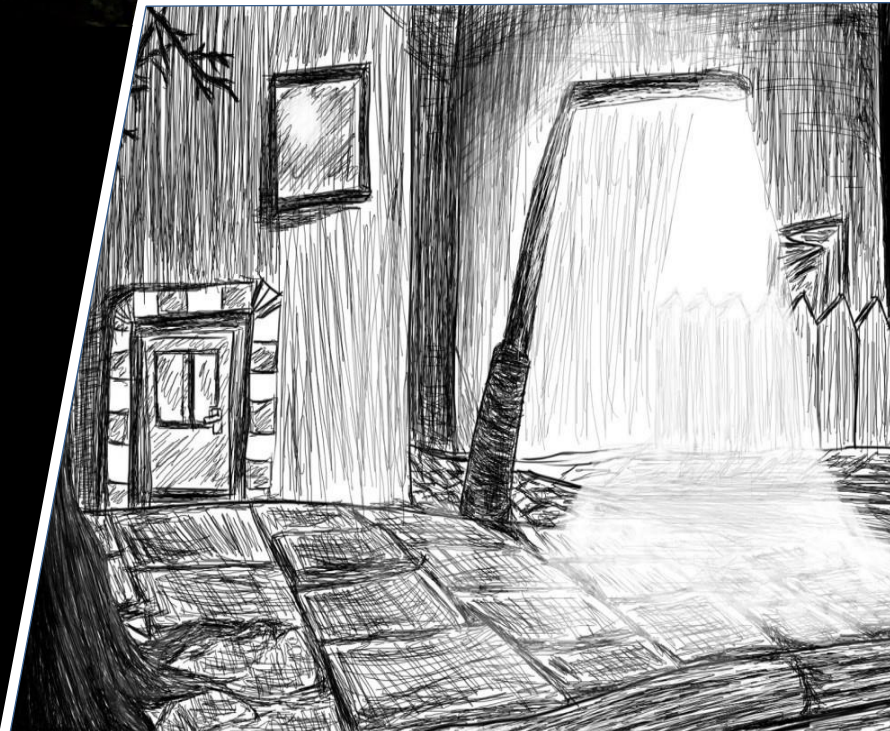


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Introduction

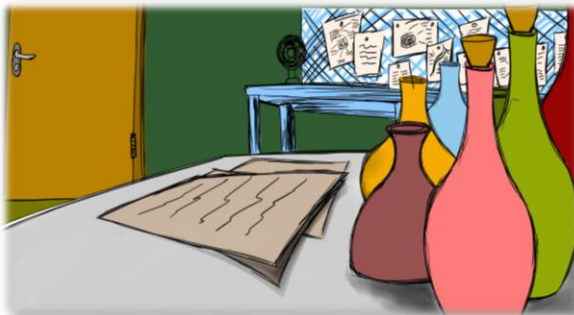
In 2014, I started having an interest in animation before going to my foundation year at Trinity St David's. Although the studies based in the foundation year was expanding my use of media, art skills and knowledge on animation, the foundation year did not provide 3D software that which is currently being used in the university. However, I learnt the ability to study artists work and analyse the conceptual art to use as research. I began studying animation in 2014 when I followed the foundation year course before starting my degree in 2015. In the foundation year, I developed various stories for animations. I explored various exhibitions in *Swansea*, *London* and *Amsterdam*. During my experience of learning art skills in school and the foundation course, I began to use my skills in art where I can develop them digitally and explore other mediums. In my first year, 2015, I learnt various software such as *Maya*, *Mudbox*, *Zbrush* and *Photoshop*. I began to explore the traditional methods of animation through research and learning the possibilities of creating 3D animation using Maya. Most importantly, I developed an understanding of the 3D pipeline which is essential in creating 3D animations.



