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Candelaria Hot Dog

An animated short film by

Alexander Montoya

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

School of Film and Animation

College of Imaging Arts and Sciences

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August 2016

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For Oliva Cordoba, who inspired this film and will always be in my memories.

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PREFACE

- Abstract

Candelaria Hotdog is a short animated film that attempts to show a personal perspective of a city's landscape and culture. It's a journey through the eyes of a person who treasures a simple memory and wants to make the best out of it by sharing it in a unique and comprehensible way.

La Candelaria is a historic neighborhood in Bogota Colombia, characterized by a constant display of a variety of street artists, musicians and beautiful locations that portray many of the local traditions and artistic styles of Colombia. The architecture from La Candelaria is primarily distinctive of the Spanish colonial style brought during the colonization period with a unique color spectrum that resembles the Colombian way of life.

The plot takes place in the context of the real Candelaria and unravels around the relationship between two characters commonly found in the city of Bogota. The story develops with a close view of the character's lives with a hint of optimism and humor.

This document examines the production process of the film and addresses some of the challenges of its creation in an attempt to serve as reference guide for future animation productions. The paper concludes with an overview of the process of making the film and shares some personal reflections from the director's perspective.

- Acknowledgments

The committee selection came after a short period of thinking. I was fortunate enough to get all the members that I thought would be a perfect fit for the project because of their professional expertise and our constant communication. I want to thank Tom Gasek who brought his vast experience working in stop motion films and was always willing to give advice on everything related to fabrication and character animation; he spend much of his time trying to make sure I had access to all the resources at hand. Mark Reisch brought his experience in computer animation and software to help make all the compositing of the film seamless and beautiful. The head of the committee Brian J. Larson who never missed an opportunity to provide advice, help and support in every single step on the way of creating the film from the original idea to the final credit sequence; thank you so much for being my mentor, my model and my friend.

I'm very grateful to all the professors of the program of film and animation at RIT for your help, patience and continuous commitment as educators. In particular, I want to thank Professor Howard Lester for supporting and encouraging my visit to RIT; I will always remember your life stories and one of the most valuable lessons of my life that is to always balance my life expectations between my hopes and my obligations.

I am eternally grateful with my parents that continuously helped me in any decision I made in my life with valuable advice and hard work, and my grandmother Mercedes Contreras whose love has constantly accompanied and motivated me to be a better person. I also want to thank all my family who inspired the story of my life and over the years has molded the individual that I am today.

Thanks to my beautiful wife Vicky Mejia Yepes who not only participated actively in the development of the film but also supported me throughout the entire process with much patience and love.

I want to thank all my friends, teammates and classmates who accompanied me through this process and made the film better with valuable feedback and support. I hope we can continue to support each other in the future road.

Thank you all!

INTRODUCTION

- Director's Context

From an early age, I remember my perspective on animated films as a marvelous world that is only possible in the dreams of those who have a childish vision of life. Characters like Daffy Duck, Scooby-Doo, The Pink Panther, Tom and Jerry, Goofy and Droopy (among many others) were a constant source of entertainment and inspiration to me since my early childhood and continue to do so today.

I was happily born and raised in Bogota-Colombia, a city full of good and fascinating people (at least the majority that I have known or remember) that has always strived for social equality. Despite how grateful and fortunate I was during my early years of education, I was given limited options while doing my college search due to the lack of opportunities and future prospects in the art field in my country during that time. For this reason, I think the direction of my path was a little meandering during the initial years.

I knew I wanted to be able to express myself through the arts so I decided to go into music studies thanks to the full support of my family and after a long search period I eventually found RIT as a way to continue this path that ultimately give me the opportunity to use animation as a tool for telling stories by using both sounds and moving images.

After all this time of personal development I have come to realize that the most important part of this storytelling comes from my real life experiences. For this reason, I believe that all the situations I have been through added valuable experience and perspective to my life, and that many of those experiences were ultimately imprinted into this film.

Candelaria Hot Dog is the result of all my development as an artist, the sum of many of my personal achievements and failures, and my continuous struggle for trying to balance the flexible experimental approach to creating a film with the rigorous technical process involved in its production.

- Goals

My main goal with this project was to create a story that could make a connection with the emotions of the audience. In order to make this possible, it was essential to keep a simple narrative structure that would work well with the timeline and resources destined for the film. For this purpose, all the creative energy was focused on telling the story through only two characters that could be "universally" recognizable and easily understood.

It was equally important to leave room for experimentation on the technical side of the film especially with all the animation techniques that implement the use of tangible materials such as Claymation and

puppets, and production workflows that require a conjunctive creative development such as sound design, because at the end, these two areas converge into my career interests.

I wanted to obtain that unique and memorable visual style that is usually found in many stop motion animated films and get the experience of fabricating each and every single part of my vision of *La Candelaria* primarily by hand with the final purpose to direct my storytelling path to the use of all these elements.

