The 5 Types of Animation – A Beginner’s Guide

What Is This Guide About?

The purpose of this guide is to, well, guide you through the intricacies of becoming an animator.

This guide is not about leaning how to animate, but only to breakdown the five different types (or genres) of animation available to you, and what you'll need to start animating. Best software, best schools, and more.

Styles covered:

1. Traditional animation
2. 2D Vector based animation
3. 3D computer animation
4. Motion graphics
5. Stop motion
I hope that reading this will push you to take the first step in pursuing your dream of making animation.

No more excuses. All you need to know is right here.

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**Traditional Animator (2D, Cel, Hand Drawn)**

Traditional animation, sometimes referred to as cel animation, is one of the older forms of animation, in it the animator draws every frame to create the animation sequence. Just like they used to do in the old days of Disney. If you’ve ever had one of those flip-books when you were a kid, you’ll know what I mean. Sequential drawings screened quickly one after another create the illusion of movement.
“There’s always room out there for the hand-drawn image. I personally like the imperfection of hand drawing as opposed to the slick look of computer animation.”

– Matt Groening

About Traditional Animation

In traditional animation, animators will draw images on a transparent piece of paper fitted on a peg using a colored pencil, one frame at the time. Animators will usually do test animations with very rough characters to see how many frames they would need to draw for the action to be properly perceived. Timing is extremely important in traditional animation, since the frames has to fit the soundtracks exactly, as such the animation process of traditional animation can be lengthy and costly. Once the clean-up and in-between are complete, the production would step over to photographing each individual frame.

History

The history of animation can be stretched as far back as 5,000BC, if you are lenient on the techniques of the art form, found on a pottery bowl in Iran that depicts a goat leaping.

The techniques of animation that we are more familiar with, however, first appeared in 1650 as The Magic Lantern, by the Venetian inventor Giovanni Fontana. Whether or not he truly is the inventor is still highly debated. A simple lantern with a strip of animation sliding past a crude lens, illuminated
by a single candle, was the humankind's first introduction to projection. Which was primarily used to scare people witless with images of devilish creatures running on the wall, and generally play on people's superstitions.

Many more inventions came along, such as the Phenakistoscope and Zoetrope, but the first projection of animation on a screen came in 1877 with the Praxinoscope, invented by the French science teacher Charles-Émile Reynaud. He then later invented the Théâtre Optique in 1888, which he then used to stage the first public screening of animation at the Musée Grévin in Paris in 1892.

There he screened the animated short Pauvre Pierrot, which is notable for being the first time film perforations was used, and also for having the animation drawn directly on the frames instead of photographed.

The first film recorded on a filmstrip was made in 1900, which also included animated sequences where J. Stuart Blackton draws a man on a aisle holding a bottle of wine, and then the man grabs the bottle. Blackton then followed it up five years later with the Humoureous Phases of Funny Faces, which cemented J. Stuart Blackton as the forefather of American animation.

Stepping to France in 1908, we saw the world's first fully animated film, made by the French artist Émile Cohl. The film was called Fantasmagorie, which contained stick figures encountering various inanimate objects that they interact with.

As the 1910's rolled around, studio produced animations came into fruition with the newspaper cartoonist Winsor McCay, who directed several animated shorts. As such, during the 1910's animations we're then nicknamed 'Cartoons'. They were mainly produced for cinemas to as pre-show attractions before the feature film. John Randolph Bray and Earl Hurd was the most successful animation producers of the decade, and was responsible for patenting the cel animation process, which would come to dominate the animation industry for most of the century.
Nowadays, traditional animation is being done mostly on computers by using a tablet (such as the Wacom Cintiq.) It is usually animated on 12 frames per second, with occasional faster actions animated on 24 frames per second.

Software

Photoshop

Photoshop is sometimes skipped when considering an animation software, but in reality its powerful drawing capabilities makes it one of the best choices for frame by frame Disney-style animation. Photoshop’s timeline functionality allows animating by drawing frame by frame, using onion skinning and is incredibly robust.

Supported platforms:

- Windows XP, 7, 8
- Mac OS X

Learn more... (http://www.photoshop.com/)

TVPaint

A french animation software, TVPaint is the all-in-one 2D animation software you’ll ever need. It’s more robust than Photoshop, but also much pricier. Great for professionals and studios.

Supported platforms:

- Windows XP, Vista, 7
- Mac OS X
- Linux
Toon Boom

Toon Boom offers a user friendly set of animation programs with advanced rigging systems, effects and camera tools. It is vector based, which means you’ll get that flash-look that I, personally, am not a fan of.

