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EXPERIMENTAL VIDEO ART: STOP-MOTION ANIMATION

**PROFESSOR CLAUDIA ESSLINGER OFFICE HOURS 10-11 1-2 MWF AND BY APPOINTMENT
CELL: 740-504-5896 WEB SITE: ESSLINGERSCLASSES.COM FOR INFO, EXAMPLES, LINKS.**

Developing moving sequences from still images is both historical and contemporary. Experimental artist/filmmakers use the process to create actions that could not be presented through real-time film and video. This class will emphasize manipulating materials from charcoal to found objects, creating innovative content for movement, integrating live video/sound recording and experimenting with the structure of time. The course will include both two and three-dimensional approaches to stop-motion, with an emphasis on innovation and cultural explorations. It will not explore strictly drawn cell animation, except as an evolution of a drawing-in-process. Class structure will include presentations of historical and contemporary work, demonstrations, readings and critiques.

Evaluation Criteria and Class Goals: *Does your work show:*

- An approach that is visually (formally), intellectually (conceptually) and emotionally **compelling**. Is there something that initially draws the viewer in to want to see more?
- Originality/ creativity/ **innovation**/ surprise/ cleverness. Does the work avoid clichés and pat expectations? Did you take a risk ...step away from your comfort zone?
- **Conceptual depth**, sophistication or complexity that allows a **sustaining** interest by the viewer. Did you develop metaphors, irony and mystery in your work while avoiding clichés? Does the form of the piece support the content? Is the work resolved, finished?
- A **commitment** that involves creative problem solving, development of technical skills on your own as well as through class, attention to detail, meeting deadlines, showing artistic integrity and effort, a willingness to learn from others including faculty and students, generosity in participation in group critiques and discussions, respect for others (electronic etiquette), attendance during class and TA hours, and caring for equipment.
- An awareness of the **appropriate audience/ assignment/ social context** of your work as relating to other artists and non-artists, those of your generation and beyond, what era you are working within, what cultural knowledge you can refer to and what will be lost on the viewer. The piece should be appropriate for experimental galleries and/or video festivals. It should be a creative response to the guidelines of the assignment.

General guidelines for video making in this class: The work you make in this class may have some similarities with other moving media in our culture; it may critique that media or subvert it, but it should be similar to other visual fine arts in that its purpose is not commercial but aesthetic, it has a point of view (yours) and creative form and content, with an emphasis on appropriate visual and conceptual decisions. It will be especially tempting to make animation for children, but that is not what this class is about. The goal is for the work to be compelling broadly within the artistic culture we are part of. The work will be more challenging if it is not suggestive of the Kenyon scene, and whatever the topic I would encourage you to push yourself beyond what is cliché in order to make your best work.

Class Structure: The course will be structured around assignments of varying length and will meet for two hours every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The first part of the semester will include many demonstrations. Classes

will include presentations from the professor and students, discussions of readings, technical demonstrations of equipment, screenings of historical/ contemporary artists' videos/films. **Although there will be many workdays, you will be expected to work between EACH CLASS to show progress.** Equipment should be tried immediately after being demonstrated. Although you may work in teams some projects, you will be expected to have a basis of competency on all equipment individually.

Assignments:

This course will have three short and one long stop-motion assignments and some research/writing/responsibilities:

Pixilation (human animation)(10 %)

2D media of choice (15 %)

3D media of choice (20%)

Final Project media of choice(50 pts)

Research/writing/presentation (5 pts)

Commitment seen through class participation, attitude, work ethic, timeliness, will be filtered into each grade.

Communication and grading: Grading comes in the form of comments and letter grades. I really value talking to you in person, writing emails in response to your work and I only give letter grades as a supplement to these more important tasks. Nevertheless, these can tell you how I think you are doing in relationship to my overall expectations which are based on a history of knowing what students can do, what the rest of the class might be able to do in the allotted time, and what I think you personally are capable of all in relationship to the above mentioned goals. Please do not compare your grades with others! There are many reasons for variations in grades. What is taking a risk for one person might be comfortable and predictable for someone else with more experience. Good work comes in many forms! Please take initiative in scheduling conversations with me if you don't understand something. It is your responsibility to catch up on work you have missed. Communication is key to understanding! To do the best in this class you should start work right after the assignment is given so that you can revise as needed. . If you miss a demonstration/ lecture, you will have to work with a TA and will not be able to visit the material as thoroughly.

