

Stop-Motion Animation

Stop-Motion Animation is an incredible mode of storytelling. It's one of the oldest techniques in making images move. It involves creating a series of still images, that when played in sequence, give the audience a sense of fluid movement. The technique has been used in all sorts of ways, from using clay and cardboard cutouts, to using found objects and people.

The best way to achieve great Stop-Motion Animation is to prepare. Because it can take so long to make stop-motion animation, it's a good idea to plan everything out very well. Once you've got your story on paper, storyboarding can really help you save time down the track. It can also help you come up with visual ideas. You don't want to have to shoot your stop-motion sequence twice. We're going to make a short Stop-Motion sequence with people to give you an idea of what's possible.

You usually want the camera to be still. Find your starting position, and take a photo. Then move a little bit, and take another photo. Then move a bit again, and take another photo. And repeat this process.

Something you need to think about before you start is the frame-rate of your animation. By frame-rate, I mean how many single images will play in one second. To create rougher looking movement, 6 frames a second will do just fine. If you take 12 still images a second, the movement will look a bit smoother.

Remember, shooting 12 frames a second means you have double the amount of work to do and it might not be worth it. Also if you're shooting 12 frames a second, the movement between each frame should be smaller. If you're shooting 6 frames a second, the movement between each frame can be a bit bigger.

This is the foundational concept of animation. How many single frames per second, will you animate your character or object with? You need to decide this before you start shooting. Stop-Motion can be a lot of fun and very rewarding when you've finished your film. It's a great way to explore ideas that you can't bring to life in any other way!

Here are some videos on Stop-Motion Animation and software that people use to achieve it:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bVL0Cm1HyIA&t=1s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqVwIOINiN4&t=498s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j08dkbYMzWE&t=203s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=td2DgP56DP0>

Special Effects

Special effects can be a really great way to bring a story that's out of the ordinary to life. In this video we're going to talk about a few easy techniques you can use in your films.

The first effect is called split screen. It's when the screen is split between two images. You can split your screen vertically or you can split it horizontally.

Split screen allows you to play two pieces of footage at the same time. This is a common montage technique, often seen in heist movies, allowing you to show the audience two different environments, two different characters or whatever other combination you can think of. You can come up with funny and interesting results that wouldn't be possible without it.

Another great technique you can use to achieve special effects is what's called a Green Screen. Green Screen's allow you to put your character in a completely different environment, usually one that you're not able to shoot at in real life. You need two elements to make what is called a 'Composite'. You need the footage of your character in front of a green screen and you need a background or what is often called a 'Plate'. The plate can be a photo or video that you've taken or

one that you've found. It could also be a drawing or a painting, allowing you to put your character in a fantastical world. Anything you can think of can be done. Once you've got your 'green-screen plate', you can shoot your character in front of a green screen.

So let's learn how the green screen effect works. What you're doing is subtracting a particular colour from your image. This is called 'keying'. The reason why green screens are green is that green is the furthest colour away from all skin tones. So when you 'key out' the colour green from your footage, it's not subtracting the colour of your characters face. An important tip is that your character shouldn't be wearing green when shooting in front of a green screen, otherwise their clothes might start to disappear.

The good thing about green screens is that they don't necessarily have to be green. Blue is also a good choice, but you can do it on any coloured wall around your house. There are a few things to keep in mind to get the best results. Make sure that the colour you choose is the only one you see in the frame. Make sure that the wall is flat and not textured. Get rid of the pictures on your wall or anything else in the way. If your character is casting a shadow on the wall then it will be much harder to 'key out' the background. To get rid of shadows, try and keep your character a good distance away from the wall and keep in mind where the light is coming from.

Once you start experimenting with green-screening, you'll figure out what works best.

Special effects can be heaps of fun and can help you tell creative and imaginative stories. Let your mind run free!

Here are some videos on split screening and green-screening:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qc_q-nzH06s

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l9VgfzQYgk4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1n33H4Q-Sk>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCqD7RVMn_0

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kU0xa4ltn4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lR0GEV5T14>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JHDLIESWxsk&t=431s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0Esc-OEtaw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKDAba4nsh0>