Rochester Institute of Technology
RIT Digital Institutional Repository

Theses

1-18-2000

To believe or not to believe

Julius Kim

Follow this and additional works at: https://repository.rit.edu/theses

Recommended Citation
Kim, Julius, "To believe or not to believe" (2000). Thesis. Rochester Institute of Technology. Accessed from

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the RIT Libraries. For more information, please contact repository@rit.edu.

TO BELIEVE OR NOT TO BELIEVE

by

Julius D. Kim

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

MFA Imaging Arts / Computer Animation
SCHOOL OF FILM AND ANIMATION
ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK
January 18, 2000

Marla Schweppe, Chairperson
Associate Professor, Film/Video

Johnny Robinson
Associate Professor, Film/Video

Jack Slutzky
Professor, NTID

/

Reproduction Permission
MFA Thesis

TITLE OF THESIS: "To Believe or Not to Believe"

I, Julius Kim, hereby grant permission to the Wallace Memorial Library of RIT to reproduce my thesis in whole or in part. Any reproduction will not be for commercial use or profit.

Signature

01 / 18 / 2000
Date

Table of Contents

Thesis Paper Title Page 1

Introduction 2

Making up a Story 3

Designing Characters 4
The boy 4
The dog 5
Aliens 6

Designing UFO 7

Designing Kitchen 8

Designing Soda Pop Cans 9

Creating Sounds 10

Creating Music 12

Conclusion 13

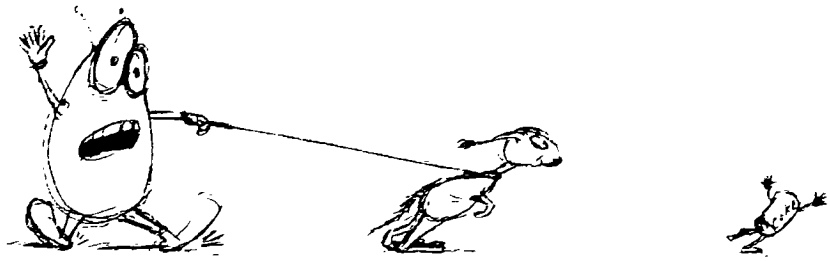
Reproduction Permission 14

Apendix A Thesis Proposal 15
Treatment 16
Budget 19
Timeline 19
Marketing Plan 21

