"All Aboard!"

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M.F.A. Thesis Project

“All Aboard!”

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Acknowledgements

The creation of this film was not just a singular effort on my part. I could not have completed this film without the help of so many people in my life. I would like to express my thanks and bring into the forefront the names of the people who had a hand in my thesis.

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Introduction

Creating *All Aboard!* was one of the most trying experiences that I have gone through, but ultimately it became one of my most satisfying achievements.

During my time at RIT I had learned the 'proper' method for creating a film: treatment to storyboard, storyboard to animatic, animatic to production, and post production to the finished work. While this pathway may be effective for most traditional works, I felt that I wanted to liberate myself from the tedium of this approach. I wanted to define for myself a new production process. One that would inspire a work that unfolds through the actual creation of the work. I wanted to create an animation that reflected the kind of animation that I like.

My goal was to create a work that was more 'organic', something far from the constraints of the trendy computer animated 3d space. I wanted to concentrate more on the artistic merits rather than on the showy technology. I have always wanted to make films like *The Street* (1976) by Caroline Leaf and *Crac!* (1981) by Frederic Back. These works are rich and beautiful, and they have timeless poignant plots. Both of these works have had an emotional and artistic impact on me. Their stories 'loosely' unfold. They take advantage of the medium of animation with their deft use of line, color and shape to create moving art works that tell their unique stories in ways that live action cannot. With this in mind, I needed to define a work that would satisfy my ambition to similarly create an animation that was imaginative and artistically compelling.

I decided to make an animation involving trains. I didn't have a real
proclivity toward this subject matter, but there was something that has always been attractive about these powerful machines. The Futurists, “who wanted their paintings to express the energy and speed of modern life” ¹ -- particularly Gino Severini, who painted Red Cross Train Passing a Village, loved trains because of their “vitality and potency.” I could relate to this sensibility about trains, so I decided to focus on trains in my thesis work.

I studied Fine Art at Dartmouth College as an undergraduate, and one of the projects I did and enjoyed immensely was a series of charcoal drawings. I benefited from the immediacy that charcoal gave me. I could instantly translate an idea in my head with deep ranges of rich blacks and a multitude of grays in a large format. I loved to work big and slash lines all over the paper and spontaneously create forms on the spot. The subject matter drew heavily from a modern technological iconography. I mixed organic shapes with forms taken from modern design ranging from construction vehicles to common electrical appliances. I felt that with this film, I could take my artistic vision beyond individual static hanging pieces. My artwork had started out as still life art and later moved towards abstraction where motion was implied. Animation was a natural progression for me because I could make art that actually moved through a space I created fully. The train object in my graduate work, I felt, could represent so much conceptually, so I decided to write the most open-ended

treatment for this work. This would allow me to find and focus on a facet of the mystery of trains that would emerge during the process of creating the work.

I believe that the seed of the 'train' idea was planted during my commutes to RIT by car on East River Road. This long road winds along a scenic area next to the Genesee River to the RIT campus. On the way there is a stretch of road with train tracks that must be crossed. If you're lucky (or unlucky) the train-crossing gate will go down and you'll be stuck as you wait for a slow freight train to pass by. This could be a real annoyance, but an appreciation of the steady power and the rhythms of the train cannot be ignored. I found inspiration in these experiences at the train-crossing gate. I found real beauty in trains.

A previous film I created used 3d computer animation, and after modeling and lighting and texturing for most of the school term the animation really suffered. I wanted to concentrate on the animation for my graduate thesis. At first, I wanted some elements to be done in 3d to save time on the drawing, so I decided to composite 3d and 2d elements together. I would take the tedious parts, like the drawing of train cars repetitively passing by, out and instead make a 3d model or the train. I also thought that I would like to make 3D backgrounds too. But instead of making my work easier, I found that even more organization would be needed to merge the two elements into one cohesive look. I had modeled a train and started blocking out test scenes, but they became far too cumbersome. It took a lot of time and several different story ideas before I abandoned the idea of using 3D in my thesis work. Once I committed to drawing everything by hand, I felt ready to get going. However, it still took me several
drafts to come up with a final idea.

