

# HOW WOULD I KNOW?

## The evolution of ideas

### // FORMAT

Educational Animated Series  
Episode RT: 3-5'  
10 episodes per season

### // THE PROJECT

HOW WOULD I KNOW? narrates in first person the fascinating stories behind scientific discovery, full of mystery, shortcomings, and revelations.

With echoes of *Jeopardy* and other popular game-shows, HOW WOULD I KNOW? presents onstage a dream-team of experts: from Aristotle to Galileo and Newton, from Boltzmann to Einstein and Higgs. Following the game-show format, the panel discusses a range of topics of various complexities, from the shape of the Earth, to Time, Dark Matter, and Quantum Gravity.

The imaginary set extends from the dawn of scientific enquiry (on the farthest left of the stage) to this day (farthest right), slicing and zooming in on various geo-temporal locations that are relevant to the subject at hand. Our peculiar moderator is an old blue teacup named Ms. Coolteacup, the sole companion of the eternal librarian guarding the *Library of Babel*. She doesn't seem to know much about the topics, but her childish curiosity and eagerness to understand and reach a consensus, help unravel the mysteries and keep the arguments intelligible for general audiences. And of course, the assembly of such diverse minds, illuminated by their personal genius while limited by the pre-conceptions of their time, gives rise to many humorous and unexpected arguments. The general tone is comedic, as Ms. Coolteacup tries to keep her illustrious guests reined in and focus on the *Eureka!* moments that will, eventually, bring it all together.

The series' goal is to provide a **comparative history** of ideas based on various theories and experiments developed throughout the years. Over time, these concepts have come closer or moved farther away from successfully explaining the universe, with our current understanding being just one step along this ongoing winding road we call Knowledge. Thus, HOW WOULD I KNOW? focuses on the importance of these fundamental principles: questioning one's beliefs, listening to reason, seeking diverse and reliable sources, being both open-minded and critical, and cherishing the importance of dialogue more than providing a final definite answer. This will become increasingly obvious, as scientists switch from the notion of a fully knowable world to that of probable outcomes at the turn of the 20th century.

This project is a response to my personal concern for the ever-increasing use of Wikipedia and other online sites as primary sources for school and academic research; most of these sites are either outdated, incomplete or inaccurate, and in some cases, purposefully misleading. Unfortunately, this online research methodology keeps spreading as the tools for self-publication and cross-referencing are integrated with the most popular online platforms. These present only the information you are most likely to accept as The Truth, which fluctuates based on the *tribe* you belong to. Thus, this feedback loop --caused and fostered by a general lack of discrimination by students and other readers-- seems to have run amuck in the last few years, spreading to major media and broadcasting corporations and paving the way for what Victor Pickard has dubbed our 'Misinformation Society'.

In this digital era, ideal for cross-referencing and meta-information, HOW WOULD I KNOW? uses the magic of animation to create an imaginary stage that illustrates on the 2D video screen the multiple dimensions of our history. I chose the *animated series* format in order to dive in depth into very specific and *manageable* topics, and to allow for first-person testimonies quoted straight from the original sources. The game-show format also helps create suspense, and calls for a more active and playful engagement from the viewer.

The project contemplates the participation of guest scientists in particular episodes --always via animated avatars-- who can help us bridge some of the gaps in the documentation and offer new insights into topic at hand.

Hopefully in upcoming episodes, I will be able to invite audiences to formulate a question to our panel or argue ideas proposed on previous episodes. Messages from the viewers are requested in WAV format (sound files) in order to animate the participants as part of a studio audience in the HOW WOULD I KNOW? virtual set.

A second stage of the project may also include an interactive online platform, where users can dive deeper into the subjects they find more interesting by following hyperlinks to other videos, books and articles. This platform is part of other project I am also developing: E-LIBRARY OF BABEL, inspired by Jorge Luis Borges' writings.

During my residency at Q21 I will:

- Develop a proof of concept / create a teaser.
- Search for Austrian partners and animation studios interested in the project.
- Seek to establish partnerships and financial support from institutions fostering science communication, i.e. the *Alfred P. Sloan Foundation* (NY, US), the Exploratorium (SF-US, who already showed interest in the project), UCSD (CA, US), and *CosmoCaixa* in Barcelona (SP).
- Create an installation based on HOW WOULD I KNOW at the showroom ASIFAKEIL.