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**SPECTACLES**

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## **CONTENTS**

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Thesis Report</b>	<b>2</b>
Original Concept	
Storytelling Goals	
Technical Goals	
Pre-Production	
Production	
Post-Production	
Screenings	
Experience	
<b>Appendix A- Proposal</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Appendix B- Storyboards</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Appendix C- Color Script</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Appendix D- Character Designs</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Appendix E- Production Stills</b>	<b>60</b>

## **ABSTRACT**

The goal of this paper is to outline the production of the film “Spectacles” from inspiration to completion. Also included in this paper are supplementary materials in order to further illustrate the processes used and decisions made during production. “Spectacles” explores the importance of free play and imagination in a child’s life. The film takes place in a domestic environment. The story unfolds from multiple viewpoints: the viewpoint of the protagonist, a little girl named Gigi, the viewpoint of Gigi’s mother, and then finally the viewers are given their own viewpoint. These separate perspectives were challenging to establish but were essential to the story. The film is a 2-D animation that has been drawn pencil on paper and then colored and composited digitally.

## ORIGINAL CONCEPT

The inspiration for this film came from my own personal life. I am the mother of a seven-year-old boy who has a very active and vivid imagination. He is also acutely interested in video games, cartoon series and playing on the computer. What inspired the story for this film is my desire, as a parent, to figure out a balance for his schedule in order to encourage the use of his imagination and his individuality without being the mom who banishes technology from her home. This story was also my way of saying how important I think imagination and individuality are. I wanted to state clearly that without our children being able to think for themselves and imagine a more beautiful world we are in for a very grey future.

This country was built on innovations and free thinkers. Some of the things that made the United States the powerhouse it once was, was its citizens' ability to think outside the box, to invent and to imagine. The ability to do this begins in childhood. Like any other ability the ability to imagine takes practice and this practice happens when a child is allowed and encouraged to play. This is an easily disputed position because free play and imagining are by definition a free form unstructured activity. Therefore it can be difficult to see the necessity for practice. But we can see the decline in the use of the imagination in many measurable ways. Along side of that we can also see in equally measurable ways that children are given very little room to benefit from unstructured time to play, pretend and learn to imagine. Following are some areas where we can see this imagination break down.

The state of the US economy is not what it once was. One of the causes for this decline is the fall of U.S. ingenuity. One example of this is the falling number of U.S. patents: "A decade ago, American companies and engineers were granted ten thousand more U.S. patents than foreign entities, but that lead has now dwindled to four thousand" (Ouellette 6). It is not a leap to attribute the decline in U.S. innovations to changes in our society, beginning with how it is to be a child in the U.S. Dana Gioia, poet and former Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts sums this up clearly in his 2007 commencement speech at Stanford University: "Adult life begins in a child's imagination, and we've relinquished that imagination to the marketplace". He goes on to say:

The situation is a cultural and educational disaster, but it also has huge and alarming economic consequences. If the United States is to compete effectively with the rest of the world in the new global marketplace, it is not going to succeed through cheap labor or cheap raw materials, nor even the free flow of capital or a streamlined industrial base. To compete success-

fully, this country needs continued creativity, ingenuity, and innovation.

Lack of imagination is cited in relation to problems as far reaching as national security. In the 9-11 Commission Report there is an entire section (11.1) titled: "Imagination" where the commission states: "We believe the 9/11 attacks revealed four kinds of failures: in imagination, policy, capabilities, and management." (339). And they go on to say that it is "crucial to find a way of routinizing, even bureaucratizing, the exercise of imagination" (344). When thinking about things like the economy and national security we may not instantly couple those subjects with creativity and the use of imagination but that in itself is an example of the thoughtlessness that we can suffer from. There are countless other areas of today's society where we see this same crippling lack of imagination: reality shows, elementary school bulletin boards, toy store shelves, the movie box office, fast food menus; the list really can go on and on. If we want to turn this around we must start at the beginning with teaching children how to gain a respect and life-long interest in creative arts or culture or just plain dreaming so they can keep their imagination viable and usable for the long term.

The disappearance of free play and space for personal expression begins first thing in the morning when the child arrives at school. Since the institution of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 schools have reduced recess time, creative arts and even, in some cases, physical education in order to make more time for reading and mathematics. Currently it is reported that only 70% of kindergarten classrooms have recess period at all (Ginsburg 183).

The No Child Left Behind Act was instituted in response to startlingly low standardized test scores across the nation. The problem with the curriculum restructuring that has taken place over the last decade in response to these scores is a lack of balance and the marginalizing of creative pursuits. School administrators, desperate to continue to receive federal funds for their schools have turned their focus so vehemently towards the raising of standardized test scores they have been forced to ignore many important aspects of child development. Social development, emotional growth, problem solving, personal expression, development of the imagination, the ability to form unique thoughts, all of these parts of growing up are nurtured by just what schools have been forced to cut, the creative arts and free time during the day. Again, Dana Gioia makes my point very well: "The real purpose of arts education is to create complete human beings capable of leading successful and productive lives in a free society. " And that is what we need "successful and productive" "com-

plete humans". With an incomplete school system we cannot hope to have this.

Time after school, for the most part, can go one of two ways depending on socioeconomic status. In the higher socioeconomic echelons there is a trend toward resume building and constant achieving. Media in all forms are planting the seed that if you are not achieving and striving right now then you are falling behind. Every day there are TV commercials about teaching your baby how to read and parenting magazines advising parents to start preparing their toddlers college resumes now. "Parents receive the message that if their children are not well prepared, well balanced, and high-achieving, they will not get a desired spot in higher education" (Ginsburg 185). This resume building and need to achieve beginning earlier and earlier "selection for private preschool programs can even be competitive, and parents may need to consider how best to "package" their preschooler" (Ginsburg 185). This loss of free time does more than just damage the development of the imagination "a hurried lifestyle can be a source of stress, anxiety and may even contribute to depression for many children" (AAP 1). To add to these crammed schedules is the child's own drive to eat up all of the modern technologies.

In 2005 it was reported that: "young people spend 44.5 hours each week" in front of a screen (TV, videogames, computer, etc.) This report continues by saying that now this number is grossly underestimated since "this figure, from 2005 research, is too dated to adequately consider the explosion in cell-phone texting as additional screen time" (Ouellette 3). An excessive amount of time being "passively entertained through television or computer games" (Ginsburg 185) is a problem that spans to both ends of the socio-economic scale.

When considering children who come from lower income families there are different problems that lead to the same result of not benefiting from "access to free, unstructured play of their own making" (Miller and Almon 3). In households where the parent(s) have to work more than one job to pay the bills children are left to daycare and after-school programs. These after school programs can provide many benefits. However, "youth who are most in need continue to have very limited access to effective programs" (B. Miller 8). When these programs are not available safety becomes an issue because "In many communities, children cannot play safely outside of home unless they are under close adult supervision and protection" (Ginsburg 185). In these cases children have no choice but to stay home and without guidance otherwise set out to exceed the 44 plus hours of screen time, "these hours spent in front of screens are contributing factors in the explosion of ADD, aggression, autism, and obesity in children and teenagers" (Ouellette 3).

With this lack of free time and less time to play and explore in an unstructured and safe way there are several things that are now missing from a child's life and development.

“Play is where children discover ideas, experiences, and concepts and think about them and their consequences. This is where literacy and learning really begins” (The Science Teacher 1). Aside from intellectual and academic proponents playing is a way for kids to grow up to be emotionally stable adults: “‘Free-play,’ as scientists call it, is critical for becoming socially adept, coping with stress... play may provide skills that will help [them] survive and reproduce” (Wenner 7).

Imagination and its benefits are clear. How we keep the use of the imagination viable in the US is also clear. The creative arts must return to public schools. Kids need to have a place in school where they can experiment and express themselves. It is also important to recognize that free play and unstructured time is an important component in preparing children to be well adjusted, thinking contributors. There are many things that will need to happen to readjust school curriculums and priorities in households across the country. But I believe that the first and most important step is awareness. Having the awareness of the decline in imagination in our citizens, the ramifications of this, and encouraging children now to reverse this trend by spending some of their time playing, drawing, pretending, day-dreaming and imagining is how we will pull out of this dilemma.

## STORYTELLING GOALS

The goals for this film in regard to storytelling were fairly simple. I wanted to show the protagonist's (Gigi's) world and contrast it to the other 'grey' world. Gigi's world is to be seen as a bright and colorful world, the world of freethinking and imagination where everything is full of life. The grey world is the place of rigidity, dullness and conformity. Aside from showing the contrast of these two worlds it was important to show Gigi's transition from her world into the 'grey' world. This transition could be read as Gigi growing up or conforming. In addition to showing Gigi's transition into the 'grey' world it was also important to show how she got out of it.

By showing the contrast I was absolutely making a judgment call. My message was clear that Gigi's world, fueled by imagination was preferable to the rigid adult world; that being young at heart and keeping your imagination, alive makes the world a more interesting and beautiful place. These worlds next to each other needed to create a stark and obvious contrast in order to really drive this point home. Gigi's world needed to be bright, vivid and full of life. Gigi continually engaged in free play and fun and her mother repeatedly removed her from her fun trying to correct her follies. The decisions made throughout pre-production in regard to the design elements in the film were very important to drive the storytelling goals home.

For example, in the character designs all of the characters, except for Gigi and the characters that only exist in Gigi's imagination, wear glasses. This very clearly delineates a separation between Gigi and her world with the 'others', the 'glasses wearers'. In addition to creating an obvious separation between the 'glasses wearers' and Gigi it also separates the characters with glasses from the audience. The audience is less likely to relate or respond to these characters on any kind of personal level because there is very little humanity to them. By taking away their eyes and replacing them with flat white lenses I took away much of their ability to emote any real expression. Without this ability to express an audience is much less likely to sympathize or create attachments to these characters.

Another goal in regard to storytelling referenced a child's need or desire to please. I couldn't have Gigi just do what she wants and rudely dance in her mother's face when it so obviously displeased her mother. Although I don't allow the mother figure to have much humanity and the mother really comes off more like a mommy-grabbing machine, I still want the mother-child relationship to be present in the film. Gigi does not immediately rip the glasses off of her face when she is in the doctor's office and sees what they have done to her vision, because she is a good girl and wants to please like all kids.

What Gigi does is an important stepping-stone in growing up. She learns to compromise. Gigi devises a scheme to keep her vision and her mother's approval by popping the lenses out of her glasses, but also keeping up the appearance of conforming by continuing to wear the frames. The mother doesn't notice that the lenses are gone because the frames are still there and she does not slow down to look deeper. This may come off as sneaky on Gigi's part but I think this is a very typical and necessary strategy for surviving in a family or society. Sometimes part of growing up is learning how to stay true to yourself, but also fit in. Although it's not as an idealistic message as I'd like- 'stay true to yourself and the rest be damned'- learning to compromise and spare your mother once in awhile is not a bad lesson to learn.

### **TECHNICAL GOALS**

The technical goals for this film were simple. My goal was to produce this film using traditional hand drawn animation. My workflow would not differ greatly from my two-quarter film. I intended on animating this film using pencil on paper and then completing the clean up and color stage in Adobe Photoshop. Compositing the animation with background elements would be done in Adobe After Effects. Final edits and synching with sound would be done in Final Cut Pro. A couple of technical goals that I set out to accomplish were to have some shots with multiple animated characters interacting together in the same scene. Another goal was to have hand painted backgrounds that would successfully mesh with digitally colored animation.



## **PREPRODUCTION**

Preproduction began in the spring of 2009 and lasted until the late fall of the same year, moving into production late 2009 and early 2010. The preproduction process was lengthy but invaluable. Writing about this stage is difficult because often I was working on several things simultaneously but here is my attempt.

Preproduction for this film began as I prepared my thesis proposal in the spring of 2009. The materials that I was required to collect and produce for my proposals were: rough concept drawings and character sketches, a story treatment, statement of purpose, budget and timeline. Many of the story and design elements from these early drawings and texts were present in the finished film. Many more elements, of course, developed as the preproduction months passed. I found the proposal process invaluable. It forced me to really focus on my intent around producing this film.

Once the idea was proposed and my story goals were established I began carrying out the story by drawing thumbnails of the entire film. Thumbnails were drawn on post-it notes with pencil and then stuck onto larger sheets of paper. This method allowed for easy editing. If a sequence was not working the way I wanted I was able to easily move, reorder, and remove drawings as needed. These drawings were done quickly and loosely and underwent countless changes. This process took roughly a month. After the structure and flow of the story was somewhat established I moved on to the next phase of storyboards.

These boards were drawn digitally. I chose to create these drawings in Photoshop to allow easy editing and to keep the drawings loose and fast. Since these drawings were digital I was able to edit separate elements of the board, changing position and scale of each element in the shot with minimal redrawing. This enabled me to start working on the composition and angles of the shots in order to take the story telling to a more complete and efficient level. I spent about three months revising this set of storyboards before putting them into After Effects, creating an animatic. By the time the drawings were put into the animatic there were not many changes made to the story structure or the set up of the individual shots. These had been, for the most part, worked out in the storyboard stage. Once these drawings were put into After Effects and were played as an animatic it was time to work on the timing.

