

Storyboards

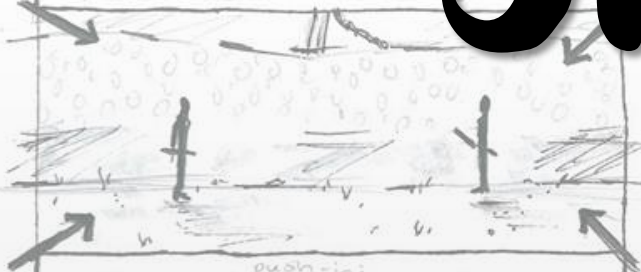
Jo-Jo McLaughlin



MED POV - women shouting at killer woman



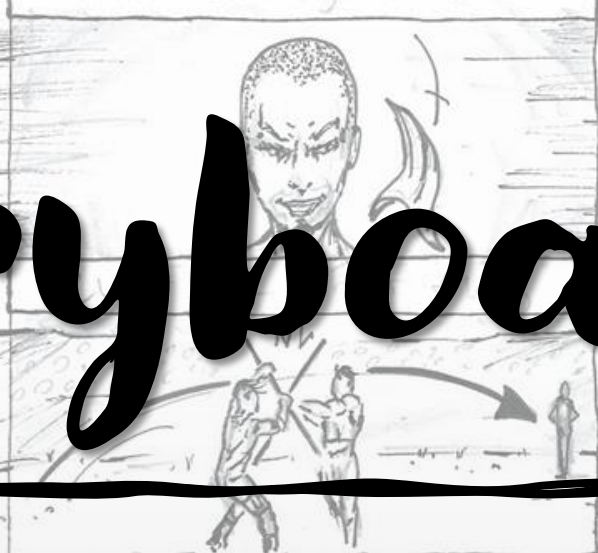
MED WIDE - Audience looks



WIDE - 2 stick fighters



OTS - Stick fighter #2



MWIDE - Crowd looking towards



WIDE - Facing crowd, Lindsay cheering



WIDE - Audience disgusted, whispering



MED WIDE - Lindsay slips and falls



MED WIDE - Lindsay slips and falls



Introduction

In this presentation, I will talk about storyboards. Storyboarding is a process in filmmaking where shots are illustrated and laid out, previsualising the film, displaying the pace and momentum of the story. They also usually include descriptions, along with details such as camera shots, camera movement, camera angles, location, lighting and dialogue. I will cover the history of storyboards, then discuss a few important aspects of storyboards, and then analysis a range of examples from animation, film, video game, commercial and music video. Most examples will have notable storyboarding techniques, which will be discussed, while some others will be criticised for lacking a clear and comprehensible layout. Finally, I will talk about storyboards which I have made, including the one I made for the multi-camera film, the fake ad and an animated short I made 4 years ago, which was for a Moving Image Arts class.



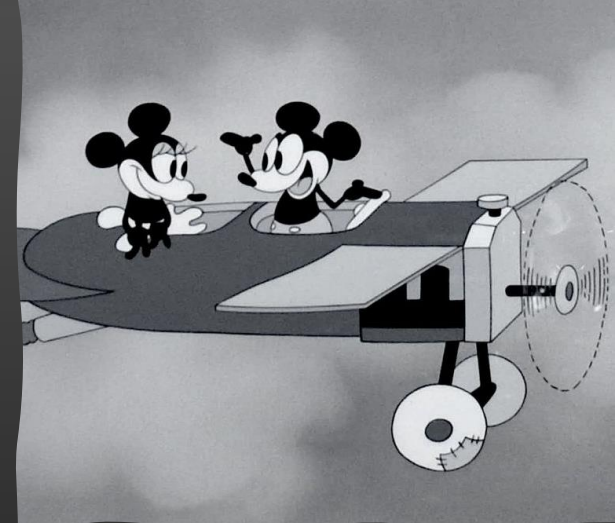
History of Storyboards (1/2)

1902 - Georges Méliès released his first film, 'A Trip to the Moon'. Méliès was one of the first filmmakers to use storyboards.

1920s - The first storyboards at Disney evolved from comic-book like "story sketches" created in the 1920s to illustrate concepts for animated shorts such as 'Plane Crazy' and 'Steamboat Willie'.

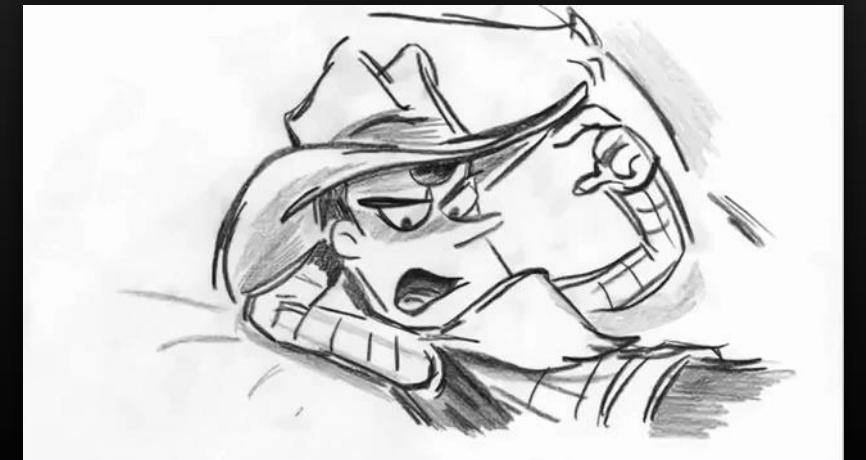
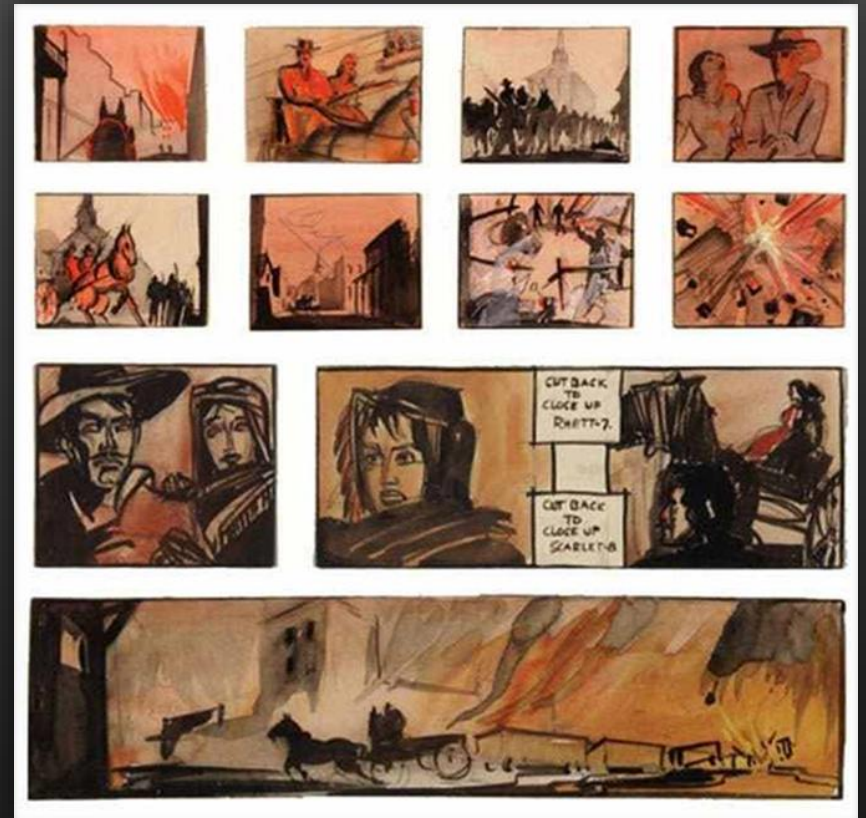
1928 - Among the story sketches from a Disney animated short, 'Plane Crazy', there was a set of six panels on a page, accompanied by typewritten pages describing the action.

