

PRODUCTION PRINCIPLES

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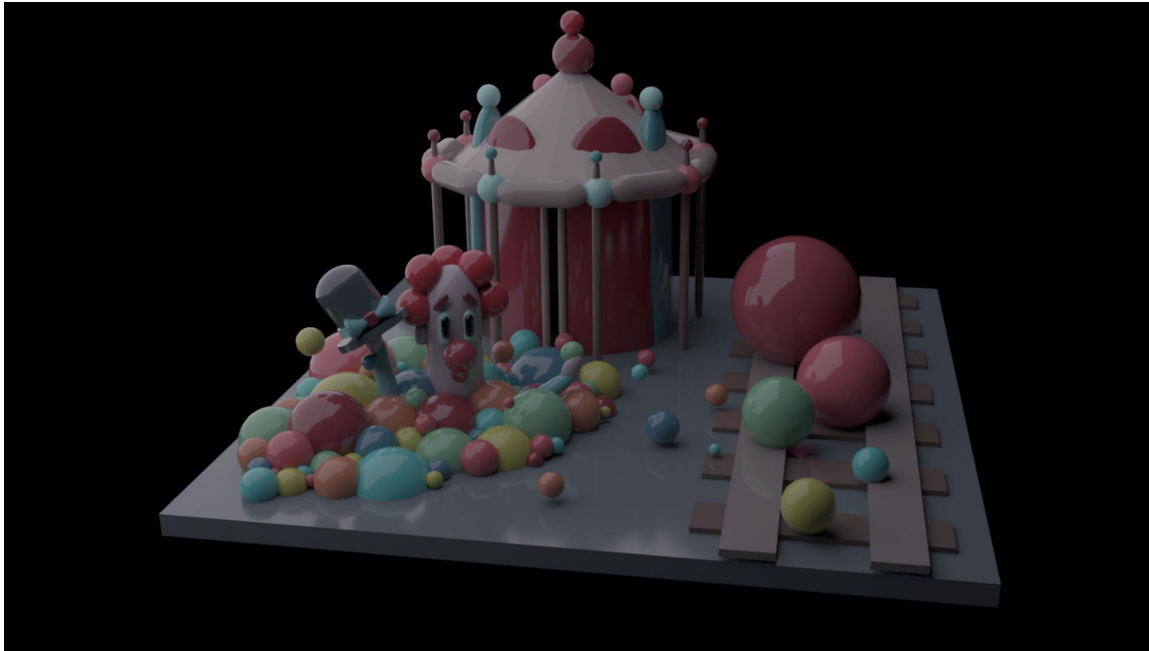
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Analysis

As I had never used Maya before, when brainstorming I tried to come up with an idea that I thought I could do in the time frame, as it would take some time for me to get used to the program. My initial idea involved a cold world located in the clouds. I started modelling that idea but throughout the process I decided to change my idea to this, as I wanted to incorporate a character into the world to give it more of a story. I ended up modelling a sad clown who got kicked out of his circus with props he'd use in his performances (juggling balls and balloons), next to some train-tracks.

During the sculpting process I stuck with mostly rounded shapes (spheres, cylinders) to coincide with the youthful feel of the world. Instead of using bright colours for this childlike-themed world, I used a more muted colour palette, to convey the dull mood. Throughout this process, something I struggled with was lighting, as whenever I'd add light it would always be too dark, so when modelling this I experimented a lot with light-types and positions (as well as camera angles).

Overall, when looking at the final result, I like the colour palette I used and the concept. However, I do feel that the textures are too shiny, and look a bit too much in combination with the large range of colours in the bottom left of the image. In addition to this, if I were to do this again, I would probably add some texture to the ground as I think it is a little too flat, when reflecting

The Friday Man

"Small fish and chips?" I ask my little sister.

With a subtle smile, she nods, addressing the worker.

Ding. Immediately, her eyes bolt towards the door.

"Don't worry" I say with a sigh, tightly wrapping my arm around her as we watch the customer stroll in.

Following her brief exhale, the door sounds again.

I clench my teeth, ushering my lifeless sister closer. Why is *he* here? Did the initial warning do nothing?

