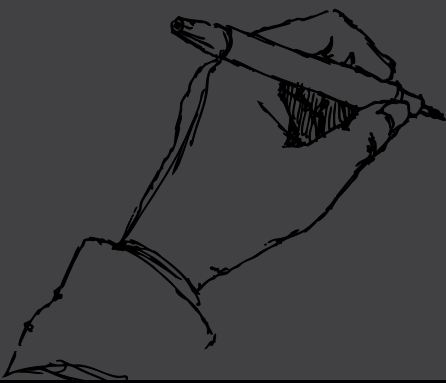


STOPMO

Studio

Stop-Motion Animation Workshop



LESSON

6

CREATING A SET



Introduction

This teaching guide will offer several ideas to help you make an appropriate set or background for your animated video and introduce you to the variety of materials often used in this creative process. You will also select and critique a scene from an animated film using the elements and principles of design, with the expectation that you will then effectively integrate these elements and principles into your production.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this guide you will be able to:

- Describe the difference between oil and water-based clay, and explain its appropriate use for prop development;
- Use a creative process to make your set or background using a variety of materials;

- Describe how to effectively illuminate your set;
- Create a 2D or 3D set or background for your group project;
- Analyze and make use of visual, spatial and temporal concepts when creating images;
- Critique a scene from an animated film using the elements and principles of design;
- Manipulate and organize design elements and principles to achieve planned compositions;
- Develop independent thinking while interpreting and making judgements about subject matter.





INTRODUCTION TO ANIMATION

Creating a 2D or 3D Set or Background

Your set or background can range from being quite simple to extremely complex and can be created in a number of ways. You could paint or draw a simple backdrop on a large piece of paper, which can be set up behind your action, or you could build a three-dimensional set, complete with a ground plane, backdrop and other items such as furniture, trees, props, etc.

Note: Professional animated videos often draw on the chroma key effect using a blue or green screen as their background. This enables the insertion of various background images into this space after a video has been shot.

Here is a list of materials you could use to build your sets in the classroom:

- Cardboard or illustration board
- Paint
- Construction paper
- Plasticine
- Masking tape
- Markers or crayons
- Scissors

You can make and use a variety of props to ensure that your set looks more creative or realistic. You can bring in items from home if you like. Use your imagination!

Optional Group Learning Activity: What Is a Green Screen?

Watch the following video and answer the questions below:

How to Make Awesome Green Screen (7 min 59 s)

[youtube.com/watch?v=w6brdwY-dvU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6brdwY-dvU)

Questions:

- What is a blue or green screen? What is chroma key? How do they work?
- Why do we usually use the above true blue and green colours?

- What is the most important fact to remember when filming with a blue or green screen?
- How far away should the subject be from the screen? Why?
- Where are blue or green screens most often found, other than in movies?

The Creative Process

For more creative tips pertaining to clay characters and to learn more about how to build 2D and 3D stop-motion animation sets and create props, watch the following video:



Creative Tips, Clip 3:
The Creative Process –
Art Materials and Creating Sets
(3 min 30 s)

Basic Lighting Techniques

Mood is very much about your story, even in stop-motion animation, and music can help achieve this as well. However, lighting is a key factor to experiment with.

Here are some basic ideas on how to light your animation set. You can think about lighting in terms of the following basic lighting types which include:

- Side lighting
- Top-heavy lighting
- Full-frontal lighting
- All-round lighting

There are also more advanced lighting techniques, which require more lights and larger sets, but it's best to keep it simple.

You can create these types of lighting by working with a key light, fill light, back light and/or set lighting. Below are definitions of key terms:

- **Key light:** The main light source used to light a subject in a scene. This light is often placed on the front and side of the key subject and is usually the most intense light on the set.
- **Fill light:** A less intense light that fills in the spaces that the key light does not reach. This type of lighting softens hard shadows cast by the key light and makes for a more visually appealing image.
- **Back light:** A light used on the back side of the key subject and aimed from above to fill the scene. It is often used in close-up shots.
- **Set light:** A light that is not aimed at the subjects in the scene but used to illuminate the background.

Use any of these lighting scenarios and you're bound to create the results you want!

Critique an Animated Scene

Critiquing an animated scene will help you review the elements and principles of design that should be integrated in your set and production.

Individual Learning Activity: Critique a Scene Using the Elements and Principles of Design

Using the elements and principles of design, select and critique one of these **animated scenes**, taken from the NFB films we have referenced in these teaching guides, or use an interesting example of a student's workshop scene, found at nfb.ca/playlist/mediatheque />.

Use the **Elements and Principles of Design - Question Sheet** to help guide your critique.

ELEMENTS OF DESIGN	PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN
Line	Movement
Shape/Form	Emphasis
Texture	Balance
Value	Pattern
Colour	Contrast
Space	Rhythm
	Unity

The Elements and Principles of Design

For more information on the elements and principles of design, visit the following sites:

Donna Tersiisky, The Elements and Principles of Visual Design

nwrain.net/~tersiisky/design/design.html

The University of Saskatchewan, College of Education's Classic Graphic Design Theory

usask.ca/education/coursework/skaalid/theory/cgdt/designtheory.htm

Natomas High School's Design Department's Graphic Design: Elements & Principles of Visual Design

nhsdesigns.com/graphic/principles/index.php

Team Learning Activity

Now, it's time to get together to plan and create your set or background for your stop-motion animated movie.