Originally I came up with the idea using the train as a metaphor for the passage of time in a young boy’s life. Professor Skip Battaglia and I were hashing this out and we were close to coming up with something interesting, but ultimately I was forcing too many disparate elements together and it was becoming a cryptic mess. The idea was to intersperse scenes of a kid growing up with shots of a man traveling on a train. These alternating scenes of important childhood experiences and the adult on the train would end with the boy getting onto the train at a stop at the same time the older version of him would be getting off. Somehow this would represent a rite of passage or a coming of age. It would also represent the older man coming to terms with himself and his life going full circle.

Ultimately this idea didn’t work for me personally although there were parts that I really liked and were inspired by. At this point, I made another attempt at creating a worthwhile story. I then considered turning this work into a documentary. I am particularly interested in the origins of things and what kind of impact they have on human lives. Steam trains have such a nostalgic quality and they were developed at a time in history of real innovation and technological advancement. Their rise at one time in history as the dominant form of transportation coupled with the arrival of diesel train technology parallels our society’s drive for advancement. I felt that a work that could depict this and convey this idea would be very interesting. There also seemed to be a correlation between the shift from traditional 2D animation to computer-based
animation. For example, studios like Disney got rid of their 2d animation department in favor of a 3d computer animation lab. I saw a lot of possibilities for creating a work that expressed the momentum and changes in our culture and in our art that parallels the changes in the technologies of our modern industrial times.

Unfortunately, this idea became too wide open and too large in scope for a solo project. I pitched my idea to Professor Lorelei Pepi and what resulted was a drawn out stream of incoherent ideas involving the history of trains and America and connecting that with artistic integrity. Lorelei realized that I had lost focus and suggested that I start nailing down concrete ideas.

From my long ramble about scenes and images, one image kept coming back to me. This was of a mom feeding a baby and using choo-choo noises to coax the baby to take a bite from a train-shaped spoon. It then occurred to me that a baby could be a good starting point for my work and the theme of the train representing a passage in time could be retained from my original idea. Instead of trying to portray the baby’s whole life I decided that I could use the mother’s routine of caring for her child as a motivation for the film and that imagery of a train could help convey the film forward.

This idea freed me from having to create a story arc, and I could concentrate on the visuals and how to make them move. Professor Stephanie Maxwell was a great help with this and she told me that I could throw away plot altogether. That I could create something more abstract and not feel guilty about it. When I was a teacher’s assistant for the Intro to Animation class at RIT, I was
reminded of how animation is a singular form of film. Transitions from scene to scene don’t have to be straight cuts, but they can morph from one disparate image to another. On re-viewing The Street and observing how the animator would move from one scene to the next in painterly transitions and metamorphoses, I had a revelation about applying this technique in my work. There are no limitations or strict rules on how a film should flow from shot to shot. I decided that I would try to keep my drawings ‘alive’ and make transitions as creative and expressive as possible in animated form.

Synopsis

The film begins with a train crossing a bridge alongside a mountainous landscape. The scene morphs with the moon turning into the baby’s face, the train becoming a plush train toy, and the mountains wrap around his face turning into blankets. The baby is then woken up by his mother and then taken off screen to be changed. The baby grabs the train toy in his mouth quickly before he is completely off screen.

His train toy morphs into a real train and you zoom to a window where you see a melancholy kid looking out the window with a man who’s head is obscured by an open newspaper he’s reading. The train window then morphs into the interior of the baby and mother’s window. Out the window you can see that the family lives next to train tracks.

The baby is placed down to have his diaper changed. The mother takes the train toy out of his mouth and the baby starts to whimper only to be distracted
by a train mobile. The train mobile goes around and then morphs into a real train zipping across the screen. The caboose becomes a baby powder bottle and is shaken on to the baby's diaper. The powder fills the room and become smoke emitted from a train stack. The camera pans across the train and then enters through one of the windows to show the mother walking down an aisle. She changes cars into one filled with men reading newspapers. They ruffle their papers as the mom exits the car and the scene morphs into a stair case.

