

Statement of Intention and Pre-production Progress

Context

Inspiration

Action towards death can be very diverse in different cultures and concepts. The festival “Dia de Los Muertos” is originated in Mexico. People believe that their ascendants and friends will be living in another world after death if they are being remembered by people. Living creatures here experience two transitions of death. People only experience real death when they are being forgotten. Pixar Animation Studios’ production of “CoCo” in 2017 is a huge inspiration for explaining and decorating death with memory. In most religions, people and living things often believe in reincarnation. They will forget everything and be reborn. Death can be a representation of a new form of life.

Death is also a key element and topic in Dali’s artwork. Dali is an iconic artist of Surrealism. In most of his paintings, death is often represented by different symbols or objects. His performance in art is irrationally presenting and giving new meaning to death. Characters are designed in an irrational but stunning way. It inspires and triggers people to think unconsciously and diversely about things happening around them. I especially love the way they present some heavy issues through hilarious or dreamy visual art.

Inquiry

How to synthesis and characterize death in surreal animation and characters.

I have been interested in works that can help raising public awareness to some current issues through animation. the culture and issues about 'death' is quite attempting to me. So, in studio 2 it is hoped to explore the possibilities of combining surrealism and death in animations and character designs. Therefore, I would like to start this project to make several short animations in which death and other issue or elements are discussed. I would like to develop surrealistic aspect and try to engage in more possibilities in the field. This could be the point of difference of my project in the field as I would like to pay more attention to surrealistic characters on top of the theme – death culture.

The artificial style I would like to try is surrealism. I have found some similarities in death and surrealistic presentation style which helped me in engaging new ideas in an abstract presentation.

Rationale

The reason of making the project is to bring issues to public as I have mentioned above which is to inspire and bring awareness to the public through series of short animations as many unreasonable issues are happening every day. Death is one of the issues that I would like to engage in. When talking about death, people will try to avoid it as sadness and misfortune

come along. Death symbolizes different things like failure, misfortune, eruption, spirits etc. People want to skip anything related to the dark side of things. Still, in some cultures, death could be a representing celebration and reborn. It is a form of life, continuity, and existence. Death is unavoidable and can be neutral.

As mentioned above, Pixar Animation Studios has created a story based on this concept of life form in the animation “CoCo” in 2017. It discusses death and being reborn through Dia De Los Muertos, which is a festival in Mexico. It presents the beauty of the meaning of death fruitfully and colorfully. It also carries some interesting elements of the festival, which is the connection between memory and death.

I would like to explore the possibilities of death and memories in an irrational visual presentation of animating. I believed that serious issues will be more persuasive and inspiring through a humorous and unexpected presentation. Irrational and nonsense style of presentation reminds me of surrealism, which allows people to think and explore their subconsciousness about themselves and society.

How can different cultures’ perspectives on death be presented in animation? Can Dia De Los Muertos and surrealism intertwine each other in animation or character design? How is the relationship between death and memories be visualized?

Therefore, an idea that is about exploring death in animation and character designs in a surrealistic form of presentation has emerged.

Method

There are two ways to emerge surrealistic into the project:

The way of characters’ action / the plot of the scene

The design of the character

Steps for production:

1. Research: (to engage more ideas on vignettes)
 - Different cultures on celebrations or believes about death.
 - Surrealism and surrealistic artworks related to death.
2. Create ideas for vignettes and character design creation
3. Chose several ideas for creation
4. Create storyboard / thumbnails
5. Design the characters in different styles in 2D
6. Model characters into 3D
7. Animate vignettes one by one
8. Add sound effects and soundtrack

Tools for the project:

For animation and character design: paper and marker, Adobe Illustrator, ToonBoom Harmony

For animation and character modelling: Blender

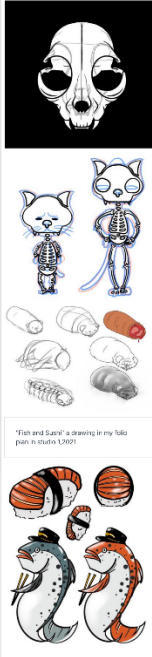



The biggest challenge in the project is time management. 3D animation and character modelling are new to me. I would have to spend more time on skills developed during the whole process. Also, the amount of work to be researched is huge as the project covers two big concepts. Therefore, I would have to speed up the pre-production work and start working on character design and animating as soon as possible.

