

Production Design for Animation

The Production Designer works with the director to define the overall look and style of the film, and then is responsible for ensuring that artistic vision makes it on screen. For both animated features and series productions, this entails overseeing a team of art directors, character and environment designers, and production artists.

Course Overview:

The primary tool a Production Designer uses to communicate the artistic vision of the film is the Visual Bible or Style Guide. This course will place students in the role of Production Designer of an imaginary film (determined by and guided by the instructor), requiring them to execute a series of artistic assignments resulting in the creation of a comprehensive Style Guide of their assigned film.

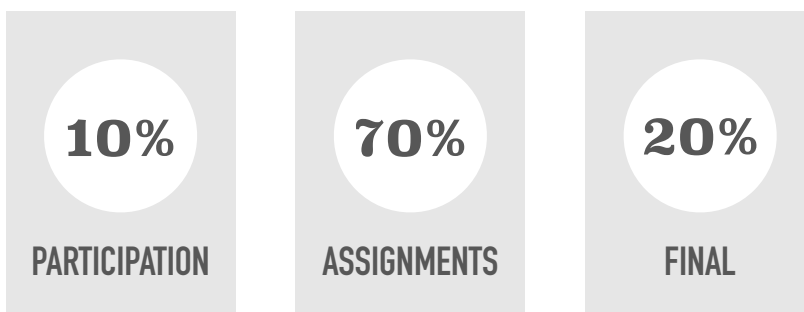
Learning Objectives and Outcomes:

Each student will attain an intimate understanding of the role of a Production Designer through hands-on development of a Style Guide for their assigned film, consisting of (but not limited to) exploration of shape language, character and environment design, color script, moment painting, look of picture, branding, and packeting.

Students will receive detailed critical review and artistic feedback from the instructor to strengthen their work, but this is not a "how-to-draw" class. Instead, the focus is on the visual storytelling process and how best to conceptualize and then communicate the vision of a film.

Students enrolled in this class should have a fundamental knowledge of drawing and painting skills and aspirations of becoming visual development artists and designers within the animation industry.

Grading Allocation / Assessment:



Participation: (100 points)

Grades for participation are based on the student's level of engagement with the professor and fellow students. There will be animated film critique/roundtable opportunities throughout the semester to share thoughts/ideas with fellow classmates. Students who wish to receive full credit for participation will engage enthusiastically during these moments.

USC School of Cinematic Arts

John C. Hench
Division of Animation
& Digital Arts

CTAN 499

Units

2

Term/Day/Time

Fall 2022
Mondays
1:00pm - 3:50pm

Instructor

Josh Staub
jstaub@usc.edu

Student Assistant

TBD

Contact Info

jstaub@usc.edu

Prerequisites

None

Description of Assignments: (7 Assignments / 100 points each / 700 points total)

This is not a "how-to" drawing and painting class, however weekly assignments will primarily consist of drawings and paintings which will be critiqued by the instructor.

- 1. Film Research / Packet Branding:** Gathered reference from comparative projects for discussion, plus a branding pass (logo, layout) to represent the underlying look for the style guide.
- 2. Film Beats:** 6 - 10 drawings to represent the major beats of the story.
- 3. Character Design Packet:** Visual design breakdown of the film's primary characters including expressions / turns and callouts.
- 4. Environment Design Packet:** Visual design breakdown of the film's primary environments with callouts.
- 5. Color Script:** 6 - 10 loose color study images of the film beats to communicate the emotion and mood along with a breakdown of the overall color strategy and philosophy.
- 6. Moment Paintings:** 2 - 3 finessed color paintings to communicate the energy and feel of the film's most important moments.
- 7. Look of Picture:** 1 - 2 technically refined color paintings to represent what a final frame of the film will look like including a breakdown of the process and technique.

Final Project: (1 Assignment / 200 points)

Each student will assemble and layout a final Style Guide based on the assignments executed during the semester.

All assignments will be reviewed in class and must be submitted digitally to our class dropbox the evening before the due date / class review.

Additional Policies:

Out of respect for the Lecturers, laptops/tablets will not be allowed during class time.

Grading Scale:

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A [95-100+] **A-** [90-94] **B+** [87-89] **B** [83-86] **B-** [80-82] **C+** [77-79]
C [73-76] **C-** [70-72] **D+** [67-69] **D** [63-66] **D-** [60-62] **F** [59 and below]

About the Professor

Josh Staub is an award-winning artist and filmmaker for Netflix Animation (formerly of Walt Disney Animation Studios) where he has spent the last 15 years contributing to multiple Academy Award winning films including *Frozen* and the animated short films *Paperman* and *Feast*.

