



# IDS



THESIS JOURNAL

A FILM BY JONAS DELL-BOSAK







# PLOT

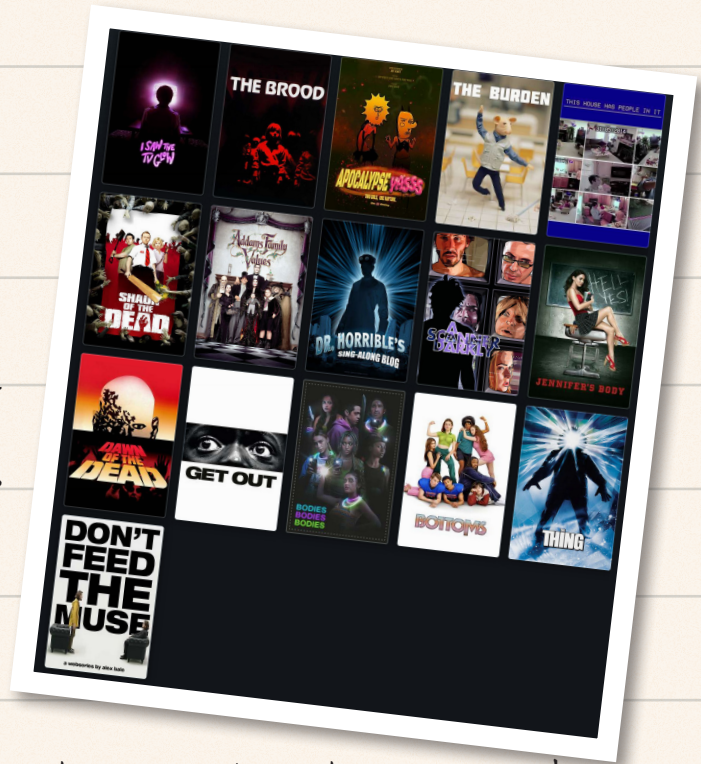
"American Idols" follows Beetle, an average person attempting to reconnect with their childhood best friend, Rosy. Rosy is now very famous, and in a world where those rich and famous enough can become deities called "idols," will soon be ascending to that level. At Rosy's ascension party, Beetle soon learns that unfortunately they were not invited as a guest, but as a sacrifice.





# INSPIRATIONS

Many of my inspirations combined horror and comedy, which is my favorite thing to do since they go so well together. A lot of situations in horror naturally lend themselves to humor, and a lot of humor is derived from scenarios that would be terrifying to live through. I hate having to talk to cis people who think they know what they're talking about but are actually being stupid as hell. I'd much rather get to hang out in a flesh church.



I was also inspired by "Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said," by Philip K. Dick, and the concept of "Sixes" as secret genetically engineered celebrities. Good stuff.

A big inspiration was disappointment and anger towards celebrities whom I had grown to think of as good people who then turned around and supported immoral causes, and the arguments among fans that said celebrities had no choice lest they have fewer opportunities in the industry. I began to think about how much one sacrifices for power and fame, and the excuses someone would make to themselves about their compliance to great evil.



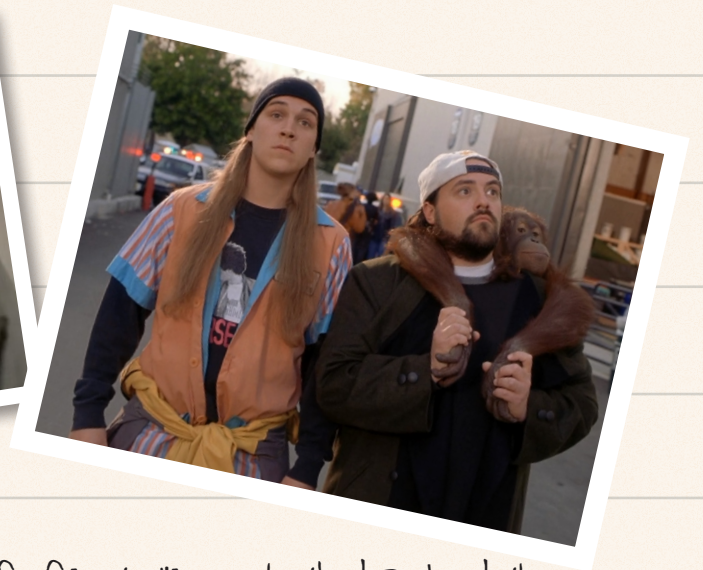
# ARTIST STATEMENT

My film is a mixed media animation incorporating traditionally animated 2D and stop-motion elements. It follows the protagonist at a party for their estranged childhood best friend who is now famous and is ascending to godhood. Celebrities/gods and other features associated with them are represented by Barbies and stop-motion, while the normal characters and world are 2D animated. I wanted to explore the way the rich and famous are worshipped and live in a world completely different from that of average people, and the lengths people will go to achieve that level of fame and power. How much suffering are you willing to ignore, or even inflict yourself if it means you can remain in your position of wealth and privilege? At what point of separating yourself from the rest of humanity do you lose what makes you human?