As I worked on the animatic I also created a color script for the film. For this I drew pencil drawings of each major beat of the story and then painted that drawing with watercolors. The color palettes used in the film were an indispensable part of the storytelling so this stage was incredibly important. These little paintings were done with minimal details. This was in order to allow the colors in the paintings to be the most

important element, rather than the lines or content of the drawing.

The beginning shots were painted with lemon yellows and cerulean blues. I wanted a happy and relaxed atmosphere for these initial kitchen shot's, a scene that would feel like a kitchen on Sunday morning when a child can take their time eating their morning cereal and is happy because they have the whole day ahead of them just to mess around. The colors change dramatically when Gigi's mother shows up. When the audience sees Gigi's mother we see her in harsh fuchsias and chartreuse, but once we see the world from the mother's view all of the backgrounds are in grey scale.

The living room is the next set in this group of drawings. Although the palettes changed some from the time I did these paintings until the final film was colored, the thinking about the color scheme for this room remained very similar. When looking at the living room the audience had to perceive the same space in two very different ways. When first viewing the living room it was supposed to appear as a very boring and oppressive place. Later on in the scene the living room background had to morph into a very bizarre and off putting place. In these early color sketches I attempted to show these two moods with both color and line. I tried to communicate the bizarre by using monochromatic palettes with stark contrast (C7, C8) and then really push the strange with line (C12). The dull and oppressive mood (C10) was communicated with a palette dominated with medium grey, very little contrast, jagged lines and geometric shapes. In this scene there is also a sketch worked up for when Gigi leaves the living room in her imagination and dances across a stage in front of an audience of fans. The color palette for this shot returns somewhat, to the kitchen palette, the harmony of the blues and yellows are back, however there is a fair amount of red included in this sketch as well giving the whole painting a rosy glow.

Once we move out of the living room the colors really get pretty strange. The Doctor's office and the waiting room scene (the waiting room was cut later) are supposed to be in Gigi's imagination but stranger than what we have seen. It is supposed to be a child's imagination let loose in a medical environment, which could look many different ways: scary, unknown and bizarre. The colors in this scene needed to reflect this level of strangeness. I tried to do this by using vibrant yellow greens contrasted with different shades of purple, orangey reds and pinks. Using a very vibrant palette was important for two reasons; one, to illustrate the strangeness and two, to contrast with the final shots in this scene after Gigi is outfitted with her glasses. Once Gigi is wearing the glasses the doctor's office is shown in a muted and almost grey scale palette (C15 and C16).

In the final shot Gigi has returned to the kitchen and pushed the lenses out of her glasses (C17). This is shown by painting the center of the scene in the original kitchen

colors with the grey scale palette pushed to the very outside borders of the scene.

The process of making these color sketches was incredibly helpful. Many of the ideas for the final color treatment of the film came from the ideas generated here in these early paintings. Doing this exercise also showed me just how much the color could help tell the story. This story, although carrying a simple message, was also complex because of all of the different views necessary in order to show all sides of the story. We need to be able to see what Gigi is seeing, what the mother is seeing, and then the viewer needs to be able to have their own view and judge what they are seeing for themselves. The effectiveness of color use in these paintings gave me confidence early on that showing these different viewpoints would be possible and that the use of color would be paramount to this goal.

As I was working on these color sketches I was also trying to finalize the character designs. Throughout my work on concept sketches, storyboards and the color script I had drawings of all the characters in the story but these drawings were vague and the exact proportions and details of the characters had not yet been defined. The characters for this film, as with the colors used, needed to have a level of separation in their design. Gigi had to be cute and round in order to show her more fluid and free character. The rest of the family had to be more angular and hard-edged in order to show their more restricted and stiffer character. One thing I did in order to define and get a sense of the mother character was to build a maquette. (D6-D8). Building the maquette helped me establish the more angular feel that I needed the family characters and the doctor to have.

Aside from the maquette building I did turn around drawings of each major character: (D2-D5). I did not need to do a formal turnaround drawing of the brother because we would never see the brother anywhere but sitting on the couch. After these drawings were completed I did one scale drawing (D1) showing all of the characters together on one page in order to establish their scale next to each other.

During the character design stage there was a significant amount of research happening as well. This research mostly happened on the Internet. I compiled many photos, which aided me in the design of both the characters and backgrounds.

Again, in the true nature of preproduction, each stage overlapped. As I was working on these character designs I was also working on the background designs. These finished backgrounds were drawn on cold press watercolor paper in pencil. They were to be colored with watercolors and colored pencils later in the year. Drawing backgrounds was the final stage before animation began. As the backgrounds were finished they were scanned and when necessary the layers of the backgrounds were composited together. These drawings then served as final layouts for animation and were dropped into After Effects in order to

move the animatic to its next stage. As backgrounds were finished I began to draw key positions of the characters for each shot. These drawings serving as a beginning framework for the animation stage and then it was time to move into production.

## **PRODUCTION**

Production began in early spring, 2009. This stage continued through the summer into early fall. The first stage of production was animating pencil on paper. I worked at home on my self built light table. I already had a good framework to begin with as I had refined the storyboard drawings to almost key frames for many of the major actions. So with this framework I began animating using the drawings that made up my animatic as key poses. I did not animate the shots in a consecutive order. The first shots I chose to animate were simple single character shots. I saved the more complex shots for later when I was more 'on a roll'.

Each shot had several passes in animation. The first pass was made up of key frames, the second breakdown poses and finally the inbetween drawings were added. As I moved through the stages I performed several pencil tests using Digicel Flipbook. This program allows an animator to shoot drawings with a firewire camera and see several layers of animation immediately. I found Flipbook to be the best program for my purposes because I was able to see animation without delay and it is also very easy to move frames on an x sheet and therefore retime animation on the fly. This retiming ability was very important during the drawing stage because it told me when and where I needed more drawings.

As shots were finished, at least through the breakdown stage, I exported the pencil tests creating QuickTime's. Then these QuickTime's were put into my animatic in After Effects. This allowed me to see the shots next to each other. Another thing that was important as I moved through the animation process was to keep a comprehensive shot list and to keep an x-sheet for each shot. The shot list allowed me to take down notes about each shot as they were animated and also easily see how much of the timeline had been animated. The x-sheets, or exposure sheets, recorded the timing of each animation. This was very important, especially, when animation was being reused or there were cycles being used.

Once all the animation was finished I began the clean up stage. Some of this stage happened digitally but I did do an initial clean up of the drawings with a good old-fashioned eraser. Another thing that happened during the clean up stage was that each drawing was examined and with an HB or B weight pencil. All gaps in lines were closed and the line work itself was cleaned up when necessary. As this happened I erased any unwanted pencil marks. After this drawings were ready to scan.

I scanned all of the drawings by hand on my home Epson scanner. Although this is a very tedious process it allowed me to keep the drawings registered and not worry about digitally reregistering my animation. Once the drawings were scanned the digital cleanup began. This stage was simply running all of the scanned drawings through Photoshop and running a variety of actions. Drawings were cropped, levels fixed and all of the white from the paper was removed.

After this stage was complete it was time to color! The coloring process took about three weeks. I colored all of the animation frame by frame in Adobe Photoshop. Once I finished coloring a shot I moved those drawings into Toon Boom where I did my final timing. Toon Boom allowed me to import my colored frames, time the drawings according to my x sheets, and then export a .tiff sequence. These .tiff sequences could then be placed into the same After Effects file that I had been working in and there the finished film began to take shape.

In the weeks that I colored the animation I broke up the time by painting my backgrounds as well. These backgrounds were painted by hand with watercolor and gouache and then once dry I layered colored pencil selectively on the paintings. This was the process that I followed for all of the backgrounds except for the grayscale backgrounds. The 'rigid' or grey scale backgrounds were colored in Adobe Photoshop. With these backgrounds I took solid watercolor swatches, scanned them, changed their color profile to grey scale and then created clipping masks over of the pencil drawing. Colored backgrounds were then put in After Effects along with the animation.

## POST PRODUCTION

Post Production consisted of a very small amount of editing in Final Cut Pro and sound. I had a composer who I was corresponding with for a couple of months prior to this stage. He was able to review the animatic in its various stages and we had several conversations about the overall sound and the different moods that were needed to help tell the story. As I worked on finishing the animation my composer built sounds that were needed for different sections and worked on composing the themes. Those themes were loose ideas until I gave him a final edit of the film. My composer took about three weeks to get the first version of the soundtrack composed. As he did this I worked on compositing in After Effects. There were several scenes where masks were needed and resizing of animation was necessary in a few shots. After all of my After Effects work was done I exported each shot as an uncompressed QuickTime and then imported each separate QuickTime into Final Cut Pro.

There was a short period of back and forth between the composer and me as we synched the sound to the animation. In place of a lot of sound effects my composer and I both preferred to use digital sounds and instruments to 'Mickey Mouse' some of the animation with sound. This took close synching work on his behalf and some slight animation timing adjustments on my side of things. There were a few points in the film where Foley sounds were necessary. These sound effects were found on the Internet on the site: [www.freesound.org](http://www.freesound.org).

Once the sound track was finished, all of the animation was imported into Final Cut Pro, and the sound effects were synched and adjusted properly, the film was exported out of Final Cut uncompressed. This master QuickTime was roughly 13 GB. I then used QuickTime 7 to export and compress with h264. Once compressed the film was about 300MB and the running time was 4:26. This version was then submitted for screenings.

## SCREENINGS

The screening process went well. I was able to submit the film to the FAVASA drop box and schedule my screening time from home. I checked in with the FAVASA table on Friday morning before screenings began and they had everything they needed from me. Graduate screenings were scheduled for the next day, Saturday, beginning at 4 PM. The graduate program was to be very short as there were only four graduate students screening.

Screenings actually began an hour later than originally scheduled but once they began everything went on without a hitch. Mark Reiche acted as my respondent and began the discussion about the film after it screened. For the most part Mark's comments were clear and his observations of the film and its content were spot on. One comment that led me to believe that the meaning of the story was not 100% clear to all viewers was about the robot scene.

Mark thought that since we were seeing the family from Gigi's imagination perspective, maybe it would have been more appropriate if the family was viewed in a more fun light. For example, seeing the family as clowns or circus performers. This point was not a surprise to me because earlier in the story process there was some feedback that maybe seeing her family in such a frightening way would be complicated. If Gigi's imagination had her see things in this scary and odd light, maybe her imagination wasn't as great as I was making it out to be. My argument for this point was that the imagination does not always produce beautiful and peaceful images. It shouldn't. Even children see things in a dark light sometimes. Darkness is part of a well-rounded imagination and important in its own right.

My message was that the imagination should be allowed to be used. It should be allowed to run free. My message was not that everything that comes out of a child's imagination is lovely and pastoral. On the contrary, if everything imagined was Mickey Mouse and balloons- then that's all we would have- Mickey Mouse and balloons. This idea, granted, is possibly a bit complex or abstract for a four-minute film, but that was my attempt.

Another reason that I turned the family into robots was to really hit the audience over the head about the mechanical and rigid nature of the family. I wanted their 'way' to be viewed as uncompromising and stiff as metal, screw and wire.

Once the discussion was opened up to the audience at large there were several comments. Most comments were very positive and really just had a congratulatory tone. There were a few questions. One question was about the robot scene and I was asked to explain my reasons for this choice. I attempted to say what I have just written but speaking in front of large groups is certainly not a personal strength. But I did do my best. Another question was why I did not use shadows in the animation. This question was then answered by one



of the professors in the audience. He stated that he liked that there were no shadows because it gave it more of a storybook feel. This was about right. Aside from these questions there were several positive comments. The screening process overall was a very positive experience.

## **EXPERIENCE**

The sixty odd weeks I spent on this project were beneficial in several ways. Having a longer and more flexible timeline than I have had on past films gave me the freedom to go deeper into different parts of the process which was very rewarding. Overall, I feel like I have a better understanding of the filmmaking process. Because I was able to linger on different steps I was able to absorb things I learned along the way more and have time to experiment.

Pre-production on this project was a very important and enlightening process for me. The ability to draw and redraw storyboards gave me a real sense of the power of storyboards. Although I have always believed in their necessity I have never had the time to work and rework boards over an extended period of time. This made animation later a much more organized and efficient process.

Creating a color script for this project was also very valuable to me. Because of the nature of the story and its necessity to show different perspectives, color was enormously important. I was able to use the same spaces: the kitchen, the living room and the doctor's office, but have them relay a totally different feeling, largely due to the use of color. Using a color script early on let me work out many of the issues that could crop up when attempting to show several different worlds within one story. In these early sketches I was able to see that in addition to using different palettes for these worlds, creating them with different line quality and drawing style was an effective means for separation. So "Gigi's world" was bright and lively color wise but it was also drawn with variable line quality and bent and distorted perspective lines. Where the rigid universe, the world that the glasses created, was made up of grays, there was very little variation in line quality and the spaces were based on one point perspective; creating a very flat and rigid world.

