

Stop Motion Summer: A Collaborative Animated Film Production Workshop

Led by Dillon Markey, Hampshire alum

June 4 – 29, 2018

Program Overview

In this film production workshop, students will collaborate over a rigorous schedule to create a complete stop motion short film from scratch. Four weeks will provide an extremely tight deadline for production, requiring an intensive classroom environment and diligent, persistent focus on the goal ahead. Students will serve as the crew, filling various roles throughout production, and will be expected to be ‘on set’ for between 8-14 hours per day. This intensive experience will provide a tangible result, in the form of a completed short film which will be submitted to festivals and shared online.

On the first day of class, students will form a committee to disseminate the groups various conceptual inclinations into one cohesive storyline. The result of this most arduous day will be a script, thumbnail storyboard, and shot list which will be followed for the remainder of the production. Phase 2 will consist of collaborative art direction and design and should take no longer than 2 days with some overlap into fabrication. In Phase 3, we will discuss the myriad technical hurdles that will arise and we will put plans in place to solve those puzzles. Students will create a detailed plan for fabrication and production. Deliberation will be kept to a minimum to progress to phase 4, fabrication. Students will utilize the many resources on campus to create vivid, detailed sets, props and puppets. Scale stop motion sets will be fabricated from scratch, puppets will be sculpted, molded, and cast, and various props will be created to actuate our imaginary world. Dialogue and sound design will also be prepared in fabrication, as well as the generation of a complete animatic. Phase 5, Production, will be the longest section and will overlap somewhat with fabrication. Students will set up our completed sets in the Stop Motion Lab in Franklin Patterson Hall (at Hampshire College), dress them with props, and light them to create a visually robust atmosphere and environment. Animation will take place over the course of the second and third weeks. Ideally we will have 6 stages animating at all times and every student will have plenty of opportunity to put their own performance into the film. The Production phase will also overlap somewhat with the final phase, Post Production. In Post, students will deal with issues of rig-removal, special effects and compositing. We will mix the sound and time the color to prepare our film for screenings and we will look at the various methods for output. Finally, students will learn how to research and submit to film festivals, create marketing packets, and premiere their film.

This workshop is not a dress rehearsal nor is it intended to ‘replicate’ a production. The goal of this course is to create and complete a short film and release it to the world. On the majority of productions an artist does not have the luxury of self-doubt or indecision; this course is designed specifically to illustrate the importance of fearless decisiveness and diligent commitment to an idea.