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Oscar-winning film
'Flow' paints animation
in a new way.

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Staff Writer

"Flow" has been the talk of the town within the animation community, as the animated independent film became the first Latvian production to win an Academy Award and the first independent film to win Best Animated Feature.

Directed by Gints Zilbalodis, and written and produced by Zilbalodis and Matīss Kaža, this is Zilbalodis' second feature film following his first film "Away," which was also an animated film. While "Away" received acclaim from critics for its honest story, "Flow" received more recognition as well as numerous nominations and accolades.

The story for "Flow" is notable for not including any dialogue whatsoever, as it focuses on a cat and a group of animals trying to survive within a post-apocalyptic world where the water level slowly continues to rise.

It is a unique take on a post-apocalyptic story, as it is a simple premise yet there is a balance of maturity and emotion that makes this story feel powerful for viewers. This allows

'Flow' is an emotional and adorable journey of friendship

them to fall in love with these animals and see how they'll survive and grow as a team.

The animation for the film was done using a free-to-use graphic software called "Blender." "Flow" was entirely animated within the program using a render engine called "EE-VEE."

The animation delivers a gorgeous stylized look, giving audiences a design that is reminiscent of a children's storybook while balancing a small coat of realism. The world is large yet lonely, giving a bright and vibrant look in the daytime, but is then given a dangerous and scary look during a nighttime storm.

The animation on the animals is bouncy and extremely expressive. Instead of using words or a voice, the film relies on their expressions, which provide some relatability to viewers who connect with their own pets. The way they move, look and communicate with one another are human-like in a way.

The film's execution and storytelling are what stand out, as the lack of dialogue within the film helps itself with creating a more striking and memorable story. A story where you

do not necessarily need the animals to talk throughout the story, instead you can watch them and see the story unfold right before your eyes.

Unfortunately, the story doesn't explore much of how the world ended or what happened to the people, leaving viewers with more questions than answers. It would have been better if there were scenes showcasing what happened to this world and the people, maybe even drawing influence from climate change to add a bit more realism.

The film's score offers viewers a mystical and soothing tone of music. It is relaxing and playful during certain interactions, thrilling and intense during more dramatic moments and dreamy and magical during the climax.

The dreamy feeling is a mixture of three specific things: the calming nature of the music, inspired by the popular game, "Minecraft," the energy and tranquility of the music inspired by the farming simulator, "Stardew Valley," and a sprinkle of inspiration from French electronic group M83's music that mixes together greatly to create a great score, done by Zilbalodis and Rihards Zalupe.



COURTESY OF SIDESHOW AND JANUS FILMS

"Flow" is now available to stream on MAX. For those who want to see an original animated independent film with adorable animals, a mature

yet heartwarming story and colorful stylized animation, go with the flow and give this beautiful film a watch.

Column: Hitting your vape comes with an unwanted price

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Generation Z was supposed to be the generation that was going to beat smoking, and we failed.

Sure, taking that rip off your mint Flum might be satisfying in the moment, but did you ever stop to think about the damages it is doing to your health, more specifically your skin?

One of the immediate effects of vaping to your skin would be the loss of oxygen and nutrients. With just this immediate effect, overtime it can cause redness, chronic dryness, increased flakiness of the skin, dermatitis, broken capillaries and more.

Free radicals are very unstable molecules in the skin that can easily disrupt your collagen levels, or in layman's terms, what makes your skin glow. Whenever you smoke anything with nicotine in it, you are

encouraging the process of creating free radicals. Free radicals over time can cause premature signs of aging, dullness, discoloration, more prominent lines and deep wrinkles.

Keratinocytes are the primary cell found in the epidermis, the outer layer of the skin. Keratinocytes play a major role in healing wounds. While nicotine does help the Keratinocytes stick together, it inhibits their ability to move.

When these cells cannot migrate to the wound to help heal, it takes far

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- Alyssa Lowry
Assistant Lifestyle Editor

longer to heal. On top of the keratinocytes being necessary to the healing process, with the absence of the cells, the scarring of the wounds can be far worse.

Specific receptor polypeptides can also entangle themselves with fibroblasts.

Fibroblasts are cells that have a broad variety of jobs, such as depositing a variety of proteins through wounds, to inflammation and scarring. Exposure to nicotine can speeding up the growth of these proteins: collagen, elastin and matrix metalloproteinase.

As nice as an up-regulation might sound, it has its downfalls.

Matrix metalloproteinase (MMP-1) is an enzyme that breaks down collagen and elastin. While nicotine boosts collagen and elastin, it also boosts MMP-1, causing the MMP-1 to break down the collagen and elastin before they can be properly used. This causes a weaker skin structure.

If I have not scared you off yet, and you've fallen victim to the vape and want to quit, here are some tips.

Holding yourself accountable

From my personal experience, I threw my vape in a cup of water and let it drown. I took a video of it to hold myself responsible to not buy one.

Search for healthier alternatives to subside the cravings

The next day I decided I wanted to make healthier choices for my body, so I went to the gym to quell my mint "Flum" craving and a year and a half later I have not caved to buy one.

Getting active can reduce your craving for nicotine and it also can help you destress, especially after a long day.

Lean on your family and friends

Leaning on friends and family after you quit can be crucial to quitting. Loved ones can hype you up to keep going strong, especially if you get close to relapsing. Studies show that when quitting nicotine, it can create irritable moods such as anger and frustration. If you start to feel

like this, friends and family are great people to rant to.

Avoid drinking

Drinking can make it harder for you to stick to your no-vaping goal, so try to avoid drinking the first few months of quitting.

What you can do to help post quitting anxiety and depression

During the first 24 hours of quitting nicotine, you could start feeling tense and anxious, which is completely normal. Some things to help with the anxiety are: reminding yourself the anxiety will pass, reducing caffeine intake, trying meditation and trying nicotine replacement products.

It is also common to feel symptoms of depression during the first month of quitting. Get together with friends, take deep breaths, make a list of things that are upsetting you and write solutions.

Quitting can be hard, but taking the time to let yourself wean off the vape will positively affect you in the long run.

COME ON DOWN TO
Raising Cane's
CHICKEN FINGERS

SUN-WED
9:00 AM - 3:00 AM

THURS-SAT
9:00 AM - 3:30 AM

201 W ORANGETHORPE AVE, FULLERTON