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Beyond Materiality in Animation: Sensuous Perception and Touch in the Tactile Existence of "Would a Heart Die?"

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BEYOND MATERIALITY IN ANIMATION: SENSUOUS PERCEPTION AND TOUCH IN
THE TACTILE EXISTENCE OF *WOULD A HEART DIE?*

by

Ellen Charlise Rocha Souza

B.A., Federal University of Sergipe, 2009

A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Science

Department of Mass Communication and Media Arts
in the Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
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RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

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THE TACTILE EXISTENCE OF *WOULD A HEART DIE?*

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A Research Paper Submitted in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

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in the field of Professional Media and Media Management

Approved by:

Professor Cade Bursell, Chair

Graduate School
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

ELLEN CHARLISE ROCHA SOUZA, for the Master of Science degree in PROFESSIONAL MEDIA AND MEDIA MANAGEMENT, presented on JUNE 27, 2012, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: BEYOND MATERIALITY IN ANIMATION: SENSUOUS PERCEPTION AND TOUCH IN THE TACTILE EXISTENCE OF *WOULD A HEART DIE?*

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Professor Cade Bursell

This research focuses on the tangibility three-dimensional stop-motion animation allows in its authorial process, and on the tactility and materiality it evokes on the other side of the screen. Based on these assumptions, I seek to demonstrate how the sense of touch is evoked by the tactility of materials used in three-dimensional stop-motion animation, by drawing on the concepts of fabrication (Wells, 1998), haptic visuality (Marks, 2002), tactile image (Barker, 2009), and on the embodied viewer's experience as defined by Vivian Sobchack (1992; 2004). This work is also directed to the application of theories to an empirical experience on materiality which resulted in the three-dimensional stop-motion animation *Would a Heart Die?*, an autobiographical piece based on memory and the aesthetics of materiality (Sundholm, 2005). With this animated work, I aim to describe the hands-on experience and aesthetic choices, by aligning it to theoretical approaches on materiality, tactility and the haptics.

Keywords: Stop-motion animation, materiality, memory, sensuous perception, touch, tactile image, haptics.

DEDICATION

I would like to lovingly dedicate this work to my mother, Cristina Rocha, who always supported me in my decisions and stimulated me to pursue my goals. I would not have made it until here without the support of my second mother, Maria de Lourdes, my father, Nilson Souza, and my siblings Alysson Rocha and Richardson Rocha, who were always ready to help me and say the nicest words.

Also, this work is dedicated to the ones who believed in my potential to develop this research, the animation *Would a Heart Die?*, and other projects throughout the two years I attended SIU. I am really glad I had the opportunity to meet Professor Cade Bursell (Chair), Dr. Deborah Tudor, Professor David Burns, Professor Robert Spahr, and Dr. Walter Metz.

Thank you all.

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CHAPTER 1

DEFINING AND QUESTIONING THE MATERIAL AND THE TACTILE

Originating in the end of the nineteenth century, three-dimensional stop-motion animation has been an exclusively manual animation practice, in which the direct manipulation of handmade puppets and models allows a more tactile approach of the physical act of animating, and a more sensuous perception of the tangible by the viewer, that is, the elicitation of the sense of touch through the experience of watching an animated film. By depicting objects from our everyday surroundings, or materials we may recognize, stop-motion animation evokes the sense of materiality - namely the idea of touching what is being seen - which might be brought up by textural surfaces that address the sense of touch and, moreover, our fingertips.

It is fair to assume that three-dimensional stop-motion animated films might elicit the tactile for its three-dimensional aspect. However, other techniques may also evoke the tangible, such as two-dimensional stop-motion and direct on film animation, in which the physical nature of materials plays an important role. Paul Wells (1998) thus characterizes this process as an evolution of materiality, which is inherent to experimental animation, where the audience recognizes forms, colors, shapes and mainly the tangibility of elements such as paint and scratches on film.

Centering on a more aesthetic approach, this research focuses on the tangibility three-dimensional stop-motion animation allows in its authorial process, and on the tactility and materiality it evokes on the other side of the screen. In other words, how can the physical animation process performed by the animator raise issues of

materiality and tactility perceived by audiences? Aligned to the physical act of animating is the process of fabrication, defined by Wells (1998) as “the *re-animation* of materiality for narrative purposes” (p. 90). So, how can the sense of touch be elicited? Can the traces left by the animator evoke the physicality of the process? What is beyond the materiality of objects employed in the animation? Can materiality further the meaning of a narrative by evoking a sense of memory and nostalgia embedded in its story? Why do real materials that may surround our everyday world – or not - bring up the notion and sense of tactility, and imply a certain appeal into this kind of animation? Some signals of imperfection, such as slightly different eyes, wrinkled pieces of cloth, an imperfectly sewn puppet, or even misplaced shirt buttons show evidence on how the presence of this specific tangibility connects to the material reality we are in.

In this study, I seek to answer these questions by drawing on theory and on an empirical experience developed during the past two semesters, which resulted in the three-dimensional stop-motion animation *Would a Heart Die?*. With this piece, I aim to describe the experience related to the purpose of this research, by aligning it to theoretical approaches on materiality.