Production for this project brought very few surprises. It was a very straightforward and organized proceeding mostly because I was able to spend time in pre-production reworking storyboards and organizing materials for production. I created a very simple and organized numbering system that began in the storyboard stage and continued through animation and into my digital filing. This filing system included a shot list that was continu-



ally updated so I was always able to see how much animation had been done, how much was left to do, where I needed in-betweens, etc. Although animation has always been a difficult stage for me keeping shots hyper-organized made for a smoother and more efficient process.

Postproduction was an enjoyable stage, mostly because finally I wasn't completely on my own! Working with a composer for the final few weeks of this project was fun and very rewarding. Sound is so very important in an animated film, especially a film with no dialogue. The sound and how it can move the story along, and even make it's own story points is really uncanny. So post production, which was mostly sound, was really seeing the story come to fruition.

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## APPENDIX A: PROPOSAL

GLASSES  
(working title)

BY  
MOLLY AGNEW

Thesis Proposal  
MFA Imaging Arts/ Computer Animation  
SCHOOL OF FILM AND ANIMATION  
ROCHESTER, NY

April 2009

Chair: Johnny Robinson, Visiting Assistant Professor  
Committee member: Tom Gasek, Assistant Professor  
Committee member: Skip Battaglia, Professor

Approved for Submission By:

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Johnny Robinson, Chair  
Visiting Assistant Professor  
School of Film and Animation  
Date: April 9, 2009

## **Synopsis**

This film will be a hand drawn animation with the running time of approximately four minutes. Animation clean up, coloring and compositing will be done digitally. The story for this film is about a little girl who has a very active imagination. Her time to play and pretend is threatened by the adult figures in her life, and she has to come up with a solution to appease her mother and allow her imagination to thrive. This story will be told from two distinctly different perspectives: the little girl's perspective and then her mother's perspective. These different views will be shown through a variety of different stylistic, color, and content choices. The aesthetic of this film will be reminiscent of the old UPA style. There will be a flat graphic quality to the work with an attention paid to distorted perspective lines in the backgrounds and simplified shapes in both the characters and sets.

## **Treatment**

This film begins with a little girl sitting at a kitchen table stirring a bowl of cereal. As she stirs the items laid on the table awaken and begin a running race around the perimeter of the table. As the place settings race she acts as referee and cheerleader delighted with her new friends. After a couple of laps a teapot wins the race. The girl gets up on the table and does a victory dance, the teapot lifted high over her head. The kitchen items celebrate alongside her. After a moment the mother enters. From the mother's perspective we see a very different scene. The girl is still celebrating on the table with a teapot lifted high over her head but the rest of the kitchen, including the victor teapot, is lifeless. The mother distressed by her daughter's outward display of her imagination (celebrating with a teapot in a very physical way) enters the room and lifts her off the table. She gives her a gentle shake, as if to wake her up from her daydream, and leads her into the adjacent room.

The adjacent room is the living room. A fat boy (her brother) is sitting on the couch playing video games. Her older sister is standing at the back of the couch using it as a dancer's bar doing repeated and mechanical looking plies. The mother suggests that the little girl join her sister. The little girl tries to mimic her sister. The camera moves in on the little girl and shows her dancing beautifully. As she dances the background changes behind her finally showing her performing on a grand stage. In the next shot the mother and older daughter are watching the little girl dance wildly through the living room. The mother intercedes and places her back next to her sister. Now holding the girl by the waist she forces her from one pose to the next. The girl follows along with a look of sadness on her face.

In the next scene the little girl is in the backyard swinging a giant baseball bat. As she swings she continually topples over into the mud. The girl is covered in mud but smiling broadly. After a couple consecutive falls the mother arrives on the scene. She is disgusted by

the muddy condition her daughter is in. She picks her daughter up by the scruff of her neck and holding her as far from herself as she can she carries her out of frame.

The next shot is the mother dropping her daughter into a chair in front of the TV in the living room. The girl is now in clean clothes. The brother is sitting on the couch playing a baseball video game. She watches her brother and through her eyes he is completely wired into the game system which he plays on appearing as a cyborg of sorts. The little girl stares at her brother for a moment and then looks to where her sister is. Her sister is still mechanically practicing her plies and now appears as a robot of sorts. The girl watches her siblings with an expression of fear and confusion.

In the next scene we see the little girl sitting on the kitchen floor. Mechanical looking items surround her. She has a screwdriver in hand as she attempts to take the toaster apart. The mother walks in to see the scene and just looks at the girl with an expression of sorrow and worry.

After a fade to black we come back to the little girl who is now sitting in a waiting room next to her mother. A mother and son walk past where they are sitting. The little boy is wearing a gigantic pair of glasses and looks very sad. Just after their exit a nurse motions to the little girl and her mother to enter the doctor's office.

The little girl now sits on the edge of an enormous couch in the Doctor's office. The girl's perspective reveals the office as a surreal medically based daydream gone wild. The girl is transfixed by her new surroundings. She is awakened from her dream when the Doctor's face slides into her vision. He points a scope into her eyes, and then looks down her throat. The doctor leaves the girl momentarily but then returns placing a giant pair of glasses on her face. The glasses are identical to the ones the little boy from the waiting room was wearing. The girl looks sad and a little confused. As the camera moves behind her to reveal what she is seeing we see that the color saturation of the room is about half of what it was and the items in the room are now lifeless and everyday.

In the next scene the girl sits in her kitchen which is now completely colorless. A close-up on her face reveals that she is crying. She takes her glasses off in order to wipe her eyes. As she sits and wipes her eyes her cereal continues to spin and the remaining cheerios in the bowl slowly form an arrow. The arrow points to where the girl had placed the glasses. The girl looks down and blinks at the message in her cereal bowl, then at the glasses and then back at the cereal. Finally she picks up the glasses and examining them one more time she forces the lenses out of their frames. She then hides the lenses in her pocket and puts the frames back on her face. Just then the mother enters. She looks down at her daughter's face, sees that she is wearing the glasses, smiles and pats her daughter on the head. The mother leaves. The girl looks up from the table and smiles.

## Context

Children today are bombarded with a relatively new set of stimuli and expectations: standardized testing, video games, overly structured playtime and a society that has turned its fear into countless safety laws and guidelines are a few among many. These things have changed childhood in America drastically when compared with generations gone by. This film will focus on different ways these new conflicts can effect American youth and most importantly what can be lost. The focus of this film will be a little girl who is continually denied the time and freedom to play, pretend and develop her imagination.

I am choosing to make this film as a way to illustrate the distorted priorities in respect to creativity and children. Imagination, creativity and the Arts in general are underappreciated by the mainstream and this attitude is going to have a bigger impact in the future than it ever has. The United States is not in great shape. Our economy is in shambles and our ability to compete in the world market continues to slip. This decline will continue without a reassessment of what's important. I like how Dana Gioia (former Chairmen of the National Endowment of the Arts) explains this issue in his commencement speech to the Stanford graduating class 2007, "To compete successfully, this country needs continued creativity, ingenuity, and innovation." (Gioia) The creativity and innovation Gioia talks about comes with practice. An alarming example of us falling behind in the global economy and how our decline in ingenuity and imagination is directly related to this weakening is clear when you "look at it through patents: A decade ago, American companies and engineers were granted ten thousand more U.S. patents than foreign entities, but that lead has now dwindled to four thousand" (Oullette). Looking at these numbers we can see a dramatic fall in patents but if you play with the semantics a little here we have literally sustained a gigantic drop in ideas.

The United States was built on a lot of different things, good and bad. One thing that is good and that has made us special, however, is our ingenuity. This ingenuity is shown through inventions, space exploration, development of technology, strides in the medical world and the list can go on. This ingenuity comes from people being able to think and create on their own and these abilities begin in childhood. A child who is allowed to develop their imagination through play and pretend eventually will grow up to be the adult who can think and create.

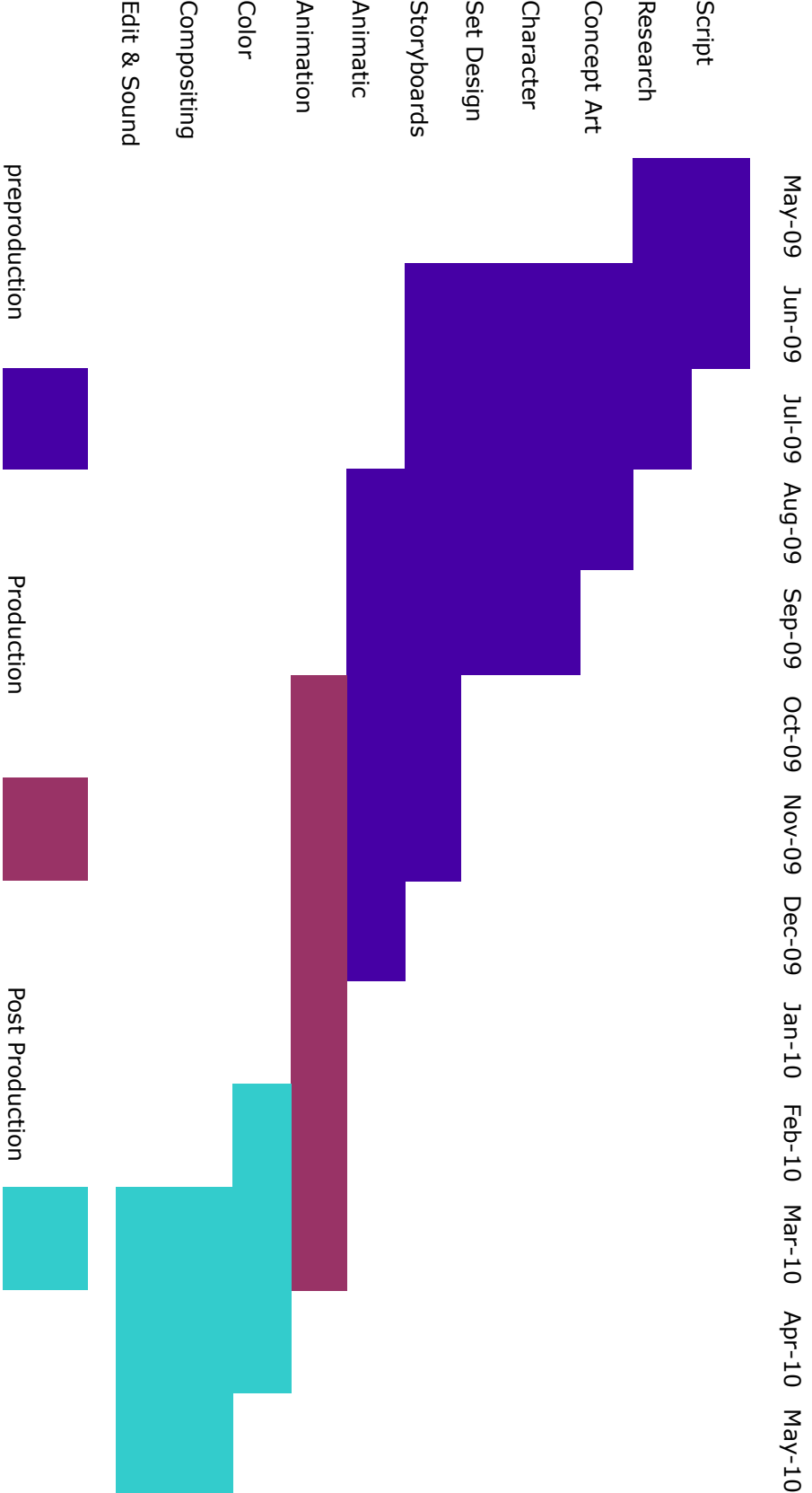
## Works Cited

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<<http://www.secretsofthecity.com/>>.
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<<http://news.stanford.edu/news/2007/june20/gradtrans-062007.html>>

Working Title: Glasses  
Producer: Molly Agnew  
Advisor: Johnny Robinson

TIMELINE

Start Date: 4/1/09  
End Date: May 15, 2010  
Run Time: 4:00  
Format: 2D animation





## Above the Line Costs

Preproduction/ Research/ Development	Price	Amount
Preproduction Staff:		
Writer	in-kind	
Concept Artist	in-kind	
Character Designer	in-kind	
Set Designer	in-kind	
Storyboard Artist	in-kind	
Research/Development	in-kind	
Animatic	in-kind	
other costs	\$100	\$100
<b>Preproduction/ Research/ Development Subtotal:</b>	\$100	\$100
Director	in-kind	
Producer	in-kind	
<b>Above the Line Subtotal:</b>	\$100	\$100

## Below the Line Costs

### Production

Production Staff:		
Animator	in-kind	
Painter	in-kind	
Composer	in-kind	
Equipment		
Computer	in-kind	
additional memory: 1TB	\$150	\$150
Animation desk	\$200	\$200
pencil test station	\$250	\$250
scanner	in-kind	
Equipment subtotal:	\$600	\$600
Other materials		
drawing materials	\$75	\$75
miscellaneous supplies	in-kind	
Software	\$75	\$75
Other materials subtotal:	\$150	\$150