Outcome (Potential Impact)

After the 12- weeks of production, I would be able to produce clips and shots of 2D and 3D animations. the project is about giving experience to the audience while watching. The clips could be irrelevant, but they are intertwined on the topic. Also, different styles of characters will be designed and presented in graphics which I would like to add more contribution to the character design field in terms of my creativity and research.

Though many stunning works have been made, I wish to be inspiring and productive by exploring and combining different cultures and art forms through a humorous and nonsense presentation. It is hoped that my interpretation of death and the dreamy way to emerge in the fields could be different.

Mind Map (week 1)

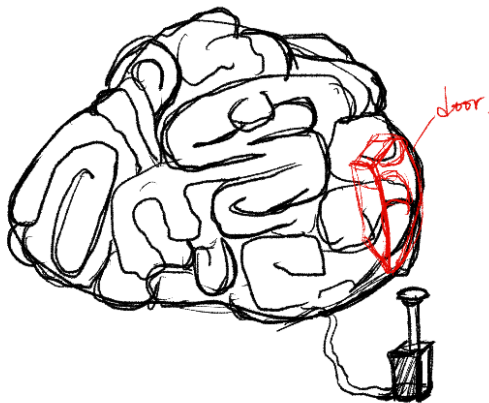
Rationale	Sketches and Drawings	Context	Methods
<p>Ideas and Concept</p> <p>Making vignettes of several 2D and 3D animations.</p> <p>Mixing Ideas from Dia de los Muertos and surrealism.</p> <p>Exploring different styles of character design.</p> <p>Exploring death and emergence in surrealism.</p> <p>Related elements: Skull and Bones Animals Repeating actions (floating, walking)</p> <p>Possible Vignettes ?</p> <p>A character is walking slower and slower. The wind blows away its skin, organs and bones respectively. It is falling.</p> <p>A loop. A fish is eating itself. Then the camera zooms out and reveals the truth that the fish is sitting on a plate. It is picked up by a chopstick and eaten by another fish. Then the camera zooms out again.</p> <p>"A dog sausage" etc.</p> <p>Slipping and recovering</p>		<p>Field</p> <p>Character Design</p> <p>Surrealism</p> <p>Animation and modeling</p> <p>Related Practices/Theories</p> <p>Surrealism</p> <p> Surreal Links</p> <p>Mexico Festival: Dia de los Muertos</p> <p> Four Animation Studios, G&C, 2017. Animation: Skull-holding scene.</p> <p> Animation: Character Design Style</p> <p>Combination of different Character Design Styles</p> <p>How Art's Made an Animation in 24 Different Styles (2021)</p> <p>I Made an Animation in 24 Different Styles - YouTube</p> <p>Instagram: Juan Cornejo @juancornejoart</p>	<p>Software</p> <p>2D ToonBoom-Harmony/ TVPaint</p> <p>3D Maya/ Blender</p> <p>Procedures</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Storyboard <input type="checkbox"/> Character Designs <input type="checkbox"/> Production and modelling <input type="checkbox"/> compose with sound effect</p> <p>Possible Outcomes?</p> <p>Significance</p> <p>strengthening the motivation or animation which carries the message of death in a easier approach to the audience.</p> <p>Possible Outcomes</p> <p>Vignettes of a sets of 2D and 3D animations. A set of Character designs graphics.</p> <p>Having Fun? Getting confused? Rabbit vs. Death Relationship between Death and Mortals</p>

Vignettes Ideas Sheet (week 1 & 2)

