

One Stop Away

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Senior Project - FMX 499

Artist Statement

The human capacity for love has no bounds. This inexplicable desire to love and feel is often derailed by the world we live in. Due to societal norms that create these notions, ideals, and values, invisible walls grow in our minds in which we continue to abide by. The internal and more often external struggle between the choice of feeling something and what is deemed right has grown over time into a political debate, especially in the era where these two minds reside.

Based in the 1950s, *One Stop Away* uncovers these complexities of love through the relationship between two students; one a black girl, and the other a white boy. The two face their challenges head on after running into one another, and begin to explore the tensions of societal norms and how they deal with their hearts wanting otherwise. As the story ensues, I want the viewer to feel the struggle between the two as well as the desire for hope of things changing for the path to their future. Without the uncomfortable knowledge of the past, we would never be able to truly understand the the choices between love and reality.

Pre-Production

Concept

The choice to make this project about racial tension was not random. I've always grown up with more white friends than black, and as I got older, a question that continued to transpire from others was if I had any black friends or any idea when I plan on dating someone the same color as me. While these things don't necessarily immediately correlate with the racial aggression of the 1950s, it stems from a thought process that has lingered on throughout the decades. I wanted to explore this story through the racial dynamics of a white boy and a black girl, and learn within the process.

History

The 3-D animated film will be based off of both the 1951 Briggs v. Elliott and the larger 1954 Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka cases. The Briggs v. Elliot case began when a white school superintendent, R.M. Elliott, refused to provide a bus for the black children who had to walk to school, with some walking 16 miles everyday. The case was escalated once the goal was changed to end school segregation, and became the first of five cases that created the landmark case Brown v. Board.

Logline

The tale of two young lives during the Civil Rights Movement whose minds and hearts are progressing farther than their present.

Script Outline

A white boy and a black girl set in the 1950's, around ten years old in age. Segregation of schooling and bussing is still prevalent. Her house borders the "Whites Only" subdivision line, forcing her to pass the conveniently-placed bus stop to walk four miles back and fourth to school each day. We begin with the girl being late for her morning walk to school.

- Girl running out of the door, showing hurried feet only.
- Holding her books, looking around.
- She looks over at the sun rising as she runs.
- She rams into a boy, white and around the same age.
- Scared, she apologizes and he tells her it's okay, and as he's picking up her books their eyes meet.
- After the brief moment between the two, she takes her books and the bus pulls up.
- He realizes and slowly walks on.
- She watches the bus go, and realizes herself that she'll be late, and starts running off to school.

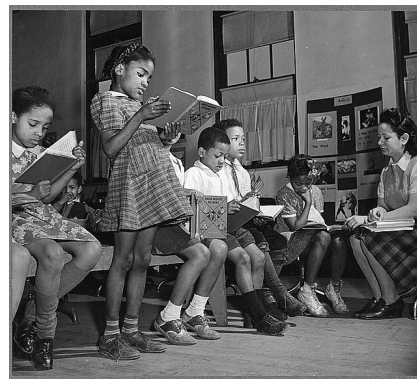
- The time changes, and the girl is now walking back from school during sunset.
- The bus pulls up, and the boy gets off and sees her.
- She struggles once again with her books as the bus pulls off, and he offers to help. She declines but he does anyway.
- They talk and laugh as the night comes, with the sun almost set.
- She realizes what time it is, they say bye, and she runs off. He looks at her as she runs away.

- Morning, she begins to place a bow in her hair, with a confident face. She leaves.
- The boy is already standing there, and once he realizes that she's almost there, he smiles.
- They sit down again and talk, and the bus pulls up. He grabs her hand and squeezes it. She smiles.
- He begins to pull her onto the bus, and she gets scared. The door forcefully shuts in their faces, leaving the two separated physically and socially. It pulls off with the boy looking out the window at the girl as the bus leaves her behind.

- Evening comes, and the girl sees the boy waiting for her. Upset, she moves past him and walks home.

