

A New Adventure Begins



NOT FOR SALE



CHIMNEY TOWN

FROZEN IN TIME



A promise.

A journey to find you.



Introduction



The beloved animated film that shone a light of hope returns to the screen with a brand-new tale of courage!

Back in 2020, during the unprecedented days of the COVID-19 pandemic, *Poupelle of Chimney Town* brought encouragement and light to audiences across Japan. Upon its December release, it quickly became a nationwide sensation, sparking an outpouring of heartfelt reactions across social media. The film went on to draw 1.96 million viewers in Japan and grossed 2.7 billion yen at the box office. It also received the Excellence Award for Animation at the 44th Japan Academy Awards. The original picture book achieved the exceptional milestone of over 780,000 copies sold—an unprecedented feat in the genre. The ever-expanding “Poupelle World” continued to capture hearts through kabuki, ballet, and musical adaptations. And now, the long-awaited latest film in the series returns to the big screen with a brand-new story!

In the first film, set in the smoke-covered Chimney Town, a boy named Lubicchi meets Poupelle, a man made of trash. Lubicchi believes that beyond the smoke lies a sky full of shining stars—and Poupelle believes in Lubicchi. Their shared faith brings about a miracle, revealing the starry sky to the townspeople. But that very night, as if to watch over Lubicchi’s growth, Poupelle vanishes.

At the beginning of this new chapter, Lubicchi, now grieving the loss of his dearest friend, gives up on waiting and decides to move forward. This is the story of how Lubicchi finds the courage to believe once more—and the journey that leads him to reunite with Poupelle. Five years since the original film, the world continues to change at a dizzying pace. This latest adventure explores what it truly means to hold on to the heart of belief—and the courage it takes to protect it. Officially selected for the Generation section of the 76th Berlin International Film Festival, this emotional fantasy adventure is now ready to touch hearts around the world!

Lubicchi wonders into another world. There’s a mysterious clock stopped at 11:59—yet perfectly intact. What secrets lie within the clock tower?

One year after the miraculous night when Chimney Town was bathed in starlight, Lubicchi is still waiting for the return of his dear friend Poupelle. But as time passes, he begins to let go of that hope and tries to move forward. Just then, Lubicchi finds himself lost in a strange realm known as the “Millennium Fortress,” a mysterious world ruled by time itself. In this place, clocks that stop ticking are discarded—However, there stands a strange clock tower that remains intact despite being frozen at 11:59. To return to his own world, Lubicchi is given a mission: *restart the stopped clock*. Joined by Fluff, a talking cat from this realm, Lubicchi sets out to uncover the truth behind the clock. Along the way, he meets Gus, a keeper of the clock tower who has kept his faith and waited for 100 years, and learns the tale of Nagi, a tree spirit who once took human form. And so begins Lubicchi’s grand new adventure—this time, with a brand-new companion by his side!

12

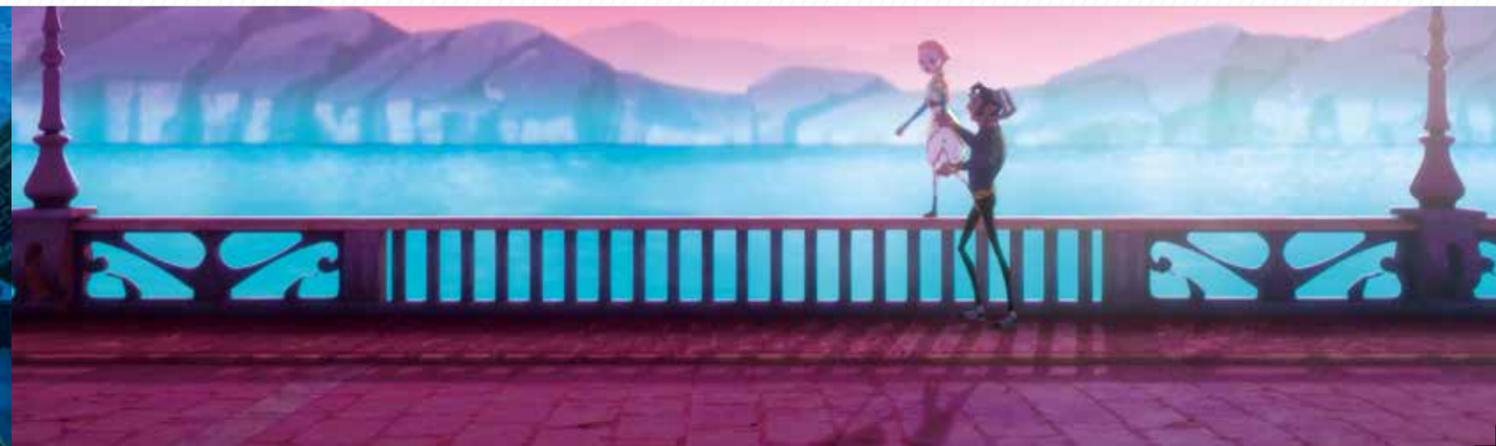


A stellar voice cast and top-tier creative team come together once more—this time, with an even greater mission.