Apendix B Original Storyboard 23

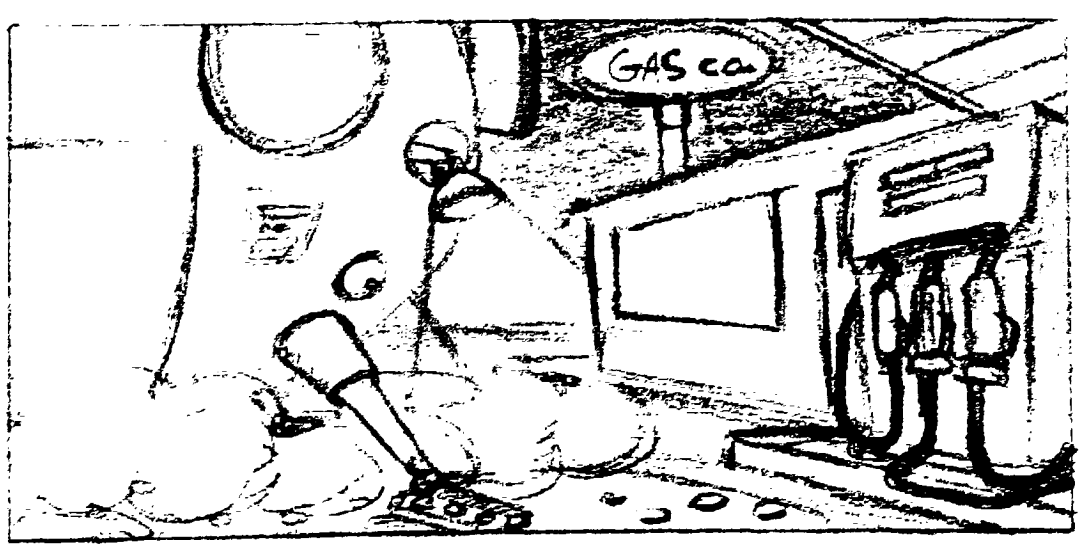
Apendix C Color Production Stills 29

Apendix D Flyer for Screening 30

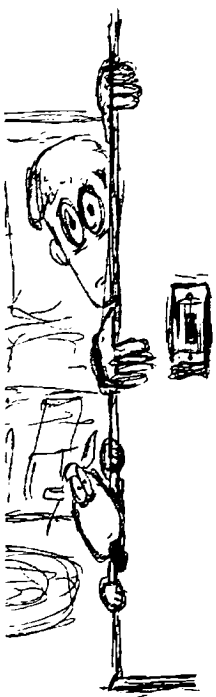


A Production of "To Believe or Not to Believe"

The experience of making "To Believe or Not to Believe" has been somewhat of a judgmental juggle with several options to choose from to make sure all scenes and designs fit together into one, whole, five minute 3-D animated film. Designing my own characters and kitchen stage, thinking up a story, and presenting the story with storyboards, sound effects and music required me to spend time creating the film with purpose and reason. This thesis paper will show how my thoughts and analysis prepared me to develop my animation production. The production has been a great experience and will benefit me in the future. It has increased my confidence and helped me to know where my limits are in the 3-D animation field.



Making up a Story



Two aliens, a dog, a boy and soda pop were obsessions I could not ignore when I started to make this comedic and eerie story for my thesis animation short. The idea of a dog and boy being frustrated with each other and later coming to an understanding when they confronted two aliens was something I felt compelled to write about. There was a strong idea to start the story with two strangers (aliens) walking into a house with flashlights flinging around in the air until one of them pointed at a refrigerator and said "there it is!" There was something in the refrigerator that explains the whole point of the story.

Thinking up a story and how to present it with storyboards is my most important focus and biggest time spender in film production. I believe they are the two main things that make a film interesting enough to be watched repeatedly. It took me a while to finish the story because I tried to tell a story completely enough that there would be no questions left for the audience to ponder. Of course, I cannot make everyone happy.

Designing Characters

The Boy

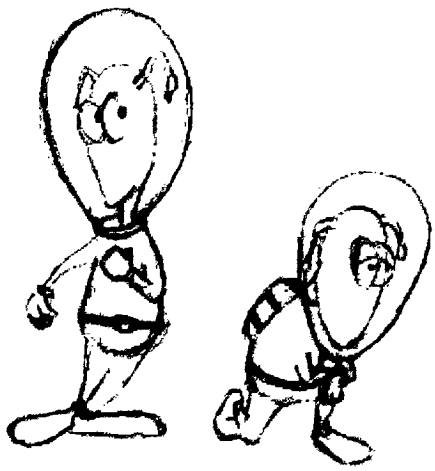
I wanted the boy in the story to be very mellow, a casual kind of guy. I wanted the audience to have a sense of "very mellow" from this guy, who does not feel "alive" enough to seek or challenge his dog's frustrating struggle to communicate that there is something in the house. We can sense more of his laziness with his voice as well. To support this role, the boy's reaction was slow so that we sympathize with his dog, seeing the dog's perspective that the boy keeps missing the dog's struggle to communicate - by making the boy's reaction slow. Finally at the end when the boy sees what the dog has been trying to tell him, the boy becomes more awake and his voice is a bit more alert. That gives us an idea how his life has been in the past – that nothing is new to him. His life is slow and mellow.

In the boy's design, it was very significant for him to have lazy eyes to emphasize being "very mellow". I have noticed some people copy other people's facial expressions to feel and understand their reactions. I wanted my audience to feel the boy's foot-dragging behavior. It helps to have him move around slowly with a quiet environment whenever he takes a step.