As my favorite animation technique, stop-motion is often impressive. And it is also impressive how it helps create little tangible worlds, in which distinct materials assume versions of existence other than their own. This being said, the stop-motion technique was chosen due to its ability to connect to my research, coinciding with a personal choice, with special emphasis on the process of fabrication, a key component of my work

This particular interest in the material aspects of elements present in animation and, in special, three-dimensional stop-motion animation, is directly connected to a research that I have been developing for one year, and which raises issues of materiality, tangibility and fabrication in animation. Based on these theories, the idea for *Would a Heart Die?* emerged from the need to produce an animated artwork that could have a strong connection with the tactile possibilities that materials utilized in an animated film offer. In addition, my goal is also to relate the visual experience of the viewer - and her/his vision - to the sense of touch this animation might evoke. By assuming this characteristic, this stop-motion animated film aims to be centered on the premise that the material fabrication of environments, props and characters can also be directly related to the construction of a narrative, even being essential to it (e.g. by evoking the idea of memory and nostalgia) through the use of specific textures and the elicitation of the sense of touch.

More recently, academic studies have been paying attention to the sensuous cinematic experience, drawing on the embodied viewer's experience in regards to the filmic element on screen (Barker, 2009). Although applicable to the case of stop-motion animation, this trend is less specifically directed towards this form of cinematic process, and relies on few bibliographic sources, with studies conducted mainly by Barker (2009) and Marks (2002). Thus, it can be said that stop-motion animation has not yet been explored the way it should, since there is not a large number of detailed aesthetic studies, let alone a reasonable number of references on its tactile and material uniqueness. In fact, the majority of books and articles about stop-motion mainly center on its technical aspects in order to teach the process, or might bring a brief history of

the technique, with summarized analysis of films. Consequently, aesthetic analyses are still scarce and focused research on these topics plays a fundamental part in the development of the field.

At this point, materiality and tactility are two important concepts that need to be properly defined for the purposes of this work. In the book *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media*, Laura U. Marks (2002) defines the materiality of the image by asserting that features of materiality other than only the objects' texture may also be included, such as imperfections like a strand of hair that falls over an actor's face, wrinkles on a piece of cloth, lighting, and other minimum details perceived by the viewer. By emphasizing more engagement by the viewer than only a symbolic identification, Marks establishes an analysis centered on a closer relationship between the audience and the film; the viewer is not supposed to be distant from the cinematic experience, she/he must engage with it through haptic visuality.

The term haptic visuality is conceptualized by Marks (2002) through a distinction made with its opposite, optical visuality. Since haptic is defined as what is related to touch, our eyes thus "function like organs of touch" (p. 3). Therefore, optical visuality involves the conventional sense of sight, whereas haptic visuality focuses on sight along with touch and kinesthetic processes. This way,

Because haptic visuality draws on other senses, the viewer's body is more obviously involved in the process of seeing than is the case with optical visuality. The difference between haptic and optical visuality is a matter of degree,

however. In most processes of seeing both are involved, in a dialectical movement from far to near, from solely optical to multisensory (p. 3).

The immersion of spectators in the cinematic experience comes from haptic visibility, which much more stimulates an embodied reaction and involvement between the viewer and the film than a distant identification. Thus, it is fair to assume that the spectators' immersion in the film through its materiality is an extensive process of subjectivity between both: her/him and the film. Rather than only identifying with an image or a specific figure or texture, the viewer can also relate to the film by the sense of touch, by the haptic look. This draws on phenomenology, in which the analysis of the process is more experimental and immersed, focused on the dynamics of the self, instead of the semiotic approach, in which the analysis is objective and distant, more centered on the text (Buchan, 2011).

As a theoretical approach to film theory, phenomenology has been neglected in the tradition of film studies. This way, contemporary studies have been focusing on more objective analyses that do not take into consideration that the connection between the object and the subject goes beyond identification and recognition. As the main approaches to film studies, semiotics and psychoanalysis "fail to acknowledge the fact that viewing is not simply an ocular phenomenon, but rather it is a fully embodied experience" (Bouldin, 2000, p. 56). If some movies are specifically capable of evoking the sense of touch, and "'move' and 'touch' us bodily" (Sobchack, 2004, p. 59), the theory behind the majority of studies disregard the embodied cinematic experience, and treats it objectively. According to Sobchack (2004):

Film theory has attempted (somewhat defensively, I think) to put the ambiguous and unruly, *subjectively* sensuous, embodied experience of going to the movies back where it ‘properly’ – that is, *objectively* – belongs: it locates the sensuous *on* the screen as the semiotic effects of cinematic representation and the semantic property of cinematic objects or *off* the screen in the spectator’s phantasmatic psychic formations, cognitive processes, and basic physiological reflexes that do not pose major questions of meaning (p. 59-60).

With the sensuous on and off the screen, the relationship between the object and the subject becomes a mutual one. Viewers are both able to touch and be touched by movies, by their textures and tangible qualities.

Although both Sobchack and Marks’s studies focus on senses other than sight and touch – kinesthetic and proprioceptive functions - for the purposes of this research, I aim to center on touch and sight, due to my specific interest in textures and surfaces. Thus, Marks’ concept of haptic visuality is essential to this study; the closer look of the viewer, that is the look that involves all the senses, precedes identification and immediate recognition, by bringing up a perception of the tactile and material in a cinematic work.

The study of Marks can be connected to Sundholm’s (2007) interpretation of Siegfried Kracauer’s aesthetic of realism regarding sound – in a brief definition, an aesthetics that recalls a sensuous depiction of sound. Sundholm thus highlights that the materiality described by Kracauer is “beyond representation and narrative, beyond sign

and signified, and constitute, therefore a pure sensual and material experience” (p. 171). Consequently, the closeness Marks mentions, privileges more the sensuous perception than mere identification.

