

IF WALLS COULD TALK/ WALLS IN MOTION: Urban graffiti animations

A course in Urban graffiti Stop Motion animations

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GRDS045

Category: Professional/representation

Studio/Lab course, 4 hours

Fall 2008-09

Time: T TH 11-1 pm

Place: GD 3rd year studio, GD Lab 2, and on location

Offered to: Graphic Design and Architecture students, 3rd year and above

Prerequisites: Photo 1 and 2, and or Instructor approval

Capacity: 12 students

Course description

A departmental elective course offered to Architecture and Graphic Design students that aims at covering the principles, processes and techniques of stop motion animation, particularly focusing on urban graffiti animation, or 2D stop motion animations applied to the local built environment (walls and urban surfaces in Beirut).

The students are required to explore the relationship of the method of expression and techniques employed with the concepts, narrative themes and issues. While developing the concept for the animation the students are encouraged to free themselves from using literal interpretations and from the structural demands of classical narrative through various systems (use of myths, metaphors, dreams abstract art ...).

Students explore and reflect on the choice of materials, method, inspiration and the tactile attraction of the chosen site. They will as well be examining motion, tempo, rhythm, depth, color, texture, form, matter and spatial representation and relation, all in the context of animation.

By the end of the course the students will produce a complete edited stop motion animation short film that will be publicly screened in the original setting, in addition to a comprehensive documentation of the process.

Course abstract:

Creating a dialogue between the animate object (moving/alive) the static inanimate object (wall, surface) and producing an animated inanimate (moving stills).

Although animation traditionally explores movement through the dimension of time (by running successive images) it has recently been taken into the dimension of space through graffiti artists who utilize the urban space as canvas to their stop motion animations, thereby pushing the boundaries of the medium as communication tool as well as an instrument for exploring the space in motion. Based on the notion that the appreciation of mass, like that of space, depends on movement, this course attempts to take animation into space and through physical movement understand and explore it.

Throughout the course, and particularly through animation (throughout the process of completing the stop motion animation on an urban space and various surface, in addition to related lectures,

animation film screenings, readings , debates and invited guest speakers) the student can explore how the space informs and challenges the artist, why it engages him/her and how it is explored and altered. One of the spaces available to explore is that of the city and the urban space, after all, “it is the city that has always influenced, frustrated and inspired graffiti artists; the metropolis is their canvas and their irritant.”¹, and in this case the exploration will carry the particulars of the city of Beirut. Embarking from the view of graffiti as an art form using the city surfaces as support for the creative expression of identity and ideas, and using the nature of graffiti to communicate with the public beyond the sanctioned space of the gallery walls, the course plans on embarking on a stop motion animation on the walls of an abandoned house or urban structure (with previous approval to utilize the space and surfaces), using the structure as a base for the concept, completing the filming of the entire animation on location and consequentially projecting it in the space. Students are encouraged to Investigate alternate interpretations to the concepts beyond the literal and classical narrative constraints through various methodologies, while using the imperfect nature of the process of stop motion animation.

Course Objectives

- Introduce and distinguish different types of stop motion animation techniques and styles
- Learn basic skills and processes of stop motion animation
- Study motion, tempo, rhythm, speed, depth, color, texture, form, matter and spatial representation and relation.
- Explore the relationship of the concepts, themes and issues with the method of expression and techniques employed.
- Investigate alternate interpretations to the concepts beyond the literal and classical narratives constraints
- Explore animation as a means of communication and self expression, using the built environment as their 3D canvas and an exhibiting space beyond the sanctioned space of the gallery walls.
- Actively participate in community commentary
- Reflect upon the different tools of animation and identify the requirements of a successful animation
- Examine the choice of materials, method and tactile implications of the chosen site.
- Explore 2D representation and illustration techniques and tools in relation to experimental animation.
- Learn audio and video editing techniques and software
- Develop a critical eye on animation

Learning outcomes:

In this course students will:

- Complete a stop motion animation short movie from concept to completion
- Develop and refine ideas for animation, exploring animation as a means of communication
- Distinguish and implement stop motion animation techniques and styles
- Learn basic skills and processes of stop motion animation
- Critically view and analyze animations through exposure to a variety of experimental animations
- Learn basics and advanced concepts of in-betweening and key framing on 3D surface
- Develop surface techniques particular to this project, and study existing 2D techniques applicable (illustration and animation techniques: from stenciling to rotoscoping)
- Develop the spatial relationship of site and the medium used
- Study basics of audio and video editing and practice using it as a language tool for animation
- Learn digital editing software and train in audio editing as well as video editing techniques, basics and processes as well as special effects
- Complete a full storyboard for the organization and preparation of the animation
- Create an Animatic (Leica reel); an animated storyboard in order to study the pacing of the animation.