Sound		
Music rights	in-kind	
Foley	in-kind	
Composer	in-kind	

<b>Production Subtotal:</b>	\$750	\$750
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## Post Production

Post Production Staff:		
Editor	in-kind	
Compositer	in-kind	

<b>Post Production Subtotal:</b>	in-kind	
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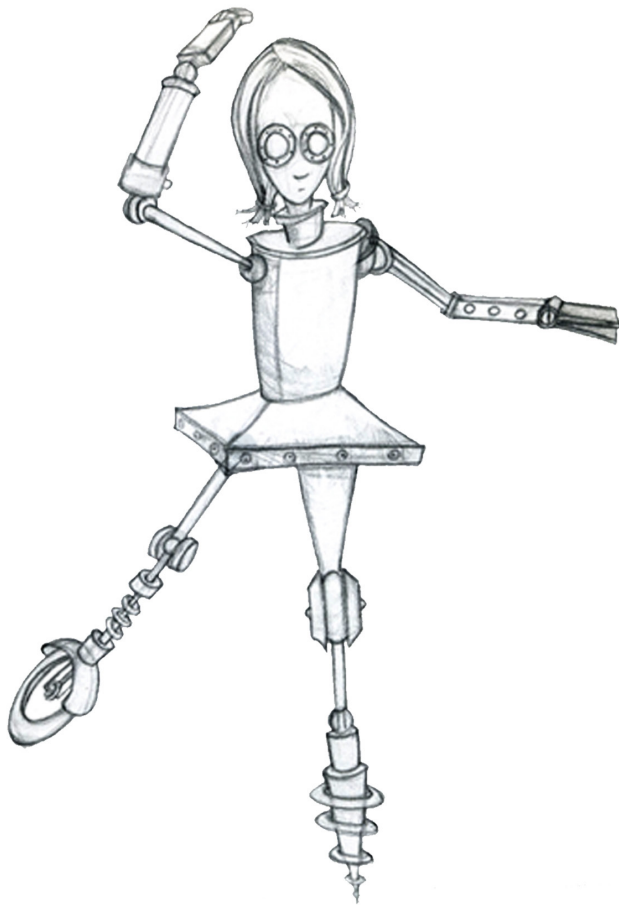
## Distribution

Promotional prints	\$50	\$50
DVDs	\$25	\$25
Festival entry fees	\$400	\$400
Postage	\$50	\$50
<b>Distribution Subtotal:</b>	\$525	\$525

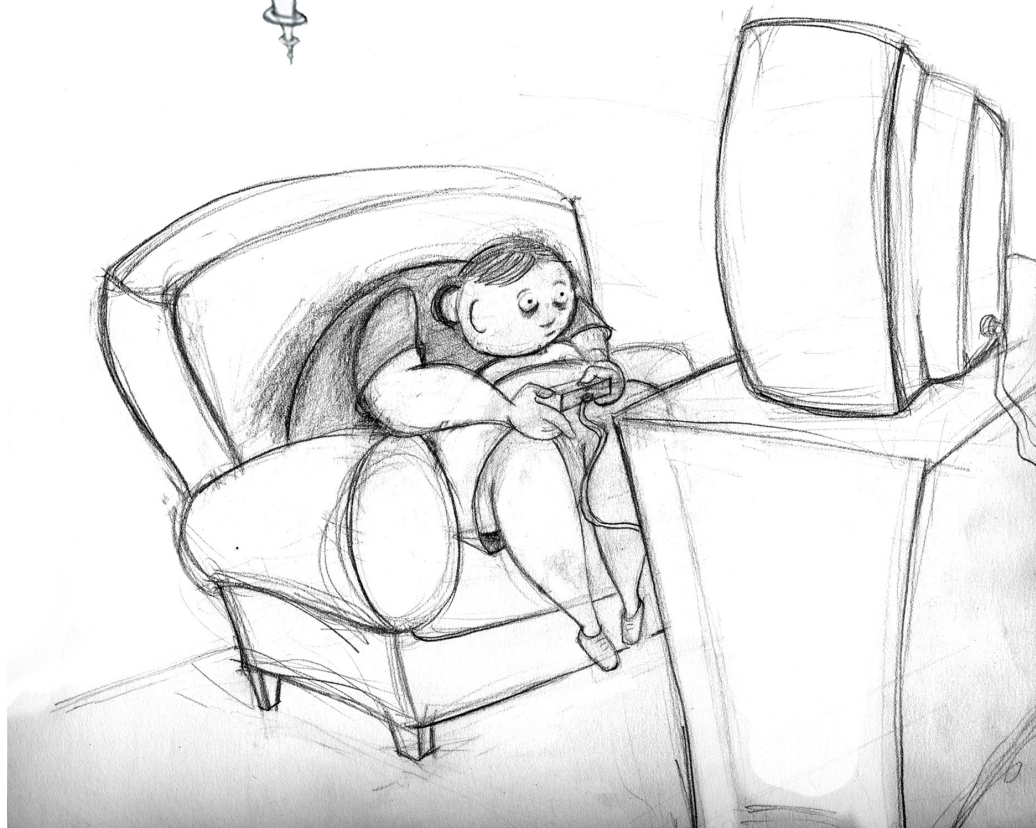
<b>Below the Line Subtotal</b>	\$1,275	\$1,275
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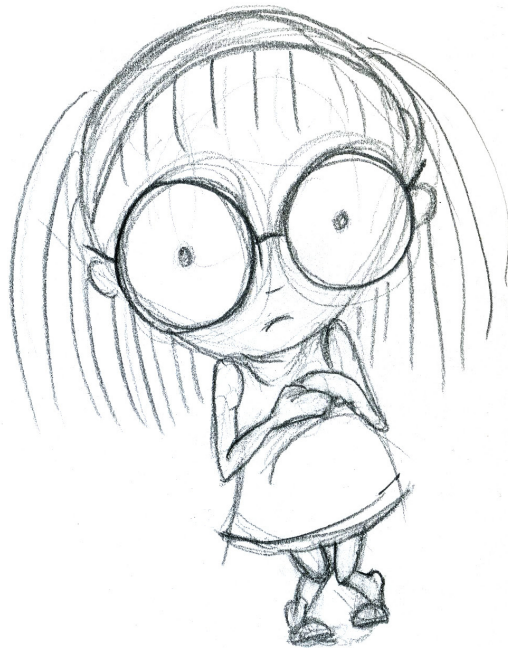
## Budget Summary

Wages & Salaries	in-kind	
Preproduction/Research/Development	\$100	\$100
Production	\$750	\$750
Post Production	in-kind	
Distribution	\$525	\$525
Subtotal	\$1,375	\$1,375