- The next morning comes and the boy is running late. He runs out of the door and gets to the stop as soon as the bus arrives. As he is about to get on the bus, he sees the girl walking far in the distance to school.
- He takes a moment to think, and slowly gets off the bus, but runs and quickly catches up to her.
- Surprised but saddened, the girl turns away from him. He takes her books and he lifts her chin. Their eyes meet, and he grabs her hand, like he did once before. They smile at one another, and walk off into the distance to school.

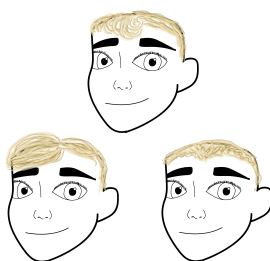
Reference Images



Environment Drawings



Character Drawings



shirt - cream with light blue and thin yellow stripes
pants - wide-legged and cuffed jeans with belt
shoes - black dress with colored bobby socks or sneakers



dress - red/brown plaid, cream collar and buttons
shoes - black flats with white bobby socks



Shot List

A MONSTER INSIDE SHOT LIST

SHOT	CHARACTER ACTION	CAMERA ACTION	CAM/FRAME #
✓ 1	Girl running out of the door	shot of feet running on the ground	S1; 1-30
✓ 2	Holding her books, looking around	medium shot of face and books	S2; 31-150
✓ 3	She looks over at the sun rising as she runs	POV girl, shot of sun rising in the southern morning	S3; 151-235
✓ 4a	She rams into a boy, white and around the same age	closeup of girl, distracted by the sunrise, rams into boy	S4; 236-274
✓ 4b	^	wider shot of the boy and girl falling	S5; 275-346
✓ 5a	Scared, she apologizes and he tells her it's okay, and as he's picking up her books their eyes meet	PAN holds at her feet, starts as they pick up the books and holds at her face as she realizes the boy	S6; 347-438
✓ 5b	^	cut to his face, with a similar gaze in his eyes	S7; 439-510
✓ 6	After the brief moment between the two, he hands her books and the bus pulls up	cut back to her face, medium shot, with the same look, and she shakes herself out of it	S8; 511-609
✓ 7a	^	cut to his face and he shakes out of it. the bus pulls up in the background out of focus	S9; 610-725
✓ 7b	He realizes and slowly walks on	wider shot of him getting onto bus with her standing there. Straight on with backs to camera	S10; 726-860 (787.)
✓ 8a	She watches the bus go, and realizes herself that she'll be late, and starts running off to school	closeup of her face as she watches the bus go and realizes	S11; 861-985
✓ 8b	^	cut to bus driving in the distance as the girl runs alongside the road	S12; 986-1082
✓ 9	The time changes, and the girl is now walking back from school during sunset	FADE to girl walking back in the early sunset	S12; 1083-1160
✓ 10a	The bus pulls up, and the boy gets off and sees her	bus pulls up, and the boy gets off	S13; 1161-1255 (650)
✓ 10b	^	medium shot of boy walking across the street and he looks over	S14; 1300-1365
✓ 10c	^	POV boy, getting closer as she's carrying her books and doesn't notice him	S15; 1366-1465
✓ 11a	She struggles once again with her books as the bus pulls off, and he offers to help. She declines but he does anyway	medium shot of girl freaking out when the bus makes a noise to drive off	S16; 1475-1494 1521-1540
✓ 11b	^(cut between 11a-11b)	closeup of boy as he helps her grab her books in the air, and he smiles	S17; 1495-1520
✓ 11c	^	medium shot, straight ahead, of the two holding the books as they sink to the bench, smiling	S18; 1541-1650
✓ 12	They talk and laugh as the night comes, with the sun almost set	FADE to them laughing and talking	S18; 1651-1700
✓ 13a	She realizes what time it is, they say bye, and she runs off. He looks at her as she runs away	closeup of girl as she realizes the time	S19; 1701-1770
✓ 13b	^	medium shot of the two as she spins back and says bye and runs off	S20; 1771-1855
✓ 13c	^	closeup of boy as he looks after her, and smiles	S21; 1856-1905
