

**THE USE OF METAMORPHOSIS IN ANIMATED AND LIVE-ACTION FILMS
TOWARDS A VISUALLY APPEALING HYBRID**

By

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28 February 2025

DATE

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the Almighty God for affording me this tremendous opportunity. I would also like to dedicate this study to my father, mother, wife and brother, who kept me going in the most challenging time and for their support. In addition, I further extend the dedication to my supervisor for being supportive and for all the guidance she has offered me.

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TITLE: THE USE OF METAMORPHOSIS IN ANIMATED AND LIVE-ACTION FILMS TOWARDS A VISUALLY APPEALING HYBRID

ABSTRACT

The study explores the use of metamorphosis as a narrative technique and spectacle, creating visually appealing hybridity in live-action and animated films. Hybridity refers to the amalgamation of live action and animation characters, resulting in new visual metaphors. The extent to which metamorphosis can be used to depict a change of state from an animated character to a live-action character and vice versa, is explored through surreal aesthetics, subconscious realities and unpredictable and illogical abstract juxtapositions. The study is practice-led and practice-based, and it culminated in an exhibition entitled “Kkobe: My Totem”. The practical component of this research was presented in video installations that encompass comparing the application of metamorphosis and hybridity using Švankmajer’s devices applied in his film *Alice*. *Kkobe* is the name of an African indigenous plant with climbing/creeping stems that produces a yam vegetable/or air potatoes. It has been adopted as a totem by the central Ugandan Baganda people and is highly valued for providing food security. This study is set within the Reciprocal theory and explains how the original narrative and the hybridised visual spectacle are enhanced by the process of metamorphosis. It makes use of meta-analysis to identify and analyse trends, patterns and themes across a diverse array of artworks, artists, movements and historical periods. By integrating data from existing studies, the researcher was able to gain insights into prevailing artistic styles, influences and debates regarding the scope of metamorphosis in animated and live-action films. The study positions the emergent artwork in “Kkobe: My Totem”, with European surrealist films towards the preservation of the Baganda's cultural heritage through digital metamorphosis. In this study, metamorphosis is placed as an appropriate storytelling device that erodes creative boundaries and empowers animators with

freedom of expression and creative imagination to re-imagine, achieve and appreciate the fluid nature of oral storytelling and cultural values.

KEYWORDS:

Metamorphosis; live action; animated films; Kkobe; Totem; hybridity; Meta-analysis; Surrealism

**THAETLELE: TŠHOMIŠO YA PHETOGO KA GARE GA DIFILIMI TŠA
DIPOPAYE LE TŠA DITIRO TŠE DI PHELAGO GO YA GO
MOTSWAKO WO O KGAHLIŠAGO KA PONO**

KAKARETŠO

Nyakišišo e sekaseka tšhomišo ya phetogo bjalo ka thekniki ya kanegelo le ponelopele, go hlola motswako wo o kgahlišago ka gare ga difilimi tša dipopaye le tša ditiro tše di phelago. Motswako o šupa go kopantšho ya baanegwa ba tiro ye e phelago le ba dipopaye, wo o feleletšago ka ditshwantšhišo tše diswa tša pono. Go ya ka moo phetogo e kago šomišwa go laetša phetogo ya maemo go tšwa go moanegwa wa popaye go ya go moanegwa wa tiro ye e phelago le ka lehlakore le lengwe, e sekasekwa ka temogišišo ya bokgabo ye e makatšago, dinnete tše di utamego le dipapišo tše di sa tsebjego, tsa go se kwagale le go se bonelwepele. Nyakišišo ye ke ya go etwapele ke tiragatšo le go thewa godimo ga tiragatšo, gomme e feleletše ka pontšho yeo e nago le sehlogo se se rego “Kkobe: Moano wa Ka”. Karolo ya tiragatšo ya nyakišišo ye e tšweleditšwe ka go tsenywa ga bidio tšeo di akaretšago go bapetša tirišo ya phetogo le motswako ka go šomiša didirišwa tša Švankmajer tšeo di šomišitšwego filiming ya gagwe ya Alice. Kkobe ke leina la sebjalo sa setlogo sa Afrika seo se nago le dikutu tša go namela/go raretša tšeo di tšweletšago morogo wa yamo/goba ditapola tša moya. Le amogetšwe e le moano ke batho ba go bitšwa Baganda ka bogareng bja Uganda gomme e tšeelwa godimo kudu ka lebaka la go fa tšhireletšego ya dijo. Nyakišišo ye e beakantšwe ka gare ga teori ya Resiprokale gomme e hlaloša ka moo kanegelo ya mathomo le ponelopele ya pono ye e tswakilwego di godišwago ka gona ke tshepedišo ya phetogo. E šomiša tshekatsheko ya metha (meta-analysis) go šupa le go sekaseka ditshekamelolo, diphethene le ditlhohlo go ralala le lenaneo le le fapanego la mešomo ya bokgabo, borabokgabo, mekgatlo le dinako tša histori. Ka go kopanya datha go tšwa dinyakišišong tše di lego gona, monyakišiši o kgonne go hwetša temogo ya mekgwa ya bokgabo ye e lego gona, dikhetšo le dingangišano mabapi le bogolo bja phetogo ya sebopego ka

difiliming tša dipopaye le tša ditiro tše di phelago. Nyakišišo e bea mošomo wa bokgabo wo o tšwelelago go “Kkobe: Moano wa Ka”, ka difilimi tša semaka tša Yuropa go leba go pabalelo ya bohwa bja setšo bja Baganda ka phetogo ya titšithale. Nyakišišong ye, phetogo e beilwe bjalo ka sedirišwa sa maleba sa go anega dikanegelo seo se senyago mellwane ya boitlhamelo le go matlafatša batšweletši ba dipopaye ka tokologo ya polelo le boikgopolelo bja boitlhamelo go nagana gape, go fihlelela le go leboga tlhago ye bonolo ya go anega dikanegelo ka molomo le ditekanyetšo tša setšo.

MANTŠU A BOHLOKWA:

Phetogo; tiro ye e phelago; difilimi tša dipopaye; Kkobe; Moano; motswako; Tshekatsheko ya metha; Bomakatši

**ISIHLOKO: UKUSETYENZISWA KOGUQULOMILO KWIIFILIMU
ZOOPOPAYI NEZABALINGANISWA BOKWENYANI
EKUBONISENI UKUDITYANISWA KWEMIBONISO
ENOMTSALANE**

ISISHWANKATHELO

Olu phandolwazi luphonononga ukusetyenziswa koguqulomilo nanjengobuchule bokubalisa kunye nomboniso, ukudala ukudityaniswa kwemiboniso enomtsalane kwiifilimu zoopopayi nezabalinganiswa bokwenyani. Ukudityaniswa kubhekisela ekudityanisweni kwabalinganiswa boopopayi nabokwenyani, okukhokelela kwimiboniso efanayo. Kuphononongwa inqanaba uguqulomilo olunokusetyenziswa ngalo ukubonisa utshintsho lwemo ukusuka kumlinganiswa ongupopayi ukuya kumlinganiswa wokwenyani kunye nokusuka kowokwenyani ukuya kupopayi, liphononongwa ngobuhle bokuyinyani noko kucingelwayo, iinyani ezisemvakwengqondo kunye nothelekiso oluntsonkothileyo olungaqiqiswanga. Olu phandolwazi lukhokelwa kwaye lusekelwe kumsebenzi obonakalayo, lwaze lwafikelela kumboniso onesihloko esithi “*Kkobe: My Totem*”. Inxalenye yomsebenzi obonakalayo yolu phandolwazi iboniswe kufakelo lweevideo ezibandakanya ukuthelekisa ukusetyenziswa koguqulomilo kunye nokudityaniswa kwemiboniso kusebetyenziswa izixhobo ze*Švankmajer* ezisetyenziswe kwifilimu yakhe enesihloko esithi uAlice. I*Kkobe* ligama lesityalo semveli saseAfrika esineziqo ezinyukayo okanye ezirhubuluzayo ezivelisa imifuno eyiyam/okanye ebutapile. Isetyenziswa nanjengesilo ngabantu baseUganda abangamaBaganda kwaye ixabiseke kakhulu ngokubonelela ngokhuseleko lokutya. Olu phandolwazi lusekelwe kwingcingane yembuyiselo (*iReciprocal theory*) kwaye luchaza indlela ibali lokuqala kunye nomboniso obonakalayo odityanisiweyo ophuculwa ngayo yinkqubo yoguqulomilo. Lusebenzisa uhlalutyo lophandolwazi olusele lwenziwe ukuchonga nokuhlalutya utshintsho, iindlela kunye nemixholo kuluhlu olwahlukileyo lwemisebenzi yobugcisa, amagcisa, iintshukumo kunye namaxesha embali. Ngokudibanisa

idatha evela kuphandolwazi olusele lwenziwe, umphandilwazi ukwazile ukufumana ukuqonda iindlela zobugcisa ezikhoyo, iimpembelelo kunye neengxoxo malunga nomthamo woguqulomilo kwiifilimu zokwenyani nezo zoopopayi. Olu phandolwazi lubeka umsebenzi wobugcisa ovelayo ku “*Kkobe: My Totem*”, kwiifilimu zokuyinyani noko kucingelwayo zaseYurophu ekulondolozweni kwelifa lenkcubeko yamaBaganda ngokusebenzisa uguqulomilo lwedijithali. Kolu phandolwazi, uguqulomilo lubekwe nanjengesixhobo esifanelekileyo sokubalisa amabali esinyhasha imida yokuyila size sixhobise abavelisi boopopayi ngenkululeko yokuvakalisa izimvo kunye nokudala ngobuchule bengqikelelo ukuze baphinde badale ubugcisa obutsha kwakhona, bafezekise baze baxabise utshintsho kubume bendlela yokubaliswa kwamabali omlomo kunye neenkolelo zoluntu.

AMAGAMA ANGUNDOQO:

Uguqulomilo; iifilimu zokwenyani; iifilimu zoopopayi; i*Kkobe*; Isilo; ukudityaniswa; Uhlalutyo lophandolwazi olusele lwenziweyo; okusekelwe koko kucingelwayo

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The study seeks to explore the impact of metamorphosis as a narrative technique and spectacle in the creation of visual appeal for the film's audience in live-action and animated films. Metamorphosis in film studies refers to the act of transforming or manipulating an image of a person or object in a film into something different, thereby creating a change of state (Paul Wells 1998: 69). The study further investigates the extent to which metamorphosis is a vehicle of hybridity, resulting in the fusion of a live-action character with an animated character. The extent to which metamorphosis can be used to depict a change of state from an animated character to a live-action character and vice versa is also explored. The study is practice-led and practice-based, and it culminated in an exhibition entitled "Kkobe: My Totem". The practical component of this research is presented in video installations that re-interpret the emerging hybridity of Kkobe plant into the Kkobe warrior. It encompasses a comparison of the application of metamorphosis and hybridity using Švankmajer's (1988) film devices used in *Alice* in the production of an animation entitled *Kkobe*, also referred to in this study as African surrealism. *Kkobe* is the name of an African Indigenous plant with climbing stems that produce a yam vegetable. It is used as a totem of the central Ugandan Baganda people and is highly valued for providing food security for the people. [(Click on this link to access the catalogue) <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:EU:16534c53-5f20-4e0c-a34c-98284bf14af0>].

The study makes several arguments on how metamorphosis influences animated and live-action films towards an effective hybridity and visual appeal. The first argument is that metamorphosis and hybridity contribute to visual elements and affect the narrative in animated and live-action films, as illuminated in Jan Švankmajer's East European film *Alice*, the creation process of which the researcher has emulated in his film entitled *Kkobe*. Further examination of how

metamorphosis creates visual appeal in both animated and live-action films involves exploring metamorphosis and hybridity as devices of surrealism employed by Švankmajer. The second argument is that Švankmajer's film provokes surreal qualities by means of real live footage morphed into animation and vice versa. Thirdly, surrealism in cinema is the pure psychological automation that seeks to express the actual workings of thought in the moving image, and surrealism is based on a belief in the superior reality of certain forms of association (Jackie Craven (2019:[sp])). Fourthly, metamorphosis creates hybridity between live-action and animated characters.

This study is set within Reciprocal theory in explaining the original narrative and the hybridised visual appeal, which is enhanced by the process of metamorphosis. The theory of reciprocity is applied to describe the effect of metamorphosis as a creation process that results in appealing hybridised art films. It is through the process of metamorphosis that a character's internal traits and attributes become external (Wells (1998:69). Thus, there is a reciprocal exchange between intrinsic and extrinsic character properties (Villalobos Echeverría (2000:[sp])). A relationship of mutual exchange is established by fusing a live-action character with an animated character. The artist or animator is offered the creative possibility of transforming a character's intrinsic properties and traits into extrinsic traits (Wells (1998: 69). Exploring reciprocity can lead to an analysis of how animation and live-action, metamorphosis and hybridity complement each other in eliciting an impactful visual appeal. The artist is able to illustrate the character's fantastical world in an animated form and state. Juxtaposing it with the realistic world offered by the live-action form simultaneously depicts fantasy and realism.

The study makes use of meta-analysis to identify and analyse trends, patterns, and themes across a diverse array of artworks, artists, movements, and historical periods. By integrating data from existing studies, the researcher is able to gain

insights into prevailing artistic styles, influences, and debates regarding the scope of metamorphosis in animated and live-action films towards effective hybridity and visual appeal (Cooper, Hedges, & Valentine 2019).

This study is presented in five chapters and accompanied by a catalogue that records the exhibition emerging from this research. Chapter One introduces the study, enunciates its background, aims and objectives, introduces the theoretical framework, and describes the nature of the study's creative production.

Chapter Two presents the literature review, themes, and theories supporting this study. The core focus frames a discussion around an analysis of how the visual display of metamorphosis and the emerging hybridity in two of Švankmajer's films, *Alice* and *Little Otik*, affect plot events and character identification. It highlights how the visual display of metamorphosis is used as a narrative and causes visual appeal, honing in on how it causes hybridity in the chosen art films. The description of metamorphosis and Hybridity is covered. An analysis of how metamorphosis amplifies surrealism in the chosen films is conducted, and surrealism is discussed in detail.

Chapter Three presents the conceptualisation and creation processes of the practical works emanating from this research. It highlights the influential artistic processes of Jan Švankmajer and William Kendrick and how they were applied in the creation of the Kkobe video installation. Finally, this chapter articulates meta-analysis as the methodology used in this research, including in creating emergent artworks. Chapter Four presents a discourse analysis and interpretation of metamorphosis and hybridity in animated and live-action films. The interpretation demonstrates Surrealist cinema in Africa and Eastern Europe, interpreting and honing in on the similarities and differences. Chapter Five provides an overview of the core discussions of this study. The main concepts of metamorphosis, hybridity, and surrealism are summarised in relation to the relevant theoretical

underpinnings, Švankmajer's films, and the hybrid visual metaphors they create. The chapter interprets the study's successes, highlights new insights that emerged, and recommends further research.

1.1 THE CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This research seeks to propose metamorphosis as the ultimate character transformation animation technique that enhances hybridity towards physically changing the state of characters, thereby persuading the audiences' visual perception. Metamorphosis is established (proven) as a medium that can fuse live-action and animated characters together and effectively depict the state change between the two genres. In his book "Understanding Animation", Wells (1998:69) asserts that "metamorphosis creates a fluid linkage of images through the process of animation". Thus, metamorphosis is a technique that gives animators the ability and freedom to manipulate images into various shapes and forms, creating a significant artistic possibility.

In line with Paul Wells, metamorphosis in art films refers to the act of transforming or manipulating an image of a person or object in a film into something different, thereby creating a change of state. "Metamorphosis is the ability for an image to literally change into another completely different image, for example, through the evolution of the line, the shift in formations of clay, or the manipulation of objects or environments (Wells 1998:69). According to Simon Abrahams, "visual metamorphosis" is the term we use to indicate shape-shifting in art. It allows an artist to transform a shape representing one item into a similar shape representing something else. This, in turn, allows one meaning to be hidden behind another (Abrahams 2012) (<https://www.everypainterpaintshimself.com>).

This study proposes that metamorphosis implies character transformation and is used in animation and live-action films. The metamorphosis technique encapsulates plasticity, which facilitates fluidity in enhancing character

transformations. According to the Free Merriam-Webster Dictionary, plasticity is the capacity to mould or alter something/object into malleability (FMWD 2013. Sv “Plasticity”). The process of metamorphosis includes the process of plasticity and moulding. According to Tiffin (2009:208) “the plasticity of the animated figure refers to its ability to stretch, compress, fragment, transform, and defy gravity. It is magical, unreal, and a prime site for magical narrative”. Wells (1998: 69) asserts that “metamorphosis creates a fluid linkage of images through the process of animation”. The research seeks to explore metamorphosis based on narrative development and character development. Strands of live-action and animated art films, namely in *Alice and Little Otik*, are used to elucidate the aesthetics and oeuvre of art films. In both films, real-life actors interact with animated characters, thereby irradiating the hybridity, metamorphosis, narrative and film narrative techniques that are encapsulated in the inquiry.

The aspect of metamorphosis as a narrative strategy resulting in narrative continuity (linearity) and discontinuity (non-linearity) is discussed in relation to Wells. Metamorphosis causes the fluid linkage between fixed properties of images before and after the transition. Dissimilar images are connected to forge original relationships between objects and cause linearity and continuity (Wells 1998:69). Conversely, metamorphosis propels discontinuity (non-linearity). Wells (1998:69) is of the opinion that metamorphosis prevents coherent developments and determines unforeseeable linearities (both temporal and spatial) that constitute contrasting forms of narrative construction.

The metamorphosis processes employed in my artwork, in the strand mentioned above, include metamorphosis in narrative. This is whereby the character has a normal life, which then changes drastically because of a certain action or discovery. In particular cases, transformations are triggered when characters’ emotions are heightened. This also involves physical character transformations, such as a human character transforming into a monster or animal, for example,

in *Alice*. In addition, two-dimensional and three-dimensional characters transform into live-action characters, and vice versa.

In this study, the history and development of metamorphosis as an animation technique is examined with reference to Christina Buehler's investigation of metamorphosis and adornment in fairy tales by French women writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. She states that:

There is a rich history of metamorphosis, beginning with classical literature that appeared thousands of years ago and endures in modern novels, plays and movies... . Metamorphosis stands as one of the foundational works in the literature of transformation in Western art, and its influence on early modern writers was immense (Buehler 2011:133).