- Inspirations

Many animated shorts, features and designs were a big inspiration to me during the creation of *Candelaria Hot Dog*. Some of these references include: *One Man Band*, *Brisk Puppets*, *Speed Demon*, *Steadfast Stanley*, *I am Tom Moody*, *Pigeon Pilfer*, *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, *Frankenweenie*, *Wallace and Gromit*, and of course all of the *Laika Studio* films made in stop motion. However, my primary source of inspiration was my city of origin – *Bogota* -. Everything found in the film can be referenced to a real location in the city known as - *La Candelaria* - (Fig.1), and all the events and characters are a cinematic representation of Colombian culture.



Fig. 1: Street in La Candelaria ¹

Many street performers are relentless hard workers that tackle every day with a positive attitude in an environment where help and opportunities are limited for them. They have obligations and needs as any other human being, and most of the time they have to confront that situation in solitude. In most cases this self-dependence motivates creativity and resourcefulness, and gives them a “legal” path that allows them to play their role in society.

¹ Source: http://www.portalbogota.com/La_Candelaria_Bogota.html

In many instances, I believe this way of thinking is a decisive factor in the healthy development of the community. I directly relate this situation to my own experience (obviously in a different context) living and studying in a foreign country where the sense of solitude becomes overwhelming at times and you learn the true value of friendship and companionship. I wanted to share my appreciation for the relationship of the characters inside that environment, always emphasizing the concept of resourcefulness and friendship.

In different ways performers are sometimes despised, displaced or stereotyped as an annoyance in the public space. However, after observing and analyzing their lives, people come to realize that their lives are as valuable and complex as that of every other person in the city. I wanted to share this observation with the audience by showing my story through the story of the street performer who is the “outsider” (Fig 2-3). This is how the theme of the film came to be.



Fig. 2: *Street performer*²



Fig. 3: *“El Barbas”*³

PREPRODUCTION

- Search for the idea

From the beginning I wanted to make a film that would show my personal experience, my culture and my city from a “universal” perspective. I also knew I wanted to make full use of the music and sound as a storytelling tool because of my own skill set and experience.

² Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/Incognito/3263921427>

³ Picture by Gina Mendoza; Source: <http://laveddaderamistad.bligoo.com.co>

The initial proposal was slightly different as it was intended to elaborate more on the living situation of the street performer and his behavior under different circumstances. However, as the film development progressed the story focused more on the relationship between the two characters over one simple situation, allowing the film to be more relatable and easier to understand within a shorter time frame.

- Concept

The film primarily develops the concept of the friendship and companionship found under unexpected circumstances. It displays the resourcefulness of the street performer to make something good out of an apparently difficult situation and the effects on his relationship with – *Pacho* – (the dog).

Humor was an important tool that highlights the labor of the performer in the city streets and what my vision of their role in society is.

- Why Stop Motion?

The decision of the media was based in my professional interests. I'm interested mostly in the creative process of making an animated film. My initial thought was that a stop motion film allows for an easier control over the software tools as opposed to an exclusively computer generated process which usually brings many software related issues. However, I knew that as much as I wanted to avoid spending a lot of time dealing with technical issues, other problems would come up in other areas such as fabrication and studio coordination.

While the story was envisioned to fit the media, the story also informed the final look and craft of the film. For instance, the fabrication of the dog was originally thought as a furry puppet using clothing materials but ultimately became a clay puppet after testing how much personality was added to the animation of a simple walk cycle.

- Story Strategies

As I went into pre-production I knew the story was going to be the driving force of the film. Characters and locations needed to be capable to tell the story of the real Candelaria, so a lot of time was spent looking for ways to tell the best story through the stop motion animation media.

The handcrafted quality of the film was important to emphasize the roots and origins of the artists and artisans distinctive of the streets of Bogota. In the same way, the music was composed with the purpose of resembling a traditional Colombian format. This approach was a challenge that added value and meaning to every single element of the film, and was important in the purpose of creating the right atmosphere and adding originality to the film.

- Color Scheme

One of the biggest decisions in terms of the overall look of the film was the selection of the color scheme. During the early stages, I wanted to make a black and white film for three main reasons:

1. I wanted the film to have a more “serious” tone, since this was originally intended for a mature audience.
2. This would mean a significant reduction to the costs of production, the time of fabrication and post-production.
3. The style would fit perfectly into one of the two main architectural landscapes of Bogota.

However, as I was looking for visual references, I found that this color “conflict” actually exists in the real Candelaria (Fig. 4). I found that many of these buildings were made during the colonization period and most of them were originally intended to be white with some wood and brick ornaments.

To contradict this imposition brought by European countries and to emphasize the importance of the local traditions, I decided that this Candelaria needed to have a more colorful design that describes a little bit better the current state of Bogota and symbolizes the cultural diversity of the capital.