Concept art is general process used for the design stage of developing visuals for characters and environments. Research also takes part in learning new techniques based on building the foundations of concept art. At the beginning of my first year, I was assigned to a team, where I was appointed one of the concept artists. To challenge myself I began learning how to use a new software, *Photoshop*. Throughout the development, I learnt to create an image, sketching using a Cintiq. Using the layer system in Photoshop, I used various layers to create the lighting and shadows. I used green and vibrant colours for the turtle, to make it cartoony and friendly. Within this role and I began learning how to create my own art piece using the style from the *Ghibli* films. As a concept artist, creating various tests and choosing ideas to show development of the various drawings leads into one final piece. The films that inspired my work are '*My neighbour Totoro*', '*Howl's Moving Castle*' and '*Castle in the Sky*'. I also used '*Lord of the Rings*', in the film they have an elephant with a rider. These films inspired me to develop drawings based on the style and the use of colour. *Hayao Miyazaki* inspired me to create my own creature using his style and use of colours.



In my second year, concept artists such as *Ryan Woodward* and *John Sweeney*, inspired me to build my basic knowledge of compositions, perspectives and lighting. From *Ryan Woodward*, the character designs are comical and inspired me to improve my character designs. In my second year, a concept artist, *John Sweeney*, inspired me to improve my environmental concept art. This developed my interest in building my own storyboards, conceptual art for characters and environments in my second year. To build my concept art, I began by exploring the internet to build my references on images or drawings based on the subject. Artists are also used to inspire my artwork to motivate and encourage to build my concept art. After research, the concept is built by outlining the simple perspectives by line drawing, then use simple colours and then apply lighting and shadows.

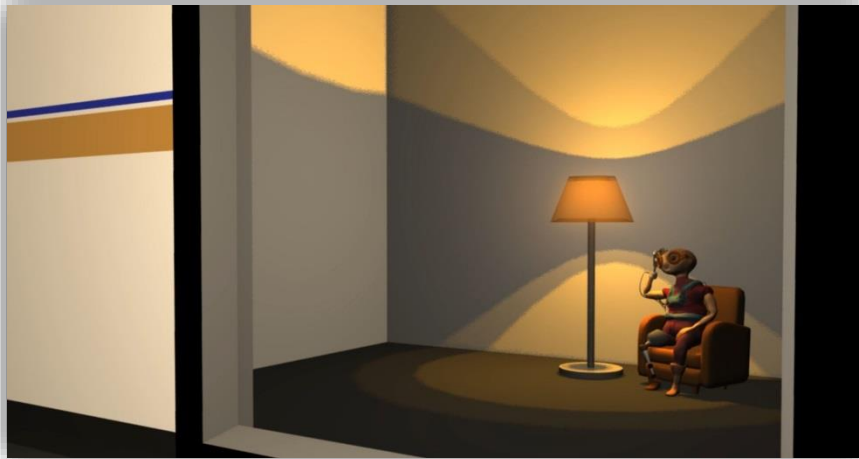




In my third year I began to develop skills in outlining basic human anatomy. I used *Anatomy for the artist* by Sarah Simblet and *Constructive Anatomy* by George B. Bridgeman books to build my skills creating different character designs by improving my understanding of anatomy. I also, used a book, *Beginner's Guide to Digital Painting in Photoshop: Characters* by Charlie Bowater and Derek Stenning. This book was insightful based around building layers in lighting and colour uses. This process to create an environment concept art, was used as a practise of creating the characters. I found that a basic understanding of anatomy and poses was needed to create silhouette drawings to improve character designs. After creating the storyboards, working in the pre-production areas led to more creative and imaginative for narratives.



For character animation, the aim is to bring characters alive by essentially developing ideas for various animations, making the characters feel alive. In my first year, I started to learn an animation software, *Maya*. I animated a ball, learning the basic principles of squash and stretch and anticipation. As I learnt, I began to dig deeper into developing my own characters, making a cyborg rig, which was made in 2016. My cyborg animation lasted twelve seconds, the animation is about the character turning his gear on his head, to give him the control of his body, gets up and starts to walk slowly to the mirror. During the development of this animation, I had become to learn new tools animating in Maya, using the graph editor and adjusting the timeline to animate. I was influenced by *Maz Rey*, a character in *Star Wars: Force Awakens*. The animation could be improved in the areas of arcs of the character, adding personality in the walk cycle. The cables on the character do not follow through with the animation. To improve this, a parent constraint to the root joint, could solve the issue with the geometry moving away from the character. In overall, my animation skills need improvement based on creating an appealing and exaggerated animations.

