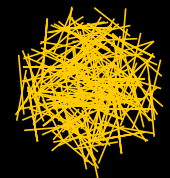


ASSEMBLING ESSEMBLE

**AT THE INTERSECTION:
COMBINING LIVE ACTION,
ANIMATION AND VFX
IN FILM AND MEDIA**



essemble



MANUAL

At the intersection: combining LIVE ACTION, ANIMATION AND VFX IN FILM AND MEDIA

Prepared by

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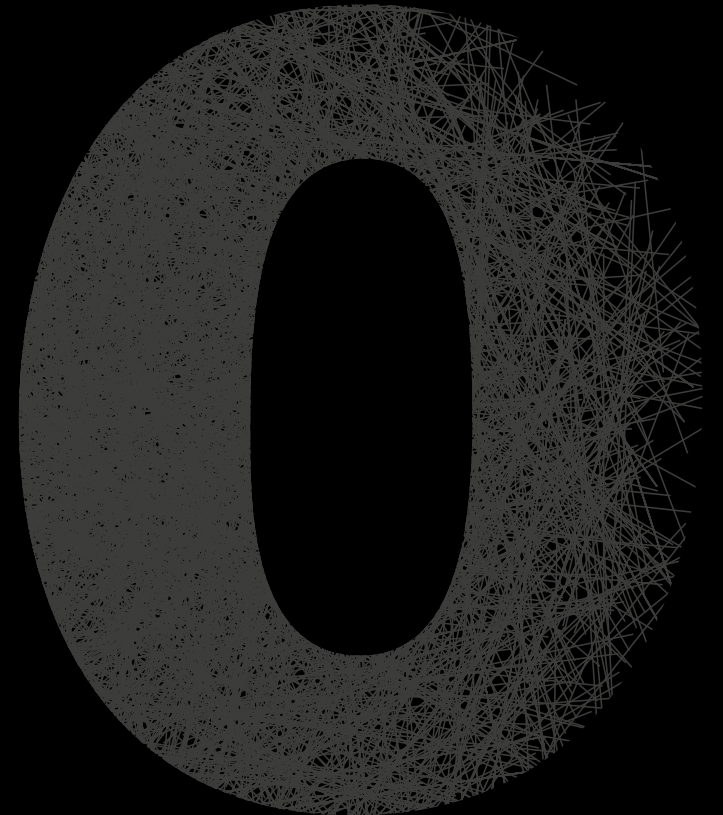
0 – INTRODUCTION

1 – THE PROJECT – PRESENTING ESSEMBLE AND ITS PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

2 – PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

3 – MODULES DESCRIPTORS

INTRODUCTION





0_INTRODUCTION_

The present manual constitutes one of the main outcomes of ESSEMBLE, a research and training endeavour that was developed by a consortium of four European film schools between 2012 and 2015 and by five Schools from 2015 to 2017. Initially funded under the European Union Media program (project ref: 1002TR029002PT), Essemble was implemented by a consortium of five European film and Media schools: Universidade Lusófona (ULHT), Film, Video and Multimedia Department, Lisbon, Portugal; LUCA School of Arts, Brussels, Belgium; Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design (MOME), Budapest, Hungary, and ifs internationale filmschule köln in consortium with TH Köln – University of Applied Sciences, Cologne, Germany. Cologne, Germany.

Initially designed essentially has a training activity, Essemble addressed the need of European Film and Media Schools for training and mobility activities focusing on media and film related technologies that push the traditional barriers of the medium and call for new pedagogical and didactic approaches. The project involved the delivery of a set of intensive training activities dealing with the acquisition of skills and competences in new film technologies, such as stereoscopic imaging, augmented reality and visual effects, and their application in the context of the creative production of new filmic formats that cross live action, animation and virtual moving images. More recently, the project became an Erasmus + funded initiative (Agreement number – 2015-1-PT01-KA203-013112) and started to incorporate besides the training dimension, also the technical and artistic exploitation of different media's, namely VR, potential to push the barriers of cinematic creativity.

The project's main objectives included the creation of a network of competences in digital film; the development and implementation of an interdisciplinary training program focusing on film development; the development of co-production initiatives between all schools involved in the consortium depicting the creative use of the taught technologies, and theoretical and critical reflection on the crossings animation and film promote when confronted with a changing media environment.

One of the core aspects of ESSEMBLE was the implementation of the proposed training program. This program was conceived around a two folded approach: intensive live training sessions and production workshops that followed the production path that goes from conception to post-production and finishing, namely when stereoscopic compositing is involved. The two main achievements targeted by this program were on one side the acquisition of technical and artistic competences in the target areas to be acquired by students and, on the other side, the actual production of a number of projects not exclusively



0_INTRODUCTION_

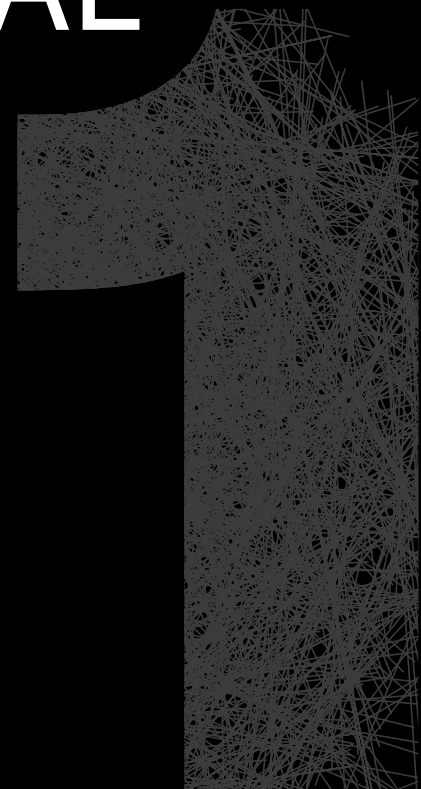
of a filmic nature. Both these achievements were closely interlinked and one depended on the other. On each central stage of the production value chain, a selected group of students is both the object of the training activity and the main responsible for the development of the production process. Our focus was on the training of both the students' abilities to express and communicate their "views" to others and their capacity to integrate original visual aesthetical elements coming from new technological arenas into to their discourse.

This program was successfully implemented throughout the four consecutive editions of Essemble and its structure and content improved on each new edition. The present manual is conceived as an educational support tool designed in order to facilitate and support the implementation of that same program by other film and arts schools that want to work in this area. The manual is organized around the same modular structure that was used in Essemble and for each module both the outline and the educational content of the module are presented.

Module descriptors include not only the content for each module but also the educational guidelines that should support its implementation. This manual is also a companion to the MOOC that was designed during the project following the same structure.

Essemble was a practice based education program and many of the activities that were conducted during the program cannot be replicated in this manual. Nevertheless, clear guidelines are given that we believe allow all those interested in exploring the same topics. This manual should be used in complement with the set of educational materials – namely exercises and tutorials – made available at the project's website <http://essemble.ulusofona.pt>

THE PROJECT PRESENTING ESSEMBLE AND ITS PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH





1 THE PROJECT: PRESENTING ESSEMBLE AND ITS PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH



Film schools face nowadays a large number of challenges, of which digital media technologies and the transformations they brought about are a significant part. Essemble departed from the conscious involved schools had of this process of ongoing transformation, and took a step back by focusing, not on what technologies are doing to cinema, but on how original uses of two core cinematic visual approaches – live action images and animation – could benefit from the new technological apparatus.

Many authors, such as Frank Rose (Rose, 2012) or Oliver Grau (2004) have in the past discussed how ours is ever more a culture of immersion and not of illusion. We departed from these visual instantiations of the cinematic apparatus and their applicability in storytelling to create a program that intends to explore the potential of transmedia storytelling, not only by using different platforms at the same time as narrative devices but more than that by resorting to the potential of these platforms to merge animation and live-action images as a resort that can prompt original forms of cinematic storytelling. The transformations that impel this process have a vast number of consequences of which three are of core importance to Essemble:

- The emergence of the need for new skills and competences on the side of all the creative and artistic personnel involved at all stages of the value chain of content production and distribution;
- The alteration of traditional workflows and project development cycles that can no longer be applied. This calls for the design of new methods and processual approaches;
- Crossing of both content and formats between platforms becomes a must. Discourses around intermediality show us our pointless it is to ontologically discuss what film is nowadays. What we should be discussing is where and how can the narrative and storytelling potential of cinema be applied across all these different platforms.

In order to address these three issues, we resorted to the concept of spatial storytelling as a conceptual and creative driver, both from an educational and production perspective. Following spatial semantics and its application in interactive storytelling, the author no longer creates the protagonist and their wants or needs, nor controls the story arc. Instead, spatial story design allows the author(s) to make the formative creative decisions by designing narrative space and spatial dynamics that then translate into user generated storylines. Spatial story design is based on interdisciplinary collaboration and can be used to create interactive digital narratives, screenplays, improvisational theatre, 360 degree films, and walk-in story



1 THE PROJECT: PRESENTING ESSEMBLE AND ITS PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH



world experiences. This concept was used in Essemble and is used in the proposed course this manual deals with, as a strategy for the introduction of transmedia reasoning amongst students.

The program follows the general workflow of a transmedia project development with a particular emphasis on two areas that are for us of core importance: script development and visualization. Both this areas are core to cinematic storytelling but they are also valuable tools for the bridging between cinema and other media arts. In fact, one of the assumptions Essemble is based on, is that many of the main activities involved in developing and producing a film are still as valuable nowadays as they were in the past, and what we as educators should do, is implement original didactic approaches that frame this activities and competences in accordance with the features of the new digital platforms that populate our world.

This transference of skills between different creative areas is at the center of what we did in Essemble and is the primary conceptual approach underlying what we propose in this manual. In the future, film and creative arts schools and educators can no longer safely stay within the limits of their own disciplines and should accept the challenge to open links with other disciplines not as a problem but as a great opportunity. Not only an opportunity to experiment but also an opportunity to improve and, via their educational efforts, mold the artists and professionals of the future.