They offer different packages for different prices. The packages are Toon Boom Studio, Animate, Animate Pro and Harmony. For hobbyists animators I would suggest the Toon Boom Studio package, which is not very expensive but still packs a great set of features.

**Supported platforms:**

- Windows 7, 8
- Mac OS X

If you want to learn more about character animation in Toon Boom, check out our Toon Boom Animation Course.

Anime Studio

Anime Studio is a complete 2D animation package that can produce traditional animation, cutout animation and anime style animation.
It have a complex bone system for complex rigging and even supports the Unity engine.

It offers two packages, the Debut and the Pro (priced at $49 and $299 respectively.) The debut is for hobbyists and beginners while the pro offers working professionals its most advanced tools.

Supported platforms:

- Windows 7, 8
- Mac OS X

Learn more... (http://anime.smithmicro.com/anime-pro.html)

**Schools**

**Sheridan College**

*School information:* Sheridan College was founded in 1967 as The School of Graphic Design at a converted public school until it was eventually moved.

The Canadian animation industry was virtually non-existent during the 60’s and 70’s, but President Porter decided to start a course in Classical Animation at the college in 1968 in hopes of getting trained animators.

- **Location:** Toronto, Canada
- **Courses:** Animation, Computer Animation, Digital Creature Animation, Visual Effects
- **Tuition cost:** $9,356.05 (Canadian dollars) per semester
- **Notable alumni:** Dean DeBlois (Disney animator), Dan Lee (Pixar animator), John Kricfalusi (Creator of Ren and Stimpy show), Dan Antonucci (Creator of Ed, Edd ‘n, Eddy)
Gobelins

School information: Founded by the Parisian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 1964, but is best known for the Cinema Department of Animation, which was founded by Pierre Ayma in 1974 when the first Asterix and Obelix feature film was being produced by Studio Idefix.

The studio didn’t have enough animators for the project, so they asked Gobelins to start an animator training program.

- **Location:** Paris, France
- **Courses:** Character Animation and Animated Film Making, 3D Character Animation
- **Tuition cost:** €6,350 First year, €6,450 Second year, €6,550 Third year
- **Notable alumni:** Pierre Coffin (Director of Despicable Me), Bibo Bergeron (Director of A Monster in Paris)
- **Start of Academic year:** Beginning of September

Gobelins is opening a Masters program for BA students next year.

- **BA Animated Film Making:** 80 students
- **Notable graduate film:** Oktapodi (Julien Bocabeille, Francois-Xavier Chanioux, Olivier Delabarre, Thierry Marchand, Quentin Marmier, Emud Mokhberi, 2007)
  Nominated for Academy Award, 2009
CalArts

School information: CalArts was founded in 1961 by Walt Disney, when Chouinard Art Institute and the Los Angeles Conservatory of Music merged together due to financial difficulties.

Nelbert Chouinard, founder of the Chouinard Art Institute, started a professional relationship with Walt Disney in 1929, and agreed to train animators for him on a pay-later basis as Disney was struggling financially.

- **Location:** Valencia, California, USA
- **Courses:** Film/Video (Includes animation)
- **Tuition cost:** $41,700 Full-time enrolment
- **Notable alumni:** Tim Burton (Disney animator and Director), Brad Bird (Director, Disney and Pixar), John Lasseter (Pixar), Jennifer Lee & Chris Buck (Directors of Frozen)
- **Start of Academic year:** September
- **Notable graduate film:** Trust & Estates (Jeanette Bonds, 2013) Official Selection, Melbourne International Animation Festival 2013

Read more... [http://calarts.edu/](http://calarts.edu/)

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2D Animation (Vector Based)
This style has become very popular in the last decade with the increasing amount of people doing it due to the accessibility of the technology. Flash is cheap and easy to use. Such are other vector based animation programs. 2D animation can be done in After Effects too.

“Animation is different from other parts. Its language is the language of caricature. Our most difficult job was to develop the cartoon’s unnatural but seemingly natural anatomy for humans and animals.”

– Walt Disney

About 2D Animation

2D animation is mostly referred to any key framed animation that is produced on a flat surface, but can also refer to vector animations that adopts the techniques of traditional animation.
Cel animation is often most thought of when talking about 2D animation, and the process is often lengthy and complicated. The technique is the same as in traditional animation, but when the animations and in-betweens are done, the frames are brought over to a process called ink-and-paint.