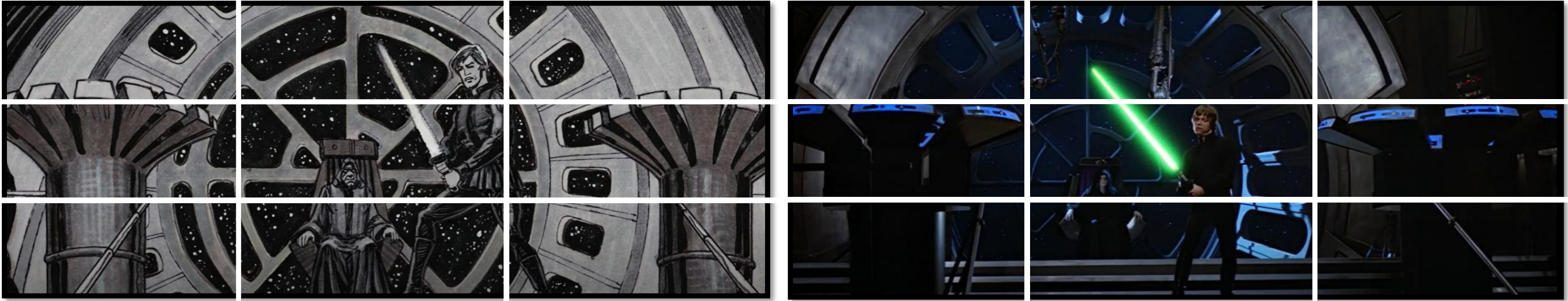
1933 - The first complete storyboards were created for the Disney short, 'Three Little Pigs'. Animator Webb Smith was credited for creating the idea of drawing scenes on separate sheets of paper and pinning them up on a bulletin board to tell a story in sequence. Disney recognized the necessity for studios to maintain a separate "story department" with specialized storyboard artists



History of Storyboards (2/2)

- 1935 - Walter Lantz Productions switched from using "story sketches" to storyboards.
- 1936 - Harman-Ising and Leon Schlesinger Productions also followed the same process.
- 1937 - All American animation studios were using storyboards.
- 1939 - *Gone with the Wind* was one of the first live action films to be completely storyboarded.
- 1940s - Storyboarding became popular in live-action film production during this era, and grew into a standard medium for previsualization of films.
- 1993 - Black Friday storyboard reel for the Pixar movie, '*Toy Story*', which became the first ever full-length CG animated feature.





Composition and Framing



A panel in a storyboard would determine where everything is in a frame and its layout to the film crew. Doing it through a visual medium is much more effective than merely writing it down on a shot list, as this allows the filmmakers to visualise what the final shot will look like. The storyboard artist may work closely with the director of photography to ensure that these pre-planned shots will have figured out and implemented important elements of film photography before shooting (e.g. Rule of 1/3rds)

2.39:1



Aspect Ratio

The shape of the panels (aka square boxes that contain the picture/shot) depends on the aspect ratio. The square ratio of the panel, therefore, should emulate the aspect ratio of the screen. This would require measuring the lines of the panel with a ruler and determining the ratio on screen. 1:1 aspect ratio is a square. The first number refers to the width, and the second number refers to the height. If the ratio of an image is different than the ratio of the screen, you may not see the whole image. Images will not fit properly if the screen is narrower than the image.

16:9



4:3



Shrek – deleted storyboard scene

In this piece of footage I came across, the storyboard artist, Cody Cameron, is pitching a scene for the movie Shrek to the production team. The goal of the storyboarding process is to collect all of the best ideas from creative collaborators in the course of developing a motion picture, and then to evolve these rough illustrations, dialogue, and plot into an organized end-to-end story sequence on a board that everyone could see. Here they're pinned to the wall, with descriptions under each picture, which are too small for the whole team to read, so Cameron reads them out.