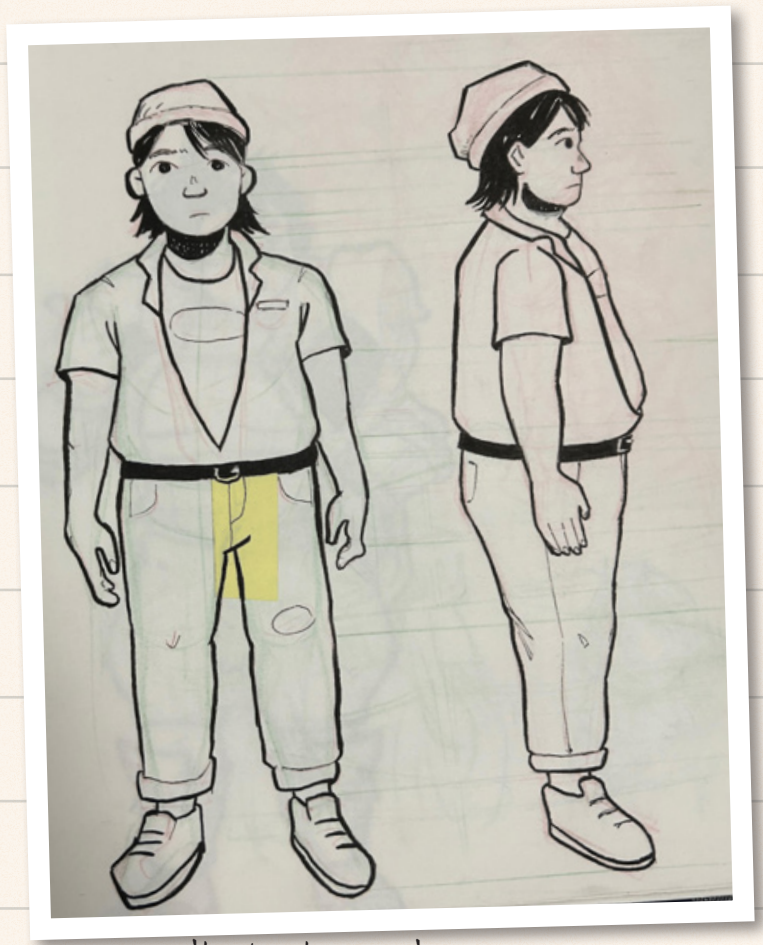
# CHARACTER DESIGN



I was intentionally basing Beetle's outfit off of Jay in "Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back" (beanie, open collared shirt over T-shirt), and unintentionally basing parts of their design off of Silent Bob (longish dark hair, fat, green), which I realized later when taking screenshots of the film to show the thesis server how their outfit was based off of Jay's. I wanted Beetle to have a casual slacker vibe but not just be in a T-shirt, and I had watched a bunch of Kevin Smith movies recently.



