

AW

ANIMATION WORLD MAGAZINE

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Getting into Gaming!



**JAK
AND
DAXTER**



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NATPE Pondered ...

Animated Cold War Propoganda Revealed!



Getting into Gaming!

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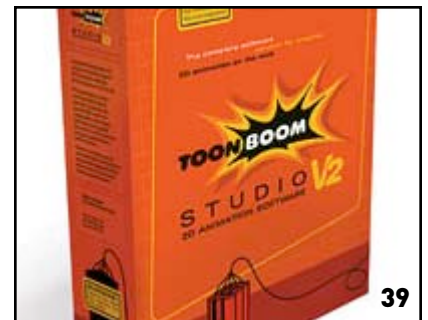
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PRECURSOR LEGACY

Gaming Animation... Naughty Dog Style

by Bob Rafei

IMAGINE THAT YOU ARE A CREATIVE
RESIDENT OF GAMES-EKHISTAN...



IMAGINE THAT YOU ARE A CREATIVE RESIDENT of Games-ekhistan and have to pack a one size fits all suitcase for a long trip AND you have to share this space with other family members. Your vehicle is a copy of the only model available in this rugged frontier-like country. Of course, you have specialists in your group that can tweak, or even rebuild, the car's engine from the ground up to modify performance. Now, if you happen to be from the neighboring Toon-town, FX-ville or Feature-land, you are accustomed to having the biggest vehicles and suitcase money can buy for your trip. However, you have to travel with all your extended family since more of them are needed to keep the bus rolling.

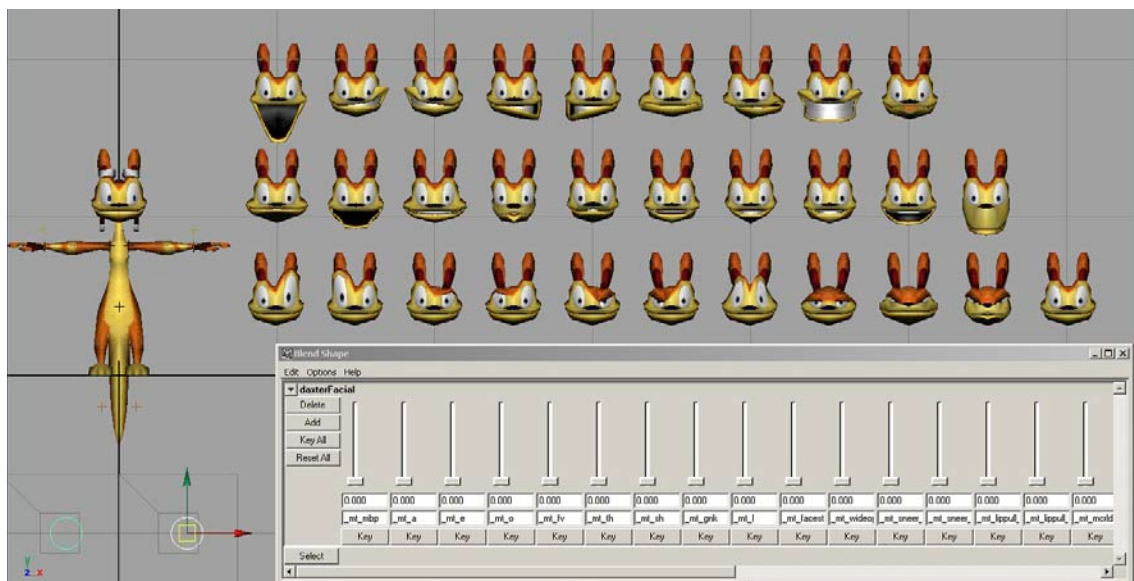
I often find myself using this horribly goofy example as a way to explain to friends and family what it is I do at Naughty Dog, Inc. (NDI) and why game development is not exactly the same as working with film or TV. What you might, or might not, have gotten from this example is that one of the main concerns of game development is memory allocation and data storage. There are only a certain number of polygons drawn on the screen, and calculations in any given frame, or frame rate will drop. Without the invisible work of the programming staff, we the artists would have very little room for any contribution of our crafts.

I also find myself explaining that besides the apparent technical limitations, another major attribute of games is that it requires an *active* versus *passive* audience participation. No two players will have the exact same experience playing the exact same game. Gameplay is paramount over any story. IF there is a story it is only there to propel us forward to the next level. If the player doesn't like the feel of the controls or the play mechanics, the best-crafted story sequences will not save the game.

Each generation of consoles has further expanded our boundaries. Since more "stuff" can pass through the pipe, visual advancements become the first noticeable difference, followed by the individual style between developers. Therefore, production design has become a required link in an ever-growing chain. Before the original PlayStation days, Jason Rubin and Andy Gavin, the co-founders of Naughty Dog, Inc., were doing the art and programming respectively, pretty much from the garage.



Two pages showing renditions for Jak (left) and Daxter from the bible for the game. Complete character development for characters includes final color drawing, turnarounds, action poses, size comparisons and facial expressions as shown here. All images: *Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy* is trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment of America, Inc. © 2001 Sony Computer Entertainment America, Inc.



Maya grabs of Dexter morphs show asymmetrical face targets for facial animations and front and side schematic drawing for modeling.

Production sketches like these are the first step in building 3D game environments.



When I joined Naughty Dog in early 1995, we went on to finish our first title, *Crash Bandicoot*, for the PS one as a team of eight. As production work started on our first PS2 title, *Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy*, in January 2001, we went from a company of 15 to 36 and today we are 44. Our decision to try something bigger than we had ever done before resulted in the (and some veterans would say the unfortunate) necessity to specialize tasks in our pipeline. We were now able to attract full-time artists foreign to game development, who have such roles as production designer and story sequence (FMA) animators. Some of these talents came to us from places like Disney Feature Animation, Digital Domain and other non-gaming production houses.

EACH GENERATION OF CONSOLES HAS FURTHER EXPANDED OUR BOUNDARIES.

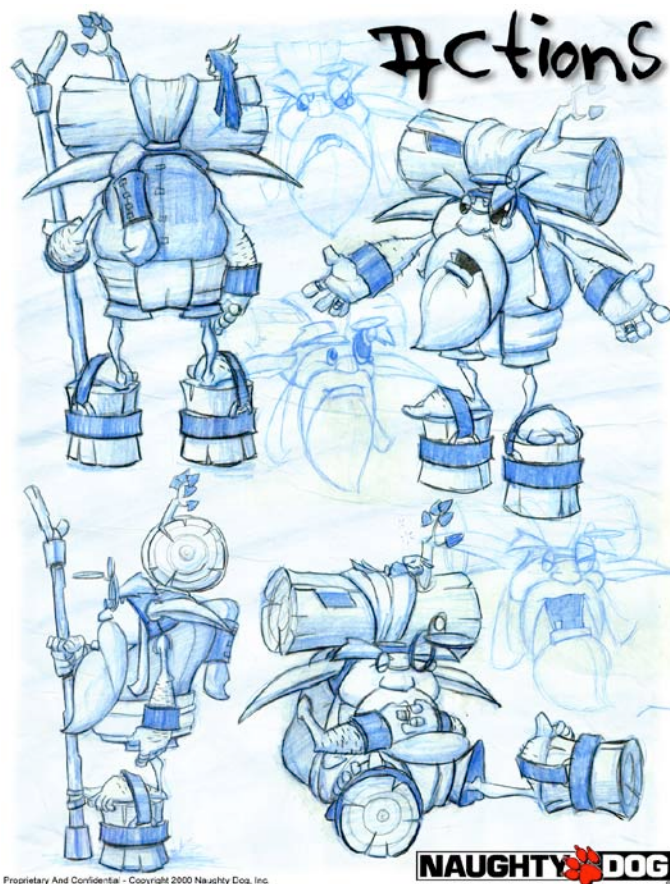
JAK AND DAXTER: TO DO LIST

Expanding on our experience in the "character action" genre, we wanted to develop the most fluid and seamless animation possible, to give Jak, and his wisecracking buddy Daxter, a life of their own. For better or worse, we decided not to give Jak a voice since it was believed any voice would further remove the player from playing as Jak. Daxter was to be a squash and stretch friendly character that would drop unique hints to guide the player within the world they were exploring. The enemies that the duo would encounter were to be just as elaborate in their animations and have the intelligence to react to Jak's moves accordingly. No longer would the enemies be constrained to a certain path, but rather would be able to track Jak and decide how to chase him around obstacles. The animated story sequences had to draw in the same *in-game* engine and needed to be good enough cinematically to stand on their own. We also wanted the player to break out of the conventional linear progression of entering levels and allow them the freedom to explore the whole world from end to end uninterrupted. Borrowing from theme park construction, we placed a unique giant background element in each "level" in order to lure the player in that direction. The level's lighting was to cycle through different times of day in a real-time 24-minute-day cycle. The game camera had to be smart enough to track Jak, yet not have any sudden movements that could make the player nauseous. The music had to match the tempo of the action. Localization for all territo-

HERE IS A LITTLE PERSPECTIVE: CRASH'S MODEL WAS ROUGHLY 500 POLYGONS. WE'VE SINCE INCREASED THE RESOLUTION OF THE CHARACTERS FOR SUCH SEQUENCES TO AROUND 12,000 POLYS...



Jak's kinematics is setup and rigged using Maya.



Various actions of Samos the Sage.

ries (U.S., Japan and PAL territories) had to progress concurrently in order to make release dates that were one week apart for each territory...AND it all had to be done in about 18 months.

Here is a little perspective: Crash's model was roughly 500 polygons. There was very little room for detail or any use of complicated shapes. The hands, for example, needed to be mitts. Jak and Daxter, however, are about 5,000 polygons combined. We were now able to model individual fingers, some description of anatomy and facial features, which would look good enough for FMA sequences...up to a distance. We've since increased the resolution of the characters for such sequences to around 12,000 polys, which allows us to budget more polys in the new model's head or facial features alone, than were in Crash's whole body. Some of these scenes involve up to six of these FMA models, along with a few regular resolution characters placed at some distance from the camera, totaling around 100,000 polys per frame just for the foreground elements. The camera can now be pushed in close enough to a face to have it fill the whole screen without looking too polygonal.

IN-GAME VS. FMA ANIMATION

Any art in the game can either fall into a background or actor category. Actors are any geometry that is rigged to a skeleton for the purpose of animation. This can include a simple door, with one bone used for rotation, to the most complicated characters and bosses (the most challenging and unique enemy set ups). All actors fall under either in-game (the ma-



Jak and Daxter's in-game walk and run cycles. The pressure exerted on the controller stick can dictate the ratio of blending between any combination of animations like these.

jority of actors in the game) or FMA. In-game actors need to be the most efficient and leanest in their use of bones and polys, allowing us to maximize our rendering possibilities. The kinematics structures for the in-game and FMA actors are mostly the same, with the exception that bones that are not pivotal to the animation (like pinkies, toes or straps, for example) are not processed on run time. This allows us to recycle states of animation, when appropriate, for consistency of style between in-game and FMA, and yields better productivity. The level-of-detailing (LOD) of actors is necessary in order to minimize polygons based on distance away from the camera.

Our proprietary mesh tessellation routine for background geometry is a crucial part of LODing, which allows us to have so many actors on screen at once. The coolest aspect of our in-game animations is

our animation blending technology. This powerful technology allows us to blend between multiple animations of the same kinematics structure. For example, Jak has a standard run cycle, but he also has a run uphill and a run down hill cycle. Based on the grade of the terrain that he encounters, we can blend the standard run into run up or down hill. Depending on the pressure exerted on the controller stick, Jak can start from a walk cycle and progress up to his run cycle. The tempo of the run cycle is also modified in parallel with the controller pressure. At half pressure the player will see a sort of jog, walk and run. The blending is also used to smooth out any transitions into other actions, like jumping or punching, at any given frame. This means we do not have to worry about keeping track of branching points from one cycle to another, which in turn cuts down any lag in player response. However, the price for responsive controls results in no allowance of anticipation in the animations. The polish on the animations could be placed in the follow-through actions at the end of the cycles, when appropriate, for instances where the player allows a gap of time before the next action is exerted on the controller. These uses of the kinematics blending gave our in-game animations more life and fluidity than existing standards.



Jak and Daxter's enemies in action and with their props. In the Lurker-chase: Smarter enemies can chase Jak around obstacles and plot new courses as the obstacles are removed.

Our FMA sequences are straightforward scenes animated to voice recordings that expand on the story while giving the player their next game task. Unfortunately, for a majority of game developers these sequences have been done with poor cinematic choices, bad timing, staging and animation. Despite the poor craftsmanship, a lot of developers have little room to



maneuver due to limited resources left to spare or choices made for optimal gameplay, rightfully so. The player, however, has seen a million movies by the time they see these amateurish sequences. Therefore these sequences are seen as intrusion on gameplay, especially since the control is momentarily suspended. Knowing that we were facing an uphill battle, it was decided to allocate resources early in the project, from engine specs to additional animation staff.

Why go through the trouble of rendering these sequences within the in-game engine rather than pre-render and load as compressed movies? Two reasons: First, we wanted to match the lighting of these scenes with that of the in-game environments housing them. Second, certain elements in these scenes can be altered by Jak's actions prior to sequence start, like broken barrels and crates. And third, we didn't want an extreme visual quality difference between in-game and FMA. We also wanted avoid farming them out to hired guns.

ART PIPELINE

The first step for any background or actors is approved production designs. In-game characters either fit a visual theme to their background or are indigenous to the environments. FMA characters are designed based on their contribution to the story. Front and side schematic, or turns, are then passed onto modelers for construction and rigging. Texture skins are created (using Photoshop) and mapped accordingly, including any alpha maps and environment reflections. Morph targets are created for phonemes, eye brow and mouth expressions for left and right side, usually adding up to 32 sliders, more if necessary. Our primary software for modeling, rigging and animation is Maya. Lightwave is used in parts of morph target construction. An extensive library of proprietary MEL scripts were created to support our specific needs. Voice talents are recorded and passed onto animators.

In-game characters go through the same process with the exception of having few to no morph targets, and any dialogue is treated as voice-over for minimum disruptions to in-game camera. Movement and attacks of in-game characters are first prototyped as much as possible to adjust game design before any animation starts. The enemy animations are further compressed by animating at 15 frames/second, but rendered out at 30f/second.

Jak and Daxter was by far the most ambitious project many of us have worked on, but at the end of



Visit the village in this typical FMA sequence. One animator would have ownership over the entire scene. The schedule allowed roughly 20 seconds of finished animation per week, per animator. There are about 45 minutes of such sequences in *Jak and Daxter*.

the day the question for us, and other game developers, shouldn't be how could we get closer to feature animation level quality? (The answer is that we simply need to look at CG milestones and draw from a century of cinema.) The question is how do we come up with innovative ways to give players as much control as possible but still influence the direction of the

game? How can we allow them to determine the outcome of their actions without simply going through the scripted steps? How do we create gaming communities that evolve due to individual player actions? Time will tell. ■

A NYC graduate of Parsons School of Design, **BABAK (BOB) RAFEI** is the art director, character animator and senior visual development artist at Naughty Dog, Inc. Bob was the first artist to join NDI in early 1995 while in the visual development stage of *Crash Bandicoot*, which paved the way for *CB2: Cortex Strikes Back*, *CB: Warped* and *Crash Team Racing* for PlayStation, collectively selling 22 million+ units worldwide. His contribution to this series ranged from modeling and texturing, to character animation and visual development.

During development of *Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy* for the PS2, Bob's responsibilities included leading visual development as well as contributing to character animations. He is currently doing the same on NDI's next endeavor. He has lectured at the Game Developers Conference on the subject of character design, and has contributed writings to *Animation Magazine* and *Animation World Network* (AWN.com).

Online Highlights

Every online (HTML) issue of *Animation World Magazine* contains additional features not found in the download or print Acrobat version, such as QuickTime movies. Don't miss the following highlights that are showcased exclusively in this month's *Animation World Magazine* HTML version:

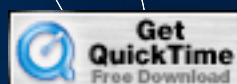
THE KEYS TO ANIMATING FOR GAMING

While completing animation for gaming is similar in many ways to other forms of animation, there are some very particular concerns...like console memory and interactivity that need to be kept always in mind. Bob Rafei of Naughty Dog explains.

TOON BOOM STUDIO V2 IN ACTION

Toon Boom Studio V2 is an affordable 2D animation software that takes animators on a smooth ride to create projects for the Web, video, wireless and more.

View the QuickTime and Flash clips online!





SELECT PLAYER

Figuring Out the Recruiting Game for Gaming

by Darlene Chan

THINKING OF MOVING FROM TRADITIONAL or CG animation into gaming animation? Think the skills you use everyday can apply easily to games? Is there a difference in terms of talent, skills and mindset between TV/film animation and gaming? We posed these questions to four top gaming recruitment professionals. Here is their very in-depth and thoughtful advice on how to put together resumes and reels and what skills gaming companies are looking for.