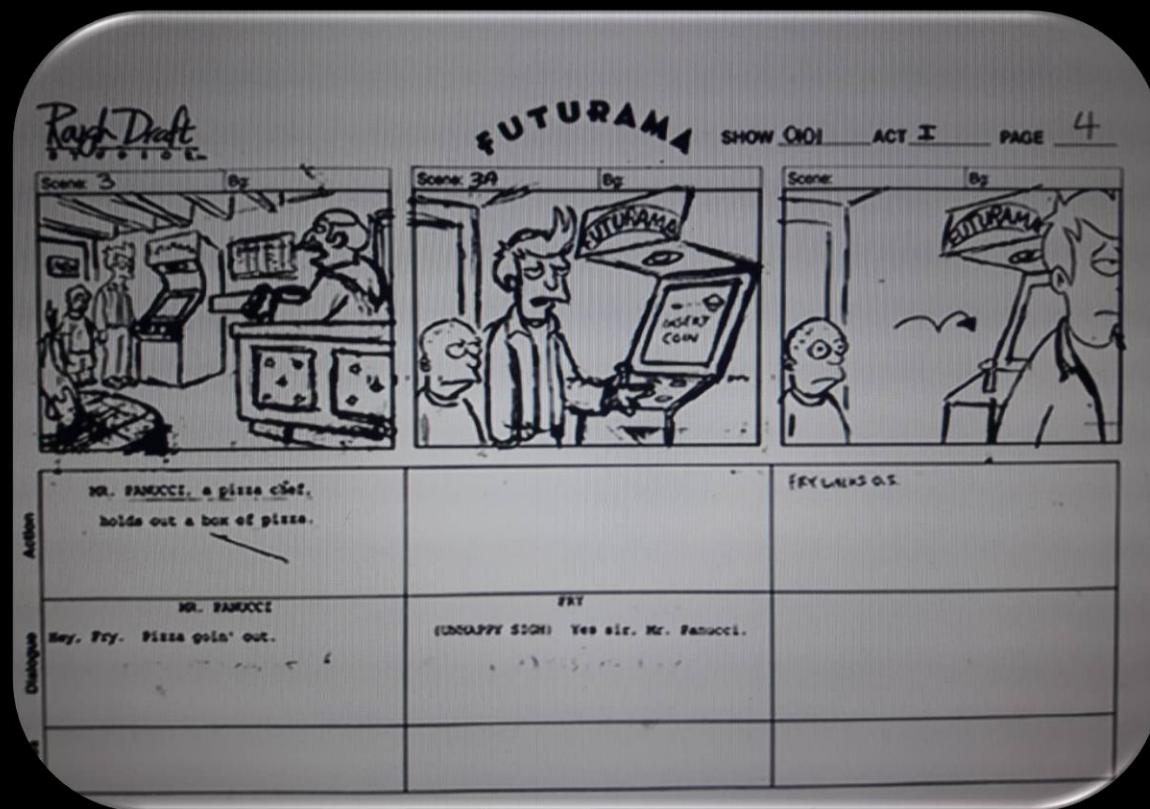
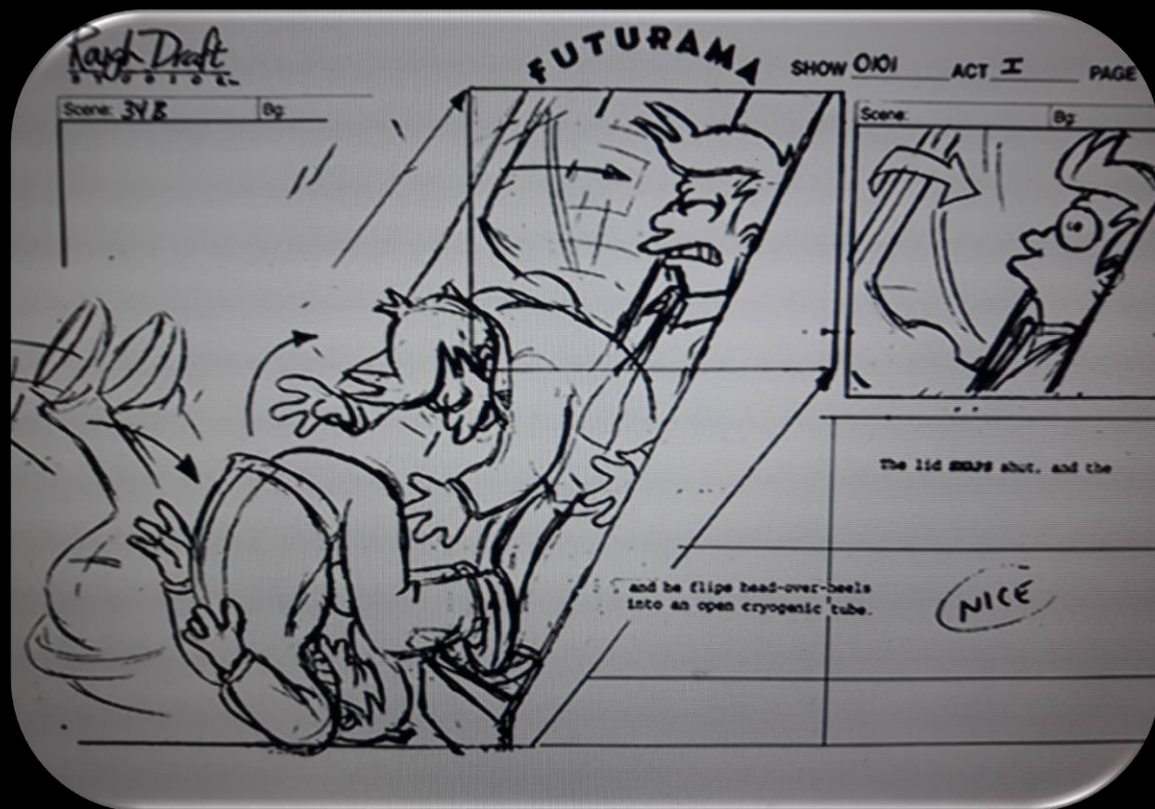
As Cameron leads the team through each frame of the storyboard, he mimics the characters when reciting their dialogue and imitates exuberant sound effects, as he does it in a pace that would be fitting to the scene. This is to help the team better visualise the scene in their heads, not only through rough illustrations, but also with the artist making an earnest attempt at giving a performance to help sell it, with it being an animated children's comedy-adventure movie.





Futurama Pilot - Storyboard

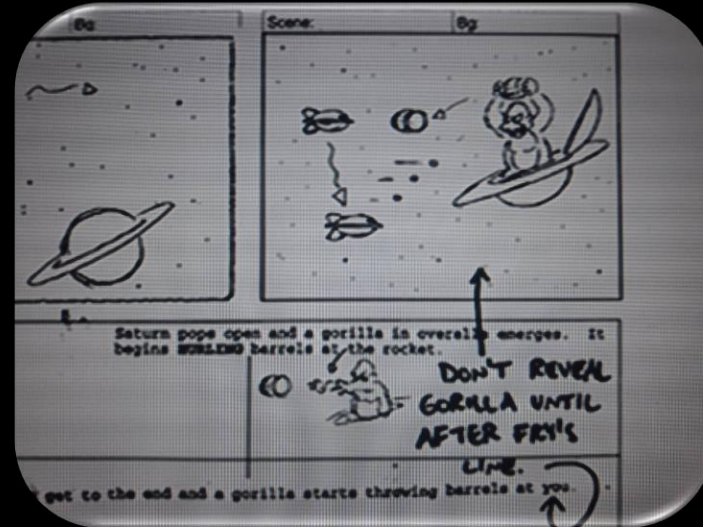
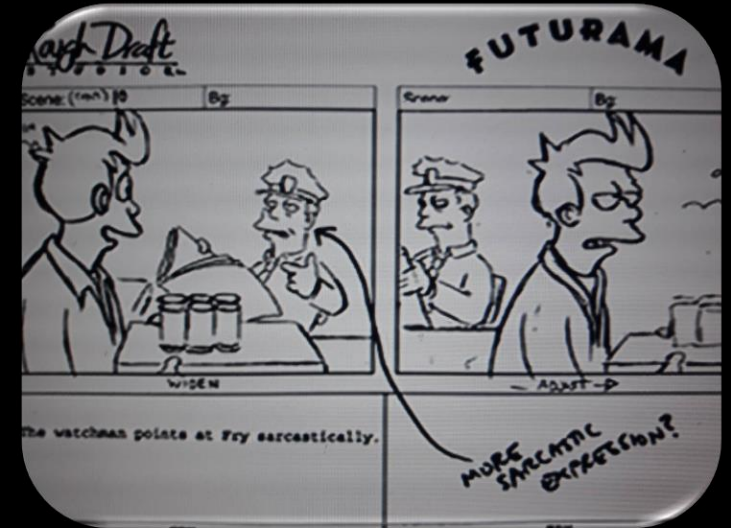
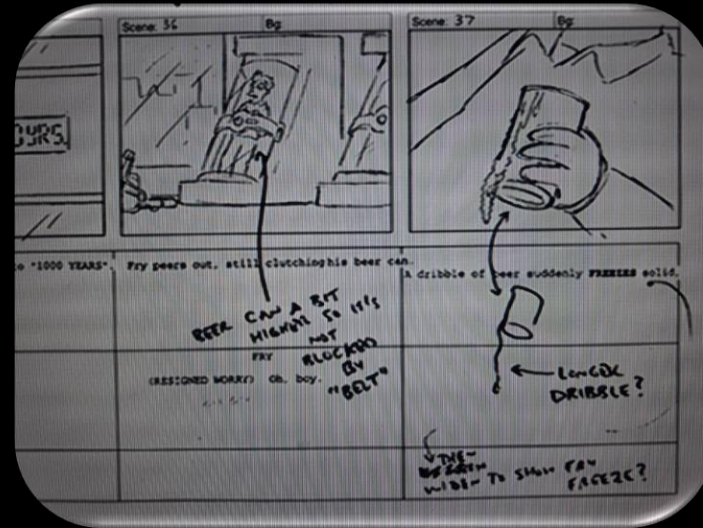
When creating a storyboard for an animated programme, detail in the design and illustrations is more crucial because it will emulate almost exactly how the finished product will look, which itself will actually be a series of drawings. Therefore, not only does it need to tell the story and arrange the shots, but it should pedantically depict composition, layout of design and other visual elements of the finished product. Unlike a live-action film or TV production, it's important for the storyboard artist in this instance to be a skilled drawer. The storyboards are laid out in frames, with rows of boxes under them, labelled 'Action', 'Dialogue', 'Notes'. There are also boxes to indicate scenes, and a line to indicate act.