There the people in charge of inking and painting the frames, places a plastic sheet of celluloid on top of the transparent paper containing the animated characters, and then proceed to copy the frames on the celluloid. This way frames can overlay each other because of the complete transparency of celluloid, which makes it easier to place multiple characters and props on top of a background.

Vector based animations, meaning computer generated 2D animations, uses the exact same techniques as traditional animation, but the benefits is the lack of physical objects needed to make traditional 2D animations apart from a computer.

**History**

In the late 90's, due to bandwidth restrictions, many artists started using Flash to distribute short (and very limited) animations on the web, which were usually very small in size.

That limitation gave Flash the mass appeal that made it such a huge success among independent artists and animators, which lasted to today.

Flash really skyrocketed in 2005 when it was purchased by Adobe. When YouTube started growing, it completely exploded, and today you can find thousands of Flash animations there.

The reason 2D was put in a separate category in a different category is that in addition to the option of animating frame by frame, an animator has the option of creating rigs for the characters and then moving the body parts individually instead of drawing the character over and over.
After Effects allows you to create complex rigs for animation, or use the puppet tool to drag and move body parts of a drawn character.

These flexibilities give beginners more options when approaching animation, especially if drawing isn’t their strong suit, unlike traditional animation, when drawing skills are mandatory.

**Software**

**Adobe Flash**

Probably the most popular 2D animation software out there. Flash has a long lineage of animation making, even before it was purchased by Adobe. Flash is vector based, which I don’t personally like, but it’s very intuitive to work with (as most Adobe’s products are) and relatively cheap.

*Supported platforms:*

- Windows XP, 7, 8
- Mac OS X

Learn more… (http://helpx.adobe.com/flash/topics-cs6.html)

(https://www.toonboom.com/animation-software)

If you want to learn more about character animation in Flash, check out our Flash Animation Course (https://www.bloopanimation.com/flash-animation/)

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Adobe After Effects
An interesting choice for 2D animation. After effects gives you great control when creating rigs for 2D, and using the puppet tool is very convenient and intuitive. I find After Effects to be a great choice since I'm very comfortable with Adobe's work environment, but that's my personal preference. Since it's also an editing software, it's great to be able to edit and color correct in the same place you animate.

Supported platforms:

- Windows XP, 7, 8
- Mac OS X

Learn more... (http://www.adobe.com/products/aftereffects.html)

(https://www.toonboom.com/animation-software)

If you want to learn more about character animation in After Effects, check out our After Effects Animation Course (https://www.bloopanimation.com/after-effects-animation).

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- Mac OS X

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Schools

Full Sail University

School information: Founded in 1979 by Jon Phelps in Ohio, before the University was moved to Orlando in 1980, under the name of Full Sail Recording Workshop. Focused on video and film production, but added in animation when the University moved to Orange County in 1989.

The University started offering online degree programs in 2007.

- **Location:** Orange County, Florida. USA
- **Courses:** Computer animation
- **Tuition cost:** $14,762 per semester
- **Notable alumni:** Culley Bunker (Lead visual effects artist), Chance Glasco (Senior animator)
- **Start of Academic year:** Second week of November

Read more... (http://www.fullsail.edu/)

Digital Tutors
School information: Founded in 2000 as an online tutoring program, focusing on giving lessons via streaming. Currently has 18 tutors from around the world.

- Location: Oklahoma, USA
- Courses: 3D animation, Visual Effects
- Tuition cost: $499 (American dollars) for a 12 month subscription

Read more... (http://www.digitaltutors.com/)

Lynda

School information: Lynda.com is a video tutorials website that offers a ton of online training for pretty much any software out there (including After Effects and Flash.)

- Tuition cost: $250 (American dollars) for a 12 month subscription

Read more... (http://www.lynda.com/)

3D Animation (CGI, Computer Animation)
3D animation works in a completely different way than traditional animation. They both require an understanding of the same principles of movement and composition, but the technical skill set is very different for each task. While in the past you had to be an amazing draftsman to be an animator, with computer animation that is not the case. 3D animation is more similar to playing with puppets rather than drawing.

“Computers don’t create computer animation any more than a pencil creates pencil animation. What creates computer animation is the artist.”
– John Lasseter

About 3D Animation

3D animation, also referred to as CGI animation, is made by generating images using computer graphics that create a series of images that forms an animation. CGI means Computer Generated Images, so it can easily mean both static and dynamic images using computer graphics.
The animation techniques of 3D animation has a lot of similarities with stop-motion animation, as they both deal with animating and posing models, and still conforms to the frame-by-frame approach of 2D animation, but is a lot more controllable since it is all digital feedback.