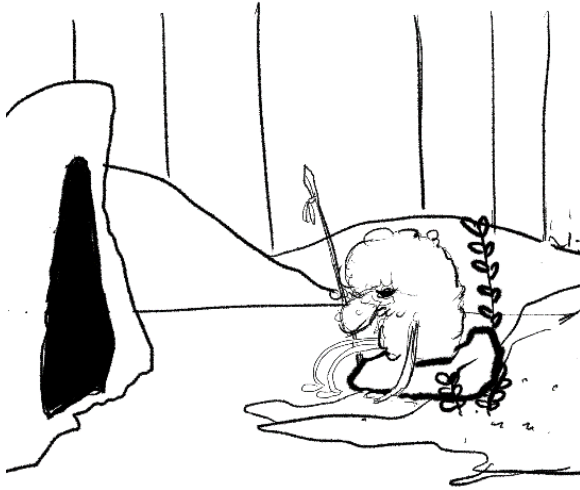
- Sushi is sitting on the screen. The camera zooms out and we can see a fish is picking up the sushi with a pair of chopsticks. The fish eats and chews the sushi. The camera zooms out again constantly. it is realised that the fish is picking up by another fish with a pair of chopsticks and being eaten. More fishes are discovered in line as the camera zooms out. (During studio 1, I have designed a fish character which is as below:)



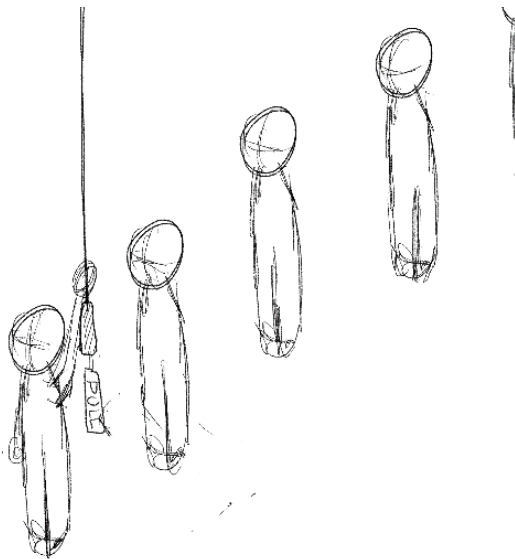
- A brain appears on the screen. It starts shrinking. People try to bump it up; When it shrinks again, a person disappears and turns into dust. People try to bump it again and again. However, it keeps shrinking. when it shrinks, a person will turn into dust. Eventually, all the people are gone. A door suddenly appears on the brain and people are stepping out from the brain. When the door is closed, the brain starts to shrink again. The story loops again.



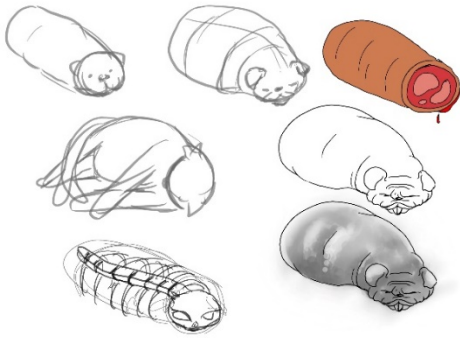
- A baby is crawling on the ground. He then grows up and becomes a child. He keeps on transforming into a human while he walks step by step. He then walks slower and slower as he starts to degrading and becomes an old man. Winds come in and hit on his body. His skin starts to deterring and turns into dust. Only skeletons are left behind. Eventually, the skeleton is blown away by the wind.
- A character in stone age clothing is guarding the territory at midnight. It can't help but keep falling asleep. It is eaten by a bear in a flash eventually. The bear walks away after the meal. another character comes in and the story loops again.



- People are lining up in the centre of the screen. the first person in the line pulls a handle. a trap door appears below the person behind him, and the person falls into it. the trap door is closed. All of them can step forward now. the process starts over again.