The Dog

The dog was designed to appear gentle and tickles us in a good way when we look at her. The behavior assigned to the dog was based on my dog, Footy. Footy is fun for me to watch when she reacts to certain things such as when I hush her during the night when she barks, or when I tease her with treats and see her sighing. I wanted to portray this kind of dog in the story. Because of her unique behavior, the audience would grow fond of her and relate to her. Knowing much about my dog and using her behavior in the story helped me know how to present the story better by using her funny, passive, ticklish attitude. The dog always gets frustrated with her "master", the boy, because he never believes anything she tries to tell him. To help with this idea, I had the boy say "nothing new" when the dog's nose pointed in the direction of the bare ceiling fan, where there aliens were hanging on a few minutes ago. To have the boy not believe the honest dog would be the same idea as a kid trying to tell a made-up story to his parents and the parents not believing him. Most of us can remember our childhood when we tried to fool our parents. When we see the dog trying to tell the boy that there was really something in the house, the audience roots for the dog. This helps us relate to the dog because we understand the real frustration of the dog. The dog character went through a few drawing revisions, starting with a ball shaped body and turning into a cone-nosed dog. She was a fun character to work with.

Aliens



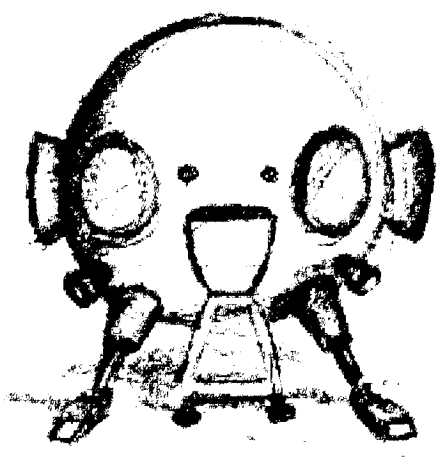
The alien characters were based on a high school story I wrote called, "Gene and Hyde". Gene does the thinking and talking while Hyde listens and does the actions. I chose them because their behaviors were already set and ready for me to use in my thesis animation film short. The sketches of them went through many heavy revisions for my thesis. They both started out with four snail eyes attached to seams on the tops of their heads. Their mouths were on their bellies. Later they became a thin, stick-figure in a human being form without a neck, allowing their heads to float. From there, the heads were revised from having snail eyes to beetle eyes. Finally, their heads appeared as human's heads but with short antennas and no mouths. They looked more like human beings but at the same time; we would see them as aliens.

Two aliens were originally supposed to communicate with each other telepathically using gestures, but it made it more complicated to solve the part where Hyde got the soda pop from the refrigerator and was confronted by the dog. The problem was that Gene, who was watching out for Hyde, used telepathy to communicate with Hyde that there was a dog coming his way. I decided to make the aliens be more like humans, without any more than five senses and without any highly advanced technologies to help them easily escape. That way we could understand the challenges and experience the suspense they were confronting. The aliens were assigned to appear, communicate, and think like human being but

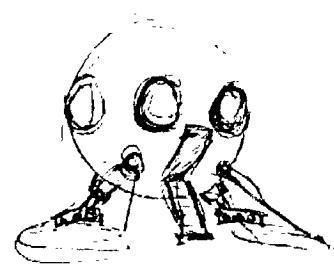
without mouths.

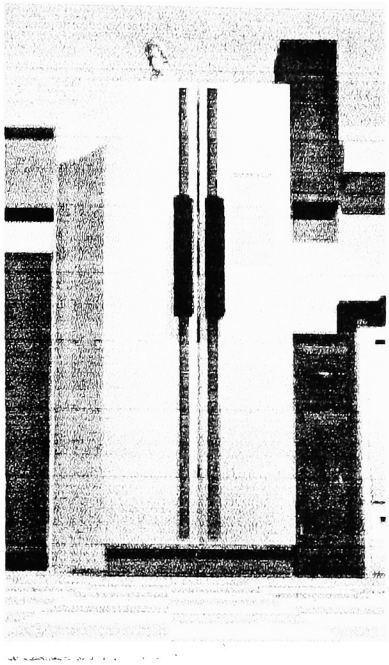
Designing the UFO

I borrowed some sketches of UFO designs from my story called, "Gene and Hyde" The sketch of the UFO was oval and had fascinating, complex details. Everything in my thesis film needed to be simple and cartoon-like, so the sketch



of the UFO was changed into a spherical shape with less detailed, with a simpler, cartoon-like appearance. There are two parts of the UFO used in the film. One for the outside and one for the inside. The inside was made to look like a customized flying ship for a soda pop collection with five shelves surrounding the walls of the ship and another shelf in the center. Later, the shelves on the wall were removed, with just one shelf in the center.





