

MOTION DESIGN

imagination
creation
techniques

JUN LI

MOTION DESIGN

IMAGINATION, CREATION, TECHNIQUES

BY JUN LI

SHANGHAI PEOPLE'S FINE ARTS PUBLISHING HOUSE

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56-87

Structural Elements

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Audio essentials
Tips for creating sound effects
Storyboard

Essential Details

Visual mix
Incorporating abstract elements
Macro vs. micro
Visualization of abstract concepts
Transitions

Backstage Production

Technical terms
Audio and video compressions
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Qian Qian: "Fade"
Chie Yoshii: "Schinttke interpreted"
Chie Yoshii: "Geisha Ukiyo-e"

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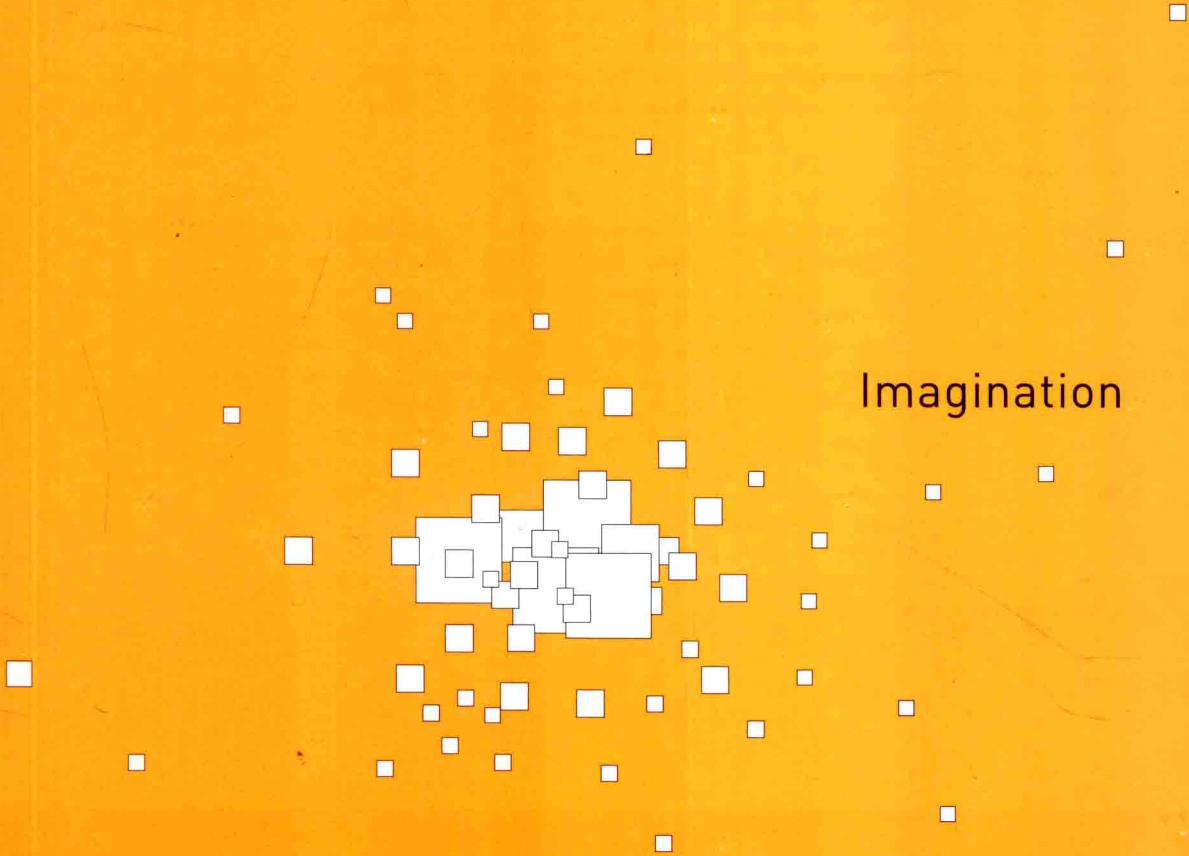
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John Lasseter, the artist who was the driving force behind the 3D movie "Toy Story," once said that we are people who use computers to tell stories and that our mission is to continuously amaze people. However, it is usually not the special effects of computers that captivate us, but rather the creativity involved in telling the story. It goes without saying that creativity comes first and then technique. Today we live in a multifarious world that is full of enticing sounds and images and making a savvy audience marvel at a single creation is not necessarily an easy task, therefore, we must continuously develop our own ability to imagine. The exercises found in this chapter will hopefully allow you to break away from usual ways of thinking and allow you to imagine beyond the obvious.

Imagination

CHAPTER



Daydreaming

"Daydreaming", the act of creating fantasies is an effective way of expanding one's mind during the preliminary stages of producing a moving work of art. Motion design consists of a very strong sense of space and time. Just like the realm of dreams. One of the effective ways of documenting one's "daydreaming" is to combine sound recording with quick sketches.