References:

Grau, Oliver (2004), Virtual Art, From Illusion to Immersion. Massachusetts: MIT Press
Rose, Franck (2012), The Art of Immersion: How the Digital Generation Is Remaking Hollywood, Madison Avenue, and the Way We Tell Stories. New York: W. W. Norton & Company

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION





2_PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

ESSEMBLE revolves around a two folded approach: intensive live training sessions and production workshops that follow the production path that goes from conception to post-production and finishing, namely when compositing is involved. The two main achievements foreseen for the course are the competences to be acquired by students and the films they will complete. Both these achievements are closely interlinked and one depends on the other. On each central stage of the production value chain, a selected group of students is both the object of the training activity and the main responsible for the development of the production process. Our focus is on the training of both the students' abilities to express and communicate their "views" to others and their capacity to integrate original visual aesthetical elements coming from new technological arenas into to their discourse.

WORKLOAD OF EACH MODULE CONTACT TIME

4 modules in 5 days
1 module in 1 day
25 days of tutoring

SELF STUDY

25 days of story development
20 days of preproduction
5 days of shooting
90 days of post production

RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE

Due to the practical nature of the program, a maximum group size of 20 is recommended

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Over the course of one semester, students work in internationally mixed teams experimenting with contemporary storytelling and ways of combining live action and visual effects/animation. The program starts with four modules, during which the students spend one week working on four specific aspects of this subject:



2_PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- Platforms: MOCAP/animation/modelling/visualization production
- Story Development
- Digital Cinematography
- How to Design Your Project

After a team building process in the second module, mixed groups of five students each work on joint projects using the design thinking approach of definition, ideation, prototyping, implementation, iteration and evaluation. This process is supported and complemented by further workshops, lectures and seminars.

Subsequently, all students meet for a 20 day pre-production and shooting phase. During the following post production process intercultural as well as interdisciplinary collaboration continues via Skype and using digital platforms. At the end of the process, all teams gather for a final module on presentation and feedback.

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, the student will ...

- have achieved an awareness of the differences in creating audiovisual narratives for live action and animation films.
- be familiar with various technical possibilities of combining VFX and animation with live action footage in various stages of the pre-, post-, and production process.
- be able to identify whether or not there is a dramaturgical need to combine elements of live action and animation to promote a specific story or story element.
- be able to collaborate with audiovisual creatives from other disciplines.
- be able to differentiate various types of effects and animatics.
- be able to incorporate basic dramatic structures into a story development process.
- be able to describe in detail the different steps of the innovation process.
- be able to structure a design thinking-based project development process.
- be able to evaluate ideas using quick and more detailed assessment frameworks.



2_PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- be able to design and follow a work flow process.
- be able to collaboratively create and improve a film or game prototype.
- be able to combine live action and animation for audiovisual project.

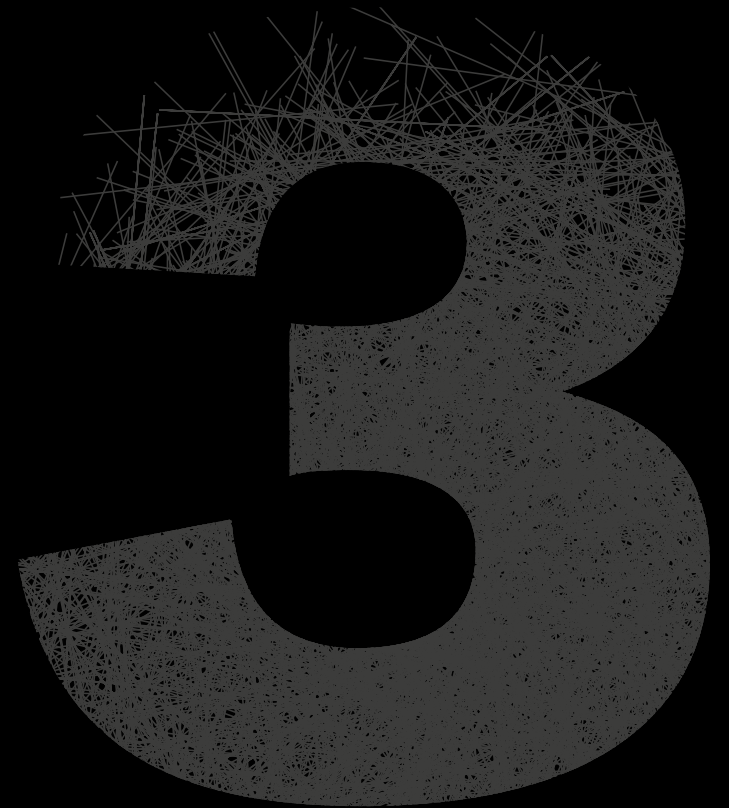
TEACHING FORM

Lectures and seminars supported by real world examples and case studies.
Practical exercises, collaborative story development and prototyping of audiovisual material.
Online-tutoring.

SCHEDULE

1. Platforms and discourses: at the intersection
(5 days)
2. Story Development
(5 days)
3. Digital Cinematography
(5 days)
4. Previsualization: Visual Style and Storyboarding
(5 days)
5. Pre-Production and Shooting
(20 days)
6. Post production
(3 months)
7. Presentation & Feedback
(1 day)

MODULES DESCRIPTION





3 MODULE I: PLATFORMS AND DISCOURSES: AT THE INTERSECTION

WORKLOAD CONTACT TIME

5 days

SELF STUDY

10 days of research

RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE

Due to the practical nature of the modules, a maximum group size of 20 is recommended

MODULE DESCRIPTION

This introductory module will set the stage for the later more project oriented modules. Differently from those, this module is not mainly practice based. Though, students will be required to go through a lot of information aimed at leading them to understand how ongoing changes in production and distribution transform the craft of filmmaking but also open new opportunities. The current state-of-the-art is constantly in flux but by taking a more conceptual approach and then using specific technologies as examples, we think the students will be able to better grasp the challenges but also the potential, of the approaches we are proposing. We want to focus in particular on the changing role of post-production and how development for several platforms, such as VR or SMART Tv, imply not only a greater role of post but also and understanding of the workflows and specifications these platforms entail. Considering this, one specific production technique – MOCAP – that blends animation and live footage, and one platform – VR – are used as examples of the concepts we are dealing with. The module is organized into a set of lessons followed by practical exercises where the students are expected to experiment around the concepts that have been taught. The tension between content and technology is always present whenever we are talking of the creative process in this domain. The eternal question to whether is it content that is driving technology or is it technology that is driving content, is one that can and should not be answered in the context of an educational activity. What we should do and we propose should be done in the case of this course, is to create opportunities for students to evaluate both possibilities. This implies that they not only develop projects from a purely conceptual point of view – in this case the concept of spatial storytelling to be developed in module two – but that they also evaluate how a new content can develop itself just from the creative use of a specific platform just like we propose they should do in this first module.



3_MODULE I: PLATFORMS AND DISCOURSES: AT THE INTERSECTION

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module, the student will ...

- have achieved an awareness of the ongoing changes in film production and distribution value chain and how this affect the creative process
- be able to distinguish between content and platform and understand that one single concept can be developed for different platforms in different manners, either by assemblage, crossing or transmediality;
- be able to identify the main trends in terms of platforms consumption – more individual and personalized ones or more collective ones;
- be able to evaluate the potential of specific platforms according to the idea they are working on;
- be able to define workflows in accordance to the target platform;
- be able to test ideas by defining a briefing that is adequate to the specifications of a given platform;
- be able to use VR technologies for different purposes from a creative point of view;
- be able to understand the potential of MOCAP as tool to produce projects that mix animation with live image;
- be able to plan a project in all its stages considering the role VFX and post will have in the project.

TEACHING FORM

Lectures and seminars supported by real world examples and case studies.
Practical exercises, guerrilla filmmaking VR exercise.



3_MODULE I: PLATFORMS AND DISCOURSES: AT THE INTERSECTION

LECTURES / SCHEDULE

1. Digital transformation: what's happening with cinema?
Lecture
2. The role of VFX in shaping new visual experiences
Lecture
3. Between immersion and illusion
Screening
4. Mocap techniques
Lecture
5. VR techniques
Lecture
6. Guerrilla Filmmaking using VR
Exercise



3_MODULE I

LECTURE DESCRIPTIONS

LECTURE: DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH CINEMA?

LECTURE DESCRIPTION

The patterns of production, reproduction and distribution of cultural content supposedly never changed in such a fundamental way and within such a short time frame, as they did within the last 20 years. The cultural relevance of digitalization is vast: In terms of content because technical (re)producibility is facilitated and in terms of technology, because digital media with its specific characteristics is expandable. In principal for a digitally produced work or piece of art there is no ending, they could be changed or continued forever.

Our media culture has never been as diverse as it is now— it seems hard to predict, in which direction its evolution will lead us. New media also means, that there will be new definitions of job descriptions, of the education in media, and that new competences are in demand. Digital workflows increasingly determine professional everyday lives and job profiles in the media industry are more and more differentiated, while more and more specialization seems to be in demand.

On the consumer side, a myriad of platforms call for the viewers' eyeballs and actions and user produced content emerges.

Digital transformation is a topic that should be discussed in the context of film creativity not only focusing on the challenges it implies but also the opportunities it entails. During this module students will be exposed to the main features of this process and how it changes the film value chain and impacts several stages of production making everything less linear and much more interrelated.



3 MODULE I

LECTURE DESCRIPTIONS

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module, the student will ...

- Understand what is digital transformation and how it impacts the film value chain;
- Understand the structure and form of this new value chain;
- be able to understand the relevance of platforms and how content development should consider this reality;
- Have developed a critical apparatus to understand the politics of the digital.