In her book, *The Tactile Eye*, Jennifer Barker (2009) defines this close relationship as one opposite to the “distant experience of observation” (p. 2). According to her, cinematic tactility stimulates this experience/connection. She then **affirms** that being “touched by cinema indicates that it has significance for us, that it comes close to us, and that it literally occupies our sphere. We *share* things with it: texture, spatial orientation, comportment, rhythm, and vitality” (p. 2). This affirmation raises issues of textural perception in stop-motion animation: the perception of materials by their physicality and the elicitation of the sense of touch in special.

When it comes to three-dimensional stop-motion animation in particular, the sense of touch is translated into the specific meta-reality of materiality (Wells, 1998). The creation of this meta-reality through some sort of real physicality of objects triggers the definition of materiality as one related to the process of fabrication, in which objects or elements may be modified and/or play a different role from the one they play in the real world, for narrative purposes.

Another theoretical approach to materiality and cinema is related to the concept of ‘deixis’, defined by John Sundholm (2005) as “categories which encode the person, place, time or social context of utterance” (p. 55), including the traces an artist leaves in her/his artwork. This concept is directly related to the aesthetics of materiality, explained by the author in his article about memory and materiality in film. Unlike Marks and Barker, Sundholm engages in a more semiotic approach, by employing an adapted

concept of 'deixis' – primarily linked to fine arts, such as painting and sculpture - to the cinematic experience, and points out that the aesthetics of materiality "is a way of retaining deixis; a trace of the past event as an intervention and specific relation, a material fact that a simple referential relation to the image tends to ignore" (p. 56). Thus, this approach brings up a definition of a materiality which might be connected to a specific detail or material used in a cinematic work in order to recall some specific memory. Here, the author argues for the presence of the artist, traditionally concealed in Western art. By using Gunvor Nelson's films as examples, in special "Red Shift", he explains that traces of memory may appear as an aspect from the past, a simple skin texture, the use of colors, the graininess of film, and camera shots.

The theme choice of *Would a Heart Die?* may resemble some of my past works, in terms of the relationship between time and space, nostalgia, memories, and even death and mystery, to a certain extent. Focusing on a narrative based on a Brazilian city my grandmother, my mother and I grew up, *Would a Heart Die?* centers on the life of an elderly woman called Maria, who faces a one-day transformation that leads her back to her own childhood. Permeated by memory, this narrative is also surrounded by materials that play an alternative existence, that is, fabric as skin, paper-mache as bread, and so on, based on Wells' concept of fabrication. Thus, it is important to note that aligning the narrative to the animation aesthetic is one of the main aims of the research and piece here proposed, and it also plays an essential role in its execution. As a result, in a story surrounded by memories and nostalgia, the present tactility may also evoke a sense of memory as stated by Sundholm in his aesthetics of materiality.

But if I may come back to 'deixis', it can be inferred that it might also indicate the presence of the artist in his/her own work or, in other words, the traces that the animator may leave in the final result. Rather than concealing this presence, there is a direct physical connection between the animator and her own piece in handmade processes: it highlights the physical act of animating, and the physical touch of manipulation in the making of the piece (Graça, 2005). Thus, the sense of touch is also recalled through the embodied presence of the artist.

In terms of aesthetical approaches, *Would a Heart Die?* focuses on the use of fabric textures – and also other materials, such as paper and wood – to create an original approach to tangibility in animation. Employing fabric textures in my works has been a practice that I started in 2011, when I decided to model and animate *Vacaleta*. In this 3-D computer generated piece, I found that it would be interesting to represent a genuine, but playful environment of a part of the region I live in Brazil – the Northeast - which is called *sertão*. This area is very dry, but it is, at the same time, a very beautiful place, surrounded by astonishing landscapes and animals. Being considered a raw place, the area of the *sertão* brought to mind the handmade and artisanal character of things. In this case, I decided to use some fabrics that could evoke some raw textures I could bump map – in computer graphics, a term that means to create irregularities over a surface texture and, consequently, highlight them - on Maya software. With these bumped textures, it was possible to create an effect opposite to flatness, which produced an environment that resembles sewed fabric murals made in Brazil's northeast (See Appendix A).

The past project has been mentioned due to its connection to the materiality I want to approach in this new one, and also because of issues of identity. Although they seemed simple and were summarized to the use of digital fabrics textures to recreate a landscape of part of Brazil's northeast, it is fair to assume that these particular kinds of fabric were used to recreate some sort of tradition. It was, in fact, a way to create a unique aesthetic of representing the environment of *sertão*.

In other animation projects such as *A Tale of Colors and Balloons* (2011), which has a mixed textural sense of handmade and digital processes, and *Aimee* (2011), almost entirely digitally texturized (See Appendices B and C), my goal was always to create texture and evoke the sense of touch through narrative and the tangible characteristic of elements used.

With this in mind, *Would a Heart Die?* tends to follow a similar aesthetic path as *Vacaleta* (2011), even if it is a completely handmade production. But although I want to recreate an environment where the women of my family grew up, I do not intend to focus completely on cultural representation. Instead, representation might be aligned to memory, due to recreation of a landscape, actions, and characters. Searching for inspiration by looking at traditional patchworks, and fabric handmade murals, a specific kind of fabric was chosen due to its capacity to evoke materiality and the sense of touch at the same time. Jute is a raw, but very tangible fabric, which was used primarily to create the puppets' skin, and elicits some sort of imperfection, due to its difficult manipulation.

