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Module: DB113 Animatic Mashup

Description:

<https://onderwijsso.tue.nl/Activiteiten/Pages/Informatie.aspx?courseCode=DB113&educationYear=2013&educationActivityInstanceId=ee213136-7e6d-4b1e-ba87-f4b3a8c05ee9>

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Introduction:

This module was about how a combination of sketches and cardboard models could be combined to explore, communicate and validate ideas. By means of making an animatic (an animated scenario) we explored how to make sketches more alive. Through cardboard modeling and green screening we learned a way how to quickly prototype the interaction of product containing a moving screen. Using these techniques to explore and explain design possibilities was the main goal of this module. As the combination of techniques was also new for the lecturers the form of the module was an open and explorative.

Process:

This module was divided into 2 weeks, the first one focused on getting familiar with the techniques, the second one to explore the techniques for your own project. The first week we started with creating a simple animatic by using PowerPoint only. We looked at several animatic videos and had to pick a song on which we would make our own animatic. I chose the song banana pancakes of Jack Johnson because this song always gives me a kind of atmosphere wherein words only are not enough. The second day I started exploring how to sketch, I tried normal paper, transparent paper and my tablet. I started animating but quickly went back to drawing to make adjustments. Only later on that day we received an explanation how to sketch, and how to use Photoshop. In my own time I looked at some tutorials for after effects to master this a bit more, and decided to only use my tablet for drawings. The days afterwards we continued on the animatic on the song but also made a movie of an cardboard modeling object. During this week next to working on my own project I spend a lot of time helping others out with after effects to get their projects to a success and look for inspiration.

The Second week I got sick and was not able to do that much. Luckily I was there on the day that we received explanation what actually was the assignment and goal for this week. And I decided to continue with this module during my project as I saw some advantages in exploring interaction possibilities. As this was not Module time anymore I worked simultaneously on my FMP proposal, coaching, E-waste challenge and more. Therefore my reflection and end deliverable was handed in way later than intended and promised to the lecturers.

Analysis:

I will split up the analysis in 2 parts, first week and second week as these where for me 2 different learning activities.

Getting familiar with the skills and concepts:

The module started in my opinion quite chaotic, we immediately had to start creating an animatic after a short introduction of the goal of the module. The goal was to explore the possibility of mashing up the 2 techniques (cardboard modeling, and explorative sketching) into an animatic. This goal itself was reasonable for me, but the setting of the module was in my opinion too much explorative. In this module there was a lot of expertise of people with after effects sketching and cardboard modeling, and I was hoping to learn a lot more from my peer students than I was able to now. Effectively we had 30 minutes of sketching instruction, and 2 hours of cardboard modeling instruction. The rest was self-practice but with constant guidance of peers and lecturers. Of course in a module it is never the main goal to learn only a skill, but if that was the case I would have liked to have some case studies of existing cardboard models and animatic to learn from them. I learned most from looking at the work of other people, and that is where I focused on the most during this week. My end results were not perfect, and had a lot of room for improvement. Although I have some experience in sketching and in after effects, what I learned here was completely new. The learning process might have been very open, and self-directed I learned a lot.

Putting skills and concepts into practice:

As said above I became sick the second week, therefore I decided to continue on the assignment of this module in my own project. I created a set of 8 blocks of cardboard with blue screens. Once I had these finished I thought about shooting several video's to explore the interaction and story line with them. It is a pity that I did not capture my whole process in one animatic as was the assignment, because there were several steps that I needed to rethink the story, and reshoot images. The main problem was with the green screen, and after effects, it took me several iterations with different screens and light setups to get a convincing result. The final result is a complete mash up of animatics, motion tracking, and blue screening. The problem for me was that I had lots of things going on besides this project, I missed moments of reflection on what I was doing with peers and therefore nobody changed my attitude to more exploring and less perfection.

Future:

I have always had affinity with making animations, my drawing skills are not perfect but with the form of animation I can let my idea "speak". I believe learning how to make animations should be a required course in this faculty as we are not classic product designers but opportunity designers who go for the bigger societal challenges. I believe animation is a tool that can help communicating opportunities, and solutions in a much larger scale than only product design. We live in a time that we can sell an idea on the market before it even exists. Looking at video's like phonebloks and from kickstarter I got inspired to take my skills in this medium to the next level. Now in this module I have also learned that forcing myself to design the product in the medium of a movie it forces myself as a designer to rethink the interaction possibilities. I will continue use it as a means of exploration as well as communication. Thank you both for this module.