TEACHING FORM

Lecture, supported by real world examples and case studies

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Slide set
- Flipchart

RECOMMENDED READING & CASE STUDIES

Gere, Charlie

The Beginnings of Digital Culture

(from Digital Culture, Charlie Gere, available online here: <http://mediaartscultures.eu/jspui/bitstream/10002/597/1/digital-culture.pdf>)

Anne Friedberg,

"The End of Cinema: Multimedia and Technological Change," Reinventing Film Studies, eds. Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams, London: Arnold, 2000

Lev Manovich,

"Principles of New Media," "What New Media is Not,"

The Language of New Media

Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001

Stephen Prince,

"True Lies: Perceptual Realism, Digital Images, and Film Theory," Film Quarterly, Vol. 49, No. 3 (1996)



3_MODULE I

LECTURE DESCRIPTIONS

LECTURE: THE ROLE OF VFX IN SHAPING NEW VISUAL EXPERIENCES

LECTURE DESCRIPTION

The lecture aims to introduce the students to the theoretical and practical understanding of Digital Visual Effects and Spectacular Narrative Cinema. The goal is to understand a variety of aesthetic, cultural, and social experiences promoted by the new digital platforms. Topics include digital visual effects, spectacle and narrative, immersive visual apparatuses and entertainments, virtual actor, complex narrative films and new forms of film that via the use of VFX blend animation and live image. Via a set of practical examples and case studies students will be guided through the practicalities and aesthetical implications of such approaches.

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, the student will ...

- Learn conceptual frameworks for thinking through new media technologies, and to lay the groundwork for clear understanding of how they work within and in tune with various dimensions constituting cinema, such as production, post-production, distribution and reception, and histories. be able to name the key elements of a successful group process
- Understand the changing landscape of cinematic ontology both within and outside the theatre, by paying attention to “theatrical” cinema on the one hand, and to forms of audiovisual experience that are derived from new media on the other. have an awareness of his/her role in a specific group process
- Refine an understanding of critical and theoretical terms used for referring to visual effects and their application in cinema



3_MODULE I

LÉCTURE DESCRIPTIONS

TEACHING FORM

Lecture, supported by real world examples and case studies

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Slide set
- Flipchart

RECOMMENDED READING & CASE STUDIES

Jeffery Okun, Susan Zwerman,
The VES Handbook of Visual Effects,
London: Focal Press, 2010

Dan North,
“The Computer,” Performing Illusions: Cinema, Special Effects and the Virtual Actor”, London:
Wallflower Press, 2008

Aylish Wood,
“Timespaces in Spectacular Cinema: Crossing the Great Divide of Spectacle and Narrative,”
Screen, Vol. 43, No. 4, Winter 2002



3_MODULE I

LECTURE DESCRIPTIONS

LECTURE: MOCAP TECHNIQUES

LECTURE DESCRIPTION

The lecture aims to introduce the students to the theoretical and practical understanding of motion capture (MOCAP) and its use both in film and animation. They will be introduced to the production pipeline from pre-production to post-production and its relevance for projects such as the targeted ones.

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this subject course, the student will ...

- Understand theory and practice of motion capture technology.
- Understand a 3D computer animation production process.
- Understand the fundamentals of how to develop a motion capture animation.
- Learn technical terms related to motion capture technology.
- Enhance the ability to discuss current issues related to 3D computer animation.
- Demonstrate the ability to offer both technical and aesthetic criticisms of the work of peers and self.

TEACHING FORM

Lecture, supported by real world examples and case studies

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Slide set
- Flipchart



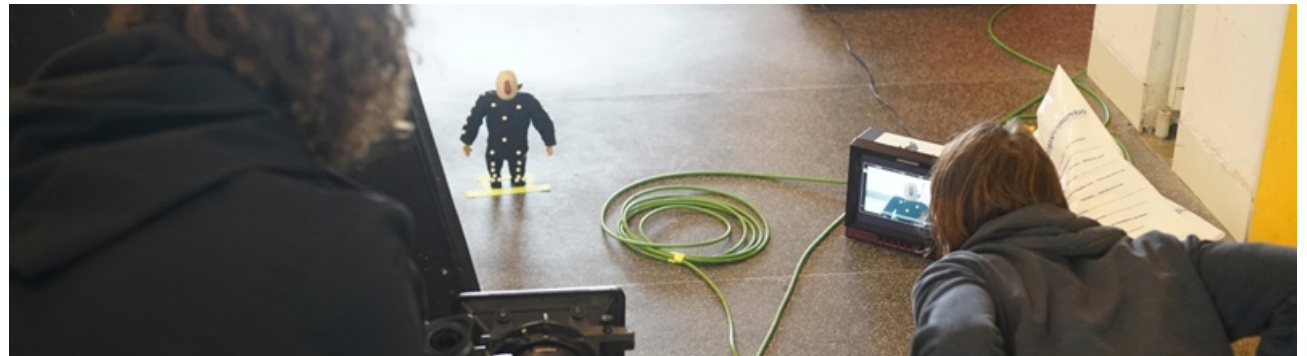
3 MODULE I

LECTURE DESCRIPTIONS

RECOMMENDED READING & CASE STUDIES

Midori Kitagawa and Brian Windsor

Mocap for Artists: Workflow and Techniques for Motion Capture, 2008, London: Focal Press / Elsevier





3_MODULE I

LECTURE DESCRIPTIONS

LECTURE: VR TECHNIQUES

LECTURE DESCRIPTION

The lecture aims to introduce the students to VR and 360°, AR, MR, xR and how these new technologies open up a new Medium. During the lecture the students will be introduced to different levels of knowledge about VR and its applications, namely via the short introduction to technologies, devices, and in particular the consequences for content development (interactivity, haptics) of these technologies. The main principles of immersive storytelling will also be explored.

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, the student will ...

- Understand the potential of VR for storytelling;
- Understand the principles of Human Centered Design for VR content creation;
- Be able to develop small projects that resort to the use of the user perspective and the idea of the user journey;
- Be able to ideate and prototype a VR experience

TEACHING FORM REQUIRED MATERIALS

Lecture, supported by real world examples and case studies

- Slide set
- Flipchart



3 MODULE I

LECTURE DESCRIPTIONS

RECOMMENDED READING & CASE STUDIES

Bruce Block, Phillip McNally,
“3D Storytelling”, Focal Press, 2013

Adrian Pennington
Exploring 3D: The New Grammar of Stereoscopic Filmmaking, London: Focal Press, 2012

Clyde Dsouza
Think in 3D: Food For Thought for Directors, Cinematographers, and Stereographers”, 2012





3_MODULE I EXERCISE:

GUERRILLA FILMMAKING USING VR

DESCRIPTION

This exercise intends to lead students to explore the principles of immersive storytelling and the potential of VR via the use of domestic in store available very basic gear for the production of a short VR film, the following steps should be followed:

Stage 1 – Development: preparation of script and ideation of the experience

Stage 2 – Shooting - Storyboard project VR.

- VR shooting differences from cinema
- CGI vs live-action limitations
- Define cameras, software to be use;
- digital production of project VR

Stage 3 – Post - Review of digital tools, technique, pipelines.

- VR post-production differences from cinema
- Review of authoring applications
- Review of cameras utilized;
- . digital production of project VR.



3_MODULE II: STORY DEVELOPMENT

WORKLOAD CONTACT TIME

5 days

SELF STUDY

10 days of story development

RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE

Due to the practical nature of the modules, a maximum group size of 20 is recommended

MODULE DESCRIPTION

The collaborative story development process that includes students from all disciplines is kicked off by a lecture on topological semantics. This innovative approach provides an ideal starting point for collaboratively creating audiovisual narratives that may be set in film, games, or related media.

To support and structure the ideation process, a lecture on group dynamics and collaborative techniques helps sharpen the students' awareness of these aspects. To kick off the team building process, each student introduces themselves individually by presenting their preferred themes and topics, their areas of expertise, and the fields they are looking to explore throughout the course of this program. In view of the collaborative tasks ahead they are asked to elaborate on their strengths and weaknesses and the roles in previous groups that have felt most natural for them.

These presentations create the basis for the team building process. The program's tutors orchestrate mixed groups of five students each, who then go on to work on a joint project throughout the remainder of the program.

In exercises using spatial storytelling and design thinking techniques, each group finds, tests, and develops their project idea. This process is guided by script consultants and tutors from the audiovisual departments, and supported by lectures on design thinking, animation, and prototyping. At the end of the five-day module each group presents a concept, screenplay, or prototype for an audiovisual project aiming to combine animation and live action. These projects are further developed collaboratively between modules II and III.



3_MODULE II: STORY DEVELOPMENT

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module, the student will ...

- have achieved an awareness of the differences in creating audiovisual narratives for live action and animation films
- be able to identify the differences in storytelling by animation and live action
- be able to identify the dramaturgical need to combine elements of live action and animation to promote a specific story or story element.
- be able to collaborate with audiovisual creatives from other disciplines
- be able to incorporate basic dramatic structures into a story development process
- be able to describe in detail the different steps of the innovation process
- be able to structure a design thinking-based project development process
- be able to evaluate ideas using quick and more detailed assessment frameworks
- be able to contribute to the collaborative creation and improvement of a film or game prototype

TEACHING FORM

Lectures and seminars supported by real world examples and case studies.
Practical exercises, collaborative story development and prototyping of audiovisual material.
Online-tutoring.



3_MODULE II: STORY DEVELOPMENT

LECTURES / SCHEDULE

1. Topological Semantics
Lecture
2. Group Dynamics
Lecture
3. Student Presentations & Team Building
4. Design Thinking
Lecture
5. Collaborative Story Development & Tutoring
6. Presentation of Idea / Screenplay / Prototype
7. Story Development / Rewrite *Self Study*





3_MODULE II

LECTURE DESCRIPTIONS

LECTURE: TOPOLOGICAL SEMANTICS

LECTURE DESCRIPTION

Based on studies of affect and on theoretical works concerning spatial semantics by Yuri Lotman, Mikhail Bakhtin, Michel Foucault and others, spatial story design provides a method of story development for user-oriented audio-visual narrative. Following spatial semantics and its application in interactive storytelling, the author no longer creates the protagonist, his or her want or need, nor controls the story arc. Instead, spatial story design allows the author(s) to make the formative creative decisions in the process of story development by designing a narrative space and spatial dynamics that then translate into user generated story. Spatial story design serves as a framework for interdisciplinary collaborations, and can be used to create film and theater scripts, improv-based theatre, 360° narratives, and walk-in story world experiences for a number of users in either live or holographic virtual reality spaces.