The basic rule of labeling all your materials with contact info is often forgotten on reels and resumes, says Patrick Kenney of Electronic Arts.

PATRICK KENNEY, Senior Staffing Manager of Artist Recruiting for Electronic Arts

Patrick Kenney began his career in recruiting ten years ago at Walt Disney Feature Animation where he worked on numerous features including Dinosaurs, Hunchback of Notre Dame and Hercules. His career continued at PDI as the senior recruiter for ANTZ and Shrek and he followed that up by working as the director of staffing at Will Vinton Studios. He joined Electronic Arts (EA) almost 2 years ago and is currently responsible for hiring artists for its worldwide studios.

I have found that a lot of traditional animators are qualified to cross over into gaming. However, they are animators that already have CG experience. Interactive entertainment doesn't have the luxury of long ramp ups so a traditional animator without some hardcore computer animation skills is really difficult for us to place. It also goes the other way. We love to find CG animators that have a background in traditional animation as well — the fundamentals of traditional animation are still key building blocks.

Believe it or not, a large amount of folks forget to put their complete contact information on their materials. We often get reels and portfolios without names or phone numbers on them and if those materials get separated from the resume, we're in trouble. As far as content, we do look for very similar things as TV/film. We list those guidelines on our Website (jobs.ea.com) as do most high-end animation studios. If you are trying to let someone know what kind of an animator you are, show your best skills at animation and probably some figure drawings, etc. If you are looking for a role as a 3D modeler, include whatever it is that would let the reviewer know that you can build models. Wire frames on turntables and some simple textures would work very

WE CAN USUALLY FIND A HOME FOR VERY TALENTED FOLKS FROM OUR "SISTER" INDUSTRIES.

— PATRICK KENNEY

well. The one thing that most folks may not know, is that you should be trying to do low poly models. For the time being, we are still using low poly models, however, we'd also like to see your skill at high poly modeling. Very often people ask me what to put on their reel and I usually turn it around on them. I ask them what they think they would need to see if they were assessing someone's skills in a particular area. Usually, they are right on the mark with their answers. Another very, very key element that most people don't include, is the shot list or what we call a reel breakdown. I can't assess your skills if I'm not 100% clear as to what you specifically did on the reel or even in the portfolio — and modelers should include their poly counts.

We often hire people from TV/film — in fact given the more cinematic approach to our games now, especially with the new technology and consoles available, it happens quite often. We can usually find a home for very talented folks from our "sister" industries. I'd say just about any role from producer to production coordinator, art directors and animators to lighters. And if you looked at a sampling of our recent production, artistic and even engineering hires from the last 12 months, you would see a very good representation from TV/film. I think a lot of people have made that transition due to the fact that the artistic integrity of the games has improved tremendously and now artists see it as a viable career choice. Also, our production environments tend to be a bit more stable, in that we don't hire on a project by project basis unless we have a very specific need for that game. Typically, we try to hire full time staff with all the benefits that go along with that. You don't find a lot of turnover in our industry and specifically at Electronic Arts — once people get in they usually find themselves challenged, rewarded and having fun on a daily basis.



Chris Smith of Emerge Interactive Agency feels a resume gets you through the door, but a good demo reel gets you the job. Photo credit: Joe O'Flaherty.

CHRIS SMITH, Co-founder, Emerge Interactive Agency

Chris has worked with independent recruiting agencies in the games industry for 4 years. His company, Emerge, specializes in staffing and talent representation specifically within the games industry.

In my experience, I have found that artists coming from the film/effects industry are qualified enough to make the jump to games. In most cases they are actually highly sought after. The technology gap between games and movies seems to be shrinking as developers push the limits of the current consoles. Game studios are increasingly hiring artists from TV/film to create a quality of art to match the technical capabilities of new, more powerful, consoles. That's not to say the artists already working within games aren't talented enough, but the film artists are more familiar with the higher polygon counts that these machines can create/handle.

On the other side of the coin, game artists are accustomed to working within the limitations of the consoles and have learned how to maximize the artwork within those restraints. Film artists should be able to learn to work within these guidelines but "creating more with less" is definitely still a skill within games.

The other limitation film artists might encounter is 3D software knowledge. Most developers prefer the candidate to come into the job knowing their software package in order to avoid excessive training time. 3DStudio Max and Maya are the two most common packages used.

The most important thing about a resume is to keep it simple. I want a prospective employer to look at your resume and within 15 seconds know what you do, your employment history, your software skills, and the titles you've worked on. That means you really need to keep the resume short and to the point for them to pick up that information quickly. Anything over two pages and you're likely losing the reader. Bear in mind that the hir-

GAME STUDIOS ARE INCREASINGLY HIRING ARTISTS FROM TV/FILM TO CREATE A QUALITY OF ART TO MATCH THE TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES OF NEW, MORE POWERFUL, CONSOLES.

— CHRIS SMITH

ing managers that are reading your resume are more than likely reviewing a number of other resumes and need to have information presented to them in a clear and concise form.

A resume may get you in the door but it's the demo reel that lands the job. The demo reel is a true test of an artist's talent. Again, simplicity is the key. Keep the demo very straightforward and show specific examples of your strength as an artist. If you want to show your diversity of skills in the demo, choose your strength to focus on and then show your other skills for a shorter period of time.

It's difficult to determine what will catch a hiring manager's eye and what will get a demo reel thrown by the wayside. Having access to someone that may understand what impresses certain hiring managers such as a recruiter or a friend within the studio can be vital in tooling the focus of a demo. One thing I've seen from TV/film artists that's not going to work for games is showing *all* the different jobs you've completed. Often TV artists will focus on the large variety of contracts or commercials that they've worked on which results in a demo full of flying logos and hot dog commercials. That's not going to cut it for games and probably won't get you very far with any respectable FX houses. Show artwork on the demo that's relative to the kind of position you're looking for. It's as simple as that.

In my experience the most sought after artists from the TV/film industry would be animators. Animation, more so than modeling, texturing, lighting, effects, etc., is a skill that transfers more readily to the game space because animation, or character/vehicle movement, is used in relatively the same ways in both TV/film and games. Skills such as modeling and texturing need to be refined to a greater degree to deal with the artistic limitations, such as polygon count, when dealing with game systems. A good animator is a good animator. And of course a good artist is a good artist, it's just a question of finding the right role for them to fit into.

ROBIN CHENOWETH MCSHAFFRY, Founding Director of Mary-Margaret.com, Inc.

Mary-Margaret.com is a leading entertainment software recruiting firm. Robin, the firm's self-described "art tools geek," attends SIGGRAPH every year. Her background includes graphic design, art and creative services at Origin/Electronic Arts and live professional theatre.

Game companies look for artists and animators who are very well rounded in their skill sets. A games animator must have a firm grasp on many, if not all, of the facets of the discipline, including modeling, texturing, lighting, effects and character animation. Many of the resumes I have seen seem to indicate that the traditional animation industry is much more compartmentalized. For example, a candidate from one of the Hollywood CG houses might have three to five years' experience in animation, but has only worked in lighting and effects and has never done characters, faces, motion-capture or backgrounds. An art director from the same CG house might have been responsible for a very narrowly defined department, rather than a large, unwieldy, cross-disciplinary team.

The most highly qualified animators have spent a lot of personal time ensuring that their reels show a wide range of skills, and that they also have traditional art skills as well — drawing, sculpting, painting, whatever.

The presentation of a reel can take many forms. More and more game companies want artists to show their work on a Website. Others accept a Website as the first step but will also want to see a high-resolution demo on CD-ROM. Traditional animators are showing movie-quality work, and the resolution and speed of the Web is often insufficient to show really fine detail. To demonstrate this level of quality you may be asked to present your reel on VHS tape. Tapes are advantageous because they do not require a particular operating system or installed software to run — just a VCR.

In terms of content, it's substance over style. The strongest reels show a variety of genres and styles, illustrating well-rounded talents. Animations should

THE STRONGEST REELS SHOW A VARIETY OF GENRES AND STYLES, ILLUSTRATING WELL-ROUNDED TALENTS.

—ROBIN CHENOWETH MCSHAFFRY

show unique moves on organic life forms; spaceships flying through space, flying logos, or a 360-degree rotation of a model are not animations. If the candidate's strengths are in modeling, he/she should show unique models (textured and lighted if possible). Strong texture artists should present a variety of textures and their uses. An environment artist will want to have a great fly-through of environments. Portraying different art styles is paramount. Candidates should show as much professional work as they can, but they should only select the best work, and never show anything they have to make excuses for. They should save 2D art and stills for the end of the reel, but show the strongest work there as well, including life drawings or pencil sketches. The reel must emphasize that the candidate can do whatever the job needs.

There are a lot of resources on the Web to help candidates put a game industry reel together. Many game companies also have very detailed descriptions of, or advice about, what they would like to see in a candidate's demo. Checking out those sites is a good way to keep current with what the audience, the game companies, are seeking.

Since so much TV/film work is collaborative, it is imperative that candidates include a shot list with complete credits with every reel. There is nothing more frustrating to a hiring manager than to discover later on that the art in a really exciting demo reel was not created solely by the candidate in question.

I can't stress enough how important it is to have a demonstrated well-rounded skill set. Only the largest game studios break up the job of animation into the same kind of steps and different jobs as many CG studios. Many great game animation jobs exist at smaller studios, but that animator has got to be able to do a lot more kinds of work.

I have not placed anyone out of TV/film into games as yet and I do not see very many resumes or reels from folks who have worked only in TV/film or other traditional animation. I am not sure, but it seems like art directors and more senior folks would transfer over easiest, because they have had more time to put together a body of work.



Crossing over from TV/film to games will one day be effortless for animators, feels Digital Artists Management's Suren Sagadevan. Photo credit: Joe O'Flaherty.

SUREN SAGADEVAN, Recruiter, Digital Artist Management

After graduating from UC Santa Barbara, Suren Sagadevan entered the recruiting world with one of the Big Five accounting firms and focused on entry level recruiting. He merged his love for games with his profession when he became a recruiter in the videogame industry with Digital Artist Management three years ago. Suren has found it extremely enjoyable to work with such creative, and more importantly, passionate individuals in that field.

Generally speaking, there is no doubt that people from television and film are qualified to work in the games industry. However, a few concerns arise in this scenario due to the nature of each industry and because of the limitations of gaming hardware. Although the resolution of in-game artwork is quickly approaching that of film, it will still require about one or two more generations of hardware development to more fairly compare the two fields.

I wouldn't say TV/film animators are necessarily missing particular skills, but more importantly, they are working under fewer technical restrictions. However, the majority of games companies use Max, with Maya as a close second. In film, Lightwave and Maya are usually the preferred art software packages, so this difference can be a minor drawback (or a major one depending on the company).

What I like to see on an artist's resume, portfolio and reel reflects what our clients, the game developers, like to see. They obviously want to see your best work, and material that is most relevant to videogames. If you were applying for an in-game artist position, they'd like to see low-poly, in-game artwork. If you are applying for a high-resolution, cinematic/cut-scene artist position, then they'd like to see relevant high-poly, cinematic or film quality material.

Sometimes a TV/film reel will work for the games industry, and sometimes it won't. This depends on the

OF ANYONE TRANSFERRING FROM TV/FILM TO GAMES, WE HAVE MORE SUCCESS PLACING 3D ANIMATORS.

— SUREN SAGADEVAN

individual company, and again, on the position applied for. If the position is for a cinematic/cut-scene artist, then there is a strong chance the reel will be useful. However, if the position is for an in-game artist, then it becomes tougher and tougher, depending on what the particular company, or art director, likes to see. For example, I'd advise someone applying for an in-game animator position to include short run/walk cycles, and/or other body movements (i.e., falling, fighting, etc.), where they did all the work, rather than a complete movie clip where a multitude of people had contributed to it.

There are a few simple guidelines to creating a demo reel, but surprisingly enough, they are often overlooked. First of all, keep your reel short and sweet. Two minutes is ideal, and anything over 3 minutes is pushing it. Second, put your best work FIRST, and proceed in reverse chronological order. Employers do NOT want to see a tape beginning with stick figures from grade school and ending 15 minutes later with your most recent masterpiece.

We actually have a number of studios that are requesting animators from TV/film. Games are getting closer and closer to paralleling the quality of TV/film with the introduction of each new gaming platform. Since the capabilities of each console keep growing, it creates a more comparable environment to that of film, i.e., fewer limitations in the production environment. Of anyone transferring from TV/film to games, we have more success placing 3D animators. Eventually though, videogames will be on a level playing field with TV/film, and crossing over from one industry to the other will become seamless. ■

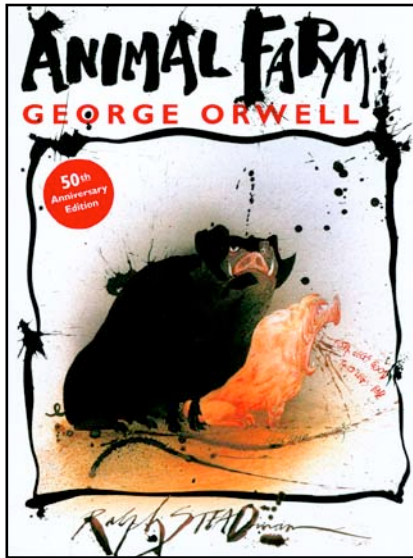
DARLENE CHAN is managing editor of Animation World Magazine. After receiving a bachelor's degree from UCLA, Darlene happened into the motion picture business and stayed for 14 years. She served as a production executive for Paramount Pictures, Walt Disney Pictures, Davis Entertainment and Motown. She produced Grumpy Old Men (1993) for Warner Bros. In 2001, she joined Animation World Magazine.

SPIN DOCTORED

Animated Propaganda

During the Cold War

by Karl F. Cohen



The Cold War forced the CIA to get into the movie business. The agency optioned rights to the classic George Orwell book *Animal Farm* (left) and had it adapted into film (right). Book cover courtesy of Harcourt Books, cover art by Ralph Steadman; top and bottom right images © The Halas & Batchelor Collection Limited. Courtesy of the Animation Research Centre Archive

OUR COUNTRY'S USE OF ANIMATED PROPAGANDA during WWII is fairly well known, but propaganda made after the Iron Curtain went up is rarely seen or discussed. Animation scholars have been aware of a few pieces of a strange looking puzzle, but nothing began to make much sense until Frances Stoner Saunders published *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* in 2000. (Published in England as *Who Paid the Piper?*) Even with the publication of her book, it wasn't clear that animation had much of a role in an organized effort to defeat Communism as she only discusses one animated film, Halas and Batchelor's *Animal Farm*. It isn't a cute Disney product for kids, but a handsome intelligent dramatic feature for adults that includes a strong anti-Communist message.

While Saunders' book received many favorable reviews and most mentioned the CIA having a hand in the creation of *Animal Farm*, the information seemed trivial compared to more sensational revelations including the CIA financing the publication of several fine art books, and their using Nelson Rockefeller and the Museum of Modern Art in New York to present art exhibits of Jackson Pollock's paintings and other abstract expressionists to counter the social realism being advanced by Moscow!

Saunders' book is the result of six years of meticulous research using records made available to her through to the Freedom of Information Act, papers in private hands and interviews. The CIA did not cooperate with her research, but formerly classified documents were made available by the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, John F. Kennedy Library and other private and public institutions with special collections.



Frances Stonor Saunders' book *The Cultural Cold War* exposes the extent of the CIA's involvement in the arts.

It may seem odd that Hollywood movies, progressive magazines, books, modern paintings, jazz, pop music and other segments of American culture could somehow be used as tools of a secret CIA anti-Communist propaganda war. Saunders explains that as early as August 18, 1945 an intelligence officer with the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (the OSS was established during WWII and was the forerunner of the CIA) wrote, "Without atomic weapons the Soviets would be using unconventional 'peaceful' tactics to propagandize, subvert, sabotage and exert...pressures upon us, and we ourselves shall be more willing to bear these affronts and ourselves to indulge such methods — in our eagerness to avoid at all costs the tragedy of open war."

The report Saunders says, "Offers a definition of the Cold War as a psychological contest, of the manufacturing of consent by 'peaceful' methods, of the use of propaganda to erode hostile positions. And, as the opening sallies in Berlin amply demonstrated, the 'operational weapon' was to be culture. The cultural Cold War was on." (The opening sallies included our government using German/Nazi entertainers for propaganda/cultural events in the mid-1940s.)

THE CIA'S ROLE IN PRODUCING HALAS AND BATCH-ELOR'S ANIMAL FARM

By the late 1940s the CIA was spending our tax dollars creating culture as a secret weapon to combat Communism and to promote our way of life around the world. Their choice of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* as an animated film to produce almost makes sense. Almost, because the book's ending shows both the pigs and humans joined together as corrupt and evil powers. They probably bought the rights assuming that the ending could be changed to better serve their purposes.

SAUNDERS' BOOK IS THE RESULT OF SIX YEARS OF METICULOUS RESEARCH USING RECORDS...