Designing Kitchen

I thought the design for the kitchen stage would be the hardest part for me to come up with. Deciding where the door, sink, refrigerator and other props were placed using a "mathematical" calculation based on their placement on the storyboards. For example, Hyde needed to have time to sneak up to the refrigerator to create the suspense of being caught by the boy, so the kitchen door and refrigerator needed to be far enough apart. Another example is that the boy could come out of the living room at anytime and catch the aliens, so the entrance was made right next to the refrigerator. A lot of the story happens in the kitchen, therefore, everything in the kitchen had to be carefully designed at one time and not require changes for other scenes.

Everything in the scenes needed to have a nice interaction and relationship with all the props and activities happening in the room. The most important thing was that the kitchen space must have a great sense of space, with not many places for the aliens to hide from the boy. The aliens having more risk of being seen by the boy in the huge kitchen created another form of suspense. The kitchen plays an important role for creating suspense.

Kitchen props and designs were set with the help of 3-D object library compact disc called "Interior Design Collection". It was created by Replica Technology. They saved me great deal of time because I wanted to finish my thesis film sooner.

Designing Soda Pop Cans

I originally wanted to use a "Coca-Cola" brand name because the brand is very recognizable and the audience would understand why the aliens loved the taste of the soda. Not only is "Coca-Cola" famous for its taste but also is collectible, making it a very good reason why the aliens wanted to collect the soda pop cans "Coca-Cola" spiral design from different galaxies in their own complicated language. This would be a great way to send out a message, "everyone loves Coca-Cola" even in different parts of the galaxy. What worried me about using the "Coca-Cola" logo was that it would take a while to get a permission from the "Coca-Cola" headquarter in Georgia (and they might not approve it) and it would delay my thesis project.

Since I wanted to finish my thesis animation film sooner, designing my own soda pop can was the only confident and safe way to get the film produced without hassle and trouble. "Frizzy-Soda" was born as a brand name, with a bubbly design on a green soda pop can. It was important to me that the design gave off a sense of a soda pop that would be easily recognized, especially, at the end of the story. When "Frizzy-Soda" was first introduced in the film, the design of the soda pop gives very important information that helps explain the point of the whole story. At

the end of the story, many soda cans with the same bubbly design and green background with different writings representing various alien foreign languages for "Frizzy-Soda" appear on the shelf in the UFO. This helps the audience get a clear idea that the aliens have been travelling to collect soda cans from different galaxies. It helps when Gene says, "four more galaxies to go". This gives the audience information that the aliens have been travelling to different galaxies to complete their collection.

Creating Sounds

When creating sound effects for my thesis animation short, I did not have much confidence in myself knowing about the way a sound was created. Mr. Barefoot from NTID's speech therapy department voluntarily helped me with sound analysis for my sound effects and the speech given to my characters. What was important to me was that the sounds be convincing and believable, not simply sounds. Mr. Barefoot repeatedly viewed my film on a small television with only sounds and speech. After evaluating the film, he gave me a few ideas that were mostly about the speech I had given to the boy and Gene. He helped correct my speech for my final version of the film. As for the sound effects, he gave me a thumbs up. He was a great help and increased my confidence to work with sounds.

The UFO's engine sound was to be a thunderous, heavy, and roaring sound that gave a sense of power and energy that can lift a very heavy load. The solution for this sound was a vacuum cleaner. A running vacuum cleaner was recorded then played back in slow speed. I added a very low boost with the help of computer software called, "SoundEdit 16". Then, the power of the UFO's engine was

heard. At age ten, I learned this trick from a book. To make the sound of sizzling soda pop, I used the actual sound of soft soda pop. I originally planned to make some recordings of a sizzling steak in an oily pan but instead simply recorded the sizzling sound of a soda. The sound was later amplified until I could hear it.

