TWISTED TALES

Animated fairy tales — with a twist.
6 x WEBISODES > 26 x 12’ TV > APPS > AR EXHIBITION > WEB PLAYGROUND

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”.

Presented by Institute for Transmedia Design
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**TWISTED CONCEPT**

*Twisted Tales* is a transmedia take on familiar fairy tales and characters, told through the medium of webisodes (6 x 12 min), a TV series (26 x 12 min), story apps, AR experience and web playground, and an educational program for kids, teachers, and parents. The series targets 6-8-year-olds, yet uses appropriate language, making it appealing for both younger and older kids.

*Twisted Tales* is an entire entertainment and teaching universe that offers a new and empowering perspective on the well-known stories and characters from fairy tales, adapting them to modern times and themes. Fairy tales, as originally written, were perfectly suited to the subject of stigmas. It is only in the more recent sanitised re-interpretations that their valuable lessons have become lost. With the darker layers glossed over and removed, more simplistic messages took root. The modern versions of fairy tales like Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, and Snow White are very different than their originals. Instead of important life lessons, they teach girls to wait for a prince to save them. Stereotypes like passive women with dubious life goals were not always part of the tales, either. It is our aim to reclaim the lost lessons of these fairy tales of old.

Through a selection of fairy tales, our intent is to tackle different stigmas. Each fairy tale episode is a stand-alone story, a retelling of a familiar fairy tale through the prism of a stigma. The first tale in the *Twisted Tales* series is *Cinda Real* (our take on Cinderella), a story about a girl who is stigmatised for having only one leg, and her intention to come to a dance “just to dance”. *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 *Sleeping Girl* (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 The Ugly Duckling). Social status stigma is problematised in the re-imagined *Midas Touch*, our *Golden Touch*, while gender identity stigma becomes the subject of *The Princess and the Real Frog* (*The Princess and the Frog*).

*Twisted Tales* rewrites fairy tales with an eye to lessons for a world of empathy and understanding and without bias of the stigmas in question. We believe that re-telling well-known fairy tales provides an important...
familiarity to the child watching/interacting with such, something which helps in their navigation of the world and more effectively emphasizes the new and unexpected narrative developments. By presenting the stigma within the familiar narrative of the fairy tale, we raise the awareness for the stigma in question and educate children on how to ‘de-stigmatise’. Both those who 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 of overcoming the stigma (from within as well as socially).

The message to young audiences is that nothing can stop them no matter what stigma they individually need to overcome, whether it’s physical, mental, racial, social, or gender based, or whether it’s due to external pressures like bullying. Why? Because kids who have been stigmatised get to learn how to overcome the stigma and be stronger and wiser!
Twisted Tales balances broadly appealing stories and their style with roots in empathy, love, and critical life lessons. Different mediums and tactics are used to embrace the largest audience possible, assure visibility, accessibility, and participation. The Twisted Tales entertainment and teaching universe is built out of:

**6 X 12’ WEBISODES** > The webseries is composed of six (6) episodes, each 12 minutes long, offering an empowering perspective on the well-known story of a fairy tale by introducing a stigma into the narrative. They act as a vehicle to build an audience and increase interest in what is to come next - Twisted Tales Universe.

**TWISTED TALES 26 X 12’ TV 1ST SEASON** > The first TV series season is composed of six (6) webisodes and 20 new retellings of well-known stories introducing different stigmas into the narrative. Each reimagined fairy tale is a lesson of empathy, love, and understanding. The series targets 6-8-year-olds, yet uses appropriate language for both younger and older kids.

**6 X APPS** > With the educational story apps, 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. Six (6) x apps are thus attached to the webseries’ storylines and characters. The educational story apps target 6-8 year olds, yet use appropriate language to attract even younger kids.

**AR EXHIBITION** > Visitors, or rather co-creators, are able to explore gigantic sculptures of a castle, garden, house, animated clips from Twisted Tales episodes, and to add their own AR drawings, thus becoming storytellers in their own right. The AR exhibition targets kids from 6 - 10 years, as well as families, to actively participate in the presented topic.

**WEB PLAYGROUND** > The interactive Twisted Tales web playground hosts six (6) webisodes, apps, educational games, and activities for kids, families, and educators for narrative immersion and deeper engagement/understanding of a topic.
The webisodes are an entry point, an immersion into the narrative world that we are creating, with the aim of creating awareness and increased interest in the Twisted Tales Universe. Through a selection of six fairy tales, each 12 minutes-long, we tackle six different stigmas (physical, mental, racial, sexual, gender identity, social status). Each episode is a stand-alone story, a lesson in empathy, love, and understanding. The series targets 6-8 year olds, yet uses appropriate language for both younger and older kids.

Webisode 1: Cinda Real

Cinda Real, an adaptation of Cinderella, is a story about a girl who is stigmatised for having only one leg. Even though she has just one leg, all Cinda wants to do is to dance, and this wish comes true when she makes herself a wooden leg.

