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### **IP Thesis**

The focus of my IP project is to capture the aesthetic qualities of 2D animation and 3D animation personified through people's personalities by combining them into a single narrative that depicts and juxtaposes their aesthetic qualities. The animation is about the meeting of two people who seem to be very different from one another in terms of appearance, demeanor, age, gender, interests, and even lifestyle. These differences will become apparent through their dialogue and body language. The underlying visual quality that parallels these elements will be represented by the different media in which they are rendered. One character, a seemingly reserved, rigid, and precision prone businesswoman, is rendered in 3D, which reflects the aesthetic qualities of 3D animation. The other character, a laid back, care-free, and less goal-oriented musician, is going to be hand drawn in 2D, which represents the gestural and expressive qualities of 2D animation. The environment in which the story takes place is on a train, which will be rendered in a combination of 2D and 3D techniques, the result of which will serve as both a contextual "middle-ground" between the two characters as well as a visually pleasing backdrop. Throughout the duration of the animation, the two strangers who are forced to sit next to each other due to seating arrangements, will slowly come to overcome the awkwardness and begin tolerate each other, ultimately resulting in a development of mutual respect. The goal of the narrative and the visual qualities is to suggest that, like people in society, different media can learn from each other after overcoming their immediate differences.

The concept behind this project is something that is incredibly close and dear to my heart. Growing up, I loved hand drawing character after character, for hours at a time, since I could

pick up a pencil. My passion for drawing things I saw or things that came out of my imagination never burned out, and it was only during my recent years in the Art and Design Program that I found a new way of expressing my artistic abilities, which was through 3D modeling and animation in Maya. Given my time spent with both media, I have come to deeply appreciate the immense degree of differences that each of these media have to offer me as both a creator and a viewer. Among friends and peers, I have come to realize that people have a tendency to think one medium is better than the other. Some claim that 3D animation is nothing less than an absolute positive step in artistic direction, whereas others seem to claim that 2D animation is a more pure and true form of animation. I personally never found one to be “better” than the other, and believe that they are simply different and each one has strong and weak points. Throughout my life experiences, I find a fascinating parallel between my views upon these media and that of people. People are capable of, and sometimes prone to, thinking that one individual is “better” than the other. Again, like the two media of 2D and 3D animation, I believe that people are simply different, and not to be judged as better or worse for their inherent qualities. With this animation, I wish to elicit this parallel I see to my audience in an visually entertaining and narratively compelling way.

Some of the influences for this project come from animations done by great artists as well as TV shows that simply inspire great storytelling. One animation by Chris Landreth, entitled “Ryan,” stands out as one of the few I’ve seen that also incorporates both 2D and 3D animation into one story. However, the point of the fusion of animation styles in Chris Landreth’s animation was to distinguish the difference between reality and internal psyche, depicted through 3D and 2D animation respectively. Despite this difference, I still found the idea to use both

media in one animation to be very inspiring and it was simply great to see someone else utilize the technique as a form of expression.

Another strong influence actually came from an HBO show called “Six Feet Under” created by director Alan Ball. The show is about the daily experiences of a family who runs a funeral home in California. While the show is not animated, I found the entire viewing experience from the first opening scene to the end of the last episode of the series to be a pinnacle of creative storytelling. What amazed me the most about this story was how well it spoke to its audience, and how each episode could be enjoyed on a large range of levels from pure entertainment to deep issues of morality. I was inspired by the show to create an animated piece that doesn’t require the use of extravagant special effects or hardcore action, and simply focus on the richness of human interaction on a very personal level. I believe this will allow the audience to easily relate to the characters and the situation, and see that this animation, while rendered in different visual techniques, depicts a story that can happen to anybody and not just action heroes.

The process involved with this animation does require a variety of technical skills ranging from scriptwriting, to hand drawing frames, to modeling and animating in Maya, to compositing in Adobe After Effects, and to sound and scene editing Final Cut. Aside from the conceptual development for the piece, my main focus during the beginning of the school year was to model the businesswoman character and the props for the scene, as the animation is mostly done using Maya. In order to produce this animation, i had to learn new and fairly complicated techniques in Maya such as detailed character modeling and “rigging,” which is the process of using joints and kinematics to get a modeled character to move accurately and naturally. Proper voice acting

was implemented prior to animation in order to time the vocals with the mouth movements when the actual animation process is taking place. Luckily, I have spent a great deal of time and effort learning Maya subsequent to my introduction to the software during Junior year. My technical knowledge with the software has definitely facilitated some good results for the purposes of this project.

Interestingly, all the years I've spent drawing "character after character" really did come in handy for the hand drawn musician character. The process for this character was to simply have a sit-in 3D model perform the basic actions to get a sense of timing and interaction with the 3D businesswoman. However, before the finished rendering, I removed the 3D sit-in character and hand drew frame by frame over the model in order to stay true to the aesthetic quality of 2D animation. Furthermore, I chose to implement a "sketchier" quality upon the drawing of the musician just to emphasize the gestural and "care-free" nature of the 2D animation that he represents.

Ultimately, I combined these two animations into a single scene through the use of Adobe After Effects with an animation/editing technique called "compositing." Essentially, the task was to take these two "layers" of animation and stack them on top of one another accordingly based on foreground and background placements. That way, the scene looks coherent and the two characters look like they are occupying one space despite the fact that they were each done completely separately during the creation and animation period.

Finally, I sat down and found a incredibly large variety sound effects and musical scores to truly bring the piece to life. The editing process is simply a period of time in which I cut and splice scenes to make them flow at a desirable pace and to time the sounds that would optimize

the effect of the visuals. All this editing was done through the use of the programs iMovie and Final Cut Pro.

Ultimately, I believe that my results have proven to be quite effective, and that they do realize my goals with the piece. I think that the visuals, in combination with the narrative that depicts strongly contrasted personality types, should offer the audience with an undeniable sense of the relationship between the aesthetic qualities of the media and the personalities seen in people. The ending scene, where the businesswoman takes a moment from her work and simply enjoys the musician's performance, serves as a climax and resolution. The result of the piece is meant to offer a glimpse of a pleasant moment shared between two people, and simply savor the taste of a minor victory that can occur in people's daily lives.

In conclusion, my animation entitled "Route S05" delivers the message of dealing with awkward tensions between strangers, overcoming differences, and creating a world in which one can always learn from another by sharing mutual respect with each other. I believe that my process of fusing these two seemingly separate animation styles strongly support my thematic intent and also provides an visually entertaining approach that makes the piece accessible to a mass audience. Like the TV show "Six Feet Under" that inspired my narrative style, I want the piece to be enjoyed on many different levels. Those wish to simply sit back and enjoy a visually pleasing short film can do just that, or some can read more into the choices I have made with the piece. Perhaps the animation can instigate discussions and ideas that might influence the audiences' perception of both the media that I'm working with as well as people in real life. No matter how slight or subtle, I believe the message in my animation can make a difference.