I stare at him. He stares back - at me, then my sister. Up, then of course, down.

Shaking, lowering her blank gaze, she wraps her long cardigan around her; tight. My little sister continues to fidget, adjusting her guise.

I stare again at his smug eyes as he begins to come closer.

"Do I *really* need to repeat myself?" I blurt, tilting my head.

He ignores me.

Then it went dark. Well, for him.

Introduction

The title I chose was The Friday Man as I felt that title could carry a broad range of stories under various dark themes. In the beginning, I thought I could go with a more gory route as the label 'The Friday Man' reminded me of a nickname of perhaps some well-known serial killer. However, I ended up deciding on making the story a little more subtle. As the story is so short (150 words), I found it quite challenging coming up with an interesting narrative I could deliver in so few lines.

The Plot

My story consists of a short scene between three characters: "The Friday Man" (TFM), the brother and his younger sister. This scene follows on from a past event between TFM and the younger sister where he had harassed her during a time she (and her brother) went to collect the typical Fish and Chip order for her family, like she does every Friday. In this scene, TFM returns and begins to make her uncomfortable, despite her being with her older brother who warned him the previous time. Once TFM approaches, the brother takes action and attacks him, to protect his sister.

Analysis

In order to get the reader instantly immersed in the scene, I began the story mid-speech. In addition to this, I used a first-person perspective as I felt that it made the story feel a bit more personal (like a diary), so that the reader can feel more, when reading it. As this story is quite relatable to a lot of girls, I felt it was important for the story to feel personal. I chose for the brother to narrate it instead of the girl herself, as I thought it'd bring a new perspective on the issue. Through the use of subtle descriptive language, I tried to show how each character was feeling through their exterior movements, rather than stating emotions. I also felt this made the narration a little more realistic, as the brother could only see how his sister was feeling through her actions, rather than going inside her head. Throughout the story, I also used many short sentences to show the high speed of certain events that occur in the scene. Within the scene, I used repetition of the word "tight" and "wrap" when describing the brother comforting her and when she feels uncomfortable because of the TFM, in order to truly convey the extent of the discomfort the characters felt, despite the efforts they both made to ease the situation. Due to the word-limit, I feel the ending might be a bit abrupt, and think the story could have been improved if there was more back-and-forth between the characters in order to build up to the attack.



Analysis

When given the prompt “Connection”, I instantly started thinking about how throughout the past year, the way we connect with one another has changed, with the pandemic being a catalyst for this process. This made me think about how reliant we are nowadays of the internet in order to build connections with our community. During the brainstorming process, I realised how that was quite a sad reality and decided to build some ideas off that. I ended up going with “Idea 3” which shows the plug being pulled on the internet, panning over to a character in mild distress, in order to emphasise how much connection means to us, and how nowadays it can be that easy to be cut off from others.

Throughout the process of making the graphics in After Effects, I struggled quite a lot, as I hadn’t used the program before until class. This caused me to break down my idea slightly, making it simpler so that I could do it in the time frame. I used some of the techniques taught in class such as “Trim Paths”, “Squash and Stretch”, whilst changing hues, opacities and moving the objects around using various tools. I also tried using a limited muted colour palette so that the colours looked more cohesive together whilst reflecting the mood of the storyline. In addition to this, in order to make the animation more effective, in Premiere Pro I added a variety of copyright-free sound effects. I tried to make the sounds seem a little overbearing as I feel the online world can be a bit too much at times, as there’s so much going on at such a rapid pace constantly.

Overall, I like the idea, as well as the colour palette. However, I do think the animation is a little too simple due to my lack of experience with the program. If I were to do this again, in a longer time frame, I think I’d go for a more ambitious concept that used a larger range of techniques and effects available in the software. I would also maybe develop the storyline further to make the graphic longer and for there to be a bit more depth.