The origins of Cinderella are rooted in the challenges of growing up and gaining independence. This provides the perfect basis for exploring the stigma of disability. In our version, Cinda has to overcome the disability of having only one leg on several levels: within herself, within her family, and within the community. By changing the focus from wanting to marry the prince to just wanting to dance, we are able to illustrate empowerment and self-realisation.

Webisode 2: Real Punzel

Mental stigma is explored in Real Punzel, the Twisted Tale of Rapunzel. Ralph is a little boy not quite like the other kids. This is because he has Asperger’s, and while he is highly intelligent, his emotional responses to situations are different than that of ‘normal’ kids. His mother, upset by her son’s condition, and horrified at the thought of the bullying and stigmatising her darling son would experience at school, home-schools him instead. Ralph is not allowed any outside contact, and subsequently, has no friends. One day, a girl from next door climbs over the fence. And it is only she who sees the boy as the person he really is, without discriminating against his little ‘idiosyncrasies’. Ralph’s mother gets mad when she discovers the friendship, fearing the worst, and forbids Ralph from seeing his friend again. But when Ralph becomes depressed, the mother relents and allows the friendship, finally becoming aware of the fact that she cannot keep her son under lock and key. Even better, she realises that he can be accepted in the world.
Webisode 3: Sleeping Girl

Sexual stigma is told through the story of Sleeping Girl, our take on Sleeping Beauty. A young prince from another kingdom comes to visit a 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 taking well to his forwardness. He then tries a different tactic, telling her a terrible curse will visit her kingdom if she does not kiss him. She ignores him. For the next week, the prince comes up with ever more disastrous scenarios that will unfold if she continues to refuse him. Yet she stays steadfast and won’t give in, even going so far as to tell her grandmother about the prince’s abuse. Finally, he gives up. And when he stops pursuing her, she finds that he is actually not such a pain to be around. They become friends and the princess finds herself starting to fancy the prince. Finally, she kisses him, but on her own terms.

Webisode 4: The Not-So Ugly Duckling

Racial stigma is woven into the story of the Not-So Ugly Duckling, our adaptation of the Ugly Duckling. The little duckling (a baby swan hatched in a duck’s nest) suffers from being laughed at and scorned for being so different. When even his mother no longer defends him, leaving him feeling hurt and betrayed, the duckling decides to run away from home. Thereafter, he encounters a swan community and his suffering comes to an end when he is transformed into a swan. Now just as beautiful as the others, he is accepted into the group (the swan is a metaphor for the white community). However, after a while, being surrounded by swans and only 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 a metaphor for any community of a different colour / race). And now that he has grown into a beautiful swan, his duck siblings have a new respect for him. They are happy to see him back, and everyone at home treats him differently. But really, it’s because he himself accepted that it was OK to be different from his family.

Webisode 5: Gold Touch

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), not realising just how hard her single father has to work to support her. 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 stick out as ‘the poor kid’, he takes on two
jobs and by now, 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 comes true and she heads off to sell the household things she has turned to gold, except that 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.

**Webisode 6: The Princess and the Real Frog**

Identity stigma takes centre stage in this retelling of the Princess and the Frog. When a princess meets a frog, she agrees to be his friend, but soon she finds that others disapprove of their friendship, everyone from her friends to her family, the latter outright forbidding her from seeing him. Upset, the Princess rebels and disobeys, continuing to hang out with Frog. He tells her he once used to be a prince, before a witch cast a spell on him, and only a kiss from his one true love can release the spell. But when the Princess kisses him, nothing happens. Yet both relieved, as it turns out, as Frog has gotten used to his different appearance, and Princess likes him just the way he is. They settle in the woods, far from people, and find that the animals in the forest don’t mind one 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 challenges those with disabilities face. Our Cinda has just one leg, yet all she wants to do 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, 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 chores done (for instance, using
them as brooms as well as 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, escaping into the woods.

There, she is so tired, she has to stop. While asleep, she is found by her grandmother and taken to a cabin. In the morning, grandmother suggests that instead of trying to make a new crutch, Cinda 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 sand the wood; the fox polishes), but once she is done, the leg doesn’t fit. Cinda’s grandmother 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. Brimming with pride, her grandmother gives her a ball gown and an invitation for the ball. Cinda is ready.

Arriving at the ball, Cinda is awed by the surroundings. She doesn’t wait for anyone to ask her to dance. She just steps right out on the dance floor, dancing on her own. Slowly, other couples stop dancing to watch this beautiful girl in her element. Everyone is mesmerised, the prince included. The stepsisters, horrified, try to shame her by telling everyone she has just one leg, but that only impresses everyone even more. And then it is the stepsisters who get shamed for being so nasty.

