorf | Design Study Stint
- Internationale Filmschule (ifs) Cologne | 2D Animation
- Psychosocial Centre Düsseldorf | Crisis Management with Torture Victims
- Specialized University Qualification (German recognition of the international Certificate “Higher National Diploma” in Graphic Design/Illustration)
- University of Cologne | African Studies
- IMT Enugu | Higher National Diploma, Graphic Design/Illustration

ADVISORY AND LEADERSHIP ROLES

- Diaspora Advisory Board, German Federal Ministry of International Cooperations (BMZ) - 2024 - 2026 (Voluntary)
- Triumph Assured Initiative (Non-profit) - Chief Operational Officer
- Spunky Toonz Studios (EdTech Brand for eco-friendly mindset in preschoolers) - Founder
- Jolly Squid Media - Chief Operational Officer (Voluntary)
- Ani-Jolly Girls’ Special Training - Founder & Coordinator
- Motion to the Sound (Mentorship for Minority Animators) - Founder & Coordinator
- Shrinkfish Media & Animation (Nigeria’s pioneer animation studio) - Director & C. O. O.



JURY AND SELECTION COMMITTEE ROLES

- Animator Festival Poznan - 2024 | Jury
- Stuttgart International Animation Festival (ITFS) - 2024 | Jury
- Zuma Film Festival Abuja, Nigeria - 2023 (Jury
- Motion to the Sound Inaugural Edition - 2022 | Jury
- SCHLINGEL International Children's and Youth Film Festival, Chemnitz – 2022 | Jury
- Festival of Animation Berlin - 2021 | Jury
- Interfilm Berlin - 2019 | Jury
- Zebra Poetry Film Festival Berlin - 2014 | Selection Committee
- Madagassy Talent Film Residence, Interfilm Berlin - 2019 & 2018 | Selection Committee / Jury
- Africa International Film Festival , AFRIFF, Lagos - 2018 | Jury
- Poetry Film Preis Weimar - 2017 | Jury head
- Chitrakartha17' Students' Animation Festival, Ahmedabad - 2017 | Jury head
- Animation West Africa Foundation - 2015 | Jury

MOST RECENT SPEAKING & PANEL ENGAGEMENTS

- AVIJOZI, Visual Effects, Film and Gaming Festival, Johannesburg - 2024 (Ethical AI in Animation: Enhancing Creativity with Integrity) | Speaker]
- ANIMASYROS Animation Festival - 2024 (Breaking barriers: African women leading in animation) | **Panelist**
- European Film Market - 2024 (AfroBerlin @EFM) | Panelist
- European Film Market - 2024 (Generative AI in the Film & Series Industry) | Contributor
- CANEX EXPO Intra African Trade Fair - 2023 (The Future of Animation) | Panel Moderator
- Fakugesi Media Arts Festival - 2023 (10 Years African Animation) | Intermediary & Panelist
- Durban Film Mart - 2023 (Creative Currency, Equity in Animation) | Panelist

INSTRUCTOR AND EDUCATIONAL ROLES

- Motion to the Sound & AniJolly Girls' Special Training - 2021 to date | Animation Instructor
- Stuttgart International Animation Festival (ITFS) - 2024 | Masterclass Instructor
- Durban Film Mart - 2024 | Project Pitching Coach & Masterclass Instructor
- Zuma Film Festival Abuja - 2023 | Masterclass Instructor
- Zebra Poetry Film Festival - 2022 | Masterclass Instructor
- Stadt Hamburg - Nord - 2019 „Kunst ist Tragbar“ | Workshop Coordinator



- Bauhaus University, Weimar - 2018 | Animation Instructor
- Zanzibar International Film Festival - 2016 | Masterclass Instructor
- Shrinkfish Media Lab [smedLAB] - 2013 | Animation Instructor

COMMUNITY BUILDING AND NETWORKING INITIATIVES

- Ani-Jolly Girls' Special Training | Founder & Coordinator
- Motion to the Sound - Mentorship for Minority Animators | Founder & Coordinator
- The Animation Club Africa - Social media interactive and mentoring group | Founder & Mentor
- Shrinkfish Media Lab (smedLAB)- Nigeria's Premier Animation Course | Founder & Coordinator
OpenToonz Animation Lab | Founder & Coordinator
- African Animation Evenings, Hackesche Höfe Cinema Berlin - 2017 | Curator

