Jelly Trip

A Major Qualifying Project Final Report

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Advised by: Professor Edward Gutierrez


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Abstract

The main goal of this project was to create a visually appealing animation featuring a jellyfish that follows a non traditional jelly life. In order to further complicate the animation, another goal was to incorporate lots of colors and patterns and experiment with making the animation kind of abstract and psychedelic. In order to achieve this, the color scheme remained rather vibrant and patterns were introduced where artistically possible.

Acknowledgements

For this major qualifying report, I would like to acknowledge Prof. Gutierrez for all of his

help and instruction with this animation.

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Concept Creation

Jelly Trip is a short animated abstract film that follows a day in the life of the non traditional jellyfish. In this animation project, the jellyfish is able to do human-like activities like riding a bike and playing the piano.

In this instance, topic selection was really mainly based on what topics inspired me in my everyday life. I am extremely passionate about marine life and have found an artistic connection with Jellyfish and other forms of marine life with the majority of my work.

Jelly Trip is set in a make believe world in which things do not necessarily make sense as they would on earth.


Figure 1: *Catfish* by Helena Cohen 2016, Watercolor on Canvas, 5 by 12 feet

In order to more fully explain where some of my artistic inspiration comes from I am also including previous works of art that I have completed that, for me, inspired the concept of an aquatic life performing. The painting above, titled *Catfish,* is one of the biggest pieces I have made so far under this theme. This watercolor triptych is composed of 3 5 by 4 feet canvases which were loaded with watercolor in order to represent the ocean. The jellyfish were then added on top using more watercolor/ gouache paints. In the end I decided to also incorporate the abstract paper squares/ rectangles in order to show human trash/ pollution and how it was obstructing and kind of constricting the jellyfish. This painting was first completed during a summer intensive paint program at the Rhode Island School of Design.

Figure 2: *Octopus Playing the Violin* by Helena Cohen, 2020, Watercolor on canvas, india ink, and mixed media, 12 by 24"

While much smaller, this piece also felt relevant and important to include. This painting was completed during the 2020 quarantine. The gears around the octopus' brain are supposed to represent how intelligent they are as marine creatures. This painting also inspired work on a clay sculpture of an octopus playing the violin, still under progress. The octopus is inking in this painting polluting the water with both the black ink and pieces of the gears in his mind.
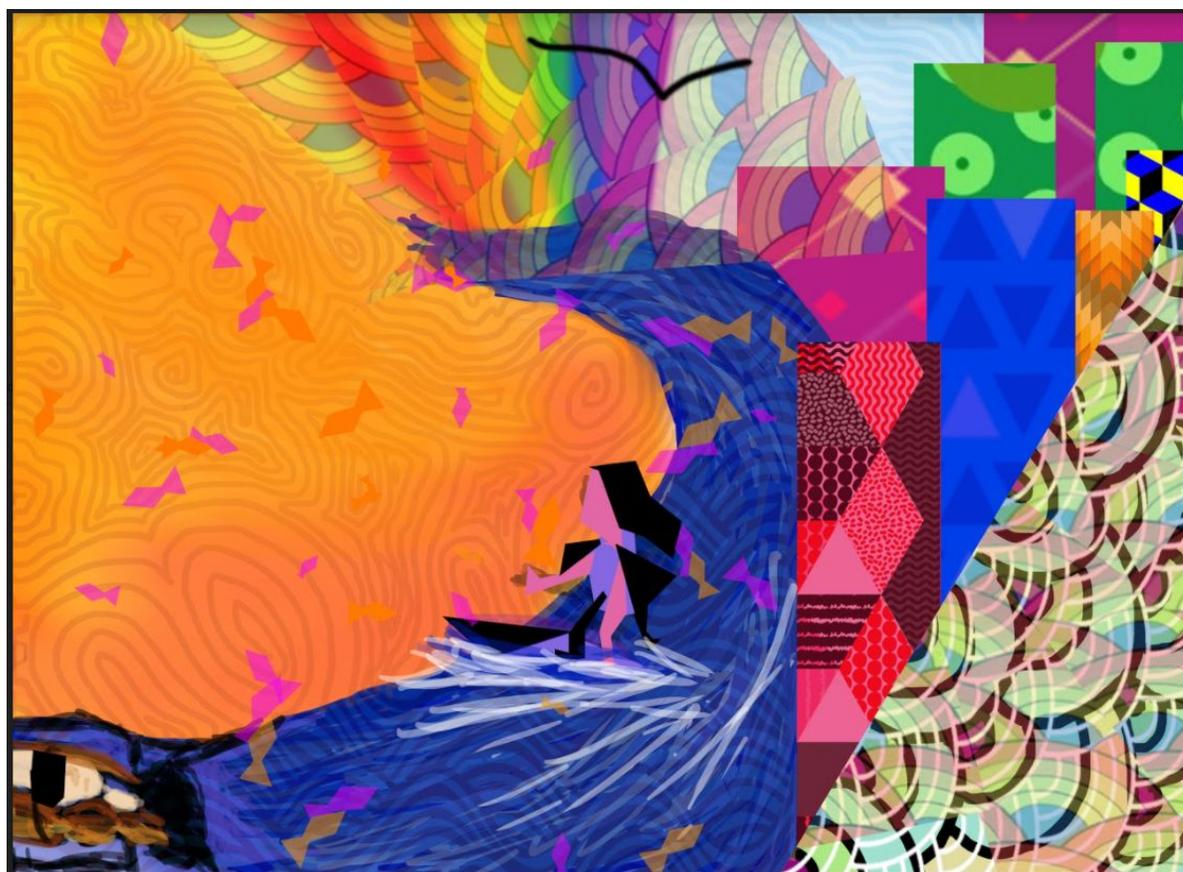
Figure 3 - *Digital Painting Final: Dreaming Girl* by Helena Cohen, Photoshop 2018

