By presenting the stigmas within the familiar narratives of fairy tales, we raise awareness for the stigma in question and educate children and parents on how to “de-stigmatise”.

Twisted Tales, an animated series of fairy tales — with a twist.

Presented by Institute for Transmedia Design
**STORY WITH A TWIST**

*Twisted Tales* is a transmedia take one the familiar fairy tales told through a webisodes (6 x 12’), an animated TV series (26 x 12’), an educational story apps and a AR experience.

Through a selection of fairy tales, our intent is to tackle six different stigmas, physical, mental, racial, sexual, social status, gender identity. Each fairy tale episode is a stand-alone story, re-telling a familiar fairy tale through the prism of a stigma. The first tale in the series of *Twisted Tales* is *Cinda Real* (our take on Cinderella), a story about a girl who is stigmatised for having only one leg. *Cinda Real* offers a new and empowering perspective on the well-known story by introducing the stigma of physical disability into the narrative. Sexual stigma is told through the story of a *Sleeping Girls* (our take on Sleeping Beauty). Mental disability is explored in the new version of Rapunzel called *Real Punzel*, and racial stigma is woven into the story of *The Not So Ugly Duckling* (our take on Ugly Duckling). Social status stigma is problematised in the re-imagined *Midas Touch* our *Golden Touch*, and gender identity stigma becomes the subject of *The Princess and the Real Frog*.

The reason we are choosing well-known fairy tales and characters rather than telling new stories in order to explore these stigmas is to provide a familiar entry point for the child watching/interacting with it, which then helps in the navigation of this world which is at the same time familiar and yet has new and unexpected narrative developments.

By presenting the stigmas within the familiar narratives of fairy tales, we raise the awareness for the stigma in question and educate children and parents on how to ‘de-stigmatisate’ the stigma. This way, both those that witness someone being stigmatised and those who have suffered from being stigmatised will be able to recognise first the stigma and its harmful effect and secondly they will be shown ways to overcome the stigma (from within as well as socially).
TWISTED TALES EPISODES

The series is composed of 6 episodes, each 12 minutes long. Each episode is a stand-alone story, re-telling a familiar fairy tale through the prism of a particular stigma.

SERIES OUTLINE

*Cinda Real* deals with physical stigma. She has only one leg, yet all she wants is to be able to dance. So when the royal ball is announced, she tries to get an invite, but her stepsisters make a laughing stock out of her, so ashamed Cinda runs into the woods, to her fairy godmother’s cabin. There she is encouraged to make herself a wooden leg. With the new leg, Cinda attends the ball and shines on the dance floor. The prince proposes to her, but she refuses; she just came to dance.

Mental stigma is explored in *Real Punzel*, the new version of Rapunzel. Punzel is a little girl who behaves a bit differently to other kids. This is because she is autistic. Her mother, upset by her daughter’s condition, and horrified at the thought of the bullying and stigma her darling Punzel will have to go through if she goes to school, decides to home-school her. Punzel is not allowed any outside contact and has no friends. Until a boy from next door starts to climb up to her balcony and he accepts her for the person she is, not discriminating against her little idiosyncrasies. Punzel’s mother goes nuts when she finds out, and forbids Punzel from seeing the boy. But when Punzel becomes depressed, the mother relents and allows this friendship, finally realising she cannot keep Punzel under lock and key, ‘protected’ from the world.

Sexual stigma is told through the story of *Sleeping Girl* (our take on Sleeping Beauty). A young prince from another kingdom comes to visit the beautiful Princess. He falls in love with her, but his way of wooing her leaves a lot to be desired. He first tries to steal a kiss from her, but she pulls back, not impressed by his forwardness. Then he tries a different tactic: he tells her that a terrible curse will visit her kingdom if she does not kiss him. She ignores him. For the next week he comes up with ever more disastrous scenarios that will unfold if she refuses him. Still she stays steadfast and won’t kiss him. Finally, he gives up. And when he stops pursuing her he is actually not such a pain to be around. They become friends and the Princess finds she has started to fancy him. So she kisses him, but on her own terms.
Racial stigma is woven into the story of *Not So Ugly Duckling* (our take on *Ugly Duckling*). The little duckling suffers from being laughed at and scorned for being so different. When even his mother no longer defends him, he feels hurt and betrayed, so he decides to run away from home. His suffering comes to an end when he finds out he has transformed into a swan and is accepted by the swans (the swan is a metaphor for the white community). But then, after a while, being surrounded by just swans starts to bore him a bit. Everywhere he looks, everyone looks the same as him and behaves the same as him. He realises that being different is not such a bad thing after all and decides to return to the duck family (ducks are the metaphor for the black community). Yet now that he has grown into a beautiful swan, his duck siblings have a new respect for him and everyone at home treats him differently. But really, it’s because he accepted that it was OK to be different from his family.