To use *Animal Farm* for their purpose, the CIA's Office of Policy Coordination (they directed covert government operations) had two members of their Psychological Warfare Workshop staff obtain the screen rights to the novel. Howard Hunt, who became infamous as a member of the Watergate break-in team, is identified as head of the operation. His contact in Hollywood was Carleton Aesop, brother of writer Joseph Alsop, who was working undercover at Paramount. Working with Alsop was Finis Farr, a writer living in Los Angeles. It was Alsop and Farr who went to England to negotiate the rights to the property from Sonia Orwell. Mrs. Orwell probably knew Farr as she moved in literary and artistic circles as an assistant to the editor of *Horizon* magazine. This is well documented in *The Girl From the Fiction Department* by Hilary Spurling (Hamish Hamilton, 2002). Mrs. Orwell signed after Alsop and Farr agreed to arrange for her to meet her hero, Clark Gable. "As a measure of thanks" a CIA official named Joe Bryan made the arrangements for the meeting according to *The Paper Trail*, edited by Jon Elliston.

Hunt selected Louis de Rochemont to be the film's producer at Paramount. He had created *The March of Time* in 1935. It was a new form of screen journalism that combined the newsreel and documentary film into a 15 to 20 minute entertaining short that went behind the news to explain the significance of or reason for an event. *The March of Time*, sponsored by the Time-Life Company, was a popular monthly series for over a decade. The series ended in 1951.

Hunt probably chose De Rochemont because he had once worked for him on *The March of Time* series. De Rochemont had also worked on socially/politically sensitive films for many years. He produced the anti-Nazi spy film *The House on 92nd Street* (1945) and *Lost*

BY THE LATE 1940S THE CIA WAS SPENDING OUR TAX DOLLARS CREATING CULTURE AS A SECRET WEAPON...

John Halas (left) and Joy Batchelor work on *Animal Farm*. © The Halas & Batchelor Collection Limited. Courtesy of the Animation Research Centre Archive.



Boundaries (1949), one of the first racially conscious films (it is about a black doctor who passes for white until he is unmasked by the black community).

A recently published book suggests De Rochemont chose Halas and Batchelor to animate the film as production costs were lower in England and because he questioned the loyalty of some American animators (*British Cinema and the Cold War: The State, Propaganda and Consensus* by Tony Shaw, 2001). The House Committee for Un-American Activities hearings on Communists in the film industry began in earnest in 1951 (Disney testified at short-lived hearings that were held in 1947) and as I've shown in my book *Forbidden Animation* several people in the animation industry were blacklisted, careers were ruined or disrupted, Columbia forced UPA to purge suspected individuals from their ranks and a successful studio making animated TV commercials in

New York had to close when conservative journalists identified the owners as two men denounced by Disney in 1947 as probable Communists.

While Shaw has proposed an interesting theory, Vivien Halas, daughter of the film's co-directors [John Halas](#) and Joy Batchelor, suggests the real reason they got the contract is that Louis De Rochemont was a Navy buddy and good friend of screenwriters/producers Philip Stapp and Lothear Wolf. De Rochemont had worked with them in the Navy's film unit and Vivien's mother had worked closely with Stapp in 1949 on *The Shoemaker and the Hatter*, a Marshall Plan film pro-



The CIA used Howard Hunt and his Hollywood contacts to obtain film rights to *Animal Farm* from Sonia Orwell. Here, Mrs. Orwell is seen dining with (left to right) Halas, Batchelor and Bordon Mace, president of the company which produced *Animal Farm*. © The Halas & Batchelor Collection Limited. Courtesy of the Animation Research Centre Archive.

duced by Halas and Batchelor. Eventually Stapp and Lothear would be hired to work on *Animal Farm*'s script.

Although the decision on what firm to hire came at a bleak moment for some American animation companies (the film could have been produced in Los Angeles by a studio whose reputation was beyond reproach), I suspect Halas and Batchelor's reputation, personal friendships and budgetary restraints were important factors in the decision to award them the contract.

Animal Farm was to be the first animated feature produced in England. John Halas (1912-1995) was born

in Budapest and had worked as an animator before moving to Paris. He moved to England in 1936 to work on *Music Man*, the first British cartoon in Technicolor. In 1940 he formed Halas and Batchelor with Joy Batchelor (1914-1991), a British animator and scriptwriter. During the war they were kept busy with training, propaganda and other forms of government sponsored films. After the war they worked on films that explained NATO, the Marshall Plan and other changes in the post-war world.

The animation firm was awarded the contract to do the feature in November 1951 and it was completed in April 1954. It is logical to assume that before the con-

sidered too anti-Communist. When it finally premiered in Paris about 1993, the Mayor of Aubervilliers (a suburb of Paris) "introduced it as a tribute to communism! My father said no, this is not communist or anti-communist. It is a fable for all time. It is anti-totalitarian and it has a humanist message." In a letter to the animation historian [Giannalberto Bendazzi](#) in 1981, Joy Batchelor told him they wanted to make a film about freedom.

To meet the CIA's objectives, the ending was changed to show that only the pigs had become totally corrupt. The film ends with other animals mounting a successful revolt against their rulers. There is no mention of the humans in the film's conclusion.



Louis De Rochemont was handpicked by the CIA to produce *Animal Farm* because of his political background. Here he stands, *Animal Farm* in hand, with Halas and Batchelor. © The Halas & Batchelor Collection Limited. Courtesy of the Animation Research Centre Archive.

tract was signed De Rochemont made it quite clear that the film would not be identical to the book and he may have had a rough script or other guidelines. Vivien says that during the production the script went through several changes before it was finalized.

The production employed about 80 animators. In Halas' book *The Technique of Film Animation*, 1959, he has little to say about the production, but he does state the film's target audience was adults rather than children and that they needed to simplify the plot. After reading a draft of this paper, Vivien Halas added that the film wasn't shown in Paris until the 1990s as it was con-

ON A FEW OCCASIONS THE CIA'S FAILURES HAVE BEEN DISCLOSED TO US BY THE NEWS MEDIA, BUT THEIR SUCCESSES ARE ALMOST NEVER MADE PUBLIC.



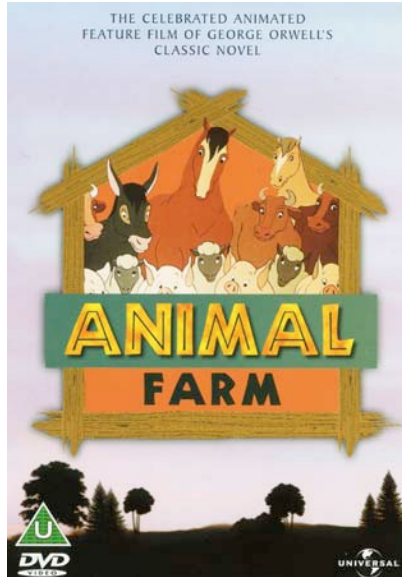
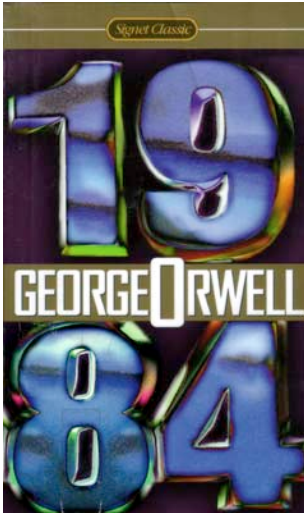
In the 1950s lighter, happier fare like Disney films were the norm when it came to animated features. © 1942 The Walt Disney Company. All rights reserved.

Vivien recalls, "The changes came about as the film evolved. There were at least nine versions of the script and heated discussions about the end. My mother especially felt it was wrong to change the ending." She has a tape recording of her father saying that the ending they used offers a glimmer of hope for the future. In an interview on Granada TV (U.K.) in 1980, he defended the ending as being necessary to give the audience hope for the future. "You can not send home millions of audience being puzzled."

Besides having Philip Stapp and Lothar Wolf working on the script with Joy Batchelor, De Rochemont had another friend from their days in the Navy's film unit working on the project. Borden Mace became president of the company set

ANIMAL FARM WAS TO BE THE FIRST ANIMATED FEATURE PRODUCED IN ENGLAND.

Despite the story changes, the film *Animal Farm* remains a powerful work of art.



The CIA also had a hand in the adaptation of Orwell's book *1984* into film in the mid-1950s.

up to produce *Animal Farm* by De Rochemont, his mentor. Mace told Vivien in an interview in 2002 that De Rochemont had the ultimate say about script changes. While it isn't clear who suggested the ending used, it was certainly what the CIA needed.

While the film was in production, Fredric Warburg, the book's publisher, visited the studio several times and viewed the work-in-progress. Saunders thinks he may have suggested that old Major, "the prophet of the Revolution, should be given the voice and appearance of Winston Churchill." More importantly, she reveals earlier in her book that Warburg had dealings with the British intelligence group M16. He fronted for them by taking their checks, depositing them and then writing personal checks that he gave to Encounter, an anti-Communist liberal literary publication. He may or may not have been a "consultant" helping to ensure that the film would be a successful propaganda tool.

In a recent e-mail from Howard Beckerman (animator and author of *Animation, the Complete Story*, 2001) he writes, "About the ending in *Animal Farm* (1954). I saw it in its initial U.S. release in 1955. At that time the only reason for the upbeat ending seemed to be that the film was very dark and the negative ending of the book would have had the audience leaving the theaters in a depressed mood. Remember, this was a film with animals, at a time when Disney films were the accepted norm. Disney changed *Bambi*, leaving out much

of the realism of animal life in the woods as shown in the book, even though *Bambi's* mother's death was the dramatic high point of the feature. The Disney live-action animal films like *Seal Island* purported to show life in the wild with all its harshness, but even here cartoon sentimentality intruded. Animation was expected to be pleasant and happy. Disney's *Peter Pan* and *Lady and the Tramp* from the '50s reflected the pleasant, nostalgic qualities that had become the norm at that time. There seemed to be a concerted effort to avoid the darkness that had been very obvious in *Snow White*, *Pinocchio* and in *Fantasia's* "Night on Bald Mountain" sequence."

"The team of Halas and Batchelor, backed by the American producer Louis De Rochemont (The March of Time), had to compete in the world market with Disney, so a few cartoon gags were introduced into the film to lighten its heaviness, and I believe that whatever the CIA's influence might have been, the choice for an upbeat ending came out of the animator's wish to succeed with the audience. All this might seem naive now, what with the new information being presented. There were movies of the period like the live film, *My Son John* (1952), which attacked the menace of communism head-on in a contrived and obvious fashion, so I guess anything is possible. If Orwell had lived longer, I suspect he would have vetoed any effort to translate his work into such a film."

The film did well at the box office and the reviews were favorable, but some critics suggested people should read the book to learn what was left out. The film was later distributed around the world by the United States Information Agency (USIA) through their overseas libraries. An article in the *Guardian* (London, July 1996) suggests the film and book were excellent propaganda in Arab nations "in view of the fact that both pigs and dogs are unclean animals to Muslims." On the other hand a French farmer told Vivien Halas "pigs are the most intelligent animals in the farmyard."

If you haven't seen *Animal Farm*, it is available on VHS and will soon exist on DVD, distributed by UAV in the U.S.A. In the U.K., a collector edition is scheduled for spring 2003 from Universal to mark the 100th birthday of George Orwell. A new restored master has been made from the original three strip Technicolor negative and Vivien Halas says it looks fantastic.

Animal Farm is a film experience you will remember. It is an intelligent work for adults with strong characters, powerful emotional moments and vivid images. It has a lighter side that includes some humor, but what

I remember most about it is how well it captures the drama inspired by the book. I'm not a purist and while I was aware it wasn't faithful to the book when I first saw it over 40 years ago, the changes didn't bother me. I look forward to seeing it again soon on DVD, now that I know why it is more upbeat than the book.

When asked if Vivien's parents were aware of the CIA's involvement with the project she said, "I don't believe that my parents were aware of any CIA involvement at the time. Frances reminded me that in the early '50s the CIA was not regarded with the same scorn as

THE PRACTICE OF SECRETLY INSERTING GOVERNMENT ENDORSED PROPAGANDA MESSAGES IN TV SHOWS IS ALIVE AND WELL.

today." By the 1980s her parents had heard rumors concerning the CIA's involvement. She says, "My father dismissed the idea, but my mother felt annoyed."

Before completing this article Vivien Halas read it again and responded with a very insightful comment that places the film in a historical perspective. She wrote, "My own feeling about *Animal Farm* is that the influence was possibly as much commercial as political. That it was normal for the USA government to try to promote their point of view through 'culture/art' and not as bad as some of the more blatant political interference that has gone on (is still going on). That they mostly put funds in the way of artists who would have done what they did anyway. That this is what has happened throughout history when monarchs, popes or other powerful institutions have patronized artists, composers, etc. This practice is good or bad depending which side you are on. No doubt there has always been bad behavior by people who want power/money/or are just plain megalomaniacs or zealots. Sometimes good things have come about as side effects. Recorded history is rarely accurate and even first hand accounts are not necessarily truthful as memory is notoriously unreliable."

On a few occasions the CIA's failures have been disclosed to us by the news media, but their successes are almost never made public. No matter how you feel about their meddling with feature films, it appears their involvement in the making of *Animal Farm* was a successful covert operation and it was kept a secret from the public for almost 50 years.

OTHER DECLASSIFIED GOVERNMENT PROPAGANDA PROJECTS

On March 17, 1998 the United Kingdom's Public Record Office declassified documents revealing the Brit-



According to Saunders' book, *The Cultural Cold War*, the CIA regularly influenced movies. *The Caddy* (1953) included well-dressed blacks to counter Soviet propaganda about segregation in America. Courtesy of Paramount Pictures.

ish government funded a newspaper comic strip in the early 1950s based on Orwell's *Animal Farm*. It ran in several countries including Brazil, Burma, Eritrea, India, Mexico, Thailand and Venezuela. There was also a strip produced by the studio that was drawn by Harold Whitaker to promote the release of the film in England. Vivien writes, "This was not propaganda, but promotion (assuming that there is a difference between political and commercial manipulation)."

Thanks to Saunders' research we now know that Orwell's 1984 was made into a live-action feature with funds from the CIA. Work on the British production began in 1954. Like the animated *Animal Farm* the ending was changed.

Saunders discusses the CIA influencing the content of other live-action projects, and says Carleton Alsop wrote regular movie reports from Hollywood to the CIA that detailed how specific pro-American propaganda themes were introduced into features. For example, he mentioned how well-dressed blacks were included in country club crowd scenes in *The Caddy*, a Jerry Lewis comedy from 1953. The scenes were to impress people who had been told by the Soviet propaganda ministry that we were a racist, segregated nation. Saunders notes that these images were "extremely optimistic." In 1953 many blacks couldn't vote, and many schools and most country clubs were segregated.

Howard Beckerman recalls that, "In 1962 I did animation for a large live-action, stock footage, CBS production called *The Road to the Wall*. It was narrated by James Cagney and related to the history of Communism and how it led to the then new Berlin wall...I naively enjoyed working on the film because of the historical research we had to do, but the director, Al Kouzel, who was more attuned to these things and unhappy with the assignment, helped me understand that we were working on a very biased presentation...It was a film made for propaganda that was passed off as a straight documentary."

When *The Road to the Wall* was nominated for an Oscar for best documentary short, CBS shared credit as co-producer with the Department of Defense. Apparently the press and public didn't look into the government's role in the production. I recall Bert B. Cohen (my father, a high school world history teacher) was upset that the film contained serious historical mistakes, but I doubt he and others who spotted them realized they were deliberate. Beckerman says, "It was revealed about ten years later, in an exposé, how government agencies were creating such films as blatant anti-Russian or anti-Communist propaganda."

The purpose of propaganda is to influence mass attitudes and opinions. Deliberately distorting information and lying are among the acceptable methods used by propagandists to make their points. Unlike other forms of communication, the objective of propaganda is to manipulate and persuade people to accept the information being presented to them.

Today, propaganda is used by world governments and corporations to promote their points of view. We have become used to the media talking about "spin doctors," experts who sometimes try and neutralize or make positive public opinion about potentially devastating facts. Contemplate for a few seconds the millions still being spent each year by the tobacco industry to put a positive spin on their image. Until commercials advertising tobacco products in the U.S. was outlawed, many animators benefited from that industry's annual propaganda (advertising) budgets.

THE PURPOSE OF PROPAGANDA IS TO INFLUENCE MASS ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS.

