

The First Step in Transforming Dreams into Reality: Storyboard

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Abstract: As in all disciplines, there are some projects that require interdisciplinarity interaction in many forms of art and design. It has been observed many times that interdisciplinarity yields more effective results during the process of a project and it is a unique technique of work that combines different domains of expertise. A production of a film is a whole of complicated interdisciplinary approaches that combining considerably different disciplines. Regardless of animated or live-action, all motion picture projects that are presented to the audience only exist as a draft before emerging as a product. We see a film project as a script first but storyboard is the first part when a film starts to exist visually. Storyboard is a technique of illustration of a script in a simple and effective manner. It is a road map for the team that is working on the film. It is fairly challenging to express the shot angles, actor or characters facial expressions, stage designs in only writing. A storyboard scene provides more effective information than the hours-long talks from time to time. Storyboard is a widely-used application not only in the film industry but also in advertising and marketing industry. In such industries, storyboard not only provides the integrity of the team members but also meets the expectations and questions of the customers about how they receive a product or service. In general terms, storyboard artist has fine arts education and is not related with motion pictures industry beforehand. Storyboard designers, who materialize a film project for the first time, must draw for thousands time in line with the expectations of scriptwriter and director. For such important responsibilities, they must have a professional knowledge of basic concepts such as shot angle results, stage designs, costumes, light, size, and perspective. The objective of this study is to analyse the history of storyboard, and their necessity in animation and live-action film industry and to explain with the project samples of the cartoon/animation students in basic storyboard lesson.

Keywords: Storyboard, motion pictures, art, design.

INTRODUCTION

Since it is on the agenda of the people in today's sense, the art is a platform where a plenty of different ideas has been discussed. On one hand, artists try to perform their arts, on the other hand, art historians, theorists, and critics interfere in the performance of the artists and this uncomfortable situation, especially for artists and designers, continues today. A work of art or design product does not have to tell itself. However, the society has started to expect that artist or the designer who created the product should make a statement about the product, especially in the modern arts after 1960's. This is because of the abstract art concept which has emerged after such period. Abstract art expresses itself as art consumer understands, however; the artist must make some statements about it as society expects it. So why does the individual who create the artwork or design product cannot explain it while art critics and theorists can write tens of pages about an artwork? Because we, designers and artist do not read much. It is obvious that art critics and theorists are the ones that read the most about the art despite they do not make artistic production.

Therefore, they write and criticize about the artworks of the artists and designers. At this point, the following questions should be addressed in a profound way; how can an individual who does not know the production process of artwork or design product comment on the artwork? How can he criticize? Or how can he comment?

This situation displays some realities that are existed in the existential philosophy of today's world of art and design. Today's artists and designers must make some clarifications about their artworks or persuade marketers or company representatives who will market their product and earn their trust. This fact in mind, an artist must explain, present a sketch or write a letter for decision centres about the emotional and applied process regarding the creation phases of an artwork.

Drawing is almost a magical power. It enables designer to communicate in a different way than spoken or written language [1]. The term sketch has generally the meaning of a rough or unfinished drawing, and the activity to sketch is to give a brief account or general

outline of something [2]. Sketch is the most important factor that reduces the challenging phases in creating an art form or design product. We must consider Sketch as a torch that illuminates the road of the artist or designer on his way to his targets. He illuminates the darkness as he uses the sketch during the creation process and thus reaching the most successful result on the way to the target. Through sketch, the artist lays out the creation process. These examples define how the sketch can help artists and designers on an individual basis and there are other useful features of the sketch. As a second contributing factor, especially the design products are the products that are created as a teamwork under the leadership of art director. The number of the people within the team and their duties depend on the design discipline of the product, the product itself and budget of the company that orders the product. Art director can only provide the integrity between the teams and communication about the production process of the team members, each of which has a different duty through the sketch. The third factor that defines the importance and necessity of the sketch is to persuade the employer or producer and get an approval. It is clearly known that no investor makes a financial investment in an artistic project that he does not trust. Therefore, he needs to see and understand all details about that project before supporting it. Sketches completely pull down the verbal explanations of the projects and prevent producers to define what's been told by imagining. This leads producers to make more accurate decisions by significantly relieving in a philological sense. It challenges the artists to convince the producers and it is a troublesome thing for producers to image what has been told. Sketches are the only way to solve this complexity.

