

EXHIBITION GUIDE

ROOM 1

THE ART OF ANIMATION

Animation brings to life the stories that we love, but how do they go from initial idea to the amazing films we see on screen? This exhibition reveals the work done behind the scenes to get from inspiration to finished production and give some unsung heroes their day in the sun.

INSPIRATION AND DEVELOPMENT:

Where do ideas come from? Sometimes it is an interesting doodle in a sketchbook, that becomes a character we want to follow, sometimes two different, completely unrelated ideas bump into each other and produce another, really original idea, and sometimes the idea is already there in book form, but how do we go from there?

How is an idea developed, and how can a children's book of a few pages become a much longer film, filled with extra story, jokes and incidents? The script is the first stage, but that is words on a page, so let's look at how visual storytelling turns those words into pictures that tell a story.

CHARACTER

What do our characters look like, what is the best design style for the story we are telling, and how can design enhance the feel and mood of a story? If we are adapting a picture book, can we use the illustrator's style as it is, or will we need to change it because we are using a different technique? There may be lots of ways of answering these questions, so how far do artists and designers have to go in developing and choosing the right style for the film?

SETTING

The setting for the action of an animated film is one of the most important aspects of a production, and everything in it has to be designed, from the hills and trees to the buildings and the tables and chairs in those buildings.

Then they need to be drawn from every angle, built as miniatures for stop-motion or in the computer for 3D CG films, and no matter how strange, we have to believe in them as the place our characters live.

LUIS COOK'S SKETCHBOOKS

- Luis worked for over 20 years as an animation director at Diverse Productions, BBC and 18 years at Aardman Animations. He has designed and directed websites, idents, title sequences, commercials, short films, pilots and series work. He also worked in Aardman's broadcast and features development departments.
- His film and commercial work has won over 50 international awards, including BAFTA's, The Cartoon d'Or, the Special Jury Award, Annecy Festival, D&AD, Royal Television Society, 10 Grand Prix's and 5 British Animation Awards. He has also been short listed for an Oscar.

TOWELS – Prawta Annez and Camilla Kjearnet

- Inspired by a “funny article” about beach etiquette, Towels focuses on one person’s obsession with personal space. Beginning a war of beach towels with a neighbouring sunbather, Towels quickly transforms from conventional storytelling into more abstract territory, as the two battling sides refuse to back down and act rationally.
- “I wanted to film to convey the frustrations I felt in 2017”, Annez explains as we discuss the use of towels as a metaphor in her film. “The frustrations of a younger generation watching people in power make life-altering decisions for us that we would have to live with longer than they would. The frustrations of watching a man in power kick about and threaten to build a wall to claim his “beach space”. My friends and I were watching a bad game of Risk in real life and I wanted Towels to be my mirror to society”.
- Inspired by Cornish artists, Ben Nicholson, Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Becky Blair and Hannah Cole,
- “Everything was done in 2D but to imitate the slightly unpredictable texture that comes with animating paint, the characters and frames were painted frame by frame digitally in Photoshop”, the director explains. “The backgrounds were also purposefully kept flat most of the time to slightly mimic the painted still backgrounds found in traditional cell animations”.
- Towels was created while Prawta was studying at Falmouth University and has gone on to win a Royal Television Society award and be nominated for a British Animation Award. Now currently working as a freelance storyboard artist in the industry, she has recently worked with studios including Wildseed, Blue-Zoo and Nickelodeon.