I decided to include this piece in the MQP report as well as I feel it really exemplifies the kind of psychedelic patterns I tried to incorporate in my video. This is a digital painting of a girl dreaming. It is not really related subject wise to the MQP but I took heavy inspiration from the abstract shapes and patterns within the shapes. I also really thought the bed turning into the wave was a nice transitional move that really helped inspire me when thinking of ways for the shapes to warp in my film as well. This piece was created as part of a homework assignment for a class in digital painting taken as a part of my course requirements at WPI.
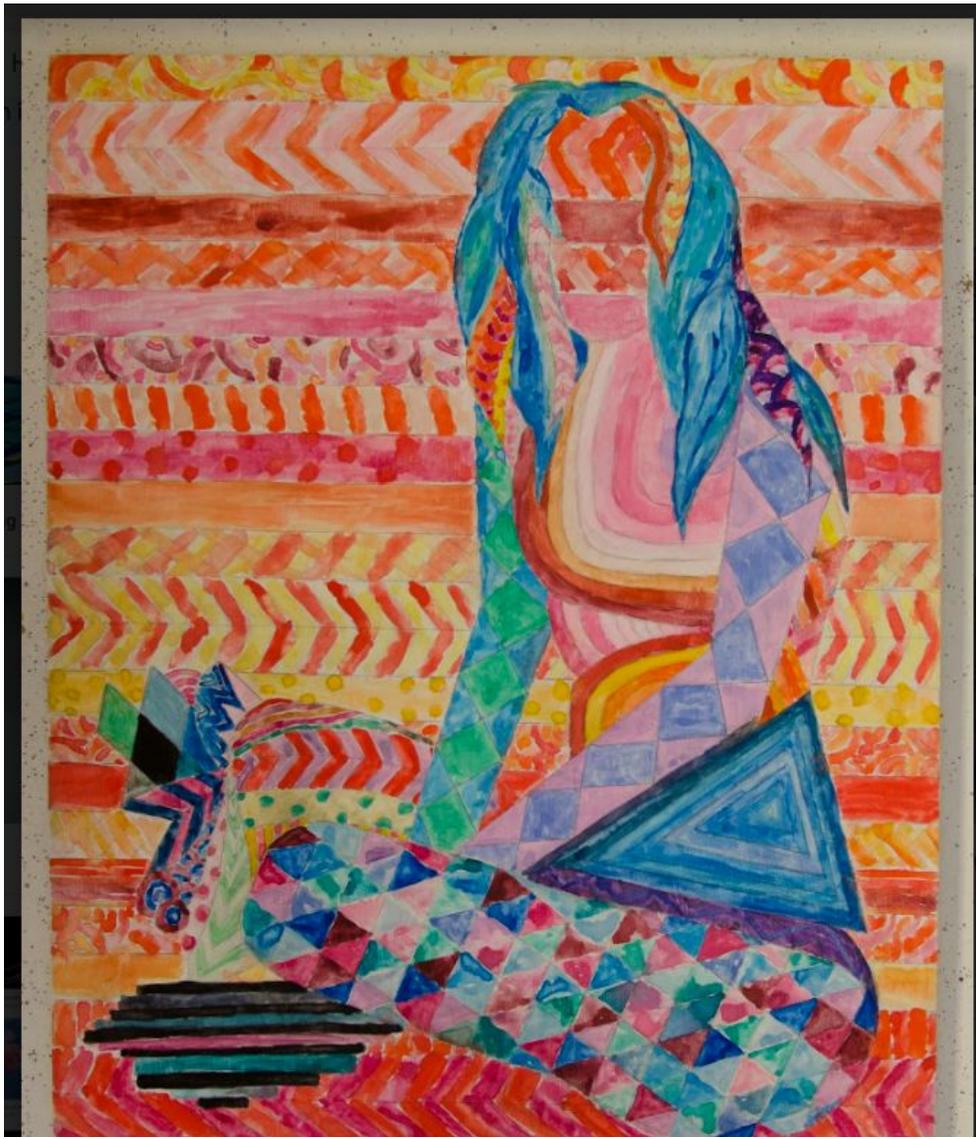

Figure 4: *Rainbow Girl* by Helena Cohen, Watercolor on Canvas, 18 by 24, 2017

This painting, though also unrelated to marine life, I feel is important to

include as it is one of the first paintings I created that feature this kind of abstract, pattern, mosaic-like style. This assignment was created in response to a prompt in a High School Studio Art class asking us to create/paint an abstract human of some kind.

Figure 5: *L'île d'Oléron* by Helena Cohen (2019) Acrylic on Canvas, 3 by 2 ft, mixed media

This painting was chosen to be included in the MQP report as it too as a kind of mixed-media, mosaic aspect. On this painting, instead of gears, I have glued down mosaic tiles in a variety of colors that, in my opinion,

are essential to the picture. This painting was created through boredom and my own free will.

Figure 6: *The Ugly Duckling* by Helena Cohen (2018) Photoshop

This digital piece was also included in the MQP report because of its style. It was created as a response to a prompt in class here at WPI addressing alternative pre-existing movie posters.

Figure 7: Photograph of a wall in L'ile D'Oleron by Helena Cohen, 2019

This photograph was also included in the report as it was sitting at this very bench surrounded by a fish graffiti abstract painting that I first thought of making an animated film about a jellyfish. This is a spot I visit often and I particularly love the recent(ish) mural they put up.