MEMBERSHIP (CURRENT RELEVANCE)

- AG Animationsfilm • Women in Animation (WIA) • ASIFA • Forbes BLK • FuturAfrik

SOME CLIENTS & PROJECT PARTNERS

- Universal Music • Universal Pictures • Nickelodeon • BLK • Deutsche Welle Documentary • ZDF/ARTE • German Federal Office • Etisalat • Berlin Producers • Triggerfish • Focus Features • Deutsche Aidshilfe (German Aidshelp) • Prirodoslovno grafička škola Zadar • Haus für Poesie Berlin • Nollywood Germany • Stadt Hamburg Nord • National Institute of Design (NID) Ahmedabad • National Film Institute Sofia • AfricAvenir

FILMOGRAPHY

- 2023: "Spunky TALES" - The Lion, the Elephant, and the Giraffe - 03 min | Designer, Producer, Director, Voice Over
- 2022: Jurassic World Dinos De Facto _ Trainhopper - Short Promo Animation commissioned by Universal Pictures
- 2021: "The World in My Head" - Compilation of several VR animation projects
- 2020: "Martha and the Vandellas, Dancing in the Street" - Motown Hit music video commissioned by Universal Music | Scriptwriter, Director, Animator
- 2020: "Oil Promises" - 120 min, DW Documentary | Co-director, Animator, Voice Over
- 2019: "Summer Trance" - Immersive VR Animation
- 2017: "Marcas de Amor" - 2D Short, Germany, Spain | Writer, Animator, Director, Producer
- 2016: "The Man Who Fell Up" - 2D Short, Germany | Writer, Animator, Director, Producer
- 2016: "Three Wise Women" - 2D Short, Germany | Writer, Animator, Director, Producer



- 2015: “Red Fruits” - Music Video, Germany, Austria | Scriptwriter, Animator, Director, Producer
- 2015: “The Legacy of Rubies” - 2D Mid Length, Germany, Nigeria, USA | Writer, Animator, Director, Producer
- 2014: “Die Liebe in den Zeiten der EU” - 2D Short, Germany | Writer, Animator, Director, Co-Producer
- 2013: “Closer N’ Closer” [Music Video, Nigeria, Germany | Scriptwriter, Director, Animator, Co-producer
- 2012: “Meine Heimat“ - 2D Short, Nigeria, Germany | Writer, Animator, Director, Co-Producer
- 2011: “Footy My Love” - Abstract on Chi-Chi Igbo, the Nigerian female football player
- 2010: “The Essence” - 2D Short, Nigeria, Germany | Animator, Director, Co-Producer
- 2009: “Anna Blume” - 2D Short, Germany, Bulgaria | Co-Writer, Animator, Co-Director, Producer
- 2009: “Patterns” - 2D Short, Nigeria, Germany | Writer, Animator, Director, Producer
- 2008: “Papermouse” - 2D Short, Nigeria, Germany | Writer, Animator, Director, Producer
- 2007: “The Lunatic” - 2D Short, Nigeria, Germany | Writer, Animator, Director, Co-Producer
- 2004: Tag Attack - 2D Animation, Ifs Cologne | Co-Director/Animator

PAST EMPLOYMENT AS TRANSLATOR & INTERPRETER

- 2017 - 2020: Federal Office for Refugees Berlin
- 2017: Customs Office Munich
- 2001-2017: “Dolmetscher & Übersetzungsbüro Ibanda,” Sankt Augustin, deployed to:
Federal Office for Refugees (NRW und Berlin)
District and Magistrate Courts Cologne, Koblenz,
Customs Office Essen.