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module, the student will ...

- be able to design user-oriented narratives
- be able to experiment with the process of spatial story design
- be able to analyze the difference between linear and interactive storytelling
- have developed a critical apparatus to understand the politics of interactive storytelling
- have achieved a critical understanding as to the relevance and importance of collaboration, teamwork, and design thinking



3_MODULE II

LÉCTURE DESCRIPTIONS

TEACHING FORM REQUIRED MATERIALS

Lecture, supported by real world examples and case studies

- Slide set
- Flipchart

RECOMMENDED READING & CASE STUDIES

Bakhtin, Mikhail M.

Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel.

In: The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays. M. Holquist (ed),
p. 84-258, Austin, University of Texas Press, Slavic Series 1981

Foucault, Michel

Des Espaces Autres (Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias)

In: Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité, no. 5, October 1984:
46–49; translated by Jay Miskowiec, In Diacritics 16, no. 1 pg.9., Spring 1986

Jenkins, Henry

Game Design as Narrative Architecture.

In: Wardrip-Fruin, N., Harrigan, P. (eds.) First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, and Game, pp. 118–130.
Cambridge, MIT Press 2004

Juul, Jesper

A Clash Between Games and Narrative.

Version 0.99, April 17th, 2001.
<https://www.jesperjuul.net/thesis/>

Juul, Jesper

Games Telling Stories?

In: Game Studies, 1998
<http://www.gamestudies.org/0101/juul-gts/>



3_MODULE II

LECTURE DESCRIPTIONS

LECTURE: GROUP DYNAMICS

LECTURE DESCRIPTION

The lecture aims to introduce the students to the theoretical and practical understanding of group dynamics.

It explores the relations and interdependences of the processes of forming, performing, storming, and norming. Focusing on practical aspects such as common purpose, complementary skills, common working approaches, and mutual accountability the students are given a box of valuable tools for the subsequent story and project development phases,

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, the student will ...

- have an awareness of how group dynamics work
- be able to name the key elements of a successful group process
- have an awareness of how collaborative processes can be designed
- have an awareness of his/her role in a specific group process
- be aware of the type of communication needed within a successful group process

TEACHING FORM REQUIRED MATERIALS

Lecture, supported by real world examples and case studies

- Slide set
- Flipchart



3 MODULE II

LECTURE DESCRIPTIONS

RECOMMENDED READING & CASE STUDIES

Belbin, Meredith, R

Team Roles at Work

Taylor and Francis, London, 1993

Bennis, Warren / Biedermann, Patricia Ward

Organizing Genius: The Secrets of Creative Collaboration

Basic Books. New York 1998

Dana, Daniel and Formisano, Roger A.

Conflict Resolution. Mediation Tools for Everyday Worklife

Mcgraw-Hill Professional, New York 2000

Hofstede, Geert, Hofstede, Gert Jan and Minkov, Michael

Culture and Organizations – Software of the Mind: Intercultural Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival

Mcgraw-Hill Professional, New York 2010

Johnson, Claudia / Stevens, Matt

Script Partners. What Makes Film and TV Writing Teams Work

Michael Wiese Productions, Studio City 2003

Spence, Muneera U.

**Graphic Design: Collaborative Processes = Understanding Self and Others
Collaborative Processes**

Oregon State University Press, Fairbanks 2006

Gardner, Howard

Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences

Basic Books, New York 2011

Katzenbach, Jon R.

The Wisdom of Teams: Creating the High-Performance Organization

Harper Business, New York 2006



3_MODULE II

LECTURE DESCRIPTIONS

LECTURE: DESIGN THINKING

LECTURE DESCRIPTION

The lecture aims to introduce the students to the theoretical and practical understanding of the design thinking process. It explores the circular motion of definition, ideation, prototyping, implementation, iteration and evaluation as an effective method of problem solving and collaborative creation.

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

- By the end of this subject course, the student will ...
- have an awareness of what design thinking is
 - have an awareness of how design thinking can be applied in problem solving and idea generating
 - understand the difference between analytical, design and intuitive thinking
 - have an awareness of how design thinking process work

TEACHING FORM REQUIRED MATERIALS

Lecture, supported by real world examples and case studies

- Slide set
- Flipchart



3_MODULE II

LÉCTURE DESCRIPTIONS

RECOMMENDED READING & CASE STUDIES

Brown, Tim

Change by Design: How Design Thinking Transforms Organizations and Inspires Innovation.

HarperBusiness, New York 2009

Cross, Nigel

Design Thinking: Understanding How Designers Think and Work

Berg Publishers, Oxford 2011

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly

Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention

Harper Perennial, New York 1997

Dunne, Anthony

Speculative Everything – Design, Fiction, and Social Dreaming

MIT Press, Cambridge (Mass.) 2013

Gabler, Neal

Marcum, James

After the Information Age: A Dynamic Learning Manifesto

Peter Lang Publishing, New York, Bern, Berlin, Brüssel, Frankfurt am Main, Oxford, Wien 2006



3_MODULE II

LECTURE DESCRIPTIONS

LECTURE: STORY DEVELOPMENT IN ANIMATION AND PROTOTYPING

LECTURE DESCRIPTION

The lecture aims to introduce the students to animation as a film language. It explores the various creative possibilities of this medium throughout the three main forms animated feature, animated short, and animated series. In addition, the lecture addresses various ways in which animated prototyping may support the pre-production phase of any film project – from character sketches to storyboard and elaborate previsualization. In conclusion, the lecture examines examples of projects that successfully combine animation and live action.

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, the student will ...

- understand what animation is and see the specialities of this film language
- have an awareness of the various creative possibilities animation provides
- have an awareness of the three main groups of animated films (features, series, shorts)
- understand the different development approaches of these three formats
- understand how the development of the story and the visuals go hand in hand in animation
- have an awareness of how animation can be used in live action preproduction
- understand the importance of storyboarding and the animatic in the prototyping process
- understand the differences between storytelling for animation and live action
- have an awareness of various ways of and reasons for combining animation and live action.



3_MODULE II

LÉCTURE DESCRIPTIONS

TEACHING FORM REQUIRED MATERIALS

Lecture, supported by real world examples and case studies

- Slide set
- Flipchart

RECOMMENDED READING & CASE STUDIES

Glebas, Francis

Directing the Story: Professional Storytelling and Storyboarding Techniques for Live Action and Animation Oxford, Butterworth Heinemann 2008

Williams, Richard

The Animator's Survival Kit: A Manual of Methods, Principles and Formulas for Classical, Computer, Games, Stop Motion and Internet Animators
London, Faber & Faber 2012

Ling-Yuan Lin, Fabia

Doubling the Duality: A Theoretical and Practical Investigation Into Materiality and Embodiment of Meaning in the Integration of Live Action and Animation Mcgraw-Hill Cambridge, Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2014

Whitaker, Harold and Halas, John

Timing for Animation

Focal Press, 2009

Bendazzi, Giannalberto

Cartoons: One Hundred Years of Cinema Animation

John Libbey & Company Ltd., 1994



3_MODULE II EXERCISE: TOPOLOGICAL SEMANTICS

DESCRIPTION

Spatial semantics perceive the room as character. In this exercise, story designers create a specific room in great detail by using props and objects in the classroom. Taking its cue from improvisational theatre, students and players respond to this fictional room, and develop stories in a space- and action-oriented way.

1) Room

Using tools like Play-Doh, Lego, collages made of magazine cuttings, etc., students collaboratively create specific rooms and spaces. In this process they are asked to pay attention to the following aspects:

- Topology (spatial structure, structure of the space)
- Topography (exact location, texture and location of the room, aesthetically as well as intellectually)
 - semantic properties (nature, state and function of space)
 - meaning (good / evil)
 - standards and rules
- What kind of order prevails in this room (philosophically as well as physically)

The results should provide an onlooker with a clear notion of the specific feel for the location and atmosphere of the room.

2) Objects

In a second phase, students are asked to place specific objects within the room, anticipating how these objects could affect people who react to and act in this room.

They are asked to think about what stories could be triggered by placing these objects in this room, and what interaction could take place – between the objects and the space or the object and the actor.

Each group is asked to try out miscellaneous objects and decide on a maximum of three objects that must remain within the room.



3_MODULE II EXERCISE: TOPOLOGICAL SEMANTICS

3) Thresholds

As a third step, students are asked to create ways to enter and leave the room. Here, again, they are asked to try numerous variations and go to extremes, investigating exactly what kinds of rituals a character would have to undergo in order to enter or leave a room. Who or what are the potential threshold guardians? What could make it even harder to pass the threshold? The aim in this exercise is to create thresholds that are almost impossible to cross.

4) Character (mobile & immobile)

Finally, the groups are asked to develop different characters.

Object of this part of the exercise is to define characters that can or cannot pass the threshold between the room and a next room.

5) Story Development: Improv

After providing the actors with a basic characterization of their roles and the nature of the room, the students watch the improvised stories unfold in the rooms they created.

By watching this play students are able to test if the combination of space, characters, objects, and thresholds they created carries.

By visualizing a story emerge naturally using space as a starting point, students are made aware of the importance of space for their stories, and learn to use spatial/topological storytelling as a valid approach to creating audiovisual stories, especially when designing interactive narratives.



3_MODULE III: DIGITAL CINEMATOGRAPHY

WORKLOAD CONTACT TIME

5 days

SELF STUDY

15 days

RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE

The idea behind this module is to form 4 groups of 5 students mixing up the students. This way, we hope to achieve truly collaboration, where the students will benefit from each other's skills and learn how to communicate and collaborate on an international level both during pre-production, shoot and post-production.