The Prince dances with Cinda and afterwards proposes to her. But Cinda refuses; all she wanted to do was dance. At first, the Prince is a little disappointed, but when Cinda asks if he wants to be friends, the Prince happily accepts. When she returns home, her father is overjoyed. He is also ashamed by his neglectful behaviour, and regrets letting the stepmother and stepsisters behave the way they did, so he kicks them out of the house. And Cinda and her father live happily ever after.
CORE CHARACTERS

Cinda is a young girl with a disability -- she only has 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 own personal servant. Even though she manages all her household tasks with 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 forward, but the first consequence is disappointment, shame, and a running away. It is only through the guidance of the mentor figure of the Godmother, that Cinda finally reaches her need and manages to dance without the aid of crutches (which also house a symbolic meaning). Her refusal of the Prince’s hand in marriage is the final element in Cinda’s maturation and initiation -- she does not need anyone. It is she who is the master of her own destiny, and no longer stigmatized.

Godmother is Cinda’s grandma. 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 Godmother -- her advice is rooted in realism rather than in the instant solutions offered by 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 daughters. Still feeling deep grief and sadness, he cannot stand to be at home. He’s a workaholic and spends all his days away on the job. That is why he does not see how Cinda’s stepmother and greedy stepsisters treat her. When Cinda returns home after the Royal Ball, her father is overjoyed. And he realises his mistakes. Feeling ashamed of his 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 fellow, generous in spirit and a very open and compassionate young man with an independent mind. Although he is expected to always be handsome, well-dressed, and behave in only the best manner, he sometimes likes to run around, play, and have holes in his trousers, as all other young men 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 really is. By accepting Cinda’s wish to stay friends and 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.

**CINDA REAL ANIMATIC**
ARTISTIC APPROACH TO THE PROJECT

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

The artistic development of the project started with a series of workshops each led by a child behavior specialist and an in-field mentor (teacher, sound designer, animation specialist), in which children created illustrations, sound, and animation. Children in different age groups, varying from two (2) to 12 became the co-authors of the project, and storytellers in their own right.

The participatory sessions were enriched with didactic games to increase children's focus, participation, and ability to work in a group. This method of teaching was created by Nina Cigüüt, a child behavior specialist. The main goal of this approach is to foster creativity through participatory creation - whether at a visual level, through drawing, or at a narrative level, through storytelling. At the same time, both interactive experiences have as their aim educating and engaging with an audience.
SESSION 1: ILLUSTRATION

Murska Sobota Regional and Study Library, Slovenia, December 2, 2017

The co-creation process started with a public workshop in which children were introduced with the Cinda Real story, and who were then inspired to create illustrations of a prince, princess, castle, animals, and environment. The challenge of the workshop was to visualise a princess with only one leg and a prince who is as child-like as they are, is allowed to be dirty or have holes in their pants.

After the workshop session, the illustrations were filtered and used as the basis for the artistic development of the project, giving it a childlike quality and inspiring us to conceive an audience-driven character and environment aesthetics. Separate parts of the body, objects, or the environment are taken from various children's illustrations and merged into a 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 workshop was lead by a child behavior specialist, Nina Rogan, and co-lead by educator.
ARTISTIC METHOD IN PICTURES
A collection of Children’s illustrations
### Children’s colours and patterns

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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
Artwork
SESSION 2: AUDIO

Murska Sobota Regional and Study Library, Slovenia, December 9, 2017

Through the sound design session, we focused on creating real world sounds together with kids, i.e. baking pancakes, mopping the floor, laughter, etc. The sound was recorded, cleaned, and upgraded to become an integral part of the Cinda Real episode, making the viewing experience as emotional and real as possible. The voices for the Cinda Real characters were provided by children as well as co-authors of this project.

To add the dynamics into the working session and to increase topic engagement, kids were given crutches in order to experience what it is like to dance on one foot. Creating the choreography in their unique way, they self-initially started making up a song about Cinda Real. We took the song and composed it in a modern hipster combining gangnam-style music with more classic pop. The reason why we have chosen this direction is the fact that we want to get as close as possible to the child's/viewer's world. We aspire that our single will become a hit between our age group, to be sung beyond the viewing experience. The final version of the song will be executed by a children's choir led by Tjaša Šimonka.

The workshop was lead by a child behavior specialist, Nina Rogan, and co-lead by an in-field specialist, sound designer and composer Matej Končan alias kleemar.

ARTISTIC METHOD IN SOUND

A Cinda Real song Children's choir
SESSION 3: ANIMATION

Murska Sobota Regional and Study Library, Slovenia, December 16, 2017

Through the animation workshop process, children were drawn into the world of cartoon production and taught how to use basic animation principles in order to inspire them to innovate. The materials from the first and second sessions were used to continue the process, drawing kids to the final step of the cartoon creation by using basic 2D animation principles. Their animations were then analyzed and are further used as the inspiration for Cinda Real film animation prototyping.

The workshop was lead by a child behavior specialist, Nina Rogan, and co-lead by an in-field specialist, animation specialist Timon Leder.