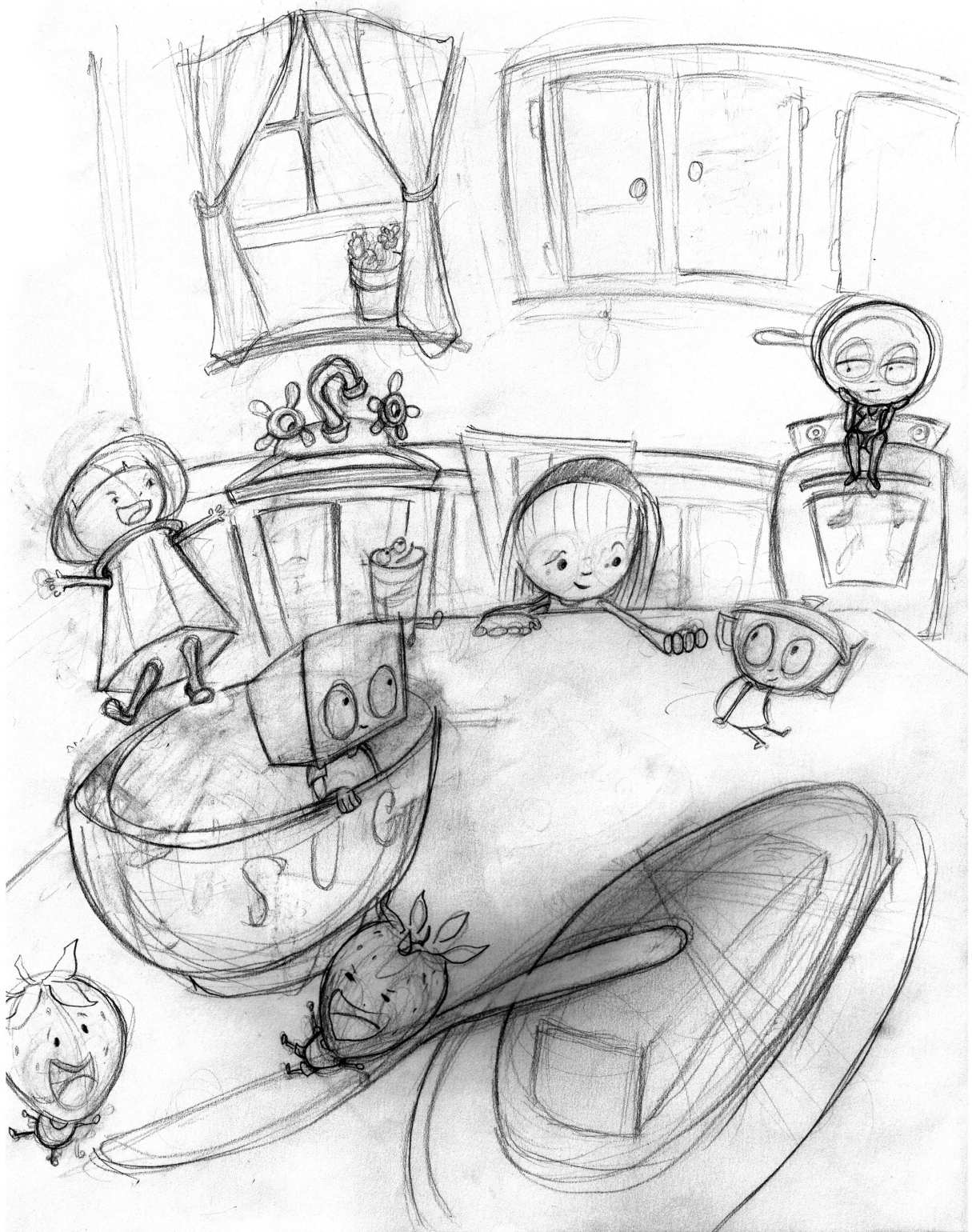


concept sketches





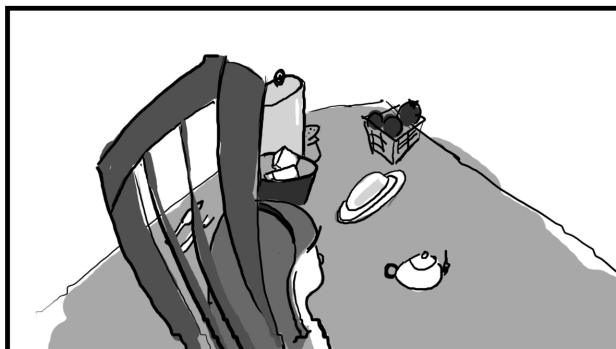




## APPENDIX B: STORYBOARDS



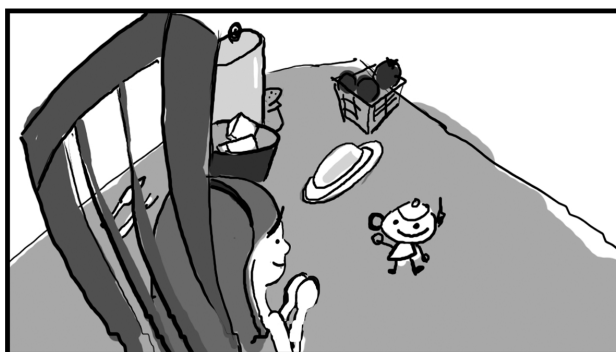
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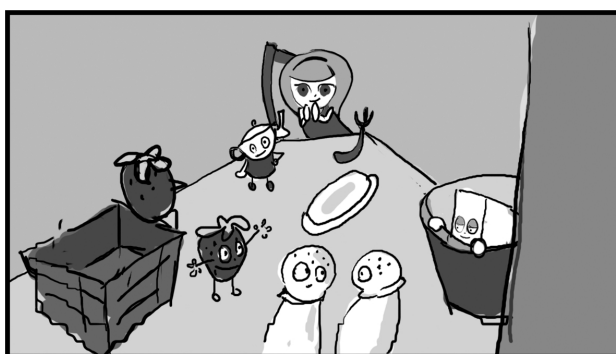
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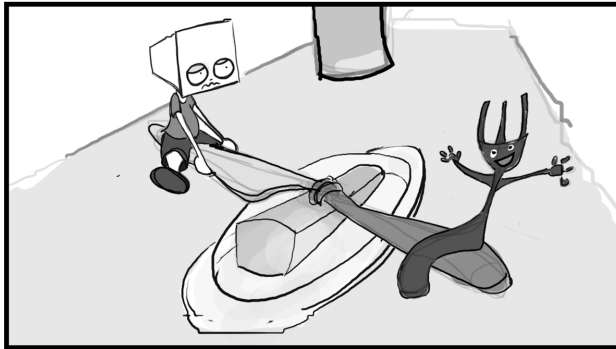
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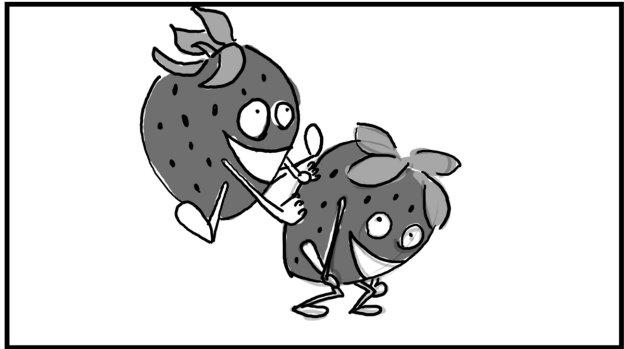
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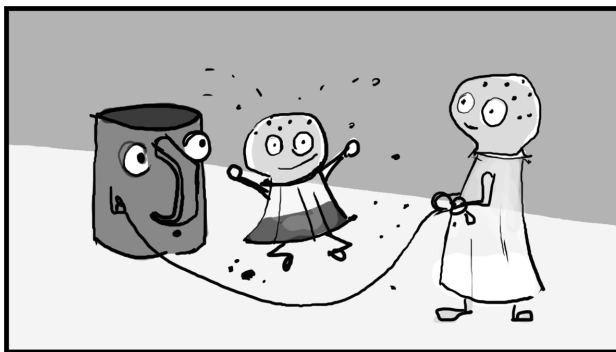
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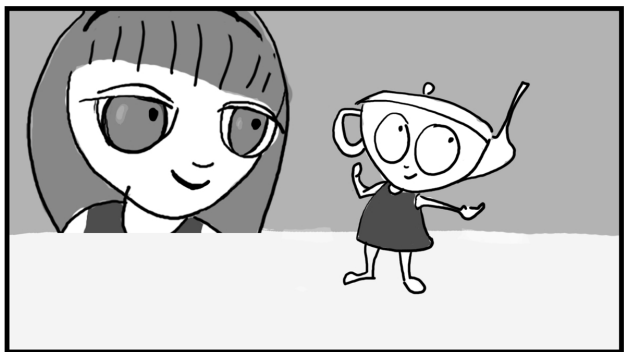
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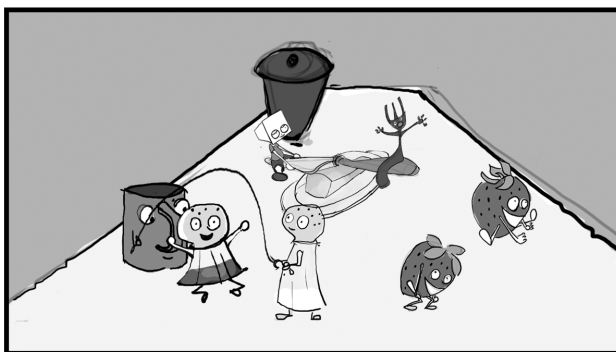
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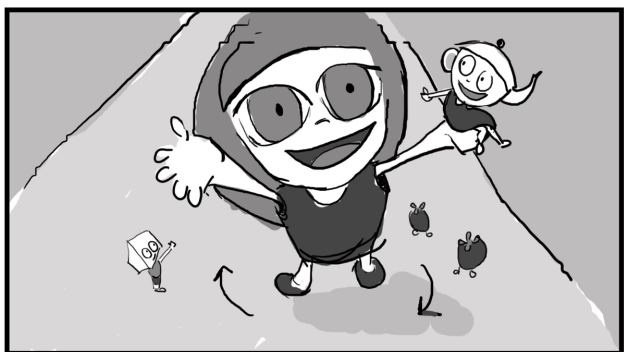
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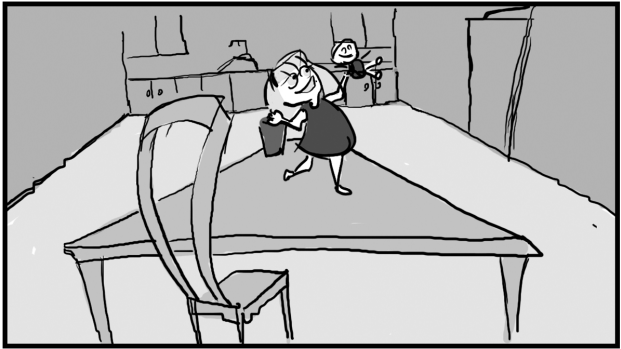
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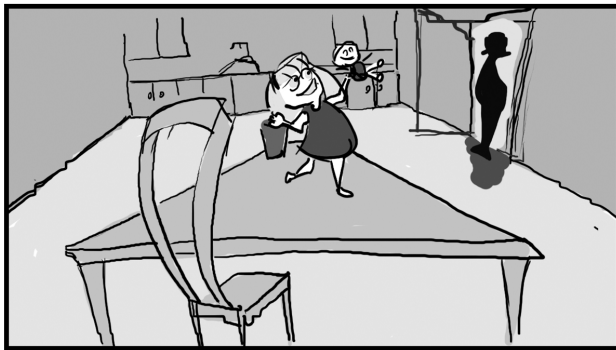
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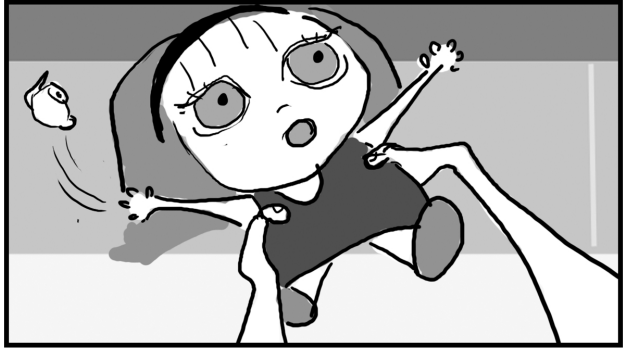


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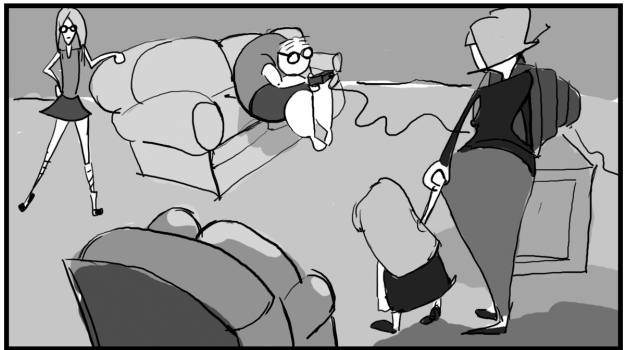
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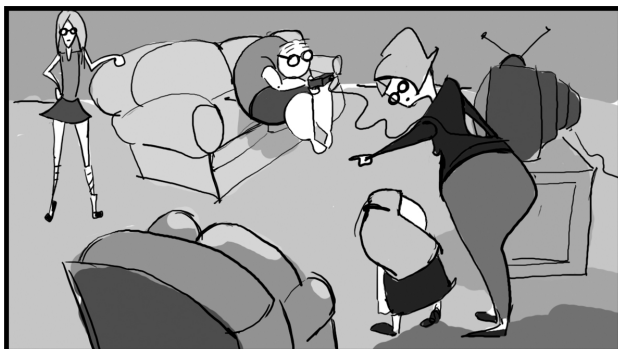
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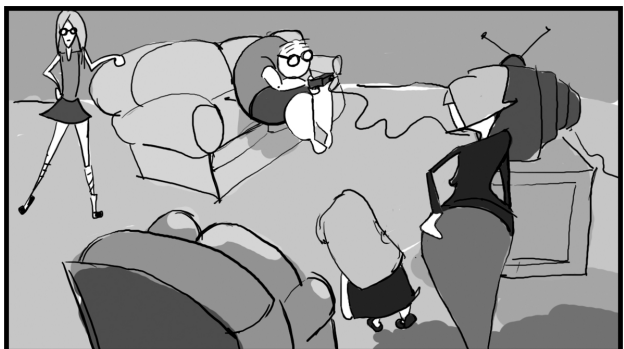
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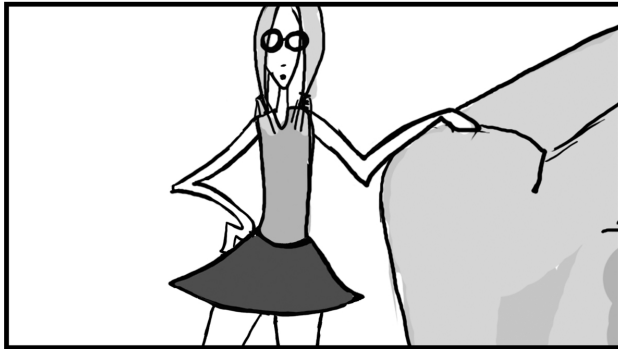
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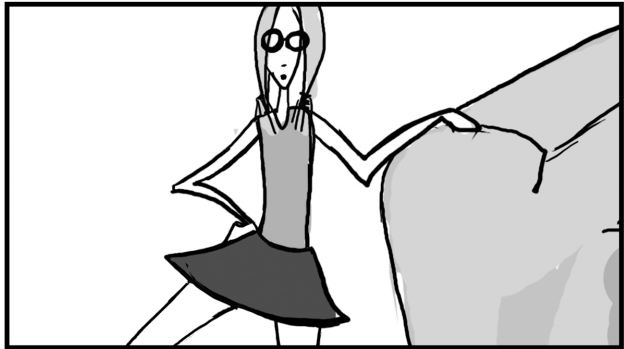
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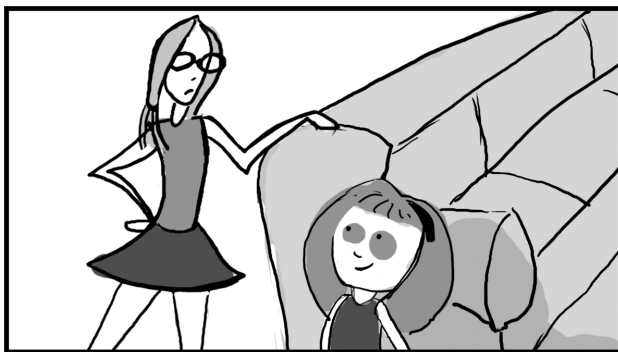
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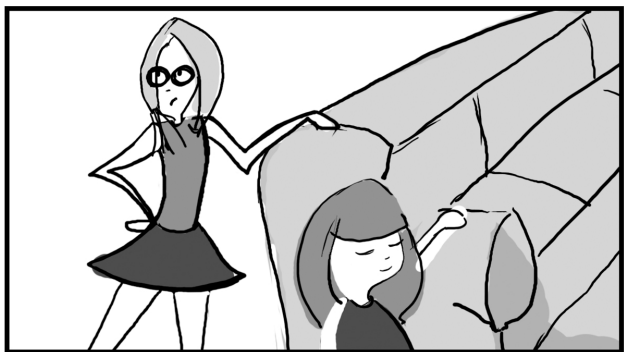
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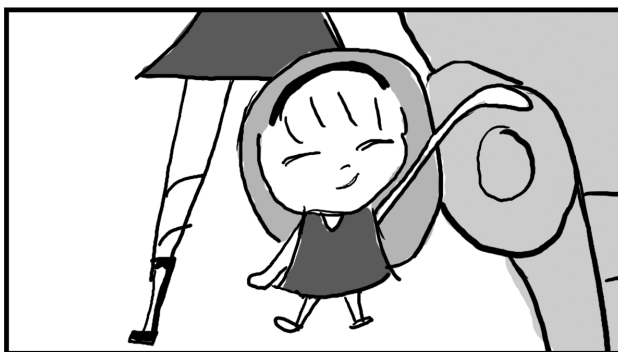
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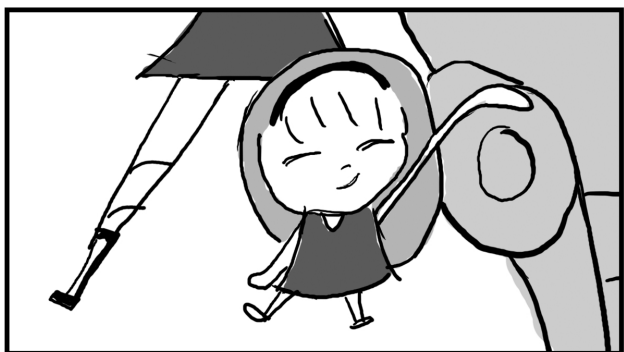
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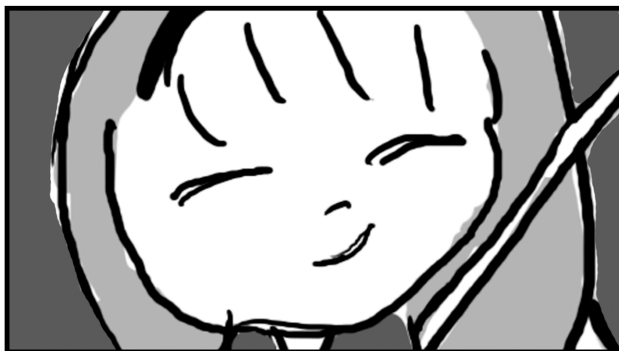
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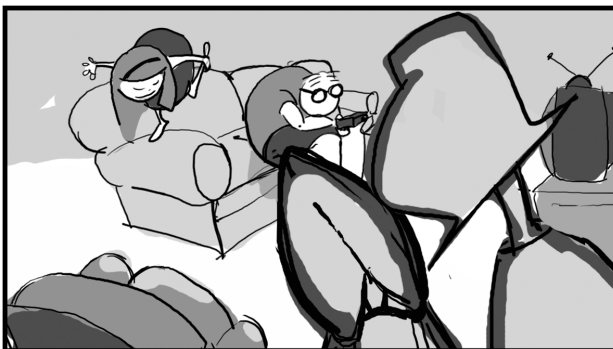
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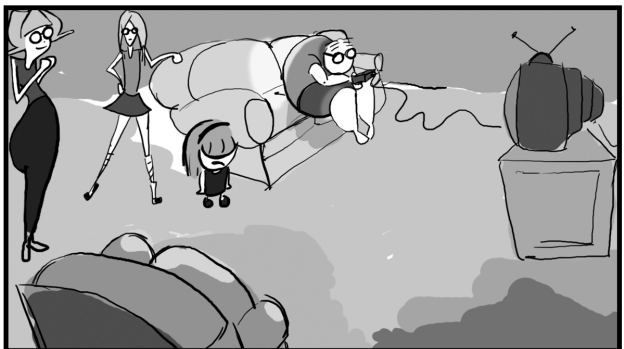
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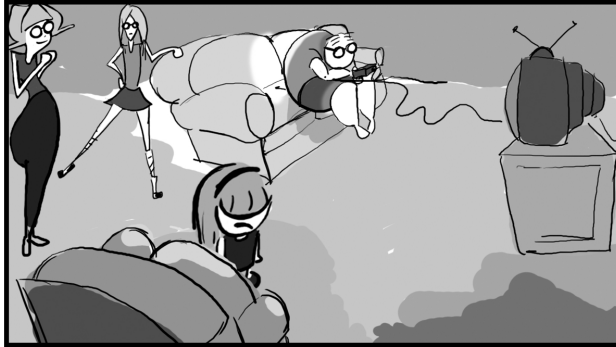