MODULE DESCRIPTION

The aim of this assignment is to give the students a very hands-on “reality check”. They will be confronted with the fact that special effects are not simply made during post production, that they need to think about the integration of the effects from the start and incorporate this in every stage of the pre-production as well. During this course, we will critically analyse each groups’ project on a post production level and make the students aware of the challenges associated with the use of special effects and CGI.

The module will start with a welcome tour of the school the course is being taught at, so the students get to know the studio environment and the post-production facilities that they will be using during the module. Then each of the groups will have to give a short, but thorough, presentation of their project in it's current state. The students will also have to present moodboards containing visual references for the cinematography, art direction, locations, styling and the special effects they have in mind. After their presentation, the students will get a technical introduction to digital cinematography where they will learn the basics of working with a RED camera (ideally or any other digital cinema camera i.e Alexa); assembling the camera, the use of lenses, and how to set up and light a green key. Then the students will get a masterclass on directing live action films that involves CGI.

The next day we investigate, together with the students of each group, what is the best way to achieve the special effects that they are aiming for. Then, by way of 4 very specific exercises derived specifically from their scripts, each group will be put to the test. They will be asked to shoot, edit, add post production and sound design to a short scene that is derived directly



3_MODULE III: DIGITAL CINEMATOGRAPHY

from their script. For the next 4 days, each group will work on their assignment individually. This involves scouting locations, setting up a green key (if needed), looking for props, constructing sets, looking for actors and styling, shooting, editing, animating, sound design, etc. In short, they will make a rough sketch of one of the key scenes of their film involving special effects. And in doing so, they will learn to judge and direct “what isn’t there”.

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

- This module should be seen as a “crash course” that compresses all the elements of a real live action shoot involving special effects, into one exercise. This module is mainly meant to give the students a much needed “reality check” before starting the pre-production of their final film.
- The students will get an introduction in the basics of digital cinematography, working with a RED camera and an experienced cinematographer.
- The students will get basic introduction into the workings of a film studio, and into the basic lighting equipment of a studio environment.
- The students will get a basic introduction into working with a green key: they will learn how to install, light and shoot with a green key.
- The students will be asked to scout and shoot scenes outdoor, so they will get to know the city of Brussels.
- The students will learn how to collaborate on a set, they will be asked to work in teams, learning how to divide tasks and how collaborate and communicate in a very efficient way. And in doing so, they will get to learn the members of their group, and their specific skills.
- The students will learn how to direct “what isn’t there”, they will learn how to judge a scene involving special effects during the shooting of the live action.
- At the end of the course, the students will have a better idea of the challenges that come along with the special effects. And the students will have a better idea on how to approach the pre- and post-production of their actual film.
- The students will have a rough, but excellent example of what they want to achieve with their final film. This will be very handy during the pre-production of their final film.



3_MODULE III: DIGITAL CINEMATOGRAPHY

TEACHING FORM

Lectures and seminars supported by real world examples and case studies.
Practical exercises, collaborative production of an audiovisual test case for each project.

LECTURES / SCHEDULE

1. Technical intro to digital cinematography
Lecture
2. Directing what isn't there
Masterclass
3. Case Study: The Making of "Voltaire" & screening
Masterclass
4. Experiments In Cinema & Film screening of EXPRMTL
Masterclass
5. Simultaneous shooting of 4 test cases
6. Simultaneous post production of 4 test cases
7. Presentation of 4 test cases & finalized work plans



3_MODULE III

LECTURE DESCRIPTIONS

LECTURE: TECHNICAL INTRO TO DIGITAL CINEMATOGRAPHY

LECTURE DESCRIPTION

This lecture aims to give the students a very hands-on introduction to working in a studio environment with a RED camera. The lecture will guide them through the basics of photography; exposure, the use of different lenses, aperture, white balance, shutter speed, depth of field...

In addition, the students will be asked to work together and set up and light a green key. In conclusion, the teacher will also guide them in working out a workplan for the coming 4 days, helping them in choosing the right camera for each specific exercise.

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module, the student will ...

- be able to assemble and operate the basic functions of an RED camera.
- have a better understanding of the basics of photography; exposure, lense choice, aperture, shutterspeed, white balance, depth of field.
- be able to set up and light a green key.
- have developed a better understanding on the basic functioning and logistics of a studio environment.
- be able to work as a team member of a film crew in a studio environment



3_MODULE III

LECTURE DESCRIPTIONS

TEACHING FORM REQUIRED MATERIALS

Lecture, supported by real world examples and case studies

- Slide set
- Flipchart
- Film Studio
- RED camera
- Green key

RECOMMENDED READING & CASE STUDIES

Joseph V. Mascelli

The Five C's of Cinematography: Motion Picture Filming Techniques
Silman-James Press, 1998

Steven d. Katz

Film Directing Shot by Shot: Visualizing from Concept to Screen
Focal Press, 1991

John Alton

Painting with Light
University of California Press, 2013

Blain Brown

Cinematography: Theory and Practice: Image Making for Cinematographers and Directors (Volume 1)
Focal Press, 2 edition, 2011



3_MODULE III

LECTURE DESCRIPTIONS

LECTURE: DIRECTING WHAT ISN'T THERE

LECTURE DESCRIPTION

The lecture aims to introduce the students to the specific challenges that are related to directing a live action shoot that features special effects or CGI. The lecture is based around a case study, a 30 second commercial that features a CGI character. The students will be taken through each step of the pre- and post-production process of making this commercial from beginning to end. During the lecture they will be shown the treatment, the visual references, the very first rough sketches of the CGI character, the storyboard. The lecture will also show before and after footage of the edit with and without CGI character, and show the fine tuning and integration of the CGI character in it's various stages.

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, the student will ...

- Have better insight on how to approach and direct a live action shoot involving CGI.
- Have a better insight in the workflow of a live action shoot involving CGI
- Understand the importance of character design when working with CGI
- Have better knowledge of the “do's and dont's” when shooting a live action scene involving a CGI character.
- Understand the importance of a storyboard when shooting a film involving a CGI character
- have a better awareness of the importance of sound design when working with a CGI character
- have a better insight in how to make a CGI character become “alive”, how to give it personality.
- have a good reference on how to approach their own project



3_MODULE III

LECTURE DESCRIPTIONS

TEACHING FORM REQUIRED MATERIALS

Lecture, supported by real world examples and a case study

- Slide set
- Flipchart
- Reference film

RECOMMENDED READING & CASE STUDIES

Richard Rickitt

Special Effects: The History and Technique

Billboard Books, 2007

Richard Williams

The Animator's Survival Kit: A Manual of Methods, Principles and Formulas for Classical, Computer, Games, Stop Motion and Internet Animators

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012

Stephen Herbert

A History of Pre-Cinema

Routledge, 2000

Bruce Block

The Visual Story: Creating the Visual Structure of Film, TV and Digital Media

Focal Press, 2 edition 2007



3_MODULE III

LECTURE DESCRIPTIONS

LECTURE: CASE STUDY, THE MAKING OF VOLTAIRE

LECTURE DESCRIPTION

The lecture aims to give the students insight in the process of developing a full CGI shortfilm. The students are taken through every step of the process, from the very first scripts, character designs, moodboards, to the first rough animatics and the final result.

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this subject course, the student will ...

- have an awareness of the complexity of the process of a CGI shortfilm
- have an awareness of the importance of storyboarding, character design and moodboards when working with CGI
- Have a better insight in how to approach their own project

TEACHING FORM REQUIRED MATERIALS

Lecture, supported by real world examples and case studies

- Slide set
- Flipchart
- Projection of shortfilm



3 MODULE III

LECTURE DESCRIPTIONS

RECOMMENDED READING & CASE STUDIES



Richard Williams

The Animator's Survival Kit: A Manual of Methods, Principles and Formulas for Classical, Computer, Games, Stop Motion and Internet Animators

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012

Frank Thomas and Olli Johnston

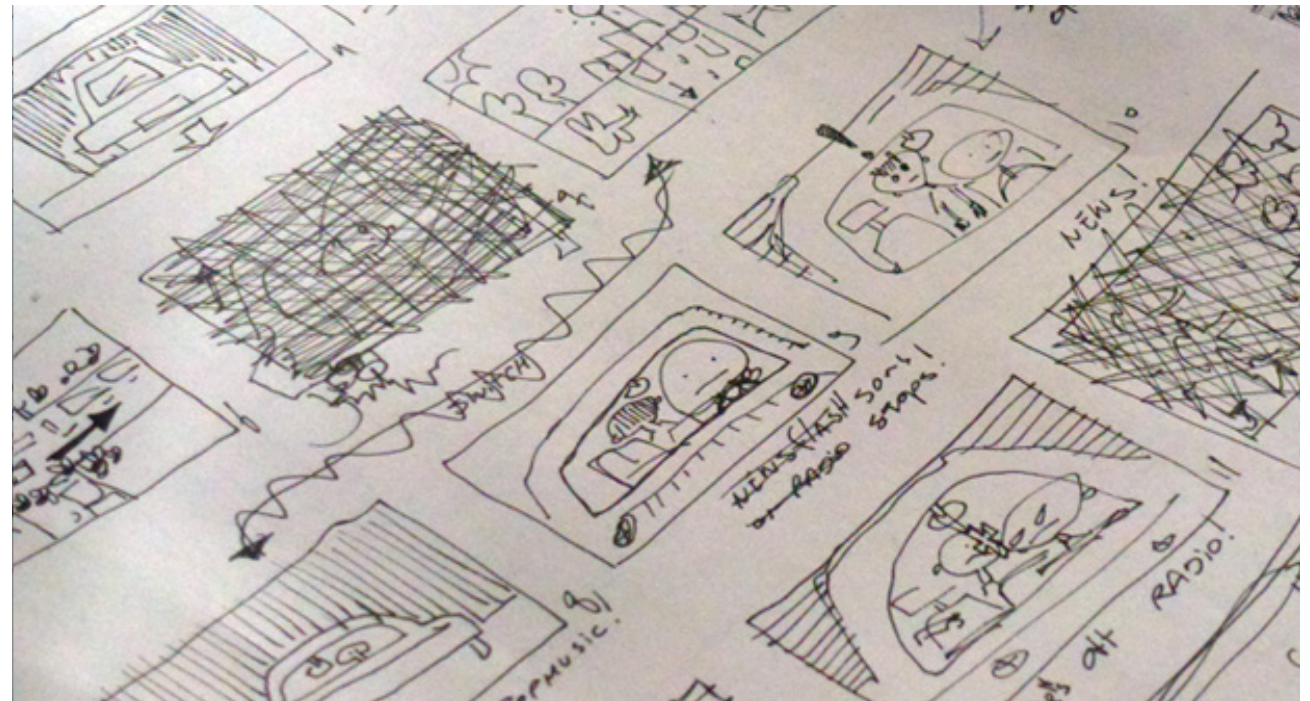
Disney Animation: The Illusion of Life

Disney Editions, 1995

Preston Blair

Cartoon Animation (Collector Series)