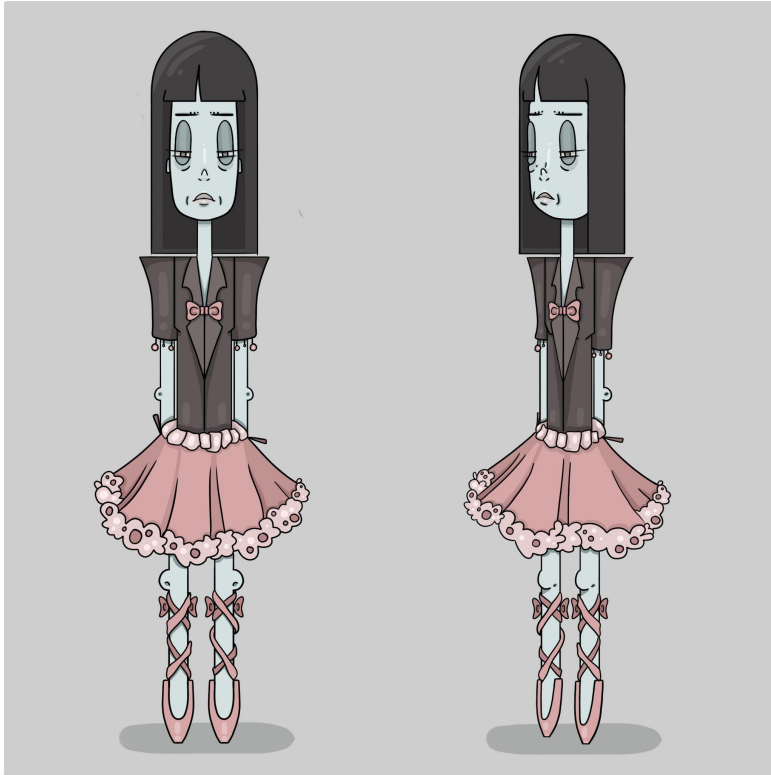
Analysis

Throughout this project, I found a large selection of elements that sparked my interest; indoors and outdoors. This led to me creating a variety of outcomes with a range of differing aesthetics. The walls of various shops around my area, however, particularly drew my eye as I saw the same smiley face over 3 times, making each street look somewhat familiar to me. I found this idea of familiarity quite interesting as although each shop was very different, the same artist would paint on each one. This subtle accent seemed to give these walls more personality and life, making them unlike most of the walls I'd seen around. Through this, it made me feel more connected to the space, as the imperfection of the area gave me a sense of community.

When composing the piece, after choosing the three images, I used a variety of blending modes when experimenting. For the final result, I ended up using a combination of 2 blending modes on the three images: Difference and Colour Dodge. Initially, whilst editing, I kept the images in colour, which led to me having to adjust the tones quite a significant amount using Gamma Correction and other similar tools. In addition to this, transforming this to be monochromatic, made me adjust the position of each image too, in order to achieve a more checkerboard feel so that the eye is drawn to those shapes.

Even though, in this image, I wanted to capture the chaotic energy of the city, I do feel that in certain areas, it may appear a little too full and slightly overwhelming. If I were to do this project again, I would probably lean further into experimenting with negative space. As well as this, even though I like the subtlety of the third image, with it adding slight rectangles towards the righthand sides, I think I could've approached that specific image differently.

Overall, I enjoyed this project as it let me develop a new way of looking at my surroundings, making me notice things I typically wouldn't. Also, through focussing on the tonal values of an image, rather than colour, I was able to better control the composition of the final result, as it became easier to change the way the viewer would see the photo, by adjusting the shapes and layout.

