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**PRODUCTION THROUGH THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS IN CONTEMPORARY GREEK
ANIMATION: ANIMATION AT THE DEPARTMENT OF GRAPHIC DESIGN AND VISUAL
COMMUNICATION**

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ABSTRACT

Animation has been taught uninterruptedly at the Department of Graphic Design and Visual Communication of the University of West Attica since the Department 's inception as the Department of Graphic Design at the former KATEE in 1978. Today, undergraduate courses in animation commence in the fifth semester and continue through the eighth, focusing on 2D and 3D animation as well as game design. Concurrently, a Postgraduate Program strictly focused on Animation is also in operation.

This presentation analyzes the methodology of creating animation films within the educational process implemented at the Department. It outlines the development stages, moving from the inception of the core idea and the selection of the target group to the communication of the concept through its gradual expansion from logline to screenplay. Furthermore, it covers the process of selecting the visual style up to the creation of the storyboard, the animatic, and, ultimately, the final animation film.

The core focus lies on the diverse modes of communication achieved through animation filmmaking. In narrative/fiction animation, the creator utilizes the expressive tools of cinematic language to generate a new form of dramatic art, heavily underpinned by the visual arts. Here, the composition of the image is entirely artificial, rendering the concept of a constructed world explicit. Consequently, the narrative can function more implicitly by employing multifaceted symbolism. The central concept develops as a story, projecting the creator's emotions and ideas regarding a specific theme. Since animation is a medium that dramatizes non-realities, imaginary worlds, and mythical realms, its narrative model remains free and dynamic in its quest for the essence of communication. Emphasis is placed on the development of characters/heroes acting as symbols, devoid of an actor's human flesh, meaning they are not required to behave like human beings. Furthermore, weight is given to the use of expressive mediums through which the creators' imagination is freely visualized.

This overtly non-real world distances the viewer; thus, animation emerges as a domain where we can dramatize far more freely than in live-action cinema.

In informative animation, the creator aims for rapid, clear, and direct communication. Cinematic language is combined primarily with graphic design elements to convey complex information to the viewer. In this sub-genre, the artificial synthesis of images is extreme, utilizing infographics, motion typography, and typically a voiceover. Dramaturgical elements, when utilized, serve to explain, inform, and update. This highly artificial image composition helps highlight data through graphic representations. The narrative function is direct and unfolds mainly through visualized symbols. The decoding of these symbols by the audience is automatic, provided there is a shared cultural identity—namely, common communication codes.

A hybrid of the aforementioned narrative styles is the creation of animated spots. Here, the creator aims to promote a message, which may manifest as an opinion, a social critique on a specific issue, or a product commercial. The common denominator is a very short duration paired with high-density coding. In commercial animation, the goal is to construct a story within an ideal and desirable world in order to transfer this affect to the product. The viewer is meant to project themselves into this desirable world and resonate with the characters. Naturally, to become part of this world, they must purchase the specific product, as the myth can only be experienced through the product itself. Conversely, when the spot does not concern a commercial product, the world depicted is neither ideal nor desirable. The creator addresses the viewer directly and bluntly, forcing them to reflect critically on a specific social issue.

Based on the framework above, a series of undergraduate student animation films will be analyzed to highlight how young adults communicate topics that concern them, whether positively or negatively. Following this, animation films by postgraduate students of the "UNIWA ANIMATION" program will be examined to shed light on the distinct concerns raised by older individuals who have already entered the workforce. A key factor is that the postgraduate creators come from diverse academic backgrounds with varied prior studies and interests. After receiving one year of condensed knowledge in animation, they successfully managed to organize and complete an animation film along with its theoretical support for their master's dissertation.