✓ 14	Morning, she begins to place a bow in her hair, with a confident face. She leaves	shot of her placing the bow, PAN to her face. Background stays out of focus	S22; 1910-1960 (610)
✓ 15	The boy is already standing there, and once he realizes that she's almost there, he smiles	medium shot of boy standing at bus stop, looking toward house	S23; 1961-2020
✓ 16a	They sit down again and talk, and the bus pulls up. He grabs her hand and squeezes it. She smiles	wider shot of the boy and girl sitting on the bench from across the street, straight ahead	S24; 2021-2085
✓ 16b	^	closeup of boy seeing the bus, and looking at her to grab her hand	S25; 2086-2190
✓ 16c	^	closeup of boy grabbing hand, PAN to her smile	S26; 2191-2270
✓ 17a	He begins to pull her onto the bus, and she gets scared. The door forcefully shuts in their faces	medium shot of boy pulling girl onto the bus, girl resisting	S27; 2271-2314
✓ 17b	^	POV of boy on the bus, with the doors shutting	S28; 2315-2350
✓ 17c	^	medium shot of girl looking at the bus, holding her hand, back facing the camera and the boy moving through the bus to see her	S29; 2351-2385
✓ 18a	It pulls off with the boy looking out the window at the girl as the bus leaves her behind	medium shot of boy looking out the window watching the girl get left behind	S30; 2400-2460
✓ 18b	^	wide shot of the girl walking slowly to school, head down	S31; 2461-2520
✓ 19a	Evening comes, and the girl sees the boy waiting for her. Upset, she moves past him and walks home	closeup of girl as she walks home, sees the boy	S32; 2521-2580 (249)
✓ 19b	^	medium shot of boy sitting, then he stands when he sees her	S33; 2581-2640
✓ 19c	^	medium shot of the two as she pushes past him	S34; 2641-2710
✓ 19d	^	shot behind the boy's head looking at her run off, with her in focus	S35; 2711-2770
✓ 20a	The next morning, boy is running late. He runs out of the door and gets to the stop as soon as the bus arrives. As he is about to get on the bus, he sees the girl walking far in the distance to school	closeup of feet running	S36; 2771-2795 (659)
✓ 20b	^	PAN? closeup of face running, checks watch and runs faster	S37; 2796-2840
✓ 20c	^	medium shot of boy getting to the stop, catches his breath and looks around. The bus pulls up	S38; 2841-2880
✓ 20d	^	closeup of boy as he puts his leg up, looks over and sees the girl already walking in the distance, now in focus	S39; 2881-2945
✓ 20e	He takes a moment to think, and slowly gets off the bus, but runs and quickly catches up to her	closeup of boy as he thinks about his choices, slowly gets off and starts running	S40; 2946-3010
✓ 21a	Surprised but saddened, the girl turns away from him. He takes her books and he lifts her chin. Their eyes meet, and he grabs her hand, like he did once before. They smile at one another, and walk off into the distance to school	closeup of girl sad, boy coming more into focus from running and catches up to her	S41; 3011-3055
✓ 21b	^	medium shot of the two with the boy in front, and she tries to push past but he doesn't let her	S42; 3101-3160
✓ 21c	^	closeup of girl as his arm lifts her chin	S43; 3161-3210
✓ 21d	^	closeup of boy as he smiles back at her, and looks down to hold her hand	S44; 3211-3260
✓ 21e	^	medium shot of the two as he holds out his hand, and she grabs it	S45; 3261-3327
✓ 21f	^	ZOOM? wide shot of the two walking to school together	S46; 3328-3430

KEY

	Not Started
	In Progress
	Completed

Production

Character Rigging

Rigging has always been the hardest part of creating content for me in Maya. Using Lynda.com and multitudes of YouTube videos helped me tremendously. I spent a long time weighting the characters to make sure they had more human-like proportions and gestures. Although I am no longer terrified of rigging and weighting, it is still a large learning curve to understand and master.