The mother walks down the stairs and the baby is lowered into a highchair to be fed. The spoon the mother uses to feed the baby morphs into a train and enters the baby's mouth which morphs into a train tunnel. The baby gets very excited and spills the utensils and empty baby food jar from his crib.

He looks down to see that his mess is a train wreck. The mother enters the landscape and cleans up the train wreckage. She finds the baby's toy train and puts it back on the track and pats it forwards. The train then follows the tracks onto a bridge which morphs into the mother arms holding the baby. The child catches the toy train that then emits a big puff of smoke from its stack to bring the film full circle.

**Storyboarding**

For the longest time I didn't have a fully laid out storyboard. I figured that I would just start drawing and let my subconscious take over. I initially thought that a storyboard would constrict me and keep me from coming up with spontaneous ideas. I learned that this idea was very flawed. I started to lose confidence in my
idea which kept changing every time I sat down to draw. I needed some kind of direction and without that I felt like I just couldn’t get started. After multiple meetings with my thesis committee and showing the same tests again and again, I realized that I had to lay my whole film out. The storyboard process became the most crucial step to creating my film.

With my loose treatment I could do almost anything, but that proved to be a hindrance too. I went through the mother’s routine and drew out all the possible things she could do for her child. I then saw different opportunities in the mother’s routines where I could include trains. I felt that beginning the film with the baby sleeping and ending with the mother putting the baby back to sleep made sense. I then filled up the middle up with an assortment of ideas and the film really began to take shape. From there the transitions really came easily and the train motifs fit in really well. I gave the baby a train toy and had the mother and her child live close to train tracks. By doing this I had the train visuals become more and more integrated into their lives.

Stephanie really inspired me by suggesting I watch *Pacific 231* (1949) by Jean Mitry. It is a short, non-narrative film that is almost a musical experience of the images of trains and the abstractions that are created through their movements. Among the many creatively composed shots were ones of train tracks. They seemed to transform from components of steel and wood into webs of divergently weaving Norman McLaren-esque lines like those McLaren created by drawing and scratching on film.

I must have created five times as many scenes than what I finally ended
up using in this work. I remember the multiple trips to Johnny Robinson, Stephanie Maxwell and Elouise Oyzon’s offices to try and mold my storyboard into something lean and complete. We threw a lot of scenes away. We questioned the meaning of scenes or made adjustments to them to make them work better. These sessions were so helpful and vital for my progress.

I remember one particular session with Carina Maggio, a fellow graduate student in the School of Film and Animation, who helped give me a lot of confidence in my ideas. We whittled away a lot of the unnecessary imagery in the work. She helped me come up with several solutions to nagging problems. For instance, the transition of going from the mess the baby makes near the end to the work where the baby is back in the mother’s arms. I felt that having the baby’s mess/wreckage be shown as a train wreck and having the mom enter the scene to clean up the mess was a very powerful scene that magnified the mother’s role and the security of her care. Tying in the baby’s toy lost within the mess/wreckage was a great idea. Another example is when the tunnel morphs into the mother’s arm because it was a perfect transition to bring the film to the closing scene.

Character Development

The film was created to appeal to many different audiences and the characters are all wholesome participants in the story. There are three characters in my film: the baby, the mother and the train. The baby represents imagination and innocence. The mother is a protector and nurturer. The train is a constant in
their lives and had many roles and meanings in this work. The train could represent time, or an intrusive element in life, or simply a means of coaxing the baby to feed. And, it was always an object of the baby’s affection.

The baby is pliable, and his face is basically an oval. It was a design that I could redraw over and over again and not worry too much about consistency. Although the baby did go through some minor design changes during the drawing, it never did lose its essential character. I wanted a more generalized baby character that’s temperament and personality is defined by its expressions and actions.

