Illustration in Motion
by Mai Ly Degnan
Illustration in Motion

Illustration today is quickly moving in a direction that is further and further away from print. Instead, as technology develops, magazines and books are being transformed. With inventions such as the iPhone, iPad, and Kindle, more and more publications are going digital and not only are they going digital, they are also becoming interactive. This allows for new platforms of visual exploration. In order to survive in a constantly evolving world of new technology, many illustrators are thinking in new ways of adapting and employing their illustrative voice. One of these ways is through motion.

This exhibit focuses on the future of illustration, movement in storytelling, and the different ways in which illustration in motion can be applied. It highlights illustrators who either animate their own work or collaborate with other animators in order to tell a story with motion. This exhibition will feature those artists’ illustration work at the same time. By showing both the artist’s illustrations as well as their animation, this exhibition will highlight that illustration is no longer just for print, and can be used in a variety of ways.

The kinds of animations in the exhibit vary from short film, commercials, advertisements, music videos, and even to animated book teasers. The four artists whose works are featured in this exhibition are Julia Pott, Emma Hanquist, Ohara Hale, and Melinda Beck. Each of these female artists has an incredibly fresh and strong contemporary voice in the worlds of both illustration and animation.
Illustration today is in a far different place than it was before Apple. Much like the introduction of the iPod, the idea of buying music at a cd store has become less and less common. Instead, the Internet has made it possible for literally anyone to find and download at the touch of a button. This upgrade in both technology and convenience has unfortunately put many companies out of business. Though it is scary to think about, printed magazines and books may also be moving in this direction due to such inventions. Because of this, it is important to note, that in a few years, it is very possible that children will no longer be growing up with picture books. Instead, they may be growing up with interactive eBooks played off their personal iPads and laptops. Products like these now offer the capability of moving and interactive images. These changes have now pushed illustrators in a direction that incorporates motion within their illustrations.
Today, motion has become very important in the way that illustrators are thinking about visual storytelling. Because of new technologies, this single image practice maybe evolving into more sequential art form. Not only are illustrators thinking of a single image, but they are also thinking in ways images can move while at the same time showing a fluid, visual narrative. They are also not only thinking about a single scene or moment, but now they thinking about the before and after as well as how sound can enhance and bring a story.
Advertisements used to only be found in newspapers and magazines. This, of course, changed since creation of the television, and since then ads have evolved from single images in print to filmed commercials. There are many animated cartoons and many of these cartoons have come from illustrators. This is only one of many ways in which illustrators apply their moving illustrations in the real world. Some do it through commercials and advertisements, others do it with apps and animated eBooks, while others even experiment with animated shorts and music videos. As technology improves so does animation, and more and more venues are available for new visual exploration.
Julia Pott is a British illustrator and animator who currently lives in Brooklyn, NY. She received her BA in Animation and Illustration at Kingston University in 2007. Pott is known for her cute yet dark anthropomorphic animal illustrations as well as her experimental animated shorts. Her style is strong and consistent throughout both bodies of work. Common themes throughout her work include love, friendships, relationships, and breakups.
Julia Pott
You Will Always Have Me, 2012
Illustration
Julia Pott

Howard, 2010

Made at the Royal College of Art, 2010

http://www.juliapott.com/howard
Howard

Application: Short Film

Howard, is an incredibly powerful animated short where Pott explores the inevitable change and deterioration in a relationship overtime. The short depicts a story of a man and a female bear who, in the beginning, are in love. However, like many things in life, things change and slowly decay over time.

Storytelling

The story is narrated entirely from the bear’s perspective. Through the use of motion and sound, Pott is able to play with the idea of time passing. She uses soothing and dreamy music at the beginning half of the short, while the bear looks fondly back at the memories of the relationship. However, things change and to show this, Pott breaks up these happy memories by cutting the happy music and replacing it with just background noise. This change in sound also helps emphasize the new mood if the piece and how overtime the bear has gone bored and tired of her lover. The contrast between species especially highlights this disconnect and makes it obvious as to why the couple was never really meant to be.
Julia Pott

Why Won’t You Love Me, 2012

Illustration
Julia Pott
Valentine’s Day Card
Commissioned by MTV Liquid Television
http://www.juliapott.com/mtv
Application: Happy Valentine’s Day Television Spot for MTV

In Valentine’s Day Card, Julia creates a short Valentines Day television spot for MTV’s Liquid Television. Pott, uses hand drawn animation and audio from an interview where the man is discussing what his first impressions of intercourse was while he was a virgin.