Instead of drawn or constructed with clay, characters in 3D animations are digitally modeled on screen, and then fitted with a ‘skeleton’ that allows animators to animate the models for their use.

Animation is done by posing the models in certain key frames, which the computer will then calculate and perform a ‘tweening’ animation that is interpreted by the computer in each frame between the key frames.

When the modeling and/or animation is complete, the computer has to render each frame individually, which unlike 2D or stop-motion animations, can be very time consuming depending on the quality of the images and the quantity of polygons in the scene.

a 3D animator will spend most of their time looking at curves that represent the movement of different body parts over time.

Another big difference with 3D animation is that unlike traditional animation, the character’s body parts are always present and should be taken to consideration.

I'll explain:

When animating in 2D, the character has to be drawn from every frame. When the character is viewed from the side, half of its body isn't shown and thus isn’t drawn. It technically doesn't exist. It's drawn on a flat page and there isn't really more of the character other than what the animator draws.

With 3D though, the character’s body parts always exist in the shot. Even when one hand isn't visible, it's still there. That adds some work for the animator, since we need to be aware of the entire character at all times.
The last major difference with 3D animation is the frame rate. Traditional animators usually work on 2’s which means they draw a new drawing every 2 frames, and thus having one drawing last for 2 frames. With 3D animation, however, the motion is always smooth (except for stylized pieces which intentionally try to look different) and having a character stop completely looks like a mistake.

Even when the character is standing still there should always be some sign of life or gentle movement to keep the illusion of life, this is something 2D animation can get away with much more easily than 3D animation.

**History**

3D animation has definitely revolutionized how the animation industry looks today, and it was all started with Toy Story (1995, Lasseter.) Computer generated animations wasn’t completely new at the time, since it had already been often used in TV shows, movies and computer games, but Toy Story set the bar by being the first feature-length computer animation, leading to a whole new industry and market.

3D animation also lead to studios trying to achieve photo-realistic animations by combining high-level computer processing with advance motion-capture. This has led to films such as Final Fantasy: Spirits Within (2001, Sakaguchi) and The Polar Express (2004, Zemeckis), with very mixed results. This kind of animation became rarer as the decade passed, as the process is a lot more complicated than key framed 3D animations, but has passed on to feature film VFX.

**Software**

*Autodesk Maya*
Maya is the industry standard 3D software, used in most large studios. Maya, Softimage and 3D Max are all a part of Autodesk and work quite similarly. Choosing one is a matter of personal and technical preference.

**Supported platforms:**

- Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8
- Mac OS X
- Linux

[Learn more...](http://www.autodesk.com/products/maya/overview)

(https://www.toonboom.com/animation-software)

If you want to learn more about character animation in Maya, check out our [Maya Animation Course](https://www.bloopanimation.com/maya-animation/).

**Autodesk Softimage**

**From Autodesk:** Softimage character animation software offers high-performance creative tools for artists and technical directors working in 3D game development and visual effects.

**Supported platforms:**

- Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8
- Linux

[Learn more...](http://www.autodesk.com/products/softimage/overview)
Autodesk 3DS Max

From Autodesk: 3DS Max provides a comprehensive 3D modeling, animation, rendering, and compositing solution for games, film, and motion graphics artists. It has tools for crowd generation, particle animation, and perspective matching, as well as support for Microsoft® DirectX 11® shaders.

Supported platforms:

- Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8
- Mac OS X

Learn more… (http://www.autodesk.com/products/3ds-max/overview)

Cinema 4D

Cinema 4D is a motion graphics artist's best friend. It's a 3D program for the After Effects user. Very intuitive, and works directly with After Effects without the need to render first. This would not however be my first choice for serious 3D production since it was designed from the ground up with motion graphics in mind.

Supported platforms:

- Windows Vista, 7, 8
- Mac OS X

Learn more… (https://www.maxon.net/en-us/products/cinema-4d/overview/)

Blender

I don’t have much experience with Blender, but its main advantage is that it is open source, works on multiple platforms and free for download.
From Blender: Blender provides a broad spectrum of modeling, texturing, lighting, animation and video post-processing functionality in one package. Through its open architecture, Blender provides cross-platform interoperability, extensibility, an incredibly small footprint, and a tightly integrated workflow.