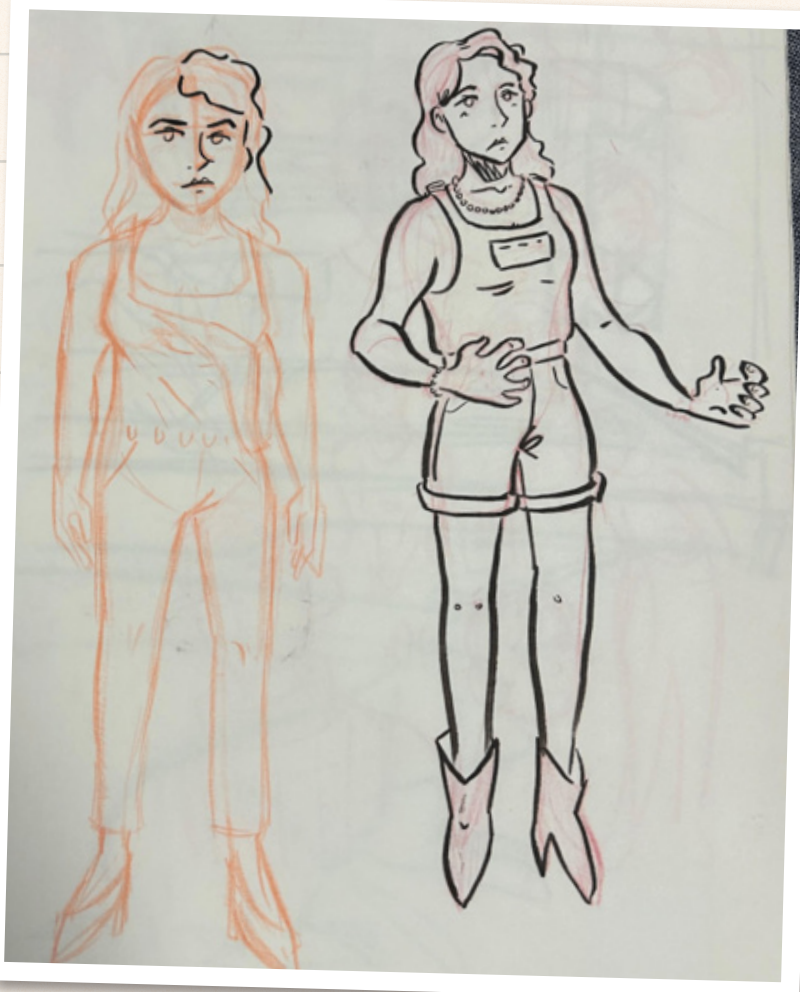




Beetle development



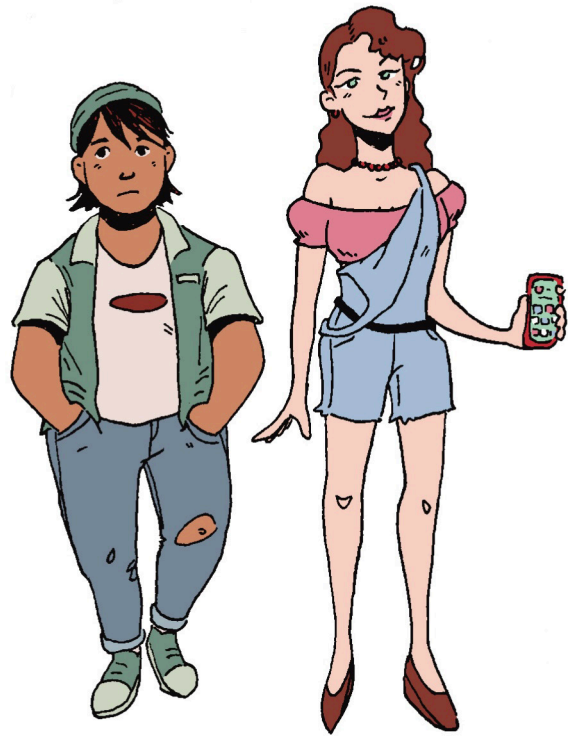




Rosy development. I knew I wanted her to wear overalls, but stylish, to show how her love of gardening had been co-opted and turned into something marketable and sexy. This doesn't come across that much since I cut the scenes with them as children.



Final designs! Except not really because Rosy doesn't wear that belt. That was too much work.



Childhood designs that did not make it into the final film :C



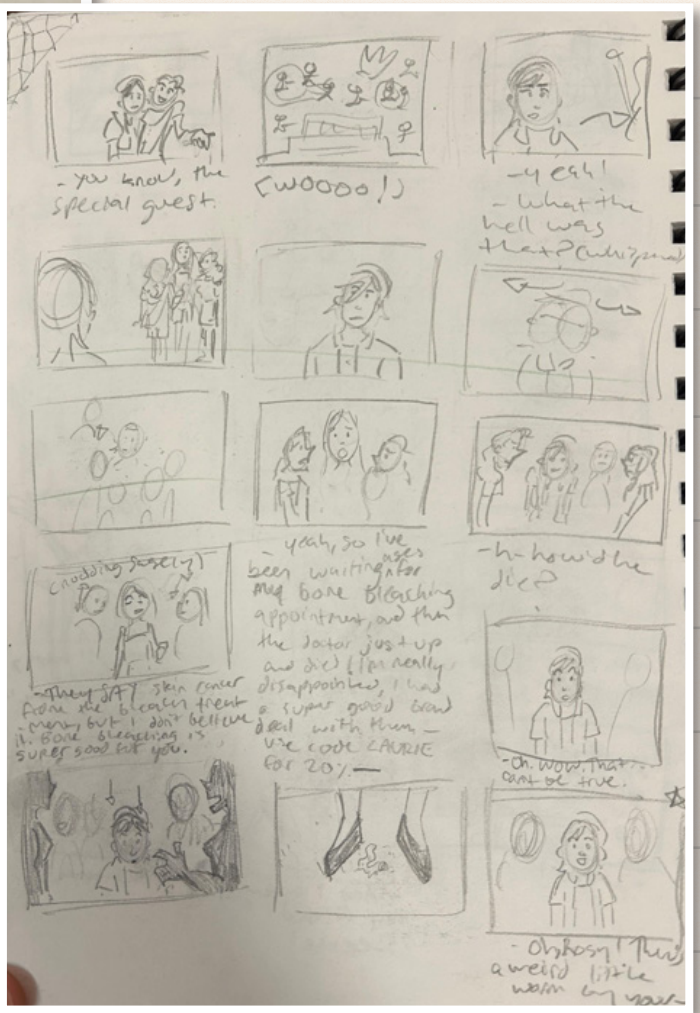
# STORY DEVELOPMENT

The way I wrote this story wasn't smart but creativity possesses me at different moments and puppets my body in short spurts and I have to get out the ideas any way I can!