The practice of secretly inserting government endorsed propaganda messages in TV shows is alive and well. For example the press disclosed in 2000 (*Salon.com* broke the story in "Prime-Time Propaganda," January 14, 2000) that the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy was providing TV networks a financial incentive to have shows include anti-drug messages. Network censors (the Standards and Practices Department) review scripts before a show to avoid including anything that goes beyond their rules of acceptable content. The networks were (are? it isn't clear the practice has stopped) submitting scripts that might fit the government's needs. The government would suggest where a line or gesture could be inserted and what the actor might say or do. The anti-drug message could be as simple as a brief show of disgust at a drug related medical crisis. If things worked out, the network got credit that allowed it to run fewer Public Service Announcements (PSAs). Running a paid ad in place of giving a PSA free airtime is a worthwhile incentive. The shows tampered with included *ER*, *Chicago Hope*, *Home Improvement*, *Beverly Hills 90210*, *Cosby*, *General Hospital* and several others. The practice began in late 1997 when Congress passed a five-year, \$1

billion project to put more anti-drug messages on television. Are the hidden anti-drug references in TV shows any more or less devious than advertisers paying movie producers to include their products on their sets? This sneaky practice is known as product placement. ■

For more information about Halas and Batchelor visit <http://www.halasandbatchelor.com/>. [The Surrey Institute of Art and Design](http://www.surrey.ac.uk/artanddesign/) houses the Halas and Batchelor Collection in their Animation Research Center and can be found at <http://www.surrart.ac.uk/arc>.

The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters by Frances Stonor Saunders. New York, New York: The New Press, 2000. 528 pages with eight pages photographs. ISBN: 1-56584-664-8. (US\$18.95)

KARL F. COHEN is a frequent contributor to Animation World Magazine and is the author of *Forbidden Animation: Censored Cartoons and Blacklisted Animators* (1997, McFarland). He teaches animation history at San Francisco State University and is president of ASIFA-SF.

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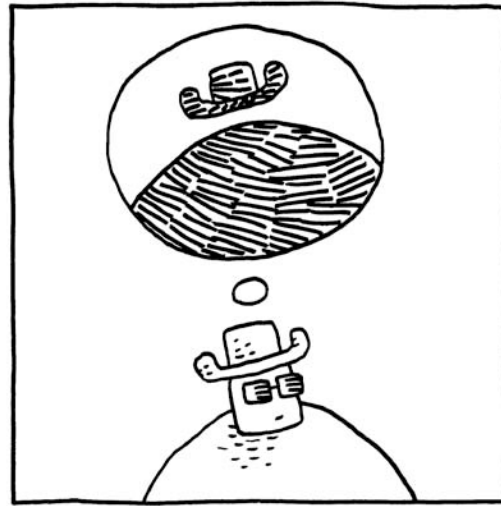


Illustration by [Andreas Hykade](#).
Courtesy of Chris J. Robinson.

HYKADE

ANIMATION PIMP

Why is it NOT DONE?

FESTIVAL PROGRAMMERS HAVE GOT TO ATTEND MIXED-MEDIA AND EXPERIMENTAL FESTIVALS, ART GALLERIES, VIDEO SHOWS — I.E., THE OTHER CINEMA.

by *Chris J. Robinson*

Insignificant and occasionally interesting contributions to the cognition of reality...

SAW AN INTERESTING PROGRAM AT THE [HOLLAND Animation Film Festival](#) in November (2002). It was called Not Done and was put together by a Belgian chum of mine, Edwin Carels. The three-part program consisted of films and videos (by the likes of Martha Colburn, Stan Brakhage, Michael Snow and Leslie Thornton) that challenge the notion of what is and what is not animation in terms of both content and technique. What I found more interesting was Carels accompanying text where he asks: "Why does a medium in which virtually anything is possible, in which the imagination has free reign and the laws of physics don't apply, so rarely shock its viewers?" And in particular, he takes animation festivals to the carpet for contributing to this stale situation by: not seeking out filmmakers in the experimental, avant-garde or art gallery world; not showing more performance-based work from animators like, for example, [William Kentridge](#); not being a forum for serious debates about animation.

WITH THE PROLIFERATION OF MASS MEDIA AND THE NEED TO FILL AIRTIME, YESTERDAY'S AVANT GARDE IS TODAY'S NIKE AD.

This is not the first time I've heard this complaint. In an article in the 2000 Holland Animation Film Festival catalogue (which was reprinted in the Spring 2001 ASIFA magazine), Canadian animator [Pierre Hébert](#) was critical of the current state of animation suggesting that it had become a recluse unwilling to open its doors to new possibilities.

CONSERVATIVE AND HOMOGENOUS

Although Carels is attacking my bread and butter, I tend to agree (in principle) that animation festivals have all become fairly conservative and homogenous. No one really cares about animation festivals as a forum for serious discussions. They are primarily a forum for buyers, recruiters, ASIFA members and drunks. From retrospectives to competitions to jury decisions, everything is relatively peachy keen. Sure, some folks mildly bitch to their friends about this or that decision, but rarely is there any sort of loud, meaningful debate about a film or a program. Even at Ottawa '98, when we got into trouble for showing this apparently racist Polish film called *Black Burlesque*, it wasn't the animation community that yelled and screamed at me, it was two Canadian Jewish associations.

And despite all the talk about experimental and cutting edge animation, festivals are not actually showing anything overly radical. We hear that Robert Breer, Stan Brakhage and Martha Colburn are animators, but when did you last see their work at an animation festival? Rather than rely on the same old crowd of independent, student and studio animators, festival programmers have got to attend mixed-media and experimental festivals, art galleries, video shows — i.e., the other cinema. We can kick animation in the balls and awake it from its decades long drool and bring in some fresh voices.

And as Carels suggests, why limit presentations to traditional film-video screenings? What about installations, dance performances, theatre? Artists like Pierre Hébert, William Kentridge and [Kathy Rose](#) all merge animation with performance arts. The problem here however (at least from an Ottawa Festival perspective) is that a single performance costs significantly more than a regular film screening. So, you know...what can I say...I'm copping out a bit here, but do I spend thousands of dollars for a one night perfor-

mance that's going to attract half capacity and leave me with no money for any other programs JUST to win the respect of assorted intellectual-artistic hipsters?

BUT IT'S NOT SO SIMPLE

Then again what is a groundbreaking work? In this post-MTV age we've appeared to have seen it all? As John Waters sorta said...can anyone make something that is groundbreaking or shocking that doesn't involve sex or violence? In Holland, for example, I went to this difficult Japanese experimental screening and then went to a screening of commissioned TV animation (commercials, music videos, ids, etc.). Aside from artistic intention (one sells a philosophy, the other, shoes), they both seemed stylistically similar. With the proliferation of mass media and the need to fill airtime, yesterday's avant garde is today's Nike ad.

Besides, much of what we show in Ottawa is already considered 'out there' by both the local public and even portions of the animation community. Furthermore, we're not some free floating entity; we are government supported and receive most of our money from animation studios, schools and software companies. We have to answer to the needs of those who fund us.

Nevertheless, I think competition and retrospective programs can (and should) be easily shaken up. There are many works that straddle the lines between animation, video art and experimental, and in most cases animation festivals shy away from these works. As Carels suggests, there is a tendency in animation, more than in any other art form, to focus on craftsmanship. Animation folks are obsessed with the quality of drawing and animation. WHAT is being said is generally less important than HOW it is being said. I remember some Animation Nation loser saying that [Priit Pärn](#) films were poorly drawn...as if there is some set standard of drawing! Or how about those whiners who keep saying [Waking Life](#) isn't animation? I mean...first off...Shut the fuck up, it IS animation. 2. Shut the fuck up and THINK for two seconds about the content. Bunch of Disney-Star Wars-Tornado-Norstein weened Wankers. Not to keep harping on [The Old Man and The Sea](#) (I could also use the puppet films of [Barry Purves](#), the works of [Frédéric Back](#), any post-*Creature Comforts* Aardman production or Martine Chartrand's [Black Soul](#) as

WE HAVE TO ANSWER TO THE NEEDS OF THOSE WHO FUND US.

examples), but while all sorts of animation folks saw this gorgeous, beautiful animated film that used a painstaking fingerpaint technique, I saw a crappy, sentimental film that oh so poorly adapted one of Hemingway's few decent books. And then there's the computer. Every goddamn year I am asked why there are not more computer films in competition...well I'll tell you why, because they suck. The animators are so busy whacking off on whatever cool software they have, they often forget to come up with an actual idea (or at least one that isn't ripped off from some combination of *Star Wars*-*Star Trek*-*Anime*). I kid you not, the computer entries we get (and it's the same crop as every other festival) are so embarrassingly stupid and riddled with clichés that our decision process becomes that much easier.

Currently there are too many animation festivals showing too many of the same films, all being judged by the same voices. It's become too cozy and familiar. We need to hear from new voices. We need to get ani-

mation artists (and more specifically open-minded animation teachers — like Stephanie Maxwell — who can introduce their students to something beyond the typical animation canon) together with musicians, poets, digital artists, experimental filmmakers so that these worlds can introduce themselves to each other with the long-term hope that something new and inspiring will emerge. A lot of people in animation bitch and moan (including me) over the fact that festival animation remains this hidden little secret...well given that we've been sitting in our house with the windows and doors locked and the blinds pulled down...is it really that surprising? ■

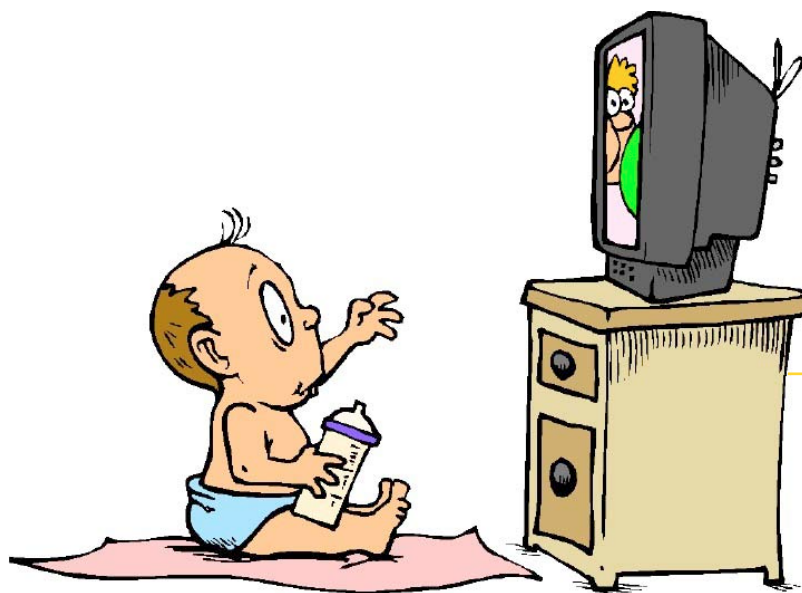
CHRIS J. ROBINSON *is but a man. His hobbies include squirrel taunting, goat thumping, meat dancing and elderly peeping. You can find the results at <http://asifa.net/robinson>*



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ANIMATION PSYCHOLOGY

The Kids Are All Right

WHO'S EDUCATING OUR CHILDREN?
PARENTS OR THE TV?

by Martin "Dr. Toon" Goodman

"But increasingly...parents are looking to TV to help them do a better job of raising kids...Inside those (TV) networks, a growing number of Ph.Ds are injecting the latest in child-development theory into new programs."

— Newsweek, November 11, 2002

"How to say this firmly: raising kids is an impossibility that usually works out anyway."

— Tom Tiede, *Self Help Nation*



Still going strong, *Sesame Street* started the educational trend in children's programming 33 years ago. Courtesy of Sesame Workshop.

THIS MONTH'S COLUMN, DEAR READERS, IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY A scarred and grizzled survivor. My parents, ever mindful of their monumental ignorance of what Moms and Dads do after the umbilical cord is sliced, attempted the daunting task of raising me anyway. Somehow, despite the mistakes, child development magically happened. The entire process was accomplished with nary an educational cartoon to help them along or a single script supervised by a doctoral-level professional. Yet all was not well; I was fated to suffer severe educational deprivation. I was forced to rely on the public school system for my formative learning, bereft of even the merest shred of animated tutelage. It's true; I was never a beneficiary of modern psychology's blessings. No *Blue's Clues*. No *Dora the Explorer*. No *Rolie Polie Olie*. When I entered the school system *Sesame Street* was still eight years from its debut on PBS. It should be considered a miracle worthy of Lourdes that I am able to write this column at all, save for one thing: as I look around at those who grew up with me, it was much the same story for all of them. And the kids are all right.

ENTER THE PH.DS

Don't ask me how. Back then, coyotes went flailing off cliffsides, felines had nutcrackers applied to their tails by mice, and Dishonest John might halt walloping Cecil in order to ask the audience: "Do you think there's too much violence on TV?" Those are just a few examples, of course. We also had Popeye pummeling, Mighty Mouse mauling, and the Fantastic Four's fracas-fraught festivities. Bugs Bunny could certainly be dynamite, and little was learned about cooperation in the adventures of Sylvester and Tweety, or Foghorn Leghorn and a certain barnyard dog. I can't even begin to recount the lessons that Goofy taught us regarding safe behavior. The only counting lesson to be learned was when one character presented another a cup of tea and asked, "One lump or two?"



Psychologists routinely analyze children's shows such as *Barney & Friends* and come up with data on what is being taught. Photo by Dennis Full. © 2002 Lyons Partnership, L.P. All rights reserved.



Blue's Clues took educational television to a new level by introducing an interactive component. Children were asked to actively participate in the lessons being taught. Credit: Nickelodeon.

before the mallet did the math. This however, is the 2000s, and the new mood is best summed up in the November 11, 2002, *Newsweek* article, "Why TV Is Good For Kids." In this article we learn that an army of Ph.Ds are now heavy contributors to the scripts for animated shows. The cartoons are scrutinized, analyzed, test-

BARNEY BROUGHT THE TRILOGY OF EDUCATION, NONVIOLENCE AND FEELINGS TO ITS PRESENT CONCLUSION...

marketed at daycare centers, and are guaranteed to be educational lessons in cooperation, self-esteem and overall healthy development as estimated by, well, an army of Ph.Ds.

The article, by Daniel McGinn, details a happy afternoon at the Yale psychology department wherein we find five undergrads dissecting an episode of *Barney* and announcing: "I've got 9 vocabulary, 6 numbers...11 sharing," and then turning the numbers over to a data analyst who compares them with past shows. Animated fare is subjected to much the same elaborate analysis. Details are provided on how a team led by Dr. Christine Ricci from the University of Massachusetts break down an episode of *Dora the Explorer* by observing audience behavior minute by minute, charting it on bar graphs and analyzing the results. We also visit with Dr. Daniel Anderson (also from UMass) as he winces through an episode of *Dora the Explorer*. It seems that the heroine and her friend Boots paddle a canoe in the direction of a waterfall, modeling unsafe behavior. "If I'd read the script I'd have completely blocked this," states Dr. Anderson. Later in the episode he agonizes as Dora paddles her canoe under some fallen tree limbs: "Oh, God, another dangerous thing...The education is a little thinner than I would wish and it's a little dubious sending them on such a dumb journey."

Oh, *rather*. It is reassuring to know that these intrepid researchers are on the job. "Wait a minute," you say, "aren't you one of them too, Dr. Toon?" Yes, and a UMass graduate at that (1987). Still, the state of children's programming today makes me wonder what sort of role schools, parents and families have during these oh-so-enlightened days. Are these institutions now so archaic and incompetent that psychologists must now pick up the slack and review everything that passes under our children's eyes? Can't cartoons simply be entertaining trivialities that let the action rip for seven to eleven silly minutes and teach nothing but what a good laugh feels like? Not any more.

NO SINGLE FACTOR ALONE ACCOUNTS FOR THE TENDENCY TO MAKE CHILDREN'S CARTOONS THE VEHICLES FOR LEARNING AND SELF-EXPLORATION THAT THEY ARE TODAY.

WHY?

No single factor alone accounts for the tendency to make children's cartoons the vehicles for learning and self-exploration that they are today. The best starting point in this examination might be the Children's Television Act, passed by Congress in 1990. This piece of legislature mandated children's shows to display an educational component in every episode. Many programmers balked, and there are hilarious stories of how TV stations passed off *The Flintstones* as genuine teaching about prehistoric life, or *The Jetsons* as a scientific program. As surely as men actually quarried rock astride dinosaurs, the Federal Communications Commission sternly laid down the law on such shenanigans and the educational edict was enforced in full. From that point on, children's shows stepped up the hiring of psychologists and other like-minded consultants to make sure that learning happened.

The psychological community brought with it another agenda, one that met with considerable approval from both broadcasters and parents. During the late 1980s there was a trend in school psychology that paralleled the prevailing educational beliefs: self-esteem became the watchword of the schools, along with a preponderant focus on "feelings." School counselors, armed with tools such as "Mr. Aardvark's Game of Self-Esteem" or "The Feelings Journey" made sure that if kids learned nothing else, they could identify anger, shame and "being OK!" This trend occasionally produced dubious results; American children scored lower in many academic areas than their European or Asian counterparts, but when asked to rate themselves, put their performances at the top of the heap. Nevertheless, the trend seeped into children's broadcasting and messages stressing cooperation, tolerance, self-esteem and the healthy expression of emotions were soon augmenting educative material on TV.