The sketch is the building block in motion pictures field as it is at every art and design discipline. The sketches have more importance in a motion pictures project than other art and design disciplines. Because sketches enable director, scriptwriter, producer, actor, actress, director of photography, lighting director, voice actors, camera operators, other team members and approximately 100 members of staff, depending on the structure of the project to work in a collective and coherent manner and be a team during the production of a motion pictures project. Storyboard is the name of the sketch that enables tremendous and jaw-dropping combination in the motion pictures discipline.

Storyboard

2B pencil and sketchbook... These are the most important tools of a designer during the creation of a product. Many disciplines of the fine arts education have drawing course as a basis. Drawing is so important for an artist or designer that it is highly likely that designer who gives up on drawing or leaving it behind

will probably lose its skill in the following period. Considering the history of art and design, we can observe that all artists and designers who have drawing in their profession and went down in history, never let go of sketches despite their popularity. The most obvious example of this phenomenon is Pablo Picasso. The academicians that are aware of this reality assign drawing projects to the senior students from time to time. Even though such projects do not cover the whole semester, they may be one of the mandatory phases of a project given and this is generally not welcomed by the students. Because a senior student in a higher education institution considers drawing assignment as a humiliation considering that he has learned so many things and have a profession. This is one of the most significant mistakes that can be done by a designer throughout his professional life and the academician aims to put the student off this wrong behaviour.

On a macro level, even the very look and feel of a film involves an intricate design process. Colour palette, composition and lighting all have a profound impact on the emotional resonance of every scene. With so much of the film now created digitally, the importance of design and pre-visualization has never been greater [3]. The design is the most important element of the construction phases of each film. Visualizing a script is a design feast from a to z. We need to design everything beforehand such as when and which music or audio will start to play, at which scene and how actor or hero will show his facial expressions and how shot angle will be. Director manages the film, however; designers design elements such as all objects, costumes, lights of the film etc. which have not been created yet. Although storyboard designers work by the instruction of the director, their designs absolutely have traces.

Storyboards are tools shorthand renderings used to plot out and previsualize series of scenes that will make up a movie. In conjunction with a shot list, a storyboard allows a director or designer to plan sequences and arrange elements within the frame [4]. Storyboard includes drawing and sketch in a technical sense. The storyboard is an illustrated view, like a comic book, of how the producer or director envisions the final edited version of a production will look [5]. Storyboards are widely used in the movie and advertising industry. Here storyboards are looked upon as being "illustrations displayed in sequence for the purpose of pre-visualising an animated or live-action film [6]. Film storyboards also relate to the stakeholders in the filmmaking process and are designed to describe the film and audience relationship [7]. Regardless of animated or live-action motion pictures project first exist in the storyboard papers by slipping away from the imagination. It is a common mistake to resemble storyboard and cartoons with each other. However,

these concepts are completely different from each other and serve different purposes.

Storyboard is a complete integrator. It is the most robust and foundation that enables production team to work in harmony, each of which uses a different technical language and that creates the foundation of the project. Many different disciplines that are not related to the motion pictures industry usually organize a workgroup the storyboard concept borrowed from cinema industry is used, where artists draft the film scenes, and movie director, designers, and cinematographers use the storyboard to define camera angles, exteriors, scenarios, and to take decisions about sounds, illuminations, special effects, and others [8].

History of Storyboarding

The history of telling a story without words, just through drawing or pictures can be date back to the prehistoric people who had drawn pictures on the walls of the caves. Such primitive images, which are still allegations as to why they are drawn, are completely in compliance with the definition of storyboard. The humankind that fails to make verbal communication solve this problem by drawing pictures on the walls of the caves.

In today's sense, storyboard concept is arguably, the need for screenplays came into being with the introduction of narrative films around 1903. Prior to this point, the unique attraction of film lay in its ability to represent the movement of objects that were not physically present in the space in which the spectator was situated [9]. We can observe that Walt Disney cartoons are the first examples of the storyboard in today's sense in 1930's in the USA, which have pioneered the development of the motion pictures industry and started a new age in all over the world. The storyboard has become popular, especially in Hollywood in the following years and become an integral part of the design and production phases of the artworks all around the world as motion pictures industry has become popular in developed countries and developing countries.

How to Create a Storyboard?