Notes

This storyboard has been looked over and given notes for improvement. Notes such as "Beer can a bit higher so it's not blocked by belt" and "More sarcastic expression?" Arrows have also been drawn on to indicate where exactly the co-creator of the show (David Cohen) is referring to. Notice how a number of these notes refers to visual elements in the frames. This is because the artists and animators are more likely to base their work on the storyboards rather than just a written script, so design is crucial.

Perhaps the reason why *Shrek* didn't receive the same form of feedback is because it has 3D animation, therefore, 2D illustrations don't accurately depict the film's art style, so composition of visual elements is mostly up to the CG animators.



The Ricky Gervais Show



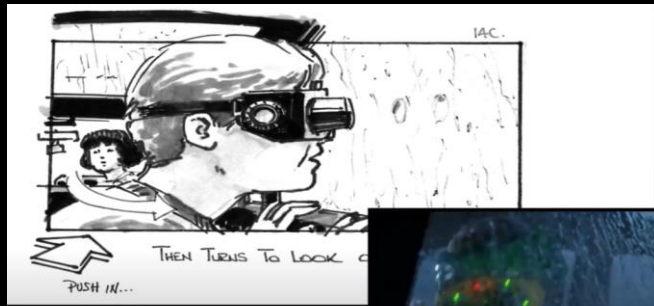
Cut-out of character placed over frame



The storyboarding for this type of programme is unique. This series uses pre-recorded podcasts and animates over them. The storyboard process pre-conceptualises how the show will visually depict the conversations had by the hosts, which makes it something of a brainstorming session. The storyboarding may have been the first step in the production process as this TV show doesn't use a script, meaning everything afterwards was based on it.

The storyboard for *Shrek* was presented to a production team, the *Futurama* storyboard got feedback in the form of notes and the *Ricky Gervais* Show presents its storyboard in video form (aka animatic), as it's the best way to show it over the pre-recorded conversation/dialogue.

Notice how one of these frames cut out the character and creatively places him on the page, which enhances the visual element. Creative liberties like this can be done when presenting a storyboard.



Jurassic Park



Arrows often appear in this storyboard. The arrows inside the frame show the characters' (or objects') movement. The arrows outside the frame represent the camera movement, and some frames are even expanded to show the motion of where the camera will go. Some arrows are numbered to indicate which movement/action is performed first. Sometimes the subject (or other elements in the frame) seep out of the frame, perhaps to make it look more dramatic and eye-catching. If you'll notice, sometimes the final scene is slightly different from the storyboard. Though a storyboard can be a helpful map, it doesn't need to be religiously followed. Often, one shot is given more than one frame because all the action within that one shot cannot be conveniently defined in one frame/description, so it's split up and labelled this way: "Shot 31A, Shot 31B"

202 EXT. LOWER LEVEL STREET -- NIGHT

Batman accelerates, oblivious to the STACCATO of CLEAVED wing mirrors as the bat-pod RAZORS through traffic- CROSSES a BUSY INTERSECTION- The bat-pod CUTS off the crowded lower level street, ROARING over into the PARKING LANES- Batman squeezes his triggers- BLASTING at PARKED CARS, BLOWING them out of the way, literally CANNONING A PATH for the pod...



204 EXT. NARROW ALLEY -- CONTINUOUS

The Bat-pod TEARS down a narrow alley blocked with DUMPSTERS-CANNONS the dumpsters to make a path-



208 EXT. PARKSIDE -- CONTINUOUS

Batman SWERVES past the Joker's truck, SLALOMS, wrapping the CABLES around a LAMP POST, SPINNING to a halt to watch...