Fig. 4: Street of la Candelaria with two different color schemes⁴

⁴ Source: <http://gotravelaz.com/candelaria>

Other animated and live action films were also referenced in order to come up with the final selection of the color scheme. Some of these sources came from several websites such as *moviesincolor.com* (Fig. 5).

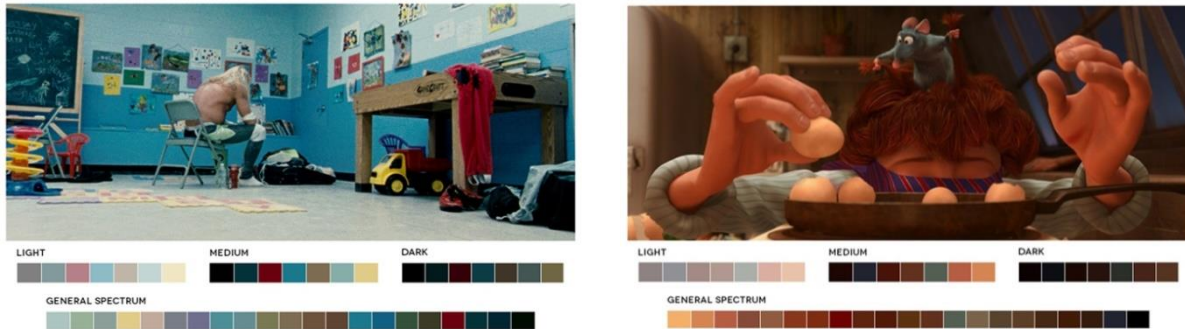


Fig. 5: Color scheme samples from Darren Aronofsky's 'The Wrestler', and Pixar's 'Ratatouille'⁵

- Character Design

The character design process began with very rough sketches (as is common in almost any animated film) but I quickly noticed that these drawings wouldn't translate as well in the design of a real life puppet. The main reason for this was that the design constantly needed to be more functional than beautiful.

Since I didn't want to feel limited by the media that I had chosen, I decided to take advantage of it by roughly sculpting several versions of the characters. This process allowed me to quickly discard the pieces that could be potentially problematic and at the same time gave me a chance to test the materials that would eventually be part of the final design (Fig. 6).

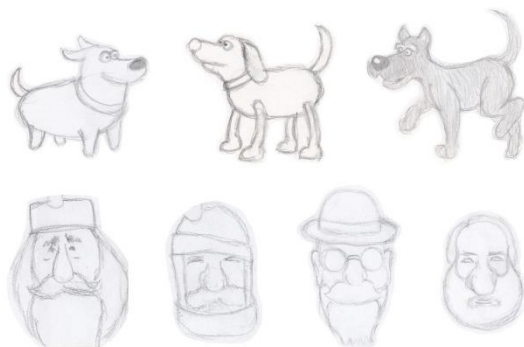


Fig. 6

⁵ Source: moviesincolor.com

There was a lot of experimentation involved with the fabrication of the every single element of the film. For this reason, at times I noticed it was hard for me to distinguish between a pre-production or production process. Almost all the elements of the film came as a result of a preliminary test that ultimately made it to the final design of the film either as a character, a prop or a location.

- Sound Design

A quote from Randy Thom was kept in mind during the initial development of the film:

...“the way for a filmmaker to take advantage of sound is not simply to make it possible to record good sound on the set, or simply to hire a talented sound designer/composer to fabricate sounds, but rather to design the film with sound in mind, to allow sound’s contributions to influence creative decisions in the other crafts”... - Randy Thom -

As the director of the film, it was important to me to use sound as a storytelling element. What I got from my experience in RIT was that many times sound is either underappreciated as an integral part of the story or in many cases even ignored until the end and done as a mandatory step that is required to complete the film.

The labor of collecting sounds was done early on and this allowed sound to be used as a reference to possible ideas or solutions to unresolved questions that came up during production. In the case of Candelaria Hot Dog, this approach helped setup jokes, actions, layouts and cuts while saving resources and time without sacrificing any of the visual elements of the film.

- Note on Music

One of the relevant facts on the music development was the decision to avoid using a temporary track. What I got from my previous experiences working in sound design is that it is a very common situation for a director to “fall in love” or get fixated with the temporary track once this starts influencing decisions.

Just as sound design, I believe music can (and should) influence all the creative decisions of the film even during pre-production. I have been brought to the conclusion that the music gradually becomes the film itself, just as any other design element, and it is not something that you simply add (or remove) at the end without considerations on the effects on the story.

- Previsualization

The previsualization of the film presented a challenge in the translation between drawn animation and stop motion media. At the time of creating a 2D animatic, perspective and distribution of the layout

became more important than the design itself, so In order to avoid any delays during production, it was important to make sure that every shot was possible in a real life scenario.