This statement suggests that using metamorphosis as a narrative technique in art films presents animators with new storytelling possibilities. Metamorphosis as a narrative strategy has been applied in both literature and film narratives. Its development originated from literature to film, marking a significant transition in the history of storytelling. For example, Frank Kafka's *Metamorphosis* is a literary fiction story published in October 1915 about a man who awakens in an insect's body. Švankmajer's fascination with using animation to give life to objects inspires me as a visual artist. It is a touchstone used in this study to explore how animation is used to create multi-stable and heterogeneous art forms. Švankmajer's art films are a mirror of how he uses animation to give life to objects. His *Alice* film presents a mirror of how metamorphosis causes hybridity in art films and reflects the significance of hybridity.

In visual arts, hybridity refers to a visual form derived from the fusion of two distinct images or objects of different characteristics. Harvey Hix's explanation is used to examine the metamorphosis process and how it causes hybridity in Švankmajer's film. The relation between metamorphosis and hybridity is established.

Metamorphosis involves a physical form, transforming from one physical state to another. A hybrid is a superior form that results from the mixture of two forms. Hix (2012: 273) expounds that metamorphosis involves one form mutating entirely into another, as seen when Proteus becomes a tiger. In variation, hybridity, like the figure of Pan, fuses two different forms, evolving into a new entity that is none of the two. While metamorphosis pertains to two forms, hybridity infers the presence of three—the initial two and the newly synthesised form from the process of blending.

In *Alice*, a young girl (Alice) morphs into a doll and contrawise in a number of scenes. In this case, the doll replaces the human live-action and the figure of a young girl. The metamorphosis process entails two forms, namely, the young girl and the doll. The depiction of Alice as a character with a mixture of two identities and with the ability to change either identity back and forth is the hybrid. In this study, hybridity is classified into two categories: primary and secondary (Hix (2012:273). Primary hybridity is whereby Alice is depicted as a superior character with heightened attributes and the ability to play both roles. Secondary hybridity refers to the creation of a heterogeneous visual idiom or metaphor (Hix (2012:273). *Alice* is thus a mixture of both live-action and animated genres and characters in particular. Metamorphosis causes hybridity to become the process or event leading to the transformation. The transformation results in a condition of continuous change and in a physical state referred to as hybridity.

This study establishes the relationship between metamorphosis and hybridity. Hix (2012:274) describes metamorphosis as a transformational event, such as an office clerk waking up as a giant beetle. This transfiguration results into a new state, but the change itself is a singular occurrence. Contrary, hybridity is an ongoing condition, such as the persistent nature of being a cyborg. While hybridity may evolve from a transformational occurrence, it remains an ongoing state rather than an occasional inconstant event. To this end, hybridity is the

condition resulting from the process of transformation (metamorphosis). Hybridity occurs during the transformation event. The transformation process triggers the condition of hybridity (Hix (2012:274).

The two films integrate both animation and live-action, as well as a myriad of animation techniques. Švankmajer explores the use of actors from different spheres, such as clay figures, socks, puppets, dolls, skeletons, machines, real people, corpses of animals, and many others. The current study's practice entails using Švankmajer's art film as a point of departure. My artwork encompasses the application of Švankmajer's metamorphosis technique. My artwork uses African narratives and folklore as major themes, and live-action characters are subjected to metamorphosis. Techniques such as rotoscoping¹ and the Reflex morph tool are used to perform character transformations.

Two- and three-dimensional characters are reworked using two- and three-dimensional software programs such as Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe After Effects, Maya, and SoftImage. These are morphed with live-action characters using the RE-Flex morphing and warping plugin set. The types of animation that this study encompasses include two-dimensional animation (created through two-dimensional bitmaps on the computer) and three-dimensional animation (created in three-dimensional software using three-dimensional polygon mesh).

Film and animation are explored as sub-genres of visual arts in this study. The study analyses how the medium of animation (through the application of metamorphosis) can be used to represent surrealism. "Surrealism establishes a bridge between the physical realm and the domain of dreams and illusions" (Yi Ting Paung 2017: 1). The analysis of Švankmajer's² film as surrealistic inclined

² Švankmajer is a popular Czech film director who has been making short films as far back as the 1960s Švankmajer was born on the 4th of September, 1934 in Prague, Czechoslovakia (now in Czech Republic) and began making feature films in 1964 (Brooke, 2014).

provides a necessary prerequisite to understanding the relationship between surrealism, metamorphosis and hybridity. Surrealism is a combination of a dream and reality. André Breton states, “I believe in the future resolution of these two states, dream and reality, which are seemingly so contradictory, into a kind of absolute reality, a surreality” (Andrey, 2016:[sp]). By analysing surrealism in Švankmajer’s films, the study examines the ability of film to elicit surrealism, defines film as a vehicle of surrealism and establishes the relation between metamorphism and surrealism in cinema.

Surrealism in film is depicted in fantasy and dream-like scenes that place the viewer in a state of wonderment. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2013) describes surrealism as an artistic approach that creates sensational imagery and effects in several forms of expression, including art, literature, film, and theatre. This is attained through uncommon or irrational comparisons and amalgamations (Merriam-Webster 2013). Through *Alice*³, Švankmajer applies surrealistic elements in filmmaking. His films echo both biomorphic (abstract) and figurative surrealism. Craven (2019:[sp]) elucidates that figurative surrealism entails the production of recognisable representational art. With reference to Engager (2017:[sp]), the Figurative surrealists *Magritte*, *Dalí*, and *Delvaux* use ghostly figures and realist techniques to depict startling hallucinatory scenes.

Biomorphic surrealism involves the exploration of new media and the creation of abstract works composed of undefined, often unrecognisable shapes and symbols (Craven, 2019:[sp]). Švankmajer’s films are characterised by creating a new whole from the assemblage of different forms, real-life actors interacting and transforming into objects and blending reality with fiction. In *Alice*, Alice’s

³ *Alice* a 1988 surreal film, written and directed by Jan Švankmajer in 1988, is an adaptation of Lewis Carroll’s book, *Alice’s Adventures In Wonderland*. When an accident occurs in her bedroom, Alice, acting as Kristýna Kohoutová, follows a white rabbit through magical passages, trying out food shrinks. She takes little account of the trouble she causes to the strange inhabitants, mostly animals. She ends up in front of the royal couple, with the king insisting on a trial, while the queen is determined to have her head chopped off like many of the army playing cards. (www.imdb.com)

transformations from a human into a doll and contra wise elicit surrealism and marvelled amusement. In *Alice*, fantasy, in the form of magic realism, is derived from combining two distinct visual worlds, animation and live-action, to constitute biomorphic and figurative elements, respectively. Zoe Brooks (2016 [Sp]) is of the opinion that magic realism is a form of painting that represents a variance between mystical, impalpable elements of physical existence, where extramundane aspects are ingrained within an otherwise lifelike environment. Magic realism is a mythical representation of the realistic view of the modern world whilst incorporating magical elements. Therefore, surrealism in Švankmajer's films is delineated in the form of realistic fiction. In his films, Švankmajer employs metamorphosis and hybridity to create a fantasy world to mirror surrealism.

Švankmajer, a Czech filmmaker, is famous for his stop-motion animations, which create a horrific atmosphere by integrating ordinary objects in unexpected ways. Central to his artistic approach from the start, his work reflects surreal, dream-like, and almost hallucinatory qualities. He was involved in the Czechoslovakian surrealist movement in the 1960s. While his films contain the raw and instinctive nature of his films in addition to their rich ethnic, folk and technological references make them enjoyable to a wide audience. His vivid and complex imagery engages viewers on a subconscious level (Good Short Films, n.d.).

Surrealism is illustrated in Švankmajer's films by his application of stop-motion animation and metamorphosis to merge realistic and unrealistic elements. As a visual artist, I am inspired by Švankmajer's art films because of their experimental nature and abstract themes. His films are character-oriented, with a realist representation and non-linearity. To this end, Švankmajer's films mirror themes of metamorphosis and hybridity embedded in the development of artworks emergent from this study. This is a touchstone for the interrogation of theoretical pillars such as surrealism in cinema.

William Kentridge, a renowned South African artist, employs the use of erasure techniques as a visual metaphor for transformation, demonstrating how African Surrealism engages with history, memory, and identity through metamorphic processes, distinguishing itself from the unconscious-driven symbolism of European Surrealism. This visual approach contributes to the hybrid aesthetics found in both animation and live-action film, where transformation becomes a narrative and symbolic tool (Art Africa Magazine 2021; ArtCritic 2023). In my animation "*Kkobe*" I apply both erasure and unconscious symbolism techniques linking both African and European surrealism concepts to yield a hybrid metaphor. This method not only illustrates transformation but also serves as a metaphor for the complexities of history and memory, aligning with the principles of surrealism by delving into the subconscious and the fluidity of identity (Kentridge 2020: 45).

In the realm of animation, metamorphosis is a powerful tool to represent surrealism. Kentridge's technique of erasure and redrawing allows for continuous transformation within his animations, effectively conveying the dream-like and often disjointed narratives characteristic of surrealist art. This approach enables the depiction of abstract concepts and the exploration of psychological landscapes, making animation a fitting medium for surrealist expression (Kentridge 2020: 45) .

In the realm of global cinema, hybridity has become a prominent trend, blending elements from various cultures and artistic traditions to create innovative narratives and aesthetics. Guillermo del Toro's "*Pan's Labyrinth*" exemplifies this by intertwining Spanish historical context with mythological and fantastical elements, resulting in a film that transcends traditional genre boundaries. This fusion of reality and fantasy mirrors the hybrid nature of Kentridge's work, where animation and fine art converge to address complex historical and cultural themes (Wikipedia 2023).

Digital media plays a crucial role in decolonising animation aesthetics by providing tools and platforms for diverse voices to reinterpret and challenge dominant narratives (ArtCritic 2023; Wikipedia 2023). Through digital animation, artists can incorporate traditional motifs and stories into contemporary formats, fostering a dialogue between the past and present. Kentridge's animations, though primarily created using traditional techniques, have been disseminated widely through digital platforms, amplifying their reach and impact. Similarly, "Pan's Labyrinth" and Kkobe utilise digital effects to enhance their storytelling, blending practical effects with CGI to create a seamless hybrid visual experience (ArtCritic 2023; Wikipedia 2023).

Kentridge's and my animation Kkobe's use of metamorphosis through animation serves as a powerful metaphor for transformation and memory, aligning with global trends in hybrid filmmaking. The integration of digital media further facilitates the decolonisation of animation aesthetics, enabling more inclusive and multifaceted representations of stories and cultures.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

It is the contention of this study that the existing boundaries of artistic expression of creative imagination in film can further be removed through the application of metamorphosis. The research aims to problematise two areas of emphasis. Firstly, it is upheld that metamorphosis can be used as a narrative storytelling device in film in various ways. This entails the exploration of metamorphosis as a narrative strategy in Švankmajer's films. This investigation enhances the knowledge and understanding of upcoming and established animators, filmmakers and visual artists. It unpacks how metamorphosis impacts the plot, character development, cause and effect, time, temporal order and duration, temporal frequency, space, openings and closings, story formation flow, story information range, story information depth, the narrator, character development, plot events, character identification, and visual appeal. As a result, animators and

filmmakers are presented with the various ways in which metamorphosis can be an ideal narrative technique and solution to the existing limitations of deriving effective narrative strategies in filmmaking.

This study argues that metamorphosis presents an appropriate technique that can be used to create an effective audience's visual appeal. It analyses how the visual display of metamorphosis optically appeals in Švankmajer's art films. Consequently, upcoming established animators and filmmakers will be exposed to techniques of narrative storytelling and gain further knowledge on various ways of creating visually attractive artefacts. In addition, the study unearths metamorphosis as an ideal technique to enhance limitless visual expression of artistic concepts and control of creative freedom. Thus, the study interrogates how metamorphosis broadens the portrayal of narrative in art films, which combine live and animated characters.

Firstly, the study reveals the various ways metamorphosis can be used as a narrative device to erode the existing barriers in storytelling, especially in films that integrate live-action and animated characters. As a result, the study affords filmmakers and animators the freedom of expression and creative imagination in storytelling. Secondly, by exploring how metamorphosis causes hybridity in Švankmajer's art films, the study experiments through the *Kkobe* animation and provides knowledge on the following:

- The existing limitations of integrating a live-action character with an animated character.
- Metamorphosis can be used to fuse a live-action character with an animated character in various ways.
- The outcome of fusing an animated character with a live-action character.

- Demonstration of how metamorphosis can be an ideal technique of fusing a live-action character with an animated character and a solution to the existing limitations of creating heterogeneous artefacts.

Metamorphosis is well-documented in European surrealism (e.g., Bergman's *The Seventh Seal*), however, its application in African narratives remains marginal. This study addresses this imbalance by analysing Švankmajer's techniques alongside African folklore in Kkobe animation, proposing a cross-cultural framework for hybrid filmmaking.

European surrealist cinema, exemplified by Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* (1957), has extensively explored metamorphosis through symbolic and philosophical narratives. In contrast, African cinematic narratives have historically received less attention in this context. Therefore, the study through the production of Kkobe animation is exploring digital media and visual aesthetics in the form of metamorphosis, surrealism and hybridity to reshape this landscape, and close the existing gap (Manovich 2007: 1)

Illuminated through the creation of Kkobe, the study applies Lev Manovich's theory of digital hybridity, which posits that the integration of various media forms—such as live-action footage, animation, and graphic design—within a single digital framework fosters new modes of storytelling and representation. This convergence enables filmmakers to transcend traditional boundaries and create innovative visual languages (Manovich 2007: 1).

In the African context, this digital hybridity provides a platform for amplifying indigenous narratives and aesthetic principles. By leveraging digital tools, African filmmakers can reinterpret traditional myths, folklore, and societal themes through a hybridised lens, thus contributing to a more balanced global cinematic discourse. This approach not only enriches the representation of African

narratives but also challenges the historical marginalisation of non-Western perspectives in film (Manovich 2007: 1). To this, the study is a mitigation of the existing imbalance and amplifies the promotion of African surrealistic cinema

1.3 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to demonstrate that metamorphosis and hybridity between live footage and animation in Švankmajer's *Alice*, as demonstrated in *Kkobe* animated video (my creation), add to the quality of surrealism in surrealist films. Furthermore, a differentiation between African and Eastern European surrealist films needs to be established, and surrealism in cinema is the pure emotional mechanisation that seeks to express the actual workings of concepts in transferring pictures. In addition, surrealism is primarily based on a connection between pure forms of association. The first objective of illustrating how the films *Alice* and *Kkobe* display surreal qualities, is achieved by their theoretical analysis in terms of surrealist elements. These elements encompass the replication of the dream/nightmare state with characters who often appear free of ethical or rational restraints or show the inactivity and ineffectiveness that people experience in authentic dreams. A second element that will aid in reaching the objective is a dislocation of logical narrative sequence or plot. Thirdly, a transformation of the everyday world into one in which ordinary objects are made unfamiliar, odd, and transferred from their normal functions and environments or put in association with other incongruous phenomena, is explored.

The second objective, which encompasses the relationship between metamorphosis and hybridity as they relate to visual appeal, is achieved by investigating their theoretical definitions, history, and evolution. An investigation of shape-shifting, liminal space, scopophilia, the reciprocal theory, reception history, reception aesthetics and deconstruction is conducted. This is further applied in relation to Švankmajer's art films and *Kkobe* to illuminate the correlation between metamorphosis and hybridity.

The third objective is that surrealism in cinema is pure psychological automation that seeks to express the real workings of thought in the moving picture. A combination of metamorphosis and hybridity evokes surrealism. This statement is achievable by investigating surrealist film theory and the history of surrealism, dating back to the writings of Andre Breton and surrealism through art. The fourth objective is to establish similarities and differences between African and East European surrealist films. This objective is attained by a comparative exploration of both African and Eastern European surrealist films.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The spectrum of Surrealist cinema comprises a limited number of films, with a small variety of subsequent works deemed "Surrealist". Surrealism's entire cinematic output is overshadowed by the sheer extent of painting, poetry, and discursive writing produced in and around the Surrealist movement. The presence, however, of so few true Surrealist movies belies the fundamental position that cinema invests in the aesthetic and dogmatic task of Surrealism. For it is precisely through the problem with cinematic representation—its detailed language, methods, and effects—that the Surrealists have been able to work out essential difficulties of negotiation between the individual and the communal, the unconscious and the societal: between "imaginary" and "reality". In discussions of Surrealism, it seems almost self-evident to subscribe to a distinction between the realms of the dream, allegory, and the unconscious, as opposed to dialogues of the social, dogmatic, and logical. Hitherto, significantly, because of the fact of its strange imprint of reality and the odd psychic engagement of its viewer, cinema provides a way out of the theoretical gridlock by considering the difference between real events and the unconscious world of longing.

In this study, I argue that metamorphosis and hybridity, formed by real footage that morphs into animation, are devices of the surreal. The problematic point is

that these devices are not often used in surrealist cinema, and since surrealist cinema is limited compared to commercial cinema and often described in orthodox terms in the film world, my argument is not supported by numerous sources.

The main research question is how metamorphosis and hybridity represent the surreal, particularly in the way live footage transitions into animation. I aim to support this research question by meticulously analysing Švankmajer's *Alice* in terms of the metamorphosis of forms and the hybridity it creates. Švankmajer is an acclaimed surrealist filmmaker, and by emphasising his surreal representations in a film such as *Alice*, I aim to establish that the metamorphosis and hybridity which represent the switch from the real to fantasy used in *Alice and Kkobe* contribute to the surrealist cinema.

In order to achieve the overarching main aim, the study seeks to discover how metamorphosis can be used as a storytelling device through the following inquiries:

- How does Švankmajer's Eastern European surrealist approach to metamorphosis differ from African animators' use of the technique in *Kkobe*?
- Why should metamorphosis be considered a narrative technique? In other words, what is the significance of metamorphosis in the evolution and history of animation as a medium of visual art?
- How is metamorphosis used as a narrative strategy in Švankmajer's art films? That is to say, how does metamorphosis in Švankmajer's art films affect the narrative in terms of plot elements, story arch and character development?
- How has metamorphosis broadened the portrayal of narrative in Švankmajer's art films, which combine live and animated characters?

Attaining the second aim entails interrogating the hybrid formed when animated and live-action characters in Švankmajer's films undergo metamorphosis. Therefore, the study employs the main question, "How does metamorphosis cause hybridity"? This presents a framework for analysis with the following research inquiries:

- How does the visual display of metamorphosis create visual appeal in Švankmajer's art films? That is to say, how does metamorphosis create interesting scenes through the depiction of transformations of mood and visuals, and how can metamorphosis be used as a spectacle?
- How does metamorphosis (in live-action and animated characters) influence realism, surrealism, reciprocity, believability or disbelief, and suspension in the art films of Švankmajer?
- How is the visual display of metamorphosis, a form of surrealism in the art films of Švankmajer?
- What is the outcome of fusing an animated character with a live-action character?
- What are the existing limitations of integrating a live-action character with an animated character?