Story

Jelly Trip tells the story of a young jelly fish entering and embracing his life in the "real" world.

The short film opens with a shot of the ocean. As the waves are crashing, the sun begins to rise in the early morning. A stray gust of wind pushes around a plastic bag which floats through the air before landing on the ocean's surface where it then gets pulled underwater by a riptide. The rip tide spins the bag around which causes the jellyfish to emerge and essentially signifies his birth. The jelly, confused, spins around violently before inking like a squid across the screen. At this moment is when the patterns ensue.

The next scene then cuts to a shot of the jellyfish riding a bike throughout the city. The Jellyfish dismounts its bike and locks it in front of a large building marked "JELLYTOWN MUSIC HALL". The film then cuts to the inside of the music hall, where the concert is taking place. Inside the hall, the audience members include a variety of other sea creatures. After a few seconds, the Jelly comes out from behind the curtain and begins to play the piano. After a few more seconds, the colors on the screen begin to blur together in real time. This is done by screen capturing and using the liquify tool on photoshop at the same time. The colors will continue to blur into a spiral form until no longer recognizable to the viewer.

The Jellyfish then falls onto a field of golden hay in a spiral, following the formation of the spiral of colors in the previous scene. When it lands, the Jelly begins using its tentacles as arms and uses a spade to plant some pretty flowers into the hay field. From there, the camera zooms underground to show the seed sprouting and turning into a flower. After the flower is fully grown, it detaches from the stem and multiplies before spinning around the scene in a spiral fashion. The flowers then turn into mushrooms which then turn into jellyfish which then proceed to perform a bunch of tiny squid ink splats with patterns, similar to what happened earlier in the animation with the large Jellyfish.

Process

The process of creating the animatic began a little rough, but after dealing with some technical issues with Adobe Premiere Pro 2020 and making better use of my time, it should not be too hard to complete the project within the intended deadline

I began by creating rough storyboard examples of what I wanted to happen within the animatic. That art was later used as a guideline in creating more finished pieces of art that would be stitched together in Adobe Premiere Pro 2020 to create the animation.

The actual process of animation was definitely hard work. There were times when the process of drawing each segment felt a bit tedious but I pushed through and, hopefully, the results will be worth it in the end.

The animation was completed for the most part as a series of images drawn in Adobe Photoshop which were then animated using Adobe Premiere Pro. In order to achieve

certain more advanced visual effects, I also used a screen capture software and recorded

some of the photoshop drawing happening in real time. I completed this process by using

my hand held drawing tablet to draw out the key poses and backgrounds in Adobe

Photoshop . I then imported the .png files in order to bring movement to the individual

pieces in Adobe Premiere. This allowed me to create a more smooth flow of animation and