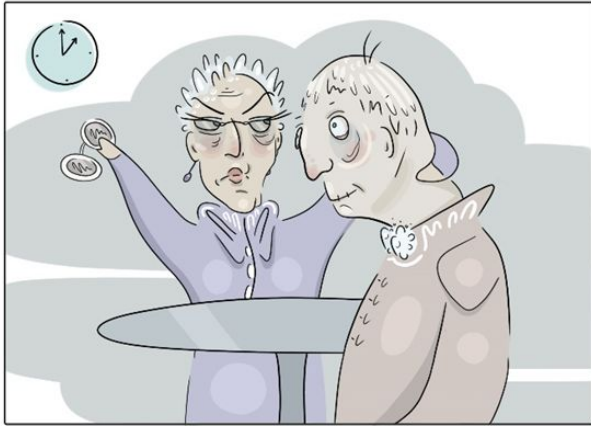


Analysis

For this project, I used the song provided as my prompt, focussing mainly on the line: "I met a strange lady, she made me nervous". After some experimentation, where I explored a variety of characters who encapsulated a range of aesthetics and styles, I landed on this idea: a failed ballerina. Her story consists of her childhood where she wanted to become a ballerina, and would do anything she could to get there, to the point it completely drained her physically and mentally. After years of training, she never became good enough and had to get a regular office-type job, hence the suit and tutu combination. As this character appears quite depressed, I felt this could've made the singer in the song quite "nervous", as she looks like she's on the brink of a breakdown, especially as she does look quite unconventional.

In order to get to this character, I used some of the techniques I was taught in class. Through combining shapes together, I tried to make a less 'classic' woman silhouette, so that the character looked a little more unique. Regarding the colour palette, I used a small selection of quite muted and dull tones in order to reflect the mood of the character. I also made sure that the various parts of her body would be easy to separate, so that if she were to be put in motion, it would make the animation process simpler.

Overall, I'd say I'm quite happy with the result, as I like the idea and the style as it's something I wouldn't usually try. However, if I were to do this again, I think I'd perhaps add more detail to some areas, even though the idea was for the character to be simple, as I feel some sections are a little bare. Also, I think maybe if I varied the tones a little more, the character may've been stronger, as the shading at the moment is more on the subtle side.

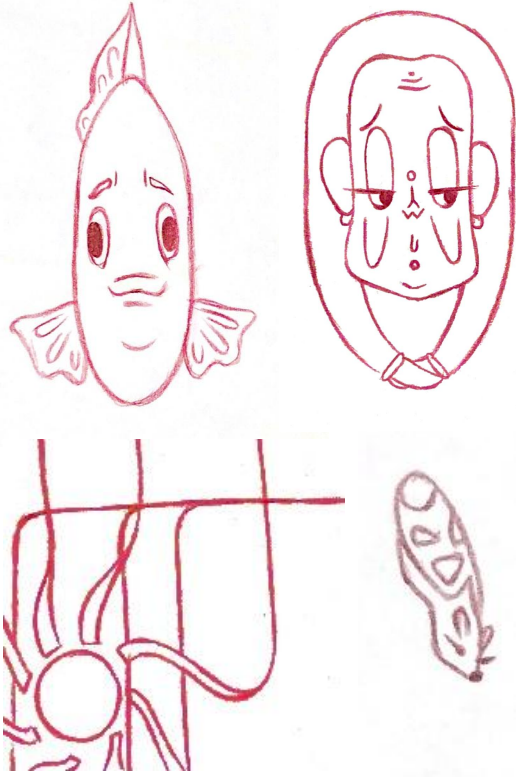


Analysis

Throughout the process of completing the initial location sketches, I found it quite difficult to draw the subjects in enough detail, enabling me to try a new very simplistic style. As people were moving by very quickly, each line I put down had to have purpose so that I could capture the key characteristics of the people in front of me. After drawing a range of people, I settled on drawing this group of elderly people I saw in a café, as I thought I could develop a good story out of them as they already had a specific dynamic together within their trio.

My story consists of three scenes. The first one portrays the couple arguing as they wait for their friend to join them at the table. As the friend approaches, the couple pretends nothing happened, whilst she reminisces and hands them a photograph of their group. Scene 3 consists of the photo taken when the couple initially met, showing how in love they once were.

When drawing the final scenes, I stuck to a simplistic and muted colour palette, to compliment the minimal line usage in the sketches. I felt this helped set the mood for the first two scenes. For the final scene I tried brightening it slightly, to reflect the happier and brighter time. If I were to do this exercise again, I would probably try incorporating more intricate backgrounds as here I mostly focussed on the characters and their expressions and narrative, rather than location. I think if I focussed more on location, the story could've had more context giving greater value and meaning to the viewer.



Analysis

Bouncing Object

Throughout this process, the animation that I preferred the most was the one that involved a bouncing character. Within this animation, I had to use techniques such as “Timing and Spacing”, “Squash and Stretch” and “Ease in and out”. I feel like in comparison with the other animations I did, this one was the most fluid as I think I understood the way a rubberball-like object would move and appear under various speeds. However, I do feel like I drew the character a bit too small as it’s quite hard to see the various features when watching back the animation. If I were to do this animation again, I would probably increase the size and reduce the speed, so that the character can be seen more clearly.