1.5 THE THEORETICAL APPROACH TO THE STUDY

The theoretical framework of this study emanates from the concepts and theories denoting metamorphosis as a narrative strategy, a vehicle of hybridity, and how these reciprocate each other in a dynamic spectacle. Concepts around metamorphosis are brought together by various animation writers. The history of metamorphosis, its significance in the discipline of animation, and its impact on plot elements are investigated with reference to Buehler (2011) and Wells (1998). Wells' identification of metamorphosis as one of the narrative animation strategies demonstrates how it aids the animator in telling stories and serves as a link to

other strategies, such as the liminal space's effect during the transformative process. Anna Teresa Tymieniecka's theory of narrative continuity and discontinuity is used to position metamorphosis as an appropriate storytelling device that erodes creative boundaries and empowers animators with freedom of expression and creative imagination.

I draw from theorists such as Cohen, Hix (2012), Andrey, and Breton to illustrate how metamorphosis influences surrealism, hybridity, believability and suspense in the art films of Švankmajer. In examining metamorphosis as a spectacle and how it facilitates visual appeal, I apply the views of Kentridge, Sobchack, Barnett, Trubshaw, Terrill (2006). In this regard, notions of shape-shifting, Scopophilia, reciprocity, liminal space and liminality are discussed to analyse metamorphosis's hold over its audience. With the aid of footage captured from a live performance, I employ rotoscope animation to illuminate how the fusion of live-action characters with animated characters in creating a hybrid can be achieved.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This practice-led study integrates theoretical and practical components. According to Linda Candy (2006), creative output can take more than one form. It can be produced or practically conducted as a fundamental part of the research process. What is important, however, is that the outcomes of this practice accompany the research process documentation. It is of great significance to include textual analysis or interpretation to explain a perspective and showcase critical reflection (Candy (2006:[sp])). In agreement with Candy, perhaps one would say that practice-led research entails working with the artwork and critically interpreting the text. In this case, the artwork illustrates the theory in the critically interpreted text. Critical text interpretation entails the documentation of the research process, in which the artwork mirrors the creative output (Candy 2006:[sp]).

To enhance our understanding of practice-led research, the current study uses the term 'creative practice', which refers to the production of an art form or product through applying the necessary processes and techniques of a particular discipline. Candy (date) explains 'creative practice' as a combination of the act of creating something novel with the necessary processes and techniques belonging to a given field of endeavour, whether art, music, design, engineering or science. The life of an individual person involves conceiving ideas and realising them in some form as artefacts, installations, compositions, designs, or performances. It can be an everyday or intermittent activity, or a life's work, during which many transformations in thought and practice occur. Creative practice is not only characterised by a focus on creating something new but also by the way the making process itself transforms ideas, which in turn lead to new works (Candy 2006: [sp]). The practice, therefore, entails the creation of an artwork. A diegesis is presented by Candy (2006, [sp]), in which a teacher-researcher examines her own classroom practices to refine her teaching methods. New strategies based on the findings are developed as a result of the search and evaluations. In this process, practice guides research, and the resulting comprehension and end results can be shared with others.

In this case, my artwork, the practical component of this study, drives the entire study. The artwork raises problems and questions that are addressed through academic theories and methodologies. As a result, my understanding of my artwork is enriched. My artwork results from practice-led studies and includes video editing and animation techniques that involve metamorphosis and rotoscoping (tracing over motion pictures to produce realistic action). Therefore, my inquiry is a technical process encompassing both experimental and intellectual research. It is a platform for experimenting with the practical aspects of theories embedded in the research. This exemplifies how expansive the research component of my investigation is. In other words, the experimentation and creative processes employed in this study elevate the artwork to more unexpected

places than a conventionally defined academic research question might. In line with Candy (2006) and as reflected in this study, practice-led research might therefore require a wider field of engagement, reading, and research than traditional scholarship. Instead, the focus would be on investigating objects, practical skills, and personal history.

The study employs two qualitative research methods. The first research method is a literature review of generally relevant themes pertaining to the analysis of metamorphosis in live-action and animated characters, its application as a narrative strategy, and how it causes hybridity in Švankmajer's films. Since this is a practice-led study, the second research method is a practical experimental application of the relevant themes. The aim here is to yield visual metaphors. In this study, the theory and practice inform, develop and influence each other reciprocally. Therefore, the study entails the creation of a hybrid visual metaphor, Kkobe, based on the analysis of Švankmajer's selected films. Furthermore, the theory is also applied to examine the artwork created.

Observation and qualitative data collection are applied to:

- Examine the outcome of fusing an animated character with a live-action character.
- Identify existing limitations of integrating a live-action character with an animated character.
- Analyse the artefact.

Meta-analysis and thematic analysis are applied to answer this study's research questions, indicating current thinking, identifying current theory, and formulating an analytical framework, followed by a visual analysis of a design artefact that applies the theoretical framework.

The triangulation technique of data collection, which facilitates the ratification of data through cross-verification from two or more sources, was employed (Patton (1999:1195). It refers to applying and integrating several research methods for the same phenomena. In this study, the instruments I used to collect data include case study analysis of Švankmajer's films, document analysis and the production process of my artwork.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

By zeroing in on scholars such as Švankmajer, the study reveals how metamorphosis can be used as a narrative strategy and creates visual appeal in live-action and animated films. The study is a methodology for analysing the relationship between metamorphosis and hybridity through reciprocity. Through the Kkobe exhibition, the viewer is able to understand and interrogate the outcome of amalgamating an animated character with a live-action character. Kkobe is a surrealistic artwork and film that broadens African cinema. It is a display of both the imaginary and reality and the liminality in between. It is a reflection of how the visual display of metamorphosis and hybridity yields surrealism. In discussions of Surrealism, it seems almost self-evident to subscribe to a dissection between the realms of dream, allegory, and the unconscious as opposed to dialogues of the social, dogmatic, and logical (Craven (2019[Sp])). Hitherto, significantly, because of the fact of its strange imprint of reality and the odd psychic engagement of its viewer, cinema provides a way out of the theoretical gridlock by considering.

Kkobe is a multifaceted hybrid artwork with multiple layers of meaning. Through Kkobe, this study is a mirror of how metamorphosis is used to depict the evolution of the Kkobe clan heroes and their adaptability. In this case, it is both a visual spectacle and a means of cultural preservation and appreciation. The study exemplifies the use of metamorphosis as a form of animation to conserve the Kkobe clan customs and traditions through digital art forms. In this case, the

utilisation of metamorphosis facilitates the archiving and accessibility of traditional African stories and amplifies their relevance. Impediments to integrating a live-action character together with an animated character were encountered during the execution of the practical work, thereby limiting the process. To mitigate the software crashing and slow rendering, a computer with high processing power and RAM had to be used to achieve better and faster renderings of the final output. The absence of proper and relevant technical support was one of the limitations, resulting in several trials and errors and slow processing.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter unpacks the literature review and related ideas supporting the argument made in this study. In order to facilitate an understanding of the technical terms, a review of the current scholarship on the subject, including theoretical and methodological contributions, is required, hence this chapter's combination of both the theoretical underpinnings and technical rendition to articulate the aesthetic manifestation explicitly. It draws from theorists such as Cohen, Hix, Andrey and Breton to illustrate how metamorphosis influences surrealism, hybridity, believability and suspense in the art films of Švankmajer. Where necessary, similarities with the animation emerging from this study, referred to as Kkobe, are mentioned in relation to the selected works of Švankmajer in terms of how metamorphosis and hybridity manifest, and these are unpacked in detail under chapters three and four of this dissertation.

2.1 THE HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF METAMORPHOSIS

The history and evolution of metamorphosis are central and fundamental in understanding its significance in the discipline of animation. The history of metamorphosis earmarks it as a device that has stood the mark of time for centuries in storytelling. The history and evolution of metamorphosis, and its transgression across various boundaries, is unpacked with reference to Christina Dawn Buehler's dissertation entitled "*The Art of Transformation: Motif Metamorphosis and Adornment in Fairy Tales by French Women Writers of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*", pinpointing its development from literature to film (Buehler: 2011).

In line with Suzanne Buchan, metamorphosis is the elementary cardinal process in any animation technique at work. Buchan defines metamorphosis as "an effect in which a cinematic image, whether 2- or 3-dimensional, appears to effect a

transition in form over time” (Buchan 1998: 21). Consequently, the animator is required to aid the transformation of form by orchestrating reality between the successive frames, regardless of whether the animation is executed on a computer, in clay or through successive drawings. Furthermore, this implies that the animator has absolute control over his/her filmed reality. The animator is able to fabricate every aspect of realness to their conditions. Therefore, he or she has total control over space, time, and matter in a metastable state since he or she can adjust and manipulate reality every second between frames (Buchan:1998: 21).

In contrast to what ought to be the application of animation in the form of special effects, the other visual media can hardly achieve this. The liminal positioning of the animator between frames makes his/her control attainable. Lastly, this ability and positioning facilitates a creative potential. This is so that the animator can go anywhere other than somewhere else in the middle, as emphasised by Williams (2012). Lisa Trahair refers to the in-between position as “...the gap as that place of non-meaning that inaugurates all meaning” (Cholodenko 1991: 189). Further scrutiny of the history of metamorphosis in this study identifies it as both an ultimate animation technique and the bedrock of animation.

Metamorphosis as a narrative strategy has been applied in both literature (Kafka’s *Metamorphosis*) and in film narratives, including art films of Švankmajer (*Alice* and *Little Otik*). Its development is traced to have originated from literature to film, marking a significant transition in the history of storytelling. The history and development of metamorphosis as an animation technique are examined with reference to Buehler (2011). The long-standing tradition of metamorphosis in literature, tracing its origins back to classical texts from thousands of years ago, is pinpointed by Buehler (2011: 133). This theme cuts across contemporary novels, plays, and films. Metamorphosis had a significant impact on early modern

writers and is considered pivotal in Western representations of transformations.

This implies that the adoption of metamorphosis as a technique created an opportunity to renew the interest of animators in visualising storytelling, which marks a fundamental transition in the history of art films as a narrative and animation as an appealing technique to both the audience and digital storytellers. The notion of metamorphosis as a fundamental aspect and ultimate technique that enhances animation is further substantiated in relation to Margo Miller's (2003) suggestion on the website, that:

Metamorphosis was a founding concept of animation, beginning with early French animator Emile Cohl, and is commonly used for fantastic or comic effects. Animated figures are not grounded in actual physicality, they transform at the whim of the animator (Miller 2003:[sp]).

For example, in both *Alice* and *Little Otik*, Alice transforms into a doll contrariwise, and the tree stump mutates into a half-baby half-tree creature, respectively. This involves the manipulation of shapes and forms, thereby aiding the limitless visual representation of characters in both animated and live-action films. In this regard, metamorphosis provides animators with significant artistic possibilities. Animators gain control and the limitless ability to manipulate images. Metamorphosis allows for image manipulation into a variety of shapes and forms, thereby broadening artistic possibilities and causing scopophilia in its audience.

In line with Wells (1998), it creates a fluid linkage of images through the process of animation. In this regard, the drastic physical transformation of characters into a myriad of shapes and forms in both *Alice* and *Little Otik* justifies the role of metamorphosis in achieving plasticity in the medium of animation. *Alice*, in a number of scenes, is transformed into malleable forms and shapes with the ability to enter small spaces, as illustrated in Figure 2.1. During the process of

metamorphosis in Švankmajer's art films, various shapes and images are seamlessly linked together, thereby portraying the fluidity of the animation medium.



Figure 2.1: Jan Švankmajer's Alice (1988) Movie Review, *Metamorphosis in Alice*, Cinematic Venom. com. May 2016. "MetamorphosisinAlice" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pcii869W9W0>, Accessed October, 2018)



Figure 2.2: Jan Švankmajer's Alice (1988) Movie Review, *Metamorphosis in Alice*, Cinematic Venom. com. May 2016. "MetamorphosisinAlice" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pcii869W9W0>, Accessed October, 2018)



Figure 2.3: Jan Švankmajer's Alice (1988) Movie Review, *Metamorphosis in Alice*, Cinematic Venom. com. May2016. "MetamorphosisinAlice" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pcii869W9W0>, Accessed October, 2018)



Figure 2.4: Jan Švankmajer's Alice (1988) Movie Review, *Metamorphosis in Alice*, Cinematic Venom. com. May2016. "MetamorphosisinAlice" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pcii869W9W0>, Accessed October, 2018)

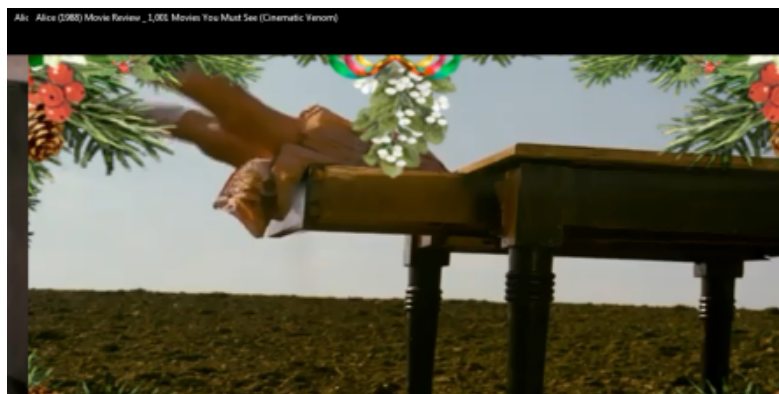


Figure 2.5: Jan Švankmajer's Alice (1988) Movie Review, *Metamorphosis in Alice*, Cinematic Venom. com. May 2016. "MetamorphosisinAlice" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pcii869W9W0>, Accessed October, 2018)

2.2 METAMORPHOSIS AS A NARRATIVE STRATEGY

Theories, themes, and bodies of knowledge are the supporting pillars of this study and are analysed in conjunction with scholarly literature. The core focus frames a discussion around an analysis of the use of metamorphosis in *Alice* and *Little Otik* by Švankmajer, honing in on how it (metamorphosis) creates hybridity in both art films. The study proposes the ideal technique by which the existing boundaries of artistic expression of creative imagination in film can further be eliminated. The study presents the various ways in which metamorphosis can aid narrative storytelling. This encompasses the expedition of metamorphosis as a narrative strategy in Švankmajer's films and the elaboration of how metamorphosis impacts character development, cause and effect, time, temporal order and duration, temporal frequency, space, openings and closings, story formation flow, story information range, story information depth, the narrator, plot events, character identification, and visual appeal.

The chosen theories facilitate the understanding of how metamorphosis in Švankmajer's *Alice* affects narrative. There are ten narrative strategies in animation, as identified by Wells in his book *Understanding Animation*. These include metamorphosis, condensation, synecdoche, symbolism and metaphor, fabrication, associative relations, sound, acting and performance, choreography and penetration (Wells1998:68-126). This, in agreement with Wells, is used to demonstrate how animation in the form of metamorphosis controls the aspects of temporal and spatial reality and aids a distinctive engagement with the mentioned strategies in relation to *Alice*. The narrative role of metamorphosis can be explored with reference to Anna Teresa Tymieniecka's (2004) theory of narrative continuity and discontinuity in her book "*Metamorphosis: Creative Imagination in Fine Arts between Life Projects and Human Aesthetic Aspirations*". According to Tymieniecka's theory, character transformations that encompass changes in mood, visual, physical and emotional transmutations can elicit pleasure in the audience (Tymieniecka 2004:[sp]).

Her theory postulates that metamorphosis enhances a mixture of genres, such as horror, action, romance, fantasy, comedy and comic action and that it evokes fear, enchantment and emotions within the audience, thereby causing a visual appeal. Analysing Gerard Marx and Lara Foot Newton's stop-frame animation project "*And There in the Dust*" (2005), in conjunction with Švankmajer's films, facilitates the exploration of the unique role that animated metamorphosis plays in the visual expression of metaphors. From this analysis, the study illustrates how the animator can control and alter a visible temporal path between frames aided by the transfer and creation of meaning in metaphors. In this regard, the metaphor is denoted with multiple meanings, as the transformation is steered through many forms to its intended state. In this respect, the animator uses his gradual control over time to magnify the moment of change of meaning in metaphor in order to illuminate character transitions in a way that intensifies their visual and emotional impact.

In agreement with Erwin Feyersinger (2021), metamorphosis affects plot events by enhancing the flawless linkage of definite perceptible components (Forceville & Jeulink 2011; Irvine 2013: [sp]). Transformations in Švankmajer's art films constitute visual metaphors that influence the audience's perception of the metamorphosis scene. In consonance with Feyersinger, during metamorphosis, the transformation becomes a visual metaphor, referred to as discourse-level metamorphosis. Irvine postulates:

A discourse-level metamorphosis in animation is the transformation of the visual representation itself, in the extreme case, regardless of what the images signify. This notion of metamorphosis is what Andy has referred to as the 'visual manifestation' of metamorphosis and includes what Norman M. Klein (2000) has termed 'ani-morph' in Vivian Sobchack's book *Meta-Morphing* (2000). Discourse-level metamorphoses are especially interesting when the interpretation of what the images represent becomes ambiguous, multistable, or even paradoxical. Animated images can thus become metaphors for everything that changes, everything that is dynamic, transient, unstable,

or uncertain – on a small and large scale. This capacity of animation to give a concrete visual expression to all kinds of changes is one of the reasons why animation can be such a powerful, versatile, and insightful form of communication (Irvine 2013: [sp]).

The perception of what the characters undergoing metamorphosis represent and the elucidation of metamorphosis affords animation the quality of depicting change and visual expression in an adaptable and comprehensive way, thus making animation an effective form of communication.

My animation *Kkobe* is a depiction of the evolution of the Kkobe clan. Thus, in both *Alice* and *Kkobe*, metamorphosis is applied to depict the character's progression, journey, trajectory and arc. In harmony with Irvine, metamorphosis can be employed to link the past, present and future in storytelling by making a fluid change from one metaphor to the next possible (Forceville & Paling 2018: 116).

Feyersinger and Hannibal's (2021) theory is used to show how metamorphosis elicits visual appeal and its impact on the audience. In agreement with Feyersinger and Hannibal, Metamorphosis demonstrates animation's ability to impact our perception, beliefs, and encounters with society (Feyersinger, 2021:[Sp]).