Grades will use the 100% scale, but will be weighted by percentage of final grade, depending on the intensity of the project. For instance: a shorter project may be worth 5-10% of the final grade where as a longer project could be 30%. The evaluation criteria will all be taken into account for each due date, not just the final result.

90-100 (A range)The high end of this indicates exceptional work to which nothing can be added, on time, following the assignment and with special insight, effort, risk-taking and creativity. All of the evaluation criteria are met. Excellent participation in critique and discussions.

80-89 (B range)This indicates above average work, competent, safe and interesting but still lacking something or it could be innovative work without a high enough skill level. Good comments during critique and discussions.

70-79 (C range)This indicates average work, average effort, basic amount of skill and creative ideas. Low participation in critique and discussions. Questionable preparation.

65-69 (D range)The work is handed in but shows less than acceptable effort creativity and skill. Little to no participation in critique and discussions. Not prepared for class.

Up to 65 (F range)Little effort, skill, imagination, not prepared, etc.

Due Dates: Projects are due *at the beginning of the class period on the date of the progress or final critique.* A project is considered late if it is not **ready** at that time and will receive an F until submitted. The F will then be averaged with your grade if the piece is handed in BEFORE the next scheduled critique. If you have an excused absence coming up on a critique day, the work is due **before** you leave. Most projects will have one or more progress critiques for which you will receive credit toward the final score. **The final project is due before the last day of class, not during final's week. The final portfolio for the semester is due the next class day after the final critique.**

Resubmission: You may improve and resubmit work and the new grade will be averaged with your initial grade. Please submit the new version within a week. Revisions that are expected for the entire class receive their own credit. This doesn't apply to the final project.

Collaboration: You all have different aptitudes and experiences, please be respectful of these in each other. Working together will improve all of your pieces. For some projects you will be the crew for another artist in the class. You are expected to help each other and to pull your part of the load. Groups will also be important at idea sessions and critiques. It is here that feedback from your peers becomes collaborative. Your voluntary participation at critiques will influence your grade.

Attendance Policy: Attendance in this class is extremely important because you cannot make up lost days by just reading or any other independent work. The class time is full of demonstrations, presentations, critiques and workshop time. If you miss demos you may never catch up and not know how to use the equipment. Workdays in class allow personal assistance from the professor on assignments and should be prepared for (you should work outside of class to be at the next stage of work, ready for assistance. Expect to spend at least 12 hours per week outside of class). You will always do better on an assignment if you are ready for the workdays in class. Video screenings are wonderful opportunities to inspire your work and describe the nature of the assignment. Students who miss these invariably don't do as well on the associated project. For all of the above reasons, I am strict about attendance and accountability.

After three (3) unexcused class absences I will begin to *lower your final grade for the course by 3 points for each additional absence*. Unexcused absences should be saved for occasional minor illnesses and you should still notify me through a call or email. Two times late (10 min after class starts) will count as one absence. Excused absences are only given for illnesses that require a doctor, death in the family, Kenyon sanctioned activities such as athletic events, etc, and must be okayed **before** the missed class whenever possible. Do not leave for these events early. All work must be **handed in before** an excused absence if it is due on the date of the absence or it will be considered late. If you have more than three excused events that pull you away from class, you will have to start using your three allowed unexcused absences (for instance, if you have 5 scheduled events, two of them will use up some of your allowed unexcused absences.) Excused absences do not include taking a friend to the airport, leaving early for break or the common cold.

Technical Proficiency: You may not use any equipment until you have been trained on it. Most of you will have some training from the beginning level class, but there will be additional training that you will get in this class. Some things may be done differently, and the software has changed somewhat. If you miss a day, you must receive training from a T.A., not just another student. This being said, you should realize that although increased technical proficiency may show determination and hard work (which can improve your grade), it is the concept and structure of your piece that will make it successful along with the appropriate amount of technological know-how.