attempt to bring the drawings to life.
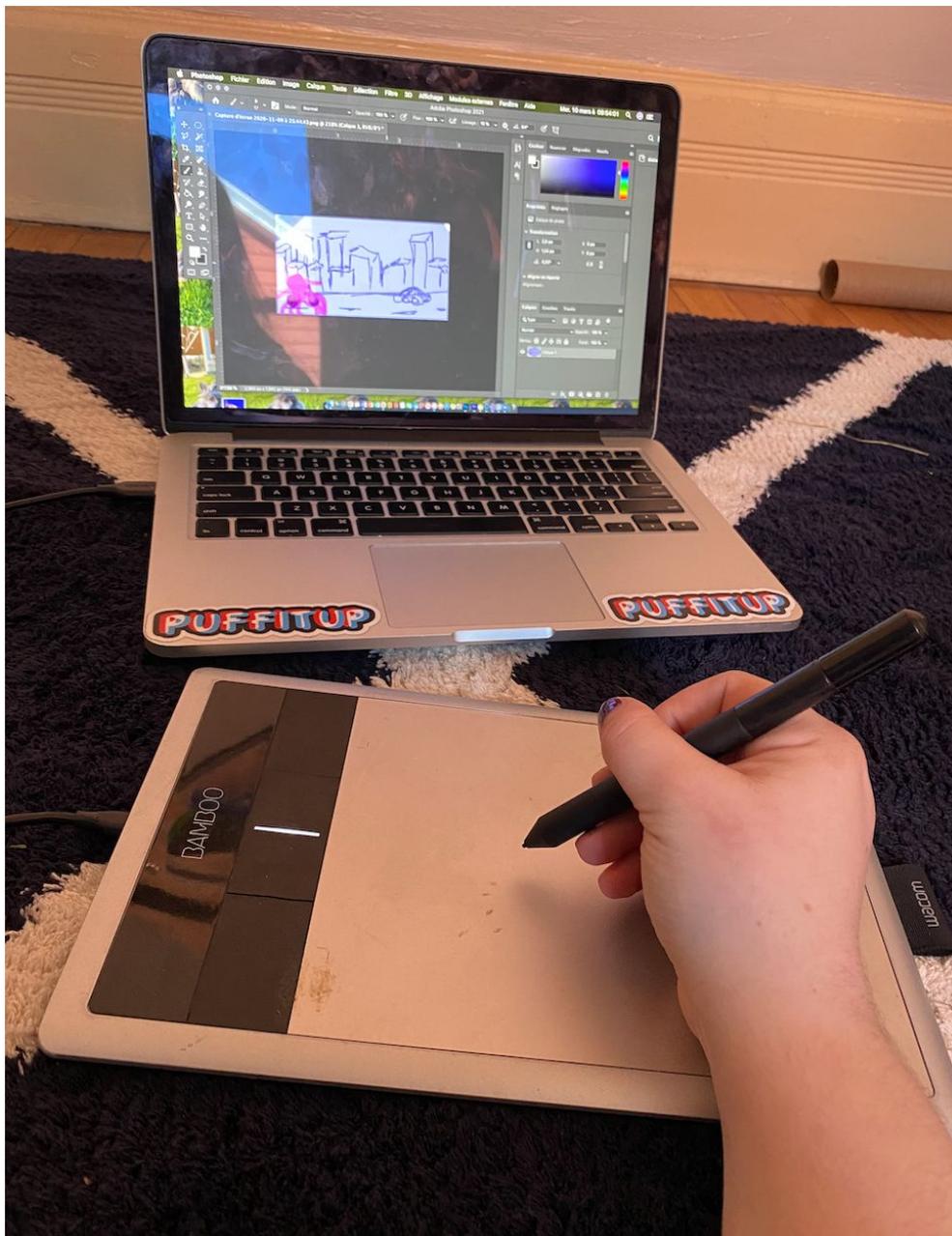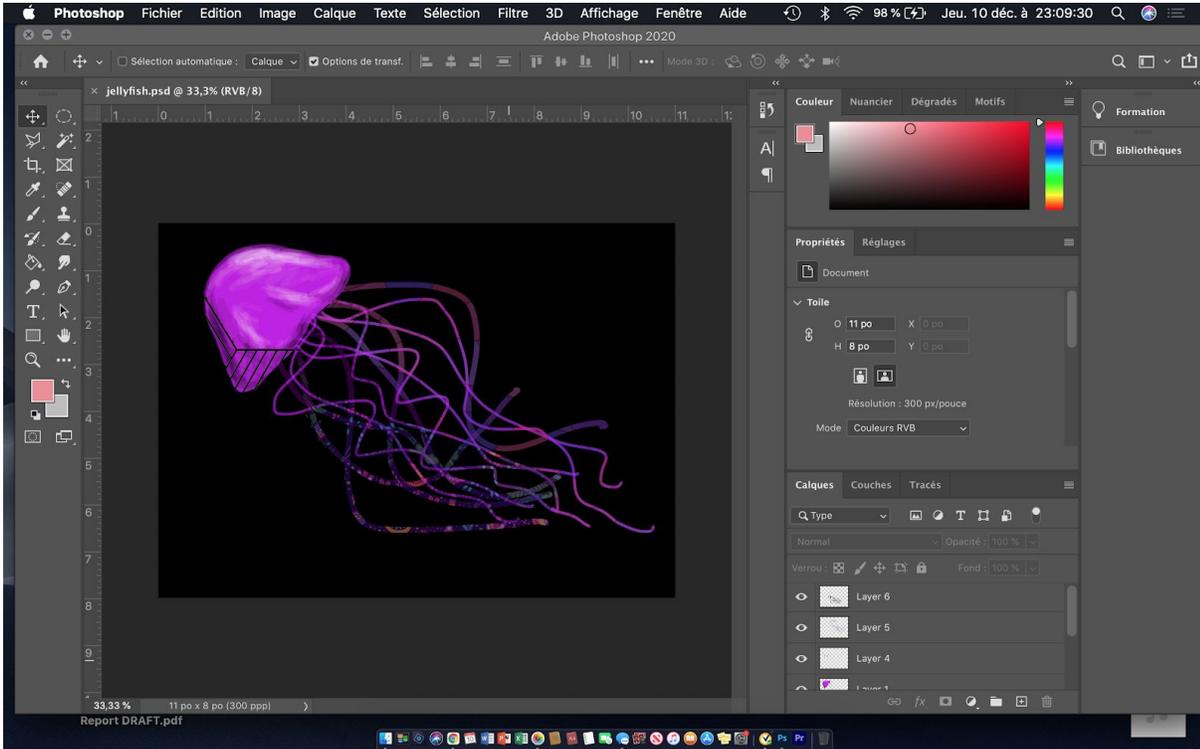
Figure 9 & 10: Screen grabs during the Adobe Photoshop drawing Process and during the