Therefore, metamorphosis affords animation the capacity/attribute to depict the change of state effectively. During metamorphosis, the viewer's perception of the subject under transformation and the entire process is influenced by the artist's creative possibilities of presenting a character's intrinsic properties into extrinsic traits, evoking anticipation and astonishment in viewers. For example, Guillermo del Toro's *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006) film represents Ofelia as an innocent girl who creates fantasy stories to deal with her misfortunes and hard life (Carrasco & Cristina 2011). Thus, she is propelled by her intrinsic ideals to deal with her predicaments.

In agreement with Michael Dudok et al. (2021), animation allows the animator to depict a character in various states and with various traits and properties. In this case, the characters can be referred to as metaphors. During metamorphosis, the characters transform the spectators' interpretation/perception of the transformation process (Dudok de Wit & Feyersinger 2021).

Therefore, there is a symbiotic relationship between the character undergoing transformation, the transformation process itself and the medium of animation. According to Danielle Albers (2021), metamorphosis affects the plot through transitions such as flashbacks (Danielle Albers, Sajika Gallege 2021; (Albers & Gallege 2021).

Alternatively, I am of the view that metamorphosis in the form of flashbacks could result in both continuity and discontinuity. Discontinuity could unfold if the scenes are unrelated, and continuity will occur in the event that related scenes are juxtaposed to each other. The repetition of events through flashbacks could disorient the audience and, at the same time, enhance their understanding of the story (Albers & Gallege 2021). Animation, with the aid of metamorphosis, offers artists freedom of creative expression (Dudok de Wit & Feyersinger 2021).

Characters in Švankmajer's art films are depicted transitioning into different states, a technique adopted in my animation. In this case, animation, through the application of metamorphosis, enables artists to break the existing boundaries of expressing their ideas. The study portrays the significance of metamorphosis and its mutual relationship with animation. Metamorphosis is a fundamental element of animation in storytelling and is "the constituent core of animation itself" (Wells 1998:69).

2.2.1 The narrative impact of metamorphosis on the plot

The precise presentation of narrative events is embedded in the plot of a film (www.filmandphilosophy.com/film-narrative). Character transitions form the basis of the plot events in Švankmajer's films. The effect of metamorphosis on the narrative elements in digital storytelling is substantiated with reference to Wells's (1998) ideology.

Metamorphosis's visual display affects the story's sequence in both live-action and animated films. Metamorphosis disrupts the linear, chronological sequence of storytelling by enhancing drastic image manipulation, which involves linking unrelated images together and depicting change from past to present and future events. Metamorphosis, by depicting flash-back and flash-forward moments, fosters this non-linear circular narrative structure, which contrasts with the classical Hollywood convention of storytelling (Wells 1998:69). By connecting different images together, metamorphosis brings about discontinuity in the physical state and appearance of characters. Characters attain different forms and shapes (Wells 1998:69).

For example, Metamorphosis causes continuity and discontinuity spontaneously in Švankmajer's art films (*Alice* and *Little Otik*). Hix elucidates that "Metamorphosis is a complete transformation in the sense that one form becomes another, all the elements of one form are replaced by the elements of another. It is momentous. It occurs, begins and ends at a point in time" (Hix 2012:275). In agreement with Hix, *Alice's* transformation into a doll is a discontinuation of her human physical form. The human form has been completely replaced by the new form of a doll. However, contrary to Hix, during the event of *Alice's* drastic transformation from a human being into a doll, her character personality is retained (continued), but her identity as a human being is discontinued. Her physical appearance also changes and discontinues.

In *Little Otik*, the character is retained in the new form when the tree stump mutates into a half-baby half-tree species (hybrid). The initial form is represented in two physical states, resulting in continuity. In this regard, metamorphosis is a transformation event that results in a condition of hybridity. To this end, hybridity replaces metamorphosis. Therefore, metamorphosis causes discontinuity and continuity spontaneously (Hix 2012:275).

2.2.2 The narrative impact of metamorphosis on time

Metamorphosis in some scenes in both *Little Otik* and *Alice* is delineated through flashbacks and flash-forwards. Figure 3.7 is a flash forward derived from Figure 3.6 in *Little Otik*. In this flash-forward illustration, as the husband holds the tree stump in his hands, he envisions a baby in his hands. In this regard, a drastic change is depicted with the passage of time. In *Alice*, Sometimes the movie tends to focus on one particular scene repeatedly for a bit too long instead of moving on, thus dragging the film at certain points.



Figure 2.6: Jan Švankmajer's *Little Otik* (2000) Horror Movie Review, *Little Otik Horror Movie Review*, August 29th ,2017. Sv "Little Otik movie review" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esT_H0a-B9I&t=365s, Accessed October 2018)



Figure 2.7: Jan Švankmajer's *Little Otik* (2000) Horror Movie Review, *Little Otik Horror Movie Review*, August 29th ,2017. Sv "Little Otik movie review"
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esT_H0a-B9I&t=365s, Accessed October,2018)

For example, when Alice eats something from her right hand, it triggers the trees to shrink in size. Then she eats something from her left hand that causes the trees to grow big in size. This action is consecutively repeated several times. Thus, it prolongs the screen time, yet it is meant to be a short film.

Temporal order

Metamorphosis is used in Švankmajer's art films to depict flashbacks and flash-forwards, thereby presenting film plots and narratives in non-chronological order. The nonlinear alternation of past and present and the reordering of events imparts the plot structure by inserting surprise, suspense and emphasis elements into the story (www.filmandphilosophy.com/film-narrative). The drastic transformation of *Alice* into a doll and the tree stump into a hybrid in both *Alice* and *Little Otik* destabilises the viewer's perception of events. Manipulating big shapes into small, young, old, past, and present shapes and vice versa results in a non-chronological order of events.

Temporal duration

Temporal duration is affected by story duration, plot duration and screen duration. (www.filmandphilosophy.com/film-narrative). In Švankmajer's art films, the repetitive portrayal of the same scene is used to expand the screen duration. In addition, the representation of metamorphosis through flashbacks and flash-forwards is used to contact the screen duration (www.filmandphilosophy.com/film-narrative). In *Alice* and *Little Otik*, flashforwards and flashbacks shorten the screen time and story duration. In some scenes, information is revealed to the viewer drastically without the passage. For example, when the husband in *Little Otik* holds the tree stump in his hand and envisions a baby surfaced.

Temporal frequency

Temporal frequency refers to the number of times story events are presented in the plot (www.filmandphilosophy.com/film-narrative). Metamorphosis affects temporal frequency in a way that character transformations are repeated on several accounts in many scenes, providing the viewer with more information in both *Alice* and *Little Otik*. The repetition of similar scenes, including the frequent visual display of transformation spectacles in Švankmajer's films, magnifies a particular event's connotation (www.filmandphilosophy.com/film-narrative). The repetition of the character transformations in both *Alice* and *Little Otik* emphasises the superiority of the characters. They are endowed with the ability to transform the way they please in order to fulfil their roles.

2.2.3 The Narrative Impact of Metamorphosis on Character Development

Metamorphosis enhances character identification and elicits visual appeal by eliding time and space. It creates a dream-like illusion in art films with both animated and live-action characters. It is further elaborated by Wells that "in enabling the collapse of the illusion of physical space, metamorphosis destabilises the image, conflating horror and humour, dream and reality, certainty and speculation" (Wells 1998:69).

This evokes the audience's wonder and amazement, causing a certain visual appeal. Characters undergo transformations into various shapes, forms and creatures. This adds a recognisability factor to the viewer by making use of exaggerated features, forms and motion, a principle known as the peak shift effect. With reference to *Japanese Animation Films: Narratives, Perception and Emotions*, the peak shift principle states that “the more salient a figure is, the more attractive or recognisable it will seem, as illustrated next” (dias.kb.dk.com).

Little Otik is a tree stump that assumes life after breastfeeding. In *Little Otik*, the radical mutation of a tree stump into a hybrid species draws the viewer's attention towards the character's face and the entire structure, thereby causing fright responses.



Figure 2.8: Jan Švankmajer's *Little Otik* (2000) Horror Movie Review, *Little Otik Horror Movie Review*, August 29th ,2017. Sv "Little Otik movie review" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esT_H0a-B9I&t=365s, Accessed October,2018)

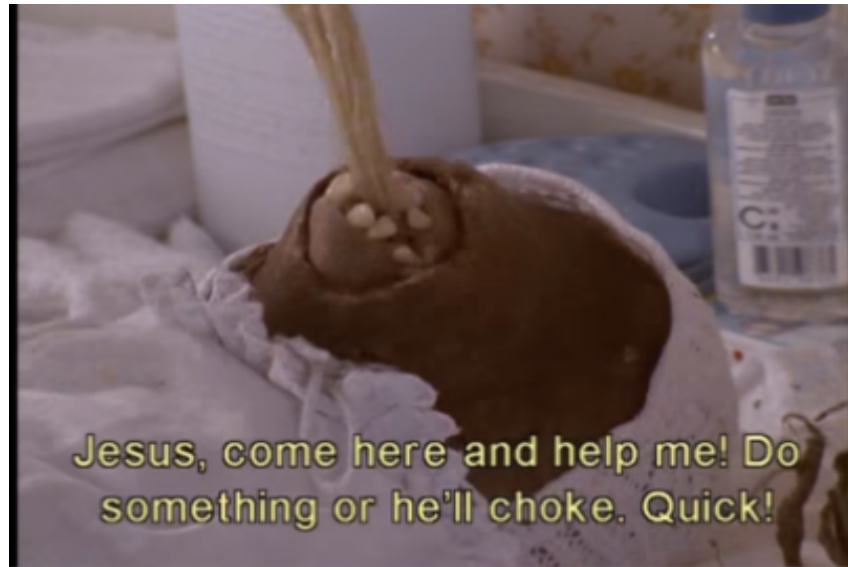


Figure 2.9: *Little Otik* (2000) Horror Movie Review, *Little Otik Horror Movie Review*, August 29th, 2017. Sv "Little Otik movie review" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esT_H0a-B9I&t=365s, Accessed October, 2018)



Figure 2.10: *Little Otik* (2000) Horror Movie Review, *Little Otik Horror Movie Review*, August 29th, 2017. Sv "Little Otik movie review" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esT_H0a-B9I&t=365s, Accessed October, 2018)



Figure 2.11: *Little Otik* (2000) Horror Movie Review, *Little Otik Horror Movie Review*, August 29th ,2017. Sv “Little Otik movie review” (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esT_H0a-B9I&t=365s, Accessed October,2018)



Figure 2.12: Jan Švankmajer’s *Little Otik* (2000) Horror Movie Review, *Little Otik Horror Movie Review*, August 29th, 2017. Sv “Little Otik movie review” (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esT_H0a-B9I&t=365s, Accessed October, 2018)

The visual display of the physical transformations of a human into a doll and a tree stump into a hybridised tree baby species in *Alice* and *Little Otik*, respectively, portrays a dreamlike sequence, a myth and an objection to reality. This evokes astonishment and admiration of the viewer due to the fascinating intrusion of the

unreal. Therefore, metamorphosis enhances artistic creativity by distorting reality and creating diversity.

The visual display of character transformation in *Alice* and *Little Otik* immerses the viewer in the story. Character transfiguration involves high-vision motion mechanisms. This takes place in a way that the transformations are depicted as rapid event sequences, thereby luring the viewer to anticipate (wisc.edu.com). In *Alice* and *Little Otik*, character transformations are triggered by eating in most of the scenes. Depiction of eating something is most likely to induce the viewer's anticipation of the mutation of that character (wisc.edu.com).

In this regard, the visual representation of a change of state causes unpredictability, thus creating twists in the storyline. This is illustrated in *Little Otik* and *Alice* by the unpredicted transformation of the tree stump after breastfeeding and *Alice*'s ways of fitting into small spaces or holes, respectively. It is an implication that the visualisation of metamorphosis in art films draws the viewer's attention by causing anticipation and suspense. Metamorphosis is used as an enigma code in both *Little Otik* and *Alice*, thus creating a mystery. This causes suspension, wonderment and amazement in the audience.

Metamorphosis is used in Art films to enhance character identification. In *Alice*, the process of metamorphosis entails the depiction of change without the passage of time. As illustrated in figures 2.1 and 2.2, *Alice* transforms into a doll contrariwise in a number of scenes drastically.



Figure 2.13: Jan Švankmajer's Alice (1988) Movie Review, *Metamorphosis in Alice*"
Cinematic Venom. com. May 2016. Sv. "Metamorphosis in Alice".
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pcii869W9W0>, Accessed October, 2018)

She is portrayed with two identities: as a young girl and a doll. With the ability to mutate into different forms, she is able to play two roles: as a young girl and a doll. She is identified as a character with two roles. The illustration of metamorphosis facilitates the flow of story information. The frequent portrayal of character transitions in the art films of Švankmajer is used to disseminate story information to the audience in order to attain curiosity, suspense and expectation (www.filmandphilosophy.com/film-narrative).



Figure 2.14: Jan Švankmajer's Alice (1988) Movie Review, *Metamorphosis in Alice*"
Cinematic Venom. com. May 2016. Sv. "Metamorphosis in Alice".
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pcii869W9W0>, Accessed October, 2018)

In this regard, character arcs and roles are established, thereby achieving character identification. The audience is able to identify various characters because of their supernatural properties. This enables the viewer to distinguish the hero from the villain and lead characters and antagonists from the protagonist.

2.3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN METAMORPHOSIS AND HYBRIDITY

In visual arts, hybridity refers to a visual form derived from the fusion of two distinct images or objects of different characteristics (Irvine 2013: [sp]). The study applies Hix's ideology to examine the metamorphosis process in art films and how it causes hybridity in Švankmajer's films. The relation between metamorphosis and hybridity is established. Metamorphosis involves a physical form, transforming from one physical state to another. A hybrid is a superior form resulting from the mixture of two forms. Professor Martin Irvine's ideology in the article "*Cultural Hybridity: Remix and Dialogic Culture*" is used to analyse the relationship between metamorphosis and hybridity. In agreement with Irvine, metamorphosis can be used to create artwork in a hybrid genre.

In Švankmajer's art films, there is a seamless amalgamation of the human world with the animated world. The same value is given to the film's narrative, aesthetics, or visuals. It reflects how metamorphosis, as an improved modern narrative with the aid of Rotoscope techniques and the Reflex morph tool, can integrate live-action and live-action genres, forming a hybrid. As a result of advancements in film technology, the films are an illustration of how metamorphosis has enabled animators to combine various genres. Consequently, boundaries of expression can be erased through the application of metamorphosis.

2.4 ROTOSCOPY IN METAMORPHOSIS TOWARDS HYBRIDITY

Firstly, the section gives a brief historical overview of the rotoscoping technique, highlighting its development in the field of animation. The definition of rotoscoping

is also analysed. This is followed by a deep textual scrutiny describing the significance of rotoscoping in relation to the *A-ha Take on Me* music video and its application in the creation of the visual hybrid metaphor. The rotoscoping technique is defined by Ali et al. (2012) in the website article, *Toon Boom*, in the article, as “an animation technique where the animator traces over each frame of a live-action movie to reproduce a realistic movement” (Ali et al. 2012:224). The technique enables the animator to capture and record the live-action and realistic movement of characters. In this aspect, the rotoscope technique enhances the visualisation of familiar things in a way that is true or accurate in real life, thereby making the scene more believable to the audience.

Historically, the rotoscoping technique is traced to have emerged at the beginning of the nineteenth century as a fundamental animation technique (Toon Boom.com). The transition from using glass and the rotoscope equipment to Photoshop signifies technological advancement within the animation medium. Adobe Photoshop© is a type of computer software used to execute the rotoscope technique. It is further elaborated by Seymour (2011) that:

...the most ubiquitous graphics application in the world was probably the first digital rotoscoping tool to be used in film and video post-production. . .Photoshop. . . can work with motion by importing frames one at a time or importing film strip files from video applications. Photoshop's brush engine is the benchmark everyone else strives for and gives excellent control when using pressure sensitive Wacom tablets (Seymour:2011).

Therefore, Adobe Photoshop©, as a contemporary tool, provides the animator with the ability to trace over still images and live-action footage. By using the brush tool, the animator is able to draw over live-action footage, add texture and intensify the colours, thereby making the scene visually appealing. This section of the study discusses the concept of rotoscoping in Photoshop, focusing on the significance of the rotoscope technique as applied with reference to the music

video, *A-ha Take on Me* and how it is applied in the creation of the hybrid practical installation in my video installation.

Regarding the *YouTube website*, in the article "*Making Rotoscope Animation Using Photoshop*," it can be said that the rotoscope technique was used in the *A-ha "Take on Me"* music video and in my practical work by following the steps outlined below. Analysis of the *A-ha Take on Me* music video, produced by Tarney Alan and released in 1985. *Sound on Sound.com* is used to illustrate how the rotoscoping technique enforces character transformations. The rotoscope technique is a fundamental aspect of the animation medium. As noted on the website *Toon Boom*, in the article "Going Bananas with Rotoscoping", it enables one to learn how to animate.

Executing the rotoscope technique entails the use of a mouse or stylus and Wacom tablets, which are perfect substitutes for a drawing pencil. The animator can trace over still images and live-action footage using the Adobe Photoshop® brush tool, the stylus or the mouse, thereby making the exercise a lot easier. The technique also improves the animator's hand-drawing skills since it entails detailed tracing and drawing over frames. This also enhances the animator's observation skills. Rotoscoping is perceived to create the illusion of movement by enabling the artist to capture the live action through tracing the movement of images, frame by frame. The drawings are then altered to create a quivering effect of the final image, thereby depicting movement (David Thrasher 2013).

In agreement with David, altering these traced hand-drawn images creates motion in a way that the images attain a flickering effect depicting a transition from one frame to another. For example, in the music video, images are depicted with a flickering effect, reflecting a transition from one frame to another. In this way, the animator is also able to give an illusion of movement to still images and backgrounds and create depth.

The *A-ha Take on Me* music video and my practical work are illustrations of rotoscoped two-dimensional still images and rotoscoped live-action footage. In this regard, the rotoscoping technique was used to integrate still images and live-action footage, creating a wide range of artistic possibilities. The music video is a combination of comic book drawings and live-action (Onextrapixel.com). The rotoscope technique enhances scenes' visual appearance and representation, thereby serving a fundamental purpose in postproduction. In this way, the animator is able to add textures and backgrounds, manipulate and intensify colours, and explore a myriad of effects (Onextrapixel.com).