ARTISTIC DIRECTION, SOUND AND ANIMATION

For the Twisted Tales episodes, a new aesthetics was researched by combining 2D animation with stop motion photography of real objects, props, and sets co-created by the children. The animation is intended to be smooth and as natural as possible, imitating movements and gestures from real life. Dynamic vivid colours and playful patterns from kids’ drawings are used on the characters, giving the animation a childlike quality.
The characters are 2D hand-drawn animated in order to bring the viewer closer to the emotions our charter is experiencing, from sadness to self-motivation and ultimate happiness. The environment, the house, the castle, and the dusty roads all have light color saturation, and are in line with the emotional statement of the character. As we move through the animated story, we are drawn into the film as a camera follows the main character each and every step of the way. The backgrounds are stop-motion animated in a sophisticated way, allowing us to use “mistakes/unforeseen light” to our advantage.

For the sound, we are researching a new approach to real world sounds combined with DIY sounds, making the cartoon a contemporary creation. The voiceovers for the core characters, Cinda, the Stepsisters, and the Prince, are given by the kid co-authors of the project. For the adult characters of the Godmother, Father, and Stepmother, the voiceover work is done by professional actors.

ARTISTIC DIRECTION IN PICTURES

In order to achieve a 3D feeling, we have reinvented the kids’s castle drawings by building a castle made from a combination of several kids’ illustrations.
WEB SERIES PRODUCTION EXECUTION

The artistic approach to each webisode is delivered with a combination of kids from six (6) different cultural environments. Cinda Real is created together with kids in Slovenia; Real Puzle in Peru; The Not-So ugly Duckling in the Netherlands; Sleeping Girl in the UK; Golden Touch, in India; and The Girl and the Real Frog in Croatia.

Each individual episode is co-created together with our country co-producers:

- **Slovenia**: Institute for Transmedia Design (main producer/author)
- **Croatia**: Minya Films & Animation
- **Peru**: Lucida Media (tbc)
- **The Netherlands**: Zelović Film
- **UK**: Plug-in Media (tbc)
- **India**: Imira Entertainment (tbc)

Each co-producer delivers five (5) participatory workshop sessions open to the public. The sessions are delivered in a kid-friendly environment (i.e., a library, kids club, etc.) and led by a child behaviour specialist, in-field experts for sound, and animation and an educator instructed to follow our methodology of participatory teaching.
Co-creation process method:

1. Workshop Session 1: Illustration
2. Workshop Session 2: Sound
3. Workshop Session 3: Animation
4. Workshop Session 4: Artwork testing
5. Production: Voiceover with kid co-authors
6. Workshop Session 5: Storyboard and animation prototype testing
7. Premiere with co-authors

The artistic development of the stories, characters, and sound is within the domain of the main producer (ITD). The co-creation process and film animation production is to be delivered in the co-producers’ countries. Each episode will be aired in the local language and translated to other languages by a country co-producer (English, French, Slovenian, Spanish, Dutch, and Hindi).

**TV SERIES**

**FIRST SEASON: TWISTED TALES**

20 x 12’ of 26 x 12’

The first TV season is composed of six (6) webisodes and 20 new retellings of well-known stories, introducing different stigmas into the narrative, following the same principles as in the webisodes. Twisted Tales teaches social values and skills in order to understand the importance of acceptance in our lives.

**Episode 7: Snow White and the Seven Oldies**

The stigma that surrounds the elderly -- ageism -- is at the centre of this tale. Snow White wanders into the woods and comes across the cottage in which the group of seven old dwarves lives. They offer her to stay with them, which she accepts, except she tends to treat them like they are not fully capable of doing the things they do. She either patronises them (speaking loudly and slowly) or rushes to do their tasks for them under the guise of good intentions (à la let me, you just sit down and rest yourself). Yet the dwarves find this insulting and meddlesome and they don’t appreciate being treated as old, infirm; and unable to do things.
Then, one day, her wicked stepmother, disguised as a poor woman, visits, and Snow White falls for her trick primarily because she sees the poor woman as someone elderly and unable to do much. This underestimation costs her when she bites into the poisoned apple, turning her into an old woman. It is only now, when she, too, looks old, that she begins to realise how prejudiced she had been toward the old dwarves, realising she had underestimated them all, seeing them in a new light and no longer as old dwarves.

**Episode 8: Beauty and the Beast**

The stigma of having an appearance that does not fall within the social norms of what is acceptable (and, in turn, beautiful) is explored through the relationship between Beauty and the Beast, who begin their friendship by talking through a wall dividing Her house from His. They become friends, but whenever She suggests they meet face to face, He always backs out. Because he is excessively hairy and has psoriasis, he feels extremely self-conscious about his appearance, convinced He makes others sick at the very sight of him. Finally, She tricks him one day and gets to see him. Her instant reaction is to recoil -- after all, She has been programmed to react in such a way -- but then the following day, She comes back and insists on hanging out with Him face to face. This cheers Him to no end, for He has finally found a friend who likes Him for who He is, not for how He looks.