Early educational efforts (notably *Sesame Street*)



Would TV stations have tried to sell this rare meeting between the Flintstones and the Jetsons as a lesson in time travel? Courtesy of Cartoon Network.

appropriated the codes of commercial television including its advertising, and educational shows dovetailed perfectly with the new proscriptions against violence since the characters were too busy cooperating and respecting one another's diversity to conk each other on the noggin. The third and final component of modern children's television was added in 1992 when a large purple dinosaur brought the dimensions of caring, sharing, accepting and self-esteem to children via a personal relationship that had every child believing they had a close friend. Barney brought the trilogy of education, nonviolence and feelings to its present conclusion; though many irritated adults plotted dire fates for the simpering saurian, Barney and friends were works of genius, the templates for everything to follow. Barney also showed that through ratings and licensing and merchandising, children's programming could make



Can animated children's fare just entertain instead of acting as a teacher all the time? Psychologists study *Dora the Explorer* in minute detail to learn what the show is teaching children. Credit: Nickelodeon.

dinosaur-sized profits.

Who were parents to disagree? Televisions fill every household, and children spend more time in front of them in the course of a week than they do in front of chalkboards. Soon, psychologists and educators were defining children's television and stringently evaluating its contents. This is accepted as being for the best, and on some terms it may be. If children are learning new material, concepts, self-love, and love for others, so much the better, right? If educators are getting a louder voice in society, what's the problem? What about the psychologists, frustrated in their efforts to obtain pre-

TO WIT: CHILD-DEVELOPMENT THEORIES ARE JUST THAT — THEORIES.

scribing privileges, battered by HMOs and watching private practices shrivel as insurance companies cut their number of reimbursable codes? If they are finding cool jobs in a hot new field, why begrudge them?

BUT...WAIT A MINUTE...

I certainly don't. Yet, a faint miasma hangs over the whole enterprise that I have difficulty in dispelling. Exactly why parents need so much help in teaching these same lessons has never been clear, but since the 1950s there seems to have been an increasing tendency for parents to defer to "the experts:" physicians, professional educators and my colleagues in the psychological community. As economic and social conditions across America changed and the two-career household became the norm for increasingly busy parents this was an easy path for many parents to follow. Yet, no one can definitively say that this has resulted in smarter or more cooperative children that sit at the top of the class while showering both themselves and others with the fruits of love and self-esteem.

Standardized test scores have declined since *Sesame Street* first appeared. Horrifying social anomalies, such as "children killing children" and school shootings, which the "Road Runner" generation never experienced, have materialized. Colleges have been forced to allocate considerable resources to remedial classes, and news stories about how some ungodly percentage of college students can't identify our allies in WWII, the dates of the Civil War, or find Japan on a map are common. A study conducted in my own city of Anderson, Indiana in 2000 indicated that of 200 black males entering Anderson schools as freshmen, 156 never graduated. Perhaps psychologists, educational experts and their TV shows didn't cause such things, but neither

have they seemed, over the long haul, to prevent them.

To wit: child-development theories are just that — theories. No matter how much revision or what sort of modernizing spin can be placed on Piaget, Kohlberg and their ilk, predicting the development of any given child is close to impossible; there being too many intervening variables in the mix, factors that muddle the nature-nurture controversy beyond hope of resolution. These theories, as general guidelines, are not useless but they are not all-inclusive either. The greatest paradox surrounding them is that they seem to assume that the child is raised in a supportive environment which encourages the unfolding of a natural developmental process; in other words, we come back to parents and family. Children's television certainly cannot be discounted as an educational medium, but it can never be a vital tool in doing "a better job of raising kids."

One of the saddest emails I have received since I began writing commentary on animation came to me in January of 1999. A perturbed mother of two girls, both under the age of three, responded to a column I had done on the old [Animation Nerd's Paradise](http://www.animationnerd.com) Website.

She complained that her toddlers were being grievously shortchanged by children's television, and that viable female role models were not adequately represented. Angry that her girls had no role model but Baby Bop, and that children's television was slanted toward males, she stated: "Tell me it has no effect on the 3-year old girl." This is clearly a case of asking children's television to do too damn much of an important job. May I suggest shutting off the TV, telling your little moppets stories about female heroes (no, you don't need a psychologist to make them up for you), and doing the job of being a strong role model for them in your own right? Give a child attention, a nurturing environment, respect for its innate curiosity and eagerness to explore, and perhaps — just perhaps — a child could survive something like a half-hour of classic, uncut Looney Tunes. You may even hear them laughing. ■

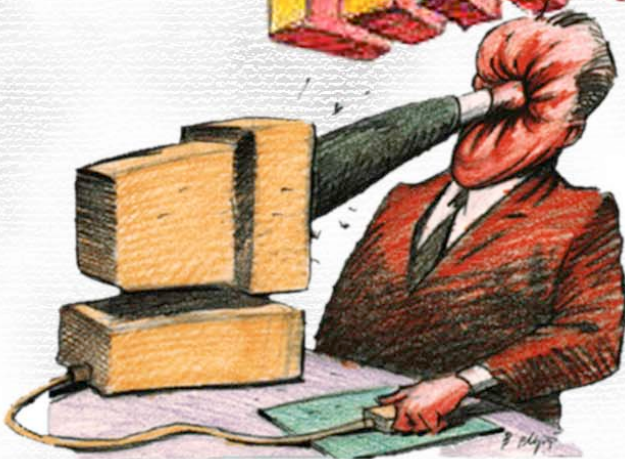
MARTIN "DR. TOON" GOODMAN is a longtime student and fan of animation. He lives in Anderson, Indiana.

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TIME DIMENSION

The Great Footage Fallacy

An excerpt from Gene Deitch's book, [How To Succeed In Animation \(Don't Let A Little Thing Like Failure Stop You!\)](#).

by Gene Deitch

Partial page of [traditional "footage" type exposure sheet](#), that didn't work in Prague. Note that the heavy lines are every 8 and 16 frame lines. 16 frames = 1 foot of film, or 2/3 second of running time.

I PROPOSE AN "ANTI-FOOTAGE" CRUSADE AS OF NOW! WHO WILL "SECOND" THE MOTION?

HERE IS SOMETHING THAT FEW ANIMATORS SEEM TO THINK about, but which has bugged me for years: Are we animating foot-long strips of film, or are we animating increments of time? If we are all into globalization, let's work in a global standard. I would like to foment an animation revolution in the dimension of time!

Footage. We were all weaned on it. Every American filmmaker, certainly every American animator, is trained to think in terms of feet of film. How many feet of film an animator can turn out per week is often his measure of productivity and measure of pay.

THIS DOESN'T WORK

When I first arrived in Prague, with the initial purpose of developing co-production with my New York studio, I ran into an immediate snag. Czech animators measure their output in meters! One meter of film equals 3.2808 feet. But what the hell does that really mean? I saw the promise of endless complications and calculations in the process of co-production. I began to realize that the whole idea of measuring animation in terms of the length of a strip of film was meaningless and madness, and I wondered why we in America had never realized this before?

Look. Movie film goes through a theater projector at the rate of 24 frames per second. So how many frames of film are there in a foot? 16! 16 frames equal two-thirds of a second! No one watching a movie is at all aware of feet of film whizzing by. If one is interested in the length of a movie, or the length of a scene, and wants to measure it, they will use a stopwatch. They will measure minutes, seconds and increments thereof. As I constantly point out in lecturing about filmmaking, we have a medium that exists in the dimension of time. Footage is especially nonsense in digital computer animation, where there is no such thing as a reel of film or even spool of tape. There is not a physical length of anything! The only length is time. Nearly everyone these days has a VCR at home, and perhaps a DVD player. Does anyone know how many feet of the reel of tape inside the cassette, or of the spiral groove on a

DVD, is needed to record one minute of action? How many are aware that the tape in the same VHS cassette spools out 30% faster when recorded in the American NTSC system than in the European PAL system? But who cares? The important thing is that the action produced on the TV screen plays at the exact same speed, and that is what counts!

THIS IS AN ARBITRARY MEASUREMENT, AS IT ACTUALLY REPRESENTS JUST TWO-THIRDS OF A SECOND. WE CERTAINLY DON'T MEASURE OUR WORK IN THREE-QUARTER SECONDS.

TIME IN YOUR HANDS

If most of the world outside of North America measure film lengths not in feet but in meters, what is it that every filmmaker on the entire planet has in common? Seconds, minutes and hours! — TIME! Movie making exists in the dimension of time.

So I had printed up a new type of animation exposure sheets. The traditional exposure sheets have horizontal ruled lines down their length, each line representing a frame of film. The numbered animation drawings for the various levels are entered on the lines representing the frames of film they are to be photographed upon. Every 16th line, representing a foot-length of film, is usually a heavy line. This is an arbitrary measurement, as it actually represents just two-thirds of a second. We certainly don't measure our work in three-quarter seconds. Of course not. We measure our scenes in whole seconds, and increments thereof.

So my new GDA, Inc. exposure sheets had every twenty-fourth line be a heavy line; a heavy line for every second of running time! Then my New York studio and the Prague studio could work in synchronization, with no need for elaborate calculations. It only took a short while for each side to adjust to this, because it was entirely logical. I never attempted to patent my exposure sheets. I'm sure that the original, footage-type exposure sheets are in the public domain. They were most likely developed at the Disney studio in the Thirties, and spread throughout the industry. But of course in those days international co-production didn't exist, and so no one ever questioned the logic of the system. I suppose that my idea of 1960 must have surely occurred to everyone else by this time. My type of exposure sheets is in use here now, but I actually haven't seen second-oriented sheets

Deitch developed a "[seconds](#)" type exposure sheet. Note that the heavy lines are every 24th frame-line (1 second of time). Now Deitch's animators in Prague and New York, could communicate efficiently.

anywhere else. I must admit that in the ensuing 40 years, the subject never came up in any of my discussions with fellow-American animators...but if they have come around to the idea on their own, I propose an "anti-footage" crusade as of now! Who will "second" the motion?

The traditional, "footage" type sheet accommodated three and one-third seconds of running time. In order to get four complete seconds onto one page of my new sheets, I had to have them printed on somewhat larger paper, but that was never a problem.

MECHANIZED SOUND TRACKS

One of the arguments, I suppose, for the footage-type sheets was that the 8 and 16-frame increments they were marked with were convenient musical beats or tempos. In traditional animation, it was com-

CONSTRUCTING THE ENTIRE SOUNDTRACK IN ADVANCE OF ANIMATION, I WAS ASSURED THAT MY FILM WOULD TRULY WORK...

mon to animate to one of those arbitrary beats, and then force the composer of the music to strictly follow the mechanically precise tempo. They often made a "click-track," so the orchestra conductor could hear the tempo in his earphones and hold the orchestra tightly to it. To my mind, this "mechanized" the music and disallowed any flexibility. I much preferred to allow the composer to work freely, and have the animators follow the music.

When our music was recorded and copied onto a 35mm worktrack, we would simply let the track run at normal speed, and then tap the tempo directly onto the soundtrack with a grease pencil, tapping as close to the moviola's sound head as possible. If I did this two or three times, I could be sure I had the beats on the proper frames. Then the sound editor moved the tape slowly through a frame counter, and noted the exact frame numbers of each mark. When this information was written onto the exposure sheets, the animator knew exactly how to move his characters to the beats. In this way, the rhythm was natural, and so was the animation! As I progressed in my work, I did more and more of the soundtrack in advance of animation, ultimately giving the animators the entire mixed track in advance, so that they would be aware of the entire atmosphere of the soundtrack. Dialog, of course, was nearly always recorded in advance, as a guide to lip-sync, but I felt that also the background music, and the sound effects were also important for the animator to feel.

Along with my emphasis that animation exists in the dimension of time, I wanted it to follow the entire soundtrack, which *obviously* exists in the time dimension. But trying to create an entire mixed soundtrack in advance of animation required a great deal of discipline and ability to imagine all of the action and effects, at a stage of production when the film only existed in the director's head! For me, the answer to the problem was the stopwatch. I would act out the film in my head, and with a certain amount of pantomiming, timing each fragment of the action over and over, breaking it down and noting the timing of each fragment. This was noted first on our Bar Sheets, which are analogous to an orchestra's conductor score, showing all of the elements together — in our case, action, dialog, music cues and sound effects.

By working in this way, constructing the entire soundtrack in advance of animation, I was assured that my film would truly work in the time dimension,

and I never gave the slightest thought to "footage."

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

A few years ago I was invited by the film institute of the southern Czech town of České Budějovice ("Budweis," home of the *true original* and infinitely superior Budweiser Beer), to do a talk and to show an evening of my films. They did a good job of promoting it, and had posters all over town, but only a few die-hard fans showed up. My spirits were buoyed when an excited young fellow rushed up to me and pleaded for my autograph, telling me how much he liked my films, etc. Flattered, I expressed my wish that he would enjoy my presentation. "Oh, I can't stay," he said, "Tonight is a big hockey game!"

The blindest and most dedicated fans of all were those local film institute freaks who were totally oblivious of hockey, and booked me on the one night when no one would be likely to be diverted from hockey to waste the evening on me! As I have pointed out in this book: timing is everything!

A philosophical note: In this digital age, we are up against a Creator of The Cosmos who perhaps doesn't have ten fingers and toes. He/She/It made our solar system impossible to digitalize. Working backwards from the fact that our planet circles the sun in approximately 365 days, and that the days are approximately 24 hours long, and there are 7 of them in a week, and we need a clumsy poem to remind us of how many days there are in each month, and 12 of those in a year, with hours at 60 minutes and minutes at 60 seconds... well, just try dividing any of those numbers by 10! We can only get digitalized at the decade and century level. And in this new century, everything is digitalized! ■

GENE DEITCH is one of the last surviving members of the original Hollywood UPA studio of 1946 and the instigator of the CBS-Terrytoon "renaissance" of 1956-1958. He was also: Animation Department Chief of the Detroit Jam Handy Organization, 1949-1951, Creative Chief of UPA-New York, 1951-1954, Director at John Hubley's Storyboard, Inc. New York, 1955, President of Gene Deitch Associates, Inc. New York, 1958-1960, Creative Director for Rembrandt Films, 1960-1968, and star director for Weston Woods Studios, Inc., Weston, Connecticut, 1968-1993. He has worked for over 40 years with the Prague animation studio, "Bratři v Triku."

CAREER COACH

Revolution, Not Resolution

by Pamela Kliebrink Thompson



THIS YEAR, INSTEAD OF MAKING SMALL CHANGES WITH RESOLUTIONS, WHY NOT TURN AROUND YOUR LIFE WITH A REVOLUTION?

nOW THAT IT'S FEBRUARY, HOW HAVE YOU DONE WITH those resolutions you made at the start of the year? Traditionally we make resolutions to get our finances in shape, our bodies in shape, or our living spaces or offices in shape. We might vow to stop smoking, eat less, exercise more, get up earlier, etc. But so often, we make these promises without being resolute and by the time February rolls around, we've already given up on them.

This year, instead of making small changes with resolutions, why not turn around your life with a revolution?

EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS

- It's great to read the trades and industry related Websites, but gain a broader understanding of the world by reading newspapers or weekly news magazines. Next time you meet that interesting person at a party or event, you'll have more to talk about than the effects in the latest Harry Potter film.
- Take a class in something that interests you, even if it has no practical application to your current job. Learn for the fun of it. For example, if you are a programmer, take a drawing class. If you are musician who loves the ocean, enroll in a sailing class. Low cost courses in a variety of subjects are offered through local parks and recreation departments, community colleges and adult education programs. Taking a class will expand your network— you are likely to meet someone new with similar interests.
- Spend several hours each day away from a computer, television or video console. Get out among the animals and birds. Can't resist working? Take along a sketchbook and pencil, open your eyes and mind to new ideas. Organizations offer events such as hikes, social events, dances and conferences. If you are
- timid about going to an event where you don't know anyone, volunteer to help the event staff. You will be put to work by the volunteer coordinator and will meet other volunteers.
- Instead of hoping that you will be discovered, make sure people hear about your talents. Volunteer to help organize a meeting, teach a class, or speak on a panel.
- Instead of waiting for that phone to ring, make the call first.
- Initiate contacts with people you'd like to meet. Every friendship begins with two strangers saying, "Hello."
- Do an unexpected kindness for a stranger or a friend.
- If you are an artist with an interest in gardening but live in an apartment, find someone in the neighborhood whose yard could use help. Older neighbors may not have the energy to tend their gardens — lend them yours!
- Make a list of what you'd like to do and the obstacles that are stopping you. Then, make a plan of what you must do to overcome those obstacles. Make a list of the people who could help you accomplish your dream. You may not know those people now, but write down how they can help you. You'll be meeting them sooner than you think.
- Don't be afraid to ask anyone for help. Don't be afraid to offer help to anyone.
- Instead of thinking of your boss as a know-it-all, think of him or her as a mentor. What can you learn from your boss?