The mother’s role was to lovingly care for her child through each stage of their daily routine. The mother’s arms and hands are her predominant features that appear on screen. Mother’s arms were based on real arms but were not confined to reality. I took liberties in stretching and squashing and smoothing out joints of the fingers. I wanted to make the hands elegant and gentle so I avoided any knobby or chunky knuckles and used smooth lines to help convey the mother’s gentle character. I particularly love the part when the mother cleans up the train wreck. Mothers clean after their babies all the time, and it’s one of the most mundane things they have to do. But I wanted to elevate this menial task by making her a giant and taking the time to clean up the piles of train cars to show that no matter how big the mess is the mother still cares for her child and will lovingly perform these tasks.

The train was based on real steam trains but not confined to true to life dimensions. At times it has a lot of ‘character’ and other times it is just a
mechanical train. It’s also represented as the baby’s toy that the baby is obsessed with. I also wanted to exploit different parts of the train -- the steam stack, the passenger cars, the aisles, the caboose, etc. I wanted to incorporate all these parts just as Jean Mitry did in Pacific 231.

The faces of the adults in this film are never shown. The only faces seen are the baby’s and a child’s face looking out of a train window. The baby is a very responsive character, reacting to the mother’s attention and to trains. I wanted body movements and gestures to really stand out in this work to express emotion without relying too much on facial expressions except for those belonging to the baby.

**Environments**

The backgrounds were intended to be simple depictions. I searched online for steam train pictures and train wreckage pictures. I also referenced pictures from a book called Classic Trains by Hans Halberstadt for train exteriors and interiors (See Appendix D, p. 39). I did web searches for home interior spaces for the time period between the 1930s to the 1950s. The kitchen in particular was an amalgam of different photos of kitchens and appliances from that time period. The bridge in the very beginning of my film was based on a photo I found online. (See Appendix D, p. 41)

**Drawing, Scanning and Photoshop**

I drew my film with blue Sanford Col-erase colored pencils on a light-table
ordered from Chromacolour International. These were a standard that we used for Johnny Robinson’s dynamic drawing class. This class was the first class where I really felt that I was learning true animation fundamentals. It was a valuable class that helped me gain confidence in my drawing skills and my sense of timing. I concentrated on making my figures very volumetric and pliable. The Col-erases have a nice soft lead tip and they leave a nice texture on the paper that is picked up well when scanned.

I went through each scene of my storyboard chronologically. The transitions from one scene to the next were crucial to the film so I had to start from the beginning. The timing and composition of each shot was also dependent on the previous shot. Scenes tended to diverge from the storyboard compositionally so it was impossible to jump between scenes. This made scheduling a lot easier but also a little frustrating when my next shot happened to be long and drawn out. I had to concentrate on working one drawing at a time not letting the length of shots become too influential.

Since my storyboard was laid out very meticulously I was aware of exactly what I had to do for each scene. To plan out the motion, particularly the elements before and after transitions, I had to draw out path lines on a separate piece of punched paper and crossed them with tick marks to gage how far each drawing had to translate from frame to frame. I color-coded these lines since there usually was more than one morphing element (See Appendix D, p. 40). This was an essential step in making the animation fluid and allowing each scene to flow seamlessly into the next.
I decided to make my film in a very extreme wide angle aspect ratio at 15 frames per second. This rectangular space was a lot easier for composing cinematic shots than the more squashed rectangular space of an analog TV. This freed me to incorporate long flowing lines for my train and the transitional elements. Drawing on 2’s is a lot smoother than on 3’s, but drawing 30 frames per second seemed like way too much work for me to do on my own. Although many artists prefer to work on 1’s, I felt that I could get away with 2’s. I scanned my drawings in grayscale at 200 dots per inch in tiff format. I used an Epson Perfection 3170 Photo Scanner to do this. It took 10 days straight to scan all my drawings into the computer. I believe I had about 3,000 – 4,000 drawings in total for my five minute film.

In order to retain the registration of the drawings, I had to glue a few blocks of wood to the side of my scanner making sure it was on straight with my bubble level tool. I then mounted a peg bar on top so that the drawings would lay flush with the scanner bed when I closed the top. When I had my peg bar mounted on the frame of my scanner, the bottom part of the paper with the holes would be elevated. The raised part of the paper would accept light differently from the scanner appearing darker than the part of the paper that was flat on the glass. This would make compositing more difficult since consistent scans had better results with Photoshop layer effects.