Social status stigma is problematised in the re-imagined *Midas Touch*, now called *Gold Touch*, a story about a little girl who wants, wants, wants. She wants what her friends have (the latest trainers, doll, or dress) and she doesn’t realise just how hard her single father works to support them. He struggles to make ends meet, but as he wants his daughter to have all the things her friends have, so that she doesn’t stand out for being poor, he takes on two jobs and is near complete exhaustion. His daughter, seeing how much her father is suffering, makes a wish - to turn whatever she touches into gold. To her delight, her wish come true and she heads off to sell the household things she has turned to gold, except when she takes the money, it, too, turns to gold. Then, slowly, everyone and everything around her turns to gold. Including her father and all her friends. Soon she is the loneliest richest girl in the world. And she regrets her wish, crying and wishing she had never wanted all those things. Her tears undo the spell and she realises what truly matters in this world, no longer in thrall to the material things around her.

Gender role/identity stigma takes centre stage in the retelling of *The Princess and the Real Frog*. When a princess meets a frog, she thinks that if she kisses him, he will turn into a prince. The frog is anxious about this; what if he doesn’t turn into a prince? And what if he does and he doesn’t like being a prince? He asks the princess to not rush into the kiss. To give him some time. So she does. And the two slowly fall in love. After a while, the princess just wants to kiss the frog for who he is, not because he might turn into a prince. So she kisses him, and nothing happens. He remains a frog. Much to both their relief, actually. Except not everyone thinks like them. They are aghast. She is a princess, she is supposed to fall in love with a prince! Not a frog. They try to elope, but end up facing discrimination wherever they go. They finally settle in the woods, far from people, and find that the animals in the forest don’t mind one little bit about their unusual relationship. And so they live happily ever after.
CINDA REAL PILOT EPISODE

With the Cinda Real fairytale we want to get children and parents to really think about what it means to be disabled, and what are the challenges those with disabilities face. Our Cinda Real has just one leg, yet all she wants is to dance, and this wish comes true when she makes herself a wooden leg.

Cinda, who has only one leg, and relies on crutches to move around, lives with her cobbler father, and her stepmother and two stepsisters. In spite of Cinda’s disability, the three women treat her like a servant and are mean to her. Cinda, however, performs her daily tasks with grace and kindness, and uses her crutches in ingenious ways to get her chores done (using them as brooms and dancing with them).

When the prince announces the ball at which he will be looking for a wife, Cinda wishes she could go, not because she wants to marry the prince, but because she would like to dance. However, when she tries to get a ticket for the ball in the town square, she gets shoved in the crowd and falls and then someone accidentally steps on one of her crutches. Her stepsisters make fun of her, turning the crowd on her and Cinda hobbles off in shame. She runs off into the woods.

In the woods, she comes across the cabin of her godmother, who suggests that instead of trying to make a new crutch, she should make herself a new leg. All the forest animals help her in this arduous task (the badger helps cut the tree; the hedgehog helps to sand the wood; the fox polishes it), but when she is done, the leg doesn’t fit. Her godmother tells her she must not give up so easily; maybe she needs to learn how to adapt to the leg. So after much falling and bruising, Cinda finally learns how to walk with her new leg. Proud, her godmother gives her a ball gown. Cinda is now ready to attend the ball.