Adobe Premiere Pro editing process
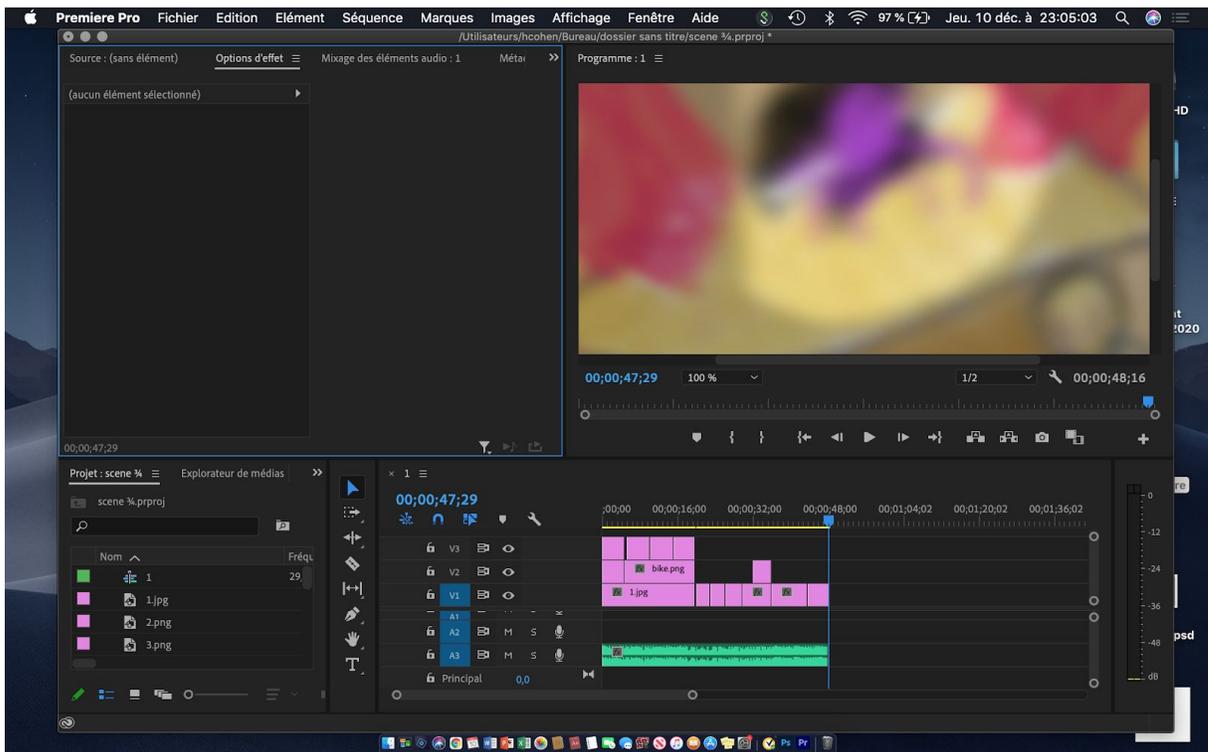
In these two screenshots one can see what I can see on the screen when I am actively drawing and or animating the scenes. This is a process that kind of happens at the same time in this style of animating as there are always more scenes that can be drawn to improve the quality of the animation.

Music

For the music I chose the song How Long? By Vampire Weekend. I selected the song by listening to a bunch of my favorite artists and selecting which song I thought would go best. I really liked the lyric "How long till we sink to the bottom of the sea?" in this song and I noted how the piano noises might make it fun for the jelly fish to be playing the piano at one point in the animation.

Figure 8:

The Father of The Bride

Album by Vampire Weekend

Character Design
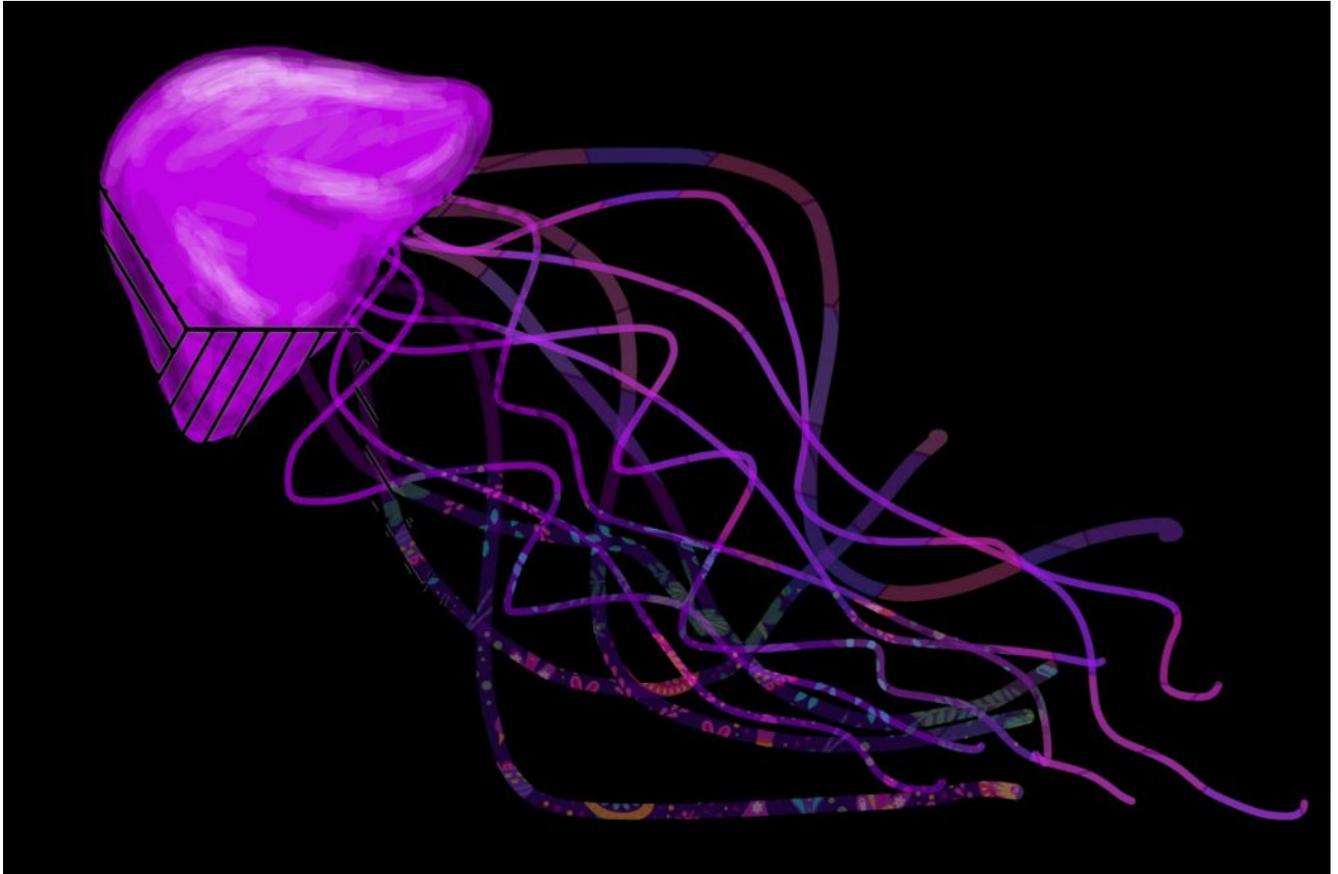
Figure 11: Jelly (View from the side)

