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Abstraction and stylized design in 3D animated films: An extrapolation of 2D animation design

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Stylization is at the heart of 2D animation design and is only recently being more fully explored in 3D animated films. In the early days of 3D animation the push for realism in lighting, rendering and deformations displaced a pursuit of stylization in the quest to expand the capabilities of computer graphics technology. With those technical problems solved, 3D animation has more recently embraced stylization in design and character movement. Stylization also can be interpreted by some as playfulness and, “play is at the heart of animation”. Nature can be seen as an “abstract visual phenomenon” and the portrayal of hyper realistic human characters in 3D animation can lead to the alienation of an audience, as they may not accept them as being real. It is the ability of animation to “break with naturalistic representation and visual realism” that is observed as one of the strengths of the art. This paper discusses the implications of stylized design and its use in 3D animated films, while drawing important references to traditional hand-drawn animation stylization processes that pose a challenge to modern 3D animation studios.

Biography

Daniel N Boulos completed his Master's degree in Educational Technology at the University of Hawaii and his Bachelor of Fine Arts at California Institute of the Arts. He has worked professionally as an Animator for Walt Disney Studios, DreamWorks Animation and Warner Brothers Feature Animation. He has been teaching animation in higher education for 20 years and recently completed his animated film, “The Magnificent Mr. Chim”. He is a Lifetime Member of the Animation Guild and a Member of ASIFA (Association Internationale du Film d'Animation). He has presented and been published in the United States and abroad. His animation work appears in more than ten feature animated films and numerous commercials and animated shorts. He is currently writing a comprehensive book on animation processes.

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