**Supported platforms:**

- Windows XP, Vista, 7
- Mac OS X
- Linux
- FreeBSD

Learn more... ([http://www.blender.org/](http://www.blender.org/))

([https://www.toonboom.com/animation-software](https://www.toonboom.com/animation-software))

If you want to learn more about character animation in Blender, check out our Blender Animation Course ([https://www.bloopenimation.com/blender-animation/](https://www.bloopenimation.com/blender-animation/)).

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**Schools**

**School of Visual Arts (SVA)**

**School information:** Founded in 1947 by Silas H. Rhodes and Burne Hogarth as the Cartoonist and Illustrators School, and then renamed in 1956. Part of the Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design as one of 36 leading art colleges in the United States.
The school offered its first degree in 1972, and it’s first master’s degree in 1983 in Fine Arts for painting, drawing and sculpture.

- **Location:** New York, NY, USA
- **Courses:** Animation, Computer Animation and Visual Effects
- **Tuition cost:** $16,780 per semester + Department fees (Animation: $900, Computer Animation and visual effects: $1,340)
- **Notable alumni:** Bill Plympton (Academy nominated animator), John.R.Dilworth (creator of Courage the Cowardly Dog), Pres Antonio Romanillos (supervising animator at Disney and Dreamworks animation)
- **Start of Academic year:** September
- **BFA Animation:** 270 students
- **BFA Computer Art, Computer Animation & Visual Effects:** 325 students
- **Notable graduate film:** Kiwi! (Dony Permedi, 2006)

Read more... ([http://www.sva.edu/](http://www.sva.edu/))

**Ringling College of Art and Design**

**School information:** Founded in Sarasota, Florida, by Dr. Ludd M. Spivey as an art school in 1931, and as a branch of the Southern College in Orlando. Became an independent college in 1933.

Qualified as a full degree-granting institution in 1971. Ringling College is named after John Ringling, a circus magnate, who was interested in funding an art college, but wasn’t interested in Southern College as he wanted to establish his own at his wife’s museum.

However, he lost his museum and residence in bankruptcy, and it was all given to the state just before he died. Ringling’s nephew made a deal with Southern College to open an art college in Sarasota, and it was named School of Fine and Applied Art of the John and Mable Ringling Art Museum.
• **Location:** Sarasota, Florida. USA  
• **Courses:** Computer Animation  
• **Tuition cost:** $18,400 per semester  
• **Notable alumni:** Aaron Blaise (Director of Disney's Brother Bear)  
• **Start of Academic year:** August  
• **Notable graduate film:** Dia De Los Muertos (Ashley Graham, Kate Reynolds, and Lindsey St. Pierre, 2013) Won Student Academy Award, 2013

Read more... (http://www.ringling.edu/)

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**University of California (UCLA)**

**School information:** UCLA is a public University that was founded in 1919 as part of the University of California system, comprised of three universities in the state.

The animation program was established in 1948 by William Shull, a Disney animator, as just a group of various animation classes. When Dan MacLaughlin became head of the department in 1971, he started the MFA program for animation where he worked as the sole faculty member for years.

• **Location:** Los Angeles, California. USA  
• **Courses:** Animation  
• **Tuition cost:** $33,193 per academic year  
• **Notable alumni:** David Silverman (Animator, Producer on The Simpsons), Hoyt Yeatman (VFX supervisor, won Academy Award for The Abyss)  
• **Start of Academic year:** February  
• **MFA Animation Notable graduate film:** Her Lion’s Jump (Régis Camargo, 2013)

Read more... (http://www.ucla.edu/)
Rhode Island School of Design (RISD)

School information: RISD was founded by the group The Centennial Women in 1877. The Centennial Women was a group formed to exhibit creations made by women from design schools, patents from female entrepreneurs, and books written exclusively by women, at the 1876 Centennial Exposition.

The group raised $10,000, and by the end of the expo had over $1,675 left, which they decided to invest into founding Rhode Island School of Design.

- **Location:** Providence, Rhode Island, USA
- **Courses:** Film/Animation/Video
- **Tuition cost:** $44,284 per academic year
- **Notable alumni:** Seth MacFarlane (Creator of Family Guy) Bryan Konietzko & Michael Dante DiMartino (Creators of Avatar: The Last Airbender), Lance Wilder (Animator, The Simpsons)
- **Start of Academic year:** Second week of September
- **Film/Animation/Video:** 50 students per year
- **Notable graduate film:** Inner Tubes (Tim Beckhardt, 2009) Screened at Ottawa International Animation Festival and Boston Underground Festival

[Read more...](http://www.risd.edu/)

Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD)

School information: Founded in 1978 by Paula S. Wallace with her husband and parents, taking out a $200,000 loan to build the first educational building, by renovating the Savannah Volunteer Guard Armory.
The university first opened in 1979 with only 71 students. Currently the University has over 11,000 students.