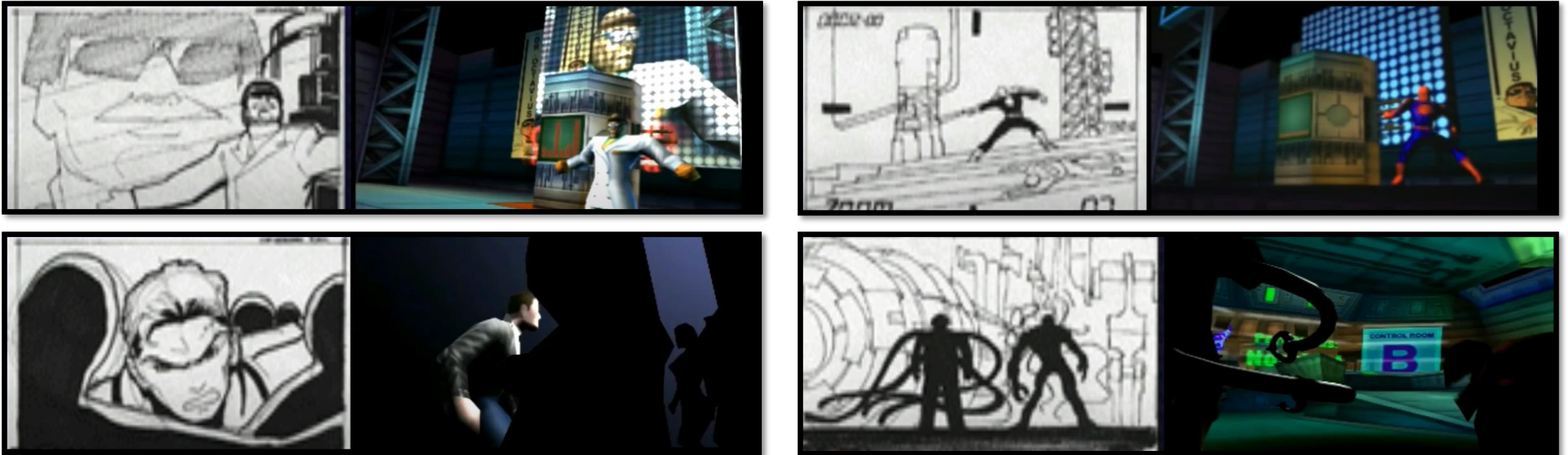
The Dark Knight

This storyboard also uses arrows to indicate movement/action. However, it also utilises another technique, which is having the same subject drawn twice or more in a frame. This is to better visually convey where the subject moves and where they're going to be, and it can save the storyboard artist from having to draw the same shot in another frame. You'll often find with films that are based on comic book franchises, uses a comic book-like art style in their storyboards. Not only does it make the film authentic to the source material, but comic books are a very effective visual medium, and some of the tropes and techniques used in them can be translated into storyboarding. That may explain why the chase scenes have lines drawn on the page, to indicate fast movement, even though it wouldn't be visible on screen. The descriptions are also very detailed e.g. "Batman accelerates, oblivious to the STACCATO of CLEAVED wing mirrors as the bat-pod RAZORS through traffic..." They can often dispatch details that may not be entirely clear in illustration form.

Spider-Man (PS1)



Here is the storyboard for the opening cutscene of a videogame. Just like *The Dark Knight*, this is based on a comic book series, therefore the recognised art style is emulated here. Not only can a storyboard convey dramatic camera shots, but also dramatic lighting, with the help of shading. Especially towards the end, where we're shown silhouettes of two characters, who are not yet revealed. This is the kind of visual storytelling technique that comes from comic books. At some point, when a character is looking through a camera, we're shown a POV from the camera. The picture is illustrated in a way that indicates it's a camera screen. Even if those visual elements don't come through in the final product, it still conveys helpful storytelling elements to the animators/game designers.



McKinstry's Revenge



I do not know the source for this, as I kept it from my GCSE MIA (Moving Image Arts) class from secondary school. Regardless, it definitely seems to be a western. There is a small section that reads, 'SHOT TYPE'. This is where you fill in what the camera shot would be, to show the film crew what shots you're exactly aiming for. If the illustrations weren't done to a good enough standard to helpfully convey these shot types on their own, labelling them helps. Although, this seems to be illustrated very well. The choice and depiction of camera shots seem very suitable for a western film. The panels alone convey the scene in an easy to follow format, but still include descriptions, which is also very helpful and should be used when they can. Also, numbering the shots can help you keep track of them better. Storyboards are typically viewed side-to-side as opposed to top-to-bottom anyway, but writing a number won't require much effort.

TITLE: **McKINSTRY'S REVENGE**

STORYBOARD

SHOT NUMBER: 53 SHOT TYPE: MEDIUM CU



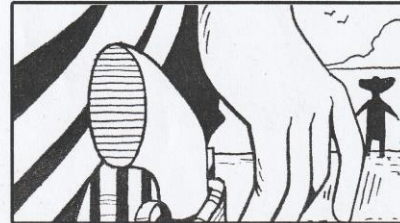
DESCRIPTION:
Scared hombre looks directly into lens.
DIALOGUE: "...Senor...I meant no harm..."

SHOT NUMBER: 54 SHOT TYPE: MEDIUM CU



DESCRIPTION:
McKinstry stares back at him.
He cracks a smile.

SHOT NUMBER: 55 SHOT TYPE: CLOSE UP



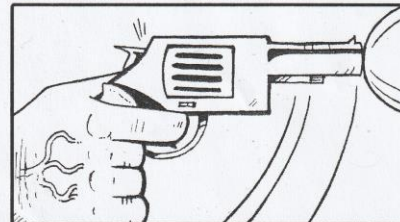
DESCRIPTION:
McKinstry's trigger finger twitches.
We hear buzzards circling overhead.

SHOT NUMBER: 56 SHOT TYPE: EXTREME CU



DESCRIPTION:
Beads of sweat run down hombre's face.
DIALOGUE: "I beg you..."

SHOT NUMBER: 57 SHOT TYPE: CLOSE UP



DESCRIPTION:
McKINSTRY draws in a flash -- BANG! BANG!

SHOT NUMBER: 58 SHOT TYPE: MEDIUM

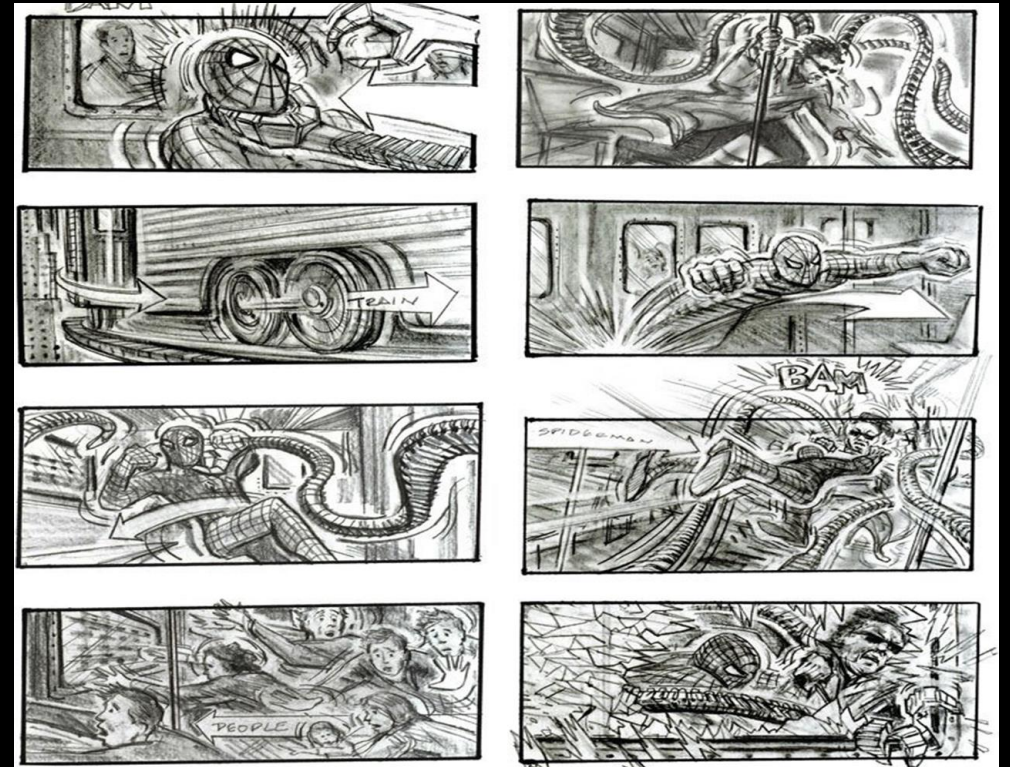


DESCRIPTION:
Hombre falls back and drops out of FRAME.
We hear his dead body hit the dirt.
Only then does McKinstry lower his gun.