A large-scale audition was held to cast the new voice of Lubicchi, the central character of the story. The role was unanimously awarded to Yuzuna Nagase, who gained attention for her performance as young Nobu Asada in the NHK morning drama *Anpan*. Joining her is a remarkable lineup of talent: MEGUMI voices Fluff, Lubicchi’s companion in the new world; Fuka Koshiba brings depth to the role of Nagi, a tree spirit in human form; Mitsuo Yoshihara portrays Gus, the clock keeper who has waited 100 years; and Anna Tsuchiya commands the role of Hora, ruler of the Millennium Fortress. Koichi Yamadera takes on dual roles as the twin clockmakers Comet and Whinny. The cast also features comedian Koji Higashino in his voice acting debut as Big Ears, Masaki Hasegawa (of comedy duo Nishikigoi) as the Giant Slug and Don, Takashi Watanabe (also of Nishikigoi) as the Dock Master, and Shotaro Morikubo as Malu, a character tied to the story’s secrets. Returning from the first film, Masataka Kubota once again brings life and humor to Poupelle, infusing the character with a pure and heartfelt soul. Yuta Kajihara, known as Kajisac and longtime comedy partner of creator Akihiro Nishino, also returns, along with Saori Ito as Antonio and Shingo Fujimori as Scoop—both reprising their roles with emotional depth and charm. The creative team behind the original film reunites with a mission to surpass it in every aspect. Executive Producer, Original Story, and Screenwriter Akihiro Nishino continues to push the boundaries of entertainment, defying conventions with his visionary storytelling. Yusuke Hirota, who was acclaimed for blending emotional depth and dynamic visuals in the first film, returns as director.

Production design and animation is once again handled by STUDIO4°C, whose impressive track record includes *Mind Game* (Grand Prize, The 8th Japan Media Arts Festival), *Tekkonkinkreet* (The 57th Berlinale Generation and Japan Academy Prize for Best Animation), *Children of the Sea* (Grand Prize, The 23rd Japan Media Arts Festival), and *ChaO* (2025 Jury Award, Annecy International Animation Film Festival). Applauded both in Japan and abroad, the studio’s artistry now expands beyond the whimsical Chimney Town to bring to life the dreamlike, otherworldly visuals of the “Millennium Fortress.”

Sound design is helmed by Koji Kasamatsu, known for *The Boy and the Heron* and *The First Slam Dunk*. The theme song, *Poupelle of Chimney Town*, is once again performed by Lozareena, whose voice reaches straight to the heart. Her newly written ending theme *little star* echoes the story’s message of courage, leaving a lasting impression on all who experience the film.





Story

An epic adventure in another world—to reclaim the courage to believe.



A dear friend who suddenly vanished

Lubicchi, a young boy living in Chimney Town, met Poupelle—a man made of trash—on Halloween night one year ago. Both outcasts in their own way, they formed a bond stronger than friendship and set off on a daring adventure to bring back the starry sky to their town shrouded in black smoke. But on that miraculous night, just as they gazed up at the stars, Poupelle suddenly vanished. At first, Lubicchi truly believed his friend would return. But as time passed, he came to accept that his wish may never come true—and began to move forward.

Then, something unexpected happens. Lubicchi spots a rat carrying the cherished bracelet full of memories that he once shared with Poupelle. As he chases after it, he accidentally tumbles into a fountain pool—setting the stage for an extraordinary new journey.



Into the mysterious realm of the “Millennium Fortress”

When Lubicchi comes to, he finds himself drifting underwater. Climbing into a small boat, he is startled to discover a talking cat onboard—a cat who, despite its sharp tongue, is oddly endearing. Lubicchi names it Fluff, and the two begin their journey together. Their path leads them to the “Millennium Fortress,” a mysterious world that governs time itself.