- **Location:** Savannah, Georgia, USA. Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Hong Kong, Guangdong, China. Lacoste, Vaucluse, France.
- **Courses:** Animation, Visual Effects
- **Tuition cost:** (In order of locations) $33,795 (American dollars), $261,911 (Hong Kong dollars), $10,983 (American dollars)
- **Notable alumni:** Mir Zafar Ali (Visual effects specialist, The Day After Tomorrow)
- **Start of Academic year:** September
- **Notable graduate film:** Legacy (Adam Floeck, 2013)

Read more... (http://www.scad.edu/)

**University of Southern California (USC)**

**School information:** USC was founded in 1880 by judge Robert M. Widney, who managed to acquire donations from Ozro Childs, John Gately Downey, and Isaias W. Hellman; three very influential figures at the time.

Originally operated in affiliation with the Methodist Church, but became officially secular in 1952. It has the largest amount of international students in the United States, and enrolls over 18,000 domestic/international students each year.

Has its own IMAX theater and research lab, which opened this year.

- **Location:** Los Angeles, California. USA
- **Courses:** Animation and Digital Arts
- **Tuition cost:** $48,347 for two semesters
**Notable alumni:** George Lucas (Creator of Lucas Arts, Industrial Light and Magic, Star Wars), Eric Hanson (Digital Designer/Lead VFX artist, The Fifth Element), Ray Harryhausen (Stop-motion and Special Effects animator, Jason and the Argonauts)

**Start of Academic year:** Last week of August

**BA Animation and Digital Arts:** 75 students

**MFA Animation and Digital Arts:** 45 students

**Notable graduate film:** Ladies Knight (Joe Rothenberg, 2012)
Nominated Best Animated Student Short at Annie Awards.

Read more... ([http://www.usc.edu/](http://www.usc.edu/))

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**Animation Mentor**

**School information:** Founded in 2005 by Bobby Beck, Shawn Kelly, and Carlos Baena, the last two employed as animators at Industrial Light and Magic.

- **Location:** Emeryville, California. USA
- **Courses:** Classic animation, Character animation, Creature animation
- **Tuition cost:** $18,928 for Full 18 Month Program.
- **Notable alumni:** Siggurdur Orri Thorhannesson ( Animator, Guardians of the Galaxy), Jude Brownbill (Animator, Pixar)
- **Start of Academic year:** Every Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter
- **Animation Mentor courses:** 5,000 students (Total)
- **Notable graduate film:** Greed (Alli Sadegiani, 2011)

Read more... ([http://www.animationmentor.com/](http://www.animationmentor.com/))
While still considered a form of animation, motion graphics is a rather different from the other types of animation. Mostly because unlike the other types on our list it is not character or story driven. It’s the art of creatively moving graphic elements or texts, usually for commercial or promotional purposes.

“I can calculate the motion of heavenly bodies, but not the madness of people.”

- Isaac Newton

About Motion Graphics

It’s the art of creatively moving graphic elements or texts, usually for commercial or promotional purposes. Think animated logos, explainer videos, app commercials, television promos or even film opening titles.
The skills for motion graphics don't necessarily translate to the other types of animation, since they don't require knowledge of body mechanics or acting, but they do have some attributes in common such as understanding good composition and the all important camera motion.

The process of creating Motion Graphics depends on the programs that are used, since video editing softwares often have different UI or settings, but the process is the same. Motion Graphics usually involves animating images, texts or video clips using key framing that are tweened to make a smooth motion between frames. These programs also supports scripts that will automatically alter the animations to various preferences that are required. Motion graphics also often uses particle systems to create various effects. It is basically points in 3D and 2D space that is shown as texts, images or visual effects. The particle effects are made with emitters that digitally produces lights, surfaces, or a disassembling animation.

Motion Graphics are simply flat-based images or 3D objects that are given the illusion of motion, accompanied with music or sound effects. This technique is often used for multimedia projects.

History

The term Motion Graphics came about computer based video editing, as programs like Adobe After Effects and Apple Motion made editing images definitely a lot more easier, since previously, before the advent of computer editing, it was a very time-consuming process, which made it limited for high-budget productions, but in present time it is highly popular for commercials, news shows and internet videos.