I jot down notes and poop out thumbnails and then make sense of them later. Here are some of those poops.



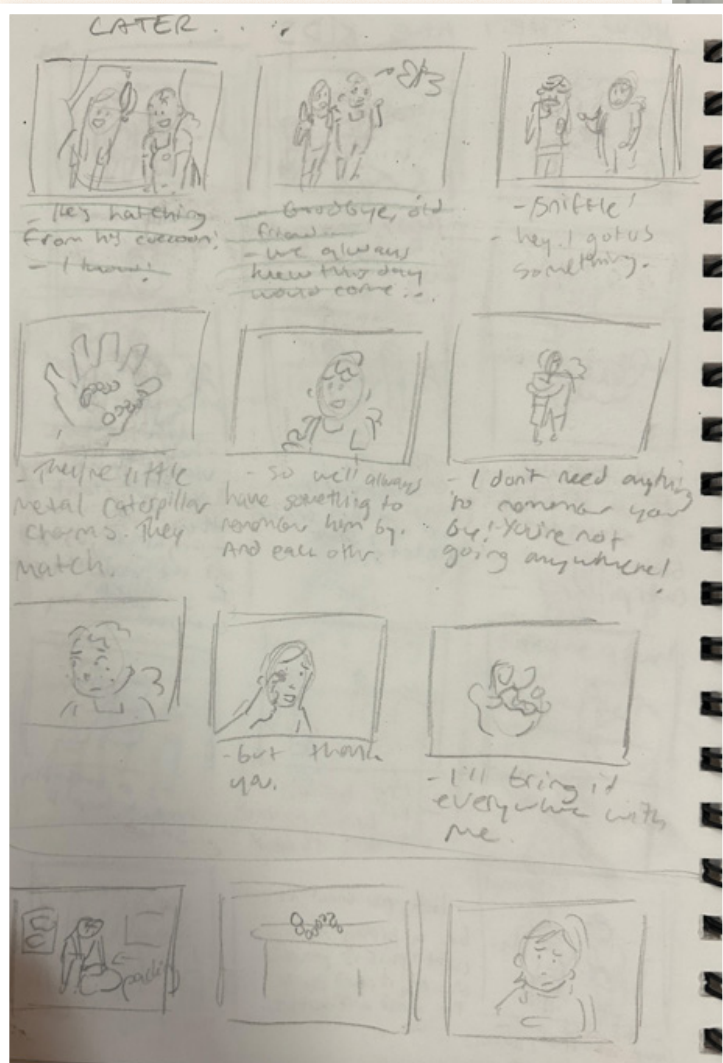








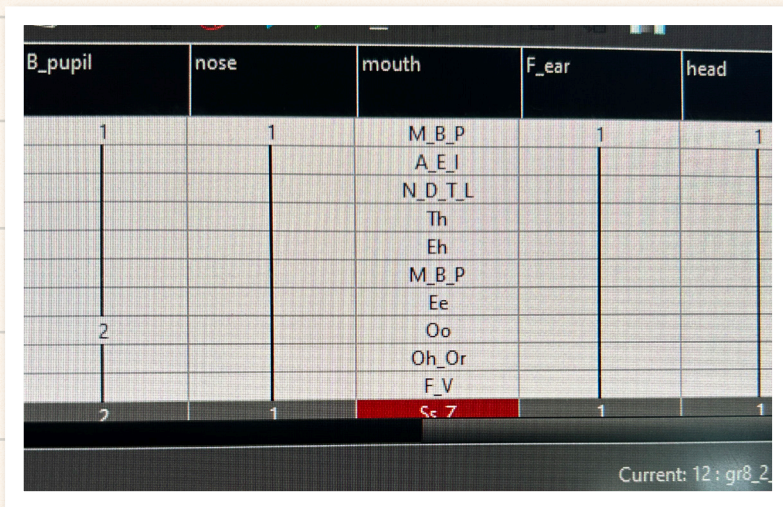




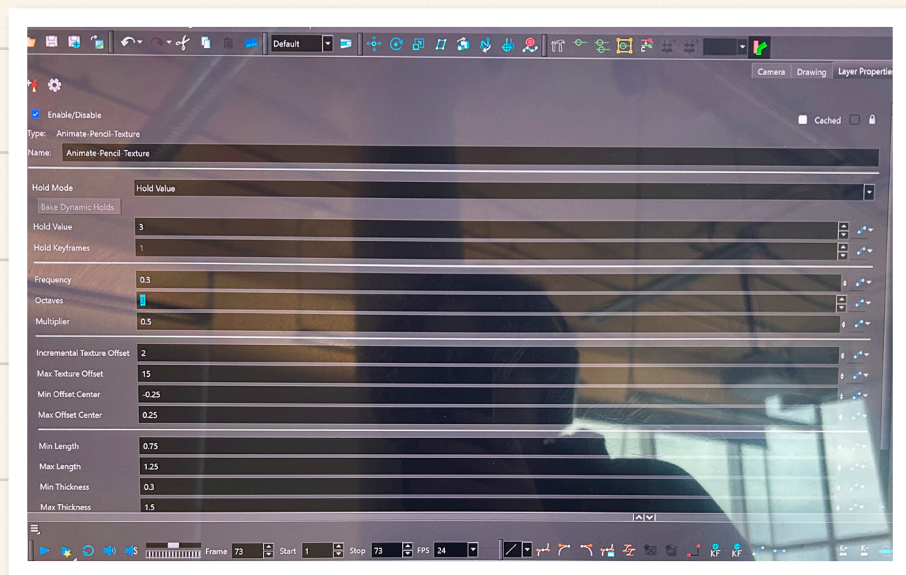


# ANIMATION TIME

Originally, I was gonna animate all the 2D parts traditionally, but quickly realized that would take wayyyy too long. I started out animating in TVPaint, and then also