Photoshop 2020

In conjunction with the style of the film, the Jelly too was also designed to be a bit abstract. Though this was not achieved to the level I had hoped within the actual animatic, one of the things that I would change in my animatic if I had more time and resources, would be the detail in the Jelly. In the pictures here once can see how I've incorporated different patterns and shapes in the tentacles in order to make the Jelly seem a bit more

psychedelic. In my opinion, this really stands out, in the following picture, in the scenes where the Jelly is inking like a squid.

Figure 12: Jelly (View from the top (when inking like a quid)

Photoshop 2020

Style/Inspiration

The artistic style of the animatic was mostly just inspired by the traditional/digital painting style mixed with patterns and other shapes in order to make them seem more abstract, but still representational.

Found Images from the web that provided inspiration:
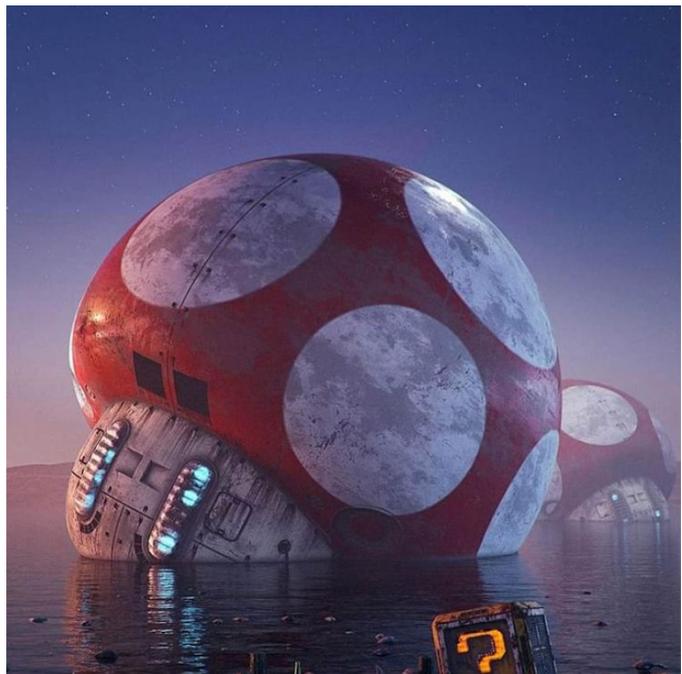
During the research phase of my project, these are some of the images that moved me. In the first image, I particularly liked the way the colors of the sky kind of blur together. I thought it was a cool kind of abstraction and wanted to include it in my references.

I felt as if I should include these pictures as a reference as I found inspiration from the way the colors and undertones seem to be altered and kind of neon. I really liked the use of the opposing color as shadows.

I included these photos as a reference as the patterns in the blue painting particularly struck me as inspiration when trying to come up with patterns in the film. I also was heavily inspired by the photo and idea of the kiwi under UV light. The way the kiwi kind of glows red instead of being its normal green color was particularly inspiring to me.
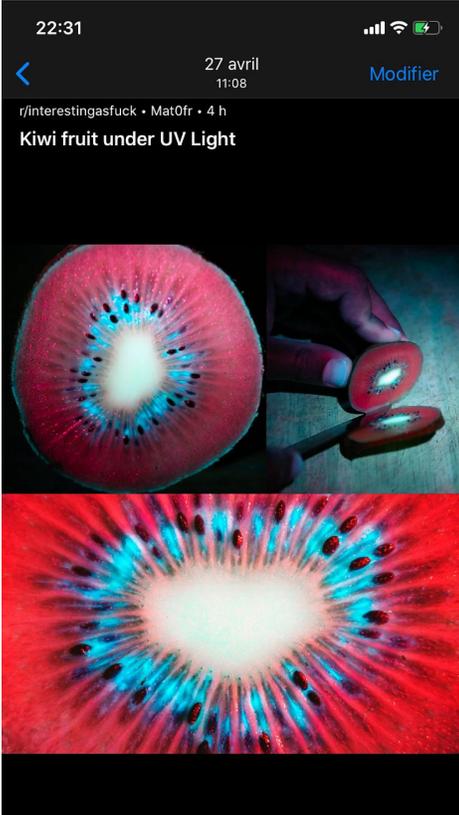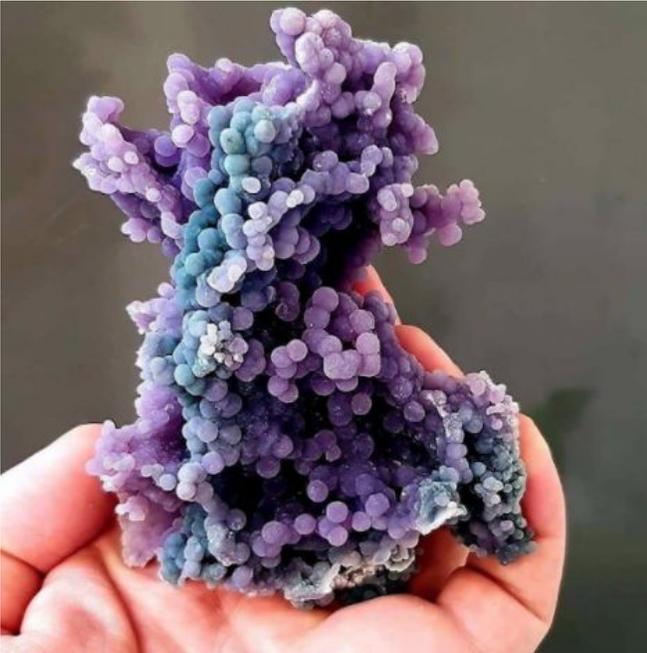
Thoughts Upon Completion

