

Catwalk. Black Cat Crossing

Odd things are going on in Catwalk Avenue

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This CG creation is a humorous animated short film that takes the viewer into a lovely and detailed designed comic city. There he is going to witness a row of odd incidents that are obviously related to Matilda, a quite inconspicuous old lady.

First this Movie was exclusively produced by four communications design students at University of Applied Science and Arts, Hanover during their second semester. Later it evolved into a collaborative project with students of University of Music and Drama, Hanover who reflected the plot's mood and dramaturgy through an atmospheric soundtrack.

The designers task was to create a short film that visualizes a well known phrase or quotation. They chose the phrase "A Black Cat Crossing is Bad Luck". The plot is that old Matilda is walking down a street carrying a black cat with her. This cat is hidden from the viewer until the climatic point when Matilda accidentally drops it. Of course the presence of the cat causes a lot of trouble all the way ...

Short

Scene Example

They were very much interested in creating a unique style that allowed us to combine 2D and 3D elements in an artificial way. Everything should look as if it was made out of paper and have hard edges. They also added some depth of field to let everything look even more like a miniature.

One of the most challenging part of the production was the right timing of all the different elements in this short film. They all needed to happen exactly at the right moment so the viewer could follow the action without losing the "story" line.

In this frame there are 32 animated birds landing on a power supply line which had to bend under their weight in the very moment when their feet would touch it.

To achieve a better kind of work-sharing they used placeholders for all objects that were not yet drawn, modelled or animated. In this case they were able to determine the route the birds would take to reach the power supply line while designer Dennis could already animate their wings. Later they joined all results together.

All the timing was arranged by using motion paths. Every character, vehicle or object that had to cover a certain distance would be attached to such a motion path that it would follow from then on. This technique was very helpful to maintain a certain flexibility during the animation process because it obtained the possibility to determine when an object would reach a certain point on the motion path.

The explosions were also animated that way.

Viewer can really find an incredible high amount of detail in this movie. The traffic signs for example follow the road traffic regulations. The city in the background is subdivided into different districts with different kinds of buildings. There are props everywhere each one created with a lot of love for detail.

Characters and objects that are important to the plot are highlighted. That should make it more easy for the viewer to follow all the action that takes place in such a short amount of time.

They did not use bones or something like that. Instead the most important limbs of the characters were mapped on different image planes. Then creators moved the pivot point to the place where the joint would be and assigned their rotation values to different attributes.

The helicopter crash in the end was actually a moderate kind of final misfortune. Due to our plan to increase the size and oddness of the misfortune step by step they also thought about a possible volcano breakout.

Produced at University of Applied Science and Arts, Hanover
Supervised by Prof. Hanno Baethe and Prof. Markus Fischmann

Designers: Marian Sander, Dennis Beckstein, Patrick Kayser, Manuel Ritter
Soundtrack: Benjamin Hühne, Michael Immer, Lars Ehrhardt

More Information at www.patrickkayser.com, www.mariansander.de, and www.no-name-party.de. Image and Video Courtesy of Marian Sander