The squishing of the shoe as the boy steps was from my girlfriend's thick-heeled shoe (without her knowing). The shoe was simply bent with my hands, which made a squishing sound. It was perfect for the boy's "sneaker noise" as he walked. Several recordings of different squishing sound were made for each step the boy made, so each sound was different rather than a sound being copied and pasted.

When I viewed my completed film with the sound effects, there was a recurring problem with Hyde (who just listens and does the action). He just nods his head, "yes" most of the time. The nodding was too quiet and did not feel right. It took me a while to figure out his nodding needed a sound. The sound of a soft crinkling noise from a soda pop can was given to each of his single head nods. His soda pop crinkling nodding added a little humor since he was a soda pop can collector.

Creating Music

When I was seven, I learned to play the piano. The experience helped me understand the basic idea of composing music using different instruments with my synthesizer. Though my music composition still needs developing, the thesis film gave me a great opportunity to improve, and I actually did!

The idea for the music came from my emotional response as I watched my film repeatedly. Interpreting music from my film (visually) was based on my desire to portray a certain mood to the audience for certain scenes or actions. I perceive music as an aid to create or set responses and moods. Music is also another form of communication to answer some audiences' questions sometimes.

I believe that where I learned to interpret moods came from my childhood when I played with my toys. When I played with my toys, it was always with an imaginary background, singing music or babbling some special sound effects. Music always came out of my mouth whenever I played with my toys.

Conclusion

I perceive my thesis project film as one big piece of art. Orchestrating my animation, sound effects, music, story, characters all together a medium and knowing the time invested gives me a great sense of value in my work. One whole piece of art.

What I have gotten out of my thesis project is a sense of confidence and the ability to better management with my time, when I produce films in the future. I learned about time management, feeling that the project took too long (about a year and a half). Other than that, making "To Believe or Not to Believe" was a great experience and fun to produce. I can not wait to make new 3-D animation film shorts – of course, I will have to spend a lot of time on my new story first so my film can be watch over and over again.

Missing Page

TREATMENT:

Synopsis

A boy and his dog are sleeping in the living room while the door in the kitchen opens slowly. We see two bright flashlights coming into the house and they are looking around in the kitchen.

"There!" whispers one intruder. Another intruder turns and points the flashlight to the first intruder and says "What?".

As the light points at the face of the intruder, we see an alien wearing a yellow hard hat with a flashlight on top of the hat. The alien is blocking the light with its arm from its eyes. "Hey!... light away from my face!"

The light points to another direction. "Oh Sorry", says the other alien.

Then we hear a whisper saying "Hey.." The light points back at the alien again. The alien covers its eyes with a hand and the other hand pointing direction. The flashlight follows the direction the alien's pointing at. The light lands on a refrigerator.

"Okay here we go... just hope it's in there..." says the first alien.

They both sneak to the refrigerator. Then a kitchen light comes on and we see the two aliens freeze with big surprised eyes. We then see a boy stretching out with a yawn and a dog walking in. The boy notices mud footprints from the opened door to the middle of the kitchen. The boy walks to the door and closes it then looks at his dog. "I'm gonna have to teach you to wipe your feet..." yawns the boy. He then walks to the refrigerator and looks inside.

The dog walks up to the muddy footprints and starts to smell it. The dog looks puzzled. The dog looks up and sees two aliens hanging on the ceiling fan. We see one alien mouthing "shhhh" to the dog. The dog growls then barks.

"Hey hey... not in the middle of the night!" says the boy. The dog mumbles in a growl and walks to the side of the boy who is still looking inside the refrigerator. The dog and the aliens are looking at each other. Then one of the arms of the ceiling fan

the alien was hanging onto starts to bend and snaps off. The alien drops to the floor making a thud noise. The boy gets up, then looks back to where the sound is coming from. He sees nothing but the running dog with the growl. "Hey!" The dog then freezes and stares at the alien who is hiding behind the counter. The dog then walks back to the side of the boy with the mumbling growls again.