Spider-Man 2



As I've looked through some storyboard examples, I've noticed not all of them bother to communicate technical details nor have descriptions, just merely present rows of illustrated frames. Maybe because these details have been covered by other sectors and it's not up to the storyboard artist to decide on those things, but including those details on the storyboard layout would've helped communicate the story better. Also, the shots here aren't numbered. Though a storyboard is typically scanned from left to right, adding shot numbers still would've been a minor and effortless addition that would prevent someone from getting lost while looking through them. The illustrations themselves are also hard to follow, which drastically change character position and shot in each one without a clear transition into how it happened, making the story even harder to follow.





BURGER KING COPS TV COMMERCIAL:
STORYBOARDS CREATED FOR BURGER KING HAWAII
AGENCY; THE HARRIS AGENCY, HONOLULU

STORYBOARD BY:
KEITH TUCKER



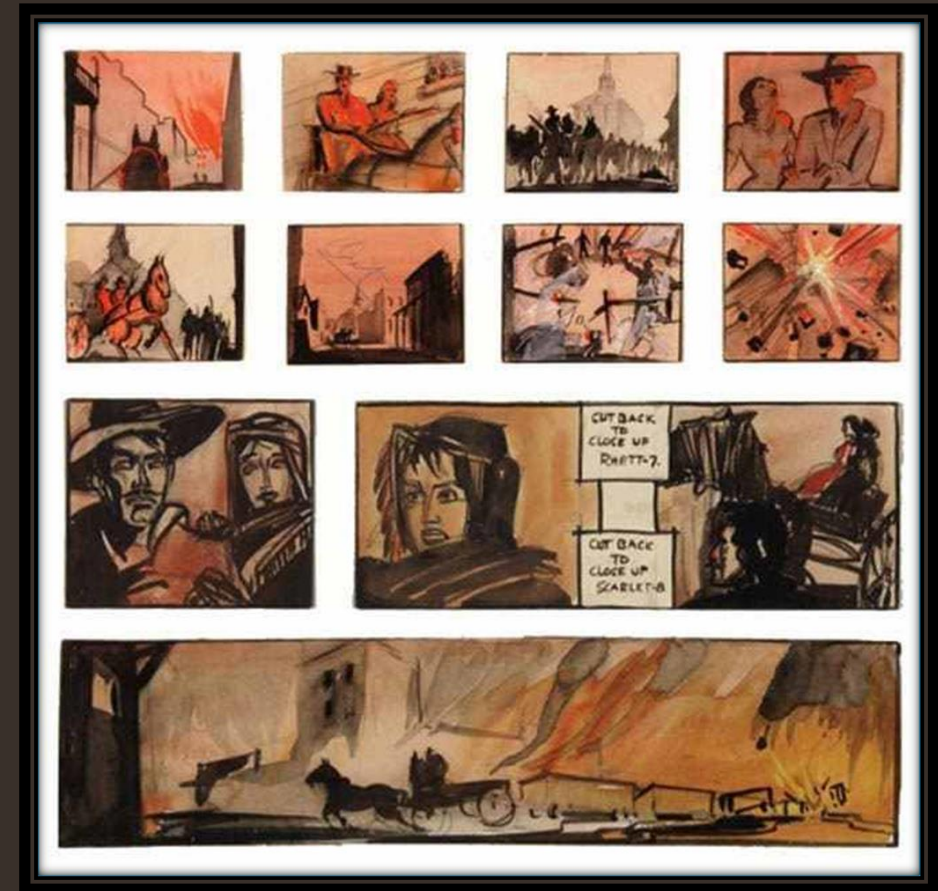
Burger King Ad

This storyboard is also just a set of panels, however, the narrative of the commercial is so concise and easy to follow, that it's justified here. It also doesn't overcomplicate the planning process. The illustrations are colourful and upbeat, which depict the mood, humour and charm of the commercial. It captures the peppiness and funk of the era that the commercial is set in, including the art style of comic books from the 70s. Perhaps adding the dialogue under the panels could've made it better.

Gone With the Wind



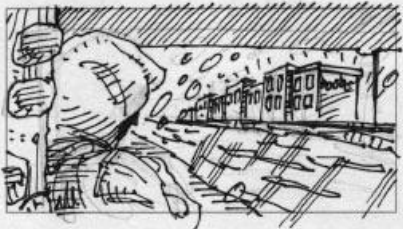
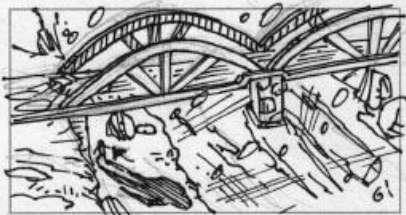
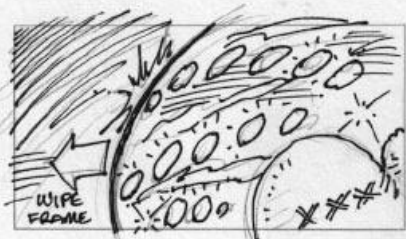
Often, a lot of storyboards will try to apply an art style that relates to the style and genre of the film, for authentic purposes. However, in this case, it doesn't seem to help much. With the panels alone, it's hard to follow what's going on, even within a singular frame itself, nevermind stringing them together to make out a comprehensive visual story. Apparently, descriptions are only used very sparingly, which seems inconsistent. The frames also change in width and height, which doesn't make any sense, because the aspect ratio would stay the same. Though adapting the intended visual style of the film can help remind the production designer, art dept, DOP etc. to consistently maintain the look of the film during stages of production, it mustn't sacrifice an easy to follow layout of conveying the story. It'd be like storyboarding a movie about a famous abstract artist, emulating their art style too closely, making the board hard to read and understand. As a storyboard artist, you would have to find a balance.



Christmas Jar Movie Storyboard



The panels in this one are hard to follow. Each one feels overcrowded, perhaps to depict a snowy atmosphere, but the overabundance of drawn lines make the illustrations themselves hard to make out. Though being good at drawing can help accurately present the look of the shots, but going overboard for the sake of showing off your ability to draw can drag down what the storyboard process is actually about: A presenting an end-to-end story sequence that everyone can make out. Though upon closer examination, you can tell what's happening, but a simple glance should be all it takes to absorb what's happening in each shot. There's importance in simplicity. If the artist wanted to convey that there was a blizzard, he could've put that in a description.