The process of storyboarding is a complex one. It is the genesis moment, the moment of translating the script into visual images. In any translation, something gets lost. The difficulty lies in the fact that the script writer's efforts all the sweat and tears spent in crafting a story with all its stunning colours and minutiae, are now going to change from literary form to picture form [10]. Having a magnificent duty, a storyboard designer needs to be creative before anything else. Regardless of how skilled a designer, his designs cannot go beyond a craft unless he is creative. In this respect, creativity must stand out among the other skills of a storyboard

designer. Transferring a script of the film into a visual dimension requires creativity for a designer. For this purpose, a storyboard designer must learn creative thinking and out of the box approach to stories. In addition to this, storyboard designer is also a communication designer. Before his designs reach to masses, his teammate monitors and approves them. That's why a storyboard designer must get along with and have an effective communication with all team members, especially the scriptwriter and director. Otherwise, his storyboard drawings would be a distant draft for all team members and producer to understand them seamlessly.

Storyboard designer has the complete control to manage the story when there is nothing more than a script during the rolling out process of the film. The only limitation for the designer is his own imagination and then the next step is that he must put across his designs only. For that reason, the designer anticipates and bring the protagonist and co-stars into life which are only within the script. However, when designer directing the audience's attention, boredom and confusion are two enemies of good design that designer need to be continually on the lookout for. Knowing about these problems will help designer in his goal of giving the audience an emotionally satisfying experience [11]. It is likely that designer may fail to notice many unnecessary details for he focuses heavily on the visualization process of the script. The designer must visualize the story written with the least material and simplest discourse in an effective manner. He must consider the important elements of the drawing culture such as movement, dimension, perspective, ratio, line values and light-shadow while doing all of them.

Composition

As it is in almost all forms of art and design, the composition is an element to which a designer must strictly consider at all times in the storyboard designs as well. The photography and cinema is a whole of compositions as two interconnected, different disciplines and especially motion pictures projects owe their composition structures to the storyboard drafts in a sense. This displays the importance of the storyboard designers in the creation process of a film.

Fibonacci sequence and rule of thirds are the leading composition rules that a storyboard designer must apply. Because animated and live-action films are shot from a defined frame area and storyboard designer must outline how to use such defined area aesthetically in the simplest and effective manner. By dividing the frame into thirds along its width and height, sweet spots are created at their cross points, providing a guide for the placement of important compositional elements that results in dynamic compositions. The lines themselves are also often used as guides for the placement of

horizons in extreme long shots and establishing shots. When subjects are placed in the frame according to the rule of thirds, it is common to position their eyes over one of these spots, the top left sweet spot if they are looking towards the right side of the frame, or the top right if they are looking at the left side of the frame [12].

Shot angle is another element that affects the use of the composition. The most common types of shot angles are;

- Close-Up (CU): Full face shot of actor(s) or up close shot of objects.
- Extreme Close-Up (EXT CU): So close you see only actor's eyes.
- Establishing Shot (EST): Shows the placement of the actor(s) for the audience.
- Long Shot (LS): Shows the actor(s) or objects in the distance (background).
- Medium Shot (MS): Shows the actor(s) or objects in the MGD [13]. Because shot angles designed

in a storyboard provide valuable insights to the director of photography and the director in the production of the film. In the light of this data, it can be concluded that storyboard designer has to consider the shot angles which makes him different from cartoon designers and other designers. In Figure 1, we observe a project of a student. The project tells a story of Temel, who is a fantastic protagonist in funny stories and adopted by all the people in Turkey. Briefly, Temel sees a job posting and applies to it that seeks a cemetery staff member and then quits it and goes to a teahouse, which is considerably common in Turkey and of which regulars are men. His friend asks why he quits and Temel says "Everybody was lying down and I was the only one that worked". We can observe that the student successfully tells the story with simple and aesthetic elements. We can say that storyboard defines the composition rules such as golden ratio, the direction of movement, look room and shot angles such as close-up, medium shot and extreme close-up during the design process in an optimum level by considering the stage design.

