

## 500 Watford residents came together to create animation short The Key, part of Watford Live! festival

By [Rosy Moorhead](#)

12:55pm Friday 27th June 2014 in [Film & TV](#)



Watford Observer: Still from The Key



More than 500 Watford residents, aged from two to 90, coloured in 5,753 frames using 5,000 pieces of paper and almost 5,000 pens to create an award-winning film that literally has 'Watford' written all over it.

*The Key* is the brainchild of Kim Noce and Shaun Clark, directors of Watford-based animation company MewLab, and is being screened as part of *Watford Live!* this weekend.

"We wanted to create a film where the whole town participated, from beginning to end," explains Kim, 40.



The film was made in collaboration with Watford Live! festival, [West Herts College](#) and [Watford Museum](#), with a small amount of funding from Elected Mayor of Watford Dorothy Thornhill.

It was created with hand-painted pencil and watercolour rotoscoped photocopies, filmed

frame by frame under a rostrum camera.

More than 500 local people were involved in making the film: attending drop-in sessions at intu shopping centre to colour in the frames, acting, drawing, choreographing, producing, writing and providing the sound.

"Animation is an extremely slow process," continues Kim, who is originally from Italy and now lives in Watford, "so it's taken about two years. For one second of animation you have to do about 25 drawings! So every person who came to the drop-in sessions would have done 10 or 15 drawings.

"It took quite a lot of organisation, but it was quite [Ads by Google](#)

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lovely. We had an old lady of 90 who came along and drew and she said 'I was in my 20s the last time I did any drawing'. Everyone really enjoyed it."

Kim and Shaun worked with Watford writer Alexander Williams, the author of children's book *Wendy the Whale*, to create the storyline of the residents of a small town waking up to find that the key to the town gate is missing. They are very frustrated because they can't leave, but they gradually realise there are other things which are more valuable in life that they wouldn't have discovered if the key hadn't been lost.

*The Key* was executive produced by Margaret Cheal, of West Herts College and *Watford Live!*, choreographed by Watford Arts Development Officer Laura Horn, and among the many actors was Watford Museum's heritage and arts manager and curator Sarah Priestley and her family.

The film has already started on the international film festival circuit, and this month won a special jury mention award at Scratch International Animation Festival in Italy, and will later be appearing in Bulgaria, Greece and Australia.

The screening during *Watford Live!*, taking place at the **Pump House**, will be chaired by the director of the London International Animation Festival, Nag Vladermersky, and will be followed by a Q&A session with Kim and Shaun.

- The Key will be screened at the Pump House, Local Board Road, Lower High Street, Watford, on Sunday, June 29 at 6pm. Details: [newlab.com](http://newlab.com), [watfordlive.org](http://watfordlive.org)

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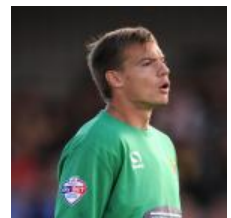
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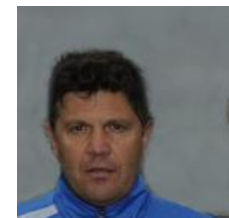
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