Debating Character

For this exercise, I made a fish character that moves between three poses, with fins acting as hands. Even though I liked the character, I think in certain areas the animation is quite fluid but also not that smooth in others, which is something I think I need to improve on. For example, the pupil size wasn’t that consistent throughout the animation.

Pose to Pose

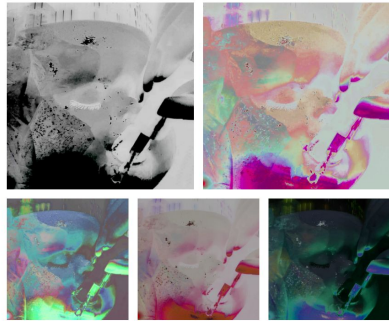
During the ‘Pose to Pose’ workshop I enjoyed coming up with the poses, as well as moving between them. Within the final result I was happy with the idea of the girl’s hair holding hands towards the end, as well as the character design. However, like the ‘Debating Character’ animation, I thought that at some points it may have been a little choppy.

Straight Ahead

Within this exercise, I used the words ‘Sun’ and ‘Nature’ as my inspiration. Since I had a lot of components within my scene, this animation took the longest. It also happened to be my least favourite as there wasn’t much planning involved as I just started morphing and extending lines into the selected objects. This, I think caused the animation to look a little messy and unpolished at times.

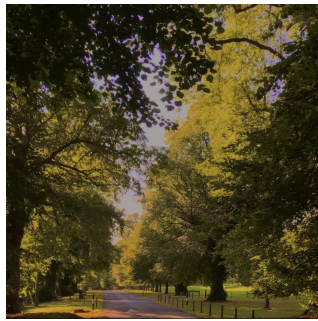
Overall Analysis

Overall, I quite enjoyed this way of working at certain points when I planned more in advance, as I felt those animations gave the best results. However, this process was quite repetitive, so I’d choose to do this again if the scene wasn’t too complicated. Despite this, I did like working using the keyframe technique, where I had to draw the keyframes out first and later fill the rest with in-betweens, halving each time between poses. This, I think, made it easier for me to animate the ‘Pose to Pose’ as well as the ‘Debating Character’ animations.



Film 1 Analysis

For the visual aspect of this film, I merged 3 photos together, consisting of a ceramic baby head, ice cubes and a building through using a variety of blending modes and adjustments in Photoshop. As I felt this selection of images was quite random, I wanted to create an environment that makes the listener feel quite out of place and confused. Through recording a moving fan and adjusting the duration and intensity I tried to set an overwhelming background tone. As the images flick through quickly and then settle I transitioned from two audios, one of reversed speech of a broken phone line, followed by the squeezing of a bottle. The reversed speech, I thought, gave it quite an ominous effect, paired with the bottle that could be interpreted as a baby-bottle



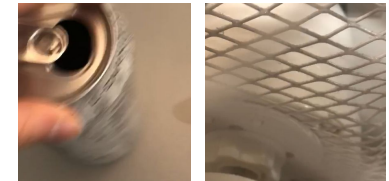
Film 2 Analysis

When experimenting with the various audios I recorded, I found that through manipulating the Jiffy Foam, I achieved an effect that sounded similar to walking through leaves. This gave me the idea to pair this with a video of a slow stroll through the woods. To match the speed, I slowed down the original recorded audio, layering it with some shorter samples at various speeds of that same audio to give the sound some variety and depth



Film 3 Analysis

For the final film, I once again gained inspiration from the visual I had created to build the sound-world. The image I used was an edited alteration of a piece I had made during the Photographics rotation. Due to the chaotic and broken feel that the piece gives off, I decided to use a larger range of sounds to reflect the given mood. For the background tone, I used a stretched-out and reversed version of an audio I recorded where I moved a can in a circular motion on my desk. Through pairing this with a reversed audio of me brushing through a washing-up brush, I tried to create a wind-like, vacuum effect. In addition to this, to add some rhythm to the sound I reversed an audio of me dangling some keys, which ended up sounding a bit like the sparking of a lighter, adding to the city-like atmosphere. When listening back to the audio, I felt something was missing, so I inserted an audio of a microwave timer in the middle, which to me sounded like a lorry reversing, which I felt matched the tone I was trying to create.