**Episode 9: Hansel and Gretel**

In this version of the story, we look at the stigma of our relationship with food, which includes both overeating and anorexic tendencies. Hansel and Gretel go into the woods to play (they do not get kicked out of their home, as in the original). When they come across candy hanging off various tree branches, they happily follow the trail that leads them to the gingerbread house in which everything is edible. Hansel only too happily sets about eating everything, ending up feeling unwell, while Gretel doesn’t want to eat, for fear of getting fat. Before they can escape, the wicked witch appears, telling them she will eat them once they get fattened up. This is where the children must devise a strategy to save themselves -- eating too much will end up getting them killed, but not eating enough will mean they don’t have enough strength to escape. So they figure out the optimal amount of food they must eat, on the one hand eating some of the sweets that the gingerbread house is made of, and on the other, tempering this with the dried fruits and nuts decorating the house. Hansel encourages Gretel to eat more while she tells him to not do it when he is tempted to eat too much. Working together like this, they manage to escape on the third day.
Episode 10: Little Red Riding Hood

Bullying is a stigma especially prevalent amongst children, and one which manifests itself in several layers. Not only does the person being bullied feel the stigma of the bullying, they are also often unable to seek help because of the stigma of being perceived as telltales, or, because they don’t think they will be believed, thus creating a Catch-22 situation. Little Red Riding Hood provides the vehicle to explore this particular stigma. Every day, when Little Red goes through the woods to visit her grandmother, the Wolf keeps following her, harassing her, bullying her. He won’t leave her alone. When she threatens to tell on him, he tells her no one will believe her. So he continues, and Little Red is feeling worse and worse, not knowing what to do. She eventually tells her grandmother, who doesn’t take her seriously, just as the Wolf predicted. In the end, Little Red is almost driven mad. Having nothing left to lose, she decides to get her revenge on the Wolf, exposing his bullying and lies for all to see.

TV SERIES PRODUCTION EXECUTION

The artistic development of webisodes in diverse cultural environments allows us to experiment more and to engage with our audiences from the very beginning. We believe this innovative approach to the production is twofold; on the on hand, it allows us to closely understand the topic of stigma in different cultures; on the other, it allows us to deliver an aesthetics of the series that can work well on all covered territories.
TWISTED TALES
INTERACTIVE PLAYGROUND

The web playground is designed as an interactive tool to increase immersion/engagement into the narrative and to provide a deeper understanding of the topic. For use at home or in the classroom, it is divided into two segments – one for kids and the other for adults.

KIDS PLAYGROUND

This interactive playground for kids hosts 6 x 12’ webisodes, educational apps, and games that lead kids from the digital to the physical space, inspiring them to engage with the topic on a deeper level. Various playful and gamified, yet didactic, activities (from watching to playing and creating) focus on strengthening kids’ talents, and furthermore helping them to develop their social skills to their full potential.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR EDUCATORS AND PARENTS

The educational part of the web platform is aimed at educators and parents to teach children critical life lessons through the Twisted Tales method of participatory teaching. The method will be published as an e-tutorial, available to guide kids through the participatory group scenarios where Twisted Tales become tools to teach social values and skills, and the kids become stars of acceptance in their lives - through storytelling, drawing, sound creation, and animation. It will be accessible for free on the web platform and cross-linked to other relevant sites. To start with, we will disseminate the method of participatory teaching through workshop sessions in educational institutions for kids across Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Portugal, UK, The Netherlands, France, and India.

The workshop methodology has been designed, tested, and executed together with Nina Cigüt, child behaviour specialist.
EDUCATIONAL APPS

With the educational story apps, 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. First in a series of six (6) is *Cinda Real*, to be followed by *The Princess and the Real Frog*, *Sleeping Girl*, *Real Punzel*, *The Not-So Ugly Duckling*, and *Golden Touch*.

**CINDA REAL** Pilot app

The challenge of the first in a series of six (6) is to draw Cinda’s new leg. Except not just any leg will do: the kids 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 Grandmother gives will encourage the child to try again, too. Other segments of the story will also be used to ‘test’ this newly created leg, from the pancake-making breakfast sequence (except here we will be seeing it as though 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 kids to see their own drawings of a leg spring to life in 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.

This same approach to the chosen topic will be applied in all six (6) story apps.
AR EXHIBITION

Visitors, or rather co-creators, will be able to explore gigantic sculptures of a castle, garden, house, and animated clips from *Twisted Tales* episodes and add their own drawings, thus becoming storytellers in their own right. In a publicly accessible AR exhibit, visitors will go inside an immersive world of *Twisted Tales*, where they will complete scenes using digital paint brushes. Immersed in the story’s animation and sound, this is a playground for children wherein they can customize each *Twisted Tale* as it comes to life and directly engage with each of the characters.