Transcendence – Music Video



Often, a lot of music videos would have a poetic pace, setting and editing style. Usually a style that wants to evoke an emotional reaction from the audience, relating to the poignant theme of the music video. The way these shots are illustrated and arranged, you can already tell what style the video is going for: serene and majestic. The well-drawn illustrations help you make out the expressions on the character's faces, so you know what they're feeling. They don't often talk, as the music and singing is usually played over them, so subtleties in the expressions and performance is important to convey the story or meaning of the video. This storyboard appears to have been made on a computer, which allows to the artist to digitise the shots to make them look more effective e.g. adjusting the brightness, shading and even adding a glare to depict the direction of the lighting. The shots are helpfully numbered as well.

Original storyboard art by K. Sean Sullivan © ksean.com (353) 206-2636



Sampling from: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints PSA Director: Adam Anderegg

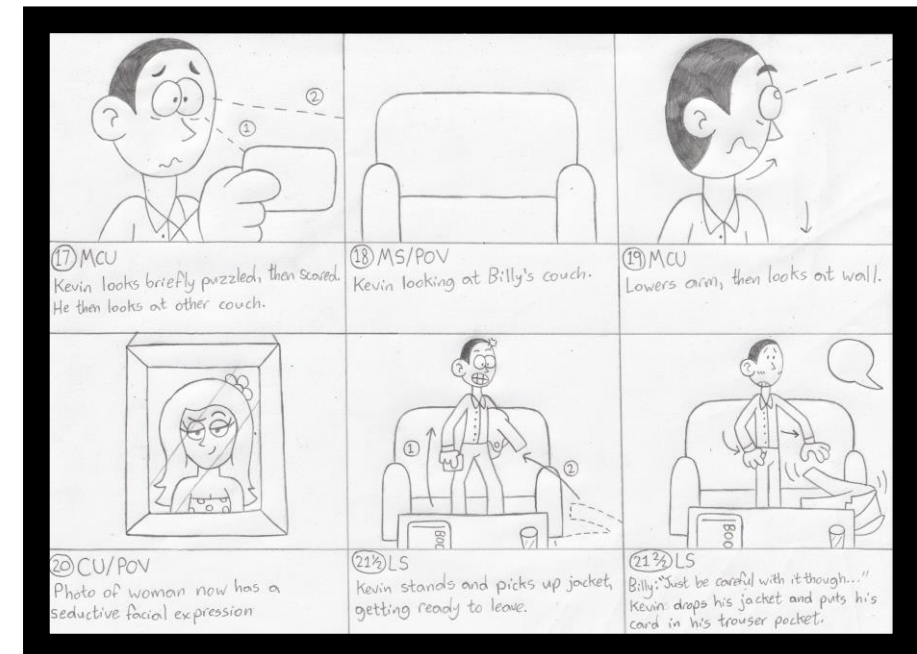
Date: 2014

K

Storyboard for Multi-Cam Film



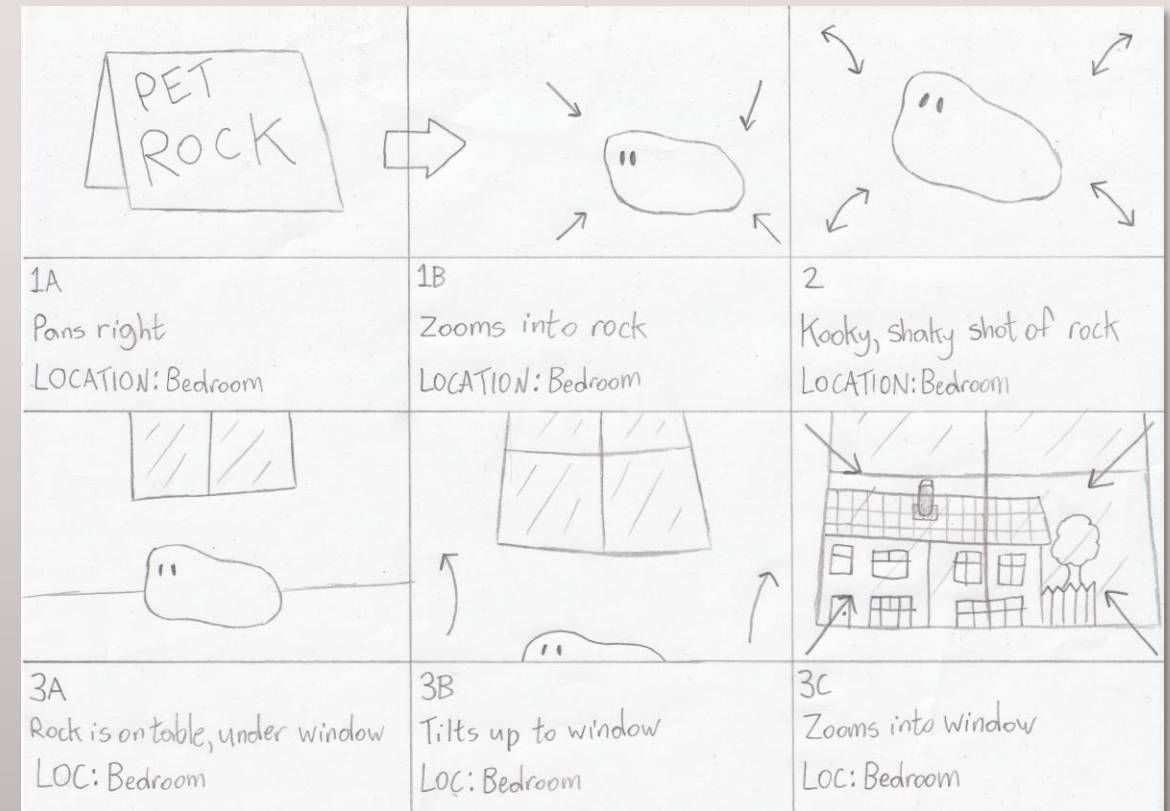
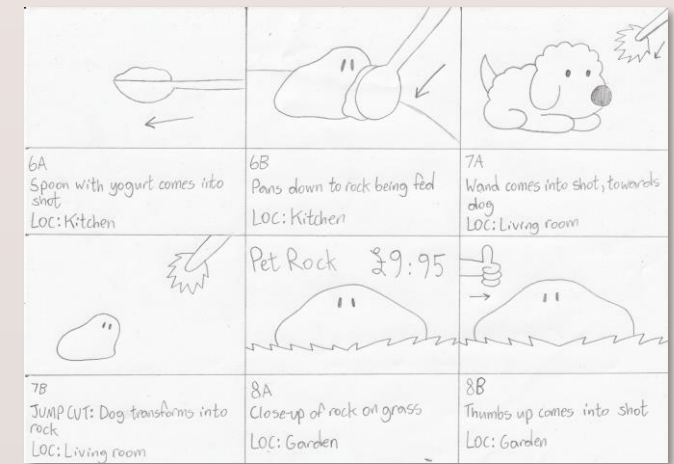
Here is a snippet of the storyboard I produced for the multi-cam film I directed. Whenever there was motion made by a character, I would draw arrows, and often I labelled the arrows to indicate the order in which the motion happens. Sometimes I also labelled the dialogue alongside, to indicate at what point the character speaks, before and after certain movements. I also drew shapes out of dotted lines, which were used to show where a character or object would move to/from. When a character would be looking at something offscreen, I drew a dotted line to show where their line of vision was facing. I didn't look these techniques up. I just thought them up when creating the storyboard, as I was trying to think of ways to communicate certain technical details to the film crew. The type of camera angles I previsualised weren't exactly achievable on set, so changes had to be made whilst shooting.