It is further elaborated by Sorbin Nick on *Renderosity.com*, in the article, “Rotoscoping Techniques and Tools for the Aspiring Artist” that:

Modern rotoscoping, which is still the same basic concept, is used to create mattes, by which parts of a live-action scene can be isolated in order to insert effects, colour correct, hide rigs or wires . . . As rotoscoping is a crucial part of any video production today, so is the importance of the job of a roto artist, both in skill and efficiency (Renderosity.com).

For example, the representation of images from rough and sketchy pencil marks in the *A-ha Take on Me* music video creates a unique stylishness and originality, thereby giving the scene an artistic look. In this aspect, rotoscoping is used for video editing postproduction (Renderosity.com).

Rotoscoping is a technique worth choosing because it enables the animator to achieve realistic motion. It is further noted by Basile Nancy (date) on *About.com* in the article, “Animation Techniques”, that, “Rotoscoping is used to capture realistic human movement by drawing over film footage of live actors, but adding an artist’s vision to the movements of a human actor can create a unique story telling medium that is just as stylistic as any other form of animation’. In the *Take on Me* music video, the realistic human movement of characters is captured by

tracing directly over the video, frame by frame, using the brush tool, mouse or stylus. The overall effect is that the movement of the traced images accurately matches that of the live actors. This makes the music video more believable and thus better received by the audience. In this regard, the rotoscoping technique is used to represent images and scenes in a way that is true or accurate in real life.

Rotoscoping in Photoshop enables the animator to accurately time scenes and events. For example, in the *Take on Me* music video, the hand emerges from the book to interact with the lady sitting in the restaurant. Directly tracing over each frame, one at a time, allows the animator to capture each live-action accurately, thereby accurately matching the depiction of rotoscoped images and drawings with the live footage. In “Animation’s Dirty Little Secret,” Thrasher David asserts that, “extremes and filling in all the frames between by free hand means . . . gives the animator more freedom in the timing of the action”. In this aspect, the rotoscope technique enables the animator to add and delete scenes. The other example of accurate timing is the transfiguration of the singer from the rotoscoped form to the human form and vice versa as he moves behind the mirror. This mirrors the accurate timing in combining rotoscoped images and drawings with the live-action without any overlapping scenes.

Furthermore, the rotoscope technique enables the animator to maintain the volume and proportion of the animated characters. It is noted on *Toon Boom* that, “your animation will maintain its proportion and volume”. In this regard, the rotoscope technique enables the animator to capture the shapes and forms of characters in detail, frame by frame. There is no room for exaggeration and alterations since the visual outline of the live action is directly traced over. For example, in the *A-ha Take on Me* music video, the proportions, size, shapes, and forms of the drawings are exactly the same as in comparison to the characters in the live-action video. This is also illustrated by the scene in which the singer is seen creating a hole for them to escape. The rotoscope technique enables the

animator to create an artistic appearance (Toon Boom). The rough, sketchy lines created by the brush tool in the *Take on Me music video* create a hand-drawn artistic and painterly appearance, thus making it appealing to viewers. It is also another way of saving time because the method does not entail a detailed study and tracing of the characters.

The rotoscoping technique is significant because it makes the animation process much easier and more effective. In this way, the rotoscope technique involves studying and capturing each action in a sequence by tracing it one frame at a time. Shifting from one frame to the next reveals the occurrence of the action in steps. The other important aspect of the rotoscope technique is that it enables the animator to depict delicate movements. This is achieved by tracing and altering the time slider one frame at a time, thereby revealing and capturing the delicate movements. The animator is able to observe, study, and capture the drastic movements in detail. This is reflected by the radical movements of the singer and the girl in the *A-ha Take on Me* music video that would have been hard to depict without the rotoscope technique the hand emerging from the comic book. The significance identified in this section illuminates the rotoscoping technique as a fundamental asset in the animation medium. Therefore, it can be said that the rotoscope technique enhances the animation process and is also a perfect substitute for animation.

2.5 SURREALISM IN CINEMA

There is a distinct relationship between surrealism and film (Winefride Cohen 2015:[sp]). Surrealism in film is usually depicted in fantasy and dream-like scenes that place the viewer in a state of amazement. The study illustrates how metamorphosis and hybridity in *Alice* amplify surrealism through the simultaneous juxtaposition of dream-like states, unconsciousness, and nightmarish that are humorous and appealing at the same time. These are fundamental characteristics of surrealism in film (Destino (2003:[sp])).

The plot events in *Alice* place this film in a surrealist tradition. *Alice*'s transformations from a human into a doll (and contrariwise) elicit surrealism, wonderment and amusement. Fantasy is derived from the combination of two distinct visual worlds, that is to say, animation and live-action. In harmony with Cohen, surrealism can be perceived as a fantasy resulting from the magical integration of the real world (live-action) and the imagined (animated). Švankmajer employs metamorphosis and hybridity in creating a fantasy world in his films that mirrors surrealism.

Similar to the theory of liminality, in agreement with Michael Dudok, characters subjected to metamorphosis undergo transitions that constitute entertainment, narrative, and metaphorical value synchronously. Metamorphoses in the art of animation can be used for their entertainment, narrative, and metaphorical values, or all three at the same time. These typically instil surprise, shock, humour, visual elegance, exoticism, and magic. This generally refers to the surreal, supernatural metamorphosis popular in fairy tales, mythology, and fantasy, where a character or an object undergoes a profound transformation, such as a pumpkin turning into a carriage (Cinderella 1950). In this case, the narrative value is quite obvious. The metaphoric value, however, is a bit more elusive, but when it is there, it can be profound (Dudok de Wit & Feyersinger, 2021).

Surreal and supernatural metamorphosis is predominant in Švankmajer's art films, as characters in live-action footage are seen transforming into animated characters and contrarwise. For example, in my animation *Kkobe*, the clan head transforms from a plant into a human in a live-action state. *Alice* transforms into a doll, and the tree stamps into a creature. These are examples of surreal supernatural metamorphosis. Metamorphosis in *Alice*, *Little Ottik* and *Kkobe* accentuates the films' visual elements and surrealistic aspects. The transformations in this aspect are referred to as surreal and supernatural. In

harmony with Dudok, unrealistic supernatural transformations (surreal metamorphosis) are more paramount and common compared to realistic transformations (non-surreal metamorphosis) in the animation industry.

Apart from the surreal metamorphosis, there is also another kind of metamorphosis in the art of animation, the non-surreal kind, let's say, the realistic kind. Unlike surreal metamorphoses, realistic ones are more ubiquitous and natural. They can be political, like someone's change from conservative to progressive, social, cultural, psychological, religious, etc., and I am also referring to the transformations occurring in nature and in everyday life. For instance, the change from day to night is a metamorphosis... The interesting thing is that realistic metamorphoses are not necessarily seen by the creators and by the spectators as metamorphoses. They can be seen as an expression of growth or decline, as an evolutionary process, or simply as part of a narrative language. While the surreal metamorphosis is usually easy to identify because it is bizarre, the realistic metamorphosis can be harder to discern because it is less surprising and the beginning and the end can be imprecise. The metaphoric value can, therefore, be less clear as well. (Michael Dudok de Wit Feyersinger, Hannibal 2021:[sp]).

Due to the high level of amusement achieved through surreal supernatural metamorphosis is more attractive and appealing to the viewer. Therefore, surreal metamorphosis is more likely to suspend disbelief and cause visual appeal to the viewer than non-surreal metamorphosis. Surrealism allows the animator to evoke amusement, horror, and anxiety, thereby simultaneously fuelling allurements and imagination in the audience (Matthews 1971: [sp]).

Metamorphosis in Švankmajer's films fuels surrealistic elements by dismantling actuality into a myriad of images and then reconstructing those images to achieve a sensational and mysterious "dream world" that amplifies real-life existence (realism) and evokes and attracts the awareness of spectators (Robin Walz 2012: [sp]).

2.6 METAMORPHOSIS AND SURREALISM

Film and animation are explored as sub-genres of visual arts in this study. The study analyses how the medium of animation (through the application of metamorphosis) can be used to represent surrealism. The analysis of Švankmajer's films as surrealistic inclined films provides a necessary prerequisite to understanding the relationship between surrealism, metamorphosis and hybridity. Surrealism is a combination of a dream and reality. André Breton states, "I believe in the future resolution of these two states, dream and reality, which are seemingly so contradictory, into a kind of absolute reality, a surreality" (Andrey 2016 [sp]). By analysing surrealism in Švankmajer's films, the study examines the ability of film to elicit surrealism, defines film as a vehicle of surrealism and establishes the relation between metamorphism and surrealism in cinema.

Through *Alice* and *Little Otik*, Švankmajer applies surrealistic elements in filmmaking. His films echo both biomorphic (abstract) and figurative surrealism. Craven (2019:[sp]) elucidates that figurative surrealism entails the production of recognisable representational art. Figurative surrealists use ghostly figures and techniques of realism to represent startling hallucinatory scenes. Biomorphic surrealism involves exploring new media and creating abstract works composed of undefined, often unrecognisable shapes and symbols (Craven 2019:[sp]). Švankmajer's films are characterised by creating a new whole from the assemblage of different forms, real-life actors interacting and transforming into objects and blending reality with fiction. In *Little Otik*, the lady's perception of the tree stump as a baby, the drastic transformation of the tree stump into a hybrid form of both a human and a tree, *Alice*'s transformations from a human into a doll, and the contrary elicit surreality and marvellous amusement. In the two films, fantasy is the form of magic realism derived from combining two distinct visual worlds, animation and live-action, constituting biomorphic and figurative elements. Zoe Brooks is of the opinion that magic realism is a form of painting that

represents “mystical non-material aspects of reality in a realistic backdrop” (Brooks 2016:[sp]). Consequently, magic realism is a mythical representation of the realistic view of the modern world whilst incorporating magical elements. Therefore, surrealism in Švankmajer’s films is delineated in the form of realistic fiction. In his films, Švankmajer employs metamorphosis and hybridity to create a fantasy world to mirror surrealism (<http://www.goodshortfilms.it/en/articles/jan-svankmajer.com>).

Surrealism is illustrated in Švankmajer’s films by his application of stop-motion animation and metamorphosis to merge realistic and unrealistic elements. As a visual artist, I am inspired by Jan Švankmajer’s art films because of their experimental nature and abstract themes. His films are character-oriented, with a realist representation and non-linearity. To this end, Švankmajer’s films mirror themes of metamorphosis and hybridity embedded in this study. This is a touchstone for the interrogation of theoretical pillars such as surrealism in cinema

2.7 THEORY OF LIMINALITY

The concept of liminal space is discussed in this study to explore the role of metamorphosis in eliciting a dream-like sequence and amazement, thereby causing visual appeal to the audience. Terrill, in his article “*Going Deep*”, defines liminal spaces as “simultaneously spaces to be crossed and spaces that foster crossings” (Terrill 2006:165-173). This term is used to analyse the change in the audience's emotional state evoked by the drastic cross-over from the familiar physical character state to the unknown.

Liminal is defined by Bob Trubshaw as a “non-time, a moment, not a transition” (Trubshaw 1995). He highlights five dimensions: “north, south, east, west plus centre, the place where one is” (ibid,1995). In agreement with Trubshaw, the centre is arduous, a place to delineate. It synchronously signifies the present and past; it is the “Dreamtime”, which is always and never. It is the mythical “Once

upon a time” of fairytales. “It was and was not so” (ibid,1995). It is wondrous and a fantasy. The metamorphosis implied in time-lapse (frame by frame) photography and several animation techniques places the spectator in this centre, a moment in between a moment, and they can experience the world from within an ephemeral imperceptible (liminal) moment. Contextualising the concept of scopophilia, liminal space, and spectacle in conjunction with related scenes will possibly explain metamorphosis's hold on its audience.

In order to expound the role of metamorphosis as a narrative strategy, Paul Wells' (date) ideology that metamorphosis causes unpredictable linearities is analysed. In line with Wells, it links different images and spaces in various time zones. It is also used in the illustration of flashbacks and flash-forwards. This is in contrast to the established convention of the classical Hollywood narrative structure in such a way that metamorphosis enhances both linear and non-linear narrative structure by concurrently depicting narrative continuity and discontinuity. Understanding the classical Hollywood narrative structure is pivotal in analysing the impact of metamorphosis on the plot and its application as a narrative device.

An understanding of how metamorphosis creates a spectacle through liminal spaces depicted in both Švankmajer's art film and my creation *Kkobe* is facilitated by the analysis of Mocke Lodewyk, Jansen Van Vuren and Theresa Collin's (2005) expression of metamorphosis in their time-lapse animation project *Minutes*. Emphasis will be placed on how liminal spaces and moments are amplified between the passage of time in their projects to decipher reality that is outside human temporal rhythms. The study illustrates that metamorphosis offers the viewer and animator a new perception of time, which has the capacity to alter human reality by proffering the spectators various ways of seeing and experiencing natural rhythms around us, though subtle and evasive to clench. Further scrutiny of the works of some of the African and European animators in the study illuminates how African animators, in comparison to Europeans, are

using metamorphosis as a narrative strategy and an appropriate idiom to depict narratives.

Shapeshifting

This section examines methods such as morphing and shapeshifting to understand better how metamorphosis is achieved and applied in live-action and animation films. This entails the study of the notion of depicting change without the passage of time, which accounts for the drastic manipulation of images into totally different creatures. Thus, shapeshifting as an aspect of metamorphosis illustrates how metamorphosis transgresses traditional boundaries and categories such as gender, age, race and species, which in turn reflects how metamorphosis is used to explore the dynamics of nature (Vivian Sobchack (2000:[Sp])). In addition, the study of digital morph as a technique that enhances character transformations (image manipulation), such as shapeshifting, is performed. This acts as a benchmark in exploring how metamorphosis enhances character progression and identification, enabling the audience to establish and identify the character's status as it unfolds in the story. Vivian Sobchack (2000), in *Meta-Morphing: Visual Transformation and the Culture of Quick Change*, as well as in her essay for the same volume, *At the Still Point of the Turning World: Meta-Morphing and Meta-Stasis*, excoriates the digital morph for its acculturation and absorption of difference and its tendency to obliterate history. "Thus, it could be argued that as a paradoxically bounded and fixed figure of transformation, the morph operates to simulate change as, on a deeper level superficially, it assimilates not merely 'difference' but also 'otherness'" (Sobchack 2000:138).

Scopophilia

According to Barnett (2020:[sp]), in terms of health and human behaviour, scopophilia is a love of looking. In film studies, it is used to describe the mental process of viewing a film. Analysing the notion of scopophilia in conjunction with related scenes, such as the simultaneous display of the interplay between

amplified external and internal character traits, realistic and fantastic worlds, illustrates how the visual display of metamorphosis elicits the audience's attention. In contrast to voyeuristic scopophilia, it explores how metamorphosis elicits pleasure in the audience by facilitating character identification. The secondary observer (audience) of the practical hybrid installation derives pleasure in watching the primary observer trigger character transmutations.

2.8 RECIPROCAL THEORY

Reciprocal theory is used to explain the process of metamorphosis and hybridity within art films. The theory of reciprocity is applied to describe metamorphosis as a creation process that results in hybrid art films. It is through the process of metamorphosis that a character's internal traits and attributes become external. There is a reciprocal exchange between intrinsic and extrinsic character properties. A relationship of mutual exchange is established by fusing a live-action character with an animated character. The artist or animator is offered creative possibility of transforming a character's intrinsic properties and traits into extrinsic traits. Exploring reciprocity can lead to an analysis of how animation and live-action, metamorphosis and hybridity, complement each other in eliciting visual appeal. The artist is able to illustrate the character's fantastical world in an animated form and state. Juxtaposing it with the realistic world of the live-action form offers a simultaneous depiction of both fantasy and realism (Smith Wilde 2002:449).

The creative approach of using metamorphosis as a medium of exchange to fuse the two genres together is employed to illustrate how artistic boundaries and limitations can be erased to yield hybridised visual metaphors. Reciprocity and reception theory are utilised to explain how the fusion of the two genres complements each other towards a productive change and effective visual effects for the viewer. Exploration of reciprocity yields an analysis of how animation and live action complement each other in eliciting visual appeal (Wilde 2002:449).

Crowther (1993:6) elaborates how fusing both animated and live action character properties together mirrors the otherness of a character. In addition, the aesthetics of merging live action and animated character genres, and the use of various visual effects to embody the philosophy of partiality and completeness, double consciousness, stillness and movement, and the link between the past and present, old and new, are explored in double ways.

The subject of “Otherness” as a concept of desire is vividly explored in works of art that employ metamorphosis, surrealism, and hybridity. Foster’s (2016) work explores how surrealist artists engage with the notion of “Otherness” through the uncanny, creating imagery that arouses desire while simultaneously evoking discomfort. In surrealism, objects of desire are often portrayed as distorted or transformed, using hybrid or metamorphic forms to signify both allure and strangeness. Foster presents examples from artists such as Salvador Dalí and Max Ernst, who use techniques of metamorphosis and hybridity to construct enigmatic figures, invoking the idea of “Otherness” as an elusive, surreal concept. Dalí’s work “The Great Masturbator” (1929) forms, blends, and metamorphoses in a way that both attracts and repels, suggesting an inherent desire for the unfamiliar. Foster’s analysis illustrates how surrealist art fosters an attraction toward the unknown and undefined aspects of human psychology (Foster 2016).

Meskimmon (2018) examines hybridity in contemporary artworks that challenge cultural and corporeal boundaries, bringing forth “Otherness” as a subject of desire. She focuses on artists who combine elements from various cultural and biological origins to reflect identity, ambiguity, and transformation. Meskimmon uses examples from artists such as Cindy Sherman and Wangechi Mutu, who use hybridity to express the allure of “Otherness” in a way that both invites and subverts traditional perceptions of identity. For Example, Mutu’s works often depict figures that embody both human and alien characteristics, symbolising a

fascination with the hybrid and metamorphic as a desirable “Other”. Meskimmon’s analysis shows how hybridity not only reflects diversity but also creates an attraction to forms that defy categorisation, ultimately challenging viewers to confront their own biases and preconceptions of beauty and desire (Meskimmon, 2018). These examples (Cindy Sherman and Wangechi Mutu’s works) provide a foundation for understanding how the aesthetics of “Otherness” and the themes of desire, metamorphosis, and hybridity intersect in art, making the unfamiliar alluring and meaningful through transformations that bridge cultural and existential divides.