Course Requirements

- Activities: Lectures, discussion sessions, active participation, Studio work sessions
animation movie screenings, laboratory assignments (editing), readings, guest
lecturers, sketch journals, online forum participation.
- Assignments Details in course outline (assignment theme will be defined in class and relates
to the chosen site
- Attendance: strict attendance required, as course is lecture based and heavily relies on
class work and studio hours in class.
- Other required materials:
Acrylic and house paint and brushes, spray cans, stencils (possibly other
materials)
Digital camera (additional cameras available from the department)
Tripod
Computer for editing (Computers and software available at the GD lab)

Grading

Grading will be based on:

Assignment (which will be divided into 4 phases)

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| Phase 1: concept development, Site research/ documentation | 15% |
| Phase 2: Sketches, Storyboard, line test and animatic | 30% |
| Phase 3: intervention and paintings on the walls | 30% |
| Phase 4: audio and video editing | 15% |

Attendance and Participation

10%

Bibliography, Filmography

- Beck, J. (2004) *Animation art, from pencil to pixel*, Flame tree publishing, Harper Collins.
- Flint, T. (1989) *Anatomy for the Artist: They Dynamics of Human Form*, Arcturus foulsham.
- Furniss, M. (2008) *The Animation Bible*, Laurence King publishing.
- Laybourne, Kit. (1998) *The animation book: a complete guide to animated filmmaking--from flip-books to sound cartoons to 3-D animation*. Rivers Press.
- Lord, P. and Sibley, B. (1998) *Cracking animation, The Ardman book of 3D animation*, Thames and Hudson.
- Morley, S. (2003) *Writing on the wall: word and image in modern art*, Thames and Hudson.
- Muybridge, E. (1887) *Animal Locomotion*, University of Pennsylvania.
- Priebe, ken A. (2006) *The Art of Stop-Motion Animation*, Course Technology PTR; 1 edition
- Wells, P. (2002) *The fundamentals of Animation*, AVA publishing.
- Scheepers, I. (2004) *Graffiti and Urban Space*, University of Sydney press.
- Bilal, Enki (1999)
- Gastman, R. (2001) *Street World: Urban Culture from Five Continents (Street Graphics / Street Art)*, Thames & Hudson Ltd
- De Bruyn, Dirk. Re-animating the Lost Objects d'Childhood and the Everyday: Jan Svankmajer. 2001
<http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/cteq/01/14/svankmajer.html>
- Habib, André. Through a Glass darkly - interview with the Quay brothers. (2001)
<http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/01/19/quay.html>

Filmography

Aardman animations: Adam, Creature comforts ...

A Zed & Two Noughts (A.K.A. Zoo). Peter Greenaway, 1985

Adventures of Prince Achmed. Karl Koch, animated by Lotte Reiniger. Germany, 1927

Animando Animations: Types of animation from sand to pixilation

Baraka. Ron Fricke, 1992

Blu animations

Brothers Quay Animations (Compilation)

Corpse bride, Tim Burton

Interview with Reggio and Glass, and making of Koyaanesqaatsi

Koyaanesqaatsi. Godfrey Reggio, 1982.

King Kong, peter Jackson, animated by Ray Haryhausen 1933.

Le tour d'animation: Jouyeaux d'un siecle, volume 1, 2 & 3

Puppetoons Georges pal (substitution)

Nightmare before Christmas, Tim Burton

Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger. Sam Wanamaker, 1977.

The wall, Pink Floyd, Alan Parker 1982.

The Cabinet of Jan Švankmajer". BFI DVD Publishing.

Wallace and Gromit, Aardman animation, Nick Park

A grand day out

The wrong trousers

A close shave

Atta, Future TV's claymations

Compilation DVDs:

Annecy Film festival animations, awards 2000.

British Animation Awards animation, volume 1,2,3,4,5,6

Zagreb Film festival animation volumes 2,5.

Course Outline

Unit	Month	Week	Session	Description	Due
		1	1		
	Sep		2		
1: Intro	Oct	2	1	Introduction and syllabus	
			2	Overview of stop motion animation Types and techniques	
		3	1	Animation basics, processes of animation: Squash & stretch, ease in ease out	
			2	Key frames, In-betweening Cycles, motion study. Sample tests Rotoscoping	
		4	1	Movie screening: Time lapse (Koyanesqatsi, and Interview with Godfrey Reggio, Barraka, ZOO)	
			2	Pixilation test #1, groups	Due pixilation
2 Assignment		5	1	Assignment # 1 intro; discussion Guest lecturer	
			2	Screening: BLU wall animations Location study, group division, develop concept structure, documentation	
	Nov	6	1	Location research and documentation, written and visual. Screening "The Wall"	Due location research
			2	Concept development individual and group	
3: Concept analysis		7	1	Material Vs. technique Study techs: stencil/cut out/ collage Sketches, work session	
			2	Due concept Work session	Due concept
		8	1	Work session, Sketches	
			2	Storyboard Due	Due phase 1

4: Line test		9	1	Preparation for line test, work session	
			2	developing line test, work session	
	Dec	10	1	Shooting line test, work session	
			2	Animatic, Line test complete	Due Phase 2
5 Shoot		11	1	Prepare materials for final shoot	
			2	Shooting on Location	
		12	1	Work session	
			2	Work session	
	Xmas	13	1	Stop Mo painting/ art work	
			2	Work session	
		14	1	Time lapse test over vacation	
			2	Work session	
	Jan	15	1	Work session	
			2	Work session	
		16	1	Shooting complete	Due Phase 3
6: Editing			2	Editing Intro; techniques/ Software Audio editing, video editing samples	
		17	1	Editing: Audio Video, guest lecturer Dina Sharara, pro digital editor	
			2	Editing: Audio Video	
		18	1	Editing: Audio Video	
				Editing: Audio Video/ compiling all	
7 Screening				Screening movie	Due Phase 4

Animation shorts are like poetry; short but intense and complex.