

Flash 'Character' Animation (midterm project)

Using Flash and/or Illustrator, Photoshop create a simple animation that tells a story. The characters may be as simple as a circle or square or as complex as a representational figure. The total amount of frames should be less than 1000 frames (12fps). Basically you should create an animation that is LESS than a minute. You should use a combination of frame by frame and motion tweening for better results.

Refer to the 'Animation Techniques' Exercise for possible starting points. You will be evaluated on the way you tell a story via shapes as well as the timing and the techniques you use to express your idea.

Disney's techniques:

Squash and Stretch
Exaggeration
Anticipation / aiming
Staging
Follow Through / overlapping action
Secondary Action
Timing
Slow In, Slow Out
Arcs

Step One – Story One-liners (5-10 different one-liners for possible story ideas)

Choose a very simple story with a very simple motivating factor for your character's action. In order to best choose a story, brainstorm a list of one-liners. Create a list of 5-10 total story ideas.

One-liners are very simple sentences describing the character's motivation (such as to climb a hill) as well as the goal (to get to the top) as well as the conflict (such as a steep incline).

The above one-liner might be represented as below:

George wants to climb to the top of the steep mountain to get the cheese but he is frightened of the sharp rocks and steep incline.

Step Two – Storyboards (hand-drawn cells for extremes in action)

Create storyboards that depict the extremes in action from one frame to the next. Use text to describe sound (for example) or movement in or out of the frame. Use arrows to show direction of movement and color these frames to describe color combinations.

Step Three – Animation (use flash to create animation)

Try and break down your animation into the 'what needs to be done frame by frame' and 'what can be done well with motion/shape tweening'. Use motion/shape tweening amply – it takes less time to create and then you will have more time to work on technique and timing. Use your storyboards to break down which will be tweened and which will be done frame by frame.

Step Four – Turn in (.fla file and .swf file)

.fla file
.swf file
story one-liners
storyboards

Creating Expressive Animation with Character Simply

When you start sketching out your ideas for a story consider including the following plot components.

Write down a simple story (your one-liners) with conflict and resolution. Create anthropomorphic creatures interacting with each other or another simple unanimated object. Try to exhibit them with expressiveness and feeling.

Examples of motive: fear of a high cliff, a fence in the way of an ice cream truck, etc.

Examples of resolution: fly over cliff with helicopter, going around fence to get to icecream, etc...

Examples of obstacles: the cliff, the fence.

Character is created when interacting in the conflict/resolution circle above. A story is simply a series of events that lead to this consequence.