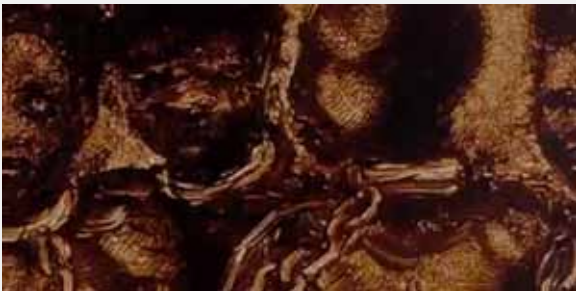
1. *Madame Tutli-Putli* by Chris Lavis and Maciek Szczerbowski (2007)

TYPE: ARMATURE



2. *Black Soul* by Martine Chartrand (2000)

TYPE: PAINTING ON GLASS

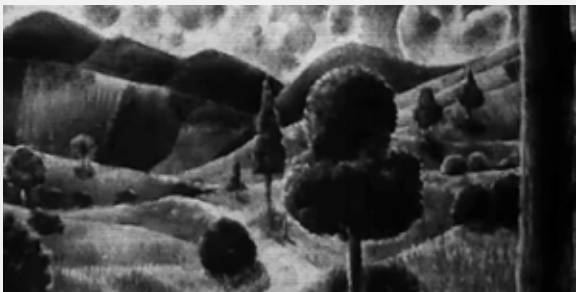




3. *The ErlKing* by Ben Zelkowitz (2002)
TYPE: SAND ON GLASS



4. *Mindscape* by Jacques Drouin (1975)
TYPE: PINSCREEN





5. *The Necktie* by Jean-François Lévesque (2008)
TYPE: ARMATURE AND CUT-OUTS





ANIMATION SCENE SELECTIONS

6. *The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse* by Evelyn Lambart (1980)

TYPE: PAPER CUT-OUT



7. *Charles and Francis* by Co Hoedeman (1987)

TYPE: PAPER CUT-OUT



8. *Moon Man* by Paul Morstad (2004)

TYPE: DIGITAL





ANIMATION SCENE SELECTIONS

ANNEX 01

9. *Sleeping Betty* by Claude Cloutier (2007)

TYPE: RECENT CARTOON ANIMATION



10. *The Big Swing* (Hothouse 7) by Paula Gillgannon (2011)

TYPE: SILICONE CAST PUPPETS WITH WIRE ARMATURES



11. *The Squirrel Next Door* (Hothouse 4) by Carla Coma (2007)

TYPE: TAXIDERMIC ANIMAL PUPPETS WITH WIRE ARMATURES



THE ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

Elements of Design

1. Line

Are lines used in this scene? If so, where are they used? What kinds of lines are visible? Do the lines evoke emotion? Are they rhythmic? Do they contrast? If so, how? Are lines being used for emphasis? Are there contour lines?

2. Shape/Form

What types of shapes do you see? Are these shapes natural or are they geometric? Are the shapes two- or three-dimensional? Do the shapes differ from the foreground and background? Are the shapes being used to indicate movement? Do they create a pattern?

3. Texture

What textures do you see in the scene? How is each texture created? Does the texture evoke emotion? Does it look real?

4. Value

Is there contrast between light and dark in the scene? If so, is the contrast high or low? Is the scene high key, low key or mixed? Is value used to add volume to a shape or create the illusion of space? Does the value evoke a feeling or mood? If so, how?

5. Color

What colours are used in the scene? Why are these colours used? Do they have a purpose? Do they express emotions or affect mood? Are there value and intensity changes in the colours?

6. Space

Does the space indicate depth? If so, how is the illusion of depth conveyed—through size, overlapping, detail, colour, value or perspective?

Principles of Design

1. Movement

Is movement portrayed in this scene? If so, how is the movement directed through the scene—through lines, edges, shapes and/or colours? Does it direct your eyes to a focal point?

2. Emphasis

What is being emphasized, or is drawing your attention, in this scene? What is the most important element? Is there one focal point, or more? How is the emphasis being created?

3. Balance

What type of balance is being portrayed in this scene—symmetrical, asymmetrical or radial? How is it being achieved?

4. Pattern

Is there evidence of patterns or repetitions in this scene? If so, where do they occur? Do they make the scene more interesting?

5. Contrast

Is there contrast evident in this scene? Is there a difference in values, colours, textures, shapes, and other elements? Does the contrast add to the sense of visual excitement created by the work?

6. Rhythm

Is rhythm evident in this scene? Is there a repetition in visual movement through colours, shapes or lines?

7. Unity (most important)

Is there unity in this work? Are the various elements of the work tied together? Do the elements on the page fit or belong together?