Overall Analysis

Overall, considering it was my first time experimenting with sound, I quite liked the process of finding objects that can create interesting sounds, mixing them together to create a specific atmosphere. Even though I found it quite challenging, as I always used to include audio as an afterthought, focussing on the visual aspect of animation, I think that at some points within this rotation I achieved the sound I wanted. However, I think I still need more practice at this, as I'd like to learn more about sound and the various techniques I could use in the future. If I were to do this rotation again, I think I would try to implement a more musical aspect to some of the sound-worlds as this week I mostly tried to create atmospheres that didn't have too much forward-planning in them. As well as this, I think the last film could've benefitted if I did more with the visual aspect and developed it to be a moving image

Initially, when given the task to create a storyline out of five words, there was a range of approaches my group thought about taking. After taking into account the 20 second time limit we had set, we decided to go for a simple storyline, leading us to start researching various children's stories, reflecting on their simplicity, to help us learn how to break down a tale into its key parts. The words we first chose were: tortoise, stars, fall, love letter, ask. After realising, including a love-letter would take up too much time in the film, we changed the words to consist of: tortoise, stars, fall, love and ask, in order to not rush the story. Our new tale consisted of a lonely, old tortoise who no longer had his partner and would watch the sky sad, thinking he was the only one who was alone in this world. One night, though, he sees a lonely star fall from the sky, and rescues her. After asking her to run away together, she agrees, leading to the end.

Once we finalised the plot, we decided to choose to go with a simplistic style that reminded us of old childhood films and shows we'd watch, to match the child-like storyline we'd created. After developing a mood-board and storyboard, we started with character designs and poses. I focussed on creating the tortoise, and Lilu the star. To ensure consistency between the different characters and poses, we used some skills we learned in the Character Design rotation, through the use of shapes and then grid-lines to get coinciding proportions, and edited our characters back and forth so that they were drawn in the same style. After this, we divided up drawing the backgrounds of the scenes we intended to each animate.

This then led us to creating the animatic, which made us change our minds a few times with how we wanted the various shots to look. We ended up splitting the scenes up, where Akiva animated the first bedroom scene, Lilu the other bedroom scenes, and me the outside scenes. In order to broaden the skills we obtained through the Motion Graphics rotation, we decided to use After Effects to create the final animation. Even though, personally, this was quite a challenge, as I had only ever used the program during a rotation, I found it quite interesting to use. I experimented with the camera function available, in order to add more movement in the semi-final scene. After piecing our scenes together, we found that it wasn't very clear why the tortoise jumps out of the window, so we added a scene where the tortoise visibly falls in love with the star that landed by his house, to make the tortoise's intentions clearer to the viewer.

In order to get our scenes to fit the 20-second time limit we cut down and sped up each scene. Through doing this, we eliminated some awkward pauses we had, making the film flow more naturally.

Our final step, after this, was to create the sound, which at first we struggled with. We knew, firstly, that we wanted to create a soundtrack as we thought it'd add more feel to the story. After experimenting with a large variety of different apps, it became quite difficult to make something usable, as sound wasn't what we were best at. However, through using the program MuseScore, Akiva was able to compose a piece. In order to get the pacing right though, we had to keep playing both the cut-down video and the music at the same time, whilst Akiva composed, so that the melody was able to adjust to the emotions playing out in the scene at the right times. After this, we tried to add more depth to the sound element of the film, through adding sound effects. Following on from that we found that these extra sounds took away from the music in the background, and in some instances made the film a bit too comical, so we decided to just use the music instead.

Overall, if I were to do this project again, I think I'd probably try and make the colour palettes more consistent, as looking back there is quite a shift between the different scenes. In addition to this, I think I'd like to add a larger variety of actions and poses for my character, and experiment more angles and shots, in order to create more motion and feel.