animated a fair amount in Toon Boom Harmony since I was taking a class on it and I learned there was an auto-boil feature with the "animate pencil texture" node. I also learned how to use the x-sheet to make a lip sync rig in Harmony, and how to use the "custom toolset" feature in TVPaint to do a similar thing.

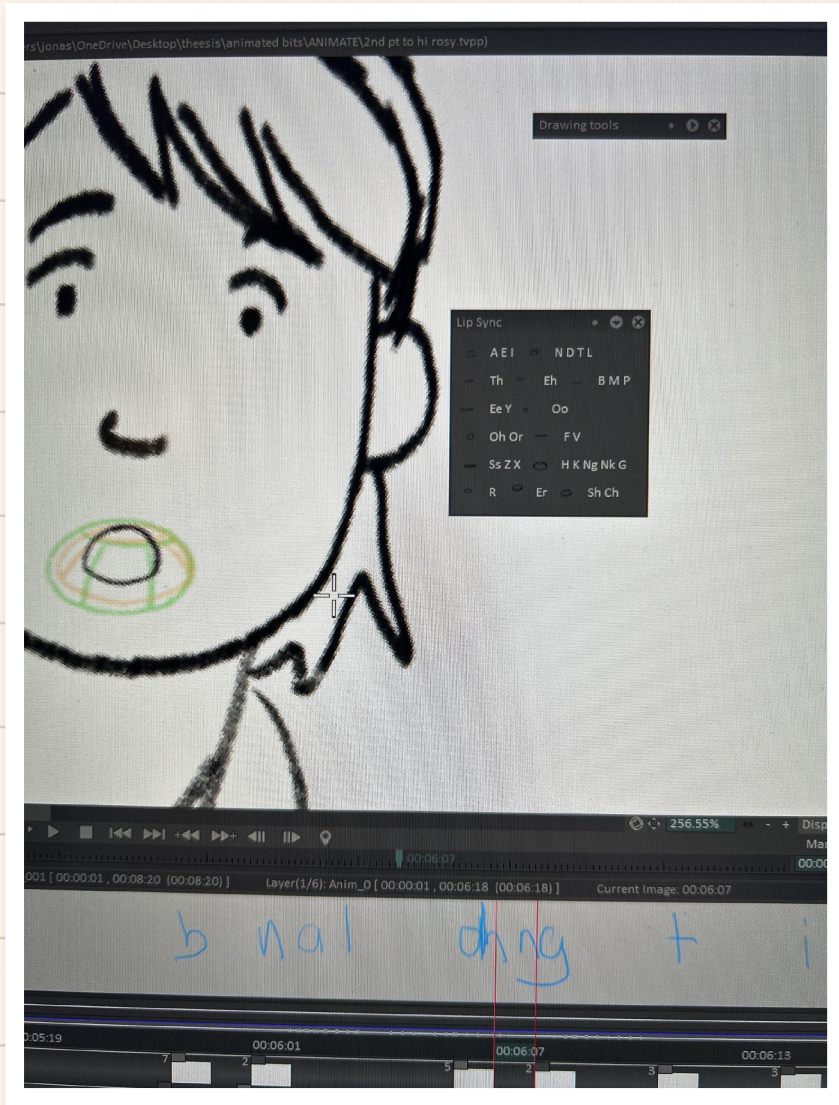


Toon Boom Harmony  
X-sheet



Animate Pencil Texture  
node my beloved...