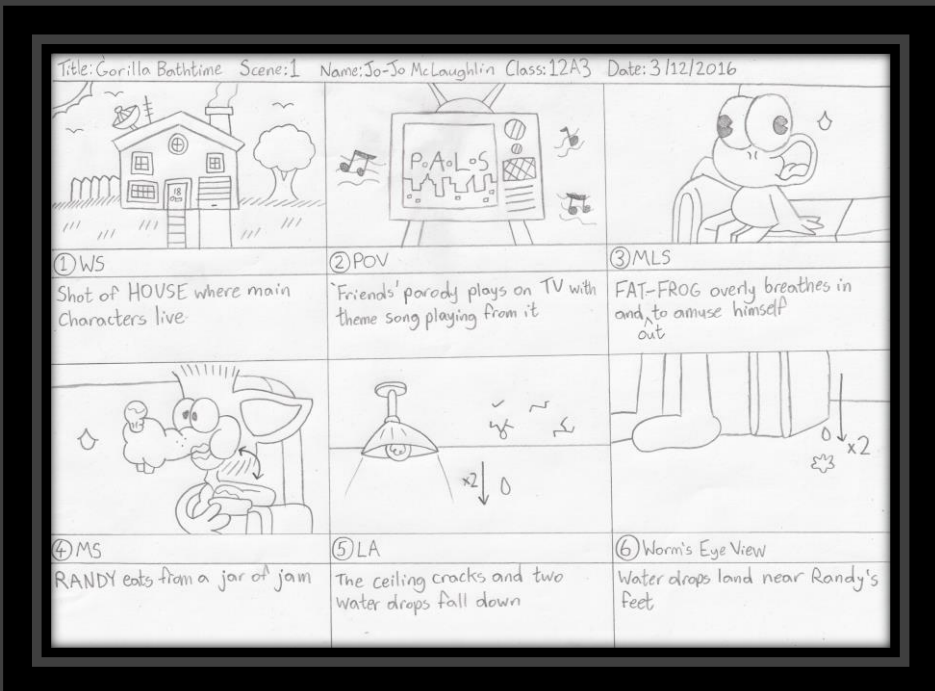
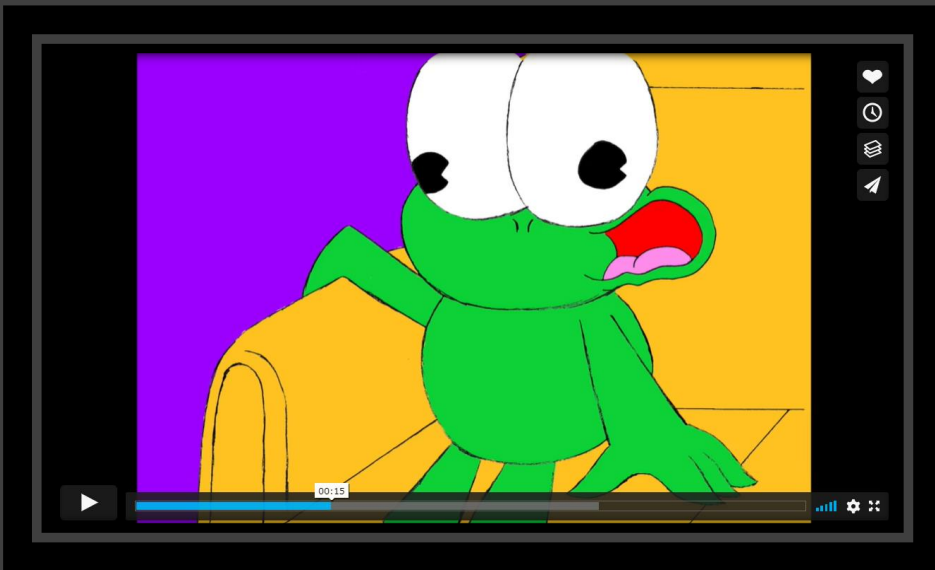
Pet Rock

Commercial

Here is the storyboard I produced for the fake ad I made. One of the requirements of shooting this ad was to have a lot of motion, such as panning shots, whip-pan shots and zooms. That's why there are a lot of arrows, as movement was planned to be going on constantly. It's also why a lot of the shots were dragged out as so: '3A, 3B, 3C' etc. The reason I gave this ad a lot of movement is because I was trying to comedically advertise a still, inanimate object as a pet, and I was trying to make it look as though having one is a lot more fun than it actually is, which is the point of an ad to be honest.



Animated Short (Student Film)



This is a page from the storyboard I created for an animated short, which was awarded joint second place in the GCSE Animation category in the CCEA Moving Image Arts Showcase 2017. I believe it captures the cartoony nature of this vivid slice of 2D animated slapstick. I got the shot type wrong in a few frames, but that's only a nit-pick because I predominantly based the film on what the storyboard panels show. I drew music notes in one frame to indicate music emitting from the TV, even though I hadn't planned on actually drawing those notes in the film. For the panels that show water drops coming from the ceiling, I drew an arrow and a 'x2' label to specify that two drops will fall. Again, I didn't come across these specific techniques when conducting research, they just happened to crop up whenever I needed a way to communicate a specific piece of information. However, that wasn't strictly necessary as I was the only one making this film

Conclusion

I have gone over the history of storyboards, providing key dates in which they were continually used and developed. I have discussed a few important features included in storyboards, and have provided a range of examples from different media sectors. Most of them good, that included a range of techniques to analysis and talk about, while some other examples lacked an easy-to-follow structure and layout, and didn't include some techniques that could've improved them. I have provided examples which I have made, to display my personal understanding of storyboards. Now knowing more about the creation of storyboards, the one I'll make for the end-of-year film will include numerous features that will communicate filmmaking techniques such as shot types, movement, panning, tilting, cuts, dialogue, shot descriptions, composition within the shots, aspect ratio, scene/act number and possibly sound effects and music cues.

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