CHAPTER THREE: CONCEPTUALISATION AND CREATION METHODOLOGY OF EMERGENT ARTWORKS

The conceptual and creation processes of my animation entitled “Kkobe my Totem” are informed by Švankmajer and Kentridge. Švankmajer’s plot events in *Alice* and *Little Otik* place these two films in a surrealistic tradition, inspiring my conceptual and creation processes in Kkobe. The lady’s perception of the tree stump as a baby (in *Little Otik*), the drastic transformation of the tree stump into a hybrid form of both a human and a tree, *Alice*’s transformations from a human into a doll (and contrarwise) elicit surreality, wonderment and amusement. Fantasy is derived from the combination of two distinct visual worlds, animation and live-action. In harmony with Cohen (2015), surrealism can be perceived as fantasy resulting from the magical integration of the real world (live-action), and the imagined (animated). Švankmajer employs metamorphosis and hybridity in creating a fantasy world in his films that mirrors surrealism.

This study also explores this altercation in conjunction with Kentridge’s (2020) opinion about foregrounding metamorphosis as a primary narrative strategy. Kentridge’s depiction of metamorphosis can be delineated as an alteration on the modified base technique whereby the artisan starts with a ductile base substance (sand, oil paint, etc.). In my animation, I begin with a drawing that can be altered by expunging it and then adding it to the base material. Each alteration is then captured frame by frame, subsequently to create an illusion of motion (as an animated sequence). William Kentridge’s work starts with a charcoal illustration as his base substance, which he expunges and/or adds to.

In comparison, in my work, I begin with a pencil drawing as a base substance, which I erase and replace with an image of a live-action character. Like Kentridge’s erasures, mine partially traces the previous frames, which prevails as the transformation progresses. This is fundamental in analysing the self-reflexive

application of the medium where history permeates and is embedded in the transformation. In this case, a spectacle is created, which constitutes the history of the making of the film and is viewed by the viewer in the completed work. The metamorphic transformations are, therefore, a foreground for the constructed nature of time, history and memory. Thus, Kentridge applies the self-reflexive technique of incomplete erasures to invite the viewer between frames to witness the spectacle of visual metamorphosis.

3.1 CONCEPTUALISATION AND CREATION PROCESSES OF KKOBE

Patricia Villalobos Echeverría's (2000) artwork, "*Reciprocity/Reciprocidad*", is used to explore the reciprocity and reception theory further.



Figure 3.1: Patricia Villalobos Echeverría. *Reciprocity / Reciprocidad*, (2000). Oil paint and serigraphs on canvas, wood, medical tubing, sound equipment and CD (11 min. loop).

The Oil paint and serigraphs on canvas, wood, medical tubing, sound equipment and CD (11 min. loop) by Echeverría were a source of inspiration for the exploration of ideologies such as erasing and revealing, otherness, regeneration and degeneration, and continuity and discontinuity in my practical project. For further exploration of the aesthetics of diversity, I derive further inspiration from the artworks of the Singaporean artist David Chan. His sculptures, Chimerative and Centauree, illuminate animal-human hybridity (MiralFahmy 2017).

Figure 3.2 is a photograph that I modified in November 2016 using Photoshop. It mirrors the integration of a character's internal (animated) and external (live-action) world, traits and attributes. Pertinent to this study, this is a springboard for the exploration of hybridity and reciprocity between live-action and animated character transformations.

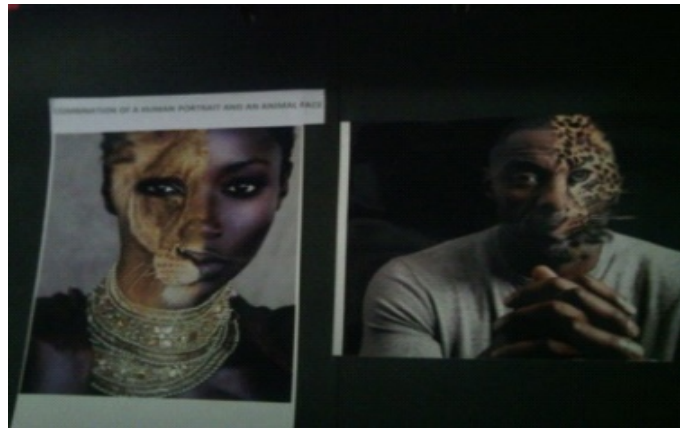


Figure 3.2: Francis Kawuma, *Hybrid Face*, Adobe Photoshop, (2016)

This study's practice entails using Švankmajer's art films as a point of departure. The practical component is created as a result of the comparative analysis of how African and European animators use metamorphosis as an appropriate narrative strategy to depict narratives. My practical component is themed by the analogy between the European and African ways of portraying fantasy and folklore using metamorphosis. It is a depiction of the Kkobe clan headmen's heroic journey. The practical emanates from the subtheme of visualising the life cycle (evolution/metamorphosis) of both the Kkobe plant and clan. Consequently, it is an adaptation based on the legend, explaining how Kkobe clansmen came to have Kkobe as their totem. Kkobe is the local name for *Dioscorea bulbifera*, known in English as the air yam or air potato.

(<https://www.fondazioneSlowFood.com/en/ark-of-taste-slow-food/igname-rampicante-Kkobe/>, accessed on 13th May, 2021).



Figure 3.3: Francis Kawuma, *Kkobe plant still from the Kkobe Animation*, 2024

The artworks presented in my exhibition emanate from the theme of visualising the life cycle of both the Kkobe plant and the Kkobe clan. It is an adaptation based on the legend, explaining how Kkobe clansmen came to have Kkobe as their totem. The Kkobe yam is an Indigenous plant, a type of climbing yam, a food crop and a totem of one of the clans of the central Ugandan Baganda people. It is highly valued for providing food security among the Baganda and Basoga

peoples. It is believed to have originated from central Uganda's forest areas in the Mabira forests in the Mukono and Jinja Districts. It is a delicacy for other Baganda but not the members of the Kkobe clan (Abe Kkobe); for them, it is taboo to eat it. The adaptation and evolution of this wild yam is the insignia of the Kkobe clan and is based on a central theme entailing survival, sustenance, preservation of nature and the clan's fundamental linchpins.

Attributed to the Kkobe plant (wild yam), the Kkobe clan attests to tradition's unwavering power in the face of change. Pivotal to Buganda's cultural heritage, it continues to play a key role in conserving the identity and history of its people, in this case, the Genealogy of its people. From its origins, rooted in agriculture to its modern contributions to Buganda's cultural and social fabric, the Kkobe clan is an emblem of the tenacity and persistence of the Ganda people.

The wild yam "Kkobe" in Luganda was a requisite source of sustenance for the people in this ancestral group, especially during a period of hardship, famine, or possibly war, when food scarcity was at a climax. The wild yam survived extinction and grew in abundance in the forests and wild areas where the people of this clan lived or had sought refuge. Unlike other crops that may have been destroyed or were difficult to cultivate, the Kkobe plant survived the harsh conditions and provided a reliable food source. The clan's ancestors regarded the wild yam as a life-saving plant, a symbol of endurance and fertility. In gratitude and respect for its role in sustaining the community during difficult times, the clan adopted the Kkobe plant as their totem.

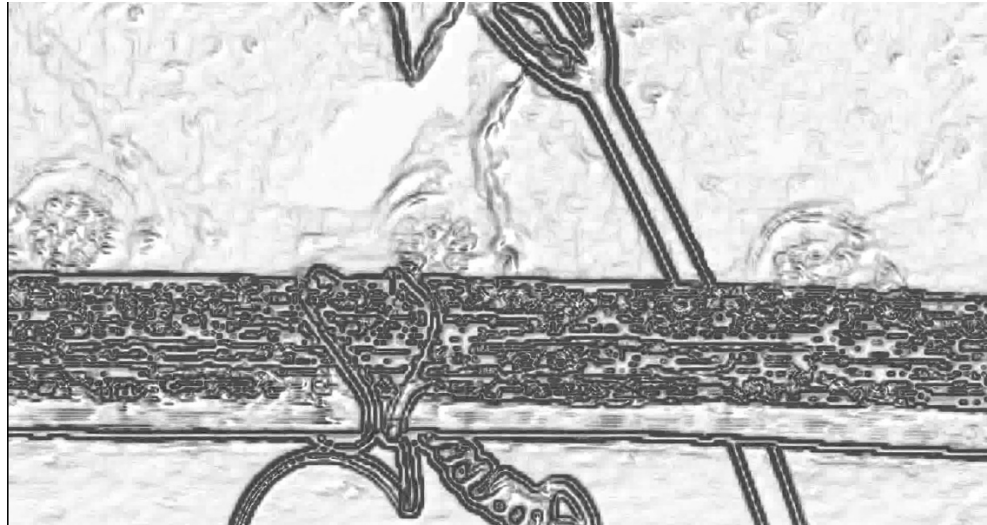


Figure 3.4: Francis Kawuma, *Kkobe plant*, Animation 2024

Go to the link to access the animation:

KKobe 1: <https://youtu.be/vXP4gyzIxIM>

The Kkobe is perceived as an icon of cultural and spiritual significance. In Ganda tradition, totems are treated with reverence, and adopting a totem is often linked to a deep respect for nature and its role in human survival. For the Kkobe Clan, the wild yam became more than just a food source. It was seen as a symbol of divine providence and fertility. The plant's underground tubers, which store nutrients and grow abundantly, symbolise fertility, hidden strength, and resilience, qualities that the clan associates with its identity. Similar to other Buganda clans, as a way of conserving, protecting, and appreciating the Kkobe, a taboo was created, prohibiting members of the Kkobe clan from eating or abusing the totem. This implies that for the Kkobe clan members, eating the wild yam is impermissible. This taboo serves as a reminder of their ancestors' history and the plant's relevance to their survival.

In addition to emblematising the clan's uniqueness, the wild yam "Kkobe plant", being a totem, encapsulates the heroic journey of the clan headman. Symbols and metaphors are frequently used in the Buganda Kingdom to illustrate the

attributes and dignity that their leaders and members, at large, are expected to epitomise. In this regard, the wild yam is a formidable metaphor for strength, persistence, fertility, and the ability to endure hardship, which are paramount to a hero's journey.



Figure 3.5: Francis Kawuma, *The Kkobe Warrior Still from the Video*, 2024

The artworks in my exhibition blend the Kkobe plant “Wild yam” and warrior transformations. They exemplify the use of metamorphosis as a form of animation to preserve the Kkobe clan customs and traditions through digital art forms. The application of animation as a medium facilitates the archiving and accessibility of traditional African stories and amplifies their relevancy. Lev Manovich, in *"The Language of New Media"*, postulates that digital media can preserve cultural practices in new formats. The conservation of African culture while acclimating it to the technological realities of the modern world is enhanced by Animation as a digital art form (Manovich 2001). Similarly, in "Zulu King", a digital animation project, the legendary transformations of the Zulu warriors and deities are illustrated with the aid of metamorphosis. In this regard, the plasticity of animation is employed to capture the adaptability of Zulu traditions, thereby serving both as

a visual spectacle and a means of cultural conservation and appreciation (Manovich 2001).

Shapeshifting simultaneously facilitates narrative continuity and discontinuity, placing metamorphosis as an appropriate storytelling device that erodes creative boundaries and empowers animators with freedom of expression and creative imagination. Unpacking shapeshifting entails this study of the notion of depicting change without the passage of time, which accounts for the drastic manipulation of images into totally different creatures.

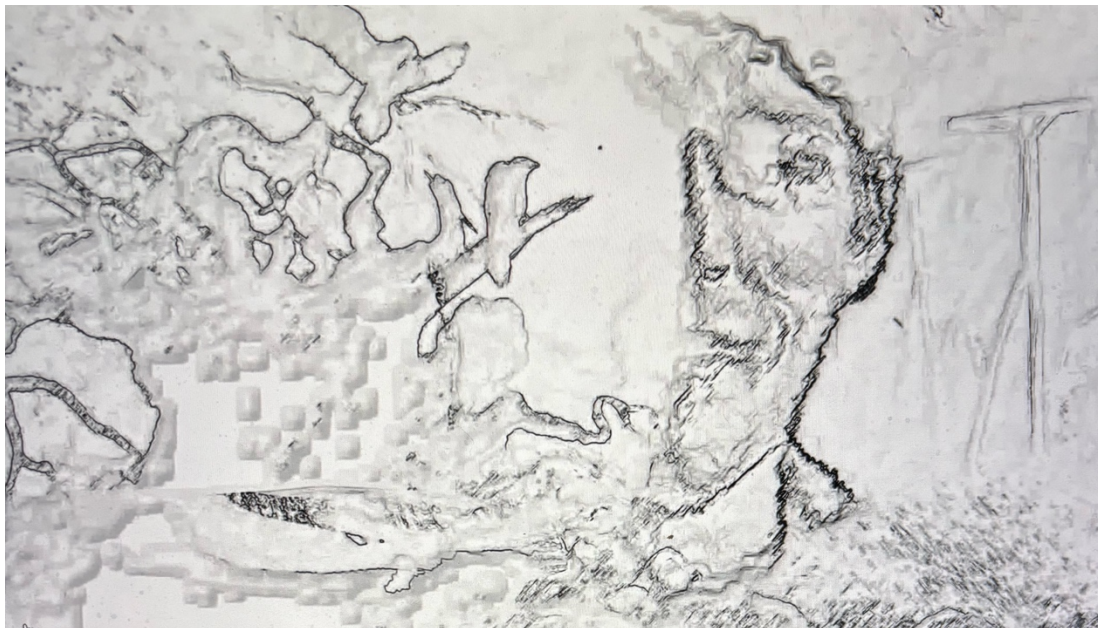


Figure 3.6: Francis Kawuma, Stills from *Kkobe Animation*, 2024

The transformations between the warrior and the Kkobe, the warrior's face morphing into a dog, represent interconnectedness, the dog's significance as a loyal protector. In African folklore, metamorphosis often reflects spiritual journeys or interactions with the supernatural. Many African cultures have stories about shapeshifting animals, humans, and deities. By animating these stories, artists bring these spiritual transformations to life, preserving important aspects of African cosmology and moral lessons through dynamic visual art. Victor Turner

(date) explores the role of ritual and symbolism in African societies. His theory of "communitas" and liminality explains how metamorphosis, both in physical form and spiritual state, is central to rites of passage and cultural rituals. In African animation, such transformations mirror these spiritual and cultural transitions.

The story of "The Lion and the Mouse", often told in African folklore, involves characters undergoing emotional or spiritual metamorphoses that reflect moral lessons. Animated adaptations of such stories allow viewers to witness these transformations visually, emphasising the animals' spiritual significance and preserving African fables. Shapeshifting as an aspect of metamorphosis illustrates how it transgresses traditional boundaries and categories such as gender, age, race, and species, reflecting its use to explore the dynamics of nature. This is achieved through the digital morph, enhancing character transformations.

Vivian Sobchack (2000) criticises the digital morph for its acculturation, absorption of difference, and tendency to obliterate history. "Thus, it could be argued that as a paradoxically bounded and fixed figure of transformation, the morph operates to simulate change as, on a deeper level superficially, it assimilates not merely 'difference' but also 'otherness'" (Sobchack 2000:138). This is a benchmark in this study in exploring how metamorphosis enhances character progression and identification, thereby enabling the audience to establish and identify the character's status as it unfolds in the story.

These artworks are a culmination of the use of metamorphosis in radiating new life (rebirth) into the Kkobe folklore and myths, in this regard, mythopoeia. It is a theory elucidating the creation of new myths or the adaptation of old ones. Using metamorphosis, African animators can re-imagine mythological characters, allowing them to transform in response to contemporary themes while preserving their original cultural significance.

Tolkien (1988), in his essay on mythopoeia, argues that myths are constantly reinterpreted to suit new cultural contexts while retaining their core values. In African animation, metamorphosis allows creators to adapt ancient myths for modern audiences, using the transformation of characters to reflect evolving cultural themes. African Tales is an animated anthology showcasing various African folk stories, many of which involve metamorphosis. Using animation, these tales are updated for modern viewers while conveying traditional African moral lessons about courage, wisdom, and community.

In my exhibition, metamorphosis is used to execute the warrior's and plant's transformations derived from the characteristics of the wild yam. Metamorphosis, in this case, is a medium of exchange and a digital vehicle (device) linking the intrinsic and extrinsic properties of the wild yam to the Warrior's heroic journey. This adaptation's activation, transformations and visualisation are brought to life and are a spectacle achieved through metamorphosis. This experience places the viewer as a witness and active participant.

3.2 META-ANALYSIS AS A DATA COLLECTION METHOD

I employ meta-analysis as my main data collection method to sequentially synthesise and analyse data from multiple independent studies and scholars to estimate an overall effect and evaluate the consistency and robustness of the research findings (Borenstein, Hedges, Higgins, and Rothstein 2011). Using meta-analysis, I gathered and examined a wide range of existing literature, including journal articles, books, exhibition catalogues, and scholarly publications in the visual arts. By compiling findings from multiple studies, meta-analysis provides an extensive overview of the research landscape (Borenstein et al. 2011).

I use meta-analysis to identify and analyse trends, patterns, and themes across a diverse array of artworks, artists, movements, and historical periods. By integrating data from existing studies, I was able to gain insights into prevailing artistic styles, influences, and debates regarding the scope of metamorphosis in animated and live-action films towards effective hybridity and visual appeal (Cooper, Hedges, & Valentine 2019).

Meta-analysis facilitates the comparison of different research methodologies, approaches, and theoretical frameworks employed. Examination of the strengths and limitations of various methods, such as qualitative case studies or mixed-methods approaches, to better understand their applicability and relevance to the research questions was enhanced (Hedges & Olkin 2014).

With the aid of meta-analysis, gaps or inconsistencies in the existing literature are identified, and areas where further research is warranted are determined. Research findings reveal unanswered questions, unresolved controversies, emerging topics and theories that require exploration in future studies. Relying on existing literature also saves time and resources, unlike gathering information through surveys and interviews (Lipsey & Wilson 2001). Objectivity and transparency are achieved when evaluating and synthesising research findings. By following systematic procedures and predefined criteria, bias and subjectivity in the analysis are minimised, especially since no interviews or individuals are involved (Hunter & Schmidt 2004).

Since Meta-analysis entails analysing existing data from published studies, excluding the direct involvement of individuals, it is an ethical alternative in my research. This is in contrast to conducting primary research encompassing human subjects, which may amplify ethical concerns related to informed consent, privacy, or psychological well-being (Pigott & Polanin 2020).

Therefore, meta-analysis is employed as a valuable method of data collection in my research, enhancing the synthetisation of existing literature, exploration of artistic trends, comparison of methodologies, identification of knowledge gaps, ensuring objectivity, and addressing ethical considerations without requiring the direct involvement of individuals in the research process.