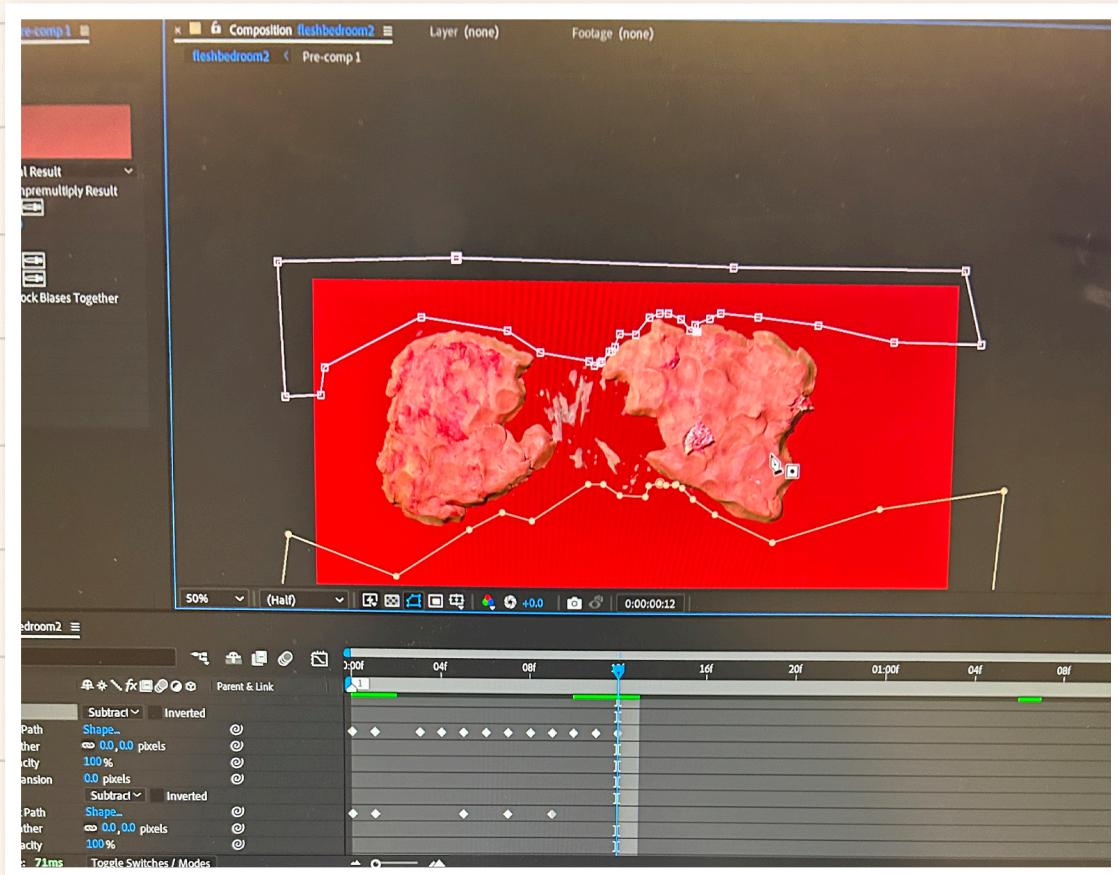


Lip sync rig made on TVPaint

Placeholder background made out of shapes in Aftereffects.







Compositing!





Left: World's worst setup  
Below: Other stuff





# STOP MOTION FABRICATION

"Jonas, how can I make my own legally distinct non-Barbie puppet with unsettling face replacements out of a Barbie?" I hear you say. Luckily for you, dear reader, this is the question I am asked the most in my day-to-day life, so I have prepared a simple guide.



STEP 1: Acquire a barbie with full articulation. This can be a Made-to-Move model, but the pre-2016 reboot Fashionistas bodies also work, and have less noticable joints.

Step 2: WIPE THEIR FACES. This is so you don't get in trouble with Mattell for using their art in your movie. You don't have to do this, but it can be fun. Use 100% acetone for this, or nail polish remover if its all you have access to. I learned a lot from doll customizing youtube.





STEP 3: Make a mold of your Barbie's face. Do this before you re-draw the face, obviously. Actually, don't redraw the face until I tell you. There's steps to this.

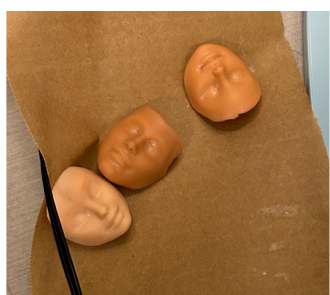
Just take some Sculpey you've been kneading and press it onto the face of your doll hard enough that it takes a good print, and then carefully maneuver the clay off of the doll. This takes longer than you'd think, since it's very easy to not press down hard enough, and even easier to fuck up the clay when you're taking it off. The nose probably won't be as long as it's supposed to be in your mold, and this is fine. You can fix it later.