- A dog becomes a sausage roll



- people stepping out the brain (being forgotten)
- black cats are falling from the sky. People are screaming and running away from them; black cats touch the ground, colour comes out; (social stereotype on death : luck and death, black cat)
- walking zombie / walking dead (death culture; purpose in life)
- hitting characters, check response (biological aspects on death : no response to stimulation)

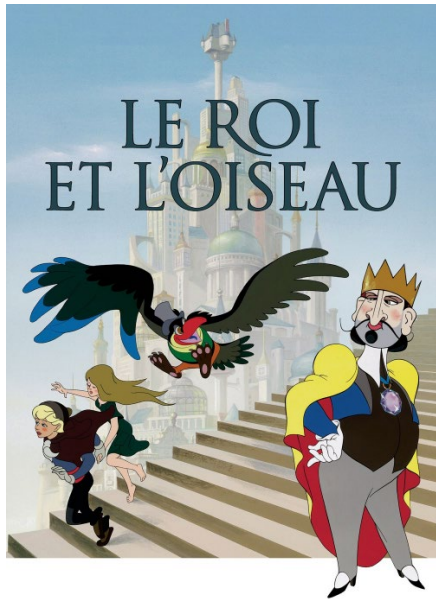
Golconda is an oil painting on canvas by Belgian surrealist René Magritte, painted in 1953.

Artificial Style and Reference (week 2)

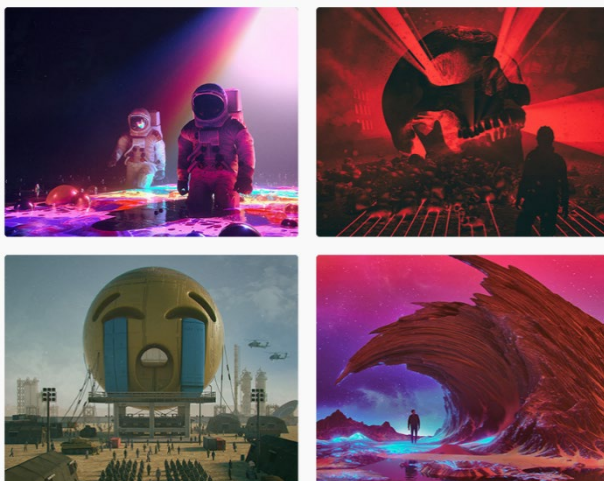
The design of the characters and the settings would be similar to the references below. I would like the overall experience to be surrealistic and irrational. A combination of 3D and 2D characters could be included in the designs.



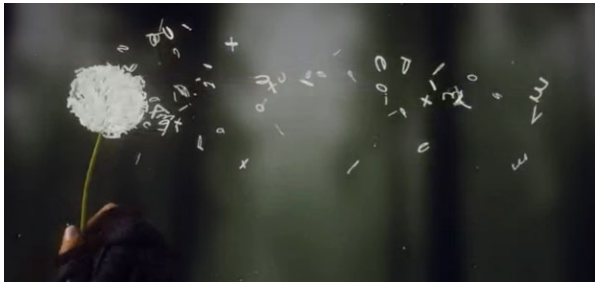
René Magritte. "Golconda". 1953. Oil Painting



Paul Grimault. "The King and the Mockingbird". 1980. Animation



Mike Winklemann, artworks from <https://www.behance.net/beeple>



Giant Sparrow. What Remains of Edith Finch. 2017. Game

Below are several related works and artists in the animation and character design field that present death:

Giant Sparrow. What Remains of Edith Finch. 2017. Game

Pixar Animation Studios. CoCo. 2017.

Joan Cornella (joancornella.net/en)

Mike Winklemann, Beeple (<https://www.behance.net/beeple>)

Joan Cornell (https://instagram.com/sirjoancornella?utm_medium=copy_link)

Misato(https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCM0Lxg-3BHOEXMAf9E_Tvhg)

The example of combining different Character Design Styles:

Gawx Art."I Made an Animation in 24 Different Styles".2021. [I Made an Animation in 24 Different Styles - YouTube](#)

Sound Idea and Reference (week 2)

As mentioned above, all the vignettes are irrelevant and have different elements. Therefore, I would like to have a piece of background music to be played throughout the whole animation. In each of the clips, some sound effects would be perfect to address the characters' actions and feelings. It could be interesting to have the music and instruments sync with their actions in rhythm and beats. As no conversation is included, music is the major hearable connection with the audience. In terms of the content and style, it is wished to give a vibe of hilarious and mysterious. I have not yet developed and firm particular effects or musical instruments. These are the general ideas on the sound aspect. I am looking forward to collaborating and creating throughout the project.