By building a new and engaging technologically advanced story world, we will foster a loyal and active audience. The AR exhibition is intended as a fun playground melding of the AR and real space, integrated into museums and galleries across Europe and India.
OUTREACH STRATEGY

Different mediums and tactics are used to embrace the largest audience possible, assure visibility, accessibility and participation of:

- Kids aged 6 - 10
- Families
- Educational institutions for kids (kindergartens, schools, libraries)
- European organisations working on the prevention of violence among children

The *Twisted Tales* dissemination starts with workshops taking place in educational institutions for kids in a safe and friendly environment. Kids become familiar with a topic through the retelling of the *Twisted Tale*, and by expressing their own thoughts and feeling about the story through drawing, sound, and animation. The workshops are delivered by educators, using our methodology of participatory teaching. Based on the needs of the group, educators can choose amongst the six (6) *Twisted Tales* that each works on the prevention of different stigma. Social media communication will be driven by *Twisted Tales* ambassadors, the kids/youngsters that have been stigmatized but who have then achieved extraordinary results in sport, art, science, etc. To give an example, we strive to get on board Ambassador Averie Mitchell, a gymnast with a prosthetic leg; Italo Romano, a one-legged skater, etc. The *Twisted Tales* web platform interactive playground will be the main anchor of all communications, and all mediums (social media communication, PR, advertising) will be directing towards it. This constant activity will contribute to forming an active and engaged community lead by famous ambassadors among kids.

The *Twisted Tales* premiere events will be accompanied by a concert performed by musicians popular with kids. Famous musicians (i.e. Nipke from Slovenia, Jacques Houdek from Croatia, Vanessa Paradis from France and the UK market, etc.) will perform for a social cause and help us open up the topic of stigma to wider audiences by speaking publicly about the importance of acceptance in our lives. Their respective audiences are already big and that is why by embracing their already existing audience we aspire to a ‘cutting through the clutter’ dissemination of the project. This kind of approach has shown great results in the past. Various international musicians have been teaming up with non-profit organizations in unique, creative ways that both benefit a great cause and introduce how music can be a part of it (i.e. Hope For Haiti Now, the Global Benefit for Earthquake Relief, the One Campaign, taking action to end extreme poverty and preventable diseases, just to name a few).
Tools and actions:
- Extraordinary kids speaking on the overcoming of their disabilities
- Famous musicians speaking about their disabilities and performing for a social cause
- Direct communication with educational institutions for kids
- Direct communication with European organisations working on the prevention of violence amongst children
- Social media communication, PR, and an advertising campaign

To start with, the distribution of Twisted Tales will take place in Slovenia, France, Croatia and continue in the UK, Portugal, the Netherlands, Peru and in India.

**CALENDAR**

**June 2019** -
Initial web and social media communication.

**January 2019 - November 2020**
*Twisted Tales* workshops in educational institutions for kids.

**December 2020**
Digital Playground release (webisodes, apps, games and education).

**December 2020 - September 2021**
*Twisted Tales* premiere event in Slovenia, France, Croatia, Portugal, the Netherlands, Serbia, UK, and India.

**September 2021** -
*Twisted Tales* TV series release.

**December 2021 - December 2022**
AR Exhibition tour.
RECOGNITION

This project was accepted by the Selection Committee to be presented at Cartoon 360, the 2016 transmedia pitching event, plus Cartoon Connection, Quebec, Canada, in October 2018. It was also awarded at the Kids Warsaw Forum, Poland, in September, 2018 with Best Pitch and Best Participatory Project. Twisted Tales will further be presented at the Mediamorosis event in Lima, Peru and in Medellin, Colombia, in December 2018, and at the Berlinale with Kids Regio, Berlin, Germany, February 2019, as well as at the Financing Forum for Kids Content, Malmo, Sweden, in March 2019.

ORIGIN OF THE PROJECT / FINAL WORD

It all began with Stigmarella – The Story about a Girl and a Shoe, which was a transmedia project we created to promote Ms Renata Ažman’s book Yoyo, which dealt with sexual abuse. The idea was to develop a broader transmedia project on stigmatisation, where the medium of an exhibition is aimed at children, while the book, questionnaire, and round table events were aimed at parents so as to design mechanics that would foster an active dialogue. In order to communicate effectively, we involved our target audience in every aspect of the project. The exhibition, a platform for participation, was the main space for the story aggregation: a space of active dialogue between children, parents, nursery teachers, psychiatrists, mental health patients, and journalists.

Ažman’s book was created out of the author’s struggles with bipolar disorder and her self-treatment through therapeutic writing. The original concept of therapeutic writing means writing and publishing a story about one’s most severe trauma. In this author’s case, psychological violence and sexual abuse in the family, which found its place in Yoyo, simultaneously representing the end and a new beginning: the end of fear, pain, and suffering, and the beginning of a new path, liberated from stigma.

The project Stigmarella – The Story about a Girl and a Shoe took place in the Galerija Spomeniškvarstveni centre (a gallery of the Institute for the Protection of the Cultural Heritage of Slovenia, or IPCH Gallery) in Ljubljana, Slovenia, from 17 September to 9 October, 2014, as part of BIO50, Biennale of Design, Ljubljana, NOW Programme, an event accompanied by several other roundtable events.

