CARTOON ANIMATION

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Chapitre 1 : ÉLABORATION des PERSONNAGES

It can be an exciting experience to create and develop an original cartoon character. Constructing and developing a character is not merely a matter of drawing the figure, each character also has its own shape, personality, features, and mannerisms. The animator has to take these qualities into consideration to make the characters seem lifelike and believable. For example, there are various personality types such as "goofy," "cute," and "screwball". Think about the type of character you wish to design, then use the diagrams and guides shown in this chapter to begin your drawing. When creating a character, you should begin by drawing rough "idea" sketches. These will give you a direction for the type and nature of the character you wish to create. Develop the basic shape of the figure, then add the features and other details.

This procedure should be followed whether the character you are developing is a human, an animal, or an inanimate object you wish to bring to life (for example, drawing a face on a computer and making it dance).

After you have developed the character and the proportions arc to your liking, develop the movement expressions of the body, head, and hands. Hands can tell a complete story with just a simple pose. Study and practice drawing the hands shown on page 28, then create some hand positions of your own. Also, the "line of action" section is a big help in creating attitudes in posture and movement. This chapter is the starting point to a world of exciting cartoon animation.
CARTOON CONSTRUCTION

PROPORTION IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN CONSTRUCTING A CARTOON CHARACTER. THE ANIMATOR MUST KEEP IN MIND THE RELATIVE SIZES OF THE BODY PARTS, BECAUSE SPECIFIC PROPORTIONS ARE USED TO CREATE CHARACTER TYPES. FOR EXAMPLE, THE HEAVY, PUGNACIOUS CHARACTER HAS A SMALL HEAD, LARGE CHEST OR BODY AREA, HEAVY ARMS AND LEGS, AND THE JAW AND CHIN NORMALLY PROTRUDE; THE CUTE CHARACTER IS BASED ON THE PROPORTIONS OF A BABY WITH A LARGE HEAD IN PROPORTION TO THE OVAL BODY, A HIGH FOREHEAD, AND A SMALL MOUTH/EYE/CHIN AREA; "SCREWBALL" TYPES HAVE EXAGGERATED PARTS AND FEATURES (DETAILED INFORMATION ON CHARACTER TYPES BEGINS ON PAGE 32).

CARTOON STUDIOS OFTEN USE HEAD SIZE TO MEASURE THE HEIGHT OF A CHARACTER - FOR INSTANCE, A CUTE BEAR MAY BE THREE HEADS HIGH, AND A PUGNACIOUS BEAR MIGHT BE FIVE OR SIX HEADS HIGH. THIS INFORMATION HELPS THE ANIMATOR TO KEEP THE PROPORTIONS AND HEIGHT OF A CHARACTER CONSISTENT. STUDY THE CHARACTERS ON THIS PAGE, AND MEASURE EACH ONE IN "HEADS."

WHEN ANIMATING, YOU´LL ALSO FIND IT HELPFUL TO MAKE A REFERENCE DRAWING OF THE CHARACTER ON A SEPARATE PIECE OF PAPER. THIS WAY, THE ANIMATOR CAN REFER TO THE PROPORTION GUIDELINES WHEN DRAWING THE CHARACTER IN DIFFERENT POSES AND ACTIONS.
THE PROPER USE OF CARTOON PROPORTIONS MAKES A CHARACTER, SO ANALYZE THE PROPORTIONS OF YOUR ANIMATED ACTOR BEFORE HE OR SHE GOES ON STAGE-UP ON THE SCREEN.

STANCE (SOLID MASSES) - DRAW A "LINE OF ACTION" THROUGH THE THREE-DIMENSIONAL PARTS TO ORGANIZE AND SET THE ATTITUDE OR ACTION. CONSTRUCT YOUR DRAWING AS IF YOU WERE FITTING TOGETHER THE PARTS OF A PUPPET AT THE JOINTS ACCORDING TO A CHARACTER FORMULA. THUS YOUR CHARACTER BECOMES BELIEVABLE, AND HE ACTS, THE AUDIENCE EMOTIONALLY RESPONDS.
BODY BUILT FROM CIRCULAR AND ROUNDED FORMS

