

# The Weekend Academy

Byam Shaw School of Art Central Saint Martins

A teacher's workbook  
for a five session  
simple animation course.

# Art is great!



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The workshops were led by artists Oreet Ashery and Douglas Ebbage.

From the experience of the workshops we have devised this teacher's pack, to enable the project to be replicated and built on with groups of young people, by teachers, artists and youth workers.

We welcome your feedback and comments: please contact us at: [www.theweekendacademy.com](http://www.theweekendacademy.com)

This workbook is based on animation workshops run by The Weekend Academy at Byam Shaw, working with students and staff from Pupil Referral Units in North London.

# Art is great!



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We invited students from a large-scale portrait-painting course run in a previous academic year, to return to participate in a simple five-session animation project. The animation course is more advanced than the large-scale portrait painting course, and we chose the students for their particular interest and aptitude in visual art.

We used the same venue – a large light studio – and simple equipment: two digital video cameras on tripods, and an Apple lap-top, with the iMovie programme. Students made their own short individual 2D animations developed from group and individual drawing games and activities, and a group 3D animation.

We worked with seven students from KS 3 and 4, two lead artists, and one BA Fine Art student assistant.

We spent a whole day together divided into two sessions a day, with breakfast before the first session and lunch in between. However, the sessions can be divided in a flexible manner; for example the whole course can be done over one intensive week, or for one session a week over five weeks. The length of each session can be modified according to the group's abilities.

### This was our structure for the day:

- 9.30 – 10.30** tutors and helpers setting up the studio
- 10.30 – 11.00** breakfast – we found a healthy breakfast to be very important for the overall calmness of the group.
- 11.00 – 12.30** morning session
- 12.30 – 1.15** lunch break
- 1.15 – 2.30** afternoon session
- 2.30 – 3.30** tutors and assistants tidy and reflect

# Intro.



The sessions are sequential, starting with drawing games, and progressing to 2D and 3D animation activities in groups, in pairs or alone. The sessions are designed to build skills and ideas for making short animated sequences, with sound and visual effects.

### Session 1+2

Drawing games: the “corps exquis”, or Exquisite Corpse.

Choosing and colouring a character.

Filming step-by-step 2D animations of a character.

Life drawing – action poses.

### Session 3+4

Drawing the character in poses from the life-drawings.

Developing an animation sequence for the character.

Starting the editing process.

### Session 5

Looking at editing processes: adding filters and music to an animation.

Progressing to 3D animation: making 3D characters out of plasticine, and building a 3D background.

This is an in-depth description of a five session simple animation course.

# Contents



- Sitting in groups of three, students pass around a sheet of A4 paper. The first person draws the head, and folds the top of the paper down. The second student continues with the body without knowing what the head was, and folds the paper and passes it to the third student, who draws the legs. Each student leaves two little lines on the next section so the next person will know where to start their drawings. The activity moves in circles, so each student is continuously drawing.

This is the “corps exquis” or Exquisite Corpse game, devised by the French surrealist poet André Breton; it is itself based on an old parlour game. It allows students to draw on their imagination and to use a range of drawing styles – for example to draw an animal’s head, or alien arms and legs.

- All the A4 sheets of drawings are ‘hung’ on the wall and each student chooses which character they like best. Make 10 photocopies of the character enlarged to A3; then students can colour in their chosen image.

Students will need to finish the drawing of their character in monochrome (black and white) first, before it is photocopied. Then they can colour in the original. Our students were itching to colour their drawings: we explained that they need copies first, to use for the animation process. The multiple copies are helpful when they are cutting out body-parts for the animation process, in case they make mistakes in cutting.

Drawing games:  
the “corps exquis”,  
or Exquisite Corpse.  
Choosing and  
colouring a character.  
Filming step-by-step  
2D animations of their  
character. Life drawing  
– action poses.