PRINCE CINDERS - Animation City, 1993 Dir. Derek Hayes

- The tale of Prince Cinders was adapted from the popular picturebook by Babette Cole and her illustrations appear to have rollerskated straight off the page. From the busy layouts, to the bubbling, bumbling sidekicks and secondary characters, there's no mistaking her unique stylings here.
- A half-hour adaptation of a children’s book by Babette Cole (Princess Smartypants, Mummy Laid an Egg, etc.), commissioned by Channel 4 and screened as their Christmas special for 1993.
- ‘The film was one of the last things I directed using the classic method of cel overlays on hand painted backgrounds. Computer colouring was just coming in at the time but hadn’t been tested on a long production and it was felt that it was too risky to rely on it.
- The Cast included Dexter Fletcher as PC, Jennifer Saunders as the Fairy, Craig Charles as the Cat, and Jim Broadbent, Jonathon Ross and Robert Llewellyn as the Three Ugly Brothers, and Lenny Henry sang the theme song!

ELIJAH Cartwn Cymru, 1996 Dir. Derek Hayes

- Elijah was commissioned from Cartwn Cymru by S4C, the Welsh Channel 4, as part of their series, ‘The Bible in Animation’. S4C Animation Commissioner, Chris Grace, had

previously commissioned children's series like SuperTed and Funnybones, but was concerned that children were not learning about some of the fundamental foundations of Western Culture and so commissioned a series of half-hour Shakespeare plays (The Animated Shakespeare), Operas and one offs like The Canterbury Tales.

- Derek: 'The story struck me as a kind of proto-Western and I got Mike McMahon, only the second artist to draw Judge Dredd in the 2000AD comic to design the film.
- For this film, we used the new system of colouring called Animo. While still doing the animation on paper, we then scanned the drawings into the Animo system and did clean-up, inbetweening, colour and compositing on the computer.'

WE'RE GOING ON A BEAR HUNT – LUPUS FILMS

- Bear Hunt was not hand drawn on paper but onto computer screens using TV Paint software.
- Many of the backgrounds were painted traditionally onto paper (and then scanned in), but the animation and colouring were done digitally. It made the production process a lot quicker, says producer Ruth Fielding.
- It is a point echoed by co-director Robin Shaw, who was also the art director on Lupus' recent feature animation Ethel & Ernest. "Technology has made it easier and faster," he says. But, he adds, it can also present difficulties. "You can go completely down the wrong alley if you are not careful." In particular, there was a risk that the animators, liberated by the technology, might put too much energy and detail into their scenes. He compares it to an actor who might overact.
- They had to reinvent the book, expanding what is a very short tale into a script with enough story for a 23-minute animation.
- Once development (the treatment, script and basic character design) was completed, pre-production kicked in with the construction of storyboards, recording of the voices (Olivia Colman, Pam Ferris and Mark Williams), the production of the animatic (which sees the storyboard panels edited together with timing and sound) and the start of sound design and music as well as detailed character and location design.
- In total, 30 animators worked on the series, with each individual animator having a target of five seconds of animation a week – which means about 12-15 drawings in a day.
- Production was carried out in stages at Lupus Films - crammed full of background artists, animators, animation assistants, editors and composers. It's a reminder that the biggest challenge in creating animation is organisational – bringing together all the work of every single crew member.
- 24 animation assistants clean and in-between the animators' original drawings. There is a very high level of draughtsmanship involved.
- Compositors bring together all the final elements and apply camera moves, textures, additional FX and lighting.

THE SNOWMAN – TV CARTOONS

- Sales of the book were initially very disappointing. A few years later, Producer [John Coates](#) rang the publishers (with 50,000 unsold copies sitting in the warehouse), expressing an interest in adapting the book for an animated film.
- Production started with a pencil storyboard which, shot to length, was the guide-track for the composer.
- The animation was on paper with pencils, traced or photocopied onto cel. Normally the animators would have to follow the voice track, but in this case they followed the music score, already recorded.
- Each cel then had to be rendered by hand on the reverse – even now no computer can match the ‘roughness’ of this rendering, giving a much more natural and personal feel to the artwork.
- It was also necessary to ensure the ‘rendering’ (shading on the characters), did not boil, so the work proved excruciatingly slow. Then the backgrounds, overlaid with inked and painted cels, was shot on a rostrum camera.
- Of course, whilst this literally hand-made production process had severe limitations, there was also something intangibly pure in the end result that would be difficult to duplicate in a digital world.

THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR – Animation City, Dir: Andy Goff

- This is a cut-out animation produced at Derek’s studio, Animation City.

FATHER CHRISTMAS – TV Cartoons

- First shown on Channel 4 in 1991, nine years after the debut of *The Snowman* .
- It is based on two books by Raymond Briggs: *Father Christmas* (1973) and *Father Christmas Goes on Holiday* (1975).
- Father Christmas is shown here as a grumpy (yet kind-hearted) old man living in contemporary Britain. There is no Mrs. Claus to be found, with Father Christmas instead happy in the company of his cat, dog and two reindeer.
- The story involves Father Christmas deciding that he needs a holiday. He converts his sled into a camper van and then travels to France, Scotland and Las Vegas!
- English comedian, Mel Smith voices Father Christmas to great affect, saying “blooming” a total of 72 times.
- As well as some light swearing, Father Christmas is also seen ogling the ladies and having a rather violent spout of diarrhoea, as well as gambling and enjoying the occasional drink and cigar!
- This film manages to slightly soften the tragic ending of *The Snowman*, by featuring a cameo from the boy in his dressing gown who is once again partying at the north pole. Father Christmas cheekily mentions to the boy that he “managed to make it again”, hinting that he eventually rebuilt his friend the snowman!
- The boy can also be seen wearing the scarf Father Christmas gave him in the previous film.
- This strongly suggests that both films take place within the same universe. Indeed, the animation is practically identical and both films were created by very similar production teams.

WHEN THE WIND BLOWS – TV Cartoons

- Jim and Hilda Bloggs prepare for war with the aid of official government guidelines. Their plucky spirit and stiff upper lip helped defeat the Nazis. Now they'll do it again. Only, this is a different kind of war altogether, fought at a distance, by an unseen enemy, with terrifying consequences. And sadly for Jim and Hilda, no amount of camaraderie can defeat it...
- This is TVCartoon's adaptation of Raymond Briggs' courageous picture book. There are no Happy Ever Afters, the Bloggs are dying, and we're going to watch them die. The fact that it's two 'sweet' hand-drawn and painted cartoon characters being subjected to these horrors makes it even more affecting.
- The filmmakers animate the Bloggs in traditional cel form, overlaying them against a blend of three-dimensional sets and photo-art backgrounds which heightens the surreal reality of the Bloggs' decline. Their escapist thoughts are presented in free-flowing sequences, their wedding memories are a sepia vignette. What a contrast with the reality of their situation. Their bright little home has the colour blown out of it, a grey mist descends, and their own cheery faces mottle and turn like time-lapsed fruit.

THE SNAIL AND THE WHALE – Magic Light Productions

Dir: Daniel Snaddon and Max Lang

There's an unusual relationship at the height of this story which creates immediate opportunities for contrast, for comedy, for characters trying to figure each other out - you can't get much more contrast than a snail and a whale.

- *A tiny peach-coloured snail longs to journey outside her rock home and see the depths of the sea and vastness of the wide world. The snail is visited by a large humpback whale who offers her a ride on his tail for the adventure of a lifetime. As the snail and the whale encounter warm beachside sunsets, brisk mountain ranges, rainbow reefs as well as dangerous storms and sinister sharks, the snail wonders what her purpose could be as a small creature on such a large planet.*
- Stop-motion characters exploring a sizable CG world, according to Snaddon, required not only technical precision from their animators and VFX artists, but also a “painter’s eye.”
- There were so many challenges to consider, especially all the extensive water effects,” explains Max Lang. “Even when we had written a script, there was this moment where I was not sure if we could actually make this film. Everything was against us; too many water effects, too many sets, too many characters.”
- “From a technical point of view, there was a lot I was not prepared for,” explains Lang, “For example, working on color continuity under the water and figuring out how the light hits the water and changes it.
- “The biggest question was if we would be able to form a relationship between a snail and a whale, two characters where the size difference is so big that they hardly fit into the same frame,”
- Even from a set design point of view, taking into account not just what a beach would look like but what it would look like in the fall, there are all these factors you have to consider. And ultimately, we ended up doing a shot for shot approach. There's hardly any shot that is done exactly the same way.”