There, they meet Hora, ruler of the Fortress. Lubicchi asks how he can return to his world. Hora explains, *“In this world, any clock that stops ticking is discarded. But there’s one strange clock that stopped long ago and was never thrown away. Your mission is to restart its hands.”*

Fluff tells him that the clockmaker responsible for the stopped clock—Gus—is completely out of his mind and useless. Their only hope, it insists, is to find a new clockmaker.



A mysterious clock —stopped, yet not broken

Lubicchi and Fluff make their way to Clockmaker’s Street in search of someone who can fix the clock tower. But as soon as they mention the tower, the clockmakers all turn them away—clearly wanting nothing to do with it.

That’s when Fluff remembers a pair of twins—Comet and Whinny—former clockmakers now working as handymen. When they visit them, the twins agree to take the job, but only under certain conditions. However, the moment they hear which clock tower it is, they refuse outright.

Then comes a surprising revelation: *“We can’t fix it—because it isn’t broken.”*

With no other choice, Lubicchi decides to visit the tower himself and ask the enigmatic clockmaker Gus directly.



The true reason the clock stopped

When Lubicchi and Fluff visit the clock tower and ask the clockmaker Gus to fix the clock, he angrily shouts, *“Go away!”* and refuses. But as they explore the memories left behind in the tower, they uncover a story from 100 years ago—a promise between Gus and Nagi, a spirit of tree who once took human form. Even now, Gus continues to believe in that promise, and he waits.

That night, Lubicchi opens up to Fluff, revealing that he too once waited for his best friend, Poupelle—but gave up in order to move forward. Realizing the quiet strength and kindness in Gus’s unwavering faith, Lubicchi makes a decision—to help fulfill the promise between Gus and Nagi. But that choice marks the beginning of an extraordinary adventure...



Character/Cast

Lubicchi Yuzuna Nagase

A boy who lost his dear friend, Poupelle. He gave up on believing and waiting, and began moving forward. After wandering into the Millennium Fortress, he sets off on a journey to regain the "courage to believe".



Poupelle Masataka Kubota

A monster made of trash who suddenly appeared in Chimney Town on Halloween night one year ago. He became Lubicchi's best friend, but disappeared the day they finally gazed up at the stars together.



Fluff MEGUMI

A mysterious talking cat who can speak human language. As Lubicchi's new companion in another world, Fluff guides him after he gets lost there and helps him fulfill his mission to move the clock hands again.



Nagi Koshihara Fuka

A tree spirit in human form. Drawn to the outside world she has always dreamed of, she comes there and begins living with orphaned children. Curious, strong-willed, and a gifted singer.



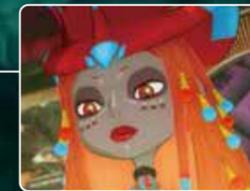
Gus Yoshihara Mitsuo

The keeper of the clock tower in the Millennium Fortress. He resides within the tower, which serves as the axis of time in the otherworld. For a hundred years, he has waited—holding onto the belief that the one he loves, who vanished long ago, will one day return.



Hora Tsuchiya Anna

A mysterious rat queen who commands the rats and rules over the Millennium Fortress. She is the one who reveals Lubicchi's mission: *to restart time in order to return to his own world.*



Comet & Whinny (dual role) Yamadera Koichi

Twin brothers and former clockmakers who now live as inventors and handymen on a remote island at the edge of the Millennium Fortress. Mischievous and full of energy, they lend their support to Lubicchi and his adventure.





Schoop Shingo Fujimori

A talkative mine thief who always supports Lubicchi. Could he have something to do with Lubicchi's journey to another world...?



Antonio Sairi Ito

Once estranged, Antonio is a friend of Lubicchi who has since rebuilt their bond.



Big-Ear Koji Higashino

A creature with huge ears that can hear sounds from far, far away.



Harbor guard Takashi Watanabe (Nishikigoi)

The intimidating gatekeeper who checks all who enter the Millennium Fortress—but underneath his tough exterior, he has a soft spot for all things cute.



Giant Slug / Don Masaki Hasegawa (Nishikigoi) (dual role)

Giant Slug – A slow-talking delivery creature whose mumbling makes him nearly impossible to understand. Don – A wake-up caller who shouts the time—“Probably 7 o'clock!”—through a loudspeaker from the cannon tower... with very little accuracy.



Malu Showtaro Morikubo

As a child, he lived with Nagi and the other kids. He now holds a precious earring that connects Nagi and Gus.



Himosac Kajisac

A middle manager among the rats who handle day-to-day operations at Hora's mansion.