"Stay with me buddy", says the boy. The alien from the counter sneaks to the door. The dog growls. The boy gets up and looks at the dog. The dog then puts his head down, being shy while looking at the boy. The boy looks back at the refrigerator. Then the alien from the ceiling fan jumps to the floor quietly and sneaks on its way to the door. The dog gives out quieter growls. The boy looks at the dog again. The dog again puts his head down being shy while looking at the boy. Then the dog looks at the alien. The alien who is on its way to the door looks back at the dog and starts to smile, then starts to make faces at the dog and to dance around. The dog growls softly then looks at the boy with its head down. The dog looks back at the alien. The alien is giving the muscular stance with two arms down and grinding teeth. The dog gives out one loud bark, then looks back at the boy. The boy then looks back and sees nothing. We then see two aliens together right by the door. The alien who is away from the door is laughing. Then the other alien slaps at the laughing alien. The slapped alien covers its face. They then both open the door and sneak on their way out. We hear a soda pop can open with a frizzling sound. Two pairs of aliens eyes pop up and look back above the counter. They see the boy drinking a soda pop. "They have it! They have it!" cries one alien while the other alien nods happily.

"Okay let's go buddy!", says the boy leaving with the soda pop can, but the dog stays.

The boy comes back and says "Hello?". The dog then leaves with the boy. One alien quickly sneaks to the refrigerator and sees a few soda pop cans. With great excitement, the alien takes one soda pop can then tums to confront a big smiling dog. The other alien gasps then runs out to the center of the kitchen room. That alien starts to shake a little while looking at the dog who just slowly looks back at him. The dog

then runs to the other alien while the one with the soda runs to the door. Then the dog looks at the other alien running and starts to run after it. The alien stops in the center of the kitchen, then he tweets two whistles. The dog stops and looks at the alien in the center of the kitchen. Then the alien flings its arms around and starts to run to the other side, away from the door. The dog runs after that alien. The alien with the soda pop makes it to the door and watches his friend being chased by the dog around the kitchen. The running alien then is stuck in the corner by the dog.

"Hey buddy? Keep me company.." says the boy in the other room. The dog growls. "Buddy?..... Hey!" The dog then mumbles and starts to walk to the living room while watching the alien. Then the alien slowly starts to walk. The dog slowly walks to the alien. The alien stops walking. So does the dog. Then the alien walks. Again the dog. Then the alien starts to run for the door. The dog runs after the alien but then the alien shuts the door on time, leaving the dog behind. The dog barks madly.

"Hey! keep it down will ya?" says the boy, but the dog keeps barking.

We then see the two aliens run into a UFO and they take off. Inside the UFO, we see the two aliens being really happy. One alien proudly takes out one soda pop and puts it on the shelf which holds a collection of different soda pop cans.

Method

The project will be entirely based on Lightwave 3d, Infini-D, and Photoshop, Dabbler,
Rhapsody, SoundEdit 16 and Premiere softwares.

I will be composing the music with a synthesizer and adding sound effects. The animation and audio will be edited using Premiere.

Aesthetic

In this Project, I want to add motion blur to the characters in an organic form and exaggerate the characters' behaviors and gestures. The project will be completed with English subtitles for the deaf.

BUDGET:

Task	Estimate	In Kind	Actual
Storyboard and Script	1,500	1,500	0
3D modeling and Texture	10,500	10,500	0
3D Animation	30,000	30,000	0
Music Composition	1500	1500	0
Sound Effect	100	100	0
Image/Sound editing	2500	2500	0
5 zip disks	100	0	100
1 8mm video tape	8	0	8
2 S-VHS tape	20	0	20
10 video tapes	20	0	20
festival fees	270	0	270
TOTAL:	46,518	0	418

TIMELINE:

PREPRODUCTION - SPRING 1997 (2 CREDITS)

SCRIPT
STORYBOARD
DEVELOPING CHARACTERS
DESIGN STAGES AND ENVIRONMENTS
MEET WITH COMMITTEE FOR APPROVAL

PRODUCTION - SUMMER 1997 (NO CREDITS)

BUILD MODELS FOR ENVIRONMENTS AND STAGES
BUILD CHARACTER MODELS
SET UP SCENES
ANIMATE SOME SCENES
PRODUCE MUSIC AND REVISE

Half of the project will be done by beginning of Fall quarter of1997

PRODUCTION - FALL 1997 (12 CREDITS)

September

MEETING WITH THESIS COMMITTEE FOR CRITIC AND REVISION ON PROJECT DONE IN SUMMER.
MEET AGAIN FOR APPROVAL.
CHANGE AND CONTINUE SETTING UP SCENES AND ANIMATE MORE SCENES.
WORK ON MUSIC.