With these scanned drawings I spent a weekend making an animatic. I used the multiply mode on each different layer so that the background layers showed through the top figure layers. I then sent the animatic to my thesis
committee members for feedback, and to the composer who was to create the musical soundtrack.

I then went back and made fill layers for the characters and foreground elements so that the background wouldn’t show through them. To do this I created a long Photoshop action and played it as a batch action on whole scenes. I first selected an area outside of the figure with the magic wand. I then had to make sure that the outline of the figure was closed (sometimes I would draw a line to close it out with the pencil tool) so that it would keep its fill color. I then grew that selection with a tolerance set to 10 so that it took more of the background with it. After that I expanded the selection by two pixels so that it went a little beyond the pencil outline (if not, then some white might show outside of the figure and would look like a halo around it). Then I changed the current layer, which was a background layer, into a regular working layer by double clicking it and pressing OK. I then made a new empty layer. I then inverted the selection and filled it in with white onto the new empty layer. After this I deleted the previous layer that had the scan on it. I then converted the image from grayscale to RGB. I saved the file out as a color layer psd file. The original scan would be kept as a multiply layer on top of this fill layer, a layer containing color, and the background layer.

Editing

I didn’t make an animatic for my film during pre-production. I worked on drawing and redrawing each scene until the pencil test produced something that
felt right. My first rough cut didn't have any holds or loops so the scenes flew by one after the other so quickly that I felt like I didn't have a real film. I was afraid that I had just bunched scenes together incoherently. Adding loops and static shots to allow the audience to breathe and catch up to the story are invaluable. Timing is the foundation of good animation and I put a lot of effort into getting the timing right. I used After Effects to shape and adjust the timing of my raw footage and to shape the work.

I edited my film in Adobe After Effects 6.0. Bringing in the frames as a psd sequence saves a lot of space and works very efficiently. Parenting layers helped tremendously too. For example, I parented layers with looping smoke exhaust to a layer with a cycling train. The smoke flowed out of the train’s smoke stack and I was able to translate the train without having to worry about matching the two animation elements by hand.

The finished work was rendered out at 720 x 480 pixel resolution at DV NTSC. This was the largest size that could fit on my DVD burner.

**Sound**

The rhythm of the train was what ultimately drove this film. This is very much represented in the musical score. Brian Sargent, the music and sound designer of this work, adopted the train motif and really took off with it. I gave him my first rough cut as soon as I had finished rendering it. I marked out points in the film where I suggested flourishes or a certain type of music. He played the acoustic guitar, acoustic bass, mandolin, percussion (I specifically requested
brush drums after Elouise Oyzon had me listen to “Last Train Home” by Pat Metheny Group from the album Still Life Talking), electric guitar and keyboards. Brian and I both have favorite musical parts of the soundtrack. For instance, in the sequence where the camera pans across a close up of a real train and its passengers, the music sounds so rustic and folksy and captures the time period and essence of that particular scene so well.

Brian’s sound effects were very meticulously made too. They really complimented the images on screen. In particular, I like the dreamy sound effects he added to the segment where the train mobile morphs into a real train and zips past the screen. Another successful part was when the mother walks down the train aisle and opens a door to get to the next train car. The sound of the train is muffled indoors and when the door opens, the sound changes to a louder outdoor sound. This attention to detail really made the soundtrack strong.

The Screening

The screenings proved to me that it’s never too late or too challenging to finish anything. Hard work really does get rewarded and the feeling of accomplishment is incredible. Somehow I was able to make something that I was proud of and was appreciated by the audience. Moments before the work was projected I was squirming in my seat nervous about failure.

