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CAMF 6001

Reflective journal

The first problem I faced with my creative project was the size and workload that an animation would entail. I was very determined to create the nature dance animation as I wanted to create something to lend myself to a more design/art focused career in the future. I went into the project with little real knowledge on the extent of the work involved but having done a lot of research into animation, through my study of Studio Ghibli and trying out small animations for myself, I realised that I would need to work on my designs as well as my schedule in a way that would help ease the workload when I get into the bulk of the animating process. My main inspiration for this project was Studio Ghibli's *The tale of Princess Kaguya* (2014). This animation style is slightly like my traditional artwork style, I think this is what drew me to it. I was impressed by the movement and flow of the piece, having not done much animation I know this level is unattainable for my first project. Instead I intend to use to mood of the piece and its focus on nature for my animation. The rough, flowy style that Studio Ghibli have employed is something I intend to use to my advantage in my animation. Using a style that lends itself to 'intentional mistakes' means I can work quicker and more to my personal style because I want the colour and lines to move around between frames. I chose hand drawn digital animation from the very beginning of the planning process. I want the animation to have its own individual mark and so the best way for me to employ my personal tastes as well as skill into a piece like this is with hand drawn animating, the main downfall to this method is my lack of experience may show and I do have a lot more work to do.

My passion for design helped with the character creation a lot. My first drafts were made to both embody the element the characters were designed after but also meant to make the animating process easier. Through working to cover up problems I realised I was inadvertently forgetting about the aesthetics of the overall piece. This is the main reason I'm making this project, so I had to go back and completely overhaul the characters.

For my second drafts I decided to do more research into character design. Most of my sources for this were contemporary, finding a lot of very useful resources from YouTube videos. I started watching a lot from a creator named, 'LavenderTowne'. Her videos gave me a new perspective on design. In my first drafts I was concentrating most of my energy on the colour and its relation to the elements, LavenderTowne introduced me to the idea of using correlating iconography to depict the concept, feeling and personality of a character. This was very helpful in creating my second drafts. I utilised iconography that was typical of the, sea, British woodlands, fire and air in my second drafts

which have made them a lot more appealing to the eye. I decided to add an outline to my characters. I did this to have better continuity between frames and an easier workflow. This will help to speed up the animation process. Adding more depth to the characters could slow me down so in order to combat this efficiently I have added more simplicity to certain aspects of the design, for example, the hands on each of my characters are less defined. The water sprite has fins, and the grass sprite has pincers. Hands being something quite difficult to draw especially in motion would slow down my process a lot so the addition of an easier version will help keep me on schedule.

My process for the animation has been sculpted around the Studio Ghibli method as well as my own experience and my software of choice. I am key framing, then adding linework, then adding background colour and finally colouring and shading the characters. This process allows me to work on several scenes at the same time. This is possible because of my storyboards that I have cut into sections and by scene.

The storyboards I have created are intentionally loose, as I do enjoy working at the tablet for a lot of my creative inspiration. I know the general movement and look of each section in a scene, but I have given myself more freedom in terms of framing or time in each section. I am not worried about this as I want to allow for some 'creative wiggle room' in the project. For example, I have a section where the grass sprite moves from one area to another written on my storyboard, I may then add two different camera angles and zooms of this movement when animating. I am limited in this respect because of my skill level but I am working and practicing with life drawing and animating every other day to get the best result. I know I only have the ability to do this as I am the main and only animator on this project. If this were going to be done by more than one person I would likely have added more to my descriptions and more to the look of the storyboards.

In order to make sure I'm prepared for the deadline; I have created a detailed schedule. I have done a lot of practice animation to get used to the process and as well as to understand the time it takes to do each section of my process. I have created a schedule that lasts until April. My original schedule was a little tight and didn't give as much time for breaks and days off and the updated schedule gives me a day off every two days or two days off every four days, I've also included important family dates off because I know even if I did schedule myself in that day I would end up not working or working significantly less. These breaks in my schedule should allow me to work more efficiently when I am working. I am worried that I won't keep to schedule but I do have a lot of days off that I can put work into if necessary and I've also given myself more time than necessary for each section of the project to combat any unexpected days off and problems with the project going

forward. I have also added days for peer review and feedback, as well as days dedicated to problem solving. This allows me to keep a broad prospective on the full project rather than tunnel visioning on each section.

Going forward with the project, I am rather stressed that I won't work to the standards I've given myself. This is mainly an issue with my confidence, I think a big issue for me will be not going back too often to finished sections and tweaking them, my time management and schedule is in place to try and combat my issue of overworking myself and a project. If I were to redo this portfolio, I may have put more effort into the backgrounds, the drafts I've made are rather simple. Having said this, I wanted the focus to be on my characters and their designs, so I am satisfied with the way I decided to manage my workflow.