

Reflection of Project: NHS Prostate Cancer

The reason of choosing the NHS case as the beginning project of the year 2 is because of the past experience of my relative passed away due to cancer. It is crucial to notice people to go to diagnose in the first stage, also inform people the symptoms of prostate cancer and examine themselves. Besides, it is important to find the style of presenting the work. Based on the information, prostate cancer mostly happened to the men over 50. That is why I think stop-motion will be a suitable medium for this project. It is aim to catch their attention and make them feel familiar. Stop-motion is a way of mixing reality and fantasy, also it is one of the traditional ways of making animation. It is a joyful thing that found a group member also wanting to do stop-motion.

Before starting the project, I was struggling with choosing NHS or GSMD. The hesitating part is because of it is NHS's project, which is important to show the professional aspect of the centre, but also need to bring out creative ways of demonstration because we are animation's students. They are two completely different aspects of the topic. However, when I dived into the NHS project, I learned a lot of things through this experience.

In the beginning, it was hard to form the story's structure and create the characters. And for the characters' design, it was difficult at the moment. I was enjoying creating the characters, but also need to be very careful about building up the facial feature. Trying not to offend anyone and not to set boundary of stereotype. Therefore, we thought it might be a good idea to create a non-human shape characters. However, after Sam saw an article about there was lots of animations

doing non-human characters for black people. We decided to create real-life human as our characters because we should not scare of making mistakes and decide to do the same thing with other people had already done.

For camera shooting, one scene is about the character thinks about his grandfather and father got prostate cancer and his father got treated, then lived for another 30 years. However, the clients mentioned about they hope 'lived for another 30 years' will not appear on the film when they gave other groups opinion because they do not want to be specific. So we decided to cut it off, and used indirect way to present this scene. At the beginning, the character will look at the photo, and the grandfather and the father will wave their hands and smile to the viewers. After that, the camera will focus on the character's face, he will drop a tear and smile. The most important part of this is to keep the atmosphere not too depressed, although the character is crying but the viewers can see his tear is for the gratitude of happiness.

When we did the final client briefing, the clients pointed out the poster in the setting. They asked us to remove it because they concerned about copyright. However, for the previous presentation, this doubt has not raised.

During the design process, I did the research of real human and animations, using other people's character design as an example while observing on real human and create the characters in my own way. During this experience, I learned how to capture facial feature. Also, because of we kept in mind that 'not to offend anyone', I started observing people walking on the road. It is a way of improving observing skill, and due to privacy right I cannot take photos, so it also trains me to remember the feature quicker.

For camera shooting and puppet manipulating, the point is to utilise camera angle to build up a different atmosphere. In the photographic scene as I mentioned before, we found out if we just moved the camera and zoomed in, the visual will be like the camera was falling off. In the meantime, we also thought about using after effect or Premier to zoom in, but it was unnatural. Therefore, we asked Chris to borrow the camera equipment to apply for this and try to create interactive scenes

between the viewers and the film. It is a way of learning how to use different camera angle and lighting to construct the scene. In the meantime, it is also a valuable point of using the puppet to create emotion. Through this process, it is important not to move too many things at the same time. When everything started moving, the scene would be disordered. It was also a reason that we were redoing lots of scenes after we checked the shots.

Because of the poster issue, how to discuss with the clients becomes a lesson for me. Luckily, one of the classmate knew how to use software to remove the poster behind, or we need to redo the scene without the poster again. And this may also happen in the future, the most vital thing is to correct everything with the clients, but also remember to prepare a plan B if they need to change anything.

From this experience, I learned a variety of things. Not only acquired the skill of how to have an efficient conversation with the clients, also learned how to negotiate with the group member when we encountered the diverse opinions from each other. The respectful lesson also appears on the character design. For the very first long project of stop-motion, I realised the preparation before shooting would be a long process.

In the future, if I am going to make a stop-motion project, I will move the preparation more forward. In case when the shooting starts, making the setting is going on at the same pace.

Because of this project, I found I was rather enjoying of making props by clay. Therefore, for the next project, I will use this technique to apply to the work, also try other material for making puppets and props to create different textures.