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Stop-motion animation

Stop-motion animation is created by manipulating objects and photographing each movement frame by frame.

There are different types of stop-motion animation both in 2D and 3D, ranging from clay animation to silhouette and object animation.

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Puppet Animation

Puppet animation takes place within a constructed environment where stop-motion puppets interact with each other.

The puppets have an armature (a “skeletal” wired structure) inside of them to help them keep still and able to move at certain joints.

An example of such animation is *The Tale of the Fox* (1937) by Ladislav Starevitch.

Use of multiple long shots to give perspective, feel of scenery and help in introducing characters.

Use of armature allows the puppets to convey certain traits, i.e. fox is cunning/sly, posture brings out the characteristic of the animal.

A black and white animation, *The Tale of the Fox* uses lighting to convey a sense of time and feelings.

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Screenshots:

1: lighting and action of wolf (yawning and stretching) conveys night time and use of fire in scene indicates it is perhaps cold.

2: central spotlight focus of wolf eating fish which was what the fox of the animation was looking at.

Perhaps indicates the view of the fox's eyes.

3: long shot of scenery to add depth of field which is done by use of light that over casts shadows.

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Silhouette Animation:

An alternative to *cut-out animation*, where 2-dimensional pieces of material are put together to create the stop-motion effect.

With this type of animation, the characters are back lit and only visible as silhouettes.

Lotte Reiniger was an animator who specialized in this technique. One of her known animations is *Cinderella* (1922).

Screenshots:

Close-up of prince and Cinderella showing their encounter and relationship.

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With the encounter, an image of a heart is shown but then changes into a growing plant, symbolising of the love that is blossoming.

First scene shows of Cinderella on her own then shows the sisters, indicating that they are in different rooms.

The next scene then has a 'room' in between the other two which is like a connection between the two rooms that wasn't accessible before.

This is shown with Cinderella going through her room into the next.

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When one of the sisters was getting ready Cinderella was helping her get ready.

In this scene Cinderella was pulling the strings of the sister's dress to make her slimmer. As she does so, the scene expands until no more where eventually the sister falls over.

An interlude or cut-scene happens in between the animation. With these the words were appearing one after the other, as if someone would be saying the words out loud.

Also, with each cut scene, it tends to start out with the word "*Snip!*" as if to say it has been cut. And with the Act ending it will bring about the next part of the story.

With *Cinderella*, however, there was no music or vocal narratives involved, implying that people generally know the story and can narrate it themselves as the story progresses.

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Puppetoon

Similar to that of *puppet animation* as shown with *The Tale of the Fox*, the main difference is that it uses different versions of a puppet for different frames rather than manipulating the same puppet.

George Pal used this technique and changed each frame by having multiple heads carved from wood that show different facial expressions.

Tulips Shall Grow (1942) is an example of such animation by George Pal.

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Screenshots

Story took place in Holland as shown by native clothing especially on the girl.

At first showing a happy scene between a young couple in love which is then interrupted by *Screwballs*, indicating a bad event will occur.

A *Screwball* is then shown walking, then the shot takes to behind the *Screwball* where a duck is walking, suggesting that a *Screwball* walks the same way as a duck.

Soon after planes arrive with bombs that destroys everything.

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Screenshots

Boy believes that the girl is dead, then rain clouds come over to destroy the "bad guys".

One shot in particular of a *Screwball* gives a similar action to how it was in Nazi Germany with the "*Hail Hitler*" posture.

The arm of the *Screwball* is then going down, indicating the downfall of the enemy along with the flag sinking, which in turn reflects the demise of Nazi Germany.

As the boy then views the destruction caused he then realises his love is still alive.

Surrounding area is then rebuilding itself, with the ending referring back to the title of the animation *Tulips Shall Always Grow*.

In this animation it tells you that although there are a lot of hardships in life, something good will eventually come out of it.

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Claymation

Figures made of a malleable material such as plasticine.

Contains an armature or wire frame inside of it to manipulate the pose of the figures.

An example is the *Morph* shorts (1970s) created by Aardman Animations.

>>> *Click on Morph picture for youtube.com link* <<<

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Screenshots

Use of hats altering character change ---> a form of "*child's play*" like dress-up.

Position of Chas (white character) who is hidden behind the box implies that as he is watching Morph in a sneaky and almost spying way, he is planning to do something naughty.

A lot of long shots is shown throughout to know what is going on in surrounding area and where everything is and taking place.

The position of Morph's body is quite limp, similar to how a dead body would be portrayed.

Close-ups used for facial expressions e.g. when Morph gets "shot" Chas started crying. After it becomes a happy ending with both of them laughing at the event.

The narration of how they speak is almost like when a baby makes noises, but are still distinguishable as to what they are saying.

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Object Animation

Uses inanimate objects to create stop-motion instead of specially created items.

Such examples are Robot Chicken and Lego animations, which is also known as *Brickfilms*.

Object animation is limited to narration as you can't physically alter the appearance of the objects.

However, mood can be depicted through music, lighting and voice overs.

>>> *show own experiment of object animation* <<<

I experimented with this technique using a doll. Although the shots are not steady when doing an actual *object animation* the camera is placed on a stand or levelled on a flat surface to keep the frames in sync.

Similarities & Differences of Narrative Forms of 2D and 3D Stop-Motion Animation

Similarities

Use forms of movement in stop-frames to execute animation.

Use lighting to bring atmosphere to scenes.

Use of music and narrative voices to bring mood and perception of characters.

Differences

Being flat, 2D stop-motion animation does not give as much depth as 3D.

Textures are conveyed more in 3D.

Limited detail needed in 2D.

A variety of camera angles used in 3D stop-motion.