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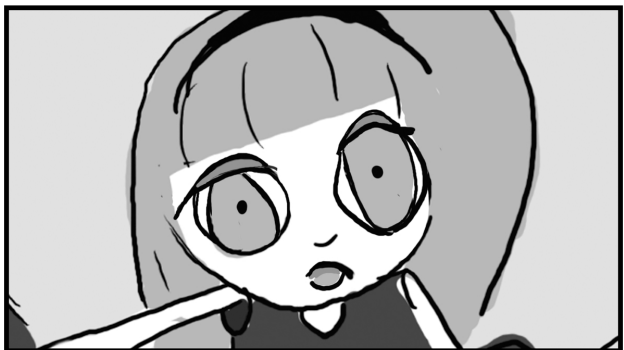
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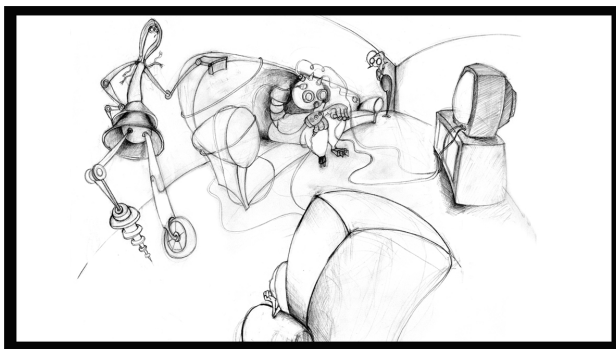
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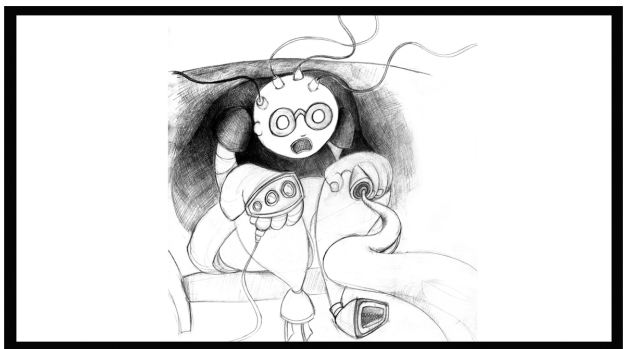
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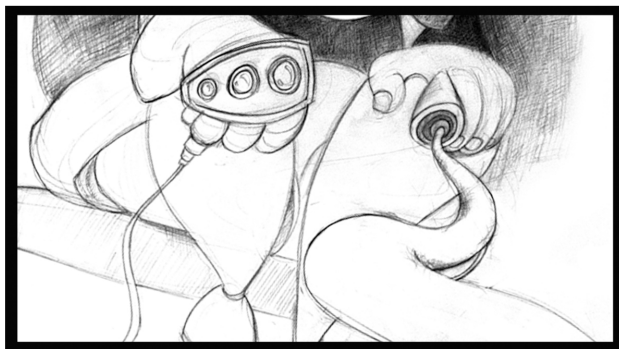
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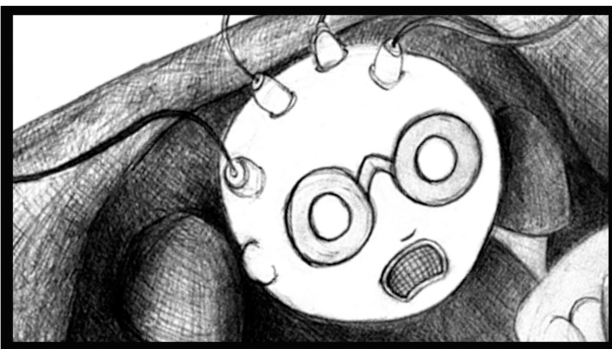
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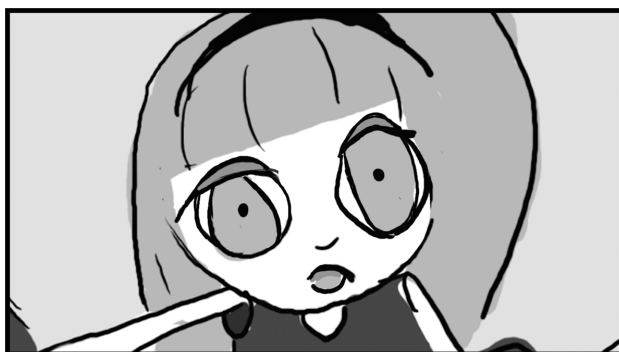
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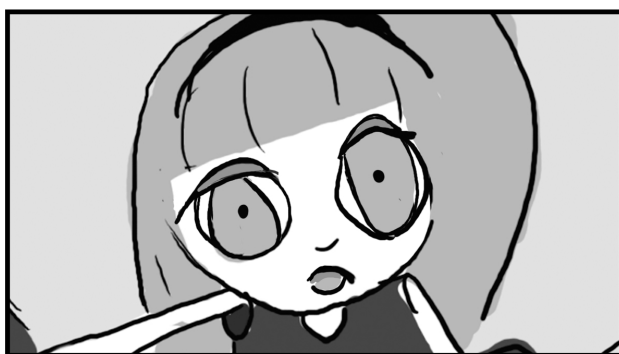
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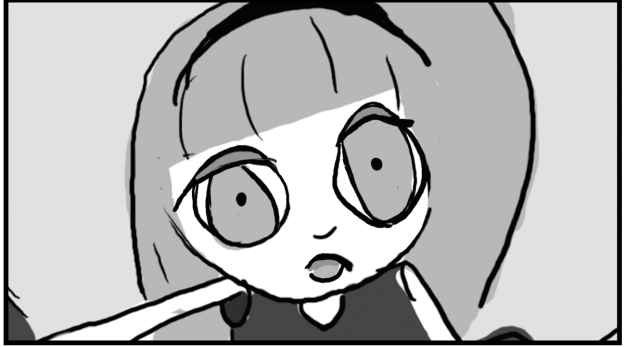
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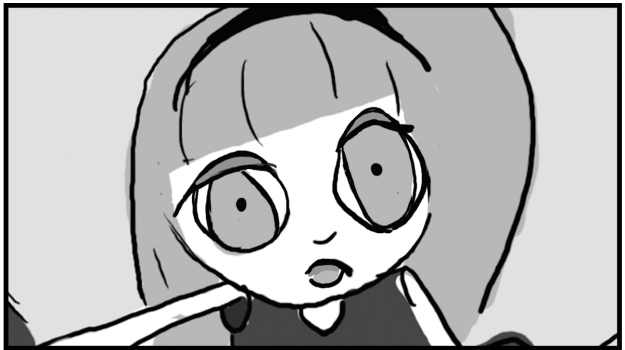
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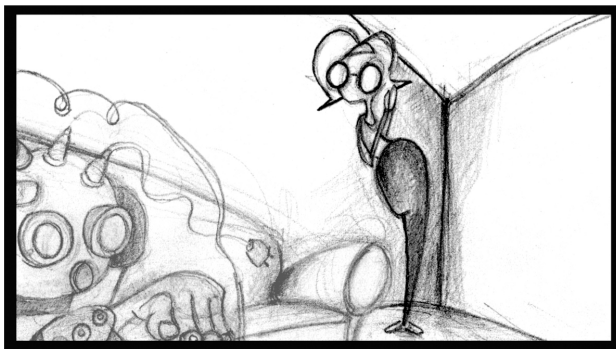
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gigi 047.psd





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gigi 052.psd



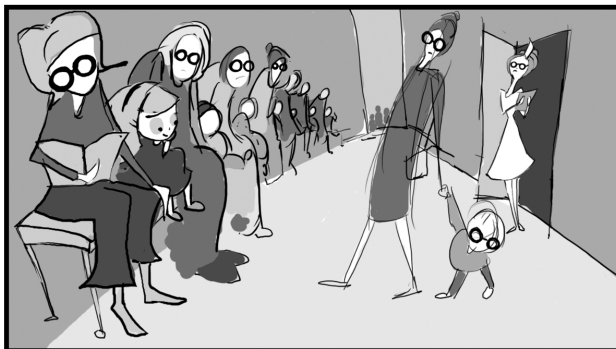
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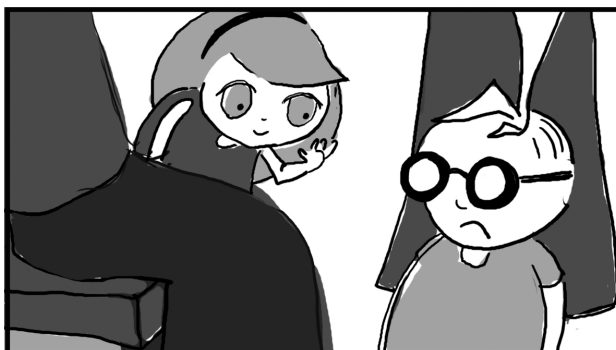
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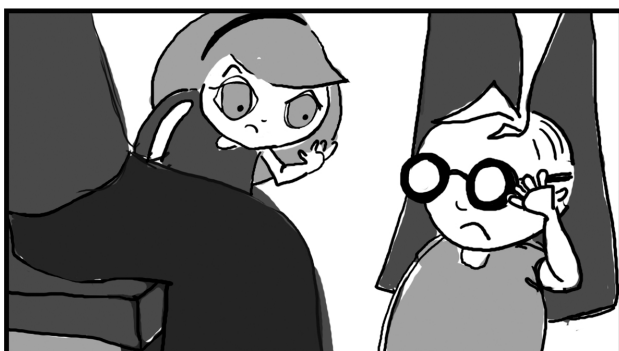
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gigi 056b.psd



