

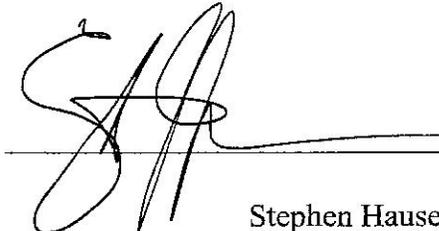
"The Snow Man"
An Animated Short Film
By
Benjamin Brossett

A Senior Honors Thesis project submitted to the Honors Program
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

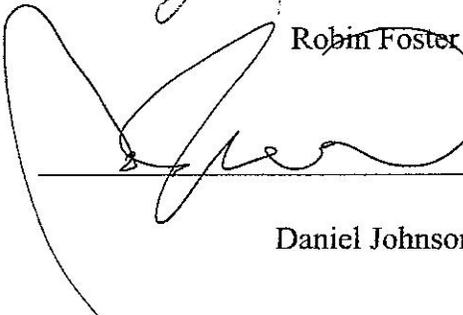
Bachelor of Motion Pictures

Belmont University Honors Program

November 20, 2020

 Date 11/11/20
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“The Snow Man” was a challenge to myself to create an animation. I have always loved the artform, but I had no idea how they were made. So I decided that for my senior thesis I would learn how. By challenging myself to spend this project in an artistic medium I had no knowledge in, it forced me to learn a lot very quickly. To complete this project, I learned the key principles of animation through close examination of great animated works and by watching videos of some of the greatest animators like James Baxter, Glen Keane, and Aaron Blaise. I observed how people and objects move and interact in the real world so I could make my animation look more realistic. I had to design my characters, create storyboards, design a color palette, draw backgrounds. My original two-minute plan turned into three minutes of animation, resulting in a total of 2,160 frames of drawings.

To accomplish this daunting task list, I learned as I went. I had to teach myself a new computer software called Adobe Animate from scratch. Sometimes I would discover a new function and figure out how to apply it, but far more often I found myself searching for functions out of necessity. To the outside observer, it was not a very efficient way of working. But for me, it became an extremely efficient way to learn and improve.

I knew when approaching this project that I was not a very consistent drawer. I was not confident in my lines, and on top of that I was new to digital drawing. I could have spent more time practicing my drawing skills, but more important to me was working towards a finished product. So, I searched for different ways to draw less and focus more on the story and learning the software. I utilized functions called Symbols, which allowed me to create a shorter loop of animation to use multiple times. I also used Tweens, which in Adobe Animate gives the ability to set parameters at two different points, and the software computes what will happen in the frames

in between. These functions allowed me to save time in drawing, but at the same time opened up so many more options for animation.

If I were to start this project over now, I would approach it in a completely different way. I think someday I might tackle the story of this snow man again. But first I plan to spend time strengthening my drawing skills and frame-by-frame character animation. One of the awe-inspiring things about great animators like James Baxter is their ability to make any character move with such conviction and fluidity. That aspect is lacking from “The Snow Man” and is something I wish I had the ability to do when creating it. However, with hundreds of hours spent on this film, and with several more to go to complete it, I am extremely proud of what I was able to accomplish. I presented myself with a very intensive challenge, and it pushed my art both technically and creatively in a completely new direction, and I am excited to continue learning, improving, and trying something new.

I love to experiment. I was curious, in telling a visual story, how little I needed to show before an audience could start to interpret meaning from it. I wanted to know how far I could push my character towards subtlety. As I learn more about the art of animation, I realize there are so many details around us that go unnoticed. The specific way a face wrinkles when smiling, or how a piece of cloth flutters in the wind. While a filmmaker might capture these details in camera, an animator must fully understand these details and create them with their own hand. They spend painstaking time and effort for others to start noticing. This animation has challenged me to spend more time with where I am and start looking closer. “The Snow Man” is a story of being. A man wanders through the snow. He is not in search of anything, he has no destination, yet he notices little things that alter the course of his journey. Life occurs in subtleties. Hidden details are all around us, we just have to take time to notice them.