



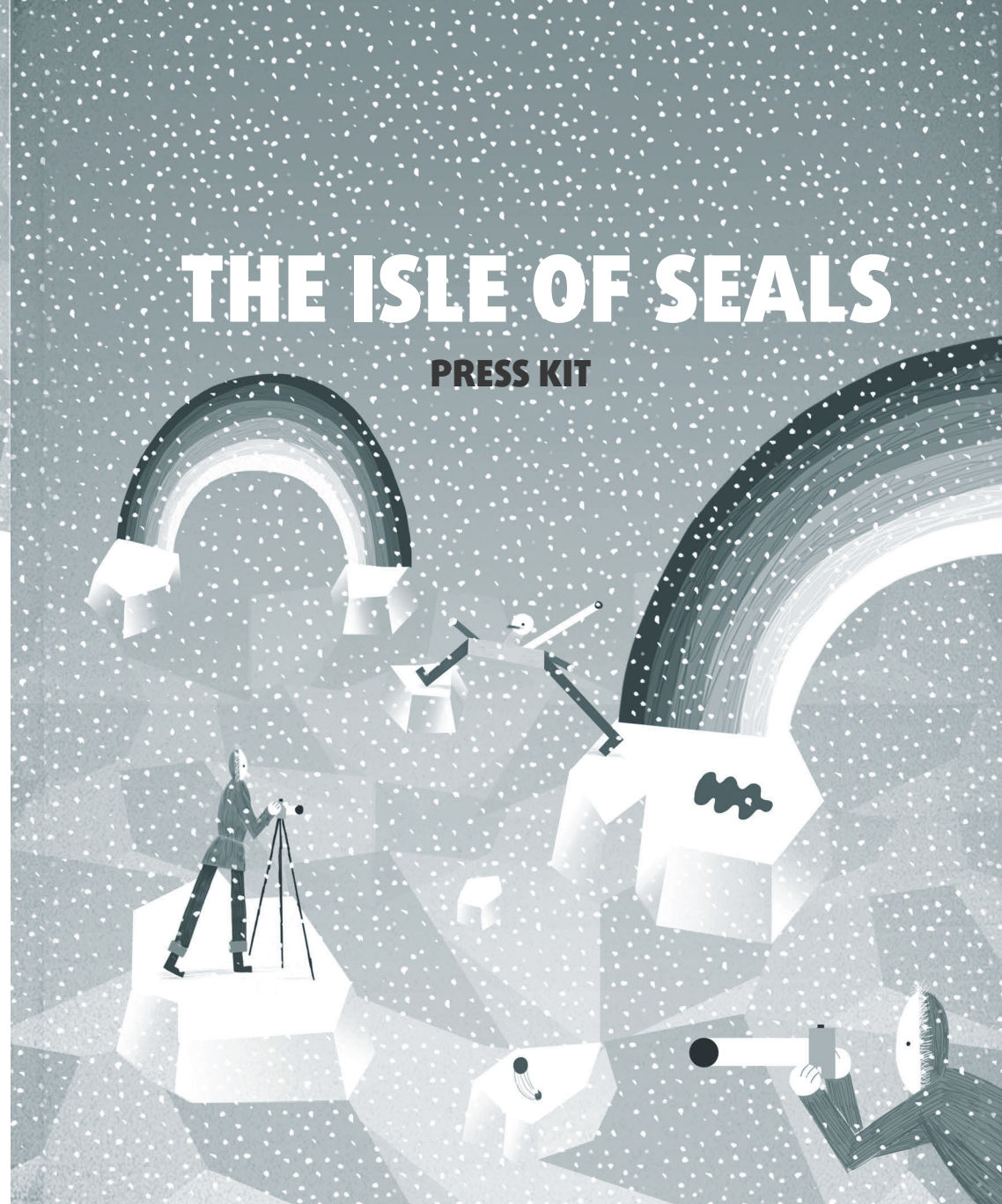
Film Title: **The Isle of Seals**  
Year of Production: 2014  
Country of Production: Latvia  
Category: Animation

Technical Information:  
No dialogues and subtitles  
Length: 6 min.  
Screen Ratio: 16:9  
Colors: B&W  
Sound: Stereo  
Animation Technique: 2D Computer Animation  
Shooting Format: HD  
Screening Format: DCP / H.264 / ProRes

Director, Design, Screenplay, Editor: Edmunds Jansons [edmunds@atomart.lv](mailto:edmunds@atomart.lv)  
Animators: Edmunds Jansons, Martins Dumins  
Composer: Jekabs Nimanis  
Sound Editor: Girts Biss

Production Company: Atom Art  
Producer: Sabine Andersone, [sabine@atomart.lv](mailto:sabine@atomart.lv)  
Festival distribution: Ieva Vaickovska, [ieva@atomart.lv](mailto:ieva@atomart.lv)  
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[www.atomart.lv](http://www.atomart.lv)  
<https://vimeo.com/atomart>



A film by Edmunds Jansons  
Produced by Atom Art

## SYNOPSIS

In the middle of a grey sea there is a grey isle.  
On this grey island grey hunters live. The life is simple and harsh.  
Seals and hunters live together in a cruel balance until one day, the Photographer arrives to document this everyday life.  
For him it turns out to be deadly complicated.