I decided to create a 2D animatic that used simple shapes as representation of the characters and parts of the set. This animatic was very useful as a reference to the story and the progression of the shots. However, in retrospective, I think a 3D animatic would have been more useful as a reference to the design and distribution of the assets in the studio and would have given me a better chance to explore other possible camera positions.

- Time Management Strategies

Following a plan that could allow the film to be completed in time was paramount. For this purpose, a shot list was made from the shots planned in the animatic. They were categorized to ensure that the core of the story would make sense as early as possible with the “primary” shots, leaving extra room for changes along the way with the “secondary” shots.

Ideally none of these scenes would come to be removed from the final version of the film but ultimately that was not the case due to the regular delays characteristic of any film production. This brought an important lesson on the basic time strategies to create a short film, and the importance of clear and concise storytelling.

PRODUCTION

- Characters First

The production of all the elements of the film was driven by the design of the Puppets. My goal as a character animator was to be able to tell the story through the character’s actions. For this reason, it was indispensable to allow them to look and move in the best possible way before moving into the fabrication of the set and props. In order to keep a consistent style throughout the entire film, the design of the puppets became the base of the entire fabrication process.

- Character Fabrication - Considerations

One of the main issues to keep in mind while fabricating the characters was the potential damage that they would suffer with the constant manipulation during the long animation sessions. For this reason, it was necessary to create spare versions of the puppets in the event of a breakage.

In order to push the design of the characters to its full potential, almost every part of the puppets was made by hand. However, this implied a great difficulty in the reproduction of identical duplicates. This

brought another potential problem that could eventually generate continuity issues in the edition of the film.

For this reason, it was more convenient to create a puppet with replaceable parts that could be quickly repaired at any time especially in the sections that would be manipulated more frequently. Such was the case of the hands of the main character which was made with detachable wrists. The example below shows the final version of the forearm (left side Fig. 7).

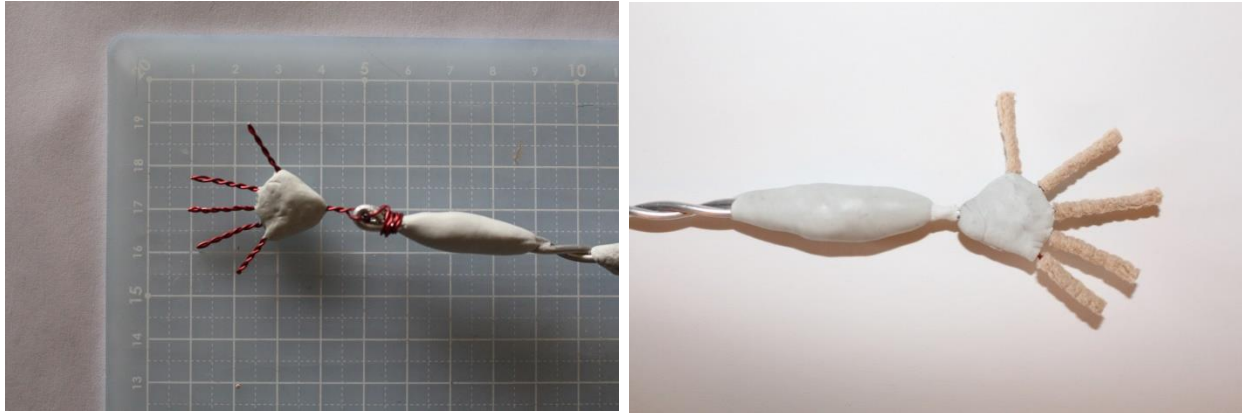


Fig. 7

- Shooting Trial-and-error

The setup process was one of the most laborious of the production. The original plan was to shoot from my studio apartment in which I was planning to construct the entire set and setup all the necessary equipment. After a few attempts to organize everything in this location we realized that the space was not ample and accessible enough.

This situation forced us to move and reassemble everything into a stop motion dedicated studio inside the SOFA facilities at RIT. They gave us permission to setup all the set parts for the entire semester and gave us access to some of their equipment in order to use it exclusively for the production of Candelaria Hot Dog.

With this contribution, both the SOFA facilities team and the chair of the MFA program Tom Gasek collaborated enormously with the accelerated production of the film.



Fig. 8

- Set Fabrication

Several material tests were made for the set construction. The initial idea was to fabricate all the parts in wood and cardboard, and paint them to emulate a city street. However, this approach was completely wrong as it failed to match both the visual style of the puppets and the concept of the film.

At this point, it was important to find materials with similar textures and reflective properties to those found on a real street. Some of which include: vinyl tiles, acrylic paints, art paper, wood, plastic and styrofoam.



Fig. 9

These materials were used to emphasize the details of the street in order to add realism and believability to the film. The colors and textures were used to highlight the importance of the set as a storytelling element and to add contrast between the characters and the location (Fig.10).