In addition to helping create some of the most successful and popular animated feature films ever made, Josh is also an accomplished independent filmmaker and sole-creator of the animated short film *The Mantis Parable*, which screened in over 100 film festivals around the world (Annecy, Tribeca), graced the screens of the nation's top art museums (National Gallery of Art, Smithsonian, LACMA, MoMA), and twice qualified for consideration of an Academy Award nomination.

In 2018, Josh was inducted into the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences (Oscars) for "exceptional accomplishments in the field of theatrical motion pictures."

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Class Focus	Assignment	Deliverable
Week 1 Aug 22nd	Overview / Films Assigned Josh Staub Production Designer / Netflix	Film Beats	
Week 2 Aug 29th	Film Beats Review / Mood Boards	Film Research / Mood Board	Film Beats
Labor Day Holiday / No Class: Sept 5th			
Week 4 Sept 12th	Film Beats Review / Character Design	Character Designs	Film Research / Mood Board
Week 5 Sept 19th	Character Design Review		Character Designs (1st Pass)
Week 6 Sept 26th	Character Packets Review / Environment Design	Environment Designs	Character Designs Packet
Week 7 Oct 3rd	Environment Design Review		Environment Designs (1st Pass)
Week 8 Oct 10th	Environment Packets Review / Color Script	Color Script	Environment Designs Packet
Fall Recess: Oct 13th - Oct 14th			
Week 9 Oct 17th	Color Script Review		Color Script (1st Pass)
Week 10 Oct 24th	Color Script Review / Moment Paintings	Moment Paintings	Color Script
Week 11 Oct 31st	Moment Paintings Review		Moment Paintings (1st Pass)
Week 12 Nov 7th	Moment Paintings Review / Look of Picture	Look of Picture	Moment Paintings
Week 13 Nov 14th	Look of Picture Review		Look of Picture (1st Pass)
Week 14 Nov 21st	Look of Picture Review / Style Guide	Style Guide	Look of Picture
Week 15 Nov 28th	Style Guide Review		Style Guide (1st Pass)
Study Days: Dec 3rd - Dec 6th			
FINAL Dec 14th 11am - 1pm	Final Projects Due Style Guide Review		Style Guide

Additional Resources:

Books:

Inspired 3D Short Film Production [Jeremy Cantor, Pepe Valencia]

I Moved to Los Angeles to Work in Animation [Natalie Nourigat]

Instagram Portfolios:

@joshstaub.art [Josh Staub]

STORY

@tallychyck [Natalie Nourigat]

@whittlewoodshop [Jeremy Spears]

@briankesinger [Brian Kesinger]

@samstyle [Samantha Villfort]

@ryangreenart [Ryan Green]

@domeeshi [Domee Shi]

@leomatsuda7 [Leo Matsuda]

@stevehatguy [Stephen Anderson]

ASSETS

@alenawooten [Alena Wooten]

@chadstubblefield [Chad Stubblefield]

@andrewtaylorjennings [Andrew Jennings]

ANIMATION

@andrew_chesworth [Andrew Chesworth]

@michael.franceschi [Michael Franceschi]

@trentanimation [Trent Correy]

@agreenster [Adam Green]

ART / DESIGN

@coryloftis [Cory Loftis]

@grizandnorm [Griselda Sastrawanita]

@dethancooper_art [Dan Cooper]

@bschwaby [Bill Schwab]

@dicetsutsumi [Dice Tsutsumi]

@woutertulp [Wouter Tulp]

@peteremmerich [Peter Emmerich]

@bobbypontillas [Bobby Pontillas]

@rrr_yaga [Daniel Arriaga]

@ryanlangdraws [Ryan Lang]

@aaronblaiseart [Aaron Blaise]

@robertkondo [Robert Kondo]

@ladyadorabeezle [Ami Thompson]

@megprk [Meg Park]

@britsketch [Brittney Lee]

@myamada1979 [Mike Yamada]

@theillustratus [Jeff Turley]

@robhruppel [Robh Ruppel]

@lorelay_bove [Lorelay Bove]

Websites:

www.awn.com

www.animationguild.org

www.cgsociety.org

Periodicals:

Animation Magazine

CGW

VFX Voice

Inspiration:

CTN Gallery [North Hollywood]

Nucleus Art Gallery [Alhambra]

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Counseling and Mental Health:

(213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

Student Health Leave Coordinator: (213) 821-4710

Located in the USC Support and Advocacy office, the Health Leave Coordinator processes requests for health leaves of absence and advocates for students taking such leaves when needed.

<https://policy.usc.edu/student-health-leave-absence/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP): (213) 740-9355 (WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call.

studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED): (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following *protected characteristics*: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment: (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and micro-aggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity |Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs: (213) 740-0776

dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/ notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

Campus Support & Intervention: (213) 821-4710

campussupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC: (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency: UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety: UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds: (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

ombuds.usc.edu

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

**PLEASE NOTE:
FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE
CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX**