

This paper examines the boutique animation practices in India through a case study of Studio Eeksaurus, an independent animation studio based in Mumbai. Historically positioned as a low-cost outsourcing hub within global animation pipelines, India's animation sector has been structured by a division of labour that separates "creative" conceptual work, retained in the Global North, from "manual" production tasks offshored to the Global South. The paper argues that Studio Eeksaurus represents independent and experimental animation that challenges these entrenched hierarchies. Drawing on the circuit of culture framework, the paper analyzes how Studio Eeksaurus navigates the interrelated moments of production, representation, circulation and consumption while negotiating the economic imperatives of commercial work and the creative aspirations of independent filmmaking.

The analysis foregrounds three key arguments. First, Studio Eeksaurus disrupts the conventional outsourcing paradigm by reclaiming creative agency at the level of concept development and storytelling, thereby challenging the binary between "creative" and "manual" labour. Second, the studio's emphasis on materiality evident in its use of clay, wool, and mixed-media techniques functions as both an aesthetic strategy and a critique of digitally standardized animation workflows associated with global mass production. Third, its in-house projects articulate regionally grounded narratives that resist the dominance of mythological retellings and homogenized global aesthetics in Indian animation. The paper also interrogates the studio's reliance on advertising as a primary revenue stream, suggesting that Studio Eeksaurus operates within, rather than outside, capitalist cultural production, exemplifying a negotiation between economic sustainability and creative autonomy. Finally, the paper considers issues of

discoverability and circulation where platforms enable global access but their cultural and linguistic specificity complicate their transnational reach.

This paper proposes that boutique studios such as Studio Eeksaurus act as crucial actors in attempting an alternative model for sustainable and culturally embedded animation practices in a global media economy.