THE ANIMATED CARTOON CHARACTER IS BASED ON THE CIRCULAR, ROUNDED FORM. IN A CARTOON STUDIO SEVERAL PEOPLE MAY WORK ON THE SAME DRAWING AND THE ROUNDED FORM IS USED BECAUSE OF ITS SIMPLICITY - IT MAKES ANIMATION EASIER. ALSO, CIRCULAR FORMS "FOLLOW THROUGH" BETTER ON THE SCREEN.
MORE CIRCULAR AND ROUNDED FORMS

THE PARTS OF THE CHARACTER FIT TOGETHER AT SOCKET POINTS. THESE EXAMPLES DEMONSTRATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMBINING CIRCULAR AND ROUNDED FORMS. THE ROUNDED, PEAR-SHAPED BODIES SUPPORT THE CIRCULAR HEADS AND ADD INTEREST TO THE OVERALL CHARACTER.
BUILD THE CARTOON FROM A ROUGH SKELETON, BUT DON´T EXPECT TO ALWAYS GET THE SKELETON RIGHT ON THE FIRST TRY - NOBODY CAN DO THAT! EXPERIMENT... DISCARD... MAKE SEVERAL DRAWINGS, THEN PICK THE BEST ONE. BE SURE TO WORK LOOSELY WHEN CONSTRUCTING THE CHARACTER.

WORK OUT A SKELETON, CONSTRUCT BODY MASSES AROUND IT, AND THEN BUILD DETAIL OVER THE MASSES.
THE CUTE KITTEN

1. DEVELOP THE KITTEN´S BODY WITH A CIRCLE AND AN OVAL.
2. ADD PERSPECTIVE GUIDELINES.
3. PLACE THE EYES AND THE NOSE.
4. BUILD THE EARS AND THE LEGS.
5. ADD THE DETAILS TO COMPLETE THE KITTEN.

NOTICE THE LARGE PAWS THAT ADD TO THE CUTE LOOK.
THE MORE COMPLEX THE POSE, THE MORE STEPS IT TAKES TO DEVELOP.
BEGIN WITH A BASIC CONSTRUCTION OF CIRCLES AND OVALS. THEN DRAW PERSPECTIVE GUIDELINES TO PLACE THE FEATURES.

NOTICE THAT THE TONGUE ACCENTUATES THE HAPPY EXPRESSION OF THE MOUTH, AND THE CHEEKS OVERLAP THE EYES, ACCENTING THE EXPRESSION. A SIDEWAYS GLANCE LIKE THIS IS A "CUTE" EXPRESSION.
GOOSE GANDER

THESE ARE THE PROGRESSIVE STEPS THAT ARE TAKEN BY AN ANIMATOR TO CONSTRUCT AND DRAW A CARTOON CHARACTER.

1. DRAW A "LINE OF ACTION" TO ESTABLISH THE GENERAL STANCE OF THE FIGURE.

2. ADD ROUNDED MASSES FOR THE HEAD AND THE BODY.

3. DRAW PERSPECTIVE LINES AROUND THESE MASSES TO ESTABLISH THE FRONT, SIDE, AND TILT OF THE BODY AND HEAD.

4. CONSTRUCT THE ARMS, LEGS, AND EYES ON (OR "ANCHORED TO") THEIR PROPER PLACES ON THE PERSPECTIVE LINES.

5. FIT OR "HINGE" THE DETAILS INTO THEIR POSITIONS.

6. CLEAN UP THE CHARACTER AROUND THE CONSTRUCTION LINES.
ROWDY RABBIT

DRAW ROWDY RABBIT FROM EVERY ANGLE. USE PERSPECTIVE GUIDELINES TO ASSEMBLE THE SOLID PARTS.

WHEN CONSTRUCTING AN ANIMATED CHARACTER, VISUALIZE IT AS A THREE-DIMENSIONAL PUPPET THAT YOU ARE JOINING TOGETHER WITH SOLID MASSES.

BUILD "PUPPET PARTS" WHEN CONSTRUCTING A CHARACTER FOR ANIMATION.

EACH PART HAS A DEFINITE PLACE ACCORDING TO THE FORMULA. THE PARTS JOIN ACCORDING TO A FORMULA PLAN.