- If there's someone you admire, tell him or her. Don't keep kind thoughts a secret.
- Change your routines and habits.
- Instead of arriving "fashionably" late at parties, be one of the first to arrive. Your host will have more time to spend with you and can introduce you to other guests as they arrive. It's less intimidating to arrive early than when the room is packed and conversations are in high gear.
- If you are frustrated staying up late into the night working on the computer, try going to bed early and getting an early start on the day instead.
- At that next meeting or seminar, instead of sitting in the back of the room, grab a seat in the front row. You'll be able to reach the speakers to thank them and introduce yourself before most of the crowd. And introduce yourself to the people sitting next to you — just being there gives you something in common.
- Instead of going to lunch with the same crowd, invite

the new person at work or even your supervisor to dine with you.

- Do something radically different. Instead of thinking, "I can't do that!" think, "I can try that at least once." You can start with something small — take a different route to work, join a carpool, try a new hair style or rearrange your office.

Make sure the changes you make bring you closer to the person you want to be. Verbalize the changes you want to make to others and yourself. For example, if you dream of being a voice over artist, but currently work as a car salesperson, tell people you are an aspiring voice over artist. Visualize yourself as the person you want to be and pretty soon you'll see that person in the mirror. ■

PAMELA KLIEBRINK THOMPSON is a career coach, recruiter and hiring strategist. Her clients include Fox, Disney, Framestore, Digital Domain and Simex. She also speaks about animation careers at colleges, universities and national conferences.



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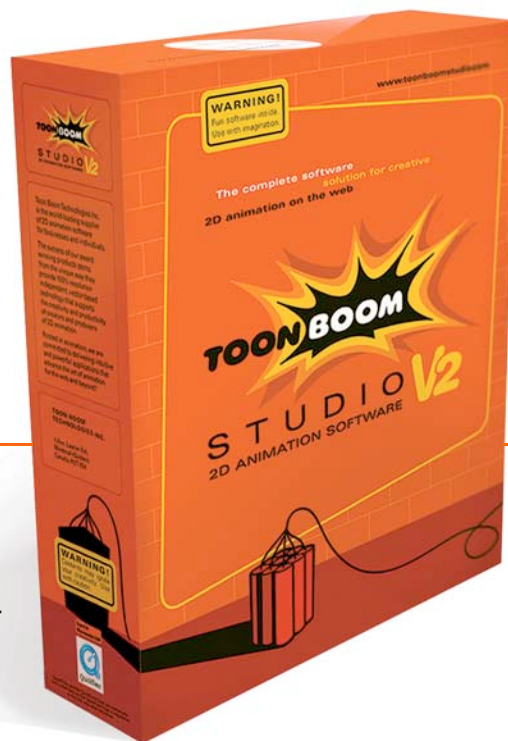


ANIMATION SOFTWARE

Toon Boom Studio V2: Going with the Flow

by Darlene Chan

Animators agree that Toon Boom Studio V2 gives unparalleled quality animation for a low price. © Toon Boom Technologies Inc.



ANIMATION IS ALL ABOUT THE FLOW — THE FLUIDITY of the image moving through a frame, possessing a kinetic energy all its own. Animators are always on the lookout for software tools that can help them achieve this sense of eternal motion. Toon Boom Studio V2 seems to fit this bill for many animators. Affordable and easy to use, Toon Boom Studio V2 was designed specifically for Web animation and offers an end-to-end production environment that is being used by experienced animators, Web designers and content developers alike. While Flash is the industry standard when it comes to Internet animation, the program wasn't actually built with animators in mind. Toon Boom Studio V2 offers to remedy this; its rich animation feature set and intuitive user interface accelerates workflow and efficiency. Able to import textures and models from other programs and export the finished product in a number of ways, TBS V2 is being used to create animation for not only the Web but everything from the small screen to giant arenas. *Animation World Magazine* recently asked a twice Oscar® nominated animator/director, a digital artist and two production companies about their experience with Toon Boom Studio V2.

CORDELL BARKER

Twice Oscar® nominated animator/director Cordell Barker has worked in the commercial field for 27 years. A native of Canada, Cordell made the 7 1/2 minute animated folk song The Cat Came Back for the NFB, which received an Oscar® nomination in 1989 and went on to garner 18 international awards. He was nominated again in 2002 for Strange Invaders. Cordell has created numerous TV ads in Canada, the U.S. and England for clients such as Energy, Mines and Resources Canada; Benylin; Nike; Chili's Restaurant and Bell Canada. He continues to receive awards for his innovative animations.

The bulk of my commercial opportunity came after I completed my first short film *The Cat Came Back*. Since then, and as a direct result of the success of that film, I have worked on over a hundred commercials. In that span of time, I have shifted from traditional ink and paint on cel over to the computer. The last two or three TV ads that I did were achieved using the updated version of Toon Boom Studio V2. These spots are an animated Coke campaign made through the production company Productions Pascal Blais in Montreal for the



Cordell Barker (left) and Jesse Giroux work on a project using Toon Boom Studio V2 at Production Pascal Blais' studios in Montreal. Photo by Denis Roy. Courtesy of Cordell Barker and Production Pascal Blais.

WE HAVE APPROXIMATELY A FIVE WEEK PRODUCTION SCHEDULE, SO WE NEEDED A PROGRAM THAT WOULD ACHIEVE WHAT WE NEEDED QUICKLY.

— CORDELL BARKER

French Canadian market. The concept is a group of five very graphically designed teenagers created in the "Flash" look, who take advantage of life's opportunities. We have approximately a five week production schedule, so we needed a program that would achieve what we needed quickly.

In all, I have directed about seven spots using Toon Boom Studio V2. For the first one we started with US-Animation, but for the quality we needed to achieve, we switched over to Toon Boom because of the speed and cost advantage. We also chose to go with Toon Boom because it was so incredibly intuitive to learn and use. The projects have gone quite smoothly, especially as V2 seems to be much more stable than V1. Prior to that, we were using Toon Boom Studio V1 on about five of the

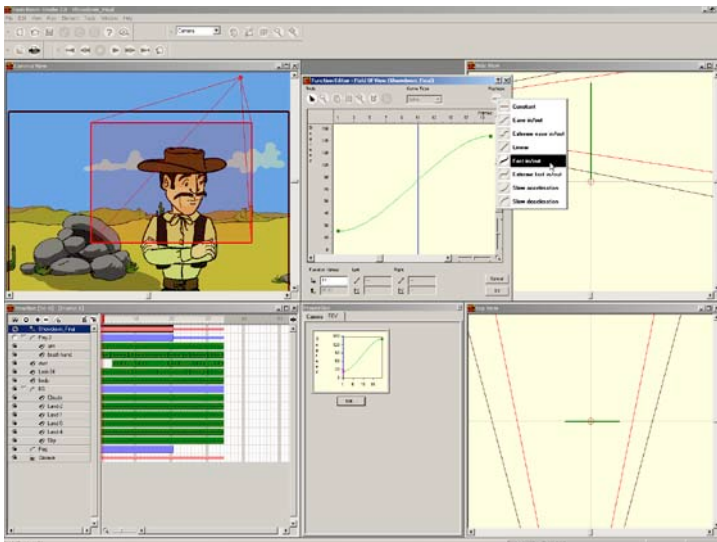
Coke projects. The reason we continued with it was the flexibility and speed of use of the program as we only had about a week to a week and a half to put together the elements of each 30 second TV spot. The thing that I really like about TBS V2 is the top and side view windows that allow an animation director, whose formative years were spent creating animation in the traditional cel-paint and camera method, to approach the animation in a very logical and visual way. Much like moving people around on a stage.

One distinct advantage is the way Toon Boom Studio V2 handles the line of any imported line-art. The line is controllable to the degree that we just couldn't get using Flash. There is a particular look to the line that when we first used Toon Boom Studio V2 and the agency creative team saw it, their reaction was, "Yeah, that's what we were after!" You are able to create a thick and thin aspect to the line — the line can go thicker when it joins to another line, and thin out when it runs uninterrupted. This has a very crafted appealing look. I also thought the tutorial was quite good. I'm a big fan of well-made tutorials that jump you straight into a full production situation so that you can be up and running as quickly as possible. An important control element was the ability to nest layers into compositions and then nest those into another separately controlled composition — there are a few much pricier programs out there that weren't able to do this important task.

ANIMATORS WHO TRY TBS V2 ONCE, WANT TO KEEP USING IT FOR FUTURE PROJECTS. © TOON BOOM TECHNOLOGIES INC. — JESSE GIROUX

The thing that surprised me the most about TBS V2 was that the price seemed so very good considering what we were able to achieve — and very quickly at that.

I would absolutely use this software again. In fact, my plan is to do more experimentation and use the program in a way that uses the multi-plane effect to much greater advantage. Its greatest strength is with a graphic style incorporating multi-planing, and as I'm a big fan of the limited animation style, I intend to play around with this quite a bit.



Animators who try TBS V2 once, want to keep using it for future projects.
© Toon Boom Technologies Inc.

JESSE GIROUX

Jesse Giroux is a freelance compositor and digital artist who has been associated over the years with Production Pascal Blais in Montreal, Canada. There, he worked closely with director Cordell Barker on the Coke commercial series.

I started to use Toon Boom Studio V2 about a year ago. I was working in an Ink and Paint studio and we were using USAnimation. Productions Pascal Blais asked us to do the compositing on a Coca-Cola ad campaign directed by Cordell Barker (a campaign that is broadcast on French television in Canada). They wanted a Flash animation look. So I tried as much as I could to achieve that look in USAnimation. But a few months

after that, the studio I was working for closed its doors. So I had the idea to use Toon Boom Studio V2 to continue the compositing of the Coca-Cola campaign and it was a success. And that was it. Not only the price of the software pleased the producer, but the look of the lines and the style of compositing was what the creative team was looking for — the fresh Internet Flash animation look. Since then we've used TBS V2 for a couple of projects here at Productions Pascal Blais for Nestle Nido and Kit Kat commercials.

The main advantage to using TBS V2 is the 3D sceneplanning. You have the top and the side view. It allows you to manipulate your drawings very easily creating depth effects. The lip-sync feature surprised me. You can compute a sound file and Toon Boom Studio V2 generates a list of drawings that follows the lip-sync. All you have to do is to replace the drawings that the software used by default with your own.

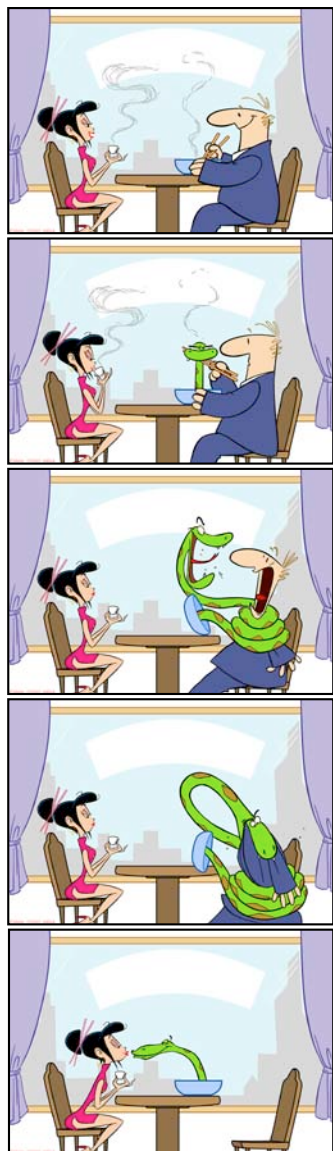
I continue to use TBS V2 here at Productions Pascal Blais, on the same Coca-Cola campaign, plus we have some other projects that we're planning to do in Toon Boom Studio V2. I also use it at home on different projects (Web design and experimental animation).

LARRY FEIGN

Larry Feign is director of STVDIO Media Animation in Hong Kong. STVDIO used Toon Boom Studio V2 in their recent productions for Cartoon Network, Walt Disney Television International and Rugby Sevens, an annual international rugby tournament held in Hong Kong for which they produced a commercial for television and outdoor arenas. The company has also designed a flip-book for print using TBS V2. You can request a free copy by sending an email to flipbook@stvdio.com or by visiting www.stvdio.com

I very much like Toon Boom Studio V2. I was a bit unhappy with all the bugs in V1, which made it not very useful. Now most of those are fixed. We have used TBS V2 for a small number, but wide variety, of projects, including video, Web animations and even a print production! Although most reviewers tend to emphasize the multiplane camera tools, we tend to use TBS V2 mostly for its excellent drawing tools.

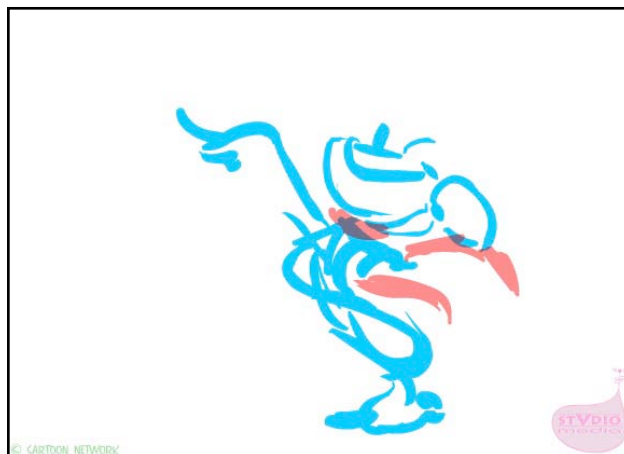
Our primary use of Toon Boom Studio V2 is not for finished work, but for experimentation, particularly for instant line tests and background and layout sketching. Our animators, many of whom never used computers



As an experiment, STVDIO created a flipbook with TBS V2. © STVDIO Media Ltd.



STVDIO created this promotion for Rugby Sevens, the annual international rugby tournament in Hong Kong. © Hong Kong Rugby Football Association.



STVDIO Media Animation created this animation *Deedee* for Cartoon Network using TBS V2. © Cartoon Network.

before, all immediately liked TBS V2 as a tool for experimenting and testing.

Presently, we are developing a new series for Disney in Asia, which requires us to come up with a wide variety of art styles and animation techniques. Since we are designing the series from scratch, we use TBS drawing tools to do a lot of freehand full-color sketching, and playing around with different cleanup styles and outline qualities. Plus it has been enormously useful in designing layouts. Of course, we could use Photoshop or other programs for the same purpose, but it's the rotating light table that makes all the difference for ease of drawing. We can sketch rough BGs and characters straight into the computer, and then by using TBS V2 colour palettes, we can test different color schemes for BGs and characters all at the same time.

We are also working on a very ambitious short animation for Cartoon Network in India, which involves several Indian dance sequences. We use TBS V2 for instant line tests of the characters doing these very elaborate dance moves. We draw into TBS V2 straight ahead without extremes or sketch planning, making for very loose and organic dance movements, with instant playback. Using Toon Boom Studio V2 allows us to get a much better feeling for the flow and fluidity of the dance than paper-and-pencil line tests. What we end up with are some of the most artful and lovely line tests I've ever seen, done with real spontaneity and inspiration, and in far less time than drawing on paper and line testing with a camera.

We were given a very short time to create some animated sequences for a promotional video for the annual international rugby tournament in Hong Kong called Rugby Sevens. Not only was the deadline short,

USING TOON BOOM STUDIO V2 ALLOWS US TO GET A MUCH BETTER FEELING FOR THE FLOW AND FLUIDITY OF THE DANCE THAN PAPER-AND-PENCIL LINE TESTS.

— LARRY FEIGN



Beetle Bailey is brought to life on a project STVDIO produced for Mort Walker, creator of the classic comic strip. © King Features.

but the client wanted a heavy and rough line style to match the heavy and rough character, but in full animation. We animated traditionally on paper, then brought scans into TBS V2. We were easily able to achieve the desired line quality by inking fast and loose in TBS V2. We got the look we wanted and met the tight deadline thanks to Toon Boom Studio V2. Incidentally, these may be the largest animations ever made with TBS V2: their primary use is to show on giant outdoor screens at rugby and football stadiums in the U.K. and elsewhere in Europe.

We have drawn a flipbook using TBS V2 almost exclusively. Very rough pencil animation was scanned and imported into TBS V2. All the inbetweening, clean-up and inking was done in Toon Boom Studios V2. This was meant as an experiment, but it came out beautifully. The pen tools and rotating drawing area made inking pleasurable, and, of course, the onion-skinning was essential. TBS V2 is not meant for print output though, so we had to export it to Flash, use Flash to export it to EPS, and then lay it out in Corel Draw.

TBS V2 has several advantages over Illustrator, Freehand or Flash as a vector drawing program for drawing and inking cartoon characters. First, the pen palette is superb, like having a drawer full of different sizes and shapes of real pens, except the TBS V2 ones

don't wear out or suddenly leave huge drips of ink on the page. The adjustable smoothing control in the pen settings is the best I've encountered in any program, and extremely useful for a clean graphic look. And I can't emphasize enough what an advantage it is to be able to turn the artwork on-screen instead of having to contort one's hand on the tablet.

I also find that Toon Boom Studio V2's vectorizing of imported scanned line art is often better than Adobe Streamline, depending on the quality of the original drawings.

I should point out here that I believe pencils, paper and erasers are still the best drawing tools known to mankind. But I have yet to find a better computer-based drawing or animating tool than TBS V2, even for print-related work.

I was actually surprised at how many features are in the program that were until now only available in the high-end animation programs like USAnimation and Animo. Of course, TBS V2 lacks special effects and is not meant for large-scale team projects. But for



TBS V2 allows animators to draw with fluidity and spontaneity, as in this [Indian dancing sequence](#) that STVDIO Media Animation created for Cartoon Network. © Cartoon Network.

smaller productions, an individual has access to an amazing number of professional tools.

We'll continue to use TBS V2 for appropriate projects. When some of the remaining few shortcomings are solved, we'll probably end up using it a lot more for general production.

NATE PACHECO

Nate is technical director for Renegade Animation, a leading producer of quality animation for some of the world's leading advertisers, software developers and video game makers, including Nike, McDonald's and Campbell's Soup.

We have used Toon Boom on several of our recent projects, specifically a pilot we are doing for Cartoon Network, and a number of commercial projects. We looked at a lot of programs, and our technical director felt that the TBS V2 package had the most features that he liked. Our people especially like the camera package, and feel that it is "animator friendly" in the way the interface

works. I think the more we use it the more surprisingly good things we find. We will continue to use it and plan to keep it in our studio's portfolio of software. ■

DARLENE CHAN is managing editor of Animation World Magazine. After receiving a bachelor's degree from UCLA, Darlene happened into the motion picture business and stayed for 14 years. She served as a production executive for Paramount Pictures, Walt Disney Pictures, Davis Entertainment and Motown. She produced Grumpy Old Men (1993) for Warner Bros. In 2001, she joined Animation World Magazine.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an e-mail to editor@awn.com.

FUTURA

SYD MEAD IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST SOUGHT AFTER VISUAL FUTURISTS CREATING THE LOOK FOR MOVIES LIKE **BLADE RUNNER**, **TRON** AND **MISSION TO MARS**.



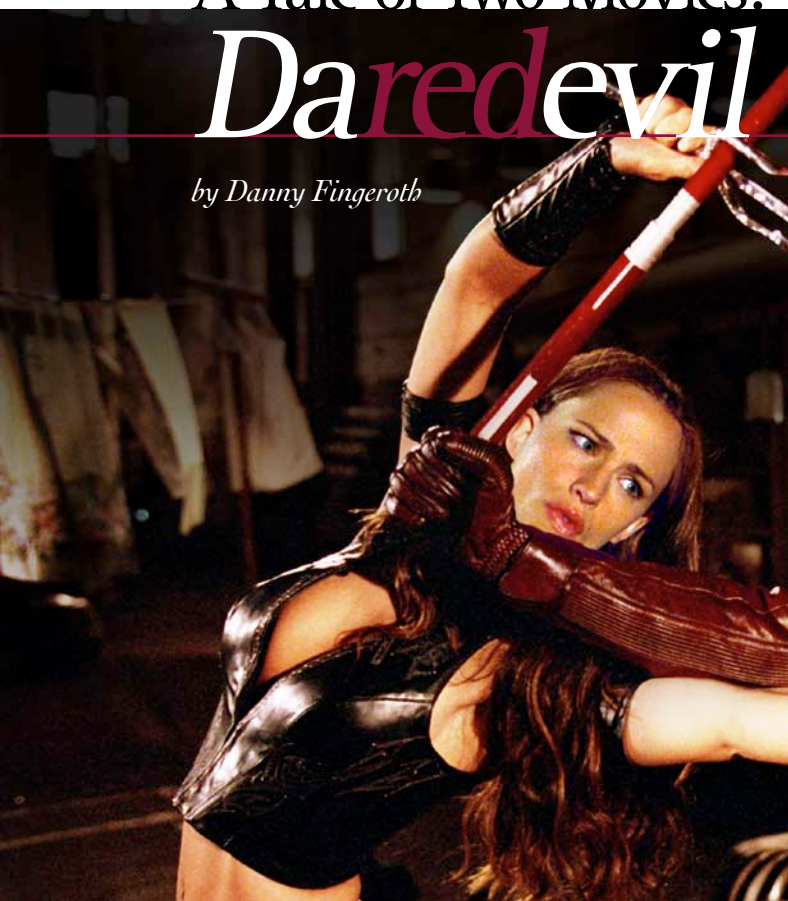
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BLIND AMBITION

A Tale of Two Movies: *Daredevil*

by Danny Fingeroth



Sure they are pretty...but is there any real chemistry?
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Fighting for justice both inside and outside of the courtroom – Matt Murdock is Daredevil.

YOU'LL THRILL AS MATT AND ELEKTRA ENGAGE IN COMBAT-CHOREOGRAPHY LIKE A KUNG FU ASTAIRE AND RODGERS.

HIS IS A REVIEW OF TWO MOVIES. OR MAYBE IT'S TWO REVIEWS, for two different audiences, of one movie.

AS A FAN...

If you are now, or have ever been, a fan of Marvel's *Daredevil* as portrayed through various comics incarnations at the hands of a multitude of creators over the past 40 years, you'll probably find this movie extremely enjoyable.

With small variations, the authentic origin of Daredevil is here. There's Matt Murdock, the kid with the widowed pug-fighter dad who wants his son to be a doctor or lawyer. There's the kid shocked at seeing his dad at work as a thumb breaker like Stallone's *Rocky*. There's Matt's loss of his sight through a radioactive chemical accident and the intense magnification of his remaining senses and the development of a "radar sense." It's all there. So is the violent loss that changes Matt's life forever, leading him to devote his life to seeing justice done, in and out of the courtrooms, where the grown up Matt practices law.

As a fan, you may take issue with the ultra violent and vengeful nature of DD, acting at times more like the Charles Bronsonesque Punisher than the wisecracking Daredevil of

AS A FAN, YOU MAY TAKE ISSUE WITH THE ULTRA VIOLENT AND VENGEFUL NATURE OF DD...



the '60s or even the grim and brooding DD of the '80s and '90s. But since you know in *your* heart that Daredevil, in *his* heart, is a good guy, you can sort of let it go. (I'm sure a lot of you won't, but the movie does carry you along, most of the time.)

You'll love the pitch-perfect Foggy Nelson as played by John Favreau, and his easy and hilarious banter with best pal and law partner Matt. You'll love the introduction of Elektra Natchios, including Favreau's wisecrack about her name. You'll thrill as Matt and Elektra engage in combat-choreography like a Kung Fu Astaire and Rodgers.

You'll smile as Michael Clarke Duncan's elegantly menacing Kingpin tells Matt that "nobody's innocent." (Of course, you might also be a little disappointed at how the Kingpin winds up this movie.)

New Yorker or not, you'll get a big kick out of the generous and glorious use made of the city (much of it actually shot on location!), especially the Hell's Kitchen locales that are so key to the film. And the special

effects point-of-view shots of Daredevil traversing the city's concrete canyons are really spectacular.

If you're a real geek, you'll giggle every time the name of a comics creator is dropped as the name of a character or place. You'll smile knowingly at *DD* co-creator [Stan Lee's](#) traditional cameo appearance. You'll grip the arms of your chair as you wait for the inevitable outcome of the battle between Colin Farrell's Bullseye and Jennifer Garner's Elektra. And you'll love the Braille motif that starts with the opening credits and continues throughout the entire film.

Indeed, if you're a fan of the comics, you're probably already out seeing *Daredevil* a second or third time. You're probably already reserving your DVD.

BUT...

If you're not a fan of the comic...I dunno.

As the movie unfolded, I tried to put out of my mind all I knew of the character and his world. I imagined just being a fan of action-adventure movies com-

ing in cold to see this film. And when I channeled that person, I was pretty perplexed.

Maybe a person like that would go in thinking: "Hey, I liked the *Spider-Man* movie. After all, Danny Fingeroth gave it a rave [review on AWN](#). And isn't *Daredevil* also based on a Marvel comic? Maybe I'll like this, too."

vilian entering the theater, my feeling would be: "Here's a really sick guy, a guy in some ways worse than the criminals he hunts. Why should I feel any sympathy for this devil?"

Yet, you're supposed to. When he basically stalks Elektra, her response is to battle him (lucky thing she's a martial arts expert), defeat him and later hunt



Michael Clarke Duncan's Kingpin (left) hires the psychotic Bullseye (Colin Farrell), who is deadly with everything from peanuts to paperclips.

But what you are given is a guy who is dressed in what looks like a Joel Schumacher Batman costume reject, who — despite apparent agility and enormous acrobatic skill — moves, in some shots, like Robocop. This *Daredevil* is a character who, despite thinking of himself as a hero, is really more of a sadistic vigilante who thinks nothing of meting out punishments that, even if you could argue don't outweigh the crimes, certainly are not *his* business to be meting out.

What most people remember about super heroes is that they traditionally capture their adversaries and let the police sort out whether the evidence merits conviction of whatever degree. While comics have certainly darkened in tone over the years, and there are anti-heroes such as the aforementioned Punisher who regularly mete out punishment, capital and otherwise, *Daredevil* has not been such a hero. (Sorry — geeked out there for a second.) Nonetheless, as a ci-

him down to continue their tryst. Could be kinky and fun. Problem here, really, is the lack of much actual chemistry between the stunningly good-looking leads.

So we have a movie full of neat stuff and quirky characters — Joe Pantoliano's outstanding Ben Urich is accessible to a civilian and also consistent with the comics version — that in the end just doesn't jell. It's one of those movies that (for a non-geek) is more fun to *remember* than it actually is to sit through. And the Favreau-Affleck scenes are simultaneously hilarious and moving — these two have the best chemistry in the movie.

Not that watching *Daredevil* was torture. But in the way that [Spider-Man](#) and [X-Men](#) managed to hit the comic geek notes and still retain enough thematic and story interest for a general audience, *Daredevil* seems to often miss the mark. There are stretches

Daredevil seems to be pondering his own soul as well – super hero or ruthless vigilante?



where your attention wanders.

If you go into the theater a *DD* fan, you'll definitely leave wanting to go reread your collection, especially the Frank Miller runs. If you're not a fan, you may well

have forgotten the movie by the time you get home.

And for you comics geeks with girlfriends or boyfriends — yes, they actually do exist — you may get your significant other to go see *Daredevil* with you once. But I'm betting you'll be at the second and third viewings on your own. Hey — at least it'll save you a few bucks. ■

DANNY FINGEROTH, veteran *Marvel Comics* writer and editor, led the company's *Spider-Man* line, as *Group Editor*, during its highest-selling years. Danny has also created, developed and written comics and animation for *AOL-Time Warner*, *Showtime Online*, *Visionary Media*, *Brilliant Digital Entertainment*, and *Byron Preiss Multimedia*. Currently, he is the creator and editor of *Danny Fingeroth's Write Now! Magazine*, a highly acclaimed publication about writing comics, animation and science fiction, published by *TwoMorrrows*. Danny's *Backstage at an Animated Series*, from *Scholastic*, is now on sale. He is also at work on *Superman on the Couch: What Super Heroes Really Tell Us About Ourselves and Our Society*, to be published in 2004 by *Continuum*.

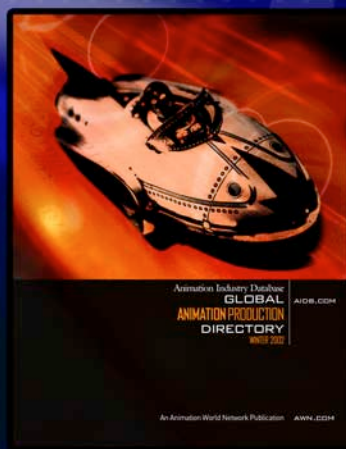
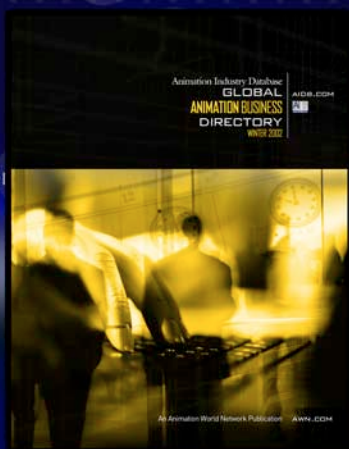
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This year's NATPE, held in New Orleans, was down in attendance and exhibitors. Many distributors who did come, opted to hold court in hotel suites instead of mingling with the crowds on the floor. Photo credit: Heather Parlato.

FROM VETERANS TO NEWBIES, TO NEW ORLEANS cabbies and hoteliers, all saw that this was not the NATPE of heydays past. It was reported that the attendance was 50% down and exhibitors were down 70% from two years ago. Even those camped out in the suites at the seven-plus hotels did not bring a full contingency. Like in 2002, this year's NATPE was a fragmented conference with the "majors" opting for comfy suites in posh hotels versus having a place on the convention floor.

The only evidence that the majors were in town was the big red square in the middle of the convention floor, called "Hollywood Plaza." Each of the big players, such as Buena Vista, Warner Bros., Paramount and others, had a small display with a phone and a person. This was the place to make appointments before trekking by cab to the Ritz-Carlton way up on Canal Street. However, those manning these booths didn't have the full scoop on what was going on in the hotels or even know who was there. Other distributors followed the lead of the biggies and ordered up suites in other prominent hotels.

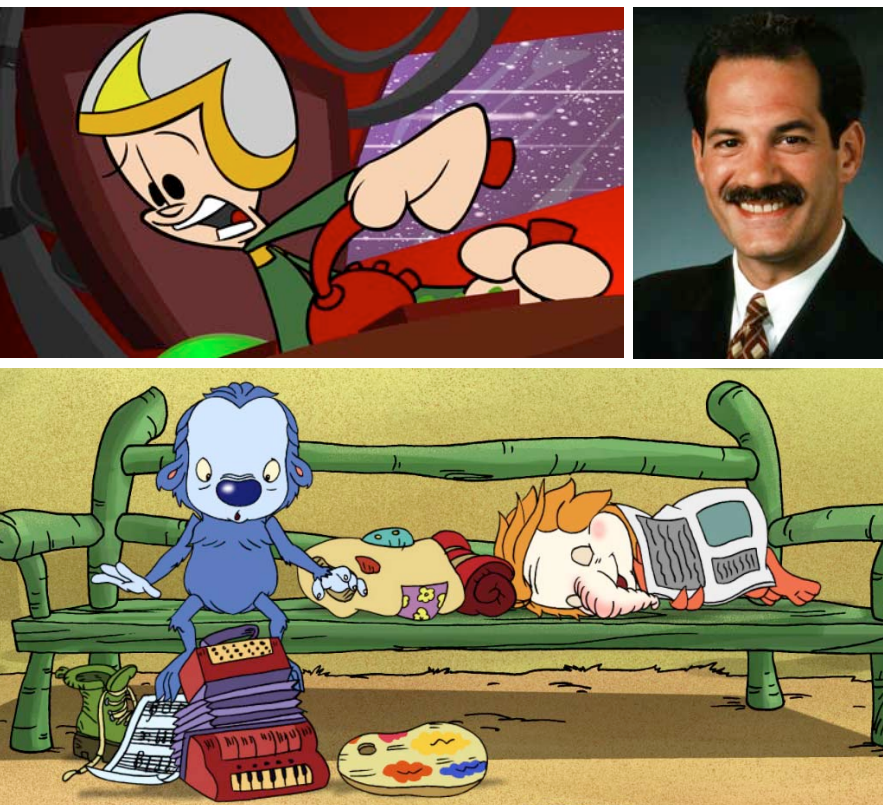
NATPE IS BECOMING AN INTERNATIONAL SHOW. DOMESTIC NATPE IS GOING AWAY...

— DAVID CARR

OFF THE FLOOR

The large Latin American contingency grouped together at the Marriott, along with other distributors that had abandoned the floor.

Rosamaria Gonzalez, a distributor of children's entertainment for Latin America, said that she has been in the business for 22 years, and nine years on her own, as Rose Entertainment. For years she had a booth on the convention floor and even reserved a space for one this year. But it was at MIPCOM in October, where everyone heard from NATPE president/CEO Bruce Johansen that the big players were again off of the floor and in suites, that the Latin American group decided they, too, needed suites. Nick Orfanopolus, vice president of NATPE Conferences, helped them settle in at the Marriott.



Jerry Diaz, executive vice-president of Salsa Entertainment, came to NATPE to stir up interest in two Salsa projects, *Olliver's Adventures* (top) and *Something Else*. *Olliver's Adventure* © 2001 Ollie's Adventures II, Inc.; Photo courtesy of Salsa Entertainment, a wholly-owned TV-Loonland subsidiary; *Something Else* © 2002 Loonland UK Ltd./Studio B (SE) Productions, Inc. in association with ZDF.