# Session 1+2



- Cut the character out, prepare a background sheet and place the original figure on top, then depending on the movement chosen the students can either cut something from the photocopies – like eyes, or hands – or make something extra: one of our students used a plasticine snake, combining 2D and 3D.
- The background sheet is a base-sheet of paper, plain or with a picture on it, used as a backdrop.
- Students then choose one movement that they want the character to perform. So for example, they cut the arm off from one photocopy sheet of their character and place it onto the body cut from another sheet, moving it in small steps every time, frame by frame.

- The tutor sticks a background sheet of paper, using strong tape, onto the wall or the floor where there is good light. Generally speaking it is best to use artificial light and block daylight, to keep the consistency within the filming. The tutor then places a video-camera on a tripod and takes still shots or very short shots, first of the base (body) image and then slowly of the arm moving. The arm is stuck to the base-paper with a small bit of folded masking tape. The student moves the arm slowly, bit by bit, and each time a still or a moving image is taken with the camera, to create the sequence of an arm movement.

For students to understand the idea of movement in a figure and the idea of a 3D figure, a helper will pose for the students in various mid-movement positions, for example in the middle of running or turning or sitting.

- The students will make quick life-drawings of the figure with pencil. This exercise proved incredibly useful for students who are ‘perfectionists’ or too slow. They learned to draw fast from observation.

# Session 1+2





## Materials & equipment list

- A4 sheets of paper
- Black felt pens
- Photocopier
- A3 sheets of paper, black, white and coloured pastels, felt pens, coloured pencils
- Video camera and tripod (we had two of each)
- Digital tape for the camera
- Lap-top or computer with simple moving-image editing software (we used an Apple lap-top with iMovie)
- Pencils
- Cartridge paper
- Plasticine
- Fine-gauge wire for building armatures
- Scissors and other small tools to manipulate the plasticine
- Fine nose pliers to cut and bend wire (using tools such as scissors and pliers can be a health and safety issue, and needs to be dealt with according to each individual student)



# Ideas1+2





# Ideas 1+2



- Taking the life-drawings that they made, students are asked to draw their original character in the various poses of body movements they drew from the model.

Using all the drawings so far students are asked to come up with a short sequence they want to film with their characters; using background drawings, or adding other drawn objects. As before, the base-image is stuck to the wall or the floor and the tutor operates the camera every time the student moves the drawings.

#### Examples of animation sequences:

- A cigarette is slowly burning in the mouth of the character whilst he is moving across the background on a skateboard.
- A character's arms and legs are all spread over the background and slowly come together to join the body.

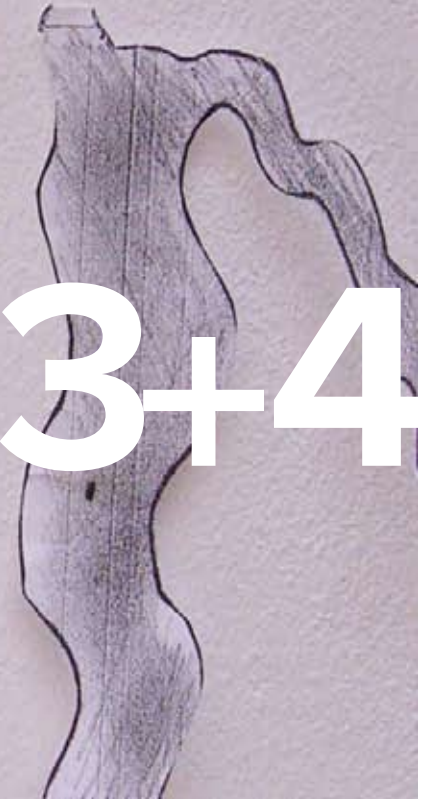
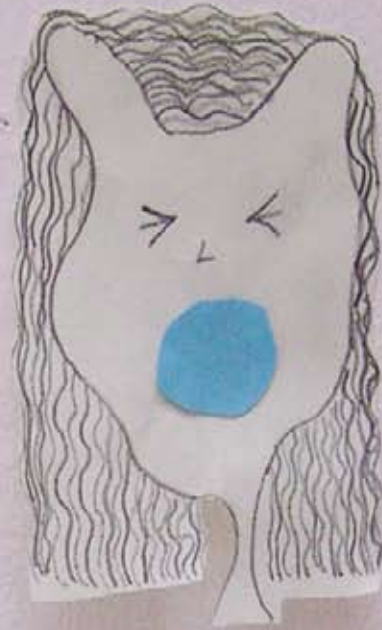
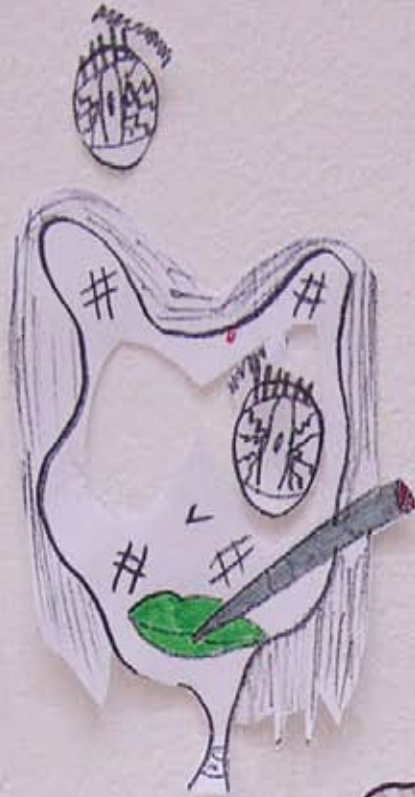
- One student made a snake from plasticine, and frame-by-frame made the snake appear to be going into the character's mouth and out of her belly, by chopping bits out of the snake and joining them back together.
- Simply filming the process of colouring the figure in, so the sequence starts from a blank outline that slowly gets filled with paint.