Arriving at the ball, there is just one snag; she doesn’t have an invite. But her forest animal friends, who brought her there, create a diversion, and Cinda slips in. She is awed by the surroundings. She doesn’t wait for anyone to ask her to dance, but steps straight onto the dance floor, dancing on her own. Slowly, other couples stop dancing to watch this beautiful girl dance. Everyone is mesmerised, the prince included. The stepsisters, horrified, try to shame her by telling everyone she has just one leg, but that only makes everyone more impressed. And the stepsisters get shamed for being so nasty.
The prince dances with Cinda and afterwards proposes to her. But Cinda refuses; all she wanted was to dance. A little disappointed, the prince asks if she will be his friend. Cinda happily accepts. When she returns home, her father is overjoyed; he is ashamed of his neglectful behaviour, and regrets letting the stepmother and stepsisters behave they way they did, so he kicks them out of the house. Cinda and her father live happily ever after.

Cinda Real will be broadcasted online in the form of a webisode accessible to broader audiences across Europe (see more in the Outreach Strategy below). We believe the story has a great European potential, due to the necessity of the topic and its unique participatory approach. The animated fairy tale will be broadcast via our own web platform and disseminated across platforms in order to start the dialogue with both the audience and the future Twisted Tales (6x24min) TV broadcaster. The web dissemination of the pilot episode is therefore intended to help attract a broadcaster and open up the path to a successful TV distribution deal for the series.
CORE CHARACTERS

Cinda is a young girl (9) with a disability – she doesn’t have one leg. Yet she goes about her everyday life cheerfully, with the help of crutches, not letting anyone or anything get her down, such as her cruel stepmother and stepsisters who treat her as their servant. Even though she manages all her household tasks with the crutches, she still has not ‘stood on her own two feet’, so to speak, as she puts her own needs second to those around her. It’s as if she accepts that she is to be stigmatized because of her disability. Her need is to do something to assert herself. When the ball is announced, her desire to dance propels her towards this need, but the first consequence is disappointment, shame and running away. It is only through the guidance of the mentor figure of the Godmother that Cinda will finally reach her need and manage to dance without the aid of crutches (which here also embody a symbolic meaning). Her refusal of the Prince’s hand in marriage is the final element of Cinda’s maturing and initiation – she does not need anyone, she is finally the master of her own destiny, and no longer stigmatized.

The Godmother is Cinda’s godparent, her Fairy Godmother. She lives in the middle of the forest surrounded with animals in a simple cabin. She is wise, knowledgeable and kind and uses her wisdom to help Cinda find the right answers and solutions to overcome her disability and fulfill her only wish, to dance. However, she does not use magic, as the original Fairy Godmother – her advice is rooted in realism rather than in the instant solutions of the Magic Wand.
Cinda’s father is depicted as a distraught character. After Cinda’s mother died he was faced with raising his only daughter alone. He decided it would be best to have a woman in the house so he remarried a woman with two greedy daughters. Still feeling deep grief and sadness he can not stand to be at home. He’s a workaholic and spends all his days at work. That is why he does not see how Cinda’s stepmother and stepsisters treat her. When Cinda returns home after the Royal Ball, her father is overjoyed. He realises his mistakes. Feeling ashamed of behaving neglectfully towards Cinda he shows deep regret and throws his wife and her daughters out of the house. Today he lives a happy life with his daughter Cinda.

The Prince is a handsome, warm-hearted, generous in spirit and a very open and compassionate young man (21) always showing an independent mind. Although he is expected to be always handsome, well dressed and behave in the best manner, he sometimes likes to run around, play and have holes in his pants, as all the other young men at his age do. His mother, The Queen, has taught him the meaning of acceptance, compassion and understanding. Once challenged by Cinda, he accepts her disability and admires her for who she is. By accepting Cinda’s wish to stay friends and not not marry he’s proving his deep compassion and understanding.

This same approach to re-questioning and reimagining today’s social values through story characters will be integrated into each of the following Twisted Tales episodes.
EDUCATIONAL STORY APPS