Exercise: News report

The purpose of this exercise is to return to the original storyline; making abstract words more concrete. Visualization of written words is an indispensable part of the creative process.

Methods for the topic: Oral description. Randomly select one piece of news from today's newspaper and make a depiction based on the text, reconstructing the entire story in your mind. Your imagination should focus on detailed visualizations for the environments and the people involved. If you cannot find an appropriate example at the moment, then refer to the text below for a quick mind-mapping exercise.

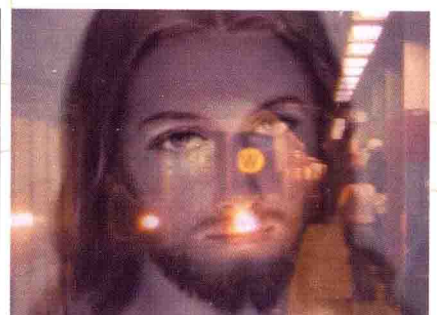
On a platform in the New York subway during rush hour, Nancy, a 30-something secretary, is reading the newspaper while waiting for the train. Someone suddenly pushed her and she fell off of the platform! Nancy promptly grabbed the edge of the platform and yelled out for help. At this time a man that looked like Jesus hastily ran over to her and extended his large hand to her. Nancy had not even said "thank you" when the large hand lifted both of Nancy's hands up and then ruthlessly let go of them. "Jesus" quickly left the scene. According to the police investigation, "Jesus" was a recidivistic criminal. Nancy was eventually saved by another passenger.



001



002



003

Different from the graphic design for print media, the creation of motion design is a panoramic 360-degree process of imagination. In this chapter we first and foremost advocate the use of a "daydreaming" method. Daydreaming is something that anyone is capable of doing. When observing the passengers on the subway for a moment, you will notice how many of them are staring off into space in a daze; the person is still there, yet the mind is off in a distant place. To a certain extent everyone wanders around carefree and contented as they are immersed in their own daydream realm from time to time. Busy thinking about next week, encountering friends and family, good food and good times, the differences in our daydreams make for a purposeful existence. We must consciously control the dream state. You can also add the method of verbal description and sound recording. It may be likened to having a bizarre and extraordinary dream and then vividly describing it to others. The dream state can be of varying lengths. Do not concern yourself too much with the logic of the story, but pay attention to describing the experience using each of the five senses. Even leaving a message on your own message machine at home is one method of recording.

• Give it a try by reconstructing the thoughts from this passage of text:

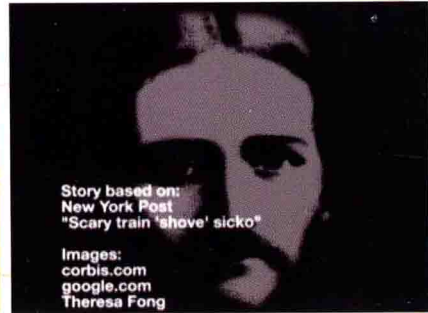
- In black and white the entire time and combined with one part which was in color, consciously arrange the time in which this all happened, the length of time passing and the reason for using color.
- Jumping into a fast frame [shot]; the same development switches to a slower frame.
- Narrate the entire event in reverse.
- Add sound effects to an entirely silent film.
- Narrate from the perspective of an observer; narrate from Nancy's point of view; then, narrate from the perspective of "Jesus".



004



005



006

Sensory Filters

The influence of our senses as filters trains creative people's keenness in observing things, which can also be thought of as an adequate adjustment of your senses in order to experience various common objects; It is even more important that you learn how to feel or experience still objects such as a glass in MOTION. What is it like once it is in motion? When something breaks after it falls, how does its shape and state of being change? What sound does it make? All of these should be part of a series of steps for various settings you do when completing the brief practice. Pay attention to sequential order and control your time, limiting it to a maximum of two minutes.



Quick Practice: Seeing beyond the glass

Break away from conventional thinking in order to open the door to creativity. Observe the extraordinary details of an ordinary object by using mostly sensory experiences and try to encourage unique ways of thinking. Whether or not something is beautiful or whether the public accepts it is not an important part of the judging criteria for this practice. Exercise should be done in a relaxed and quiet environment. Don't rush. You are encouraged to abandon the idea that first comes in mind; You are encouraged to "speak nonsense."

We use the five senses to directly perceive the world around us: Sound, sight, touch, taste and smell as well as what is known as the sixth sense. Motion design utilizes their multimedia advantage which best expresses the sensory experiences of humans.