Software

Adobe After Effects
After effects is the most common software for motion graphics. It is the software that streamlined motion graphics and made it so much easier to make.

It’s new integration with Cinema4D made it the ultimate tool to make the best looking videos (with or without 3D) for any commercial use.

**Supported platforms:**

- Windows XP, 7, 8
- Mac OS X

Learn more… ([http://www.adobe.com/products/aftereffects.html](http://www.adobe.com/products/aftereffects.html))

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- **Start of Academic year**: September
- **BFA Animation**: 270 students
- **BFA Computer Art, Computer Animation & Visual Effects**: 325 students
- **Notable graduate film**: Kiwi! (Dony Permedi, 2006)

Read more... (http://www.sva.edu/)
Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD)

**School information:** Founded in 1978 by Paula S. Wallace with her husband and parents, taking out a $200,000 loan to build the first educational building, by renovating the Savannah Volunteer Guard Armory.

The university first opened in 1979 with only 71 students. Currently the University has over 11,000 students.

- **Location:** Savannah, Georgia, USA. Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Hong Kong, Guangdong, China. Lacoste, Vaucluse, France.
- **Courses:** Animation, Visual Effects
- **Tuition cost:** (In order of locations) $33,795 (American dollars), $261,911 (Hong Kong dollars), $10,983 (American dollars)
- **Notable alumni:** Mir Zafar Ali (Visual effects specialist, The Day After Tomorrow)
- **Start of Academic year:** September
- **Notable graduate film:** Legacy (Adam Floeck, 2013)

[Read more...](http://www.scad.edu/)

Full Sail University

**School information:** Founded in 1979 by Jon Phelps in Ohio, before the University was moved to Orlando in 1980, under the name of Full Sail Recording Workshop. Focused on video and film production, but added in animation when the University moved to Orange County in 1989.

The University started offering online degree programs in 2007.
Stop Motion (Claymation, Cut-Outs)

Stop motion is done by taking a photo of an object, and then moving it just a little bit and taking another photo. The process is repeated and when the photos are played back one after another they give the illusion of movement. This is similar to traditional animation but it uses real life materials instead of drawings.
“I love all forms of animation, but there is something unique and special to stop-motion: it’s more real and the set is lit like a set. But I think it’s also a kind of lonely and dark thing to want to do.”

– Tim Burton

About Stop Motion

Stop-Motion animation can be referred to any animations that uses objects that are photographed in a sequence to create a animated action.

The process of Stop-Motion animation is very long, as each object has to be carefully moved inch by inch, while photographing every change, to create a fluid sequence of animation.

Claymation

One of the most popular form is Claymation. Working with clay or play-doh characters that can easily be manipulated for animation. Advanced claymation (such as The Neverhood or Armikrog) uses metal skeletons on which the clay is then molded for more sturdy rigs.

Puppets

Some animators would use regular Puppets instead of clay one, usually also built upon some sort of skeleton rig. The faces of the characters can be replaced based on the expression, or be controlled within the rig.

Cut-Out
Another popular form of stop motion is Cut out. Using construction paper or cardboard characters and placing them on a paper while shooting the animation from above (That’s how South Park was made before they switched to computers.) The cardboard is then moved a little each frame to create the illusion of movement.

**Silhouette**

Similar to cutout animation, silhouette animation uses cardboard or some kind of flat material, but the objects are all black and the shot is depicted with silhouettes only. This is one of the oldest forms of stop motion and is rarely used today.

**Action Figures / Lego**

Some use action figures or lego characters for animation. This genre is very popular on YouTube with many channels dedicated to creating funny skits with lego characters. Robot Chicken is a great example of that. They use famous action figures to make fun of pop culture.

**Pixelation**

Pixelation is a form of stop motion that uses real people and real environments to create unreal videos. It uses the stop motion method of taking a still photo, moving things around, and then taking another photo, but the subject matter is usually real people instead of puppets.

**History**

Stop-Motion animation was very often used as special effects before the introduction of CGI animation, and as such has a very long history in both the animation and film industry, starting from The Humpty Dumpty Circus (1887, Blackton.) One of the most earliest of clay animations was Modelling Extraordinary (1912), and Stop-Motion animation also created the first female animator, Helena Smith Dayton, who made a clay animated short based Romeo and Juliet in 1917.
Another technique, which came about in the 80’s, was Go Motion. This technique involved programming a computer to move the models for the animators before each frame was photographed. It was used when creating visual effects for RoboCop (1987, Verhoven) and The Empire Strikes Back (1980, Kershner.) It was a lot more complicated than doing it by hand, but the result was a more realistic looking animation.