Walter Foster Publishing, 1994





3_MODULE III

LECTURE DESCRIPTIONS

LECTURE: EXPERIMENTS IN CINEMA & SCREENING OF EXPRMTL

LECTURE DESCRIPTION

The lecture aims to introduce the students to the rich history of experimental cinema and its vast influence on contemporary cinema, animation and special effects. In the early days of cinema, all films were experimental. Filmmakers actively explored this new medium, searching for ways to tell a story, to convey meaning and spread ideas by structuring moving images in time. While Hollywood would start growing into a major industry in the late 1920s, others would continue the search for innovation and question its hegemony. Their work would seep slowly yet steadily into the mainstream and help shape our image culture and visual language into what it is today. This lecture aims to make the student critically analyze his own work, and realize it's quite a challenge to be truly innovative.

The projection of EXPRMTL tells the story of experimental film through the history of this festival, a history which tells us how we came to understand what we watch, a history which questions the very nature of film and how a big part of how we understand our world relies on the very nature of moving images.

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, the student will ...

- understand the importance and vast influence of experimental cinema.
- be challenged to be truly innovative, thinking outside the box
- have an awareness of the various techniques that been investigated and invented in experimental cinema
- get a better insight into the rich history of the Experimental Film Festival that was held in Knokke



3_MODULE III

LÉCTURE DESCRIPTIONS

TEACHING FORM REQUIRED MATERIALS

Lecture, supported by real world examples and case studies

- Slide set
- Flipchart
- Projection of documentary EXPRMTL

RECOMMENDED READING & CASE STUDIES

Stephen Herbert
A History of Pre-Cinema
Routledge, 2000

Gene Youngblood
Expanded Cinema
E.P.Dutton, 1970

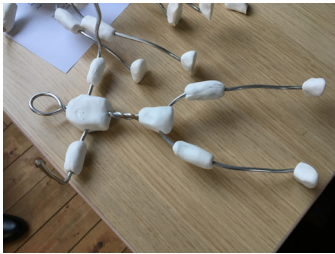
A.L. Rees
A History of Experimental Film and Video
British Film Institute, 2011

P. Adams Sitney
Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde, 1943-200
Oxford University Press, 2002



3_MODULE III EXERCISE: TEST CASE “FLYING BICYCLES” (JOE & SARAH)

DESCRIPTION



The script of the “Reaching Out” describes the story of Joe, an old war veteran suffering from Alzheimer, who’s unable to communicate with his daughter Sarah, and takes his refuge in the clay figures he’s constantly playing with. This script offered some very interesting combinations of live action and clay animation, where the viewer is taken into the world of this traumatized veteran by way of animation, depicting war scenes. This concept offered a variety of challenges to the students that we decided to try out in a test case:

- the animation of the clay figures itself was an interesting topic. What would the figures look like? What will the animation look like? Is clay animation the best technique for this project?
- the transitions from live action to the world of clay animation offered a very interesting challenge. How will we go from the live action images into this world of clay animation?

Live action

For the live action portion of the test, the students were asked to come up with a detailed shot list and storyboard, so that they knew exactly what they needed to shoot. Furthermore, they needed to assign each member of the group with a specific function on set. They had to find actors, styling, props and a location to shoot the scene.

Clay animation

Because of the limited time during the module, parallel with the live action shoot, the animators of the group already started building and animating the clay soldiers. This meant that communication was crucial between the two teams in the group. First up, was the building of the clay soldiers:

Then, using stop motion, the clay soldiers were animated:



3_MODULE III EXERCISE: TEST CASE “FLYING BICYCLES” (JOE & SARAH)



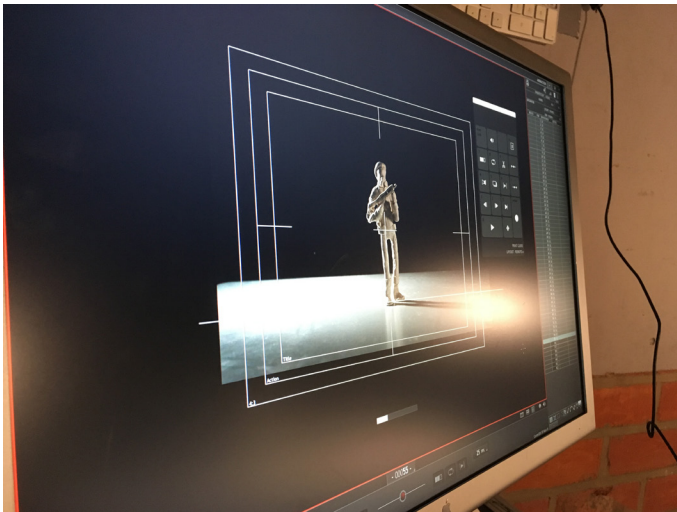
Post production

During post production, the students first had to edit the footage, trying to get the scene to work. Then they had to add the stop motion footage to the edit in a fluent way. Next up was sound design, color grading and adding titles.

Outcome

This exercise proved to be very useful for the “Reaching Out” group. After this exercise, the students will:

- know how to communicate and work together as a team
- know the importance of a shot list and a storyboard
- understand the importance of sound design to help integrate the stop motion into the live action footage
- become aware of the challenges that come along with stop motion. In the end, this exercise made the students realize that stop motion was not the best technique for this film. And they decided to work with CGI instead.





3_MODULE III EXERCISE: TEST CASE “FLYING BICYCLES”

DESCRIPTION



The script of the “Flying Bicycles” was by far the most challenging concept, combining live action footage with literally all possible techniques of animation, going from old skool stop motion, to classic 2D animation, 8-bit animation to full CGI characters and even a hand puppet.

Clearly the challenge of this film would be the different styles of animation and integration of all these different techniques in a coherent and realistic way. So we chose the “waiting room” scene as the test case for this exercise, since it had all of the animation and live action elements the students would be confronted with when shooting the final film.

There were several important issues that we wanted the students to investigate on with this test:

- What would all the different animated characters look like?
- How can we make all these styles of animation match with the live action footage?
- How would these characters interact with the live action surrounding, in other words how can we integrate them in a believable way?
- What are the best techniques to use for all these different animation characters?

1) Live action

For the live action portion of the test, the students were asked to come up with a detailed shot list and storyboard, so that they knew exactly what they needed to shoot and animate. Furthermore, they needed to assign each member of the group with a specific function on set. They had to find actors, styling, props and a location to shoot the scene.

2) Animation

What made this project so interesting, was the combination of all the different animation techniques with live action footage. Since we were limited in time, we decided to skip the full CGI character and rather concentrate on the other characters:

- a stop motion puppet, in this case we opted for an existing wooden puppet
- a classic 20's style 2D animated character
- a very rough 8-bit computer generated character



3 MODULE III EXERCISE: TEST CASE “FLYING BICYCLES”



Since the scene had a stop motion animation character that needed to be integrated in the live action scene, there was also the need to shoot in a green key environment. This proved another good challenge, since the students had to match the lighting, the camera angle and focal length of the live action part with the stop motion part. This proves to be extra challenging since the students would be using two different camera systems, the RED for the live shoot and a Canon 5D Mark II for the stop motion part. Parallel with the stop motion shoot, the 20's style 2D character and the rough 8-bit character were being further developed and animated.

3) Post production

During post production, the students first had to edit the live action footage. Then they had to integrate the stop motion and 2D animation footage in the edit in a fluent way. Next up was sound design and the recording of sound effects and voice overs for the animation characters, adding to the humor and personality of the different characters.

4) Outcome

This exercise proved to be very useful for the “Flying Bicycles” group. After this exercise, the students...

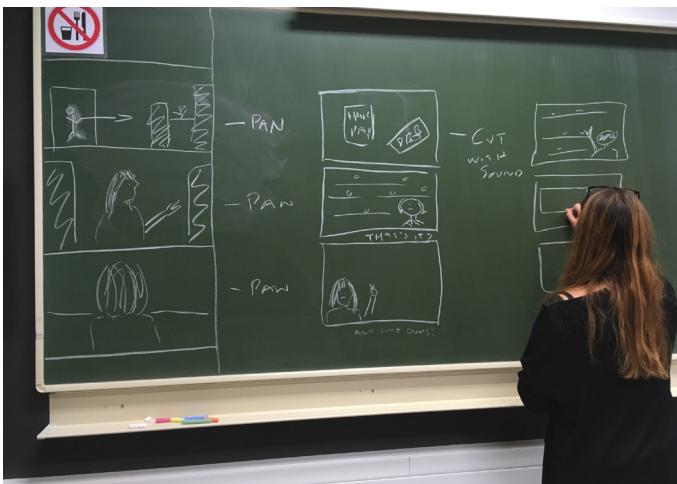
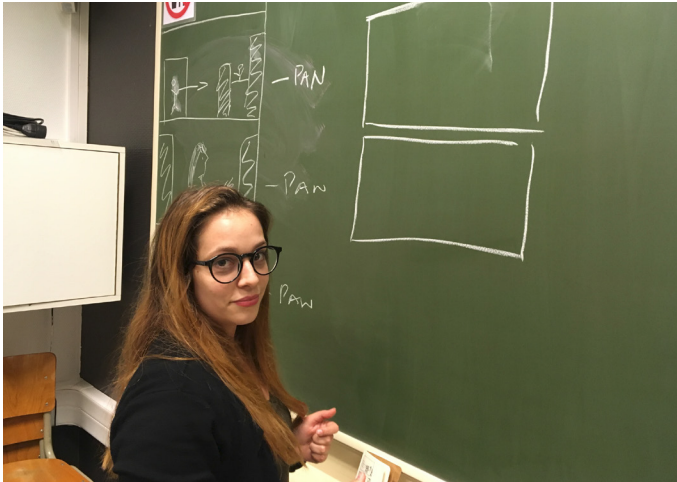
- know how to communicate and work together as a team
- are aware of the challenges of shooting stop motion in a green key environment
- know how to match stop motion with live action footage, both in lighting as from a technical point of view
- know the importance of a shot list and a storyboard when combining animation with live action footage
- understand the importance of sound design and voice overs to help integrate the stop motion into the live action footage and to add personality to their different characters
- become aware of the challenges that come along with the stop motion technique. This exercise made the students realize they couldn't just rely on stop motion for the animation of the main character, since it would be too time-consuming. Instead, they opted for the combination of stop motion for the figure itself, and 2D animation for the facial expressions of the character.





