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Animated Short Film

Vinny Argentina

University of Alabama in Huntsville

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RCEU 2022 Project Proposal

Project Title

Animated Short Film

Faculty Information

Name: Vinny Argentina

Status: Associate Professor

Department/Program: Art, Art History & Design

College: Arts Humanities and Social Sciences

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Proposal ID RCEU22-ARS-VMA-01

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I. Project Description

Animated short films are a fantastic medium for individual expression and experimentation, but they can be incredibly time consuming and challenging to create. This project seeks to help one highly motivated student reduce some of the barriers to creating an animated short film by providing funding to support full-time work, as well as an active mentor to help with project management/production. The short can explore any subject matter desired using 2D or 3D digital tools, stop motion, or a completely experimental process, but it should be produced from start to finish during the program period. Getting a short film done in 10 weeks is a TALL order, so scope will be important, but motivation, passion, and strong initiative will also be essential.

II. Student Duties, Contributions, and Outcomes

The selected student will work with the faculty member to conceptualize and appropriately scope a short to produce within the program period, and will then visually develop and produce the animated short film. This will be an intense schedule, but is an outstanding opportunity to learn and develop artistic and technical skills, gain a better understanding of industry best practices, as well as produce portfolio work. The student will be exposed to planning, creating mood boards, story development, look development, character design, environment design, storyboarding, using version control software, compositing, foley audio, and editing over the course of the production of the short. A positive attitude, good organizational skills, strong communication, and self-motivation are important traits the successful student will need for this role.

As the primary production artist working on the short, the selected student will contribute the majority of the visual content seen in the final short. Specific contributions or demands of the student will be determined by the content and processes needed to produce the short, but the student and mentor will work together to ensure the content and processes play to the selected student's strengths.

This is a unique opportunity that will allow a great deal of creative freedom, dramatically accelerate improvement of artistic and technical skills, and provide an intimate understanding of the full animated short production pipeline and processes. The professional experience and portfolio materials gained from this program will be extremely beneficial in developing a personal body of work and helping the student land an entry level job in a very competitive industry. The short film will be completed at the end of this program, and will subsequently be submitted to festivals.

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III. Student Selection Criteria

Previous experience with animation is vitally important for the success of this project given the timeframe, so ARS 220: Animation Introduction or equivalent experience is required, as are 2 or more ARS 32x skill development classes, and ARS 425 : Short Film is preferred. In addition to having experience with animation, a proven track record of having a positive attitude, good organizational skills, strong communication skills, being self-motivated, and highly creative are important factors that will be considered. Students will be evaluated based on their letter and portfolio materials - please make sure you include a link to your online portfolio!

IV. Project Mentorship

Barring additional complications from the pandemic, the selected student will work on-site in Wilson Hall with the faculty mentor. Working hours will be flexible, but full time work (40 hours per week) will be needed to complete the project. The pre-production phase of the project will require daily interaction between the selected student and the faculty mentor as the story, style, tools and process for the project are defined. The faculty mentor will continue to provide hands-on help with the project during the production phase as needed, but will take on more of a production manager/producer role for the short. Production meetings will be scheduled at a minimum of once per week to assess progress, talk about issues or potential roadblocks, and to evaluate technical and artistic work completed. The faculty mentor will be able to help with many aspects of the production and may take on production roles as needed to complete the short. The faculty mentor will also create and help maintain a Subversion repository for project files as well as a project in Shotgrid for production management. Thoughtful, detailed feedback will be provided by the mentor throughout the project, and is expected in return. Help will always be available, but a good deal of independent troubleshooting and problem solving is also expected from the selected student.