PAST JOB EXPERIENCE (Diverse Selection)

- 2006 to Date: Independent Producer, Director and Scriptwriter, managing own studios and productions
- 2005: Key Animator, Trickstudio Lutterbeck, Cologne
- 2004: Saban Animation Paris | Animation and Editing
- 2003: West German Broadcasting (WDR) Cologne | Hands-on Video Editing & Animation
- 1995 - 2019: Independent Studio Artist focusing on Acrylic and Oil Paintings, Monoprints, Wire Art, and One Line Drawings with numerous art exhibitions in diverse countries including Austria, China, Germany, Japan, Nigeria, South Korea & Switzerland
- 1990 - 1991: Graphic Designer and Copywriter | Goldmark Advertising, Lagos
- Freelance Cartoonist for Newspapers and Tabloids, including Nigeria’s pioneer tabloid “Classique Magazine” as well as Today’s News and other newspapers.



AWARDS (SELECTION)

- Robert Bosch Foundation Promotional Prize for Animation
- DEFA Foundation Research Prize
- Focus Features Africa First Short Film Programme
- Africa Movie Academy Awards (2x)
- Redefreiheit (Amnesty International) for “Outstanding Media Work in Human Rights Issues”
- United States Congress (for Outstanding Media Work)
- California State Legislature (for Outstanding Service to the Black Community)
- Ritter Sport Award for Animated Poetry Films
- Audience Prize: “Made for Mobile Awards” Cologne
- Silicon Valley African Film Festival
- Anime Caribe Film Festival

SELECTED PRESS APPEARANCE (Six links on the last page)

SWR Kultur • IN Magazine, Forum der Kulturen Stuttgart • HRT (Croatian Radio & Television) • Nollywood Reporter • The Guardian • What Kept me up • The Punch • The Nation Online • CEO World Biz Magazine • Deutsch Welle TV: “Insight Germany” • International Business Times Magazine • Deutsche Welle TV “Arts 21” • Deutsche Welle TV: “Der Tag Mit Jens Olesen • RBB Fernsehse “Mit Der U-Bahn Durch Die Welt” • Poetry Film Magazine Weimar • Cartoons 2; A World History Book of Animation • Animatoon Animation Magazine • Deutschland Radio Kultur • Die Tageszeitung (TAZ) • Die Welt Kompakt • Sächsische Zeitung • Zeitgenössische Kunst in Nigeria und Ghana. Friedrich Reinhardt Verlag Basel, Sammlung Alfred Spinnler • Kölner Stadt Anzeiger

LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE

English (Native Language | German (Fluent, Native Level | Igbo (Mother Tongue) | Spanish (Basic Conversational Level) | Pidgin (Fluent, Native Level)

CONTACT

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Some relevant links on the next page



6 PICKS FROM PRESS



Ebele Okoye: „Ich bin eine Nomadin, immer noch“
 Stand: 9.9.2024, 17:04 Uhr
 //SWR KULTUR
 14.09.2024



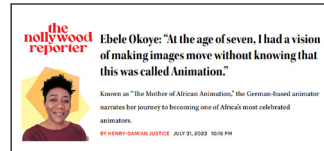
//IN MAGAZIN
 Forum der Kulturen Stuttgart
 Edition: April 2024



//DEUTSCHE WELLE | Insight Germany
 2014



From War-Torn Childhood to Animation Pioneer: The Inspiring Journey of Ebele Okoye, Nigeria's First Female Animator
 //WHAT KEPT ME UP



Ebele Okoye: „At the age of seven, I had a vision of making images move without knowing that this was called Animation.“
 //NOLLYWOOD REPORTER | 31. 06. 2024



//DEUTSCHE WELLE | Arts 21
 2012

6 PICKS FROM OWN FILMS & COMMISSIONED



THE LEGACY OF RUBIES



OIL PROMISES



MARTHA & THE VANDELLAS DANCING IN THE STREET



JURASSIC WORLD DINOS DE FACTO



MARCAS DE AMOR



ANNA BLUME

STUDIOS



JOLLY SQUID STUDIO



SPUNKYTOONZ
 ED TECH

TRAINING PROGRAMS



MOTION TO THE SOUND



ANI-JOLLY GIRLS' SPECIAL TRAINING



SHRINKFEISH MEDIA LAB ANIMATION-COURSE
 NIGERIA'S FIRST ANIMATION COURSE