One student's 2D animation was developed as a coloured drawing, rather than a moving-parts animation. He coloured it in bit-by-bit and so the colours change when the animation is viewed.

Drawing the character in poses from the life-drawings. Developing an animation sequence for the character. Starting the editing process.

# Session 3+4





# Ideas 3+4





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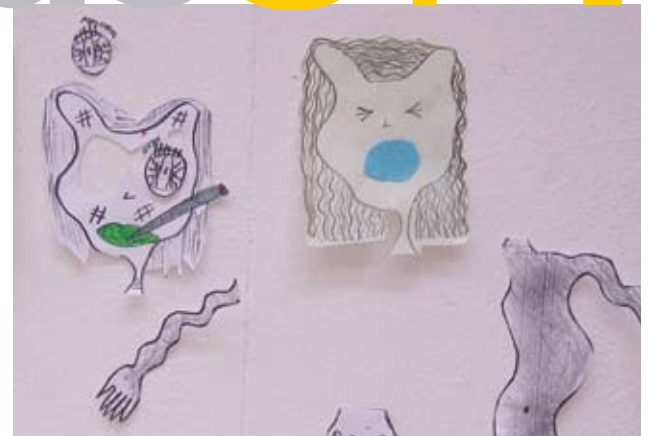


# Ideas 3+4





# Ideas 3+4





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# Ideas 3+4



Sessions four and five may overlap, depending on how fast your students work. At the end of our project, students made 3D characters out of plasticine and made a group animated sequence.

### Editing

Round about the third session the lead tutor started bringing a lap-top into the sessions. We used a simple editing programme (iMovie from Apple Mac) and showed the students some editing processes. Students added filters, effects, and music to their animation. We found our students were very musically literate and were excited to choose favourite background music. One student used a CD of rap that he had composed and performed himself.

### 3D characters

- Using different colours of plasticine, students created 3-dimensional creatures. We tried to stabilise them by using fine-gauge wire or wooden armatures.

Students then built a 3D background for the images from cardboard, for example creating a 'black box' for the characters. It is also possible to build other props from card and plasticine for the characters, for example animals and cars. Our students used their plasticine creatures to make a 3D group animation. We put the animations together with titles and a linking sequence and burned a CD of the final edit for each participant.

Looking at editing processes: adding filters and music to an animation. Progressing to 3D animation: making 3D characters out of plasticine and building a 3D background.

# Session 5





Ideas5





# Ideas5