With the 1st Cinda Real educational story app we want to get children and parents to really think about what it means to be disabled, and to educate them on the challenges that those with disabilities face in a manner that will be fun and gamified. This same approach to the chosen topic will be applied in all 6 story apps. The challenge of the the 1st in the series of 6 is to draw Cinda’s new leg. Except that not just any leg will do: the children need to get the leg just right. It can’t be too long, or too short; neither too wide nor too narrow, and the arch of the foot needs to be well balanced, too. Because if the leg doesn’t fit, then Cinda can’t dance. If a child creates an appropriate leg he/she is rewarded with an animated video clip of the royal ball. Cinda’s leg in the dance is the one created by the child. If, instead, the child creates a leg that is too long or too short, they will access an animated clip of the story in which Cinda is trying and failing to make herself a new leg. Once again, the ill-fitting leg used in the clip will be the child’s own drawing. The encouragement that the Fairy godmother gives will encourage the child to try again. Other segments of the story will also be used to ‘test’ this newly created leg, from the pancake-making breakfast sequence (except that here we will be seeing it as if Cinda is trying to use her new leg rather than her crutches as is in the original story) to the walk into town to get the tickets for the royal ball. The app will allow children to see their own drawings of a leg spring to life in a short animated film video clips. Through this medium they will be able to interact with the story (stigma of physical disability) on a deeper emotional level.
AR EXHIBITION PLAYGROUND

In an exhibition space both parents and children will able to express their own stories, through writing and through drawing. In the AR experience the participant will meld in to hybrid of a AR and real space. In the AR experience, the world of the fairy tale will mesh with the real spatial environment (garden, castle, etc.) of the exhibition space and with the participants, so that they can enter the story and enact certain parts of the fairy tale with AR paintbrushes. This ties in with the theory of therapeutic writing that we explored in the first stage of this project, and for this reason the AR exhibition playground plays a significant educational value. The AR paintbrushes are especially fun to experiment with, and they are a technology that is still only accessible in exhibit spaces rather than in individual homes. The participatory exhibition is therefore intended as the fun playground within which children can make their own versions of the fairy tale characters come to life. The visitors or rather co-creators will be able to explore, through their own drawings, the subject of each stigma and become storytellers in their own right.
ARTISTIC NOTE
OF INTENTION

We believe that for a transmedia project to succeed, it has to be participatory, with the participation meaningful for everyone involved, which is why the project was, from the outset, developed and executed through contributions, from both children and their parents.

The animation process started with a series of workshop in which children created illustrations, sound and animation. Children in different age groups, varying from 2 to 10, were inspired to visualise a princess, a castle, animals and a prince that is as childish as they are and is allowed to be dirty or have a hole in their pants. Separate parts of the body, objects or the environment were taken out from various children's illustrations and merged into one single character or object. This approach means the end users - the children - have a co-creative and participatory role from the very outset of the project. So from an early age they are shown the value of teamwork and co-creation as opposed to solitary creation.

The main goal of this approach is to foster creativity through the transmedia platforms - whether at a visual level, through drawing, or at a narrative level, through storytelling. And at the same time, both interactive experiences have as their aim to educate and engage with latest technology.

For the animated Twisted Tales series, a new aesthetics is researched by combining 2D animation with stop motion of real objects, props and sets co-created by children. The animation is intended to be playful and dynamic with vivid colours thus giving the animation a childlike quality.
ARTISTIC METHOD IN PICTURES

A collection of Children’s illustrations
Children’s colours and patterns

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Twisted Tales
Character adaptation
Character development
Integration of Children’s colour palette in character design
Integration of Children’s drawings and textures in background compositions
Character and environment artwork
OUTREACH STRATEGY

With Twisted Tales we target children, aged from 6 to 8, their parents and grandparents as well as nursery teachers. The project is intended for young children, parents and educational institutions willing to work on the prevention of violence. Twisted Tales will be promoted through kindergartens in an educational (safe and friendly) environment where the highest penetration of our audience is. We will set a team of storytellers in order to promote the story in kindergartens in Slovenia, France, Croatia, Portugal, The Netherlands, UK, Germany and Austria. Through the participatory workshop children will be introduced to the story and afterwards invited to express their thoughts and emotions on the topic through drawing. The drawings will be further used for web dissemination (web platform, social media communication). Prior to the launch of the Twisted Tales series we will invite famous musicians popular among kids to join the initiative and perform for a social cause (i.e. Jan Plestenjak and Neca Falk, Slovenia, Jacques Houdek, Croatia, Lena Meyer-Landrut, Germany and Austria, Vanessa Paradis, France and UK). They will be invited to promote the project by speaking out loud about their own “stigma” of life. We believe that if a famous person can speak loud and open up, we all can. This kind of approach, musicians teaming up with NGOs has shown great results in past (i.e. Hope For Haiti Now, Global Benefit for Earthquake Relief, The One Campaign, taking action to end extreme poverty and preventable diseases, to name a few.). In each country (Slovenia, France, Croatia, Austria, Germany, The Netherlands, UK) we will organize a concert to accompany the Cinda Real (12’ animated fairy tale) screening premiere. Each concert will be supported by one of the European organisations working on the prevention of violence among children. The promotion of the premiere will happen through our own networks, and the musicians’ and charity organisations’ networks. Their audience is already big so it will help us spread the story as far as possible and embrace the largest possible audience. A series of video interviews with musicians will be disseminated to promote the event in order to strengthen our reach and position among audiences. The video interviews will be published on the web platform and spread via social media networks (prior and post event activity). This constant activity will contribute to forming an active and engaged community lead by famous ambassadors among kids.
Target markets:

