

Developing nature of 'ANIMATION'

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Abstract

Animation is the ultimate cultural tradition. On the silver screen, in TV shows, video games and even marketing, animation inspires childlike wonder, helping us to connect with dynamic characters while embracing new perspectives or horizons of the entertainment industry.

Animation is closely tied to the media and technological development of the last ongoing century, but we have long felt drawn to artistic depictions of movement. The archaeological evidences show that animation has staying power. This concept is critical to human creation but with room for changes sparked by evolving tools and techniques.

To have a deep study of the evolving nature of animation, we have to take a deep dive into the history of animation to learn how animation technology has advanced through the years as well as where the field is headed.

Key Words

Britannica, Ancient Cave Painting, Archeological Surveys, Animation, Technology, Virtual world, Animation principles, Global outreach, Research and development. Storytelling, Music, Entertainment. Animation industry, Modernization, etc.....

Introduction

Beginning of Traditional Animation

Throughout history, animation has taken many forms. Britannica defines this practice as “the art of making inanimate objects appear to move,” adding that this is

an “creative impulse that long predates the movies.” Understanding its origins can help us recognize why it remains such a fixture to this day.

Early Beginnings: Hand-Drawn Animation

Animation has existed in some capacity for millennia. Many prehistoric paintings used sequential imagery to depict motion. In 2022, a team of archaeologists used 3D modelling to breathe new life into ancient cave paintings, arguing that, if observed in firelight, these images would have appeared remarkably life-like.

Another example is the Iranian archaeology site Shahr-e Sukhteh, where researchers uncovered a goblet adorned with images of a jumping goat. Spin the vase, and these goats appear to move. In ancient China, craftsman Ding Huan is believed to have achieved a similar effect with a lamp featuring moving images of birds.

The desire to bring movement to works of art persisted through the middle Ages, with numerous techniques lending the perception of movement to the creative works of the time. Medieval tapestries, for instance, depicted events in a sequential form. Meanwhile, mechanical devices known as automata began to appear, sometimes drawing on the illusion of moving images for entertainment purposes in court.

By the 1800s, innovators began experimenting with new strategies, with inventions such as the phenakistoscope and the zoetrope, which used vertical cuts within a cylindrical drum to reveal images in various stages of motion. This formed the basis for a popular toy produced by Milton Bradley in the 1860s.

Animation as we know it today took a leap forward with the development of celluloid film during the late 1800s. Allowing animators to create characters separate from their backgrounds, celluloid streamlined the animation process, limiting the need for time-consuming redrawing.

Methodology

The Golden Age of Animation

Film enthusiasts consistently show fondness for the golden age of animation, which arrived with the advent of sound on the silver screen. This era's strength derived, in part, from the introduction of compelling characters, which utilized design fundamentals such as colour theory and shape language to great effect. During this time, pioneering studios took major risks, pushing the boundaries of animation and revealing how it could form the basis of memorable narratives.

No discussion of animation's golden age would be complete without highlighting the massive contributions of Walt Disney. He brought animation to feature films revealing how animated characters and settings could promote rich and nuanced stories that touch on important themes. Disney's animation history closely aligns with the evolution of animation itself.

Near the final days of this golden age, another powerful animator entered the scene: Japanese filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki of Studio Ghibli. Known for iconic films such as *My Neighbour Totoro* and *Spirited Away*, Miyazaki revealed the enduring value of hand-drawn design in an era of rapid technological advancement.

The Dawn of 3D Animation

Drawing on computer-generated imagery to produce moving images within a three-dimensional environment, 3D animation proved a game-changer in the 1990s and 2000s. This evolution is best reflected by the rise of Pixar — especially with the release of the acclaimed film *Toy Story*, which was the first fully computer-animated movie.

A remarkable technological and artistic achievement, *Toy Story* paved the path toward a second golden age in animation, including some of today's most cherished films (*Shrek*, *Finding Nemo* and *Frozen*, to name a few). By the 2000s, this was the dominant form of animation, with hand-drawn styles largely taking a backseat.

Stop-Motion and Motion Capture

Hand-drawn and computer animation are just two of many animation techniques. Stop-motion animation relies on the physical manipulation of models or puppets, with animators taking photos and making small adjustments, eventually playing frames back to achieve the perception of smooth motion. Claymation comes to mind, with *Wallace and Gromit*, in particular, demonstrating stop-motion's creative potential.

Motion capture animation is similar but begins with real actors and then transforms their motions into digital data. This technique can produce surprisingly lifelike movements, as seen in Gollum from the *Lord of the Rings* franchise.

Conclusion

Effective animation draws on foundational artistic techniques, which, although streamlined through digital technologies, remain crucial for creating compelling characters and evocative settings.

The most impactful creators show reverence for the animators of yesteryear, drawing from their most trusted techniques to influence modern animation processes. Insights into animation history can provide powerful inspiration, too, forming the basis for new concepts and characters that feel both fresh and timeless.

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