3_MODULE III EXERCISE: TEST CASE “GIRL WITH THE BLUE HAIR” (ANNA)

DESCRIPTION



The script of the “Girl with the Blue Hair” was another very interesting project, since it was conceived as a “puzzle”, a live action crime story where the viewer has to try to solve what happened by “entering” a VR space. In this VR space the viewer will have to combine different elements that were featured in the live action part. Only when combining the right objects in this VR space, the viewer solves the puzzle.

This concept offered a variety of challenges to the students that we decided to try out in a test case:

The “puzzle” itself still posed some questions :

- How would the story be told exactly, there was still need for more structure to make the puzzle “fit”.
- What will the live action look like?
- What is the best way to match the live action footage to the VR space and vice versa.

The VR space was another very important part of the project:

- What would the VR space look like exactly?
- What key elements will we use in the VR space?
- What combination of objects in the VR space will solve the space?
- How time consuming will the construction of the VR space be?

1) Live action

For the live action portion of the test, the students were asked to come up with a detailed shot list and storyboard, so that they knew exactly what they needed to shoot. Furthermore, they needed to assign each member of the group with a specific function on set. They had to find actors, styling, props and a location to shoot the scene. They also needed to work parallel to finish everything in time, so while one part of the group was preparing the live action shoot, the other members already started constructing the VR space.



3 MODULE III EXERCISE: TEST CASE “GIRL WITH THE BLUE HAIR” (ANNA)



2) VR space

While the live action footage was being shot, two other members of the group started constructing the VR space. After talking extensively with the rest of the team about the look, size, styling, art direction and lighting of the room, construction started.

3) Post production

Since it was not possible to integrate the live action footage in the VR space in such a short amount of time, it was decided to finish both elements, the edit and VR space simultaneously and present them separately.

4) Outcome

This exercise proved to be very useful for the “Reaching Out” group.

After this exercise, the students...

- made serious progress structuring both the live action as the VR part of their story
- know how to communicate and work together as a team, working parallel on both the live action as the VR part of the story
- know the importance of a shotlist and a storyboard to make the puzzle of their story fit
- have a very good case study of their final film
- have better knowledge on how to approach the construction of a VR space
- became aware of the challenges that come along with working with VR spaces





3_MODULE III EXERCISE: TEST CASE “ROOM 109”

DESCRIPTION



From the start “Room 109” proved to be the quintessential Essemble project, the perfect example of live action footage featuring animated characters. The story depicts a teenager’s “coming of age”, with animated figures symbolizing his child like thoughts and feelings. This concept offered a lot possibilities for a great test case, but finally we chose the operating room as the best exercise, since it combined both live action footage shot in front of a green key and an animated 2D character.

This scene offered a variety of challenges to the students that we decided to try out in a test case:

The animation of the 2D character figure itself was an interesting topic:

- What would the 2D character look like exactly, how will it behave?
- How can we get a realistic, well integrated result?
- How can we give this 2D character some personality?

The live action scene in the operating room also seemed like a good challenge:

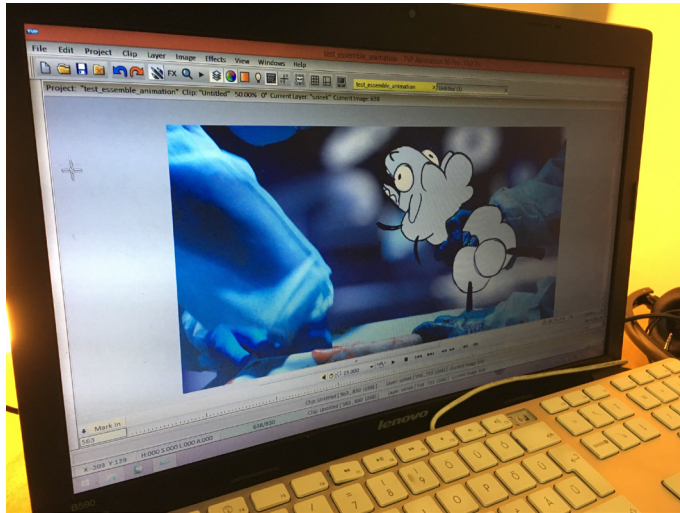
- How can we use the green key to avoid constructing a real operating room?
- What is the best way to approach the shots that will feature the 2D character so that the integration will be as smooth as possible?
- What is the best way to light the live action footage so it will match the operating background that will be added later on during post production?

1) Live action

For the live action portion of the test, the students were asked to come up with a detailed shot list and storyboard, so that they knew exactly what they needed to shoot. Furthermore, they needed to assign each member of the group with a specific function on set. They had to find actors, styling and props to shoot the scene. They also had to find a proper picture of an operating room that could function as a background for the green key footage. Then they had to prepare the green key so it could be used as a backdrop for the live action.



3 MODULE III EXERCISE: TEST CASE “ROOM 109”



2) 2D animation

Because of the limited time during the module, parallel with the live action shoot, the animator of the group already started sketching the 2D character, trying to define the exact style, look and personality of the character. This meant that communication was crucial between the two teams in the group. Here are some of the first sketches of the 2D “sheep” character:

3) post production

During post production, the students first had to edit the live action footage shot in front of the green key, trying to get the scene to work. Then the green key background had to be keyed out and replaced with the background of an operating room. And finally, the animator had to draw the 2D animation on top of the existing footage.

4) Outcome

This exercise proved to be very useful for the “Room 109” group. After this exercise, the students...

- know how to communicate and work together as a team
- know the importance of a shot list and a storyboard when combining animation with live action footage
- are aware of the challenges of shooting live action in a green key environment
- learned how to match live action footage with a background plate
- know how to match 2D animation with live action footage, both in lighting as from a technical point of view
- understand the importance of sound design and voice over to help integrate the stop motion into the live action footage and to add personality to their different characters



3_MODULE IV: PREVISUALIZATION – VISUAL STYLE, STORYBOARDING, PRE-PRODUCTION

WORKLOAD CONTACT TIME

5 days

SELF STUDY

10 days individual work, online teamwork and tutorials

RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE

In teams defined earlier

MODULE DESCRIPTION

The module combines lectures / presentations from experienced industry professionals and university tutors with creative and practical work divided into groups of the film projects. Lecture I. focuses on the visual language of the films' storytelling. How choices in visual execution affect the storytelling is presented through film analysis, moodboards and storyboards. This helps the participants fine tune their stories and prepare for pre-production. Lecture II. focuses on pre-visualizing scenes of a planned movie through storyboards, 2D and 3D storymatics and animatics. It helps understand how creative choices in scene blocking, picture framing, lenses, camera moves, etc. affect the delivery of the meaning and the understanding of the creator's goals. It also helps the participants plan their technical needs for the planned shooting and therefore support professional pre-production. Lecture III. focuses on the pre-production and production angle of the film production. The participant film makers develop their film projects with the help of the inputs received from the lectures and also with active tutoring that should be made available. Through meticulous analysis and brick-by-brick development they fine-tune their stories, detail their visions and define their cast, set and technical needs for the pre-production. On the last day of the module each group present the up-to-date advancements of their film projects in front of a panel of the tutors, guest experts and industry professionals. The presentations include the final synopses, the planned cast, location and set references, technical needs, production plan and time schedule. Each project receives expert feedback and advice from the members of the panel. At the end of the module tutors, organisers and participants discuss and finalise the plans and tasks for the next module and for the rest of the entire process.



3_MODULE IV: PREVISUALIZATION – VISUAL STYLE, STORYBOARDING, PRE-PRODUCTION

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module, the student will ...

- have achieved an awareness of the importance of visual choices in storytelling
- think about their film projects with a broader creative angle and with better established visual approaches
- be better at communicating their creative choices
- be better at creative collaborations and teamwork
- understand the capabilities and expediences of previsualisation in the production workflow
- have an awareness of how previs is being used in various pipelines of vfx and animation
- understand how to approach complex scenes in pre-production utilizing any form of previs to foresee possible obstacles and plan execution

TEACHING FORM

Lectures and seminars supported by real world examples and case studies.
Teamwork of storyboard and mood-board development followed by supervising and tutorials.
Status-report presentations. Online-tutoring.

LECTURES / SCHEDULE

1. Finalizing of the scripts
Teamwork with tutoring of script tutors
2. Moodboard and storyboard
Lecture
3. Storyboard development
Teamwork with tutoring of storyboard tutor
4. Introduction to previsualization
Lecture



3_MODULE IV: PREVISUALIZATION – VISUAL STYLE, STORYBOARDING, PRE-PRODUCTION



5. Development of previz
Teamwork with tutoring of previz tutor
6. Introduction about pre production planning
Lecture
7. Presentation in teams of the projects' development status
Pitch





3_MODULE IV

LECTURE DESCRIPTIONS

LECTURE: STORY DEVELOPMENT IN ANIMATION AND PROTOTYPING

LECTURE DESCRIPTION

The lecture aims to introduce the students to animation as a film language. It explores the various creative possibilities of this medium throughout the three main forms animated feature, animated short, and animated series. In addition, the lecture addresses various ways in which animated prototyping may support the pre-production phase of any film project – from character sketches to storyboard and elaborate previsualization. In conclusion, the lecture examines examples of projects that successfully combine animation and live action.