- “Even the little things, like breaches in the sea foam, turned out to be super challenging,” he continues. “There was always something around the corner that we didn't know and had to find the most effective way to do it.”
- In total, *The Snail and the Whale* has won over half a dozen awards including the New York International Children's Film Festival Audience Award, Banff Rockie Award for Best Children's Animation, and second prize at the Chicago International Children's Film Festival..

ROOM 2

THE TIGER WHO CAME TO TEA

- Produced by Lupus Films and HarperCollins, *The Tiger Who Came to Tea* had its red-carpet premiere at The Odeon in Leicester Square in London and aired on Channel 4. The animated special featured a star studded cast: Benedict Cumberbatch, Tamsin Greig, David Oyelowo, David Walliams, Paul Whitehouse
- Written by Judith Kerr, the story is about a tiger, who turns up unannounced and eats and drinks Sophie and mummy out of house, home and bathwater before disappearing into the night.
- Lupus Films developed their own brushes to match Judith's original artwork and to speed up the process of colouring the Tiger's stripes. Every single frame (36000) of the film is coloured entirely by hand – which is almost unheard of in modern animation pipelines, essentially replicating traditional Cel painting.
- Eighty artists were employed to create *The Tiger Who Came to Tea* across the entire animation team, with the vast majority based in the UK.
- The youngest crew member joined for the summer between their second and final year of University, and Lupus Films have a healthy spread from recent graduates up to seasoned professionals who have been in the industry for decades – some of the crew even worked on Channel 4's 1982 Christmas classic, *The Snowman*.

MR BEAN – Tiger Aspect

- The animated series is produced by Atkinson's own production company Tiger Aspect, in a co-production with Richard Purdum in the UK and Varga in Hungary and it has earned itself a notch in tv history as the very first prime-time animated half hour, bravely commissioned for terrestrial television by ITV as 52 stories, to be broadcast as double bills in a primetime Saturday evening slot.
- Atkinson himself lent both his voice and his body to the production, allowing the animators to film him as Mr Bean so they might capture the idiosyncrosy of the character.
- Mr Bean's beloved Teddy takes a more central role in the series. His mini is there too, and the unfortunate Robin Reliant we've seen in the original films now comes a cropper in almost every episode.
- Mr Bean also has an on-off girlfriend, Irma Gobb, and a crabby old landlady, Mrs Wicket who has a spitting, clawed moggy called Scrapper at her side...
- There's some splendid character design - like the 'floating' feet and the nifty touch of having the characters eyebrows move like beads on threads.

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- There's also lots of extra detail and cases of foreground character action causing ripple effects through the background of each tale.
- In keeping with the original creation, dialogue is minimal, just a few audible phrases and burbles from our star placed strategically to help decipher the action.

THE CURSE OF THE WERERABBIT. – Aardman, dir: Nick Park

- In the film, the intrepid inventor Wallace and his enterprising dog, Gromit, have hatched a humane pest-control business and are busy capturing rabbits in local gardens as everyone prepares for the Giant Vegetable Competition organized by Lady Tottington.
- When a mysterious nocturnal creature begins plundering the town's vegetable plots, Wallace and Gromit begin working overtime to catch the culprit — but first, they must determine what it is.
- During the filming of Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit, Aardman Animations managed an average of three seconds of usable film PER DAY. It took five years to complete.
- Tragically, a fire in 2005 destroyed everything used in all of Aardman Animations's films, including the Wallace and Gromit sets, props and models.