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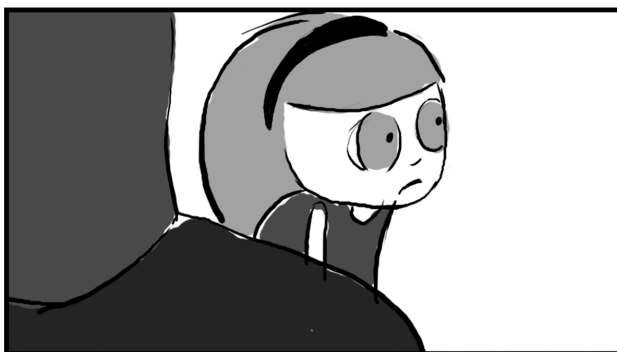
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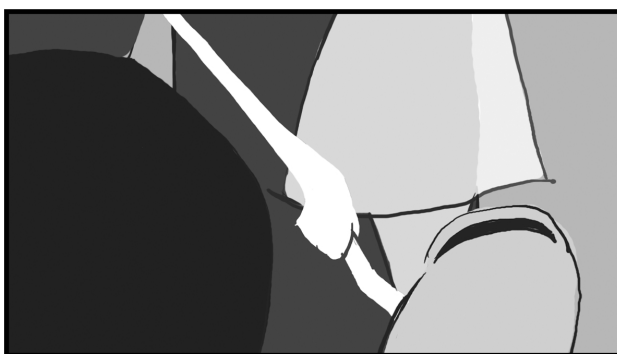
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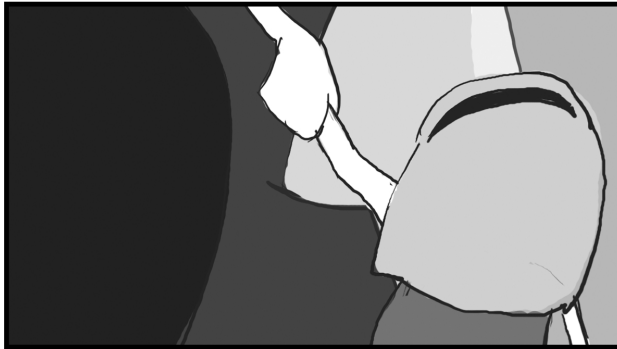
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gigi 060e.psd



gigi 061a.psd



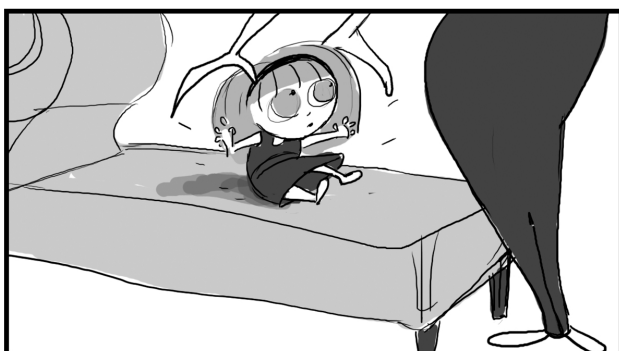
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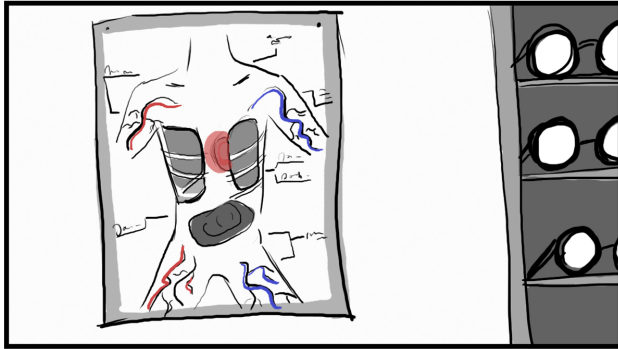
gigi 061d.psd