Below are some moody music references:

Walt Disney Animation Studios. "Silly Symphonies - The Skeleton Dance". 2015

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOGhAV-84iI&ab_channel=WaltDisneyAnimationStudios

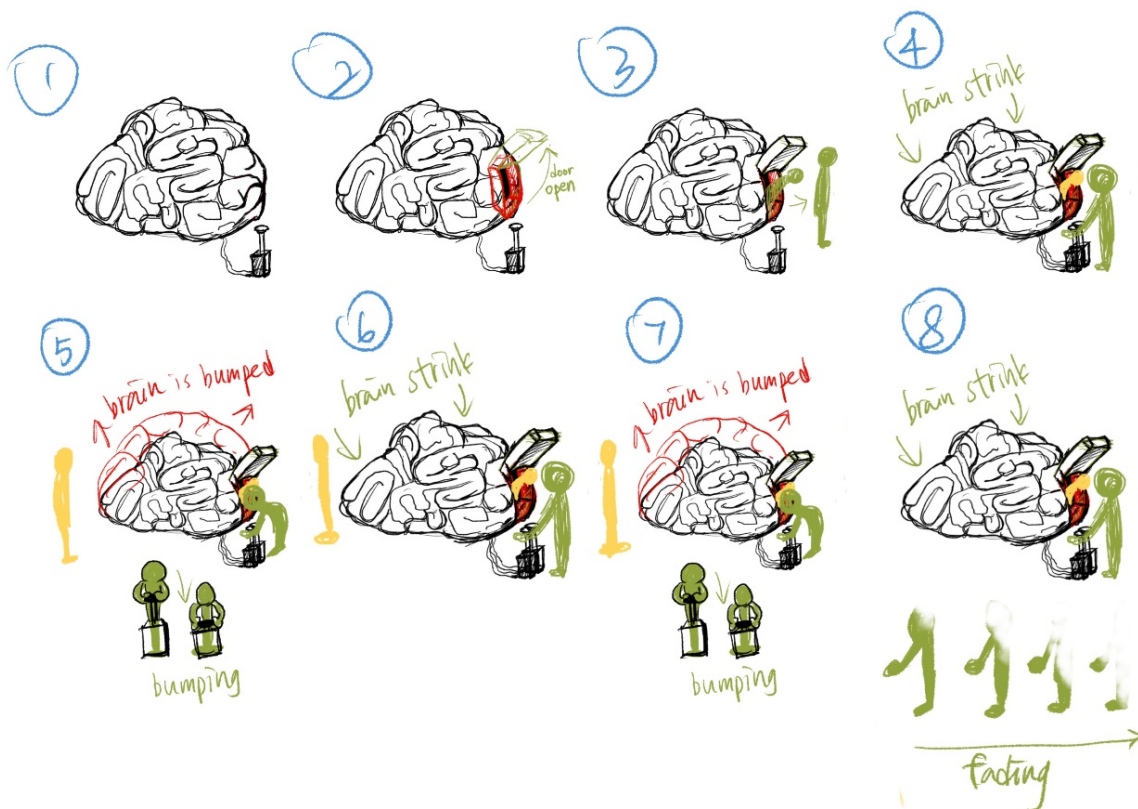
Steve Cutts. "Happiness". 2017

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9dZQeIULDk&ab_channel=SteveCutts