Fig. 10

- Recycling Parts

Due to space limitations, it was impossible to construct the entire street as a single set. After some testing, it was decided that La Candelaria was to be fabricated as two separate sets. This situation brought the opportunity to re-use some of the background sections by relocating them to “fake” a different location, and allowed us to experiment with different camera positions that were not considered in the storyboard.

At the end this use of the set parts combined with the positioning of the camera and a variety of compositing techniques allowed us to have a seamless progression of shots.

- Costume Design and Props

One of the biggest coordination challenges during the production of the film was the fabrication of the costumes and clothing accessories. Weaving all the cloths on the puppets while allowing proper movement and resistance, and creating miniature clothing armatures that would enhance the animation was a very demanding but rewarding labor as it ultimately made the character’s movements believable.

Vicky Mejia made a great work in creating these costumes that flawlessly match the story. The selection of the costume materials was a long process that included several trial and error situations that gave us valuable experience and influenced many of the stylistic decisions of the film. Materials with elastic

properties and little bulk such as cotton, polyester and nylon were used for the clothes, while materials like silicone, plastic and synthetic leather were used for the accessories (Fig 11).

Two incredibly talented undergraduate students at the school of film and animation collaborated in the fabrication department. Illysa Simsek made many of the food props using polymer clay and acrylic paints, while Austin Quinlan made all the silicone casting of the clothing accessories like shoes and hats (Fig. 12).



Fig. 11



Fig. 12

- Rigging

During the early stages of pre-production, the resources at hand were carefully analyzed in order to avoid any complication with the fabrication of rigs. Even though the animation was entirely done straight ahead, the use of a previz allowed us to plan the staging of the scenes and some of the character's actions.

For this reason, the rigging process for the film didn't require any complex pieces. For the most part I used aluminum wire wrapped in Chroma-key tape, and most of the time the wire was attached to a regular C-Stand. However, as the animation progressed and the wire started to lose strength, the rig presented a problem with precision. For this reason, some of the shots needed to be improvised and fixed by hand (Fig. 13).



Fig. 13

- Cinematography

Manojh Reddy provided his great eye and skillset to enhance the final look of the film as a cinematographer. We decided to use a DSLR camera (Canon Rebel T5i) with two different lenses: an 18-55mm and a 100mm Macro. The macro lens was used for medium shots and close-ups because of its convenient focal length, while the 55mm was primarily used for wide shots.

After several animation tests with the dog, I came to the conclusion that shooting in 30fps was better for the film given the fact that the animation was going to be made in “twos”. This option offered a good balance between speed of production and animation smoothness.

- Lighting

Initially we experimented combining two different lighting kits. The first one was a Day light Kino-Flo kit (3 heads) and the second one was a Tungsten Dedolight K12B kit (4 heads). This setup however, proved to be inconvenient for Claymation as it generated temperature issues and restricted the mobility around the set for animation.

Once we moved to the animation studio in RIT we decided to go for a final setup using 3 heads (100W) from the Tungsten Dedolight kit and one overhead Arri (300W). Besides this, we also used some light filters to keep the daylight appearance and the consistency of the color palette at all times.



Fig. 14

An anecdote to mention about the experience with the lights came during one of the last animation sessions. After a few hours of animation, the 300W overhead bulb blew out in the middle of a shot. Fortunately with the help of Kevin Lamark (one of the SOFA facilities staff team members), the bulb was carefully replaced and the animation could be resumed without any major changes in the shot.

- Camera Movements

One big production challenge that I decided to tackle with the film was the use of camera movements in two different scenes. The first one was made on the second shot of the film where the camera pans on its vertical axis (pedestal), and the second one was made on the very last shot of the film where the camera rotates on its vertical axis (tilt).

The challenge was to plan, develop and animate these two scenes at the same time without the use of any automated motorized camera rig; In other words, I had to do it the “old” way. For this purpose, a simple camera tripod with carefully measured marks was used.

The process was tedious as it needed to be tested and re-shot in several occasions at different animation frame rates in order to secure a smooth animation and a realistic motion. Ultimately, the result was successful and added an extra detail to the craft of the film.

- Animation

The long studio hours were probably the most enjoyable part of creating the film. It was a time that required a lot of concentration and physical work that allowed me to focus all my creative energy into telling the story that I wanted to tell.

All this “alone” time gave me the opportunity to develop my skills and work habits to a level that I never experienced before. For instance, an important lesson came to me on the proper care of my body and the appropriate adaptation of the workspace as the production deadline approached. A small pain in the abdomen forced me into the urgent care and the doctor’s diagnosis stated that the pain was possibly a consequence of a repetitive activity in an incorrect position. This situation delayed the production of the film but was very important on an educational level.



Fig. 15

- Time Constraints

Coming close to the production deadline, one of the most difficult parts of the work as a director was to make creative decisions based on circumstances external to the film itself. In order to be able to finish the film in time, some scenes needed to be left out and some of the time destined for improvements needed to be used on developing other parts of the film.