Twisted Tales
It received a special acknowledgement by BIO50, Biennale of Design, Ljubljana, NOW Programme. The honorary patron of the project in 2014 was Vlasta Nussdorfer, Slovenian human rights ombudswoman.

The research taking place at the time of the exhibition showed that the majority of parents and nursery teachers were impressed by the quality of the educational approach and requested the full version of the animated fairytale that was an integral part of the exhibition.

Stigma is a broad concept that describes a process affecting the most sensitive parts of human life, and which, subsequently, is difficult to define. All feelings of stigma develop in the early stages of childhood, when we begin to develop a view of ourselves and the world. However visible or hidden on the outside, our stigmas change the way we see ourselves and how we interact with others. As we see it, enforced by the stereotype-filled media of the modern world, it is an ever-growing problem of everyday life that needs to be addressed with diversity and tolerance.

The exhibition, held in Slovenia, showed the need and appreciation of the local community, and through our experimental approach, we learnt new ways to present the chosen topic — through a constant exchange of ideas and with new approaches to the art of effective communication. Based on the research data, we have reinvented the project and designed a broader transmedia experience that combines webisodes, a 26x12min TV series, an educational story apps, AR experience, and an educational programme for kids, parents, and teachers. Twisted Tales are critical life lessons of empathy, love, and understanding, teaching us social values and skills, and to understand the importance of acceptance in our lives, all in a form that is playful and gamified.

**AUTHORS**

Sara Božanić (Director / Producer) is CEO of the Institute for Transmedia Design, based in Slovenia. She is a ‘hybrid’ – a designer, strategist, educator, and thinker. In 2015, she was chosen amongst 40 EU consultants who work on audience development via digital means to take part in policy debates under the Voice of Culture – a Structured Dialogue between the European Commission project and cultural sector. In 2011, she received a Young Creative Entrepreneur Media Award from 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 later 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 SPID, Croatia’s Screenwriters and Playwrights Guild.

Nina Cigüt (Defectologist) is a special teacher dealing with children with special needs in elementary school and kindergarten. Together with children, she is working on recognition of their strongest talents and interests. She devises strategies that, despite children’s obstacles, deficits, or disorders, enable them to achieve optimal results. Great emphasis is given to the development of the internal motivation of an individual. Nina is the author of the Twisted Tales methodology of participatory teaching, a tool teaching social values and skills in school, kindergarten, or at home.

Dalibor Kazija (Artistic Director) is a designer and illustrator with experience in different fields and media, and whose areas of exploration include visual communication design, illustration, and animation. He has created numerous short animated films, and has, as an illustrator, participated in a number of exhibitions, demonstrating his creative ingenuity and passion for design. In 2016, he designed the Webdoc for the film Ukrainian Sheriffs, and was awarded with the IDFA Winner Special Jury Award for Best Feature-Length Documentary, selected and presented to the public at the ZGRAFs international design exhibition in Zagreb, Croatia in January 2017.

Timon Leder (Lead Animator) works in animation and pedagogy. He upgraded his academic knowledge in an animation direction school in France (La Poudriere). His student animated short Work (with Urban Breznik) circled the world in more than 30 festivals, whilst his debut short film Weasel is circling the world now. During his studies, he created nine (9) animated shorts (two professional) and animated many others. He also wrote a degree on children’s comprehension of film language, and cooperated on the creation of the first manual on animation for schools and kindergartens.

Marica Kicušić (Animation Artist) is a concept artist and illustrator. Marica is an expert in 2D animation, character design, illustration, and storyboarding. She has participated in more than 80 international art and...
animation exhibitions in Serbia, Hungary, France, Macedonia, Brussels, Mexico, China, Italy, Russia, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Croatia, Slovakia, Portugal, and has won several awards for animation, printmaking, illustration, and drawing. She has been a member of ULUPUDS, the Association of Applied Artists and Designers of Serbia, since 2010.

Ivan Stojković (Animation Artist), senior 2D animation artist and illustrator with five-plus years of experience in various types of animation. He has a special interest in short animated films and forms, and has worked on various shorts at home and abroad. His latest 5’ short was funded by the Serbian Film Center. Ivan has a special eye for details and is a passionate drummer.

Gašper Rus (Storyboard Artist), cartoonist, illustrator, and storyboard artist, closely associated with Stripurger, the distinguished Slovenian alternative comics magazine. His work can also be found in the seminal comics anthology Slovenian Classics in Comics. His graphic novel Gugalnica (The Swing), written by Žiga Valetič, brings in front an illustrated story about children suffering emotional damage due to the suicide of a parent. He is a regular magazine comic contributor.

ekleemar, 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, he awarded the Best MTV Adria Act for composing and playing with the Croatian band Lolobrigida.