- Slovenia,
- Croatia,
- France,
- Portugal,
- Austria,
- Germany,
- UK,
- The Netherlands...

After a thorough dissemination of the *Twisted Tales* episodes we intend to continue with dissemination activities: to further promote the project we will build up a participatory AR exhibition. By building new and engaging technologically advanced storyworlds we will foster a loyal and active audience.

**CALENDAR**

**June 2019**
Web and social media communication

**January 2019 - November 2020**
Kindergarten Twisted Tales workshops

**December 2020**
Episodes and app release

**December 2020 - September 2021**
*Twisted Tales* premiere event in Slovenia, France, Croatia, Portugal, The Netherlands, UK, Germany, Austria

**March 2021 - December 2022**
AR Exhibition Tour
**AUTHOR’S WHY?!**

*Twisted Tales* is a project that works on the prevention of violence among children in a form suitable for them - playful and gamified. It offers a new and empowering perspective on well-known stories and characters of fairy tales by removing bias and introducing a stigma that their lead characters must overcome. Each re-imagined fairy tale tackles a different stigma such as physical, mental, racial, social status, gender identity, etc.

The modern versions of fairy tales like *Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Snow White* are very different than their originals. Instead of important life lessons, they teach girls to wait for a prince to save them and boys can kiss without permission. Stereotypes like passive women with dubious life goals were not always part of these tales. The 20th century in particular saw a concerted sanitisation of fairy tales, with the darker layers glossed over and removed, and in their stead more simplistic messages took root. It is our aim to reclaim the lost lessons of the fairy tales of old.

Core to *Twisted Tales* is that the kids are the stars in this new generation of Fairy Tales. The message to the young audience is that nothing can stop them no matter what stigma they individually need to overcome whether it’s physical, mental, racial, social status, gender identity, etc. Why? Because the children that have been stigmatised have to learn how to overcome the stigma be stronger and wiser!

*Just living is not enough... one must have sunshine, freedom, and a little flower.*

Hans Christian Andersen
Sara Božanić (Director / Producer) is a CEO of the Institute for Transmedia Design, based in Slovenia. She is a ‘hybrid’ – a designer, strategist, educator and thinker. In 2015 she has been chosen among 40 EU consultants who work on audience development via digital means to take part in policy debates under the project The Voice of Culture – a Structured Dialogue between the European Commission and the cultural sector. In 2011, she received a Young Creative Entrepreneur Media Award by the British Council for her achievements in the development of the interactive media design sector in Slovenia.

Jasmina Kallay (Director / Screenwriter) is a screenwriter, novelist, transmedia creator and creative producer. In 2012, she wrote Beat Girl, a YA novel which was adapted into a feature film, a webseries, an app and a TV series (Ireland/UK) and nominated for an International EMMY (2013). In 2015 she wrote Write a Screenplay, the first screenwriting manual in Croatia. In 2014, Croatia’s national broadcaster commissioned Jasmina to co-create a new children’s daily program called Woohoo (Juhuhu), which was the first TV program in Croatia to be filmed on a VR set. In 2016 she created a family reality show called Kids Rule. She has a number of film and TV projects in development and works as an adviser for Creative Europe/MEDIA. She is also one of the founders of SPIID, Croatia’s Screenwriters and Playwrights Guild. Jasmina has worked closely with Sara and ITD for a number of years (currently collaborating on Twisted Tales, a transmedia animation project which received MEDIA development funding), which has resulted in an excellent working relationship built on trust and creativity.