In addition, the tangibility that might be evoked by the use of fabric and other elements - aligned to the use of stop-motion as a technique, and to the engagement of

both animator and embodied viewer's experience - is the main goal I expect to achieve. Since stop-motion is a technique which aims to photograph in sequence what exists in the real world – different from 3-D computer animation, which simulates cameras, and 2-D drawn animation, in which the paper, a real object, is rarely the main element – the combination between those turns to be essential to the process.

Stop-motion animation is directly related to the notion and sense of touch. The textures that evoke materiality in stop-motion animation “beg to be touched” (Barker, 2009, p. 137), and engage the embodied viewer's experience. Thus, this specific technique evokes a tactile perception by the use of materials and textures that appeal to our experience and address our sense of touch through vision. This way, two main approaches are used in this research: Marks' haptic visuality and Barker's tactile cinema, which bring up the embodied relationship between the viewer, and the on-screen image, drawn from Vivian Sobchack's phenomenology of the mutual embodied cinematic experience. Also, my aim is to utilize Graça's theories on the physical act of animating, found mainly in the realm of handmade animation, as well as to employ Paul Wells' ideas on fabrication and the alternative existence of materials in stop-motion animation. In addition, I draw – although to a lesser extent - on Sundholm's concepts of deixis and aesthetic of materiality aligned to issues of memory and the presence of the artist.

Based on theory as well as on empiric experience, this research is divided in specific parts that are founded on the basis of textual analysis - available bibliography, such as books and journals – and of film and design analysis along with note-taking,

methods that are undoubtedly necessary, since observations of animated films guide this research, as well as my own project.

The body of this work thus is structured in three sections, which seek to give this research a theoretical approach aligned to the theorization of my own animated piece. This way, the first section “This Tactile Materiality, or the Alternative, the Real, and the Uncanny” focuses on the basic concepts of tactile and tangible aspects of three-dimensional stop-motion animation and the uncanny characteristic of animated real objects, by drawing on specific examples of animated films by the Brothers Quay, Jan Svankmajer, Ladislav Starewicz, and Barry Purves. As it follows, the second section, “Evoking Materiality in The Physical Act Of Animating, Memory, and Sensuous Perception”, is based on the elicitation of the sense of touch through stop-motion animation, aligned to the animator’s act of manipulating and animating materials. Finally, the third and last section, “About *Would a Heart Die?*: The Construction of a Tangible Narrative”, brings more detailed descriptions of the process of animation, production notes and materials – such as images, script, and storyboard -, along with theoretical and aesthetic support on how materiality is associated to it, as part of a research and practice-based work.

In sum, materiality is an inherent characteristic to the process of handcrafted animation, and supports the three-dimensional stop-motion technique by centering on the tangible aspects of materials used. The analysis of theories and animated films along with the production of my animated film is essential to this work, and figures as a step to understand how issues of materiality, fabrication, tangibility, tactility, and

physicality, to say the least, can be found, perceived and detailed during and in the result of my production.

CHAPTER 2

THIS TACTILE MATERIALITY, OR THE ALTERNATIVE, THE REAL, AND THE UNCANNY IN STOP-MOTION ANIMATION

As a technique that privileges the use of real two or three-dimensional materials, stop-motion animation implies the notion of realism not in its more orthodox aspects – the exact reproduction of real physical features, movements and behaviors - but in a context surrounded by tangibility, a concept that overcomes these aspects and enhances the nature of textures and materials. This approach is, thus, directly focused on the appeal of an aesthetic that highlights tactility, even though movement and character design, for instance, do not match real world forms.

Issues of realism and materiality in animation constitute a field that includes distinct animation techniques in its approaches. The majority of studies focuses on Disney's hyper-realism (Wells, 1998), and on the comparison between three-dimensional stop-motion and the attempts, failures and successes of computer animation in reproducing textures, human figures and natural environments (Purves, 2008; Pettigrew 1999). In addition, approaches on alternative techniques addresses how tangibility behaves in abstract animation, and a few studies on stop-motion animation (Purves, 2008; Wells, 1998, 2002; Barker, 2009; Buchan, 2011; Hames, 2008) indicate the nature of materials used in the fabrication and production processes as a sign of inherent materiality.

In a section of his book "Stop Motion: Passion, Process and Performance", Barry Purves (2008) analyzes the process of stop-motion animation in an aesthetic context, in

which he explains the appeal of the technique in conjunction with its physicality and texture. Also an stop-motion animator, Purves employs a series of interviews with other animators about the physicality of the technique, concluding that the magical characteristic of the process in making inanimate objects and puppets come to life is parallel to the attractiveness of their tangible aspect to the audience.

Focusing primarily on three-dimensional stop-motion animation – as is the aim of this present work - Wells (1998) mentions that objects and materials that are part of our routine evoke a more physical character in animation and, hence, fabrication “plays out an alternative version of material existence, recalling narrative out of constructed objects and environments, natural forms and substances, and the taken-for-granted constituent elements of the everyday world” (p. 90). Thus, issues of materiality are present not only in strict representations of the real world, but also in the tactile sense that the nature of real built objects evoke both when animated and when watched by the viewer.

Significant examples of materiality in stop-motion animation can be found in the works of Czech animator Jan Švankmajer. His animated films elicit tactility and the use he makes of objects and puppets privilege the sense of touch. Films such as *Jabberwocky* (1971), in which he uses toys, stones, dolls, clothes, and other materials, and *Dimensions of Dialogue* (1982), a series of three animated pieces with a variety of materials used and manipulated - food, clay, as well as objects such as a toothbrush, shoes, a knife, and others - show a more surreal approach within the exploration of dark and political topics.