Staff



Executive Producer, Original Story & Screenplay : Akihiro Nishino

Born in 1980 in Hyogo, Japan. As the original author, screenwriter, and executive producer of the animated feature *Poupelle of Chimney Town* (2020), he achieved a major box office success with a gross of 2.7 billion yen despite the COVID-19 pandemic. The film won numerous awards, including the Excellent Animation of the Year at the Japan Academy Prize, and received international recognition. His stop-motion short film *Bottle George* (2024), for which he also served as original author, screenwriter, and executive producer, was shortlisted for the 97th Academy Awards and received multiple awards at international film festivals. In New York, he is producing the Broadway musical *Chimney Town* and served as co-producer for the 2025 stage play *OTHELLO* (starring Denzel Washington and Jake Gyllenhaal), which topped the Broadway weekly box office charts for three consecutive weeks. He is currently producing the film *Chimney Town: Frozen in Time*, scheduled for release in spring 2026.



Director : Yusuke Hirota

Yusuke Hirota joined STUDIO4°C in 2001 and made his debut as computer graphics director on the TV series *Piroppo* (2001). He went on to help shape the visual style of acclaimed works including *The Animatrix – BEYOND* (2003), *Genius Party – BABY BLUE* (2007), *Genius Party Beyond – MOONDRIVE* (2008), and the *Berserk: The Golden Age Arc* trilogy (2012–2013). He co-directed *Harmony* (2015). His directorial debut, *Poupelle of Chimney Town* (2020), was seen by more than two million viewers. He supervised CGI for *ChaO* (2025) which was the winner of Jury Award at Anecy International Animation Film Festival. *Chimney Town: Frozen in Time* (2026) is his latest film as director.

Production Design and Animation: STUDIO4°C

STUDIO4°C is a Tokyo-based animation studio renowned worldwide for its high-quality, visually inventive works. Led by producer and founder Eiko Tanaka, the studio has consistently explored the possibilities of visual storytelling, placing strong emphasis on artistic individuality. Over the years, STUDIO4°C has produced a diverse range of acclaimed films, including *MEMORIES* (1995, exec. produced by Katsuhiro Otomo), *Princess Arete* (2001, dir. Sunao Katabuchi), *The Animatrix* (2003), and Masaaki Yuasa's *MIND GAME* (2004), which won the Grand Prize at the Japan Media Arts Festival. The studio's landmark title *Tekkonkinkreet* (2006) earned the Japan Academy Prize for Best Animated Feature. Subsequent works like *Genius Party* (2007), *the Berserk: The Golden Age Arc* trilogy (2012), *Harmony* (2015), and *MFKZ* (2018) have continued to push boundaries and surprise audiences. More recently, *Children of the Sea* (2019) was submitted for the Academy Awards® and won both the Japan Media Arts Festival Grand Prize and the Mainichi Film Awards. In 2025, the studio's latest film *ChaO* was awarded the Jury Prize at the Anecy International Animation Film Festival. The name "4°C" refers to the temperature at which water reaches its maximum density—a metaphor for the studio's commitment to the highest artistic quality.



Theme Song : Poupelle of Chimney Town by Lozareena

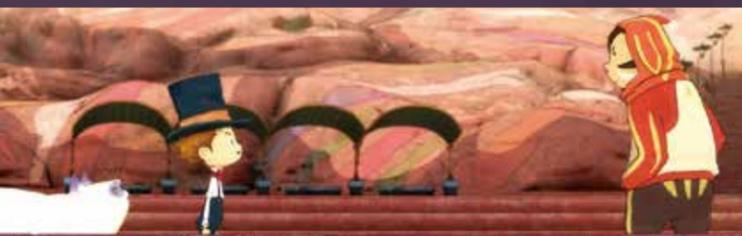
Lozareena rose to prominence as the singer of the theme song for the animated film *Poupelle of Chimney Town* (2020), based on the bestselling picture book by Akihiro Nishino. In the same year, she released her debut album *INNER UNIVERSE*, featuring the track "Nani ni Naritakute", which went viral on social media among teenage audiences and has surpassed 8 million views on YouTube. Her subsequent works include "unknown" (2023), as well as theme and insert songs for various productions such as *Nile Perch Women's Club* (2021), *Abunai Deka Returns* (2024), and *Little Shark's Big City Adventure* (2025). She also appeared in the TV drama *The Warden's Code* (2025). A rising singer-songwriter whose expressive vocals and emotional storytelling continue to attract growing attention.