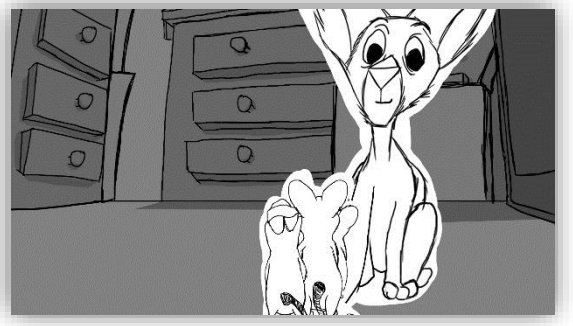


To show case my work, it involves showing the process and the development stages such as planning and improvements in the animations to the final stage. In my second and third years, I have developed leica reels, progression reels and animation reels. In my second year, I created character animations to build my basic knowledge in animation principles. However, the character animations were made based on specific actions such as pain, free running, afraid and lip sync. These animations relied on performance and acting although the character animations were made by following only video clipped reference to help develop the animations. However, in the third year, my process of creating animation was to increase my research by making my own clip so that I can improve my character animation. This improved my development stages and reduced the time of researching for online clips, as a result this improves the process of animating a character. I follow a process of specific character animation by creating your own reference material, which is a quicker method than spending the time to research and collect video references. After collecting references, the process of animating starts by having a stepped animation of the character following through basic movements and following through key poses. By having key poses, its enables a pass through to the next stage of creating a spline animation. After achieving the blocked stage, the first pass of animation is about the arcs, in-betweens, anticipation and timing. As soon as this is put into the animation, the second pass is about thinking about the subtle movements of hands, eyes, facial

movement and displaying the personality of the character. I find this method to be helpful to start creating realistic animations and bring the character to life.



My progression reel in my third year, shows the stages of development of character animations. Filming and editing are essential when it comes to the outcome of the clip. Leica reels, film references, progression reel, animation reels, cinematography, editing techniques by using *Adobe Premiere*. Through my second year, I developed short clips of a character animation reel and a Leica Reel. This was used to get feedback and show case my animations. The Leica reel was made based upon a 3D film named 'Harmless', made in 2017. Although the Leica reel was not fully successful in fully animation, the planning and timing of the Leica reel helped blocking out the 3D animation. As per practise, it is important to understand editing because it falls within timing in filming. Feedback is a useful way to get an opinion of your film from an audience to improve the film.



One aspect of the course I have found useful is time management which is important to all projects, especially involving a 3D pipeline. In the first year, my time management was not realistic due to my inexperience. I researched how a basic schedule could be constructed, making it easier to manage my tasks and work load on a week by week basis. As I continued into the second year, technical and hardware issues also affected my time management. I had other issues of work being delayed due to my CPU over heated multiple times, which was then fixed through buying a new CPU heatsink. I particularly also had problems regarding technical issues of understanding how to create specific props in my 3D film making project. In my third year, I began to challenge myself to keep working on my project with realistic time schedules. During my production in 3D, there were instances of textures of the characters face needs to be adjusted, such as adding a foundation of a beard and adding eyebrows, instead of using geometry alphas. Due to my inexperience with *Substance Painter*, I encountered issues such as change in lighting and showing different colours, this took additional time to solve. Another challenge was that there were fewer assignments set in the second semester of the third year, the assignments were more challenging because of the quality and quantity of work required. Therefore, each stage of the production was planned carefully, such as risks, health and safety.



