



PUPPET BUILDING FOR STOP-MOTION ANIMATION **A 7-week Continuing Education Course**

Génération(s) Start Motion, led by **Films en Bretagne** in partnership with the **European School of Art of Brittany (EESAB)**, is an ambitious training project covering initial, continuing, and professional education. Its goal is to strengthen and significantly renew the human resources in stop-motion animation in France, while supporting a cross-disciplinary and transformative adoption of new technologies.

The project is accompanied by 4 complementary projects: the "**Green Puppet Lab**" (applied research on materials, health, environment, and circularity), **Media Literacy activities**, an **Artist Residency programme**, and an **Applied Observatory**.

Génération(s) Start Motion is co-funded by the **Caisse des Dépôts** and the **Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée**, following the **France 2030 - La Grande Fabrique de l'Image** call for projects.

As part of the **Training** component, and in addition to the **National Arts Diploma in Stop-Motion Animation** run by **EESAB**, **Films en Bretagne** is launching a new cycle of continuing and professional training programs in 2025.

The **Puppet Building** continuing education programme aims to train young graduates / new animation film professionals at the assistant level in stop-motion animation puppet fabrication, allowing them to fully integrate stop-motion film and series production teams immediately after completing the course.

It consists of 5 modules covering all aspects of professional stop-motion puppet building (design, sculpting, modelling, mould-making, ball-and-socket armatures, foam and silicone bodies, painting, costumes, and more).

At the end of the training, participants will have each designed and built a complete, animatable puppet, as well as a portfolio documenting their process, which they can use to find employment.

Learning Objectives:

- Character design and sculpting
- Mould-making (heads)
- Armature fabrication
- Casting and finishing
- Costume fabrication

Teaching Methods:

The training modules will combine a small theoretical component (one 1.5-hour session per day) with a strong practical component (varied exercises increasing in complexity throughout the training).

Since several instructors are English speakers, and in order to both encourage English learning among our French participants and to welcome non-French-speaking international participants, **this training course will be conducted in English.**

Lead Instructor:

Susanna Jerger (*The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar, Asteroid City, Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio, Isle of Dogs, Kubo and the Two Strings...*)

Other Instructors:

Christine Polis (*Sauvages, The Inventor, A Town Called Panic, Earwig, Isle of Dogs, My Life as a Zucchini...*)

Anna Deschamps (*S raphine, No Dogs or Italians Allowed, This Magnificent Cake, Frankenweenie, My Life as a Zucchini, Fantastic Mr. Fox...*)

Target audience:

Young graduates / new professionals in stop-motion technical fields, professionals from related fields (sculpting, jewellery-making, sewing).

Prerequisites:

Candidates must be recent graduates or professionals in the audiovisual or cinema industry with basic knowledge and beginner-level experience in puppet building or at least one of its disciplines. Be a professional in a related craft such as sculpting, jewellery-making, or sewing.

Total Duration: 7 weeks (break from August 11 to August 15)

Dates: July 7 to August 29, 2025

Location: Training organised by Films en Bretagne at EESAB Lorient facilities

Price:  6860 incl. VAT ( 24.5/hour)

Funding may be available through AFDAS, another OPCO, or France Travail.

France 2030 **scholarships** may be granted to trainees without access to funding from OPCO or France Travail, as well as to foreign nationals. Scholarship applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Meals and accommodation are the responsibility of the trainee. Reimbursement for accommodation and meal expenses may be possible through the training's funding body—please check with your advisor.

Evaluation of Learning Outcomes:

Self-assessment by trainees at the start of the programme. Regular progress reviews with instructors throughout the course. Final self-assessment in collaboration with instructors and the training organisation.

Application Requirements: Downloadable form below + motivation letter + CV + portfolio of previous puppet-building or related work

Application Deadline: Before May 15, 2025

Response Time: 6 working days after the application deadline

Number of Participants: 6 to 8

Equipment and Materials:

All necessary equipment and materials for this course will be provided to participants

Detailed programme

MODULE I - Designing and sculpting your character - Week 1

The first module will guide you through the design and sculpting process.

From first sketch to scale drawing of your character. You will learn what special requirements to look out for when planning your character as well as various sculpting techniques and how to make a sculpting armature that will also serve for moulding.

MODULE II - Mould making - Week 2 & 3

Moulding the different body parts in hard and soft two-part moulds.

You will learn how to plan your moulds, how to make mould keys and what to consider when playing up your prototypes for a two-part mould. You will fabricate a puppet head with animatable eyes and simple replacement mouths and in the process learn how to use a lot of different materials.

Health and safety will also be an important subject.

MODULE III - Armature fabrication - Week 4 & 5

You will be introduced to the technique of soldering brass and steel parts and work with your moulds in order to plan and fabricate fitting wire and ball and socket armatures as well as grip blocks and prepping your armature for casting.

MODULE IV - Casting and Finishing - Week 6

Learn how to position and cast around your armatures with urethane foam and silicone, trim and seaming, patching and of course painting techniques.

MODULE V - Costume fabrication - Week 7

You will make patterns and create miniature costumes and shoes for your character. Ageing techniques for the costumes will also be covered.