October

MEET WITH THESIS COMMITTEE FOR APPROVAL.
CHANGE AND CONTINUE SETTING UP SCENES AND ANIMATE MORE SCENES.

POSTPRODUCTION FALL 1997 (CONTINUE)

November

MEET WITH THESIS COMMITTEE FOR APPROVAL.
CHANGE MUSIC AND SCENES.
PUT ALL SCENES TOGETHER AND EDIT FOR CLEAN UP.
REVIEW AND REVISE.
COMPLETE POSTPRODUCTION.
COMPLETE THESIS REPORT.
SCREEN THE ANIMATION.

---

* If I have not met with a satisfaction of my thesis committee for the review of my production in the summer, I will finish my thesis by the end of Winter quarter.

MARKETING PLAN

I will submit film to festivals. I will also see if any soda pop company will be interested with my film for advertisement reason, and talk to committee chair about other alternatives.

List of festivals to submit:

Ottawa International Animation Festival '98
Ottawa
(613) 232 6727
Rules and regulation will be mailed Jan. 1998.

Newport Beach International Film Festvial
Joseph Mahoney
(714) 851-6555 or fax (714) 851-6556
NBIFF
4400 MacArthur Blvd., 5th Floor
Newport Beach, CA 92660
USA

Mellow Manor Production's "Mike and Spike's Animation Festival"
Send to Spike at:
7488 La Jolla Blvd., La Jolla, CA 92037 or call
619-459-8707 or fax 619-459-8722.
No deadline for submission.

Los Angeles International Film Festival
AFI FEST
2021 North Western Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90027 USA
Telephone: 213-856-7709
Fax: 213- 462-4049

Chicago International Film Festival
Chicago
(312) 425-9400

Toronto Worldwide Short Film Festvial
Toronto
(416) 535 8506

NEW YORK EXPO
532 La Guardia Place, Suite 330
New York, NY 10012
Phone: (212) 505-7742

UFVA STUDENT FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL
Department of Film & Media
Arts Temple University 011-00
Philadelphia PA 19122 USA

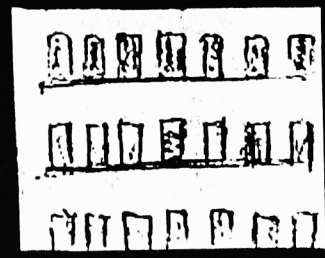
Mill Valley Film Festival
Mill Valley, Calif.
(415) 383-5256

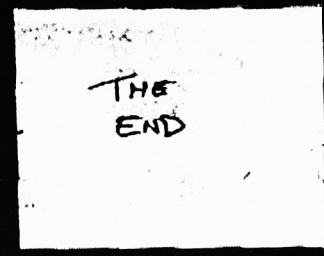
World Animation Celebration
30101 Agoura Court Suite 110
Agoura Hills, CA 91301
(818) 991 2884

SODA
POP!

SODA
POP

SODA
POP




THE
END

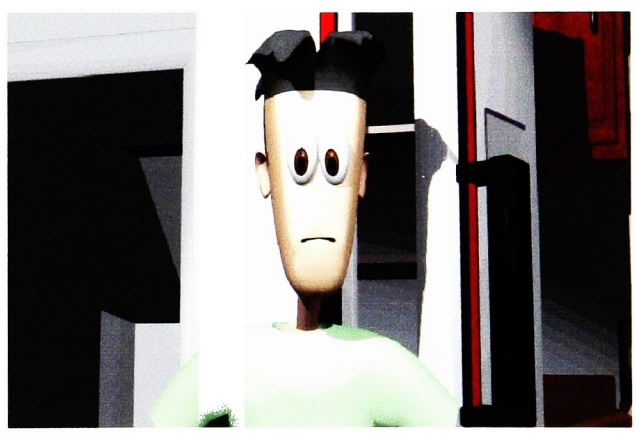
APPENDIX C

These are some snapshots from my thesis film.