Tjaša Šimonka (Composer and Choir Leader), is a young musician and music professor in primary schools. Besides her daily job with kids, she performs with several music groups, and is the conductor of the Vocal Group BeleTinke, as well as singer for the Ethnotrip group. With Ethnotrip, she has released three albums and regularly tours across Europe. Tjaša won the Perlach Award, given by the University of Maribor, for her thesis on ethnomusicology. Music is her lifetime companion.

Petra Bertalanič (Transmedia Producer) is a linguist. Since 2014, she has played the role of transmedia producer at the Institute for Transmedia Design, communicating across mediums and cultures, and thus building bridges between them. As transmedia producer, she was involved in various international projects including managing, planning, and development, as well as production and maintenance of story continuity across multiple platforms. Petra likes prototyping and creating stories that weave traditional ways of delivering narrative experiences with the latest in technology.
Miljana Dragičević *Webisode and TV Series Executive Producer* stands at the intersection of creativity and production of animated kids’ content. She is the CEO of Minya Films and Animation, a creative production / consulting studio based in Zagreb, Croatia. She is also the creative producer of 3D2D Animatori, a Zagreb-based studio involved in the production of international kids’ content. Miljana is the producer of an animated TV series, *Misha & Robin* (30x5’), produced for Croatian Radio and Television (HRT). The series is currently being distributed in China, South Korea, and in the Spanish-speaking areas of North America.

Lidija Zelovic *Webisode Producer* is a filmmaker, writer and (motivational) speaker. Lidija is the creative producer at Zelovic Film. She worked for years as executive producer and researcher for BBC and Channel 4, and has been producing Zelovic Film for 15 years. From 2012 to 2016 she took place in the documentary advisory committee at the Media Fund. Her latest private documentary ‘My Own Private War’ (2015) won many international awards. At home, in Sarajevo, she studied Yugoslav literature and worked as a presenter and journalist for the local tv station. Trying to escape the hatred that was growing in her home country she fell in love with a man far from home, in the Netherlands. Dutch seemed to have all that home didn’t have any more - it was ‘normal’... Lidija stayed in the Netherlands as a refugee. Losing her home broke Lidija’s heart. Her need to get her life back urged for expression. She studied film at University of Amsterdam. Filmmaking was a precarious attempt, a risk that didn't make sense but it allowed her to keep on dreaming. The whole experience gave Lidija power and positivism. So she keeps on dreaming, through her films, her stories, her speeches.

Luis Da Matta Almeida *TV Series Producer* is postgraduate in Cinema and Television and Audiovisual and Multimedia at Lisbon Universities and is writing his master final project about violence in child animation. He has been working in animation since 1987, creating, producing, and/or directing lots of short movies and TV series, and has won more than 100 international awards, such as the Cartoon D’Or. Luis is the CEO, Director, Creative & Executive Producer of Sparkle Animation. Luis is also a permanent Board Member of Cartoon, a platform dedicated to supporting animation industry professionals, also supported by Creative Europe.

Pierre Cattan *App Executive Producer* founded Small Bang in 2012, a creative studio which explores new narrative forms. He directed the prospective documentary web series *Minidocs* (10x4’, Orange, 2012) and is the executive producer of 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’s department. Pierre has produced and directed the Mediapart live since May 2012. Pierre is also a founding member of PXN, the association for producers of digital experiences.

Xavier Guyomarc’h (App Animation Art Director) is 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 accompanying Jacques Perrin’s latest film, Seasons. He also is the artistic director of Small Bang’s first video game, Diorama, the Girl and the Goddess, adapted from Homer’s Iliad.

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, and MEDIA Desk Slovenia. Its work has been selected for major industry events in the region: Cross Video Days, Biennale of Design in Ljubljana, the Cartoon Forum, IDFA Forum, and 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, and was awarded the IDFA Winner’s 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.

MINYA FILMS AND ANIMATION (Croatia) is a young and progressive production studio lead by Miljana Dragičević. It was founded in late 2017, with the aim of producing high quality kids’ content for TV and theatre, guided by decades of in-field experience by Miljana. Minya Films and Animation creates original kids’ content with acclaimed international partners such as Lynx Animation Studio, Light and Color, and Pyjama Films. Its work has been selected at major industry events, such as the CEE Animation Workshop, Cartoon Forum, SPP, MIPCOM, and MIFA, to name but a few.
In Zelević Film (The Netherlands), we bring together dream and perfection, truthfulness and urge, the personal and the universal. We specialize in personal films, and are always looking for strong, truthful, filmic, and - whenever possible - innovative and humoristic stories. The smaller the story, the wider the world it can reach!

Sparkle Animation (Portugal) is a Lisbon and London-based studio dedicated to producing animation projects, providing original and meaningful content with excellence in design and creativity. Sparkle Animation is a part of Sparkle Network, an international collective of award-winning creative industries.

Small Bang (France) creates multi-platform experiences connecting the physical and digital worlds. From the participatory 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.

QUOTES

“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*

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

Hans Christian Andersen