Equipment policy: We will be using three studios: 101 is the physical space where you will build and photograph. 206 is the editing space where you will composite audio and video, 207 is the sound room where you can create audio. You will have a "station" in 101 with lighting stand, camera, etc. You are expected to care for all equipment both on the premises and off. If something breaks or is lost while in your possession, you are responsible for it financially. You may sign out equipment through Lisa Dilts between the hours of 8:30 and 3:30 (except the lunch hour, 12-1pm) Most of the time, you will have an extended "rental" of this equipment because you won't be able to move the camera after set up. You may use 101 closet Art tools, but you must get permission to take the tools out of the room and must return them the same day. The keys must be returned when your portfolio is handed in or you risk not having your grade recorded. Make sure you clean up after yourself, don't bring food or drink in the edit facilities. Only Students enrolled in Installation art, Digital Imaging, Digital Photo, Video Art, Acting and Directing for the Camera and Photography and Advanced Studio may use Horvitz Digital Studios or the animation room. Anyone else, for any other project is not allowed (even with you helping them! There is a media lab in the library for all other classes or other projects you create for other classes.)

Copies: All work will be handed in as a copy on Midian for grading and for inclusion in the Kenyon Art Department Archives. They maybe exhibited on our website or for promotional reasons within the college. A final version of each project is due as an electronic portfolio by Monday Noon after the last day of classes.

Academic Honesty: Being honest academically in an art class is more difficult to define than in other classes. Sometimes using another image/video is intended as a cultural reference or quote. It even has a name: "appropria-

tion". Whenever this is intended, the image is well known enough in the culture for most people to know where it came from, and therefore it evokes some ideas or feelings tied to the original. This is fine for an artist to do. It is less appropriate to use a copy of a beach scene from a TV commercial for instance, just because you need a "beach" and you aren't near one. Taking another artist's image or idea directly and passing it off as your own is a case for dishonesty however unless the "stealing" itself is part of your concept. I suggest that if you have a question, come talk to me first.

Class Etiquette:

Critiques: You don't need to raise your hand to comment, and I encourage you to participate. Make sure to speak loudly enough for everyone to hear and give everyone a turn.

Bodily care: Please plan to eat before and after class but not *during* class. If you must have a snack for health reasons, please speak to me about it and *never* eat near a computer. A closed container of water may be placed below your desk for urgent care. You may leave if you need the restroom without asking but please be as quiet as you can.

Internet/phone/ Computer work: In a class where you are sitting in front of a powerful computer all the time, with your phone in your pocket, it is very tempting to use that technology when we are meant to be doing other things. We all get *very* distracted by mouse clicks or texting when someone is presenting something or when we are having a critique. Please do not continue to work on your project when we are looking at someone else's work. Being a full participant in the critique observation and discussion is part of what I evaluate you on. Email may be done before or after class, or during a break. If you are waiting for something to render, please plan other aspects of your project during wait time rather than get distracted by e-communications. ***You will not be able to use your phone in class. I'm going to ask that you put your backpacks in the front of the room with your phone in them.***

Journal/Sketchbook: You will keep a journal in which you will record ideas, notes on demos, notes and responses to screenings and readings and write stories. You can sketch ideas for video sequences, storyboards, treatments, etc. It can also be a depository for interesting articles you find. If typing electronically is best for you, please print it out and put it in your sketch book.

Disability Statement: If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your ability to carry out assigned course work, I would urge you to contact the Office of Disability Services at 5453. The Coordinator of Disability Services, Erin Salva (salvae@kenyon.edu) will review your concerns and determine, with you, what accommodations are appropriate. All information and documentation of disability is confidential. Please notify me as well.

Privacy vs Confidentiality: *If you are having a particularly hard time for any reason, please let me know early and keep me in the loop...this need not be specific, but some general communication.* I am happy to talk to you about issues you are concerned about...just know that I am not mandated to confidentiality the way a counselor, doctor or clergy person is (though I will keep your confidence unless there is danger to yourself or others, especially in terms of sexual harassment/misconduct/ assault)...in that case I would need to notify the college titleIX coordinator about the basic facts of the incident (you may choose whether you or anyone involved is identified by name). For more information about your options at Kenyon, please go to: [http://www.kenyon.edu/directories/offices-services/office-of-equal-opportunity/sexual-assault-and-harassment/...](http://www.kenyon.edu/directories/offices-services/office-of-equal-opportunity/sexual-assault-and-harassment/)

Equipment and Materials needed for Animation/Stop-motion:

Notebook/Journal, Index cards, (Bookstore)

Foamcore, wire, clay, cloth, masking tape, drawing materials, etc as needed.

Books available through me and Library....see extensive bibliography in FAQ on lab computers.

For additional help contact Visiting Artist/ Manager of Technology: Emily Zeller (individual appointments available) Contact Emily at Zellere@kenyon.edu or at her office in Horvitz. Teaching Assistants are also available in the lab for three evenings per week.