The kitchen scene.

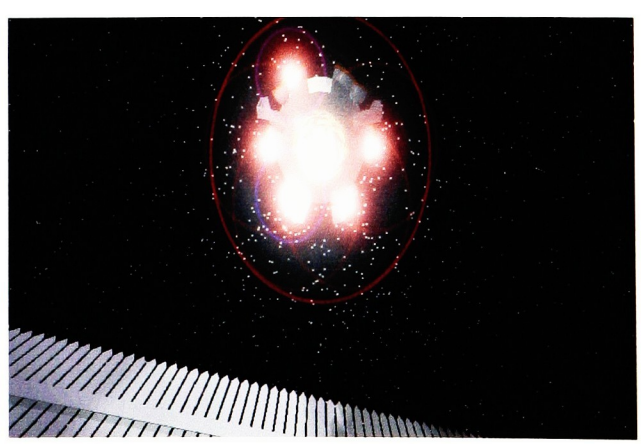
Aliens walking into the kitchen.

A dog in search for aliens in the kitchen.

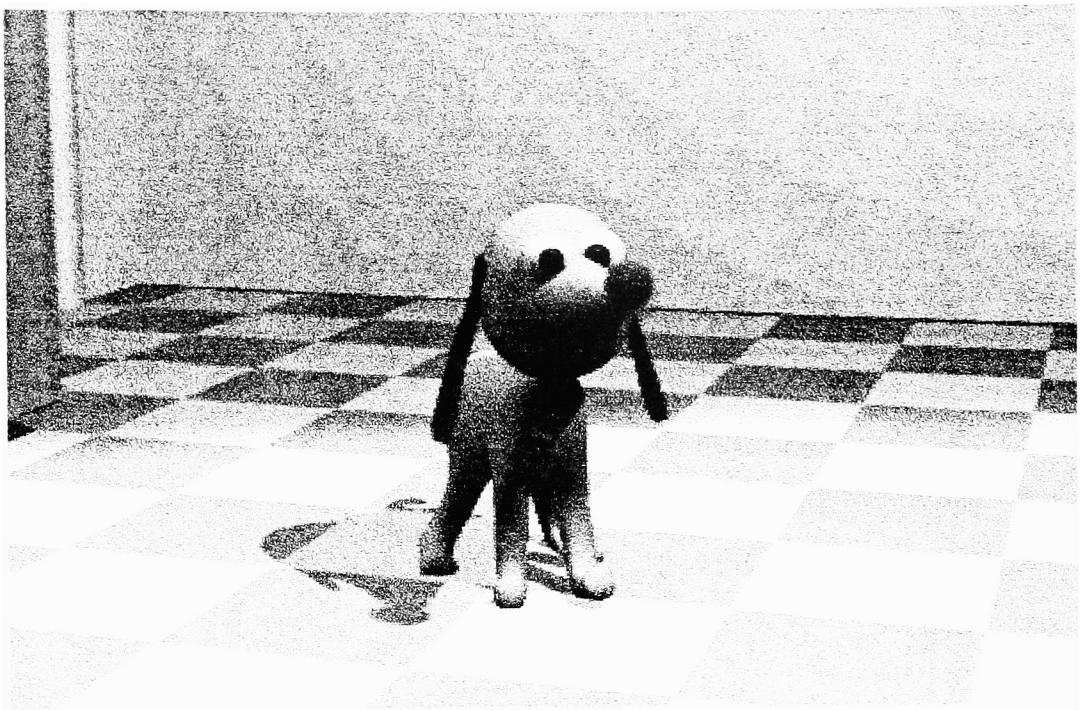


A boy hushing at his dog at night.

The dog finally found the aliens.



U.F.O. blasting its way off into space.



To Believe
or
Not to Believe

Monday November 16, 1999
at 7:00 sundown

Meet at the Carison Auditorium