After screening All Aboard I made my way to the podium and fielded quite a few questions. The questions ranged from inquiries about how I made the film to where the music came from to if I liked kids. One woman in particular
commented that when she first saw that my film was going to be a black and white hand drawn film, she wasn’t thrilled. It wasn’t her type of film. But by the end of the film she said that she changed her mind and wanted to see more. That could be one of the best compliments that I had gotten and it made the whole experience seem worth it.

**Conclusion**

There was a lot that I learned about myself during the creation of *All Aboard!* I learned that self-confidence can have an extraordinary impact on one’s life. The fact that I couldn’t finish this work, or even get started for that matter really damaged my feelings of self worth. I was petrified with the idea that I would not be able to finish. Because of the amount of work that it would require and because of doubts about whether this work was worth doing at all, I felt hopeless at times. After many years, and with the help of my friends, this work was accomplished. I am grateful to Jeff Lester who spent months working on his own thesis alongside me. Because of Jeff’s support I was able to get back on track and begin working. We critiqued each other’s work. We pulled for each other. And, we ended up really pulling the best out of each other. Having someone near who is going through the same trials as you are can really be helpful, especially because you know you are not alone in your struggles. Lastly, my thesis committee was very patient and believed in me, and they also helped me through a lot of hard times along the way.

My professor from Dartmouth, Louise Hamlin, told me that you never know
when the muse will come so you’d better be in the studio because when it does come, it's a real gift. I have to admit that I avoided working on my film for a long time. But when I finally did get the confidence to put pencil to paper and resolve to finally get this work done my muse did arrive and saw me through my project. The train and the baby’s family were somehow involved more than just as characters or props in my film. They ‘demanded’ to be created and I eventually learned to accept this and get to work.
Bibliography and Appendix Sources


Appendix D References:

Page 39 Photos:


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Photo from Friends of Locomotive #35 and the Oyster Bay Railroad Museum.
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Photo from Monon Caboose Roster.  Copyright 2004-2006.  Monon Railroad Historical-Technical Society, Inc.  Photo ca. 1956
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Personal website of a train steam whistle enthusiast ‘steamwhistle’.  Copyright 1997.
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Photo courtesy of the Yamhill County Historical Society, Lafayette, OR.  Copyright 2000, YCHS.  Photo is Rex Train wreck – 1913

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Photo is Crossing the Train Bridge 0138-04 by Steve Baker.  2004-09-02.  Fort Nelson, BC, Canada.  All Rights Reserved.
http://www.dlpgraphics.ca/gallery/photo.php?photo=3819&u=1354%7C41%7C...
Appendix A:

Original Thesis Proposal

The fact that people use choo choo noises to feed their children is a device to entice them to eat. I believe that this kind of situation gives rise to a lot of different scenarios where trains are used as models. Then can become obsessions and they can become dangerous. They are pictures of strength with tremendous size, but are also bound to tracks that determine their position in space justifying their existence.

I want to play with these different scenarios and create a surreal interplay of events that proceed in constant locomotion. I want to play with the iconography of the physicality of the train and the tracks itself and also mix it with human interaction.

I want to start with a child being spoon fed by a person making choo choo noises. When the person feeding the child switches to a bottle and doesn’t make the noise the child will refuse. The person will ultimately turn the bottle sideways and make the choo choo noise. Then the baby will accept it and the baby’s mouth will become a tunnel to start off the train exploration.

I will constantly morph events into one another paying close attention to sounds and visuals. I want to mix real life situation and exaggerated reality with a child’s version of the events. I would like to mix different types of visual styles together tying the train to metaphorical situations.

I want to discover a vocabulary through this film relying on my own experience as well as researched material. I’d like to delve further into the
subject of trains to see how people are connected with this type of transport.