Original Story :Tick Tock: Frozen in Time By Akihiro Nishino

The film *Poupelle of Chimney Town: Frozen in Time* is rooted in the message: "Everyone experiences an '11 o' clock hour' in life — a time before the bell rings when effort may seem unrewarded. But it's okay, because the hands of the clock are destined to align." This powerful message is drawn from the original picture book, which begins with the line: "There once was a mysterious clock tower that had stopped at 11:59, even though it wasn't broken..." Upon its release, the book was described as "the most tragic yet most beautiful story in Akihiro Nishino's body of work," a reputation it still holds.



Published by: Gentosha Price: 2,530 Japanese yen



World of the Poupelle



1 Character



2 Chimney Town

Once shrouded in thick smoke, Chimney Town was a closed-off world where no one even imagined the existence of stars beyond the haze. However, thanks to Lubicchi and Poupelle, who dared to believe in the stars, the smoke was cleared away—transforming the town into a beautiful, vibrant place beneath a clear sky.

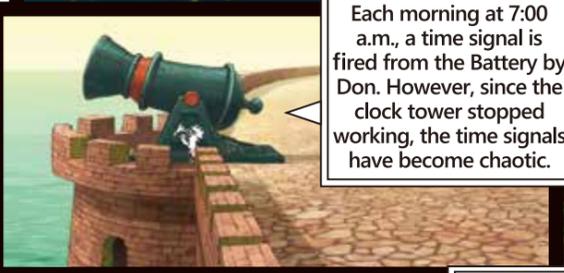


3 Millennium Fortress

Governs the "time" of all things in existence.



The fortress' s only timepiece—the clock tower—has been frozen at 11:59 for the past 100 years.



Each morning at 7:00 a.m., a time signal is fired from the Battery by Don. However, since the clock tower stopped working, the time signals have become chaotic.



The clocks delivered by couriers represent "life" and are all managed by Queen Hora, a rat monarch.



Time flows differently here compared to the real world.

"Tatsumi Street" is where all the clockmakers of the fortress gather. It is lined with clock shops that maintain and repair the flow of time.



Message

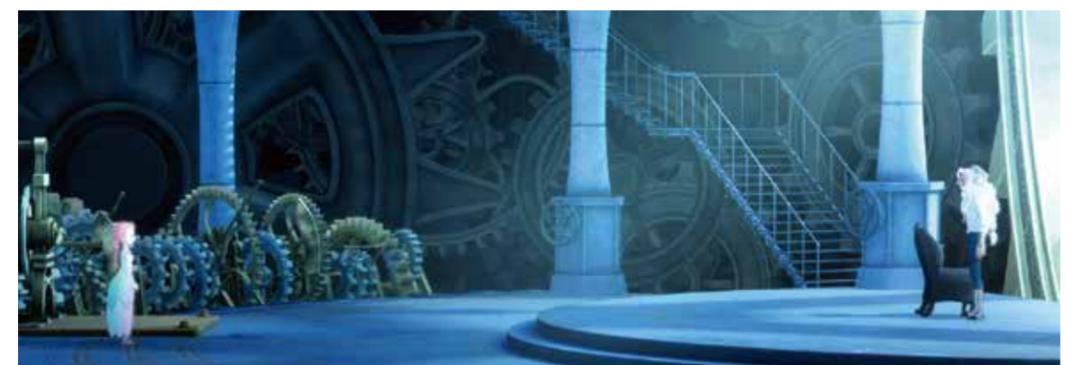
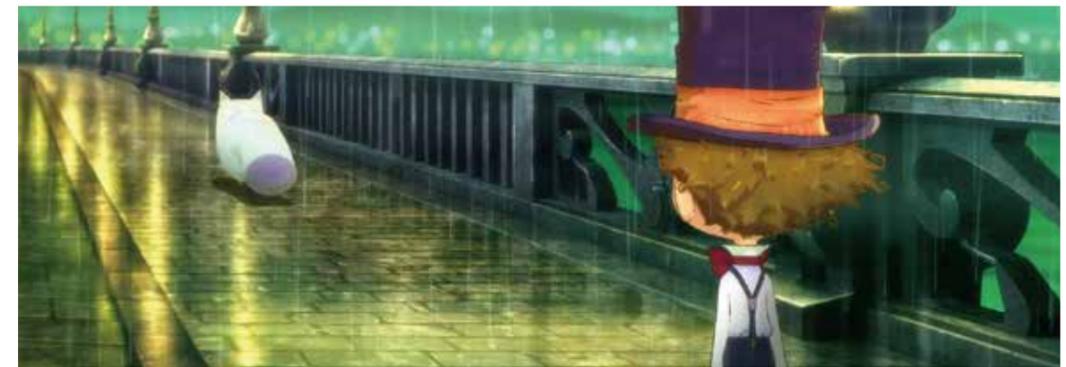
The story behind this film is rooted in something I experienced in my early twenties—a time when a close friend of mine disappeared, and all I could do was wait, not knowing if he would ever return. As the comedy duo King Kong, we rose through the ranks quickly, appearing on various shows—but our skills hadn't caught up to our exposure. We couldn't deliver results, and under the weight of it all, Kajihara's spirit gradually gave way. One day, he simply vanished. With all our work suddenly gone, I was stuck in my apartment, on standby for potential tabloid fallout.

