

Ideas to Inspire and Invigorate the Art Classroom

Creating Simple Stop-motion Animation with Paper



Kick start your students' creativity with new ideas, approaches, and materials designed to challenge participants and take their work to a new level. Each art activity provides detailed instructions and connections to works of art at the MFAH as well as a list of accessible, affordable supplies and where you can purchase them.

This idea is geared for any instructor wanting to explore stop-motion animation and narrative storytelling using a digital program of your choice with suggestions provided depending on tools available to students.

Connection to the MFAH Collection

Stop-motion animation is an artistic filmmaking technique in which objects are physically manipulated in small increments between individually photographed frames so that they will appear to be in motion or change when the series of frames is played back. Still pictures are pieced together and flipped through rapidly to give the illusion of a movement or time passing, creating a movie. There are many types of stop-motion techniques, in both 2-D and 3-D media, such as: hand-drawing, cel, cut-paper, sand, and claymation.

To give a natural look and feel, traditional 35 mm films are recorded at 24 frames per second, meaning for one minute of film, the filmmaker has to record 1,440 separate frames. Video recording is about 30 frames per second, meaning roughly 1,800 individual digital images are compiled to make one minute of video. Changing the number of frames recorded in a second can create either time-lapsed photography or a slow-motion film style. See the chart below for more details.

- 1 frame per minute:
time-lapse photography
- 18 frames per second:
early motion-picture films
- 24 frames per second:
worldwide standard for movie-theater film projectors
- 300+ frames per second:
high-speed cameras for very slow-motion photography
(used for miniatures to make models seem larger on screen)

Cassandra C. Jones is a remix artist who collects thousands of other people's photographs, in both print and digital form. She uses digital photography to create collage and video works. Her video *Wax and Wane* traces the moon's monthly cycle through images compiled from the Internet.

To view the video animation, visit <https://vimeo.com/10108485>.

A Few Discussion Questions to Start Conversations

1. The artist Cassandra C. Jones considers herself a remix artist. She scavenges images from the internet, reorganizes them, and creates a work of art with a new meaning and context. In what ways has she altered the original images?
2. Though it is a video you can watch, in what ways is it also like a collage?
3. What story is the artist trying to tell with this video?

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Gather These Art Materials

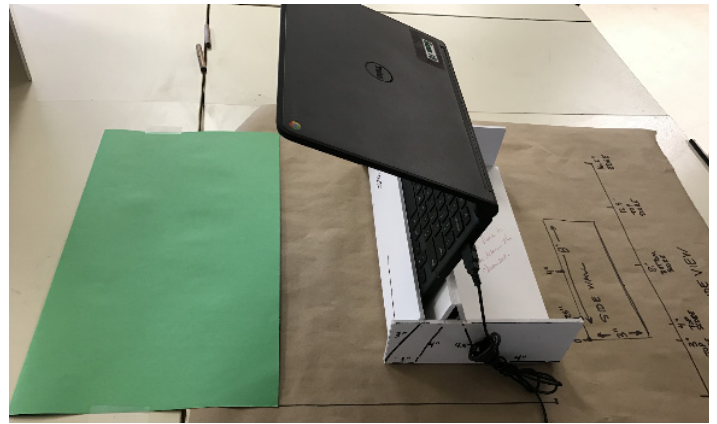
- Tape / glue / rubber cement
- Scissors
- Old magazines, greeting cards, junk mail
- Construction paper
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Ziploc bag for storing pieces
- Blank white paper
- Other objects from around the classroom that can be used in the video

Instructions for Project Setup

Using a digital program of your choice, create a 30-second stop-motion film inspired by an object(s) around your classroom.

1. First, pick which digital program you will use.
Possible free options are:
[ClapMotion for Google Chrome](#)
[Apple Stop Motion Studio \(the free version\)](#)
with an iPad or iPhone
2. Then, brainstorm a story. Remember that a strong narrative has a problem, a character's struggle, and a solution. Some story ideas could be:
 - flowers that don't want to be together, but need to be put in a vase
 - two toys that need to get to each other, but have trouble
 - refrigerator magnets that help each other hold photos/drawings up
 - cars that race each other and end up stuck in something and a super-slow car ends up winning
3. Create the background, or setting, where the stop-motion movie will take place. Backgrounds should be simple and steady. Backgrounds for stop-motion animation can be created from just about any materials you have on hand such as crayons, markers, construction paper, colored paper, watercolors, and cardboard boxes.
4. Next, create any of the characters or props needed for the scene. For a two-dimensional video, these can be drawn on paper and cut out, found in a magazine and cut out, or collaged together.
5. Now set up your video-recording device and computer. Stop motion requires a camera or video device to record a single frame that, when run at normal speed, appears to represent continuous movement. You can set up by connecting a computer to a video camcorder, digital still camera, or a webcam.
6. Remembering how many frames, or pictures, are needed for even a second of video, take pictures of your scene, making small movements of the background, characters, and props. Don't try to move too much between pictures.
7. If you are going to include any audio dialogue or music, you can do this after you have compiled the video and layer it over the recording.
8. Once you have taken all the pictures needed for your story and they have been rendered using the different digital platforms suggested, these videos can be shared or uploaded to the internet.

Project Setup Examples



Additional Information and Resources

To view a hi-res image of the work, visit the [MFAH Collection online database](#).

To see more works by Cassandra Jones, visit <https://vimeo.com/cassandraciones>.

To visit the artist's website, visit <https://www.cassandraciones.com/>.

Additional video resources from YouTube

[How to Make a Stop Motion Video by a Cool Filmmaker](#)

[Legos, Legos, Legos in Stop Motion](#)

[How to tell a 30-second Story](#)

Front: Cassandra C. Jones, *Wax and Wane*, 2008, single-channel, stop-motion animation, 4 minutes, 10 seconds, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, museum purchase funded by Morris Weiner, 2018.7. © Cassandra C. Jones

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