I have different ideas for the conclusion of the film. The train could end up coming back out of the child's mouth or the child could end up eating a real train right off the tracks. Another possibility is that a train could be shown in its environment leaving a tunnel to represent the persistence of trains in our lives. I want to leave myself open to explore these different options and create something that is meaningful.
Budget

Light Table with lamp $99

Col-erase colored pencils and pink pearl erasers $20

Paper (regular 8 ½” x 11” white copy paper and 500 sheets of acme punched paper) and index cards $300

Hole Puncher – Free from school but would cost

Pencil Test cart – web cam, mount, and peg strips, lights $60

Anasazi Stop Motion Animator (pencil test capturing program) free at http://www.animateclay.com/modules.php?op=modload&name=Sections&file=index&req=viewarticle&artid=24&page=1

Newly Built Computer (Including Sony DVD burner with Nero DVD authoring program) $1500

Wacom Tablet Intuos 2 - $220

Epson Perfection 3170 Photo Scanner $200

Adobe Photoshop 7.0 $600

Adobe After Effects 6.0 Professional $900

Dvd’s $40

CDR;s $30

Total = $3969
Timeline

2001

Summer – Researched my idea. Tried to come up with a concrete story idea. Visited Rochester and Genesee Valley Railroad museum on multiple occasions http://www.rochnrhs.org/

Fall – Starting drawing tests for animation and styles and mediums
I was a TA this year for Lorelei Pepi

Winter – Rethought my film and reworked concept of the film. Did more planning and retooling in the Spring term.

2002

After months of Reworking the storyboard through the summer and into the fall. I finished the storyboards late in the Fall quarter. Started work on the first scene with the baby pulling the train toy.
Moved to North Carolina for a new job in the March. Went on hiatus for close to a year.

2003

Spent a year working at DP Associates on the V-22 Osprey project. Made interactive multimedia training material for the marines.
Discussed the story with a small group of graphic artists who wanted to make films.

2004

Began work at Red Eye Studios back in Rochester in March. Made Full Motion Video (FMV’s or cut-movie scenes) sequences for video games. Drew sporadically during the year. Work was intense.

2005

Red Eye Studio went out of business in July. Started up full time on the film from August to December. Worked intensely with Jeff Lester. Made a lot of progress. Professional experience was a real help in accomplishing the quality of animation that I envisioned.

2006

January – began work at Irrational Studios in Boston. Settled into my new environment for a month. Then began working on the thesis at night after working on video game animation during the day.
End of April wrapped up drawing and scanned for ten days straight. One week before screening (May 22nd, 2006) I sent the rough cut to my sound designer. I met him while I was interviewing for my current job in December and he agreed to do my sound pro bono.

I gave him the rough cut on a Wed. and he had the soundtrack done by Friday night.

I finished the compositing and editing work the night before screenings at Shaun Foster’s house in Oneida, NY (halfway from Boston to Rochester). I brought my computer with me and added the color layers and soundtrack that morning. At 5pm I left Shaun’s house and drove straight to the Screenings. I received a speeding ticket in Chittenango. I arrived at 7:10 pm (the screening began at 7pm in the Carlson Building). I was fourth or fifth in the program and I made it in time.
Marketing

Submit to Festivals

Ottawa Int'l Animation Festival
Animation Block Party
Coney Island Film Festival
Annecy
Rhode Island International Film Festival (Accepted)
Zagreb
Crok
Black Nights Festival
South By Southwest
Kalamazoo
Fantoche
Slamdance
Portland Independent Short Shorts (PISS) festival
Anima mundi
Movies on a Shoestring

Submit to web galleries

http://www.ifilm.com/
http://www.atomfilms.com/
http://www.youtube.com/

Use as demo material to pitch animation freelance projects
Appendix B: Storyboards
IV
Appendix C: Film Stills
Appendix D: Concept Art
The following are visual reference images (photographs and illustration) and hand drawings created for the making of All Aboard! The sources of the photographs and illustrations may be found in the Bibliography and Appendix Sources section of the thesis.

a. http://webpages.charter.net/upcascade/images/Helpers%20at%205.jpg
cumberland_Gap_train_tracks_and_tunnel_6.jpg

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%20Nj,%20Feb.%201957.jpg

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First Greenbeans
I. Example of an animation path with tick marks made before drawing the scene. The tick marks represent the spacing of the train from one frame to the next. This helped ensure that the sequence would animate smoothly.

II. This is an overlay of the path and a scanned drawing.

III. This is the final result of the drawing in my film.