The scope of Švankmajer's work is composed by his surreal animations, feature films and other works that bring live-action and stop-motion animation together.

Although almost unknown in the West until the early 1980s, Švankmajer has influenced other animators such as The Quay Brothers, with his obscure themes and the use of found and used inanimate objects.

Although objects are usually part of his films, *Darkness, Light, Darkness* (1989) is specifically remarkable due to the use of clay as its main material. With an environment based on a miniaturized room, this animated short film is a humored piece that starts with a clay hand trying to compose a body to which it will belong. As the animation develops, other body parts appear by knocking on the doors or coming from the window, put in the wrong places and, later, correctly assembled, until an indistinct portion of clay comes inside the room, only to be modeled and compose the missing parts of a man's body.

Darkness, Light, Darkness is an animated piece that demonstrates the process of modeling and animating from another perspective and distinct sense, by aesthetically focusing on modeling and the use of clay as an essential part of its execution. By evoking touch, it is possible to notice the physical act of animating through the fabrication of the character. As a viewer, I can perceive the animator's fingerprints left in a material such as clay, and I can follow the process of construction of the character in the animation. Cardinal (2008) comments that even though Švankmajer's extravagancies may seem shallow sometimes, they are "redeemed by the care he shows for the tactile as much as the visual impact of his vivid transformations. He seems indeed to attribute unusual significance to the sensations of touch" (p. 73).

But how do his works evidence this unusual significance to touch? Švankmajer's interest in the use of materials and textures and the elicitation of the sense of touch can be translated in his 'gestural' sculpture, an exclusively manual artistic process that was the basis of movies such as *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1980), and *Dimensions of Dialogue* (1982). In the second part of the latter, called "Passionate Discourse", a couple engages in a sexual act, sculpturally blending in each other, only to find there was something alive left as a result. This new life is then the reason they start fighting, destroying each other with their own hands, and forming a fluidly animated and undefined clay sculpture. Once again, clay is the main material for the execution of this piece, and the presence of the 'gestural' sculptor - in this case, the animator - is notably perceived, and plays a very significant role in the aesthetics of the piece. Švankmajer explains:

Unlike gestural painting, the imprint of the gesture is not made by a tool, such as a paintbrush or a palette knife, and thus emotionally it is an unalloyed expression of the psychological state of the artist. The gesture, an expression of our emotions, becomes fossilized, without losing its authenticity through some kind of aesthetic transformation. (...) Gestural sculpture is a pure form of tactile art, since the hand neither combines nor looks for analogical structures which best correspond to our feelings, but creates those structures directly, because it unloads immediate emotions into them. (...) Gestural sculptures should be perceived largely through touch, which is more efficient here. People are then forced to perceive the sculptures as something other than artefacts, and allow

themselves to be directly affected by the artist's emotion. (...) There should be analogical contact between the author of the gestural sculpture and its perceiver. Through touch (loaded with a gesture the same as the artist's) the tension present at the birth of the sculpture should pass into the psyche of the perceiver, and stimulate visual associations (as cited in Dryje, 2008, p. 163-164).

Therefore, this physical act of animating, better explained in the next section of this work, privileges the gesture of the animator and the contact she/he might imprint in the creative process. Any signal of what happened in-between frames may be considered, and imperfections are also part of the process. Fingerprints on clay, and hair or fur boiling, are only some examples of how the process of fabrication aligned to the animator's act might evoke tactility and the sense of touch.

Greatly inspired by the filmography of Jan Švankmajer, The Quay Brothers, American identical twins, started animating in the late 1970s, after having moved to England. Their work encompasses films that depict disconcerting atmospheres due to their dark themes and their choice of materials to match narratives. By bringing objects that seem dead to life, their films resemble bizarre experiments with undead elements. Textures thus play an essential role in the construction of an original aesthetics, emphasized even more by the use of stop-motion as their main technique, aligned to live-action scenes. The exploration of light and shade focuses on the physicality of the process - mainly when associated to objects and the materials they are made of - in which fabrication "comes from the idea of redefining the material or object as if it still possessed an intrinsically organic life" (Wells, 1998, p. 91).

Tactility is highly noticeable in one of their most notable films, *Street of Crocodiles* (1986), a mix of live-action and animation. Based on a novel of the same name written by Polish writer Bruno Schulz, the fabrication in the film is remarkably inspired by the author's depiction of elements present in the story through the use of a myriad of textures and materials (Buchan, 2011) that were employed to construct the sets and props. In this obscure and nonconventional narrative, the objects are emphasized by their own materiality. The movements they perform are then incorporated by their tangible intrinsic characteristics in an atmosphere permeated by the movement of particles, puppets, and objects that come to life.

Thus, in *Street of Crocodiles*, the tangible qualities of the textures and objects utilized are also accompanied by a narrative that speaks to it. Although both are intertwined, Barker (2009) mentions that the film evokes the sense of touch by its own materiality, which might call the viewer's attention much more than the plot or narrative. In the tailor shop sequence, materials such as wool, tissue paper, and even meat are placed in an atmosphere that revels in texture through the contact of surfaces and camera close-ups of objects that reveal themselves gradually. When the tissue paper touches the surface of meat, it is possible to notice how both surfaces form a texture one might recognize, but that simultaneously plays an existence other than its own. In fact, the tactile environment that the movie is surrounded by evokes fabrication; the materiality present in the movie, and mainly in this particular sequence, is one that establishes "a world of dirt, dust, flesh, fabric, and textures that are familiar to us but which the film invites us to see for the first time" (Barker, 2009, p. 139), due to our awareness that there is something beyond their conventional materiality.