This situation allowed me to look at the film from a completely different perspective and gave me a chance to focus on some of the areas that I felt weaker at the time. Some of these areas include the direction of a group of people (under pressure), time management and efficient storytelling.

- Music Score

A meeting with the composer Sean Jefferson brought a long discussion over topics such as story, visual style and mostly the soundscape of the film. With the purpose to obtain a sonority that could be identified as “Colombian”, music references of traditional Colombian rhythms were considered. Some of these references include music from the Orinoquia, Andina and Pacifica regions, as well as some current and popular Colombian bands such as *Puerto Candelaria*, *Monsieur Perine* and *Choquibtown*.

This “spotting” session with the composer was very productive in terms of idea generation. However, after our initial meeting we had several conversations through e-mails where he would send several music proposals and I would reply to him with feedback and suggestions. For instance, one of the longest discussions we had and one of the most difficult things to obtain during the production of the music was the access to real instruments that would match a traditional format. For this reason, after a few iterations of the music we finally decided to use many computer generated sounds to create the illusion of a real band.

All in all, working this way allowed Sean to have more freedom to develop his own artistic approach to the story and gave me an opportunity to work on my delegation and trusting skills. I am very satisfied with the result since this process ultimately made the film unique and original.

POST-PRODUCTION

- Files Management

Keeping an organized workflow was a very important part of the project. The communication between all the participants and constant exchange of information demanded a very precise management. During the post-production stage, it was particularly important to safely store different versions of all the takes in RAW and large JPEG files as well as compressed and uncompressed files in order to have easy access to all the separate layers of compositing. This reduced the rendering times and allowed us to test different compositing techniques while using non-destructive workflows.

- Compositing

The first step of the compositing was cleaning out the rigs from the photographs. This process was done primarily in Adobe After Effects and was slightly different from shot to shot as in some cases additional factors needed to be considered such as material reflective properties, colors and grime.

I want to emphasize the fantastic work of other team members like Sultan Alshehri, Meghdad Asadi Lari and Ihab Mardini who helped with this process always in a timely manner. In the same way, the final coloring process, layer blending and particle addition, was done with the valuable help of Mark Reisch and Manojh Reddy.

- Editing

During the editing process, the feedback that I got from people outside of the production team was extremely valuable. After observing and dissecting the film many times, it was important to get a fresh

perspective from people who had never watched the film. The clarity of the story and the logical course of events were more important than following the order of shots exactly as planned. For this reason, some changes were made in the editing of the film by following some of these opinions. Dhaneesh Jameson was one of the main collaborators who gave this fresh perspective and provided his valuable experience during the final stages of the film.

- Final Audio

While generating the soundscape for Candelaria Hot Dog, several things that had to be taken into account. The most important part of the process was the communication between the sound designer and the director and the ability of the sound designer to individually create a work that encloses both the director's vision and the designer's personal artistic approach. Vicky Mejia made a great job in achieving these two particular goals and successfully created the soundscape for the film.

The primary function of the sound effects was to keep a balance between reality and fantasy adding to the stylized nature of the film. In this case, the sounds were not supposed to be specific to the region but instead were used to create the atmosphere of a common city street.

Given that the film had little or no dialogues, the story needed to be told mostly through the acting of the characters, so the sounds were generally used to emphasize the jokes and anticipate all the important actions made by the characters.

- Titles and Credits

The credit sequence was made entirely using 2D digital animation. The decision to make it this way was to differentiate and add variety to the film. For this reason, the color palette, the character design and the animation style were carefully considered in order to keep a consistent look (Fig 16). Karl Pajak, a fellow undergraduate student at the School of Film and Animation, did a fantastic job which ultimately added an extra touch to the final impression of the film.



Fig. 16

PUBLIC REACTIONS

At the time of the first screening of the film which was at Carlson Auditorium at RIT, a new system was implemented for the graduate thesis projects where international students had to make an art statement in front of the audience right after the projection of their respective films. Even though I felt confident about my English skills and I had many expectations on how the audience would react, for obvious reasons this situation added to the nervousness preceding the film's release. For this reason, it was difficult for me to pay much attention to many of the people's reactions during the projection.

After the screening of the film and the art statement, I remember one of the reactions that came from the chair of the School of Film and Animation - Malcolm Spaul - and it was directed to some of my acting decisions. This comment was on the topic of delivering vs suggesting information through the character's actions and it helped me realize how the audience perceived my work at the time. This comment was also relevant to my professional interests particularly as a character animator, which is why I remember it so clearly.

On the negative side, a comment was made on the lack of depth in some of the scenes which emphasized the space limitations at the studio and made the images seem a little flat at times.