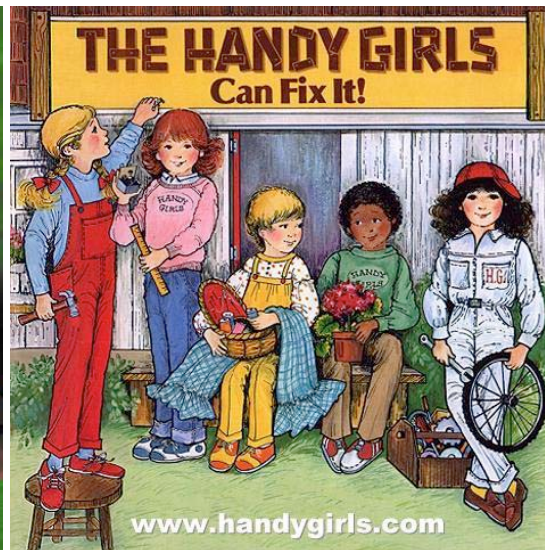
Jerry Diaz, of TV-Loonland's Salsa Entertainment, was camped out at the Marriott with the rest of the group. "NATPE is changing," said the executive vice president. "We will stay with NATPE. By coming here we save up to five or six trips and it is a good kick off for MIP-TV."

Another suite holder was AnimEigo. Natsumi Ueki, COO, did not go the 2002 conference in Las Vegas. It was her new chief marketing officer, Denise Anker, who made the decision that if they were going they would have a suite because it would be quieter, more relaxed, offer more time for meetings, and the price was reasonable, even with the NATPE surcharge for being listed in the book and getting badges for the floor. In their Wyndham Riverfront Suite, just steps from the convention center, Ueki said that she was there to sell her titles to TV, meet licensors and to learn more about television marketing. She is aware how powerful television is for her Japanese animation properties. "It has been a wonderful experience. I think we will do again next year. Our hope is that NATPE comes back in one location," said Ueki.

"NATPE is becoming an international show. Domestic NATPE is going away because targeted meetings with station groups are held elsewhere," explained David Carr, of Beantown, a broadcast promotions company, who attends every NATPE. However, he doesn't see a need for a badge. He is there to party with his clients, the marketing executives. "Everyone is here because they don't want to be missing. My primary function is to rescue our marketing clients [from strictly business]. It is a good place to get one-on-one with clients to build relationships," said Carr, executive producer of the on-air promotion and television marketing company.



Beantown's owner and executive producer David Carr takes advantage of the opportunity to get one-on-one with clients at NATPE. Courtesy of Beantown Productions.



Joey DiFrancesco of Raven Moon sought out broadcasting partners for *Gina D's Kids Club* (top left), a live-action/animated "family values" show for 3 to 6 year olds, created by J&B DiFrancesco. © 2003 Raven Moon Entertainment, Inc. All rights reserved.

Co-creators Barbara Ciarlantini and Mary Schwartz came to New Orleans to present *The Handy Girls* (top right), a combined live-action/animation show based on *The Handy Girls Can Fix It!* book published by Random House in 1984. © Handy Girls, Inc.

Building new relationships was the focus of Louis Sek's visit to NATPE. Sek, Chairman/CEO of the Chinese company Colorland Animation, co-produced the Christmas movie *In Search of Santa* (bottom right), and is currently in discussions with international distributors. Photo courtesy of Colorland Animation; *In Search of Santa* © 2003 Colorland Animation/Tundra Productions.



ON THE FLOOR

It was obvious that many were missing from the convention floor and the floor was a microscopic portion of its former self.

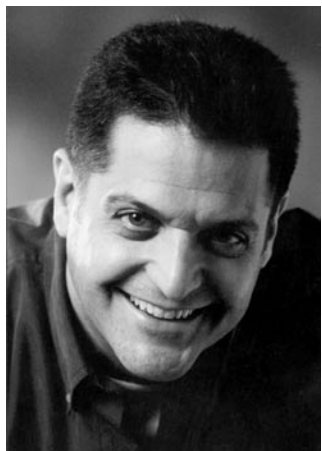
First time exhibitor Raven Moon brought the *Gina D's Kids Club* home entertainment package to NATPE to find "broadcasting partners." Joey DiFrancesco, chairman/CEO, was there not to "sell" but to create partnerships. "I have a deal for the broadcaster. I will give them 13 episodes free to broadcast with 100% of all ad sales and participation in 50% of all product revenue from all sources worldwide for five years," stated DiFrancesco. "Partnering with the broadcaster is the future of NATPE."

Handy Girls creators Barbara Ciarlantini and Mary Schwartz had a great deal of optimism for NATPE. From their home base in Las Vegas, where they missed the 2002 show, they traveled to New Orleans to present their girl-friendly do-it-yourself show to get worldwide reaction. Schwartz said, "We are getting a great response from everyone who has seen it. Being in the U.S.

property. Ciarlantini and Schwartz will be there.

ShoPro Entertainment, of Japan, had a formable presence near the entrance of the floor with their latest hit animated series, *Hamtaro*. John Easum, vice president of licensing and sales, feels that NATPE is becoming a "grand L.A. Screening." "More business is done on the road in the U.S.," he said. "But ShoPro will always do NATPE, even though it costs more. It is a way to introduce our executives to everyone."

Colorland's Louis Sek is a veteran of both NATPE and MIP and is committed to attend all of them in the future. The Chairman/CEO of the Chinese production company had a booth for the first time to present his original properties. "As a production service you don't need a stand," said Sek. For him the decision to have a booth was an economic one. "NATPE is much more reasonably priced. Even if you make one good contact then it is worth it," he said. Though he wasn't booked back-to-back with meetings, he was meeting new "friends" and gathering information just by being in the booth. "Some say that NATPE has lost its focus. It



Mark Bannon, CEO/executive producer of Wreckless Abandon, was at NATPE to introduce Animation Content, a new marketing company. Wreckless Abandon's latest project was *A Freezerburnt Christmas* (right), which aired on NBC last December and featured *Saturday Night Live* cast members Chris Parnell, Darrell Hammond and Horatio Sanz. Animation Content logo © Animation Content, LLC. All rights reserved; *A Freezerburnt Christmas* © Wreckless Abandon Studios. All rights reserved; Photo credit John Loos.

doesn't need a focus. It is a great place for the industry to meet and exchange and build new relationships."

Another seasoned floor dweller was Mark Bannon of Wreckless Abandon Studios. Following December's airing of their NBC special, *A Freezerburnt Christmas*, Bannon, CEO/executive producer, was introducing Animation Content, his new marketing company for concept representation. He was surprised by the change at this year's show. "Ironically, I have had the best meetings I have ever had," he said. "I hope that NATPE settles

itself out. We meet people you never would have a chance to meet otherwise, here on the floor."

Barry Ward had much stronger feelings about the direction NATPE should take. "NATPE is an essential North American market and should be positioned as such," said the president of the Vancouver-based Bardel Entertainment. "Indies like Bardel can't afford to go to two European markets a year," he said. He even suggested that NATPE go face-to-face with MIP-TV by scheduling NATPE at the same time and persuading the majors to stay home.



Barry Ward thinks NATPE is essential for indie companies like his Bardel Entertainment. One of Bardel's most recent projects was *The Christmas Orange* that aired during the Christmas 2002 season. Photo credit: Juliet Greenberg; Courtesy of Bardel Entertainment. *The Christmas Orange* © The Christmas Orange Productions, Inc.

KOCCA is a consortium of Korean Content Producers. This was the first time many of their members attended this U.S. market. Won-Jung Kim, KOCCA spokes person, said the members of the consortium attended to explore the Western market and they did not get a chance to meet any of the U.S. networks. However, they did have success in exposing their properties to those that came by the exhibit. KOCCA will be attending the MIPs, but may consider passing on next year's NATPE.

WALKING THE FLOOR

Many do not need the comforts of a suite or a stand. They are there to meet people, to present their wares

and to start dialogs.

Bill Dennis, of Toonz Animation India, is a veteran of all of the markets. "The glitz and glamour of NATPE is gone, not that this is a bad thing," said the CEO/president. For him, attending all of the markets cuts down on his travel. "The people that were sent to this year's show are not generally the decision makers," he observed. He said he would attend next year's NATPE in Las Vegas. "After all, it is *the* U.S. market," he said.

Frank Saperstein of the Philippine animation studio, pasi, expressed how overall disappointing NATPE was this year. However, he said he was making more contacts and having more time to spend with his meetings. He had hoped that this year's NATPE would have bounced back from the pall of 9-11 and 2002 because of the New Orleans location.

Joan Vogelesang, COO of ToonBoom Technologies of Montreal, summed it up: "I always create opportunities where there are none." And for many, NATPE is still the place to do just that.

While the crazy stunts and promotions of past NATPEs are over, it appears for those that are focused on their business, know whom they need to meet with

and why, then NATPE is still a very valuable event. More conservative in nature now than in the past, it is drawing fewer people, but they are the television syndication crowd and that doesn't necessarily impact the world of animation, with its co-production deals and pitches to major U.S. networks. While the MIPs are firmly entrenched as *the* markets to do international deals, NATPE is still a place to build relationships, have key meetings and do on the floor research prior to MIP TV. So, over the hushed tones of upset over the economy and the market, voices rose to express the value they are still getting from this event, to wish the best for NATPE and to proclaim their commitment. ■

JAN NAGEL is a marketing consultant to the animation industry representing production services and development, and is the president of Women In Animation, Inc., a worldwide professional organization. Jan was also representing the following projects at this year's NATPE: *El Dia de Los Muertos* (Jim Keeshen Productions), *Captain & The Quill* (Glenn Productions) and *Goddess Only Knows* (MJ Productions) for co-production and/or distribution.

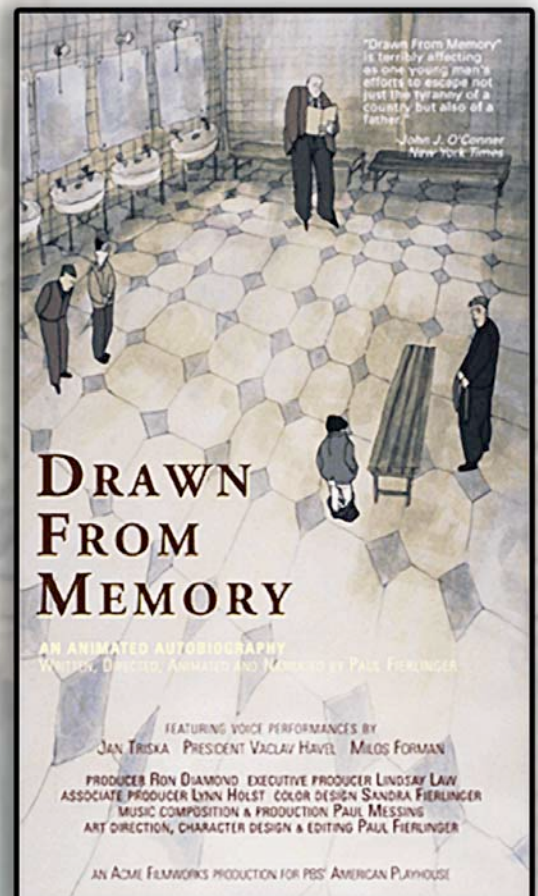
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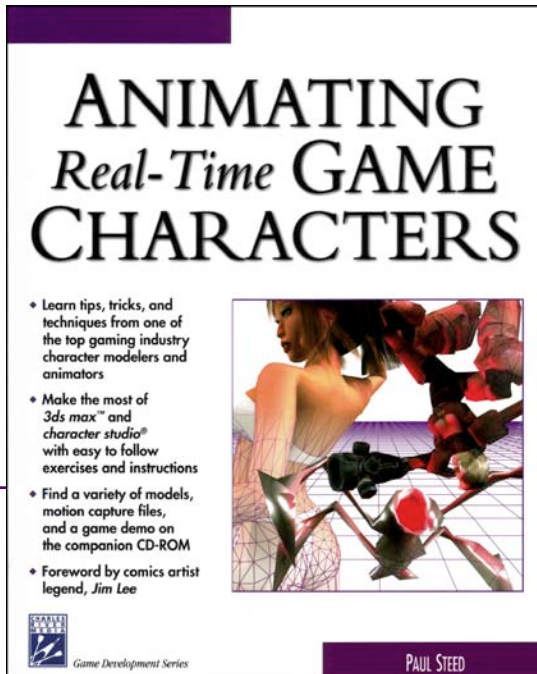


Milan Kundera. The work, which could be called *The Movie of Laughter and Forgiveness*, uses the lighthearted medium of animation to heartbreaking effect."

—Carrie Rickey
The Philadelphia Inquirer



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BOOK REVIEW

Animating *Real-Time* Game Characters

by *Oliver Wade*

THERE WILL ALWAYS BE A PLACE FOR THE MORE TRADITIONAL FORM OF ANIMATION, BUT THE WORKLOAD OF 3D IS ONLY GOING TO INCREASE.

THINGS HAVE CHANGED QUITE A BIT SINCE GERTIE THE Dinosaur lumbered out of Winsor McCay's pen in 1914. 3-Dimensional animation is stealing the spotlight from its 2D predecessor at a more furious pace than most would have imagined possible. Most of the highest grossing animated films in the last few years were animated on the computer screen before playing on the big screen. It seems that traditional cel animation is beginning to die out just like Gertie's real-life counterparts.

A RISING TIDE

Video games, once a haven for simple programmer-created sprites, are becoming increasingly visually sophisticated as each generation of hardware is introduced. It is no longer acceptable to have a simple block hitting another simple block or to have a 2D sprite chase another 2D sprite around a flat landscape. The great majority of today's animated entertainment comes to us in 3 dimensions.

THOSE WITH LITTLE OR NO UNDERSTANDING OF THE 3D PROCESS AND WITH ACCESS TO 3DS MAX WILL FIND IT AN INVALUABLE RESOURCE.

What all this means is that if you look toward the future of animation there is a fully rendered, highly detailed, incredibly animated face looking right back at you. There will always be a place for the more traditional form of animation, but the workload of 3D is only going to increase. If you want to stay relevant in the world of animation you must have, at the very least, a working knowledge of computer generated animation. A good place to start is the book *Animating Real-Time Game Characters* by Paul Steed.

According to the book, Paul Steed has been working in the video game industry for 11 years and his experience shows. This volume covers all the basics anyone would need to create a real-time game character from scratch. It follows a logical line of progression from designing a character through modeling, rigging (building a skeleton to move your model), weighting (attaching your model to the skeleton) to animating. All of the basics are covered with enough detail that someone who has never animated in 3D before should be able to have a character up and running (or walking, or shooting) by the time they have finished the book. This is no small feat considering all the different disciplines one needs to master in order to accomplish this. Many game companies now hire separate artists to design, model and animate their characters so gaining knowledge in each of these fields could lead to one in which the reader may eventually want to specialize.

GREAT STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS

From the outset it is clear that the author intends his readers to use the software programs 3ds Max and Character Studio. This leads to the book's greatest strength...and biggest weakness. If you are indeed prepared to use these programs, the book does an excellent job of guiding you in a step-by-step approach for each chapter. It is laid out in a "push button X to achieve result Y" sort of way. Each step of the process is described in painstaking detail. As I said, if you are using 3ds Max, this can help you achieve your goal. If you are *not* using that program then a large portion of the book becomes meaningless. All of the tutorial work does not translate easily to other programs such as Maya and SoftImage. Maya is known for its intuitive animation abilities and is used extensively in game animation today. The exclusion of information on this package is a glaring one and makes the book seem a bit outdated.

Since this book is so exclusive to one program it would have been helpful to have quite a bit of general

knowledge given to the reader as well. Starting with the first chapter, "Built To Move," which covers everything from character concepts to building your model, there was not enough information on *why* something was done, just *how* something was done. This carried throughout the entire volume with point-by-point explanations of how and the occasional stop for why. This is especially evident in the animation chapters. If you do not have a working knowledge of the principles of animation (weight, timing, use of arcs, slow-ins, slow-outs, overlap, follow through) this book won't do much to help you. Those subjects are touched on but not given the gravity they deserve.

The book also comes with an enclosed CD that should run on most PCs. Again, if you are using 3ds Max, this resource is invaluable. It contains the actual files used in the lessons from the book. It allows the reader to examine the entire process for him or herself first hand and to interact with the lessons in a unique way. If you are not using Max, these files are of no use whatsoever.

The CD also contains full color files of all the reference images from the book that are especially helpful when looking at the character reference and texture files. Finally, it contains a demo of the game *Betty Bad* (on which most of the lessons in the book are based). It is interesting to see how all of these things add up to the final product, even though the game itself also seems a bit outdated.

In summary, this is a well-crafted and deep "how-to" book on creating an animated video game character from scratch. Those with little or no understanding of the 3D process and with access to 3ds Max will find it an invaluable resource. Those who have some understanding of the 3D process and a working knowledge of animation would do better to look elsewhere. ■

Animating Real-Time Game Characters by Paul Steed. Hingham, MA: Charles River Media, Inc., 2003. 392 pages with CD-ROM. ISBN: 1-58450-270-3. (US\$49.95)

OLIVER WADE is the animation director for *Insomniac Games* whose titles include the *Spyro the Dragon* series and *Ratchet and Clank*. He has been in the animation industry for 15 years and has been making video games for the past 10 including stints at *Electronic Arts* and *Disney Interactive*.

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