Collaboration within a team, planning and making an artefact by working together is crucial to have a successful project. By organising, planning, communicating, problem solving, decision making is important as a team. In the first year, working together in group projects has shown ways of collaborating with a team, adjusting skills to suitable roles a project. By being introduced to new people, I began to understand that there were a wide range of people with various backgrounds. However, the ability to work as a group was not successful due to the lack of communication and a share of ideas of achieving the final product. Due to being inexperienced, each of the member could have solved this issue by sharing their work. The 3D pipeline was affected as I caused a few issues regarding modelling and UV unwrapping. The issue was the merging the geometry causing loss of UVs, topology of the geometry was not up to a standard in the short film. I had help working on my props, redoing the topology and prevented issues regarding UV unwrapping. This was caused by using the 'smooth' tool in Maya and not fully understanding the making the 3D props correctly, making wireframes clean for UV unwrapping. I found this to be challenging, however I learnt from my group feedback. A new challenge was met, regarding my group collaboration in the third year,

where I was tasked to create a character. Although, due to my unsuccessful parts in my second year of 3D film making, my character skills needed to improve, therefore I had used online tutorials to improve specific parts of my work in production. Working within a team, I had been able to improve on many areas of working on my character, regarding modelling, texturing and rigging. I used tutorials based on *Maya*, *Zbrush* and *Substance Painter*. My ultimate challenge was rigging, due to understanding weight painting, I learnt many things regarding shifting weights on the joints of the character using Human IK. Although, I had many problems going from smooth skinning and interactive skinning. I learnt that interactive skinning is useful due to time. This was successfully used when I began to animate the character, as the geometry would follow through correctly when moving the characters joints. The progression over the years, improvement shows by paying attention to feedback and going through research. Collaboration needs to have meetings, making sure to update the group and present work to the team for progression or feedback.

Conclusion

In conclusion, my art work has been improving regarding the use of *Photoshop* and improving visual development by practising drawing different characters and faces of celebrities to improve my skills. However, regarding research and development, it needs to improve in areas such as taking my own photographs and experimenting with traditional art. By doing this, it the process of creating my work could improve because traditional art can show more characteristics. For example, Disney had a team from *Good Dinosaur* and went to *Wyoming*, to capture the look and feel of the wild. The film shows how detailed and life like land in the film can be, this is due to the satellite images they had used. Although my art work provides basic understanding of character concept art, it can improve though dynamic poses and action poses.

When animating a character, I have come to a successful process that encourages and allows me to create character movements with room to develop new ideas and create appealing animations. However, animation skills need improvement based on various principles such as showing secondary action, exaggeration and appeal through key poses of the character animations. They need to be more exaggerated and have eccentric silhouettes.

For creating show cases, my character animation progression reel highlights the different stages of development. This is crucial to the industry to show your process and animation skills. It is also important for getting critical feedback based on your process and animation development. Although, after producing this progression reel, feedback has shown me that I need to include my reference material to my animation.

Through developing my stories, the leica reel was clean. However, the block out for the leica reel could have been improved based on the animation and the changes of expression on the characters. The leica reel could have been cleaned around the characters, instead of having a white outline around the character, because this creates a cut out like feature pasted on the environment.

Time has been very important to each project in all years. In the first year, I found the tasks to be challenging and inexperienced to create detailed work. This was also due to paying attention to my hobby, playing video games instead of tackling the challenges in the projects. However, I have altered my hobbies to match with my time management to an organised fashion. Where I will be able to focus on my projects rather than spending time on my hobby.

Working in a team was challenging but over the three years of the course, I feel I improved my communication skills and was better able to work as part of a team, both learning from others and helping them. My team advised me to use parent constraints for the eyes of my character, Buck; I had suggested before to use projection of a texture to have an efficient technique for creating a realistic eye. I have recognised that it is important to listen to feedback given from the team as well as giving advice on the areas I feel more confident with such as modelling, texturing and animation.

In conclusion to my work, I have improved over the years in university. However, there is still need for improvement based on redoing or creating more 3D work. To familiarise myself with different software and experiment on various things.