

Shorts We Love



Bury It — CHVRCHES feat. Hayley Williams

(3'8", Darren Price with Jamie McKelvie, Australia)

<https://youtu.be/B9BLMNn0PrQ>

Why we love it: This music video for the Scottish band's powerhouse electronic pop tune captures the eye as easily as it does the ear, building on the designs and artwork of comic-book artist Jamie McKelvie, best known for the Image series *The Wicked + The Devine* and the Britpop-themed *Phonogram*.

Who made it: Mighty Nice is a Sydney-based animation studio co-founded by Darren Price, one-time head of 3D at Nexus London, who directed with McKelvie as co-director. It won a BAFTA for its first short, *Potapych: The Bear Who Loved Vodka*, and has worked on commercials for high-profile Australian and international brands. It has produced two animated series: *Bottomsnikes & Gumbles* and *Kazoops*.

Origin story: "The idea came from the band CHVRCHES, and their collaborator, comic artist Jamie McKelvie," says Mighty Nice executive producer Jacqueline Archer. "He has been creating posters and album artwork for the band for a while now. His style is kind of linked to CHVRCHES, and he and the band had the great idea for the short."

How it was made: Archer says the music label funded the project, which took a team of 30-plus six weeks to complete. "It was a fully digital production," she says. "We used Maya for the 3D animation, and TVPaint for the 2D."

Biggest challenge: "Practically, the schedule was the hardest rigid factor. It was hard to achieve everything we wanted," says Archer. "Creatively, animating the band in Jamie McKelvie's style was the trickiest. We wanted to maintain his linework and look, whilst also capturing the likeness of Hayley and CHVRCHES. ... It was a massive challenge and I'm not sure we completely achieved it. We keep getting told that Hayley should have a gap in her teeth that we missed!"



Simorgh

(4'30", Meghdad Asadi Lari, Iran)

<https://vimeo.com/175266909>

Who made it? Asadi Lari was studying electrical and communications engineering when he made two amateur short animations for international conferences. After completing his technical degrees, he moved into more creative fields, producing *Simorgh* as his thesis film at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, N.Y. He will begin work as an assistant visiting professor at RIT this fall.

Origin story: "The film is a personal adaptation and interpretation of the 12th century poem *The Conference of The Birds*, a long Sufi poem of approximately 4,500 lines, written by the Persian poet, Farid ud-Din Attar," says Lari. "Having the story in mind, I wanted to connect each and every single element of the film to Iranian culture."

How was it made: "The work is completely done digitally, except the watercolor texture of the birds, which was actual watercolor on paper, scanned and put on the 3D models," Lari says. "The character design was also a mixture of calligraphy on paper and on computer. The calligraphy letters used in each bird are the name of each bird in Farsi, digitally written in calligraphy form, and broken apart to design each bird."

The reception: Finished in 2014, the short was included by more than 60 festival selections and was a semifinalist in the Student Academy Awards. It's won awards in seven festivals and premiered online July 18.

Future animation plans: "I'm directing a few shorts, including one for an award winning scriptwriter," he says. "However, because *Simorgh* was embraced by international audiences, the big plan that I'm developing in my mind is to continue the path that I started with the film, and perhaps make it into a feature project, or pick another rich story amongst the many that we have in Iranian literature and explore the endless possibilities of creativity." ☞

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