Dalibor Kazija (Artistic Designer), designer and illustrator with experience in different fields and media, Dalibor’s areas of exploration include visual communication design, illustration and animation. He has created numerous short animated films, and has, as an illustrator, participated at a number of exhibitions, demonstrating his creative ingenuity and his passion for design. In 2016 he designed the Webdoc for the film Ukrainian Sheriffs, awarded with IDFA Winner Special Jury Award for Best Feature-Length Documentary, that was selected and presented to the public on international design exhibition ZGRAF12 in Zagreb, Croatia in January, 2017.
Pierre Cattan (App Executive Producer) founded in 2012 Small Bang, a creative studio which explores new narrative forms. He directed the prospective documentary web series Minidocs (10x4', Orange, 2012). He is the executive producer on several mobile applications: Cinemacity, co-produced with Arte in 2013, Birdlab, a participatory science app created for the National Natural History Museum, Morphosis (2015) and Phallaina (2016), co-produced with France Télévisions’ Nouvelles Ecritures department. Pierre produces and directs the Mediapart live since May 2012. Pierre, is a founding member of PXN, the association for Producers of Digital Experiences.

Xavier Guyomarc’h (App Animation Art Director), a passionate and versatile graphic artist, with an excellent understanding of both 2D and 3D animation film production for TV, smartphone and tablets. Xavier joined the Small Bang team in 2014. He notably brought his expertise and talents to the Seasons: Morphosis application which accompanies Jacques Perrin’s latest film, Seasons. He also is the artistic director of Small Bang’s first videogame: Diorama, the girl and the goddess, adapted from Homer’s Iliad.

kleemar, Matej Končan (Composer), is an electronic composer and musician oriented towards organic and analogue electronic sounds. His music, commonly described as IDM or intelligent dance music, profoundly reaches beyond firm genre categorization and varies between melodic post-rock and electronic dance sound expressions. In 2010, awarded as best MTV Adria act for composing and playing with Croatian band Lolobrigida.
PRODUCTION COMPANIES

Institute for Transmedia Design (Slovenia) is a smart institution focused on story and technology driven innovation. A pioneer in transmedia design methodology and practice (research, development and production), ITD has been actively involved in co-creating international projects with partners such as the British Council, Edinburgh Napier University, the Arts Academy, Split University, MEDIA Desk Slovenia. Its work has been selected for major industry events in the region: Cross Video Days, Biennale of Design, Ljubljana, Cartoon Forum, IDFA Forum, MIT Open Doc Lab. In 2015 it was awarded special recognition for its transmedia design project Stigmarella - The Story about a Girl and a Shoe (BIO50, Biennale of Design, Ljubljana). In 2016 ITD produced the transmedia for the film Ukrainian Sheriffs, awarded with the IDFA Winner Special Jury Award for Best Feature-Length Documentary. In 2017 ITD’S transmedia project Twisted Tales received MEDIA support as the first ever animated project from Slovenia.

Small Bang (France), creates multi-platform experiences which connect the physical and digital worlds. From the participative science of BirdLab to the cine-walks of Cinemacity, through the physical fresco of Phallaina and the Open Bidouille Camp events, the Small Bang teams explore every novel form of spatialized narration. Small Bang readily defines itself as an interactive orchestra, a laboratory for cultural and civic innovations which places the human experience at the heart of the narrative and digital journey.

Sparkle Animation (Portugal), is a Lisbon and London based studio dedicated to producing animation projects, providing original and meaningful content with an excellence in design and creativity. Sparkle Animation is a part of Sparkle Network, an international collective of award-winning creative industries.
“The European Union is the world leader of democracy, human rights, tolerance, individual freedom, brotherhood, cultural and ethnic diversity and social inclusion.

Cinda Real is an excellent metaphor of these values, transmitted to younger children through transversal social realities, that they easily identify, challenging them and consolidating them in children from an early age.”

Luis da Matta Almeida (Board Director, Cartoon Media)
June 15th, 2016

“Providing young children with the opportunity to understand and explore social stigmas such as disability is hugely important and Cinda Real offers an imaginative and unique way in which to do this.

There are certain animation projects that deserve to be made and then there are projects that need to be made. Cinda Real is the kind of project that not only deserves to be made but needs to be made - for children everywhere.”

John Lomas-Bullivant (Session Chairman, Cartoon 360)
June 27th, 2016