Working mainly with puppets, animator Barry Purves has a vast background in theatre performances, but switched into the art of animation, in which he could infuse his acting experience into the expressions of his humanlike puppets. Since the beginning of his career, Purves has noticed that animation could be linked to other kinds of art, and the span of his work reflects this connection. These connections are even more obvious when one can perceive how theatrical performances are a strong influence in his animation.

Along with *Screenplay* (1992) and *Next* (1989), *Achilles* (1995) is one of a great number of Purves' animated films that speak to the theatrical tradition. Animated in stop-motion, it pays a clear homage to Greek theatre, not only by organizing a narrative about mythology, but also by making use of similar dramatic elements. However, the most remarkable characteristic of this animation is the role the materials play in the process. *Achilles* employs texture and, consequently, evokes the sense of touch. Both protagonists look like statues with pale and grayish colors and cracked skins, and the other characters have sculpted details shown intentionally, as if they had some kind of unexpected material lives.

This sort of realism achieved through the material representations seen in *Achilles* - since the characters resemble real statues that have humanlike movements - raises questions on the physicality that the stop-motion technique might evoke. About the concept behind *Achilles*, Purves (2008) affirms:

I wanted it to be a celebration of male flesh, an idea not disagreeable to the ancient Greeks. I encouraged Mackinnon and Saunders, the puppet makers, to

sculpt the puppets with appropriate bulges, curves, and textures. I knew this film was going to be lit dramatically with strong shadows; (...) I wanted *Achilles* to glorify in every muscle and vein of these astonishing puppets (p. 17-18).

The realism that these puppets depict with “muscles and veins” and “a celebration of male flesh” through material texture can be related to the uncanny. A Freudian term, the uncanny is defined by what can be simultaneously “alien and familiar; familiarity is a mark of associational security while alienation emerges from the displacement of use and context” (Wells, 1998, p. 91). Coined by Ernest Jentsch in his 1906 essay “On the Psychology of the Uncanny” in which he identifies the phenomenon in E.T.A. Hoffman’s tale “The Sandman”, through a humanized wooden doll called Olympia, the concept was later developed by Freud in an essay named “The Uncanny”. In the essay, he connected the uncanny “to what was known of old and long familiar” (Ferrell, 1991, p. 133), fact that can be directly connected to Wells’ analysis:

A child’s doll, therefore, would stimulate comforting memories of childhood, whilst embodying the formal distantiation *from* childhood. The doll narrates itself at the historic level but is estranged from its contemporary context, and thus seems threatening by still seeming to possess the life it was invested with by the child during its period of heightened function (1998, p. 91).

Thus, the tactile quality of puppets and objects is directly related to the uncanny, mainly when it comes to the fabrication of elements that may resemble real objects,

human features, statues, or simply the movement of toys that seemed familiar in a certain moment of our lives, but may cause a sensation of displacement. As animation is able to evoke the uncanny, this uncomfortable familiarity might be provoked by a doll that moves, as in Švankmajer's *Jabberwocky* which dolls blink eyes and remove gloves, soldiers march, a sailor suit dances, but the barrier between the fantastic and real worlds is broken by a real cat, causing some sort of displacement. The toys that move may be familiar, and evokes a child's play, as any child would like to see her/his toy coming to life. However, in the sequence where the sailor suit manipulates a machine that traps small dolls, and bigger dolls eat smaller dolls' parts, the material elements play an alternative existence and, therefore, appear to cause a sensation of displacement.

The same happens in *Meat Love* (1989) and *Alice* (1988), both films also directed by Švankmajer; whereas in the former pieces of meat perform human activities, in the latter, built animal skeletons that look like experiments, and a realistic rabbit are part of an uncanny atmosphere. In Purves' *Achilles*, statues, which are already human like, acquire lifelike and fluid movements, in addition to facial expressions. Talking about animated figures, Ferrell (1991) asserts that the uncanny can be found in "the sly turn of a doll's head, the imperceptible flicker of a statue's stone eyelids, the animal whose expression is for a moment almost human." (p. 132).

Whereas the recognition of objects and surfaces' textures causes this uncomfortable familiarity, they may also cause "defamiliarization". The term is used by Suzanne Buchan (2011), and can be directly connected to the alienation Wells (1998) described above. Taking The Quay Brothers' *Street of Crocodiles* sequence of the tailor

shop as an example once again, it is fair to assume that the viewer may experience uneasiness. In this particular sequence, besides the contact between the meat and the tissue paper, pins are placed against the surface of a kidney, while porcelain hands caress it. We all may know what a kidney is, but the combination of elements might be categorized as unknown and uncanny, defined by Ferrell (1991) as “an effect of a process of perceiving rather than of an image perceived” (p. 132). A similar process occurs in the sequence where dusty screws are seen coming out of a piece of meat inside a pocket watch; we see texture and recognize it, but the fast close-up shot focusing on the fast movement of the screws coming out of the meat causes, once again, a discomfort that is not only familiar, but also alien to the viewer.