LITTLE WOLF-HUNTER PIG

1. DRAW A LINE OF ACTION, AND THEN BUILD THE OVAL BODY AND THE ROUND HEAD OVER IT.

2. ADD PERSPECTIVE GUIDELINES AND PLACE THE EYES.

3. SET THE SHOULDER, ARM, HAND, AND EAR SOCKETS. DRAW THE NOSE.

4. NOW BUILD THE FEATURES - EARS, CHEEKS, MOUTH, ETC. FIT ON THE COAT AND THE GUN.

5. USE AN ANIMATION BOARD TO MAKE A "CLEANUP" DRAWING BY PLACING A CLEAN PIECE OF PAPER OVER STEP 4 AND TRACING.
CUTE RABBIT

ANIMATORS USUALLY DRAW WITH A SCRIPTO PENCIL WITH A NO. 2 LEAD. THEN A KNEADED ERASER IS LIGHTLY RUBBED OVER THE ENTIRE DRAWING TO PREPARE FOR A "CLEANUP" OR REVISION DRAWING.

1. DRAW A CIRCLE FOR THE HEAD AND A PEAR SHAPE FOR THE BODY.

2. ADD PERSPECTIVE GUIDELINES AROUND THE HEAD.

3. THE EYES ARE PLACED ABOVE THE HORIZONTAL GUIDELINE. THE NOSE STARTS WHERE THE GUIDELINES CROSS.

4. ADD THE CHEEKS, AND FIT THE ARMS ON THE TOP OF THE BODY.

5. DRAW THE EARS, EYES, MOUTH, AND LEGS.

6. FINISH THE DETAILS, AND THEN ERASE THE CONSTRUCTION GUIDELINES.
STUDY THE FORMULA (UPPER ABOVE) FOR THESE BAD BOYS. IT ALSO APPLIES TO FOUR-LEGGED TYPES, SUCH AS THE BEAR ABOVE AND THE BULLDOG SAILOR ON PAGE 72.
THE BELLIGERANT BULLDOG

SPIKE THE BULLDOG HAS A BARREL-LIKE CHEST, SMALL BOTTOM, HEAVY ARMS AND LEGS, NO NECK, PIGEON FRONT TOES, AND BOWED LEGS.

USE CONSTRUCTION GUIDELINES TO HELP YOU DRAW THIS BULLDOG IN SEVERAL DIFFERENT POSES AND ACTION VIEWS.

MAKE A REPEAT CYCLE OF BULLDOG RUNNING USING THE DRAWING AT RIGHT FOR POSITION ONE. SEE "GALLOP" IN "MOVEMENTS OF THE FOUR-LEGGED FIGURE" ON PAGE 102 FOR A GUIDE.
MORE CUTE CHARACTERS
MORE ANIMAL CHARACTERS

THIS PAGE CONTAINS A VARIETY OF ANIMAL CHARACTERS WITH DIFFERENT EXPRESSIONS. THE CONSTRUCTION METHODS INCLUDE THE USE OF SKELETAL FORMS IN COMBINATION WITH ROUNDED AND CIRCULAR FORMS.
THE FACIAL EXPRESSIONS AND BODY ATTITUDES MUST COMPLEMENT ONE ANOTHER.

NOTICE THAT SOME OF THESE FORMS ARE SQUASHED WHILE OTHERS ARE STRETCHED TO DEVELOP THE PERSONALITY.
HERE ARE SOME ROUGH SKETCHES OF AN OWL TO SHOW YOU HOW ITS WINGS CAN BE HANDLED. THEY CAN BE STRAIGHT OR THEY CAN TAKE ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A HAND WITH THE FEATHERS AS FINGERS.
MORE BIRDS

NOTICE THE HEAD SIZES.

These characters differ greatly in personality and shape due to their proportions. Notice the differences in beaks, legs, necks, and wing sizes. For example, the baby chick has no neck (the head shape overlaps the body shape), while the ostrich’s neck is exaggerated. All of the characters on these two pages have been developed using the circle and rounded form method.

Different shapes can suggest different personalities: cute, goofy, pugnacious, etc.