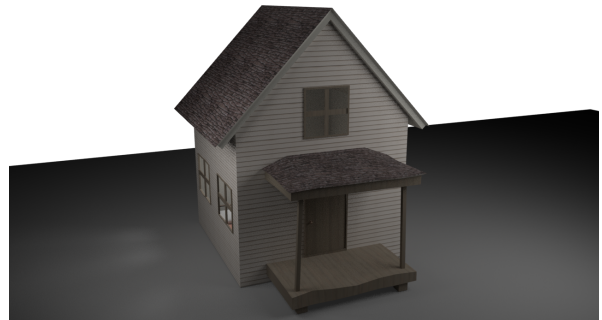
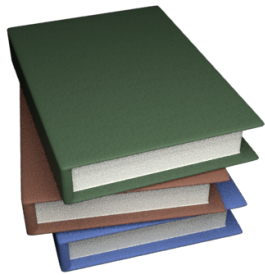
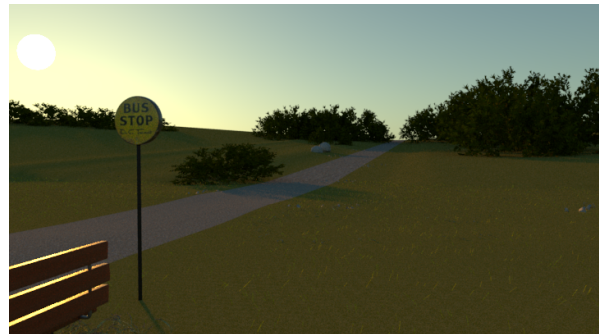
Hair Dynamics

Since I chose a more difficult route, I decided to create hair dynamics for both of my characters. There were many times where the hair kept flying off, but through the use of Google, I figured out how to make the hair look good and stay manageable for animation. In the end, the dynamics were not cooperating well enough, so I chose to keep them in the Static state so I could maintain the look, but the movement was lost.



Assets

I created many different assets for the character's environment, including books, trees, a bus, a bench, a house, and a few other additional items. Texturing everything was very meticulous due to the fragile file structure that the texture attributes carry. The bus was the most time-consuming due to its irregular shapes and different style, but I am happy with the realistic results that I ended up with.



Rendering

I don't think that one is able to mentally prepare for the endurance that you need for rendering. Since I am used Arnold to render my project, the frames took a lot longer to render and process than it would if I used Maya to render. Averaging at 3 minutes per frame with 3400 frames, I had to render frames for around 170 hours. This was an extremely intensive piece of the project, due to the rendering process using the entirety of my computer for over a week. If I was able to do something differently, I would try to plan out a lot more time to render the files so the process would not disrupt my everyday workflow.

Post-Production

Compositing

Truly the simpler piece of creating my project, compositing in Adobe After Effects took about two hours to complete. Taking the time to now make sure that all the frames look correct as well as line up with one another is crucial after rendering, especially due to the immense amount of frames I had to maintain. The shot list was more helpful than ever, allowing me to search for frames in sections instead of guessing where different scenes begin and end.

Music

Recently learning about YouTube's audio library, they have royalty free music as well as copyright free songs for content creators to use. I wanted to capture tension in the music, but also have a light-hearted ending to balance the film out when the plot moved forward. After days of searching, I landed on Chris Haugen's "Northern Lights" due to its warm yet unsettling tone and for the composed ending since it matched well with the storyline.

Editing

The final edit in Adobe Premiere Pro was mainly placing all the scenes together and making sure that each one has the correct color balance and feel, and if there were any glaring issues I wanted to make sure I could fix them. Overall, the full render out of Premiere Pro took less than a minute since all the videos were composited beforehand.