On a more personal level, one of the most important reactions came from the Colombian audience which brought generally positive reactions. Up to this day, most of the positive comments have been made on the craft of the film and the believability of the world of *La Candelaria*. This eventually gave the film an official selection into the "new talents" category for one of the most important film festivals in Colombia – Festival Internacional de Cine de Cartagena de Indias (FICCI).

- Festival Submissions

Some of the film festivals where the film has participated up to this day include:

- Official Latino Short Film Festival (USA)
- Festival Internacional de Cine de Cartagena de Indias - FICCI - (Colombia)
- SIFF Southeastern International Film Festival 2016 (USA)
- Filmstock Film Festival (USA)
- Reedy Reels Film Festival (USA)
- Festival de cine corto de Popayan (Colombia)
- Anim!Arte - International Student Animation Festival of Brazil (Brazil)

- Corto Creativo Short Film Festival (Mexico)
- IN.S.A.N.E Animation Film Festival (Sweden)
- La Boite Carrée - Traveling short film festival (Portugal)
- Festival Equinoxio (Colombia)
- Indiearth Animation Film Festival (India)
- Pervolia International Film Festival (Cyprus)
- Quabila Film Festival (Egypt)
- RIT Honor Show (USA)

CONCLUSIONS

The experience of creating this film allowed me to develop in many areas of my life. I had the chance to work hard for a personal goal while coordinating a fantastic group of people. I learned to trust more in my own skills and decisions even though I'm still eager to learn much more about animation.

I learned that working hard is very satisfactory but it's even more satisfactory when you do it for something you really believe in or you really want to do. After working continuous hours at the studio I realized how much I enjoy the time I spend animating characters and even after getting tired of working on the same project for a while, I still feel excitement every time I get a small glimpse of a new idea or feel motivated every time I watch an inspiring film that uses new tools in a creative way.

The relationship between the two main characters was a direct reflection of my own relationships with my family and friends. As the animation progressed, I noticed that in order to obtain a "universal" and relatable story, I had to openly show real human behavior which I could only reference from real situations that happened in my life. For this reason, now I believe that close observation and exploration is an incredible valuable part of storytelling. This filmmaking experience forced me to state my own artistic vision and personal opinions openly while developing my communication skills.

- Following my Roots

I have come this far with a lot of effort but always with the valuable support of my family. I have been very fortunate for having the opportunity to learn, apply my knowledge and share my experiences primarily in the United States and I think it is my responsibility to share some of these experiences and opportunities in Colombia for the future animation professionals.

For doing so, the search for festival screenings of Candelaria Hot Dog was focused in many regions of Colombia with the purpose of sharing both the story and the experience of creating the film as an educational tool. It is my purpose to continue to share these tools now as a more experienced artist and as an educator.

- What would I do different now?

One of the most important experiences that I had was in my work as a director and producer. I was very fortunate to work with an amazing group of people with whom I continuously had very good communication and understanding. I think it's important to learn how to pick your work team and learn how to communicate your ideas to them in an efficient and respectful way.

The process of delegating responsibilities was difficult at the beginning because I wanted to be in control of every aspect of the film. I think if I were to do something different at this point, it would be to trust more in my team selection criteria and rely on the opinions and judgements of that team from the beginning. I would spend more time developing my strengths and would try to organize my production timeline accordingly.

- Online Link to Candelaria Hot Dog:

<https://vimeo.com/140668453>

APPENDIX A - Original Thesis Proposal

(Working title)

By

Alexander Montoya

MFA in Film and Animation

School of Film and Animation

Rochester Institute of Technology

Rochester, New York

March 2014

Approved for Submission By:

Brian Larson, Chair

Synopsis:

Five minute Stop Motion / 3D Computer Animation film. A versatile street performer (busker) meets a friend that allows him to reveal his real personality.

Rationale:

For a person that develops habits over the years, sometimes is very difficult to accept change. However, sometimes these changes are inevitable and urge us to act in certain ways that we are not used to. With a little bit of fortune, these moments also bring the opportunity to find something or somebody very special on the way.

This is an experience that I personally find as one of the most interesting ways to grow up as an artist and as a human being. The way I find opportunities in life is usually different to every plan I made, and this brings excitement and adventure to every decision and moment in my life.

As for the media, I believe stop motion animation allows me to express myself more naturally as an artist and also allows me to focus on the skills I have developed during my studies at RIT; other computer elements are also necessary for the project and I'm sure they will make the film look much better and will help me learn more about the resources and workflow for the creation of an animated film.

Treatment:

On a city street a man walks by and sets up a small "stage", he gets ready to make a show on the street. He starts doing his performance but as time passes he realizes that people is not very interested in what he is doing, instead of paying attention to him they just throw a few coins at him with indifference.

The man does this for several days and changes his performance every day trying to get people's attention but all he gets is the attention from a playful street dog that shows up everyday. (However, the man is more interested in getting human's attention)

The dog comes day after day showing a growing interest in what the man does, he enjoys teasing the busker and always tries to get some attention from him. On the other hand, the man is always trying to stay focused and to be nice with people.