Now that the animatic is near completion, there is much to reflect upon. After three full terms of work and nearly forty hour work weeks during them, this challenge proved to be a bit more difficult than expected. The task at hand was most definitely a lot of work and for that reason the level of quality of drawing in each individual scene is lower than I had hoped. If I had more time, and perhaps a team of assistants, in the future I would definitely want to go back and make some of the drawings a little nicer. I would also definitely want to add more psychedelic patterns and fun effects like the blurring of the screen. I definitely think this animation is promising for a future and perhaps longer animated film.

Although this animation was particularly long and difficult in such a short time, I am somewhat pleased with how it turned out. I have employed a bunch of new techniques that I had not used in Adobe Premiere previously. I am particularly pleased with how some of these techniques came to be in the end and look forward to expanding my knowledge of various animation software for the working world.

Conclusion

In the end I am somewhat proud of my work. I am extremely happy that I was able to finish animating the entire length of the movie in the time given. At nearly four minutes it was quite a task to accomplish in just a few months. Of course, my film isn't perfect and there are still improvements that could be made. In the future if I were to redo the project, I would definitely want to employ some teammates or a group of animateurs just to help flush out some more in between kinds of drawings. I think that with more time, I could have completed this myself, however it was difficult to keep drawing each and every frame. Another thing I'd like to change is that if I were to go back and work on the project some more, I would definitely want to add more of the patterns/ mosaic aspect to it. Originally I definitely wanted to include a lot more, however that was a lot of little parts to draw and stitch together.

Bibliography

Google Images

Appendix 1: Storyboards

Title: Date: Name:

Scene: 1   **Shot:** Plastic bag in sunlight

Audio:

Scene: 2   **Shot:** Bag lands in water & gets caught in spin

Audio:

Scene: 3   **Shot:** spinning
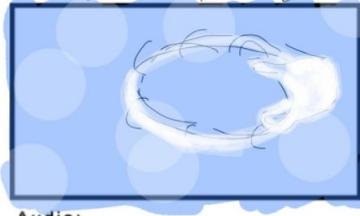
Audio:

Scene: 4   **Shot:** Jelly spins out of bag

Audio:

Scene: 5   **Shot:** zoom in on Jelly
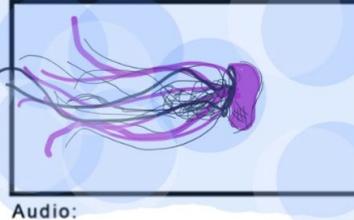
Audio:

Scene: 6   **Shot:** Jelly splats

Audio:

Title: Date: Name:

Scene: 7   **Shot:** Splat turns into patterns

Audio:

Scene: 8   **Shot:** City / Jelly riding bike

Audio:

Scene: 9   **Shot:** Riding across screen

Audio:
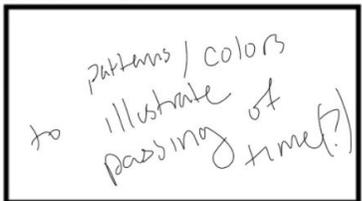
Scene: 10   **Shot:**
Patterns / colors to illustrate of passing time(?)
Audio:

Scene: 11   **Shot:** Locks bike

Audio:

Scene: 12   **Shot:** Jelly gives concert

Audio:

Scene: 13 Shot: Jelly in middle

Swirl
colors
from above
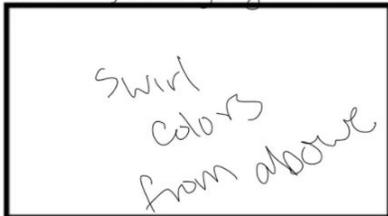
Audio:

Scene: 14 Shot: Jelly drops into feild
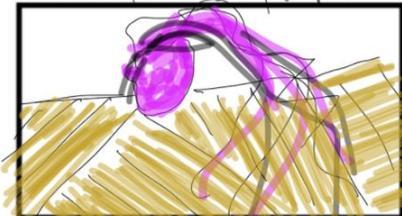
Audio:

Scene: 15 Shot: (zoom) Gardening

Audio:

Scene: 16 Shot: floral patter
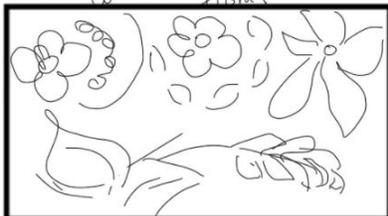
Audio:

Scene: 17 Shot: Jelly planting
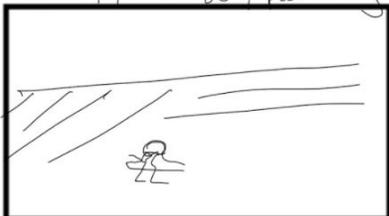
Audio:

Scene: 18 Shot: (zoom) flower seed
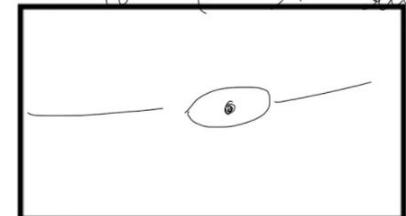
Audio:

Title: Date: Name:

Scene: 19 Shot: flower growing
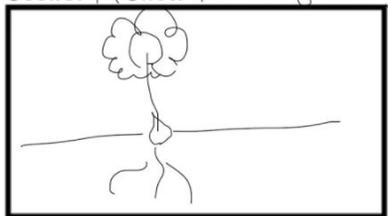
Audio:

Scene: 20 Shot: Swirl of flowrs
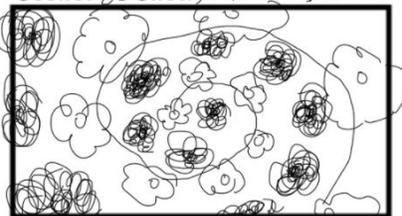
Audio:

Scene: 21 Shot: Flower → mushroo
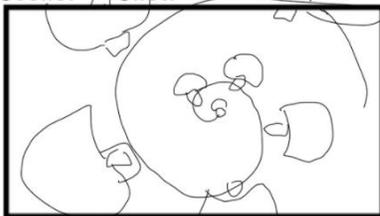
Audio:

Scene: 22 Shot: Mushroom → Jelly

Audio:

Scene: 22 Shot: all mini Jellies do the splat
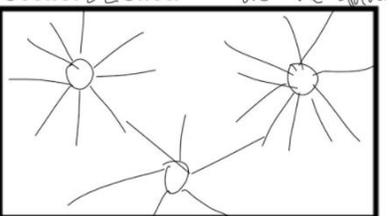
Audio:

Scene: Shot:
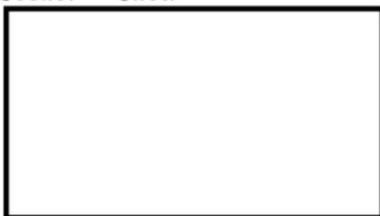
Audio:

Appendix 2: Cinematic Script

JELLY TRIP
By Helena Cohen
With special thanks to Professor Edward R Gutierrez & Professor Adryen Gonzalez

OPENING SCENE

CHARACTERS:
Jellyfish/ Plastic bag
Sun

LOCATION: At sea / underwater

MUSIC STARTS (HOW LONG? BY VAMPIRE WEEKEND)

From a dark sky, the sun begins to rise. It glows a vivid red and orange color in the early morning light. The sounds of waves crashing can be heard in the distance.

PLASTIC BAG
Drifts across the screen before settling on to the water for a few seconds. Suddenly, the bag is pulled underwater

CAMERA PANS DOWN UNDERWATER

PLASTIC BAG
Gets stuck around bubble ring that pulled it under water

JELLYFISH
Falls out of plastic bag and spins madly around the bubble ring

PLASTIC BAG
Drifts slowly off screen pulled by the current of the water

JELLYFISH
Continues spinning until the bubble disperses and ends dazed and confused

CAMERA FOCUSES ON JELLYFISH RATHER THAN THE PLASTIC BAG

JELLYFISH

Dazed and Confused, the Jellyfish starts together himself. He swims around the screen for a bit before swimming directly opposite of the camera. The Jellyfish than inks like a squid, but instead of black ink, the ink is a mess of psychedelic patterns

END OF OPENING SCENE

SCENE 2

CHARACTERS
Jellyfish
Extras

LOCATION: (Underwater) JellyTown

MUSIC CONTINUES (HOW LONG? BY VAMPIRE WEEKEND)

CAMERA IS PANNED OUT IN ORDER TO VIEW THE ENTIRE STREET

JELLYFISH
Rides bike across screen. In the opposite direction patterns and shapes float across the screen to illustrate the passing of time. At the end of the street the Jellyfish dismounts from his bike and locks it outside of a building labeled JELLYTOWN MUSIC HALL

CAMERA CUTS TO INSIDE JELLYTOWN MUSIC HALL

JELLYFISH
Plays violin on stage

EXTRAS (SEAHORSE, SMALL FISH, HERMIT CRABS, AND OTHER SMALL MARINE ANIMALS)
Gathered around stage enjoying the music, some can be dancing

CAMERA EFFECT IS APPLIED TO SCREEN SO THAT ALL THE COLORS SWIRL TOGETHER AND IMAGES ARE NO LONGER REPRESENTATIONAL

END SCENE 2

SCENE 3

CHARACTERS
Jellyfish
Flower/Mushroom/Mini Jellyfish

LOCATION
JellyTown corn fields

MUSIC CONTINUES

JELLYFISH
Drifts whimsically to the ocean floor. When he "lands" he finds himself surrounded in an underwater field of yellow corn

CAMERA ZOOMS IN TO SOLELY THE JELLY'S TENTACLES WRAPPED AROUND SPADES, FLOWERS, AND OTHER GARDENING OBJECTS

Jellyfish
Continues to plant as normal

SCREEN FLASHES WITH VIBRANT ABSTRACT FLORAL PSYCHEDELIC PATTERN

CAMERA ZOOMS OUT TO WIDESHOT OF JELLY PLANTING IN THE CORNFIELD

CAMERA CUTS TO SEED PLANTED IN THE GROUND

FLOWER
Grows in fast-motion. When the flower is done growing, it breaks off from the stem and joins a multitude of replica flowers in a swirling formation. Gradually these flowers sprout into mushrooms that are swirling around the screen. Then the mushrooms start to grow legs and turn into a swirling school of tiny jellyfish. After a few seconds of swirling, the mini jellies ink (like a squid but not black) and the screen turns into another mess of psychedelic patterns.

END SCENE 3

END OF FILM