First, the effect of each sense consists of a series of fundamental judging parameters:

Sight: brightness, scale, color, contrast, precision, motion, perspective

Sound: pitch, volume, clarity, tempo, rhythm, channel

Touch: texture, contact surface range, temperature, weight

Taste: sweet, sour, bitter, spicy, salty, temperature, intensity

Smell: fragrance, odor, intensity



Place a glass about a foot from you. First, you must see beyond the actual size and shape of the glass and focus your imagination upon the following aspects:

- Its weight
- Its surface texture: Is it smooth or rough?
- Its scent: supposing it just contained lemon juice.
- Suppose we throw it on the ground. Will it break? The motion of shattered glass flying everywhere.
- The sensation of catching tiny shards of glass in your hand
- Suppose the glass has a gender: Is it a she or he?

Sensory Overlap

Interlocking one's senses in order to comprehend the synesthetic overlapping of the senses. In this exercise, please go unconventionally "listen", "look", "touch", "smell" and "taste"; abandon obvious ways of articulating concepts and focus on more abstract experiences and ways of expression.

Exercise: Using your ears to see

Using sensory overlap is an extremely effective method for the cultivation of dispersed thinking. We live in a sensory world that possesses every sort of sensory stimulation that is possible in great abundance. Nevertheless, by intertwining the senses in a nonlinear way, "feel" sound, touch, smell, taste and sight; then, you will not only be able to exercise and enhance the individual sensory nerves of a creator, but will also be better able to consciously, even highly philosophically, explore all common sights and occurrences or any sensory abilities that people do not particularly pay attention to.

Select a passage of instrumental music and listen to it with your eyes closed, trying to catch in your thoughts the flitting colors and images. Do not analyze the origin of these images, let them freely come and go from your world of thought. Try your best to filter out concrete objects and consciously bring abstract forms into mind. Listen repetitively and gradually add some sensory connections, e.g., "Are the high pitches cold or hot?"; "What color are the low pitches?"; "Are there any forms or shapes which keep recurring?"; "Does motion have laws?"; "Is the overall feeling of the music sad or happy?"; "Is it heavy or light?"



007



008



009

Suppose you have lost one of your senses, for example, sight. Thus you must use your ears to "see", use touch to "see" and if you lost your sense of taste, you would have to use your eyes to measure the amount of an ingredient to "taste" the flavor of food when cooking. This sort of replacing one sense with another or to interpret another sensation is a very effective method of expanding your imagination.

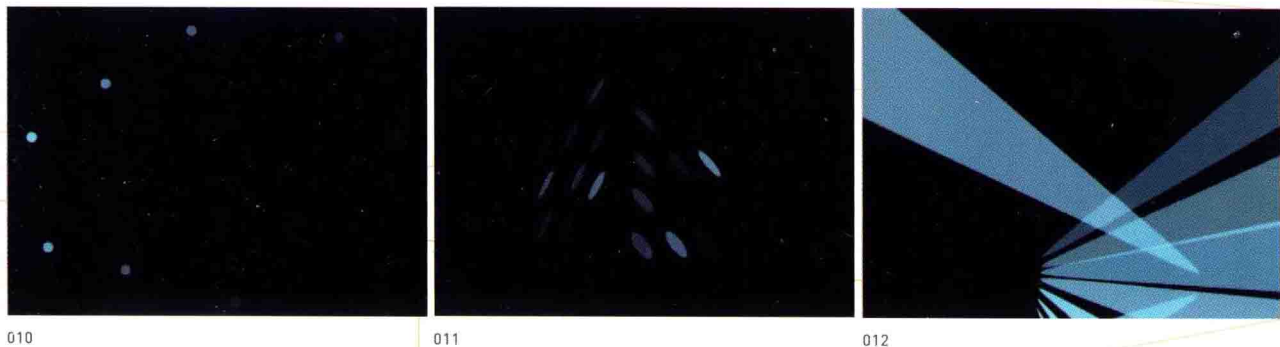
Still using the same music as before, now try to imagine a geometrical shape such as a circle, the number of circles, their size and the direction in which they are moving. If there are any other images which pop into your head during this practice, please do not stop the exercise. Try to remember the characteristics of the images and overlap them with the former geometrical shapes from your thoughts.

Compare the quick sketches of practice one and two.

Things to pay attention to: It is encouraged to do the sketches simultaneously as the music plays, catch any fleeting abstract images and avoid all representative forms. If necessary you can repeat the music two or three times.

Deliverable: Verbal description along with simplified storyboards.

Class period: One.



Take a broad view and look afar; the world we live in is filled with a vast diversity of omnigenous images. Regardless of whether or not an object is still or moving, natural or artificial, resplendent or ordinary, images are omnipresent. The key to creating and designing images is in transcending the original meaning that an image possesses, giving it an entirely new conceptualization and significance. First of all, motion images have their own unique temporality and spatiality. As a consequence of this effect, we should complete the process of switching from a two dimensional to a three dimensional conceptualization and then let a timeline serve as a foundation for the entire work. Everything in the universe is in motion. We merely need to utilize our macro-vision and micro-vision perspectives to observe them and express them. This chapter expounds upon the "Basic elements" and then moves on to "In-Depth Look at Fundamentals".