The man gradually starts accepting the dog as his only real companion as the dog is being persistent and friendly to him all along. The man begins to perform with more enthusiasm than before, even if only in front of the dog.

One day, the man decides to do a performance that requires a lot of concentration and physical endurance from his part. One by one, people start paying attention to him; the man is thrilled about the situation so he decides to keep on going with the same show for more days.

The observers gradually fill the place and move the dog away as they need some space to watch the show. The dog is persistent and struggles to get near the man but with little success.

Eventually, the dog stops coming to see the man. The busker is confused, he's clearly uncomfortable with the situation and he gets distracted to a point where his performance is affected. His concern about the dog is so big, yet the attention of the people is centered on him and he has to continue with the show.

His only real friend, his companion has disappeared inexplicably and he has to decide what to do. (Is the dog in danger?) The decision to go look for the dog or to finally become a renowned artist will reveal to him the most important thing in his life.

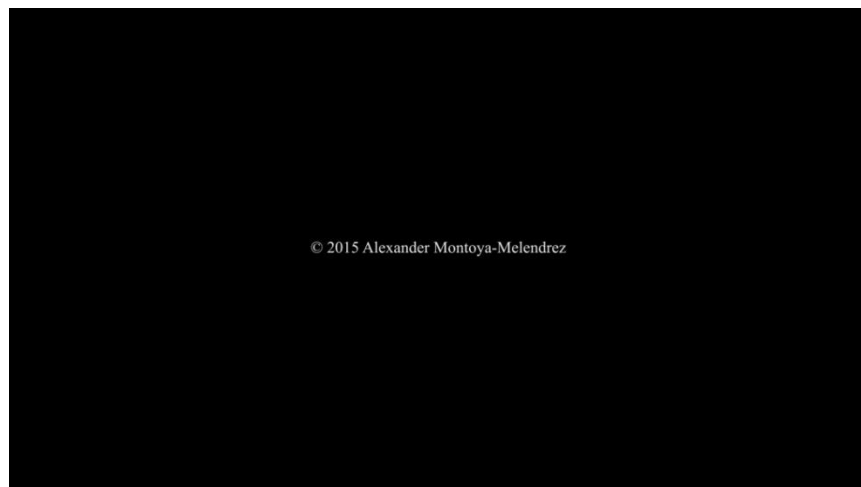
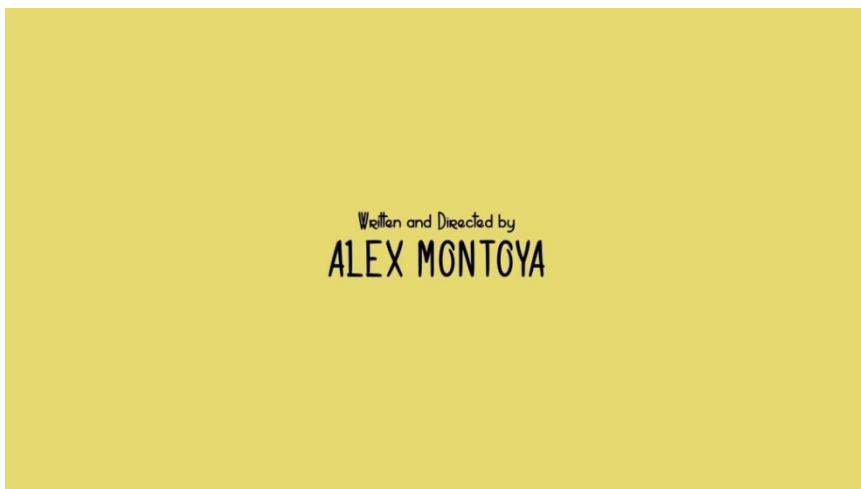
Original Budget Study (not actual):

- Character design / construction	\$500
- Rig construction	\$200
- Set design / construction	\$500
- Material tests	\$100
- Construction equipment (workshop, sculpting tools)	\$200
- Production space (studio space, electricity)	\$1200
- Music composer / Rights	\$200
- Miscellaneous expenses (Food, transport, tools)	\$500
- Distribution (advertisement, festivals)	\$100
TOTAL	\$3500

Original Timeline (not actual): (March 2014 – May 2015)

	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
Script	X														
Concept Art	X	X	X												
Storyboard			X	X											
Animatic					X										
Material tests					X	X									
Puppet construction						X	X	X	X						
Rig construction									X						
Set construction								X	X	X					
3D environment			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Music	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X			
Animation Tests										X					
Animation											X	X	X	X	
Editing										X	X	X	X	X	X
Compositing										X	X	X	X	X	X
Sound													X	X	X

APPENDIX B - Screenshots



APPENDIX C - Promotional Poster