Storytelling

In interview form, and through the use of body language, Julia creates a sweet and playful animation that captures the humor and awkwardness of the unknown. Pott adds comedy to the animation by creating two anthropomorphic animals of the opposite sex. As the male bear describes his first assumptions of what he thought sex was to the interviewer, Pott illustrates the bear’s naive imagination. Pott animates the partners “scuttling” to each other like crabs making this scene silly and sweet, giving the animation a relatable and humanistic kind of quality.
Julia Pott

I love that you’re here with me, 2011

Illustration
Julia Pott’s work is sophisticated, sweet, humorous, and dark all at the same time. She keeps her imagery, color palette, line work, and themes consistent in both her animation and illustration work. Pott’s use of anthropomorphic animals going through relationship ups and downs helps give us an instant feeling of connection and relate-ability to her strange and beautiful made up world.
Ohara Hale

Ohara Hale is a self-taught artist who currently lives in Montreal. Though, popular for her gig posters, she is also incredibly multitalented in all aspects of design. She has made her living as an illustrator, author, animator, director, textile designer, graphic designer, art director, and musician. Ohara is known for her fresh playful imagery, bright colors, and sense of humor, which clearly translates through all aspects of her work, regardless of the medium.
Ohara Hale  
*Familiar Trees, 2009*  
Gig poster
Ohara Hale

Philémon Chante - Je te mange, 2012

https://vimeo.com/37317553
Application: Music Video

“Je te mange,” when translated from French to English, means “I eat you.” This beautiful 3:22 animation was directed and illustrated by Ohara Hale, and animated by Eva Cvijanovic for French musician, Philémon Chante.

Storytelling:

The music video focuses on the relationship between a female and male rabbit. Ohara uses one continuous, uninterrupted shot that follows the male rabbit throughout a surreal made up environment. The song for this animation is sweet and slow paced, only enhancing the dreamlike quality of Ohara’s world. Like much of her illustration work, the music video is not all roses and sunshine and ends with a twist. Starting off beautiful, Je te Mange takes a drastic turn where out of nowhere, the two loving rabbits eat each other till they are just bones. Despite this crazy ending, Ohara still manages to keep the strange imagery with the song romantic.
Ohara Hale
Bloomfest LA, 2011
Gig Poster
Ohara Hale

L’ABC de MONSIEUR PIZZA, 2013

http://vimeo.com/62280098
L’ABC de MONSIEUR PIZZA

Application: Book Teaser

L’ABC de MONSIEUR PIZZA is Ohara’s first children’s book that came out earlier this year. The book is a bilingual picture book about a slice of pizza and his mushroom friend, teaching children both French and English. Like watching a teaser trailer for a film, Ohara made a short animated commercial for her book using only incredibly simple animation techniques.

Storytelling

This subtle animation is simple and to the point, but viewer still feels the happy mood of the story. By using little movements to portray humorous and personified actions of her characters, as well as putting tiny blinking eyes on almost everything in the image, Ohara brings the already bright and cheerful illustrations to life.
Ohara Hale

*What We Saw/What We Thought, 2010*

American Illustration 29 selected work
Ohara Hale

Ohara Hale’s design sense, color choice, and humor is apparent throughout all aspects of her illustration and animation work. She is fun and does not take herself too seriously with her personified objects, absurd creatures, and quirky worlds. She has perfectly managed to turn kitsch into a sophisticated body of work is pleasant and an overall treat to look at.
Melinda Beck

Melinda Beck is an illustrator, animator, and graphic designer who currently lives in Brooklyn, NY. She earned her BFA in graphic design from RISD in 1989. She is known for using a number of different styles, which appeal to everyone from toddlers to adults. Her body of work expands from sophisticated editorial illustrations all the way to whimsical animated children’s television spots.
Melinda Beck
Bread Winner
Editorial illustration for The National Magazine
Melinda Beck
Halloween Graphics
Illustration for NickJr.
Melinda Beck
Family Trip
Interstitial animation for Noggin
http://vimeo.com/20298181

Tuesday, May 7, 13
Family Trip

Application: Television Spot

*Family Trip* is an animated television spot for Noggin, a children’s cable television channel owned by Nickelodeon. Melinda Beck merges photography and digital illustration to create this fun animation. Like certain aspects of her illustration work, the human characters are simple and put together in an assemblage kind of way, with buttons for eyes and wire for arms and legs. A lot of the animation has lined paper textures and folded origami objects.