The scope of Ladislav Starewicz’s work is also populated by uncanny representations. Using dissected models of insects and frogs in stop-motion animated films that date back to the 1910s, Starewicz’s animations such as *The Cameraman’s Revenge* (1912) and *The Insect’s Christmas* (1913) are perfect examples of how real skin textures can work with recognition and, sometimes, displacement. In relation to the stop-motion technique employed by the animator and its effect in the viewer’s sensuous perception, Barker (2009) comments:

The effect would not have been the same if Starewicz had drawn his figures on animation cels: the familiar surface textures of these animals and insects establishes the intimate connection between the creatures and the viewer that resonates deeply, viscerally, between the film’s body and the viewer’s body (p. 141).

If Barker raises issues of familiarity in relation to the textures used in Starewicz's movies, the materials present in his films are also surrounded by fabrication, as defined by Wells (1998), which connects the use of insects and other animals for the purposes of the narrative. *The Insect's Christmas* and *The Cameraman's Revenge* are two examples of this fabrication - with both using beetles, other insects, and frogs - then justifying the use of tangible and recognizable elements in order to fulfill an esthetics based on narrative needs.

Accordingly, this process is clearly perceivable in The Quay Brothers' *Street of Crocodiles*, in which the fabric textures and the recreation of dust and dirt match the novel's description, and in Švankmajer's *Darkness, Light, Darkness*, based on the manipulation of the clay material to assemble and model a human body, relying on an aesthetic choice that serves and matches the narrative purposes.

In essence, the connection between stop-motion animation and the real material world translates itself into the use of elements and textures, influencing our tactile perception by evoking the sense of touch through vision. The elements depicted in the animated films here analyzed are part of a great range of three-dimensional stop-motion movies which evoke tactility by the use of everyday and found objects, as well as surface materials that speak and address our fingertips.

CHAPTER 3

EVOKING MATERIALITY IN THE PHYSICAL ACT OF ANIMATING, MEMORY, AND SENSUOUS PERCEPTION

If animated films are able to arouse the sense of touch through their tactile qualities, it is fair to assume that this materiality is measured by the relationship between the object being analyzed and the viewer. Based on the concept of haptic visuality as defined by Marks (2002) in Chapter 1, our cinematic experience – not in general, but in relation to some films - is directly connected to the tactile, when what we see evokes the material and the tangible.

Even though cinema is not by definition a tactile medium, but rather a visual and aural one, it can elicit the sense of touch by its use of textures, and different materials and surfaces that when manipulated and moved are evidenced as part of a tactile experience. Considering that our senses are intertwined, Sobchack (2004) writes that in our cinematic experience we are “able to touch and be touched by the substance and texture of images” (p. 65). In three-dimensional stop-motion animation, the process is very similar: our sight touches on screen textures through haptic visuality; our sense of touch is evoked by vision, which works as, for instance, our hands.

But if this sense of touch is evoked through the image on screen, how does the animator participate in the process? Is her/his activity capable of eliciting the sense of touch both from his experience and from the viewer's? Placing significant attention to the process of animating, Scottish animator Norman McLaren affirmed in a much used quote that “What happens between each frame is more important than what happens in

each frame; Animation is therefore the art of manipulating the invisible interstices that lie between the frames” (as cited in Furniss, 2009, p. 5). Here, McLaren privileges movement, and the scope of his work is comprised by numerous pieces of cameraless animated films, as well as pixilation, which speak to a remarkable control of movement performed between frames. About movement and the act of animating, Graça (2007) asserts:

Movement should never be understood as a formal, external aspect of a mechanical character, but as an expression of physical existence itself, projected externally and seen as a manifestation of life. Consequently, the artistic activity always presupposes an experimental search for the intensity and parameters of the sentient unit: to touch the exterior object with the senses and to internalize it, integrating it into the substance of one's own body, would be to work the most primitive sensorial terrain, in order to prepare it for a poetic treatment (2007, p. 169).

Although Graça's research is directed to the tradition of handmade cameraless animated films in order to theorize the poetics of animation, her study can be applied to three-dimensional stop-motion animation when it comes to the physical act of animating. Hence, the animator takes part in an interaction with the object manipulated, and by bringing his own world experience into the process, **there lays** a mutual sensuous exchange. Here, instead of an embodied exchange between the object and subject focused on the film and the viewer, there lies an embodied tactile and

kinesthetic exchange between tangible elements and the animator; she/he touches the object imprinting her/his experience in terms of movement and expression and, at the same time, leaves tactile traces of her/his presence into the animated piece.

Handmade animation therefore relates directly to the physical act of animating, since the animator's presence and sensibility are more perceptible as a result of the contact she/he imprints into the elements being animated. Techniques such as hand drawn and stop-motion animation convey the animator's sensibility (Bishko, 1994, p. 79), and since the hand is the main tool that comes in contact with the object being animated, the process is physical in its essence, in that it privileges the tactile.

By manipulating and moving puppets, objects or other elements, the animator's touch is thus perceptible in stop-motion animation, with imperfections being part of the process. This literally hands-on technique makes it possible for the animator to leave her/his traces in the piece being animated, through marks such as fingerprints, – some that may convey emotions, as in Svankmajer's gestural sculpture mentioned in Chapter 2 – a slightly moved eyeglasses on the face of a puppet, or even a wrinkle on a piece of cloth, all of which are part of this tactile process.

