



Shira Avni is an animation filmmaker and [Associate Professor of Film Animation at Concordia University in Montreal](#), Canada. She holds an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (2003). Her animated documentary films ([John and Michael](#), [Tying Your Own Shoes](#), and [Petra's Poem](#)), in partnership with the National Film Board of Canada, have garnered 34 international awards, including the prestigious [DOK Leipzig Golden Dove](#) and the [NHK Japan Prize](#), and have screened in over 120 festivals worldwide.

Her 2023 film [Two One Two](#), has won 4 awards to date, including the [Special Jury Prize at the Sommets du Cinéma d'animation](#) and [Best Animated Short Film at the Berlin Short Film Festival](#), with screenings in Chicago, New York, San Francisco, Portland, Washington, Calgary, Lunenburg, Montreal, Fredericton, Ottawa, Percé, Quebec City, Vancouver, Australia, Berlin, Cyprus, Dusseldorf, London, Manchester, Seoul, Palermo, Mexico, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK.

Avni is the proud recipient of a [2020 Distinguished Teaching Award at Concordia](#) for her Under Camera, Animated Documentary, and Advanced Animation courses. Her [current research](#) weaves documentary, animation, and personal memoir to address neurodiversity, identity, social justice, motherhood, and interdependence through luminous clay-on-glass animation, back-lit to create the shimmering effect of stained glass in motion.

Director's Statement

Two One Two initially began as a film about perinatal trauma after the unexpectedly violent birth of my son. He was born quite prematurely and stopped breathing many times per night in his first years of life; the only way he slept safely was upright as I walked endlessly (as many mothers do) through the fog of love, fear and utter exhaustion. I see parenting very much as a feminist issue, and wanted to document both the joys and the intense struggles of being a neurodivergent 2-headed monster while working, caretaking and surviving with my easily-overwhelmed autistic sensory system. Walking became our way through the world, with my little son accompanying me everywhere. As the film evolved, the

imagery became less explicitly about trauma, and more about the uniquely symbiotic journey. While the final film is joyful, upon close viewing the Two One Two monster is heavily scarred.

I decided to embrace the necessary fragmentation and tactile immediacy of filmmaking under the constraints of being a full time professor/filmmaker/parent, experimenting with clay on glass, object animation, rotoscoping and trying to capture the sensory experience of continually walking through the world as a dual being. One day after a particularly difficult sleepless period a somewhat inebriated man told me he had finally seen my “deuxième tête (second head)” - only then did I realise many people did not notice the very chatty, singing little human on my back!

Award-winning animation filmmaker Shira Avni continues her deeply personal animated documentary journey to explore motherhood, fragmentation, neurodiversity, trauma, and healing through the infinitely laborious, handcrafted frame-by-frame filmmaking process. Two-One-Two mixes archival video, sound recordings, experimental, clay on glass, under-camera, and rotoscoping animation; exploring the loving bond between mother and child in this intimate love letter to the process of (un)becoming a two-headed monster.