

First place! Mexican's animated short wins at Toronto festival



His short film “Express” took first place at a Toronto festival and has been screened at festivals in Rome, Texas, and in various cities around Mexico.

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Alex Carrillo

Asael Villanueva

Juan Manuel Ramos

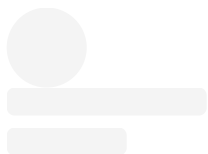
Mexican **Alejandro Carrillo**, a **Digital Art and Animation** student at [Tec de Monterrey](#), created a **short film** that has received **first place** in the animation category at the [Toronto Indie Filmmakers Festival](#).

*“I really enjoyed finding out because my **dream** is to **direct an animated film**, and now my work has been recognized in other countries. I still can’t believe it,”* said the 22-year-old.

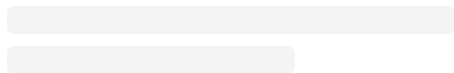
The animated short film had already been screened at this and other festivals, such as the [Roma Short Film Festival](#), the [BAM! Festival](#) in Texas, and **Digital**

Short Film Fest 2021, where it came in third place.

In **2020**, Carrillo also created a **coloring book** that was an **Amazon *Best Seller***, and two of his **illustrations** were **featured** in the virtual [***Walt Disney Family Museum***](#).



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How he received the news that he'd won first place

Alex Carrillo says the short film “**Express**” was made for one of his **classes** at **Tec de Monterrey**, where he'll graduate in 2022.

“*Express*” tells the story of **Eddy**, the **main character**, who's afraid to show his **talents** to **the world** until his **favorite editor** comes to town and inspires him to pursue his dream of becoming a writer.

After submitting his animated short to **various festivals**, such as the *Roma Short Film Festival* in **August**, it wasn't until **October** that he was **notified** of his **first-place** win at the *Toronto Indie Filmmakers Festival*.

“They had **selected** it for **screening**, and I thought that was going to be the end of it. **Several weeks** went by, and I was notified by **email**.”

“**I thought** it was **just a thank you** because it didn't say anything like ‘Congratulations’ in the title, but then I saw that **I'd won**,” said Carrillo.

“My work has been recognized in other countries. I still can't believe it.”

Now, Alex's short film, winner in the **Animation category**, one of **the festival's 28 categories**, will be shown for even longer and **its creator will be acknowledged**.

This is the **first animated short film** made by **Alex Carrillo** to receive **first place** at an international festival.

“It motivates me not to quit, to **keep learning**, to keep **creating content**, and most of all, it motivates me to give **110% to my projects**,” says Alex.

Becoming known in national media

Alex's story has been shared in **national** and **international** media, and he's even been invited online to **television programs**, such as **Venga La Alegría**, where he'll return in person in November 2021.

*"The **Public Relations** issue has been somewhat **difficult**. An agency helped me get some interviews in 2020.*

*"After I **published the book**, I looked for a **way** to tell my story, and it happened gradually," he says.*

"It motivates me not to quit, to keep learning, and to keep creating content."

Alex adds that his time in **Tec de Monterrey's Storytellers** program, where students collaborate on **content creation** in the areas of **national communication** and the Tec's campuses in Mexico was also helpful.

After Alex's story reached media outlets such as **Sopitas**, **Forbes Life Latam** magazine interviewed him in October 2021 and let him **illustrate the cover** of that issue.

*"The fact that they **trusted** me with this **illustration** felt really good. They gave me the **creative freedom** to draw.*

***"Many entrepreneurs dream* about getting in **Forbes**, and for me, it was also a **dream come true** to be there at 22 years old," says Alex.**

Becoming a speaker to inspire more people

As a result of his **book** being recognized as a **Best Seller** on **Amazon**, right behind **J.K. Rowling**, the author of the **Harry Potter** book saga, Alex has been invited to give **speeches** in his native **Saltillo, Coahuila**, as well as in Monterrey, Nuevo León, where he's pursuing his degree.

*"The **first time** I was invited was for an **event** at **Tec de Monterrey's Saltillo campus** in the field of entrepreneurship.*

*"I went, **I told my story**, and talked about how I'd done the things I'd done. It was very cool because it **breaks the stereotype** in Saltillo that what you do stays there and doesn't go any further," he says.*

He also says that **Adobe** and **Talent Network** invited him to give a **web talk** during an event called **Creative Land**, which was one of his largest audiences.

He's received other **invitations** to give speeches at various other events on the **Tec's Saltillo campus**, at some **local schools** and **universities**, and at the **Autonomous University of Nuevo León (UANL)**.

*"The plan is to **keep improving** the **presentation**. I'd like to **give one at the Monterrey campus** before graduating," says Carrillo, who hopes to graduate from the Tec in June 2022.*



Preparing new projects

Alongside his **studies**, Alex is already working on **another animated short film** and on **his second coloring book**.

He also joined forces with the **“Luis Pablo” association**, with the idea of creating **illustrations** to **raise funds** and **support children with cancer** who don't have sufficient resources for their treatment.

During the month of November, there'll also be an **auction** of one of his **paintings** to **raise funds** for the **Red Cross** in Saltillo.

*“Now that I'm in the **final stages of my degree**, I'd like to **suggest** that **young people take advantage of every moment** and every project they take on. What's made these projects of mine stand out hasn't been the idea of winning an award.*

*“I never expected the short film to win a festival. I made it for a class. **If you carry out a project** and **fall in love** with it and **dedicate time** to it, the rest will just fall into place,” Carrillo concludes.*



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