CHAPTER FOUR: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF METAMORPHOSIS AND HYBRIDITY IN ANIMATED AND LIVE-ACTION FILMS

This chapter presents an analysis and interpretation of how metamorphosis and hybridity manifest in related films while making specific references to how this was achieved in Kkobe, the emergent artworks from this research. It makes inferences from other works that apply metamorphosis as a narrative tool towards a surrealistic and appealing spectacle.

4.1 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN METAMORPHOSIS, HYBRIDITY AND SURREALISM IN FILM PRODUCTION

In addition to being a visual spectacle, metamorphosis and hybridity enhance intense viewer reflection and engagement (Krämer 2019). Krämer's work examines transformation and adaptation in animated and live-action films, focusing on the visual discourse that metamorphosis and hybridity evoke. For example, in the film by Guillermo del Toro, Mexican filmmaker titled *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006), Krämer highlights the fusion of human and fantastical elements through the character of the Faun in Figure 4.1, whose hybrid form reflects deeper themes of innocence, power, and the subconscious. The Faun appears as a hybrid of a person and a goat with horns, resulting in the weird animal. Thus, del Toro's faun was achieved through metamorphosis, resulting in a hybrid that presents surrealist characteristics, such as a strange, not seeming real creature like in a dream.

Similarly, the metamorphic imagery in Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away* (2001) uses transformations, such as the heroine's parents turning into pigs, to symbolise greed and the loss of identity. Krämer argues that these visual transformations serve as discursive elements, reflecting cultural fears, desires, and the fluid boundaries of identity, making metamorphosis and hybridity powerful tools for

storytelling and reflection in cinema. While these visual transformations usually narrate stories from artists' imaginations and fantasies, most, however, use metamorphosis to render these visual abstractions into aesthetically pleasing narratives.



Figure 4.1: Guillermo del Toro, *Pan's Labyrinth*, Film, 2006

Fabe's (2004) book entitled *Closely Watched Films: An Introduction to the Art of Narrative Film Technique* provides a discourse analysis of narrative techniques in

film, with a focus on the reflective potential of metamorphosis and hybridity. Fabe discusses how Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) uses hybrid characters, like the Cheshire Cat and the Mad Hatter, to represent psychological and societal themes in a surrealistic way.

Tim Burton's part-live action, part-animated, all-3D version of 'Alice in Wonderland' is a collage of characters and episodes from Lewis Carroll's two nineteenth-century books about a girl who falls into the rabbit hole of her own imagination (Dave Calhoun 2010).

In this collage of part live-action, part animated objects and character, *Alice* is accentuated as a pretty young lady (like in a live-action film, but is surrounded by seemingly hybridised natural and beautiful flora with some man-made architectural units such as a decorated metal gate and pillars appealing to the viewer's eye, Figure 4.2. Thus, Tim Burton's transformative approaches can be said to be appealing to modern society even though they are based on mythology, and he achieves this by morphing related and unrelated things towards a harmonious spectacle.



Figure 4.2: Tim Burton, *Alice in Wonderland*, 2010

Another example is *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (1993), where Burton uses metamorphosis, shown in Jack Skellington's transformation between Halloween and Christmas realms, as a reflection of identity exploration and duality. Fabe's discourse analysis illustrates how these transformative elements allow filmmakers to explore and reflect on societal values, individual psychology, and the fluidity of human identity in a visually compelling way.

In addition, the main video of Kkobe 1 is the continuation of a shorter animation of Kkobe 2, reflecting how metamorphosis is being used as a narrative strategy in portraying the Kkobe clan warrior's journey. In this process of creating visual appeal, the Kkobe is being appreciated and conserved. This animation is a multifaceted, layered piece using animated Kkobe plant seeds in Figure 4.3, transmuting from being consumed to an interesting self-replication like a DNA formation as in Figure 4.4.

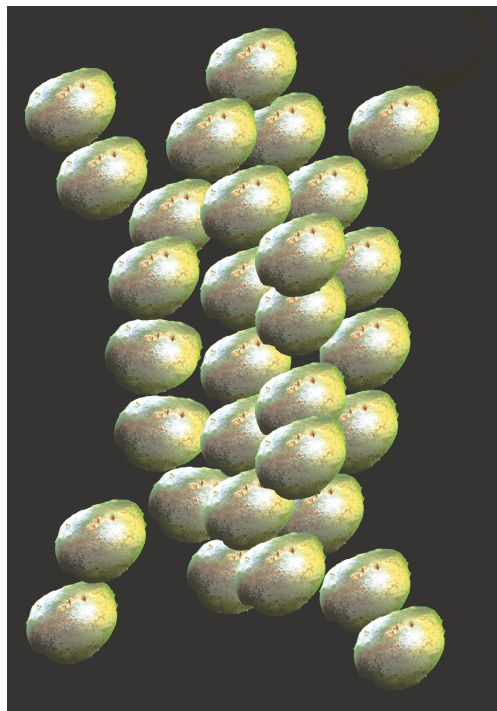


Figure 4.3: Francis Kawuma, Kkobe seeds 2024

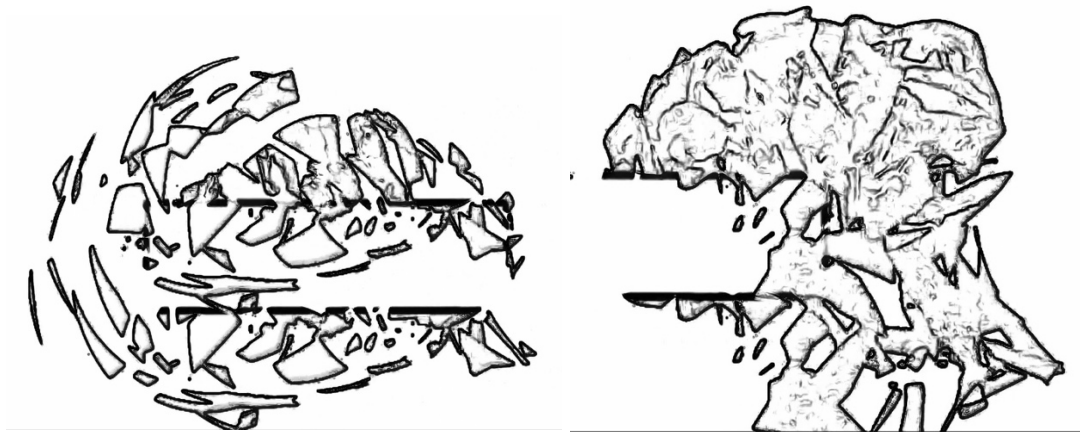


Figure 4.4: Francis Kawuma, Stills from Kkobe 2, Animation 2024

Go to the link to access the animation:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/149oCN7FE1NvLoyeiEAi9EmqWk8QITl5_/view?usp=sharing

Thus, the first part is the portrayal of the Kkobe plant/seeds as a source of life and strength for the clan warriors in preparation for the upcoming battles. Then, the Kkobe plant/seed, after being consumed, triggers heroic character attributes and bestows the warrior with supernatural powers of morphing into different forms, as in Figure 4.5.

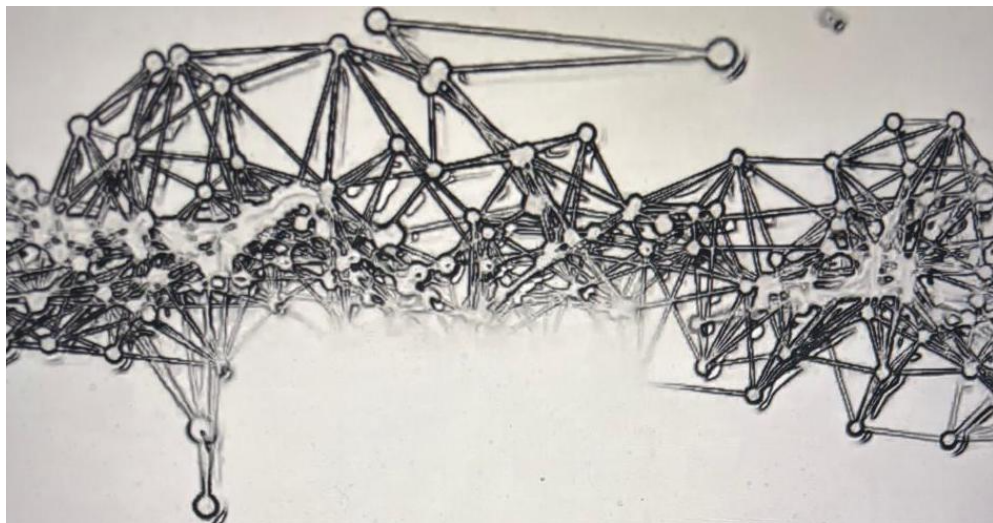


Figure 4.5: Francis Kawuma, Stills from Kkobe 2, Animation 2024

Metamorphosis is used to represent the Kkobe clan warrior as a powerful human being with supernatural abilities, as in Figure 4.6. The video is a display of the evolution of the Kkobe clan warrior and their originality. The characters are depicted with tiny dots referencing that their physical being embodies the Kkobe as their source of origin.

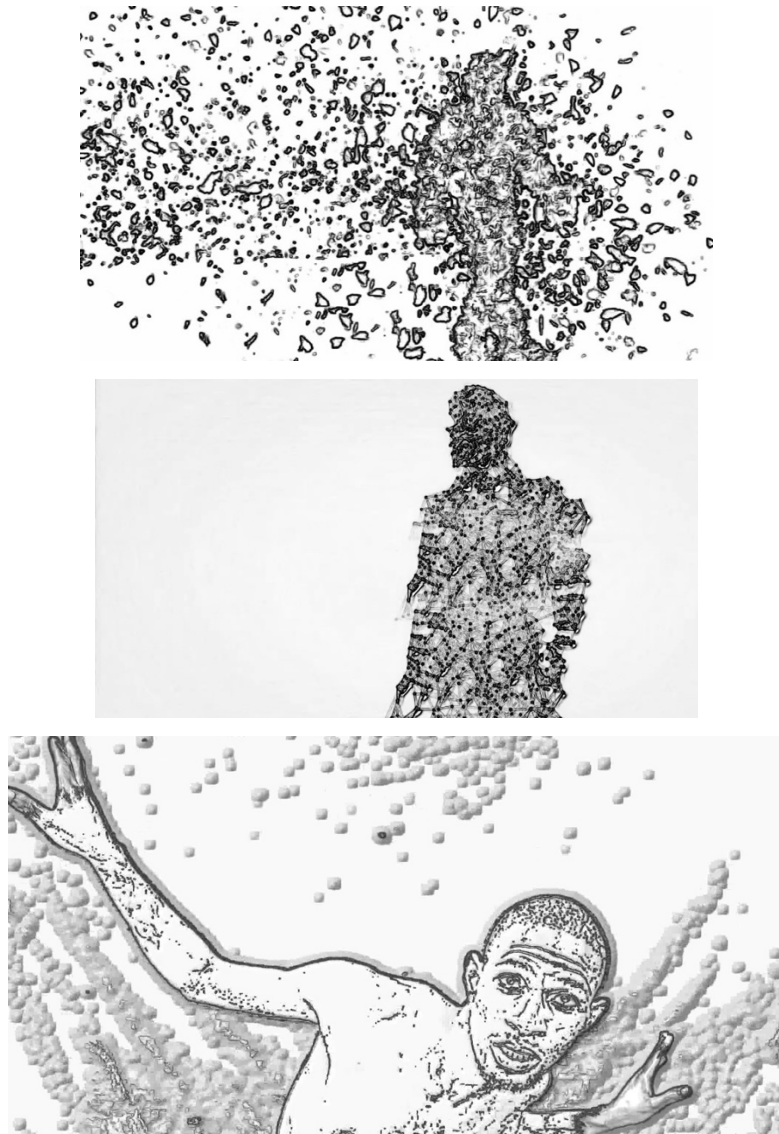


Figure 4.6: Francis Kawuma, Stills from Kkobe 1 and 2, Animation 2024

In Kobe 2, like in the main video, it ends with the characters in their physical form ready for war (Figure 4.6). This animation represents the Kkobe clan and its warriors as superior compared to the other Buganda clans.

4.2 ARTISTIC INTERVENTION THROUGH METAMORPHOSIS AND HYBRIDITY

Hix's (2012) explanation that hybridity is the fusion of two distinct images or objects with different characteristics is applied to examine the process of metamorphosis in art films and how it produces hybridity in Švankmajer films. The relation between metamorphosis and hybridity is established. Metamorphosis involves a physical form, transforming from one physical state to another. A hybrid is a superior form resulting from the mixture of two forms. Metamorphosis causes hybridity in a way that it is the process or event leading to the transformation. The transformation results in a condition of continuous change in physical state, which is referred to as hybridity.

Hix postulates that metamorphosis is an event:

Yesterday, I was an office clerk; this morning, I am a giant beetle. Hybridity is an ongoing continuous condition; My cyborgness persists. Metamorphosis results, of course, in a condition, but the metamorphosis itself is the event of transformation. Hybridity may result from an event, but hybridity is the condition brought about by the transformation (Hix 2012:274).

To this end, hybridity is the condition resulting from the process of transformation (metamorphosis). Hybridity occurs during the event of transformation. The transformation process triggers the condition of hybridity.

When Proteus metamorphoses into a tiger, he mutates into the tiger; the hybrid Pan, in contrast, merges a human with a goat. In metamorphosis, one form replaces another, but altogether only two forms are involved. In a hybrid, two forms join to create a form that is neither one nor the other, so three forms are involved or implied (Hix 2012:273).

Švankmajer's *Alice*, a young girl metamorphoses into a doll contrariwise in a number of scenes. In this case, the doll replaces the human live-action and the figure of a young girl. Similar to Kkobe, the warrior is first portrayed as the Kkobe plant contrariwise Figure 4.7.

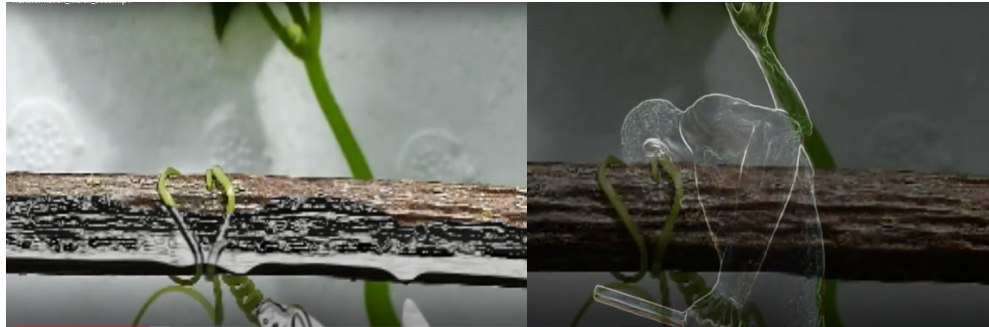


Figure 4.7: Francis Kawuma, Stills from *Kkobe: my Totem*, Video 2024

In this case, the metamorphosis process entails two forms, namely the Kkobe plant, which transforms into a warrior. In the process of transformation, the changeover is marked by shapeshifting, crossing over, the liminal space epitomising the hybrid as an abstracted landscape which neither takes the form of Kkobe plant nor a warrior's face depicted in 4.6, and this is after the warrior was presented as a dog. This transformation process elicits the audience's attention, while at the same time, the change is simulated on a deeper level superficially and assimilates a 'difference' or 'otherness' (Sobchack 2000:138). This is because Figure 4.8 presents a completely different scene, and if it is viewed separately from the Kkobe scene, it could be seen as something else altogether.



Figure 4.8: Francis Kawuma, Stills from Kkobe: My Totem, Video 2024

In this study, hybridity is classified into primary and secondary. Primary hybridity is whereby in Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland*, Alice is depicted as a superior character with heightened attributes of being a pretty girl emerging from a dreamland of sophisticated natural vegetation. Secondary hybridity refers to the creation of a heterogeneous visual idiom or metaphor similar to the Kkobe folklore. In the case of *Alice in Wonderland*, the film is a mixture of live-action and fantastic scenery in the environment. Spectators are linked with the stuporous and the bizarre through hybrid and metamorphic aspects of artworks that elicit reflection and reimagination of familiar concepts. These are applied by Švankmajer and other surrealists, thereby making the viewer an active participant.

In my Kkobe animation, African narratives and folklore based on Švankmajer's work (such as *Little Otik* and *Alice*) are used to recreate a hybrid video comprising two- and three-dimensional characters, mutating into live-action and contrariwise characters. The creation process of this work illuminates metamorphosis as a narrative strategy and the hybridity it produces. The characters undergo metamorphosis using techniques such as rotoscoping and the Reflex morph tool.

Two- and three-dimensional characters are created using two- and three-dimensional software programs such as Adobe Illustrator, Adobe After Effects, Maya, and Softimage. These are morphed with live-action characters using RE

Flex morphing and warping plugin set. The types of animation that the study encompasses include two-dimensional animation created through two-dimensional bitmaps on a computer and three-dimensional animation created in three-dimensional software using three-dimensional polygon mesh.

The practical component of this study entails the creation of a hybrid art form and character to illustrate how metamorphosis causes hybridity. It constitutes the fusion of an animated character with a live-action character, the character's physical transformations from the animated state to the live-action state and inversely. The hybrid yielded a visual metaphor and prototype demonstrating how artistic possibility and creative freedom can be achieved.

The rotoscoping technique is used to amplify the visual effects and intensify the realistic look of the characters. It is also used to fuse a live-action character with an animated character. This study's source of inspiration was drawn from Švankmajer's fascination with using animation to give life to objects. It is a springboard set in this study to explore how animation, through metamorphosis, is used to create multi-stable and heterogeneous art forms.

Richardson (2006) explores the role of surrealism in cinema, with a detailed examination of Jan Švankmajer's work as an exemplar of surrealist and hybrid visual storytelling. Švankmajer, known for his stop-motion films like *Dimensions of Dialogue* (1982) and *Alice* (1988), utilises metamorphosis as a surrealist technique to transform everyday objects and animate them with symbolic meaning. For example, in *Dimensions of Dialogue*, mundane items like bread and clay undergo surreal metamorphoses that reflect conflict, consumption, and renewal. Richardson argues that such transformations mirror human relationships and societal interactions, creating a hybrid of the familiar and the grotesque. These transformations illustrate how Švankmajer's surrealist

metamorphosis invites viewers to reflect on subconscious fears and desires, fostering a profound connection between viewer interpretation and surreal art.