## DIRECTOR NOTES:

Each film has its own story of how it began. One begins with some sort of event while another with a vivid visual image. "The Isle of Seals" began with a peculiar place and its environment.

I was preparing for an exhibition in Tallinn and decided that the central piece would be an animated film. But I couldn't come up with an idea. I wanted something connected with both countries – Latvia, where I live, and Estonia, where the exhibition took place. Then, as a result of a random conversation, I found myself exploring the church register of Ruhnu Island. Ruhnu Island means "the Isle of Seals" in Estonian.

This island is located in the Baltic Sea, near the Latvian and Estonian border, historically inhabited by Swedish seal hunters. Hunters have lived on the island for centuries – from the very beginning, when the island belonged to the Swedes, and throughout the political changes, when the island was controlled first by Russians, then by Germans and finally by Estonians. This story fascinated me with the indifference with which the indigenous people of the island had responded to all these historical political changes.

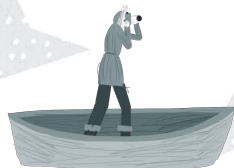
Even during the war, when no one bought the fat from the seals they hunted, they continued to live at their usual pace, knowing or perhaps hoping that somehow everything would work out. And it did – several tons of fat accumulated during the war time was bought by the Estonian government, which thus gained the favor of the islanders and began to rule the island.

Although the documentary material was the initial impulse behind the work, the film has quite little to do with the real situation on Ruhnu Island. Only the hunters are left in the film, and they continue to do their own thing and live their lives regardless of whatever goes on in the world.

The island and its distinctively-thinking inhabitants are just a background for the film. To me, the main character of the film is the photographer. The film is an absurd comedy about a photographer as a media representative with an unstoppable desire to show the world around him inside a frame of preconceptions. In general, it is about the failure of media to record objective reality.

To me as an author, this film is also a reflection on animation. I'm still trying to understand what animation is or is not. It is an attempt to explore the language of animation and understand the importance of the story, characters and design in animation. How do you facilitate the viewer's perception by giving up anything superfluous without crossing the line beyond which simple becomes primitive?

In this sense, "The Isle of Seals" is an experimental film to me – a viewer-friendly experimental film.



## ABOUT DIRECTOR:

Edmunds Jansons was born in 1972 in Saldus, Latvia. He studied TV directing at Academy of Culture, has taken animation directing course at VGIK in Moscow, but recently graduated MA at Estonian Academy of Art – the masterclass led by Priit Pärn.

In 2002 Edmunds founds animation film studio Atom Art. Studio tends to be a platform for young talented animators and their experiments. In the last years Atom Art has become one of the most noticeable creatively active Latvian animation studios.

The films produced by Atom Art has been selected at the festivals all over the world, such as Annecy, Ottawa, Hiroshima, HAFF, Stuttgart, Zagreb, Oberhausen, Clermont-Ferrand, Dok Leipzig, Encounters, Anima Mundi and many others, and has been awarded in many of them.

Studio works in variety of techniques – drawing, sand animation, animation with charcoal, puppet and cut out animation. There is also a big variety of animation genres – magical realism, animated documentary, musical, absurd, animated tv series for pre-schoolers a.o.

Edmunds has worked as tutor of animation directing at Academy of Art and Academy of Culture of Latvia.

He is also film expert at Culture Endowment Fund and National Film Centre of Latvia.

Besides his initial work Edmunds is recognized and beloved award winning children's book illustrator. His books "Year of Wonderbaby" and "Poop and Springtime" has been awarded J.Baltvilks Best illustrations award and had been included in IBBY honor list.



## FILMOGRAPHY:

### ISLE OF SEALS (2014)

The Special Prize of Jury at "Sommets du cinéma d'animation", Canada

### CHOIR TOUR (2012)

Renzo Kinoshita Award at 15th IAF HIROSHIMA, Japan  
Jury Special Award at Animafest Zagreb, Croatia  
Sound & Music Award at the LIAF, London, UK

### INTERNATIONAL FATHER'S DAY (2012)

Graduation Film Award at 21st IAFF KROK, Russia  
Best Student's Film Award at 10th WFAF VARNA, Bulgaria

### SHAMMIES 6 x 5' (2010-2015)

Special Prize "Best Film for Young Children (Ages 2-5)" at 29th CICFF, USA  
Silver Award for The Best Animated TV series at Xiamen IAF, China

### SPRINGTIME IN CROW STREET (2009)

Special Distinction Award at 15th SICAF, South Korea

### LITTLE BIRDS DIARY (2007)

Grand Prix at Tallinn Graphic Triennale, Estonia