Once you're happy with your mold, bake it according to the directions on your package of clay. Let it cool before you use it or you will burn your fingies.



STEP 4: Cut off the doll's face and fill their empty head with with epoxy and magnets. Pop off the head of your doll (save the neck peg!), then carefully use an exacto blade and carve off the face of your doll around the edges. Once you're done, arrange your mini magnets so you know which pole is which and begin filling up the empty head of the doll so their face has a smooth surface to be up against. Before the epoxy can set, push in the mini magnets, then put a little more epoxy over them to keep them secure.

wait for the epoxy to fully set, and then paint over the grey epoxy with gesso, then paint that matches the skin tone as close as it can. This is so the grey doesn't peek out from under the faces.





STEP 5: Use a dremmel in the neck hole of the head to make sure there's enough space for the plastic peg to go back into it. I don't have a photo for this but it's not hard. Wear safety glasses and a mask so you don't get bits of epoxy dust in your eyes or lungs.



STEP 6: Take your Sculpey and press it into the face mold as hard as you can without making it impossible to remove. Once you've removed it, fix any errors with your sculpting tools, and then change the expression and mouth shape to what you want it to be while still maintaining the molded parts. I stole this method from a film Jill did last year.



Once you're happy with the face, remove as much excess clay as you can from the back while still keeping enough so that it bakes in a position that won't fuck it up. Leave some excess clay on the sides and top for reasons I will explain later. Then bake according to the clay's package instructions. Repeat until you have all the expressions and mouth shapes you want.

STEP 7: Once the baked faces have cooled, use your dremmel to sand off the excess parts. Make sure the face is thick enough in the back for it to lie somewhat flat on the head without looking too weird. Take breaks to line up the face to the head and check against the face you cut off as well. You don't want to make the face too small and have it not cover the whole head.

This is where the excess clay on the sides comes in. The exact shape of the head has changed slightly now that it is full of epoxy, so you can use the excess to cover up more of the face. Make marks in pencil to help you match more exactly.



STEP 8: Carefully superglue the mini magnets to the back of the faces (including the one you cut off). Make sure the poles line up correctly with the magnets in the head. Marking the sides with a paint marker and testing which ones connect to the head is a good strategy. It gets harder to attach the magnets as you glue more of them on, because they want to connect to the ones already glued onto the face. Be very careful and wear gloves so you don't get superglue on your hands! It is also helpful to have a toothpick or tool to keep the magnets in place while the glue dries, so they don't jump onto the other magnet and get glued together.

STEP 9: Paint your faces with a layer of gesso. Once that's dry, paint them again with paint that matches the doll's skin tone as closely as possible. Or not as closely as possible if you're going for something weird and off-putting.



STEP 10: Spray the blank faces (including the one you cut off!) with Mr. Super Clear or some other matte finish and wait for them to dry. I used Morgan's Mr. Super Clear because she had some that she wasn't using. Wait for the finish to dry (this may take longer than you'd think). Also be sure to wear a mask and use a fume extractor while spraying the finish! Actually, you should have been doing that for the epoxy and the acetone too.

I don't have a photo of the sprayed blank faces so this is the faces with features on them. Pretend those are not present.



STEP 11: Sketch on the faces with colored pencil, then paint them on with acrylic paint markers or a tiny paintbrush. Do this to the cut off face as well, as it is your neutral expression. Try to make the features match, then let them dry.



STEP 12: Spray all the faces with Mr. Super Clear again. Look at the image for step 11. It will look like that. Try to get good coverage and as few bubbles as possible, then let dry.



STEP 13: Drill a hole in the back of the doll's body that is close to the size of your brass metal tubing. Knead some epoxy and stick it into the end of the tubing, then push the tubing into the hole until the end is all the way against the inside of the doll's stomach. Use more epoxy to seal the rest of the hole to fortify the connection. Now the doll can be used with a rig!





Once you connect the head to the body, you're done! You can drill holes in the feet if you want, but I was lazy and just taped the feet to the ground. You may have to chop off some of the neck peg for the head to fit onto it, but this shouldn't affect movement.

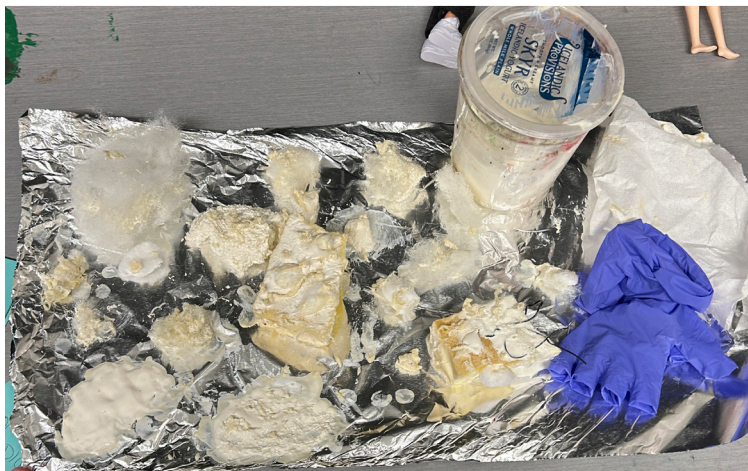
I also made clothes for some of the puppets and re-rooted one of their heads. If you're going to reroot you should do that before you cut off the face and fill the head with epoxy.





