# Contents

Acknowledgments xiii

Author xv

Introduction xvii

1 What Are the Possibilities? 1

Creating Magic ..... 1
Silent Films and Beyond ..... 3
Stop Motion and Its Various Faces ..... 6

Chapter 1 touches on the meaning of alternative stop-motion techniques. This chapter highlights key people in history and their different approaches to stop motion. It addresses the possibilities of applying these approaches to animation.

2 Shooting Frame by Frame 17

Technique to Serve the Idea ..... 18
Preproduction ..... 24
Equipment and Setting Up ..... 28

Chapter 2 sets up the study of the frame-by-frame stop-motion approach by addressing preproduction requirements. It discusses the importance of using this approach to serve an idea and the hardware and software needed to execute these techniques.

3 Pixilation 35

Take Advantage of the Medium ..... 36
Who Is the Director? ..... 38

Humor ..... 42
Shooting on Twos, Fours, and More ..... 45
Variations on Pixilation ..... 47
The Moving Camera ..... 54

Chapter 3 digs into how pixilation works and the best way to take advantage of it. Some basic but important principles of animation that apply to pixilation are reviewed.

PRO-File Juan Pablo Zaramella 58

4 Time Lapse 63

Expand Your Awareness ..... 64
The Intervalometer ..... 68
Understand Your Subject ..... 69
Contrast ..... 70
Shutter Speeds ..... 71
Time-Lapse Rates and Formulas ..... 72
Time Lapse and Pixilation ..... 73
Motion Control ..... 74

Chapter 4 explores the well-established technique of time lapse, which has little written about it. Technical, conceptual, and practical issues are discussed in this chapter, with an explanation of the best way to get effective results. Cameras, equipment, formulas, and software are revealed.

5 Cinematography, Lighting, and Composition 77

Cameras and Lenses ..... 78
Camera Controls ..... 84
Animated Lighting ..... 88
Compositional Beginnings and Ends ..... 93

Chapter 5 reviews many filmmaking techniques, principles, and concepts that apply to live-action and stop-motion puppet animation but are geared toward alternative stop-motion techniques. There are many adjustments to these approaches to cinematography that need to be altered in order to get the most from pixilation, time lapse, and downshooting.

6 Objects, People, and Places 95

People, Objects, and Rigging ..... 96
Organic and Nonorganic Objects ..... 98
Shooting Safe Zones ..... 100

Chapter 6 studies the subject in front of the camera. Certain materials and uses of materials work better

than others for specific alternative animation approaches. This chapter also discusses the role of the animator or actor as the animated object.

PRO-File Keith Loutit 105

7 The Multiplane Downshooter 109

A Stand of Your Own ..... 109
Lighting for the Downshooter ..... 112
Clay, Sand, and Dimensional Objects ..... 116
Cutouts ..... 118
Backgrounds ..... 122

Chapter 7 covers the third general area of alternative stop-motion techniques: downshooting. This chapter highlights the most popular techniques and suggests additional ones. This chapter includes diagrams and explanations for making your own stand and getting the most from it.

8 A Sense of Drama 129

Live Action and Single Framing ..... 130
Subtle and Broad Performance ..... 132
Reference Film and the Cartoon ..... 136
Look in the Eyes ..... 137

Chapter 8 suggests various ways to add drama and interest to your non-puppet stop-motion films. These approaches include animation principles, composition, lenses, and performance among other references and tips.

9 Rhythm and Flow 139

Let the Music Lead ..... 140
Patterns of Movement ..... 143
The Beat Goes On ..... 145

Chapter 9 brings in the element of sound and music and discusses their important relationship to picture. This is similar to other techniques in filmmaking, but specific exercises are suggested. This chapter describes frame-by-frame matching of picture and sound and includes information about breaking down music for animation.

PRO-File Corrie Francis Parks 147

10 Collage (The Digital Advantage) 153

Planning a Collage ..... 154
Match Lighting and Rotoscoping ..... 155

Clean, Clean, Clean ..... 159
The Chroma Key ..... 162

Chapter 10 provides a more technical explanation of how to expand upon footage that has been shot with alternative forms of stop motion. This chapter covers postproduction techniques and software used in this area.

11 Massaging Frames in the Edit 165
Working the Frames ..... 166
Impossible Perfection ..... 169
File Management ..... 171
Playback ..... 171

Chapter 11 discusses the editing process in relationship to these alternative techniques. Preproduction and postproduction editing can make all the difference in the refinement of a film. This chapter discusses the use of editing software and the various details and principles involved.

12 Exposure to the Market 175
Now What? ..... 176
Record and Archive the Process ..... 177
Websites and the Internet ..... 178
Film Festivals ..... 179
Ownership ..... 182
A Few Thoughts ..... 184

Chapter 12 concludes the book with a discussion of how filmmakers can capitalize on their alternative frame-by-frame work. Websites, documenting the process, and festivals are a few of the topics covered in this important final chapter.

PRO-File James (Jamie) Caliri and Dyami Caliri 188

13 Exercise 1 The Traveling Head 193

14 Exercise 2 Rotating Human Subjects 199

15 Exercise 3 2D/3D Handball 205

16 Exercise 4 Animated Starburst Light Loop 211

17 Exercise 5 Dropping Heads (Cutout) 217

18 Exercise 6 3-2-1 Countdown 223

19 Exercise 7 Love at First Sight 229

20 Exercise 8 Cycles 235

21 Exercise 9 The Cartoon Punch 239

Index 243