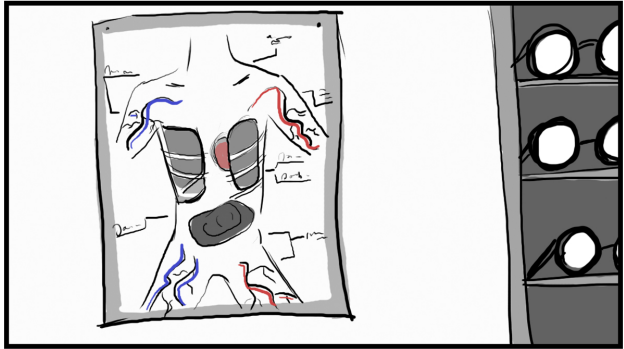
gigi 062.psd



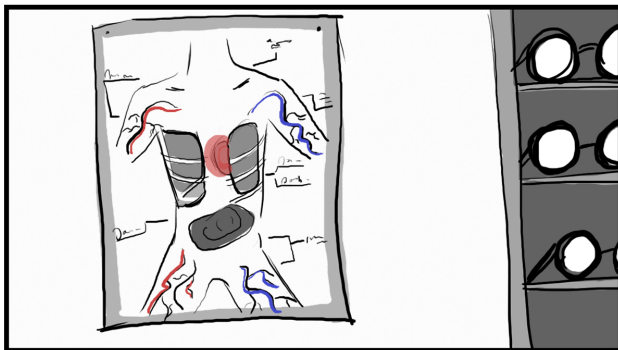
gigi 063.psd



gigi 064a.psd



gigi 064b.psd



gigi 064c.psd



gigi 065a.psd

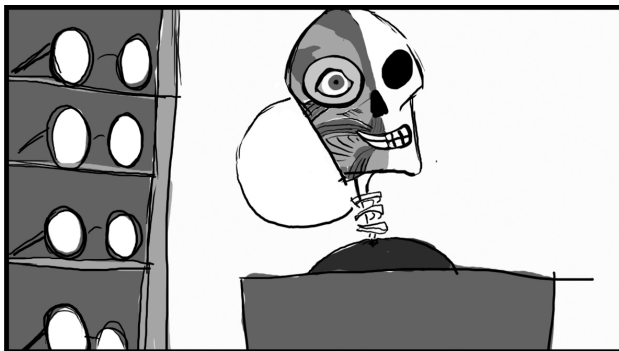


gigi 065b.psd



gigi 065c.psd





gigi 065d.psd



gigi 066.psd



gigi 067.psd



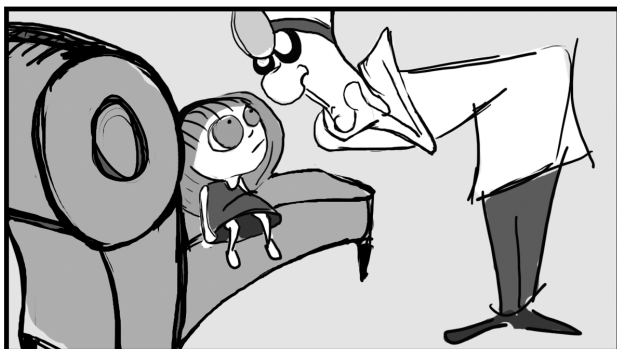
gigi 068a.psd



gigi 068b.psd



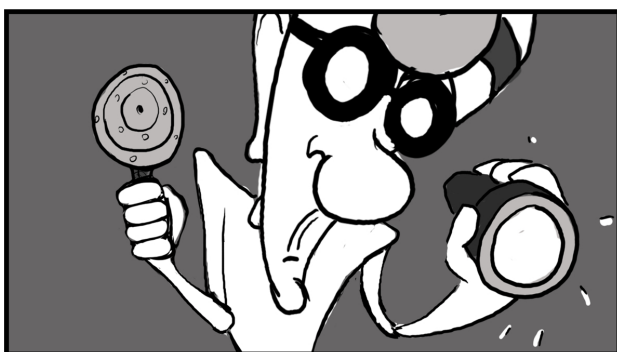
gigi 068c.psd



gigi 069.psd



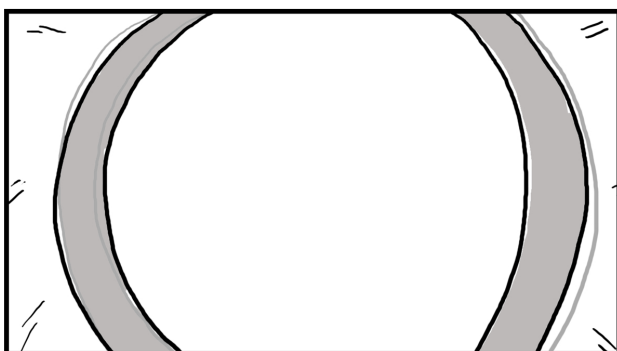
gigi 070.psd



gigi 070b.psd



gigi 070c.psd



gigi 070d.psd



gigi 070e.psd





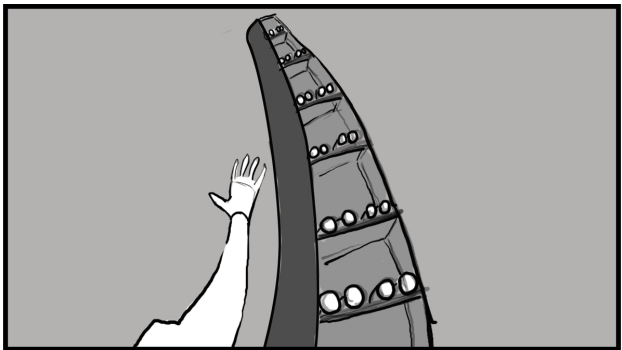
gigi 071a.psd



gigi 071b.psd



gigi 071c.psd



gigi 072.psd



gigi 073a.psd



gigi 073b.psd



gigi 073c.psd



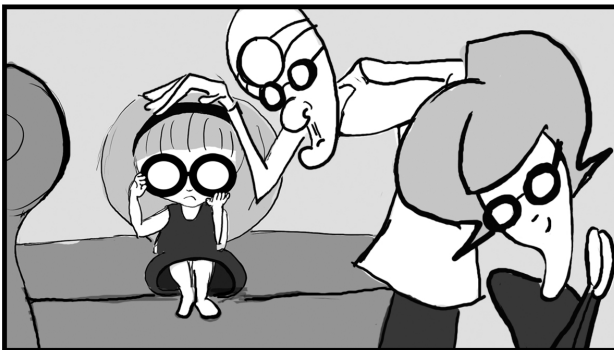
gigi 073d.psd



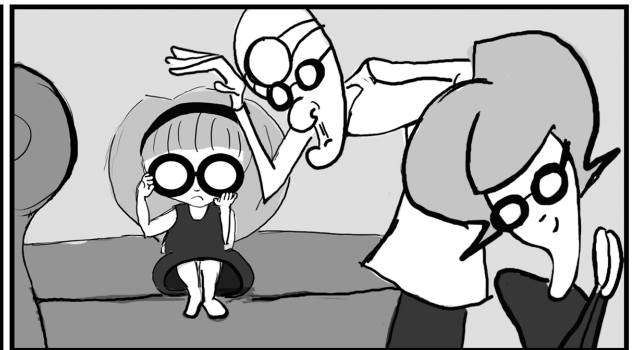
gigi 073e.psd



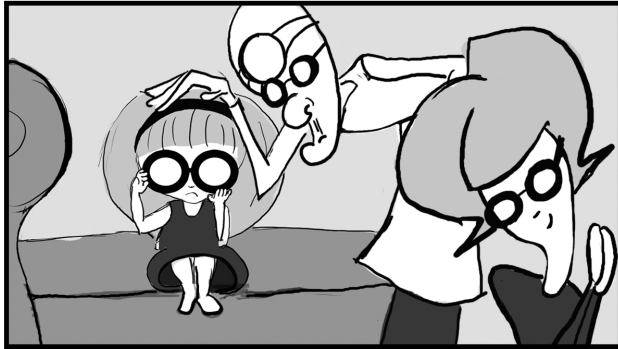
gigi 073f.psd



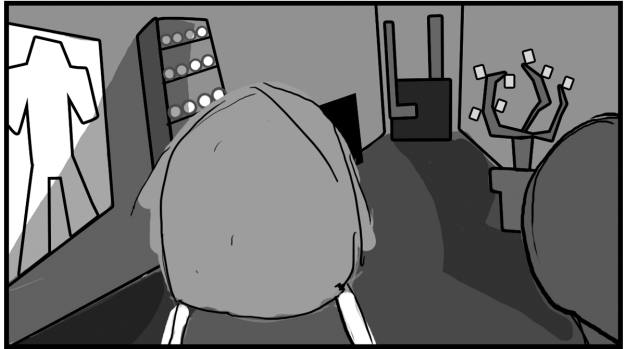
gigi 074a.psd



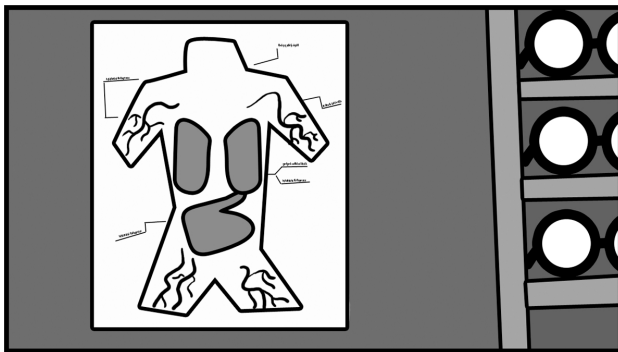
gigi 074b.psd



gigi 074c.psd



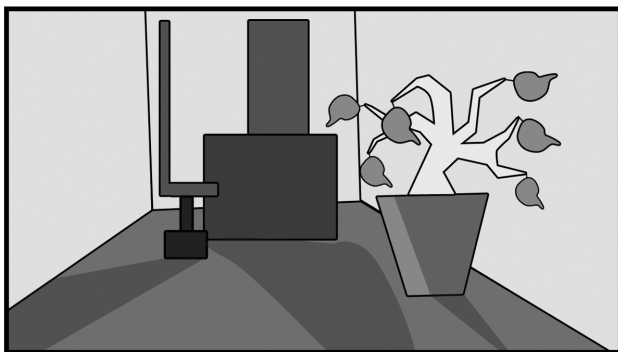
gigi 075.psd



gigi 076a.psd



gigi 076b.psd



gigi 076c.psd



gigi 078a.psd



gigi 078b.psd



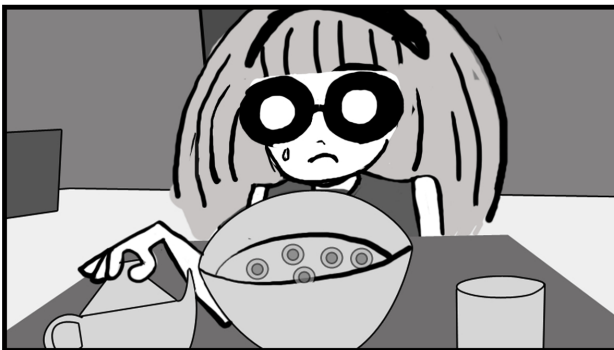
gigi 079a.psd



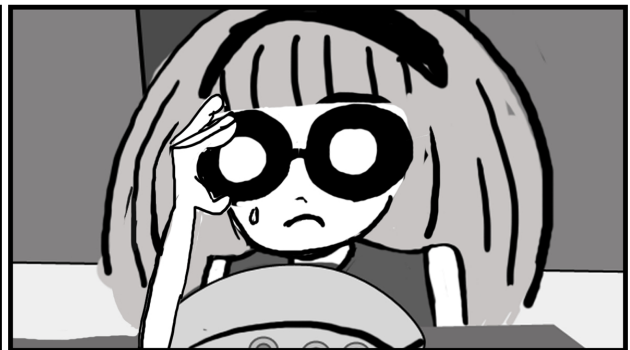
gigi 079b.psd



gigi 079c.psd



gigi 079d.psd



gigi 079e.psd



gigi 079f.psd



gigi 079g.psd



gigi 080a.psd



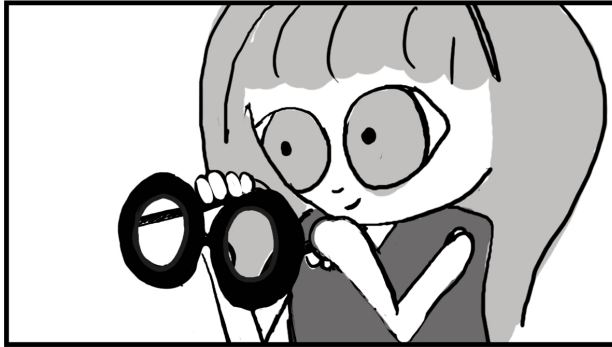
gigi 080b.psd



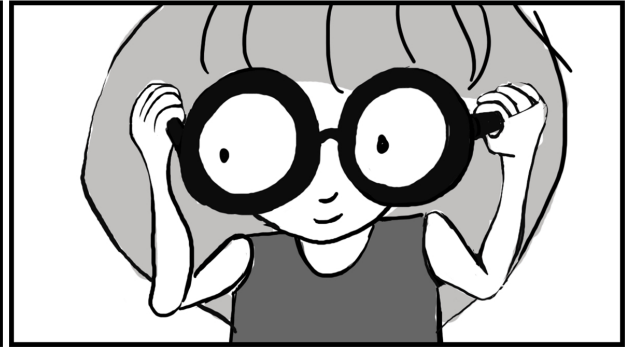
gigi 081a.psd



gigi 081b.psd



gigi 081c.psd



gigi 081d.psd



gigi 082a.psd



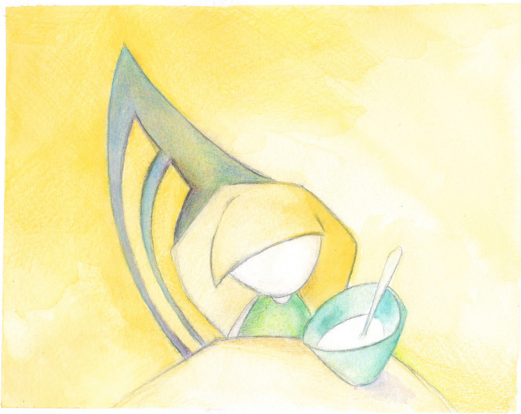
gigi 082b.psd



gigi 082c.psd



## APPENDIX C: COLOR SCRIPT



C1



C2



C3



C4



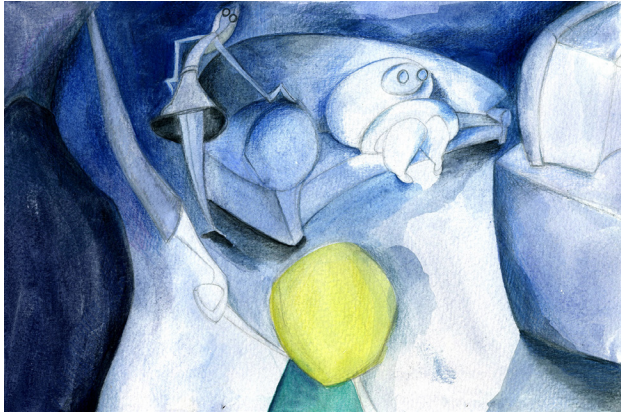
C5



C6

C1-C6; Scene 1: the Kitchen





C7



C8



C9



C10



C11



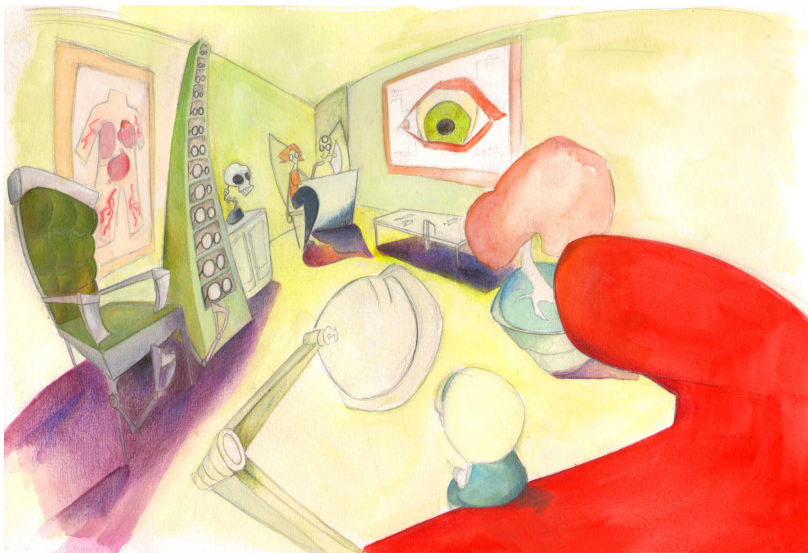
C12

C7-C12; Scene 2: The Livingroom





C13



C14

C12-C15; Scene 3:  
Doc's office



C15





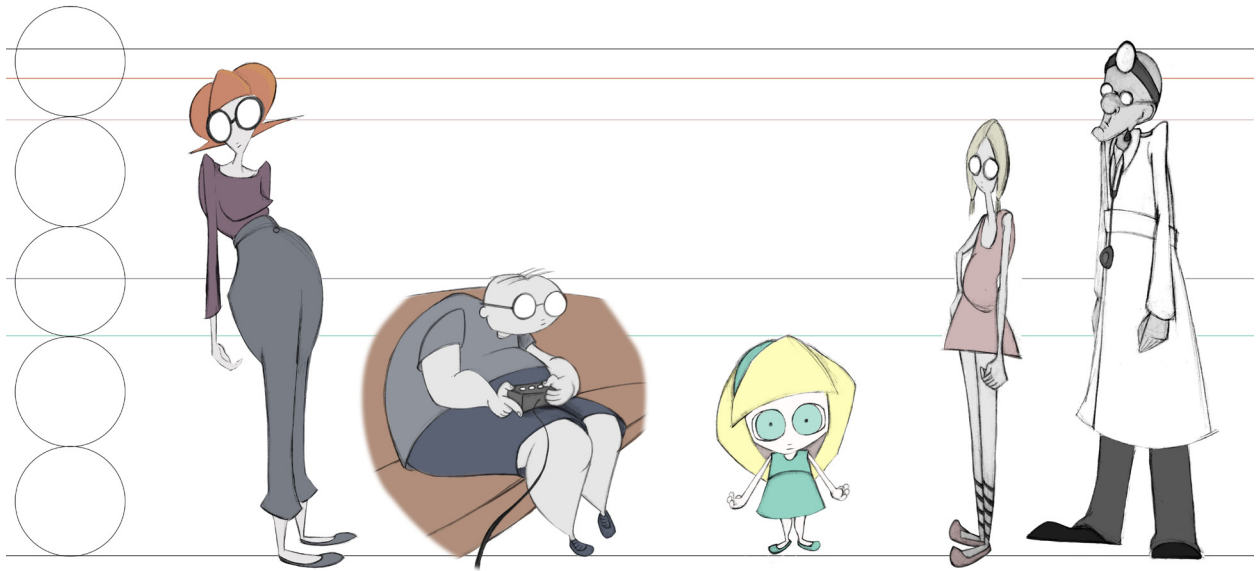
C16



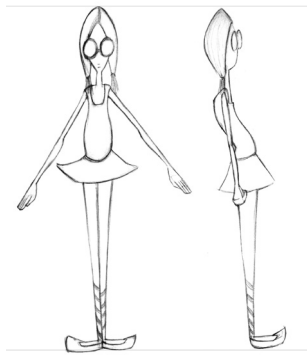
C17

C16-C17; Scene 4:  
Back to the Kitchen

## APPENDIX D: CHARACTER DESIGNS



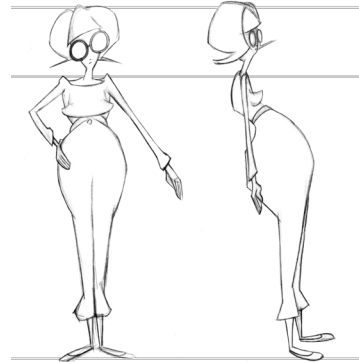
D1



D2



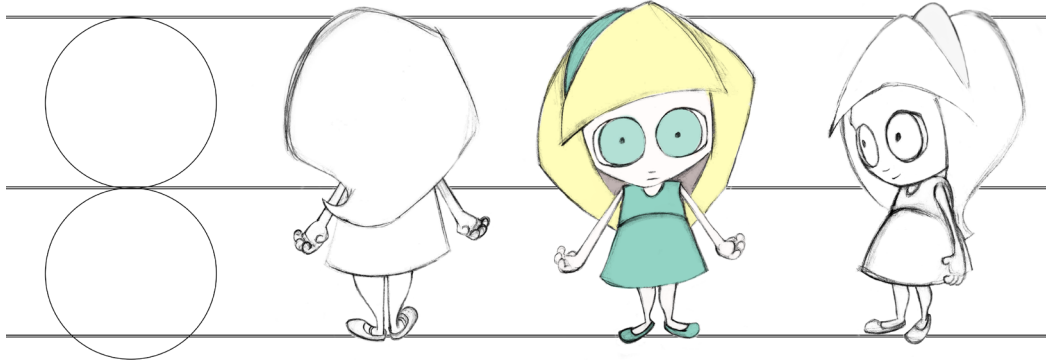
D3



D4



Gigi

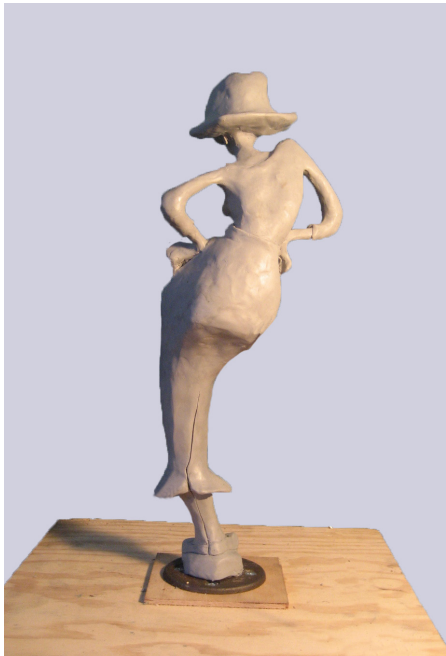


D5





D6



D7



D8

Maquette of Mother. wire, wood, Sculptee.

## APPENDIX E: PRODUCTION STILLS