## Supplies list that I forgot to include earlier:

- Doll with full articulation
- Acetane
- Q-tips (for the Acetane)
- Sculpey
- Acrylic paint
- Gesso
- Epoxy (I used SteelStick)
- Superglue
- Mr. Super Clear
- Mini magnets
- Brass tubing
- Clay tools
- Drill
- Dremmel



Above: setting up Rosy for her death scene

Left: Latex flesh experiments



FLESH CHURCH! I build this bad boy for another class last year, and the film I made with it was very short and didn't make a lot of sense, but I still liked it. I wanted to include the flesh church in my thesis film as well since I spent so much time making it and it's sick as hell. Unfortunately I had to oil it up before every shot so it looked wet.



Most of the eyes in it are movable, but not all of them. Some got stuck when I attached them with latex. I would move the eyes with one of my clay tools in between shots. Shout out to Orosco for puppeting the church! The position he had to be in did not look comfortable at all but he did not complain.





# FRIENDIES & FANART



Leo, my thesis husband <3



Top left: at the Brass Tap post-Stick in the Dirt

Middle and bottom: Buckin' Bash







Left: Having a yaoiful time in NY

Middle Right: Having a normal good time in NY



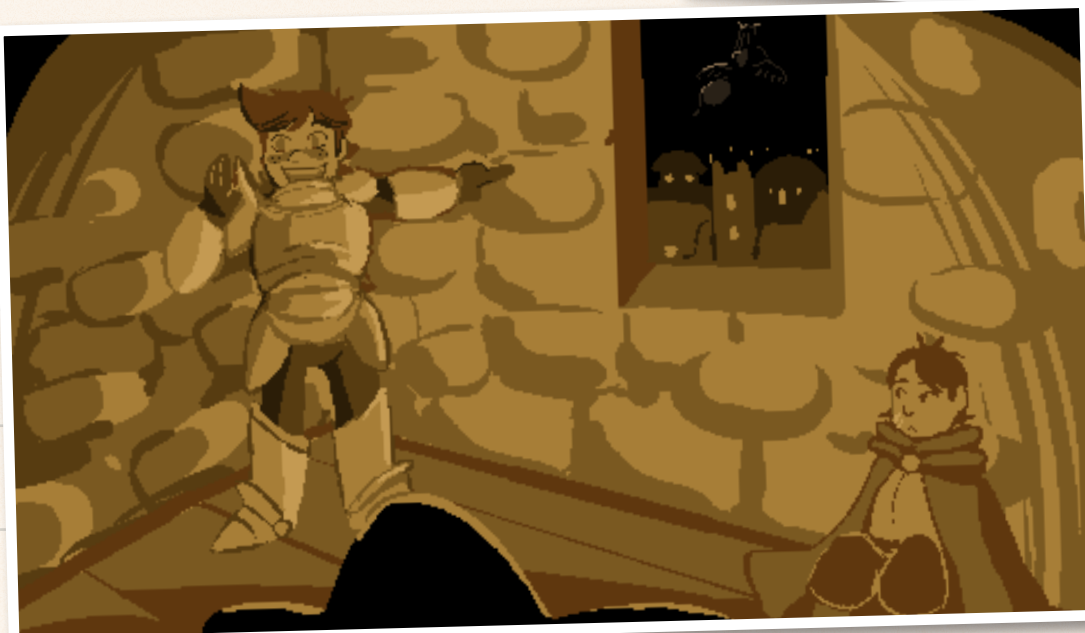
Bottom left: more Buckin' Bash





Left: Lara's Secret Santa gift 2 me  
:) !!!!!

Right: Art of Rosy by Rosy ('s  
amazing voice actor Courtney)!!!!



Left: Beetle as a  
knight in H's thesis  
prologue!!! (They  
are in the bottom  
right corner. Also  
Matt from Kiki's  
film is there!)



Top right: Kiki's art of Beetle!!!



Beetle, Rosy, and Jommy Brommy in drag, by Arin (who did my credits!)



# ABOUT THE ARTIST

Jonas Dell-Bosak is a transmasculine genderqueer artist who wasn't sure whether or not this part was supposed to be written in the third person or not. They like body horror and oreos and cats. Their favorite authors are Phillip K. Dick, Octavia Butler, Ursula Le Guin, and Jeff VanderMeer. They have watched roughly five hunderd movies. Below is a photo of them busting a move.