Nick Park:

- After I've come up with the initial idea -- you know this whole idea of exploring rabbits -- Bob Baker, the writer and I were sitting in a pub in Bristol and we got this lightning strike of an idea -- what if it were a were-wolf movie, but with a big funny rabbit instead eating vegetables instead of people and develop it for Wallace and Gromit?
- We sat there typing it and as we were typing, one of us would be drawing, or vice versa, or the other one would be making a mock up model in clay while we were writing. So it all went on at the same time.
- Then there was a certain point when we stopped writing, where the script becomes very visual and we went into storyboard for most of the writing time actually. We spent a couple of years storyboarding. We'd shoot the boards and then put them into a digital edit system. We put our own voices on, temporary music, some sound effects and edit the whole thing.
- It would be very rough, but those storyboards would become our story reel. We'd constantly be editing from that. Redrawing stuff, trying to make acts better, trying to find scene structures that were better. Sometimes we'll throw out the whole scene and decide we don't need it or add a scene somewhere. It remains a very organic, constantly rolling process to the end of the movie.
- The Wallace & Gromit movies I made were always referencing other film genres outside of animation. Films that I loved all the time. Hitchcock films, film's like (David Lean's) *Brief Encounter* and I equally love the work of Chuck Jones, Tex Avery, Tom and Jerry cartoons and Disney films. I grew up on all these films.
- I've always loved slapstick comedy. I love Buster Keaton and all the Laurel and Hardy films. Maybe that's where I got Gromit looking at camera and giving us kind of a knowing look to the audience. Maybe from Oliver Hardy the way he would seem so "give me strength" -- you know, put upon, looking for sympathy.

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- I've always loved book illustration as well, and collected comic books. In the 70's and 80's I read graphic novels, like Hergé's *Adventures of TinTin* and the illustrated books of Raymond Briggs. He did a book called *Father Christmas* and *Fungus the Bogeyman* which were popular in the UK. I love that graphic and chunky style that he had where everything is rendered. He also did *The Snowman*, which was later turned into animation.
- I always loved those 1950's shapes, all post World War II. I love a lot of that stuff, too. I used to watch Ray Harryhausen's *Mother Goose Stories*. He did one called *Hansel and Gretel* (1951) years before. I love that and that kind of holiday animation that was on TV.
- I guess it's the satisfaction of everything I love coming together, you know, Jules Verne stories, H. G. Wells, *TinTin Adventures* and Laurel and Hardy comedy kind of all coming together but with the atmosphere of a Hitchcock movie.
- I always start off by drawing. I start off with visual ideas. It's what started off my film *A Grand Day Out*. I started drawing this rocket, and I thought it would be great to just build to it. That's one of the sort of things that attracted me to 3D really. The chance to build something like this rocket in this big cigar shape and cover it with rivets.
- We could have done our Were-Rabbit using CGI because you can do such great fur and everything. But we just chose to do it more in keeping with Wallace & Gromit and do it in the old way -- make a big fur puppet and animate it, harking back to King Kong because of the sympathy the animator was able to put in his eyes, in his facial expressions. He was the force of antagonism, a beast; and yet you felt so strongly for him. We were trying to tap in on that kind of quality and didn't mind if the fur was a little mopy or twitches a bit, like in *King Kong*, really.

OZZY PARKER

- Stop motion animator, Ozzie Parker says: 'I like collaborating with people from different backgrounds, that bring a diverse range of life experience and technical skills...this achieves more than anyone can do on their own. 1 + 1 can truly equal 3 when taking genuine creative risks and bringing brave ideas to life on budget.'

JOANNA QUINN

- Recently nominated for a BAFTA, Quinn finds much of her inspiration for Beryl's character through sketching. Her drawing station, located right by a window near a bus stop, is perfect for capturing all types of people in different moods and postures. "I'm looking for body language and the way people stand or sit or something," Quinn says. "You become very familiar with the drawings in your book, so you're looking at the drawings and somehow they get imprinted in your brain."