Storytelling

*Family Trip* is obviously meant for kids with its playful song and content. The short celebrates children’s excitement when going on vacation. “Are we there yet?” is repeated in the chorus which instead of being obnoxious, is sung sweetly, highlighting the impatience we all have experienced while traveling.
Melinda Beck

Living in New York

Advertisement for Target
Melinda Beck

Bird

Station id animation for NickJr.

http://vimeo.com/20305906
**Bird**

Application: Television Spot

*Bird* is an animated television spot for NickJr, which is another children’s television channel owned by Nickelodeon.

Melinda Beck uses simplified flat shapes to create everything in this animation. The use of simple shapes is important in animations for children because objects become instantly recognizable.

Storytelling

Not only is this animation entertaining, but it is also educational because it teaches about pollination. The beginning scene is a close up of a bird eating a piece of fruit from a tree. As it finishes, the bird flies off and drops the seed on ground which immediately grows a new tree. More birds flock to this new tree, and the cycle continues, teaching about how trees grow.
Melinda Beck is a multitalented, hard working, and experimental artist who is capable of a number of different styles. Her work is whimsical and sophisticated and she knows how to appeal to all ages. Though her animations are primarily for children, aspects of her illustrative design are found throughout both bodies of work. With bold colors, stylized silhouetted figures, decorative patterns, and 3 dimensional objects, Beck cleverly creates a world that she can call her own.
Emma Hanquist is a Swedish illustrator who has studied at the Maryland Institute College of Art and received her BFA at the School of Design and Crafts at Göteborg University in 2007. She is most known for her editorial illustrations but has also worked on a number of animated films. She is an innovative illustrator, and her work perfectly translates into both mediums.
Emma Hanquist

Ilojalitet i bokvärlden (Disloyalty in the Publishing Business), 2012

Illustration in Svensk Bokhandel
Emma Hanquist

Spotify Commercial
Produced by Brikk

http://vimeo.com/43383416
Application: Commercial

Emma Hanquist’s illustrations are playfully used while advertising for Spotify, a commercial music streaming service, and its collaboration with Chess, a Norwegian telecom company.

Storytelling

The commercial is shown in four separate scenes where a character in a Spotify t-shirt is depicted sharing an iPod with his friend in a Chess t-shirt. Each scene shows the characters hanging out doing different activities emphasizing the idea of friendship, which also reiterates the Chess/Spotify collaboration. Hanquist’s strange and stylized characters are evident throughout the commercial, adding to the overall humor of the animation.
Emma Hanquist

Fackböcker i kris (Books in crisis), 2013
Illustration in Svensk Bokhandel.
Tony Clifton - Rainy Days or Sunny Days

Emma Hanquist
Rainy Days or Sunny Days, 2010
Produced and directed by Emma Hanquist and Anders Hellman
http://vimeo.com/16729689
Rainy Days or Sunny Days

Application: Music Video

Rainy Days or Sunny Days is a animated music video for musician, Tony Clifton. The animation was created by Emma Hanquist and Anders Hellman. With black and white line drawings, we are invited into lonely man’s home where we follow him throughout his daily routine.

Storytelling

Rainy Days or Sunny Days is an overall beautiful but very sad animation. With the absence of color, Hanquist uses simple and stylized characterizations that stay true to much of her illustration work. This allows for facial expressions to be the main focus. The somber music goes together perfectly with the lonely drawings, where at one point the music picks up, and along with the man’s temper after he spills his coffee.
Emma Hanquist,
Nätmobbare (Internet bullies), 2011
Illustration in Henry
Emma Hanquist uses a combination of digital and analog techniques to create her illustrations. Often with realistic photo shopped eyes, noses, mouths, and hair, Hanquist gives a kind of life to her otherwise oddly shaped people. Her use of humor and wit is done in all the right places, and though her characters are strange, the illustrations themselves are very sophisticated and clever. Her animation work is just as interesting. Using the same stylized body shape, Hanquist puts much of her focus on emotions and facial expressions. Her work looks great as single images, and translates just as well when moving.