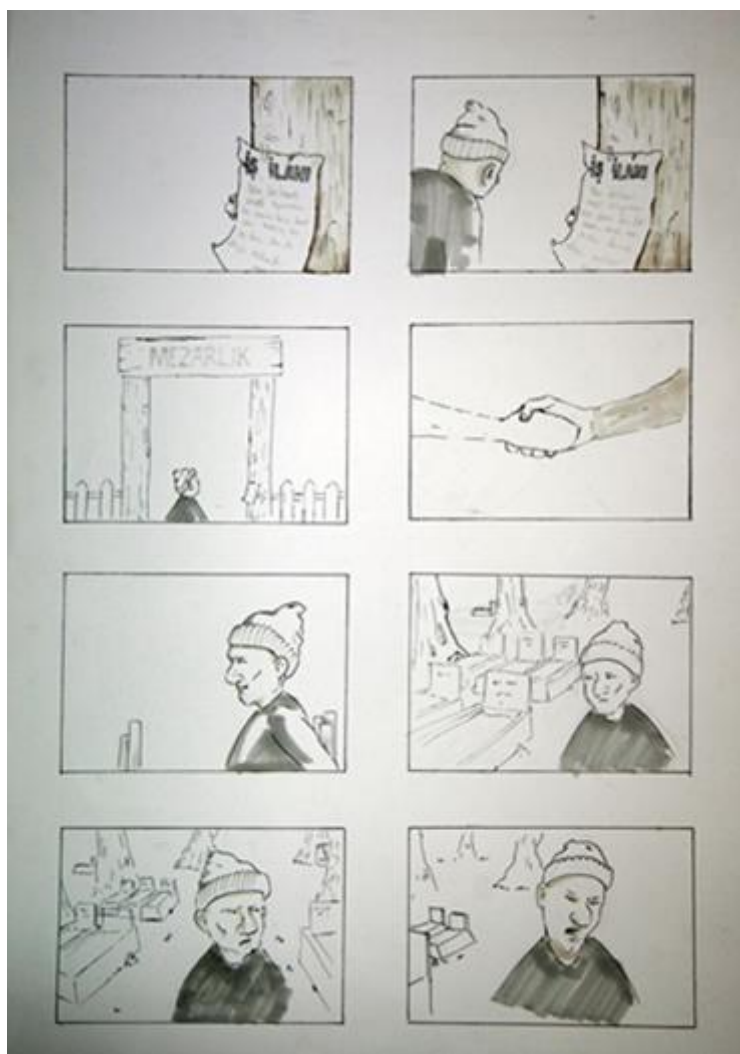


Fig-1: A junior student project (drawing by Mehmet Taşdelen).

Perspective is the leading dimension concept for a storyboard designer. Photograph and cinema become distinct from other all art disciplines with its depth of field feature. Depth of field is a unique feature that offers considerably different narrations for cinema and photography disciplines and to form depth of field on a storyboard draft is possible through creating dimension, that is to say, perspective.

Light and Composition

Light is one of the most important elements in cinematography. Used for defining a scene, the light offers the audience to convey a story with different meanings. The existence of all display arts depends on the energy of the light and no matter how simple it looks; we cannot see without the light. First of all, the light is a kind of energy and spread through a source of energy. The audience does not pay attention to the source of light in an animated or live-action film, however; the light offers a wide range of narrations for

director of photography and director that directors decide on the type of the light on the storyboard drawings. Therefore, the light and shadow concepts are a different factor that a storyboard designer must know and use them carefully in his drawing. In Figure 2, we observe a student project. The student has selected a scene from Winter Sleep by director Nuri Bilge Ceylan that receives Palme d'Or from Cannes Film Festival for his project. The leading actor seeks for a horse for his hotel in a scene that lasts around 118 seconds and it depicts a moment when a wild horse is attempted to be tamed. The venue is a flat plain and the weather is cloudy. We can observe that the student has successfully applied the concept of light in an optimum level despite there were no warning by the academician for the portrayal of the scene. Considering the light and shadow is one of the important factors of portraying the scene. By this way, the team has a rough insight about the conclusions before the shooting.

