

Introductory essay

Animation Fixation provides insight into the process of animation through the presentation of stills (or captured frames), publicity posters, and the screening of finished films. The animation production process is so long that the final film might best be appreciated as a punctuation mark, the ‘full stop’, at the end of an often arduous journey. With this exhibition’s inclusion of posters as a nod to the marketing and distribution efforts that follow, perhaps a ‘semi-colon’ is the most apt signifier for the relatively small space that the finished film takes up in the overarching life and trajectory of an animated production. By the time the film has been released, it is a document of process, the cumulative trace of much work, compromise, happenstance, collaborations, technical difficulties and frustrations. It begins with the seeding of an idea, through mood boards, concept design and storyboards, to the modelling of characters and environments, and then rigging, layouts, blocking, animating, lip-syncing, lighting, colouring, soundscape, editing, effects and rendering – and I’m sure I’ve overlooked the work of one or two (now cranky) key players and crucial tasks.

But this is not to tar the process with negativity – as can be seen from the artistry and often lightness-of-touch evidenced in the stills herein, the animation process generates much beauty. And to think that each of these stills in and of themselves amount to miss-able blips in real-time playback; it is only in sequence, in concert with the other 24 orphan images, that they make for that one second of majestic illusory life. That these stills stand alone as impressive works of art is in fact astounding – what effort, artistry and attention

goes into that second ... let alone a three or four minute film! This paradox between the often-arresting beauty of the animated still and its transience within the animated film continues to fascinate.

When you look carefully into the world of animation, fixation is indeed a consequence. Looking beyond the first pass of character and story, and into an appreciation of these films as moving works of art, this practice and sensibility can accompany and inform a lifetime of pleasurable engagement with imaginative, expressive, and uniquely personal rendered realities. This exhibition presents student works from Griffith Film School and Queensland University of Technology. As accomplished animated works they are impressive, as the achievements of students of animation they are doubly so. *Animation Fixation* includes 2D animations of both bold expressive colour and subtle painterly approaches, stylized and realistically rendered 3D Computer-Generated Imagery (CGI) works, and perennial stop motion puppetry. The scenarios range from classic cartoon chases and sci-fi realities, to pirate gags, trippy jungle face-offs, and sensitive filial dramas. There is much here to wonder at, to look into and behind, and ultimately to enjoy.

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