The Stop-Motion art form also created animators that would set the standards, like visual effects master Ray Harryhausen who created animations for Jason and the Argonauts (1963, Chaffey) and Clash of the Titans (1981, Davis), and Nick Park who created the Wallace and Gromit franchise. However, Stop-Motion wasn’t always made for shorts and visual effects. There have been many feature-length Stop-Motion animated films, most notably The Night Before Christmas (1993, Selick) and Wallace and Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit (2005, Park.)

Software

**Dragonframe**

If you’re planning on making a professional stop motion video, Dragonframe is the best tool for the job. Its comprehensive software can be used with many different attachments, such as devices that control the camera, lights and even camera focus.

It gives the user complete control over the lighting of the shot with an option to program the dimming of the different lights over a period of time. It comes with a keypad controller for easy control of the photo taking process, and for flipping between frames.

*Supported platforms:*

- Windows 7, 8
iStopMotion

If you're looking to spend a bit less and you're making stop motion more as a hobby, this software is just for you. It's not expensive and very user friendly.

It does have good features though, such as DSLR support, onion skinning, using an iPad or iPhone as a remote and even chroma keying (using green screen.)

**Supported platforms:**

- Mac OS X

Learn more... ([http://boinx.com/istopmotion/mac/](http://boinx.com/istopmotion/mac/))

**Schools**

**CalArts**

**School information:** CalArts was founded in 1961 by Walt Disney, when Chouinard Art Institute and the Los Angeles Conservatory of Music merged together due to financial difficulties.

Nelbert Chouinard, founder of the Chouinard Art Institute, started a professional relationship with Walt Disney in 1929, and agreed to train animators for him on a pay-later basis as Disney was struggling financially.

- **Location:** Valencia, California. USA
Courses: Film/Video (Includes animation)

Tuition cost: $41,700 Full-time enrolment

Notable alumni: Tim Burton (Disney animator and Director), Brad Bird (Director, Disney and Pixar), John Lasseter (Pixar), Jennifer Lee & Chris Buck (Directors of Frozen)

Start of Academic year: September

Notable graduate film: Trust & Estates (Jeanette Bonds, 2013) Official Selection, Melbourne International Animation Festival 2013

Read more… (http://calarts.edu/)

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Notable alumni: Mir Zafar Ali (Visual effects specialist, The Day After Tomorrow)

Start of Academic year: September

Notable graduate film: Legacy (Adam Floeck, 2013)

Read more… (http://www.scad.edu/)
School of Visual Arts (SVA)

**School information:** Founded in 1947 by Silas H. Rhodes and Burne Hogarth as the Cartoonist and Illustrators School, and then renamed in 1956. Part of the Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design as one of 36 leading art colleges in the United States.

The school offered its first degree in 1972, and it’s first master’s degree in 1983 in Fine Arts for painting, drawing and sculpture.

- **Location:** New York, NY. USA
- **Courses:** Animation, Computer Animation and Visual Effects, Stop Motion (Continuing Education.)
- **Tuition cost:** $16,780 per semester + Department fees (Animation: $900, Computer Animation and visual effects:$1,340)
- **Notable alumni:** Bill Plympton (Academy nominated animator), John.R.Dilworth (creator of Courage the Cowardly Dog), Pres Antonio Romanillos (supervising animator at Disney and Dreamworks animation)
- **Start of Academic year:** September
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**Before you go...**

Congrats for getting through this guide! You took the first step to becoming an animator, and that’s amazing. BUT before you leave, if you want to take it a another step further, check out our ebook Animation For Beginners (https://www.bloopanimation.com/animation-for-beginners-book/). It is a step-by-step guide to becoming an animator (Even if you’ve never
animated before). It doesn’t matter if you can’t draw, or that you’ve never used an animation software before. **Animation For Beginners** (https://www.bloopanimation.com/animation-for-beginners-book/) will take you through the journey of becoming a professional animator. From making your demo reel, finding a job in the animation industry and all the way to making your first animated short film.


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**Related**

[Animation for Beginners (Where do I start?)](https://www.bloopanimation.com/animation-for-beginners/)

[3 Animation Books Every Animator Should Own](https://www.bloopanimation.com/animation-books/)

[Animator’s Holiday Shopping Guide](https://www.bloopanimation.com/animators-holiday-shopping-guide/)

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