During that time, our agency offered me a path forward: "Would you like to go solo?" I was conflicted. I was angry. But I also remembered how much fun we had doing stand-up together, or just hanging out. I thought—*what if I succeeded on my own? Would there be a place left for him to come back to? Would all the joy we shared disappear forever?* And so, I made the decision to wait. Even now, I believe it was the most courageous choice I've ever made.

When you act on your own, it's your own will. But to wait for someone else—especially when the odds are high that they may never return—that takes a different kind of bravery. And it was that feeling I poured into this story.

This is the story of a boy who once gave up on believing—but must face the choice again: to believe and wait. Will the clock, once stopped, ever begin to move again? It's not just the story of someone special. It's the story of anyone who's ever stood still, yet refused to give up.

Executive Producer, Original Story & Screenplay Akihiro Nishino





Director's Note

**"Waiting doesn't mean "doing nothing."
—It's "complete faith" in your friend!"**

This film tells the story of Lubicchi, a boy who once gave up on waiting for his dearest friend. Through an extraordinary adventure in a mysterious world called the "Millennium Fortress," he comes to understand what it truly means to wait—and is ultimately reunited with his friend.

In the previous film, *Poupelle of Chimney Town*, we explored the theme of "believing." This new chapter continues that universal theme, taking it even further by delving into the act of waiting—a powerful form of belief in itself.

Through this work, I wanted to portray the strength and kindness of caring deeply for others, and the honest heart we must hold onto.

We live in a world that constantly demands convenience, efficiency, and instant results. While technological advancement has certainly enriched our lives, there are things we must never forget—things we must never lose, no matter how far technology takes us. This film seeks to express those timeless values through the act of waiting—waiting with courage, conviction, and unwavering faith—delivered in the form of an animated film.

Visually, we've aimed to create a warm and artistic fantasy world. The animation combines Japan's unique limited-animation techniques with expressive 3DCG character movement and a hybrid of 2D and 3D background art.

The diverse characters are not only distinct and whimsical in design, but also rich in humor and charm. Even amidst the drama, we wanted to ensure the story remains fun and accessible for all ages—an entertainment piece that speaks to both children and adults.

It is my deepest hope that this film will be embraced by audiences around the world.

Director Yusuke Hirota



Yuzuna Nagase Masataka Kubota / MEGUMI
Fuka Koshiba Mitsuo Yoshihara Anna Tsuchiya Koichi Yamadera
Shingo Fujimori Sairi Ito / Koji Higashino Nikshikigoi Showtaro Morikubo
Executive Producer, Original Story & Screenplay: Akihiro Nishino Director: Hirota Yusuke Music: Harumi Fuuki
Original Character Design: Atsuko Fukushima
Background Design: Hirokazu Sato Art Director: Minoru Nishida Character Supervisor: Chiaki Imanaka
Animation Directors: Tomonari Nakajima Hisato Tokumaru Yuta Sano Shogo Furuya
Color Design: Yuko Egami CGI Director: Yoshiyuki Oguni Editing: Kiyoshi Hirose Sound Design: Kouji Kasamatsu
Producers: Eiko Tanaka Ryoichi Fukuyama Ko Mori
Original Concept: 『Tick-Tock: Frozen in Time』(Akihiro Nishino/GENTOSHA)
Theme Song: "Poupelle of Chimney Town" by LOZAREENA (Sony Music Labels)
Production design and Animation: STUDIO4°C
© Akihiro Nishino / "Chimney Town: Frozen in Time" Production Committee

Web site (Japanese) : poupelle.com
X/TikTok/Facebook @poupellemovie Instagram @poupelleofchimneytown