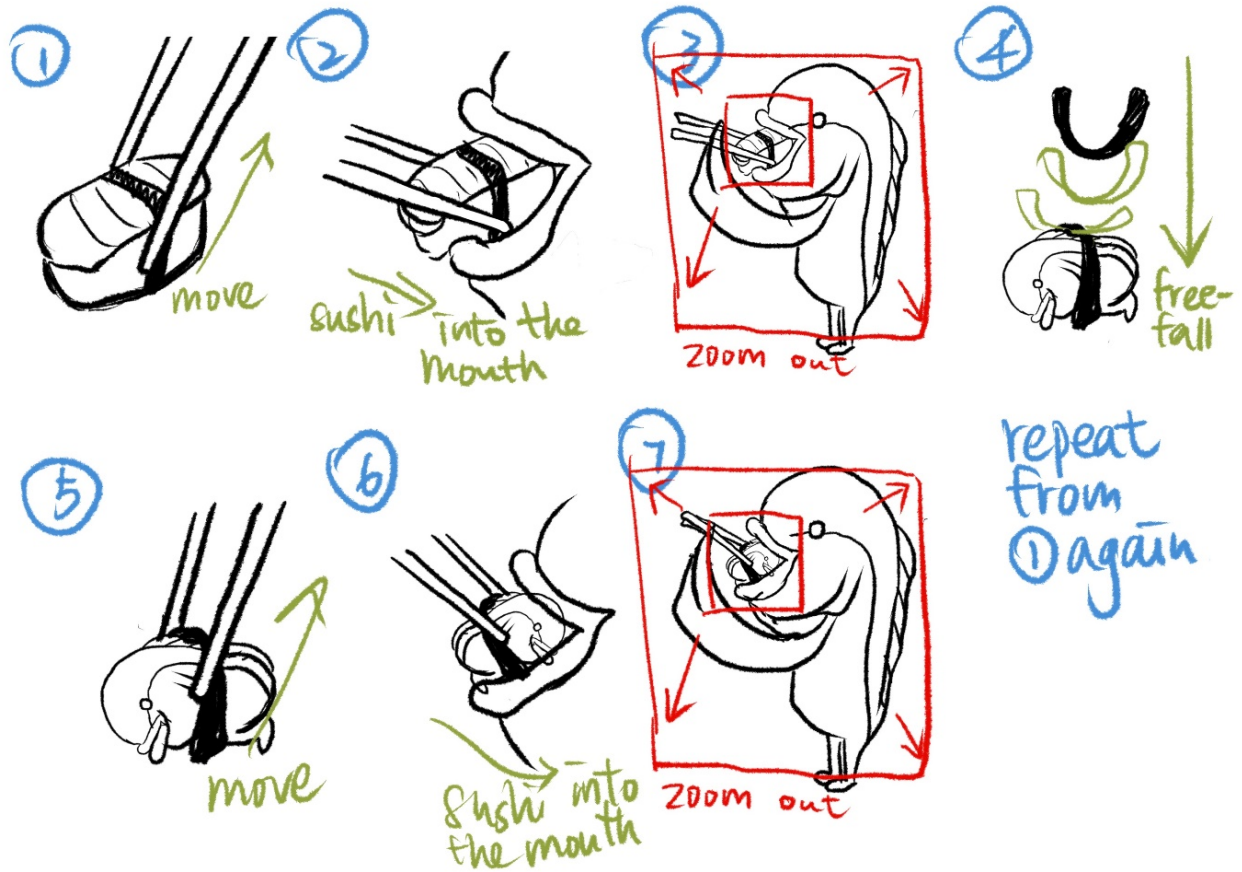
Storyboard (week 2)

Below are drafts for some stories:

- A brain appears on the screen. It starts shrinking. People try to bump it up; When it shrinks again, a person disappears and turns into dust. People try to bump it again and again. However, it keeps shrinking. when it shrinks, a person will turn into dust. Eventually, all the people are gone. A door suddenly appears on the brain and people are stepping out from the brain. When the door is closed, the brain starts to shrink again. The story loops again.



- Sushi is sitting on the screen. The camera zooms out and we can see a fish is picking up the sushi with a pair of chopsticks. The fish eats and chews the sushi. The camera zooms out again constantly. it is realised that the fish is picking up by another fish with a pair of chopsticks and being eaten. More fishes are discovered in line as the camera zooms out.



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Misato(https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCM0Lxg-3BHOEXMAf9E_Tvhg)

Gawx Art."I Made an Animation in 24 Different Styles".2021. [I Made an Animation in 24 Different Styles - YouTube](#)

Rene Magritte. "Golconda". 1953. Oil Painting

Paul Grimault. "The King and the Mockingbird". 1980. Animation

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