Wells examines metamorphosis and hybridity in the context of animation, particularly within surrealist traditions and their impact on authorship. Švankmajer's works, as Wells (2002) states, are rich with surrealist transformations that blend organic and inorganic, human and object. In *Alice* (1988), Švankmajer reinterprets Lewis Carroll's character in a hybridised form, transforming familiar story elements through stop-motion into unsettling and surreal imagery that challenges conventional boundaries between reality and imagination. Wells emphasises how Švankmajer's use of hybridity and metamorphosis in animated forms transcends traditional storytelling, creating a reflective experience that forces the viewer to question norms and the nature of reality itself.

4.3 METAMORPHOSIS AND HYBRIDITY IN KKOBE

The Kkobe Clan's reverence for the plant as a symbol of life and fertility ties into the broader Buganda tradition of honouring nature and its role in human life. The Kkobe clan's adoption of the wild yam as their totem is a story of survival and gratitude, deeply rooted in Buganda's rich oral tradition. The wild yam, a plant that sustained its ancestors during times of hardship, became a symbol of resilience, fertility, and the interconnectedness between humans and nature. While modern historical records of the Kkobe clan's origin are scarce, the oral narratives passed down through generations continue to reinforce the clan's values and identity within the larger Buganda Kingdom. Drawing inspiration from the characteristics of the Kkobe plant, "Wild yam", my artworks mirror the Kkobe clan's warrior (clan's headman) attributes demonstrated in his heroic journey. The warrior's trajectory embodies endurance, perseverance, and triumph over adversity, as signified by the Kkobe plant in various ways.

For endurance and survival in adversity, the wild yam (Kkobe) grows underground, where it is protected from environmental threats like drought, fire, or predation. It thrives even in difficult conditions, surviving without much care, hidden beneath the soil until it is needed. This characteristic made the Kkobe plant a metaphor for resilience, reflecting how the Kkobe Clan's headsmen, warriors, and leaders have survived and flourished despite challenges.

A traditional Buganda warrior, including those from the Kkobe Clan, was expected to exhibit endurance and the ability to withstand long periods of struggle—whether in battle or during periods of migration and famine. The wild yam's ability to sustain life during difficult times made it a fitting symbol of the warrior's tenacity. A warrior would have to endure physical hardships just as the yam endures underground, waiting for the right time to emerge. According to John Roscoe's (1965) ethnographic studies, the heroic qualities of Buganda warriors were closely tied to the natural world, with totems often reflecting the characteristics that warriors were expected to emulate, such as persistence and stealth. The yams' underground tubers symbolise fertility and renewal because they can regrow even after being harvested. This regenerative ability is closely associated with the heroic journey of a clan leader or warrior, who is expected to survive personal challenges and ensure the continuity of life for future generations.

Oral tradition suggests that during times of war, famine, or migration, the Kkobe Clan's warriors and leaders relied on the wild yam for sustenance. This literal sustenance parallels the headman or warrior's metaphorical role as the community's provider and protector. A warrior's ability to bring back resources (whether through victory in battle or leadership in hard times) reflects the yam's role as a life-sustaining force for the clan. This notion of fertility and sustenance is also found in Buganda's clan structure, as Sir Apolo Kaggwa (1901) highlighted in his studies of the Buganda Kingdom.

The wild yams' underground growth represents a warrior's hidden strength. It lies beneath the surface, unseen, much like the latent power of a warrior or clan leader who, though calm and patient on the outside, possesses great strength and wisdom within. This metaphor resonates deeply with the Kkobe Clan's headsmen, whose strength and leadership are not always visible but emerge when needed.

The warrior's journey often includes periods of waiting and preparation, like how the yam lies underground before it is harvested. This parallels the heroic qualities of patience, strategy, and readiness—essential virtues for a successful leader or warrior. Buganda traditions emphasise that a good warrior knows when to act and when to conserve strength, just as the wild yam stores energy until it is needed. May Mandelbaum Edel (1957) also mentions how Buganda's warriors' patience and strategic planning were key to their success.

The heroic journey of a warrior typically ends in victory and a triumphant return to the community. The yam, when harvested, serves as a symbol of abundance and triumph. In the Kkobe Clan, the wild yam signifies that after the challenges faced in battle or during hard times, the headsmen or warrior returns not only with victory but with the ability to nourish and provide for the clan, much like the wild yam provides sustenance after a long period underground.

The regenerative power of the wild yam also mirrors the cyclical nature of a warrior's journey. Just as the yam can be harvested and then regrow, the warrior undergoes challenges, triumphs, and renewal cycles. This idea of regeneration and continuity is central to the role of the Kkobe Clan's leaders, who are tasked with ensuring their people's ongoing strength and vitality. This reflects broader Buganda beliefs in cyclical renewal and the role of leaders in maintaining order and prosperity for future generations.

My artwork entails the transformation of the warrior's face into a dog as a visual metaphor. Figure 4.9 highlights its significance in the Kkobe clan. One of the clansmen, Kyewaalabye of Kaabyuma, county chief of Buweekula, was waging an expansion war against the Banyoro and got tired. Before he slept, he assigned the women to keep watch and wake the warriors up if anything suspicious happened; unfortunately, even the women fell into deep sleep. If the dogs had not been responsible for watching over the camp, the Banyoro would have been surprisedly attacked by Kyewaalabye and his men. This further contributed to the dog's prominence in the Kkobe clan. Ssebuliba of Buddo is another great Kkobe clan member who survived a fire together with his dog, yet all his wives and children deserted him. He pampered the dog even more after this incident, so the dog came out prominently even then. (<https://kkobeclan.com/history.htm>, accessed on 13th May, 2024).



Figure 4.9: Francis Kawuma, Stills from *Kkobe Animation*, 2024

The dog often symbolises loyalty, protection, and guardianship in African traditions. For the Kkobe clan, the dog is closely associated with the role of the warrior, as both serve as protectors of the community. Warriors, like dogs, are tasked with guarding their people, land, and culture. The dog's role as a protector reinforces the warrior's responsibility to the clan, emphasising loyalty and

devotion to the community. Among many African ethnic groups, dogs are known for their protective instincts and loyalty, often guarding homes, livestock, and villages from external threats. In this way, the dog serves as a fitting symbol for the warrior, whose duty is to defend the clan. Similar themes can be found in other African cultures. According to John Mbiti (1990) in his book *African Religions and Philosophy*, animals, particularly dogs, are often viewed as spiritual companions and guardians, linking them to the roles of warriors who protect not just physically but also spiritually.

4.4 EFFECT OF RECIPROCITY IN KKOBE

This section analyses the application of reciprocity as a reflective aid facilitating the transition of artworks across traditional boundaries, luring the viewer and capturing their attention. Reciprocity is a form of reflection where the viewer and artwork correlate and interact interchangeably (Foster 2002). In the Kkobe, human-to-dog and plant transformations and characters with sharp teeth elicit fear and protection concomitantly. The integration of natural and surreal forms and display of intrinsic and extrinsic character attributes places the spectator in a hybrid space, thereby unanimously projecting connotations, encountering innermost fears, and yielding a trans-mutative spectatorship experience. Viewers are able to reflect on their inner reactions and engage vehemently (Foster, 2002).

Dewey (1934) postulates that the reciprocal relationship between the artist, artwork and viewer plays a role as a form and tool of reflective interaction. Being behind the scenes and witnessing the transformations concurrently reciprocated my role as an artist and viewer to engage and complete the artwork. Dewey further states that the “artistic process is incomplete without the viewer’s engagement, as each individual’s experience and interpretation bring the work to life in a unique way (Dewey, 1934). Kkobe is an artwork with many layers of meaning and characters depicted with various intrinsic and extrinsic attributes. Abstract artworks tend to evoke spectators’ reactions to derive/connote personal

meaning in non-representational forms. In this instance, the spectators' perception reflects onto the artwork, completing the artistic experience through personal reflection and emotional engagement (Dewey 1934).

Thus, without the viewer's interpretation, the artwork is incomplete. The mutual correlation between artist, artwork, and spectator is essential to forming a transmutative experience that elicits spectators' perceptions and opinions, thereby co-establishing the connotation of the artwork. In my creation process I was being transformed between two spaces and characters simultaneously. In addition, I was placed both at the beginning and end of the creation process. The experience made me part of the artwork.

Reciprocity in art facilitates a shared interactive experience between the artwork, the artist and the viewer. During spectatorship of the Kkobe, a viewer's perception mutates through hybrid visual forms. The transformation of the characters and objects attracts the spectator to reflect on the boundaries of perception and reality. Artworks entice the viewer to engage interactively through comparing and contrasting. This experience enhances their interpretative role and makes art an active, reflective experience that integrates realism and surrealism (Bourriaud, 2002).

Reciprocal theory is used to explain the process of metamorphosis and hybridity within art films. The theory of reciprocity is applied to describe metamorphosis as a creation process that results in hybrid art films. It is through the process of metamorphosis that a character's internal traits and attributes become external. There is a reciprocal exchange between intrinsic and extrinsic character properties. A relationship of mutual exchange is established by fusing a live-action character with an animated character. The artist or animator is offered the creative possibility of transforming a character's intrinsic properties and traits into extrinsic traits. Exploring reciprocity can lead to an analysis of how animation and

live-action, metamorphosis and hybridity complement each other in eliciting visual appeal. The artist is able to illustrate the character's fantastical world in an animated form and state. Juxtaposing it with the realistic world offered by the live-action form simultaneously depicts both fantasy and realism (Wilde 2002:449).

The creative approach of using metamorphosis as a medium of exchange to fuse the two genres together is employed to illustrate how artistic boundaries and limitations can be erased to yield hybridised visual metaphors. Reciprocity and reception theory are utilised to explain how the fusion of the two genres complements each other towards a productive change and effective visual effects for the viewer. Exploration of reciprocity yields an analysis of how animation and live action complement each other in eliciting visual appeal (Wilde 2002:449).

Hall's (1997) work extends Reception Theory into the domain of cultural studies, emphasising how media and artworks are understood through processes of interpretation that depend on the viewer's social and cultural context. Hall's analysis of visual art reflects the idea that surrealism and hybridity in art can provoke diverse interpretations, influenced by the viewer's identity and background. For instance, in works like Dalí's *The Elephants* (1948), where massive, distorted elephants stand in stark contrast to their realistic surroundings, the impact on the viewer is shaped by cultural frames and personal responses to the absurd and the hybrid. Hall argues that art with surreal and hybrid elements challenges viewers to reflect on their own perceptions and the cultural meanings ascribed to different symbols, suggesting that Reception Theory can help explain why surreal and hybrid art often evoke such varied emotional and intellectual responses.

Both of these texts illustrate how Reception Theory, when applied to surreal, metamorphic, and hybrid artworks, shifts the focus from the artist's intention to the viewer's active role in meaning-making. These theories demonstrate the

reciprocal relationship between the artwork and the viewer, where meaning is co-constructed through the act of viewing.

The theory of reception is applied to analyse the observer's interpretation of the hybridised artwork, with reference to Paul Smith and Carolyn Wilde (date) in their book, *A Companion to Art Theory*. This also aids the reader's understanding of the impact of the hybridised visual metaphors on the audience. The illustration of the significance of engaging the observer as an active participant in completing the artwork is based on Jauss's elucidation that "The historical life of a literary work is unthinkable without the active participation of its addressees" (Jauss 1982:19). Thus, the Reception aesthetics as a pillar of reception theory is employed to illustrate the relationship between the observer, recipient, the work of art, the artist and the observer's interpretation (Wilde 2002:449); (Iser 1989: 8); (Paul Crowther 1993:7).

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter encapsulates my reflection on the conceptual and creation processes of my artworks as an artist and viewer, as well as the final artwork interpretation in relation to the various scholars and theories discussed in the study.

5.1 RECIPROCITY IN INTEGRATING METAMORPHOSIS, SURREALISM AND HYBRIDITY

My artwork in Kkobe: My Totem, is an appreciation and illustration of how limitless boundaries of expression and creative freedom can be achieved through the application of metamorphosis and hybridity in both live-action and animated films. Through this, I was able to experiment with the technical process. By encountering various challenges and being able to resolve them, I was able to execute transformations through metamorphosis. In learning the limitations and delimitations of the metamorphosis technique, I was transformed and attained skills of eroding boundaries of imagination to create visual appeal.

However, without the viewer's interpretation, the artwork is incomplete as the mutual correlation between artist, artwork, and spectator is essential to forming a transmutative experience that elicits spectators' perceptions and opinions, thereby co-establishing the connotation of the artwork. I was being transformed between two spaces and characters simultaneously. In addition, I was placed both at the beginning and end of the creation process. The experience made me part of the artwork. This section in my study analyses the application of reciprocity as a reflective aid facilitating the transition of artworks across traditional boundaries, luring the viewer and capturing their attention.

In the Kkobe, human-to-dog and plant transformations and characters with sharp teeth elicit fear and protection concomitantly. Integrating natural and surreal

forms and displaying intrinsic and extrinsic character attributes place the spectator in a hybrid space, thereby unanimously projecting connotations, encountering innermost fears and yielding a transmutative spectatorship experience. Viewers are able to reflect on their inner reactions and engage vehemently (Foster 2002).

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Reception aesthetics as a pillar of reception theory is employed to illustrate the relationship between the observer, recipient, the work of art, the artist and the observer's interpretation (Wilde 2002:449); (Iser 1989: 8); (Crowther 1993:7).

5.2 THE AESTHETICS OF CONSTRUCTION AND DECONSTRUCTION IN ARTWORKS WITH METAMORPHOSIS, SURREALISM AND HYBRIDITY

To explore the aesthetics of construction, deconstruction, metamorphosis, surrealism, and hybridity in contemporary art, two valuable readings provide both theoretical insights and practical illustrations: Roseline de Thélin (2019) offers a deep dive into the process of deconstruction and reconstruction in art, particularly within the surrealist and dreamlike traditions. Drawing on surrealism's influence, de Thélin describes how breaking down conventional narratives and structures can lead to unexpected, innovative expressions. Her methodology combines a surrealist approach—embracing chance, play, and irrationality—with a focus on hybrid visual styles and metamorphosis, creating artworks that move fluidly between digital and traditional mediums. This blending of techniques allows for iterative deconstruction and reconstruction, paralleling how dream states function as fragmented yet reassembled narratives. De Thélin's work highlights how artistic deconstruction helps artists re-imagine self-identity and perceptions of reality, inspired by surrealist icons like Marcel Duchamp and the automatic drawing techniques used by early surrealists (de Thélin 2019).

Martta Heikkilä discusses the philosophical underpinnings of construction and deconstruction in the context of Derrida's analysis of Antonin Artaud's artworks. Derrida viewed Artaud's pictograms as situated in a space that defies traditional distinctions between subject and object, creating what Derrida described as "subjectiles". This space of liminality—between visible and invisible, real and imaginary—serves as a framework for surrealist and hybrid art forms, where automatism is often employed. In surrealist metamorphosis, for instance, artists

allow unconscious, spontaneous gestures to emerge, deconstructing controlled forms and embracing hybridity to reflect complex psychological and social themes. Artaud's approach, described as "documents" rather than mere drawings, illustrates this intersection of hybridity and metamorphosis, where art becomes a fluid act of rebirth rather than a fixed structure (Heikkilä 2020). These readings show how artists use deconstruction not just as a technical process but as a way to continually rethink artistic identity and purpose, often drawing on subconscious themes to allow hybridity and metamorphosis to transform the artwork's meaning over time.

Kkobe exhibition denotes metamorphosis as the ultimate medium and digital vehicle (device) that brings to life the activation, transformations and visualisation of the Kkobe folklore and their adaptation to the audience. The animation in this exhibition is an adaptation based on the legend, explaining how Kkobe clansmen came to have Kkobe as their totem and relating the heroic attributes of the clan warrior. In these animations, metamorphosis is placed as an appropriate storytelling device that erodes creative boundaries and empowers animators with freedom of expression and creative imagination to re-imagine, achieve and appreciate the fluid nature of oral storytelling and cultural values. As a result, the spectacle derived from this experience engages the viewer as an active participant and witness in the appreciation and preservation of the Kkobe culture. Metamorphosis, as a medium of exchange between the past, present and future, connects those currently viewing the artwork to the embedded Kkobe cultural heritage origin, yielding visual appeal concurrently. It depicts the effective hybridity and visual appeal yielded due to the impact of metamorphosis in both live-action and animated films.

5.3 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study depicts metamorphosis as the crowning medium and digital technique that revitalises the activation, transformations, and visualisation of Kkobe folklore.

As a storytelling device, metamorphosis erodes the creative boundaries and amplifies animators' freedom of expression and creative imagination. Through the medium's plasticity, animators can re-imagine and enliven the fluid nature of oral storytelling and cultural values. The entire experience yields a spectacle, allowing the viewer to engage with the Kkobe culture in real time. Metamorphosis, as a vehicle between the past, present, and future, links the artist, the spectator, and the artwork to the origin of Kkobe cultural heritage, yielding visual appeal concurrently through reciprocity and hybridity.

From this study, one can deduce that artworks with transformations elicit more wonderment and hence cause more visual appeal compared to those without. Artworks with metamorphosis, hybridity, and surrealism are more reciprocated compared to those without. Films with transformations tend to have advanced characters compared to those without.

Metamorphosis allows the animator and artist to create multifaceted artworks with various meanings. They can create characters with intrinsic and extrinsic traits that elicit wonderment and visual appeal. The visual display of metamorphosis combined with hybridity evokes surrealism geared towards visual appeal. The study recommends critical debates honing in on the comparative analysis of the suspense of disbelief in both 2 and 3-dimensional transformations in animated films contrary to live action films.

Surrealism, in conjunction with metamorphosis and hybridity, is utilised by both African and European artists to conserve and reignite the representation of their cultures. African surrealist films, Kkobe, Jan Švankmajer's surrealist cinema, and European surrealist films employ surrealist techniques to preserve cultural traditions, folklore, and societal norms. Švankmajer's works often draw from Czech folklore and mythical themes, recontextualising them through nightmarish imagery to question cultural identity and authority (Brooke 2014). Comparably,

European surrealist films, particularly those influenced by Luis Buñuel and the Surrealist movement, use emblematic narratives to represent culture and identity (Andrey 2016). African surrealist films also blend folklore and myth, to bolster cultural heritage (Belcher 2005). These surrealist traditions all function as a means of conserving cultural narratives through unorthodox storytelling regardless of their different cultural circumstances.

The study and my exhibition mirrors the link between African and European surrealist films. Kkobe and Švankmajer's films both utilise unpredictable and illogical abstract juxtapositions. Their artists use surreal aesthetics, to explore subconscious realities and to preserve culture (Belcher 2005). In this regard, I therefore extrapolate that Kkobe is an addition to African surrealist cinema.

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