

Apoorva Kaushik

Mr. Speice

ISM

26 March, 2018

Shadowing an Animator

Mentor Visit 3

Mentor: Marta Marks

Profession: Head of Artist Management and Recruiting

Location: Reel FX

Date: March 7, 2018

Time: 1:50 PM - 3:35 PM

My third mentor visit took place on March 7, 2018 and was centered around shadowing David Vallone a lead animator at Reel FX. This visit was focussed on learning more about the animation department and how the animation department fits into the pipeline of a large studio. Through this visit I was able to meet with Mr. Vallone and further develop my understanding of how an animator fits into a studio pipeline and the things that are important to their work. Specifically I was able to learn more about an animators work flow in a studio setting and how technology can optimize a workflow. Overall this was a very interesting and helpful mentor visit as I was able to shadow an animator and learn a lot about the role of an animator.

During this visit I was able to learn about the importance of an animators work flow and how it fits into a large studio. Mr.Vallone told me about how the animation department worked with other departments so that the production could be made efficiently. Animators mainly work with both the modeling and rigging departments so that whatever they animate has the ability to move as needed. For example, if a character needs to be able to make a certain expression the rigging department would be responsible for making sure that the character can be manipulated to do so. Furthermore, the modeling department would be responsible for making sure the character could be rigged to make certain expressions. This collaboration is needed so that the animation pipeline functions well and the any production can stay on schedule and have a final cohesive product.

While shadowing Mr.Vallone I also learned about some additional software that can be used in conjunction with Maya in order to gain efficiency and be more comfortable while animating. The first piece of software I learned about was the TweenMachine which is an add on to Maya that is meant to help animators create the inbetweens. An inbetween occurs between two important poses. For example, if a character is standing up from a sitting position two main poses could be the sitting pose and the fully standing pose. However, to make this motion smooth and natural there would be an inbetween where the character is in the middle of standing up. This pose can often be hard to create since it is between two very different poses and will be heavily affected by any type of curve that is being automatically interpolated. In order to start of this pose the tween machine can be used to generate a pose between the two key poses that is a percentage of the two poses. The machine will then be able to interpolate a pose that is completely controlled by the animator rather than the computer interpolation. However, the

machine can not create the entire pose since it will make the animation very uniform and it will look computer driven rather than animator driven. Mr.Vallone stressed the fact that Tween Machine is only good for starting on a pose and that the animator needs to edit the pose so that the animation follows the story and is still true to the creative direction of the shot. Another piece of software Mr.Vallone mentioned was an animation selection picker which breaks down the rig of a character so it can easily be animated. This software simply makes animating simpler since animators can select controls rather than the NURBS Curves of a rigged object. I plan on downloading both of these softwares and experimenting with them in order to make my own workflow more efficient. Additionally, I will be able to incorporate my knowledge of animation and these tools in order to create a high quality animation. In general, these softwares will help me in the future as I will be able to animate more efficiently and my work will stay creative rather than being too technical.

Overall this mentor visit was very interesting and very helpful as I was able to talk to Mr.Vallone who has a lot of experience working in the animation department of a large studio. This experience gave him a different perspective than a lot of the people I spoke to from smaller studios. Specifically the perspective he had on cooperation between departments in a studio was different than a lot of the smaller studios I spoke to since they relied on generalists and had fewer formal departments. Furthermore, Mr.Vallone also told me about a lot of softwares that he used to aid his workflow which was very interesting and will be very helpful for my future work. In general Mr.Vallone was very helpful and had a lot of great information about how the animation department worked with the rest of the studio.