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, the student will ...

- understand what animation is and see the specialities of this film language
- have an awareness of the various creative possibilities animation provides
- have an awareness of the three main groups of animated films (features, series, shorts)
- understand the different development approaches of these three formats
- understand how the development of the story and the visuals go hand in hand in animation
- have an awareness of how animation can be used in live action preproduction
- understand the importance of storyboarding and the animatic in the prototyping process
- understand the differences between storytelling for animation and live action
- have an awareness of various ways of and reasons for combining animation and live action.



3_MODULE IV

LECTURE DESCRIPTIONS

TEACHING FORM REQUIRED MATERIALS

Lecture, supported by real world examples and case studies

- Slide set
- Flipchart

RECOMMENDED READING & CASE STUDIES

Glebas, Francis

Directing the Story: Professional Storytelling and Storyboarding Techniques for Live Action and Animation Oxford, Butterworth Heinemann 2008

Williams, Richard

The Animator's Survival Kit: A Manual of Methods, Principles and Formulas for Classical, Computer, Games, Stop Motion and Internet Animators
London, Faber & Faber 2012

Ling-Yuan Lin, Fabia

Doubling the Duality: A Theoretical and Practical Investigation Into Materiality and Embodiment of Meaning in the Integration of Live Action and Animation Mcgraw-Hill Cambridge, Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2014

Whitaker, Harold and Halas, John

Timing for Animation
Focal Press, 2009

Bendazzi, Giannalberto

Cartoons: One Hundred Years of Cinema Animation
John Libbey & Company Ltd., 1994



3_MODULE IV

LECTURE DESCRIPTIONS

LECTURE: MOODBOARD AND STORYBOARD

LECTURE DESCRIPTION

Moodboards and storyboards are crucial tools in filmmaking. They not only help the creators communicate with their co-workers, but also they also instruments of the overall creative process. Even more specifically, they help the writer-director to shape the story of their film through exploring the visual choices they make. Through making choices in locations, set design, wardrobe, characters, colour palette, camera work, etc. they understand the differences and importance of the plot and the story they want to film better, and therefore they are able to fine-tune the script and put the pre-production on the right track. The lecture lists the tasks and means of moodboards and storyboards, setting examples of visual choices that the creators of actual, released films had made. The lecture details relation between visual characteristics and stories / premises of award-winning masterpieces. The lecture is dominantly based on personal and public observations and analyses of films and their visual articulation.

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

By taking the explicit and implicit knowledge of the lecture the student will:

- more precisely and creatively distinguish different visual articulations of films
- better understand the importance of visual choices in storytelling
- approach their film projects with a broader creative angle
- think about their film projects with better established visual approaches
- more likely be able to fine-tune the story and plot they want to deliver
- be better at communicating their creative choices
- be better at creative collaborations and teamwork



3_MODULE IV

LÉCTURE DESCRIPTIONS

TEACHING FORM

1. Audio-visual presentation with key arguments, film examples, analyses and case studies.
2. Interactive practical exercise with discussions.

SUPPLEMENTS

Slide set
Film excerpts / trailers

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Computer / projector / loudspeakers

FILM EXAMPLES

Son of Saul / The Lego Movie / The Godfather / Oldboy / Gravity / The Voices / Blue Is the Warmest Colour / The Dark Night / Let The Right One In / Interstellar / Control / Utopia / True Detective

SUGGESTED READING

Robert Mckee: Story (Harper Collins, 1997)



3_MODULE IV

LECTURE DESCRIPTIONS

LECTURE: INTRODUCTION TO PREVISUALIZATION

LECTURE DESCRIPTION

The lecture aims to introduce previsualization, its key features and expedience during the pre-production phase, as a collaborative process that generates preliminary versions of shots or sequences, enabling film-makers to visually explore creative ideas, plan technical solutions, and check against budgetary constraints. With a brief glimpse into previs history, the lecture also does encompass a case study of previs for CG animated piece, proving it's talking points in practice, as well as presenting the method's scalable and flexible nature to fit to any kind of production's requirements.

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, the student will ...

- understand the capabilities and expediences of previsualisation in the production workflow
- have an awareness of the brief history of pre-production planning
- understand the difference between terms like previs, postvis, techvis and know their place in the production pipeline
- have an awareness of how previs is being used in various pipelines of vfx and animation
- understand how to approach complex scenes in pre-production utilizing any form of previs to foresee possible obstacles and plan execution

TEACHING FORM REQUIRED MATERIALS

Lecture, supported by real world examples and case studies

- Slide set
- Flipchart
- Projector



3_MODULE IV

LÉCTURE DESCRIPTIONS

RECOMMENDED READING & CASE STUDIES

Glebas, Francis

Directing the Story: Professional Storytelling and Storyboarding Techniques for Live Action and Animation

Oxford, Taylor & Francis 2009

Cline, Gare

PREVISUALIZATION – Parts 1-4

http://library.creativecow.net/cline_gare/Previs_intro/1

Creativecow.net, May 14, 2017

Altman, Randy

The Third Floor's Eric Carney on the evolution of previs

<http://postperspective.com/the-third-floors-eric-carney-on-the-evolution-of-previs/>

postPerspective, May 10, 2016

Failes, Ian

Behind the scenes of Digic's Witcher 3 cinematic

<http://www.fxguide.com/featured/behind-the-scenes-of-digics-witcher-3-cinematic/>

August 10, 2015



3_MODULE IV EXERCISE:

MOODBOARD AND STORYBOARD

DESCRIPTION

The exercises support the students in understanding and fine-tuning their film scripts based on visual analysis of their future film project through mood boards and storyboards. Also, mood boards and storyboards will help the students more precisely pre-produce (and thus produce) their planned film projects.

EXERCISE 1: ANALYSIS OF A FILM REFERENTIAL TO YOUR FILM PROJECT

1. Pick a film with meaningful story and characteristic visuals.
2. Observe and analyse the visual world of the film: colour palette, framing compositions, set design, etc.
3. Create a moodboard with visual elements similar to the film's visual traits.
4. Define and characterise what feelings and associations these visual traits create.
5. Recall and retell the plot of the film.
6. Try and define the story of the film.
7. Observe the story in relation to the findings of the visual style. How they correlate.
8. Arrive at a deeper understanding of the core of the story.

EXERCISE 2: FINE-TUNING STORY THROUGH MOODBOARDS

1. Create a moodboard that reflects the visuals of your planned film project.
2. Observe and analyse the visual world of the film: colour palette, framing compositions, set design, etc. also verbally defining what feelings, emotions and associations (=implicit content) they raise.
3. Try and define or redefine the premise / core story element / universal contradiction / message of your planned film in the light of your visual findings.
4. Fine-tune script if necessary.



3_MODULE IV EXERCISE:

EXERCISE 3: STORYBOARDING

1. Create a shot-by-shot sketched storyboard for one of the most important scenes of your planned film.
2. Observe and analyse your decisions in blocking of the scene, together with framing, camera movements, etc.
3. Contrast your decisions to the scripted goal of the scene.
4. Contrast your decisions to the premise / core story element / universal contradiction / message of your planned film.
5. Rethink and fine-tune if necessary.





3_MODULE IV EXERCISE:

PREVISUALIZATION OF COMPLEX SCENE

DESCRIPTION

Previs has become an essential tool for most of the blockbuster films we see today, where previs teams work with producers, directors, cinematographers, stunt coordinators, special effects crews etc. to visualize ideas, help develop the storytelling, and solve budgetary and other production issues. With huge service companies specializing in previs and postvis, it is not uncommon to see feature films with 80-100% done in previs during pre-production. Although it may seem unaffordable, and though it's most well known way, 3D animated previs requires a team with special skillset, it is not impossible for most film projects to utilize, and benefit from the methods of previs.

Students will follow a guideline, and prepare a sequence of shots that seem to be challenging either from a technical or a budgetary point of view.

Shooting script

Discussing their shooting scripts, student teams assess the risks and issues of their project from storytelling, technical and budgetary aspects. They shall pay attention to segments that are:

- posing a challenge in storytelling, and paramount for audiences to grasp, thus it is necessary to visualize and screen them to get a better picture before the actual production phase.
- about to be utilizing mixed techniques, complex camera movements or any such technical solution, that they did not have a chance to try previously.
- about to be utilizing technical components that are expensive or inaccessible within their current predicament, thus finding and probing alternate solutions is necessary.
- budget heavy, and would need to be visualized in order to optimize layout, camera movements, extras etc.

As a result they should have a more realistic view on their story, with scenes analyzed from multiple aspects, and at least a few key shots to proceed.



3_MODULE IV EXERCISE:



Scriptomatic

In a second phase, students are asked to assemble a quick scriptomatic of their selected section. In doing so they will break down script lines into separate shots, while also adding temp sound to the rough edit. This edit will serve as a basis for following steps, as well as help students to start structuring the story into audio-visual blocks.

Storymatic

As a third step, students will need to utilize their storyboards drawn for their film. They will learn if the drawings are detailed enough to serve as 'shots' for the scriptomatic, and if needed they will be asked to elaborate on them, or draw more in-betweens as see fit. During this phase, the students will be elaborating on the storytelling with more detailed elements, as well as more visual information, and temp sound.

Previs

Finally the student teams shall elaborate on their storymatics, taking them into three dimensional spaces. With the previs phase, they will be able to further determine complex camera or character movements, rough editorial ideas, relation to sound. With more informative camera field of view they could inform the production design more precisely as well. In case of a student team lacking CG expertise, they will be able to perform the session with simple stop motion animation.



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