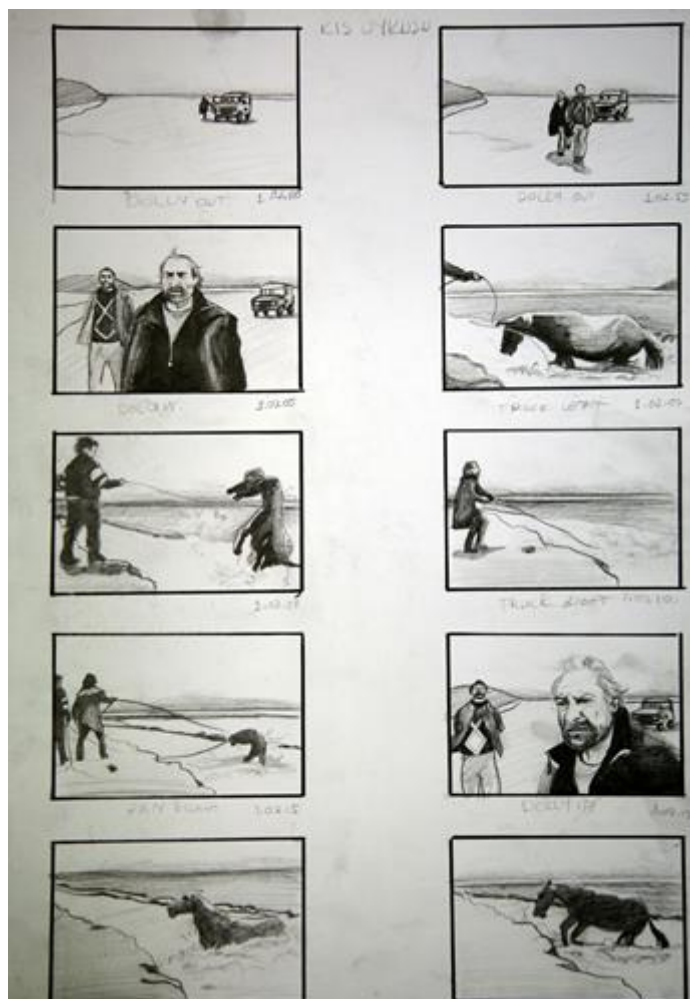


Fig-2: A student Project (drawing by Merve Camgöz).

There are basically two types of light in drawing; direct light and reflected light. Direct light

emanates from a light source, such as a light bulb or the sun. Anything that creates light, such as a TV or a

computer monitor, is giving off direct light. Reflected light bounces off of objects. We see the world around us primarily through reflected light [14]. While controlling light is an extremely simple application in animated films and studio shots in the film industry, it is completely impossible to do so in external shots. For that reason, if there is a predefined light in the storyboard, all crew may have to wait for days and even weeks to find or catch the correct light in bringing the film into action.

Stage Representation

Scene planning is where the technical elements are worked out which will tell the camera department the exact field size at which the artwork will be shot and exactly where the camera will be placed over artwork. For a storyboard designer, it's worth remembering that scene planners and director of photography will know a lot more about average layout artist or animator [15]. Stage planning must be decided between the director, director of photography and storyboard designer through brainstorming during the creation of a film. Because even the most popular cinema actor or animated movie character may cause attention loss of the audience within a bad stage plan and decreases the quality of the film.

For animated films layout, the first stage of production is the cinematography of animation. Good layout pluses the storyboard staging, choreographs the camera moves, adds depth and design to backgrounds, and sets the stage for the animated actors. After layout, it is finally time for the animators to create memorable performances that are based on storyboard 'rehearsals' [16]. The situation is slightly different in terms of live action films. People ignore many images that they see in their daily life. Most of the live-action movies is a selection of images that people see in their daily life. However, such scenes are the result of careful selections in films that the picturegoers can be lost in amazement when they watch a venue that they pass by every day. This striking feature starts with the successful implementation of the storyboard designer that designs that scene. Then he is followed by director, director of photography, camera operator and stage editors.

CONCLUSIONS

The design and creativity are directly related to the emergence of a project which is not physically available. Design concept has a great importance, especially in motion pictures discipline. Storyboard is the first place where animated or live-action starts to exist. Therefore, storyboard designers have a duty to express a story of lots of pages of text in a visual sense. To visualize the story is an extremely difficult task because every individual that looks to the visual may perceive it differently due to their life standard, world

knowledge, world perspective. This natural diversity presents a fact that one of the important features of the storyboard designer is that he must make explanations and persuade the masses about the product that has emerged. For artists and designers to acquire such feature, they must make research and read books about their fields. Culture can be a necessary factor for visual expression, but reading culture is required for verbal expression.

Another important feature of the storyboard is that it reduces the cost of a motion pictures project. Because it finishes the costly applications with only pen and paper. The storyboard drawings of a creative designer who improved himself may save at least 10% depending on the budget of the film. Without storyboard, no production team member can imagine the outcome expectation of their responsibilities within the project and must make more shots. In short, storyboard offers the possibility to make variations on the progress of the project and enables the director to create the most coherent scenes in his imagination by eliminating the not existed scenes. The storyboard is the fundamental point that creates the compositions of the motion pictures. Because each director of photography expects that everything in his mind to be ready before he starts his work. Storyboard offers this opportunity. It is an undeniable fact that the most successful directors of photography work with storyboard designers.

For such qualifications, storyboard concept and storyboard designers have become the indispensable elements of the motion pictures and advertising industry today. No artistic endeavour can be ripened and be successful with the sketch. Sketch is the starting point of every point of art and storyboard is the starting point of motion pictures.

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