The nature of this process raises questions about the physicality of stop-motion animation, which is distinct from 3-D computer animation. As two techniques that differ completely in terms of materials used and main tools – the first employs real materials and a photographic camera in a physical space, while the latter is totally produced within the use of the computer and appropriate software – the materiality each evokes is, consequently, different. The perfect, colorful and plastic surfaces of an animation such as *Toy Story* (1995) may evoke the material character of toys from our childhood

(Barker, 2009), although they are not produced in the real world; on the contrary, they are binary representations of real textures, or digital recreations of surfaces. This way, for being a digital technique that is able to produce perfect models, slight imperfections are generally eliminated and, as a result, objects end up with a polished and smooth look. On the other hand, Aardman animations such as *Chicken Run* (2000), *Creature Comforts* (1989) and the Wallace and Gromit shorts elicit a more tactile sense, due to its handmade character, and the use of clay, material that let the fingerprints of animators more apparent, the result of constant manipulation. In a response to the appeal of stop-motion animation, Sayoko Kinoshita asserts

Puppet animation is fascinating (...) The images constructed within the mind of an animator are brought to life with the warmth of his or her hands, frame by frame, and I always feel as if such embodiments start talking to my heart directly like the real living things in our world. (...) We can say that this characteristic differs significantly from that of 3D computer animation (as cited in Purves, 2008, p. 21)

The use of textures in Computer Generated Imagery, most known as CGI -and for the purposes of this work, three-dimensional computer animation – and the production of sets and characters in a 3-D world are part of a technology which has developed considerably throughout the decades. Since Pixar's first experiments such as *Tin Toy* (1988) and *Luxo Jr.* (1986), the technique has remarkably progressed the

application of artistic and authentic textures, results that can be seen in *Finding Nemo* (2003) and *Cars* (2006).

By making observations that recognize the artistic potential of computer animation, Purves (2008) affirms that even though digitally created textures can impress by the quality of computer graphics means, textures are more natural when achieved through stop-motion animation and the tangible elements involved in the process, since they evoke the tactile directly from the real material world.

Writing about the American tradition of stop-motion animation as special effects during the last century - in which the main goal was to produce and animate models in order to achieve a greater extent of 'creature realism' in live-action movies, such as in *Jason and the Argonauts* (1963) and *King Kong* (1933) - Pettigrew (1999) establishes a comparison between stop-motion and CGI and, at the same time, shares Purves' notions that computer graphics has been producing great quality and convincing characters and animations. However, Pettigrew considers that stop-motion animated characters are more naturally dramatic than the ones produced entirely on the computer, mainly because of the manual character of the technique. In this manner, the author relates models' expressive qualities to physical manipulation, as he affirms that "The look of a model and the way it moves are an extension of the animator himself, whose own personality diffuses through the fingers that manipulate the puppet, shaping the personality of his creation" (p. 27).

Due to experiments made in the field of 3-D computer animation in the late 1980s and early 1990s, stop-motion creature effects were gradually replaced by CGI, and computer animation effects were successfully employed in live-action movies such as

Terminator 2: Judgement Day (1991), and *Jurassic Park* (1993). This way, it is important to notice that Pettigrew's book was released in 1999, the end of a decade in which computer animation was in development in order to achieve more realistic and convincing special effects.

Although this is an interesting discussion, it deserves an in-depth analysis that should be part of further research. Meanwhile, the focus of this work is not on the comparison between both techniques, but on the potentialities of three-dimensional stop-motion animation when it comes to the tactile.

But if I may return to the physical act of animating, as already mentioned, the relationship between the material look of a puppet or model to the animator's act of touching and setting these creatures in motion directly evokes materiality. The physicality of puppets evokes a sense of "flesh and blood" (Purves, 2008, p. 15), which brings up the notion of a material that can be felt due to its tangibility and existence in the real world. According to Purves (2008), the "tactile pleasure" of animating is the main reason why stop-motion animators engage in the art, denoting that the tangible aspect of models in three-dimensional stop-motion animation is thus inherent to bringing them to life or, in other words, to animating them.

Physical manipulation and tactility are concepts that Wells (2006) approaches in his study of several animation techniques. For him, clay animation denotes a handmade process and the utilization of an easily accessible material, characterized by its tangibility. Actually, when Wells makes this assumption, he conforms to the sense that the appeal of clay animation is in recognizing that the characters have an intrinsic materiality and can be touched. By analyzing Michael Frierson's ident made for Nick Jr.

channel, Wells comes up with the conclusion that clay provides plasticity in its forms, and a notion of hands-on modeling, due to its “strong ‘material’ presence” (p. 120).

The expressive materiality of an animated film - achieved by the animator’s hands while manipulating models and objects, thus imprinting her/his experience of the world into them - and the nature of the presence of the artist, can be related to the concept of ‘deixis’. Defined in Chapter 1, deixis is connected to the indexical character of things and “points” the context in which a work of art was made and what it recalls.

Memory is a construction of both the present and the past (Sundholm, 2005). According to the author, events that happen in the present evoke memories from the past, which will be reconstructed in film. When depicted in personal films such as Gunvor Nelson’s *Red Shift* (1984) and Malcom Le Grice’s *Little Dog for Roger* (1967) - examples employed by the author - the process of constructing a cinematic memory not only relates to the traces the filmmaker leaves in her/his creation, but also to the “actual (indexical) relation to the material” (p. 62). In other words, this relationship is explained by the fact that materials employed in the process can recall personal memories and a specific context, which in turn indicate the tactile traces left by the filmmaker, instead of concealing her/his presence.

This more semiotic approach of ‘deixis’, which is defined by Sundholm (2005) as “the act of pointing” (p. 63), as well as the relationship mentioned above is what comprises the aesthetics of materiality - the indication of a memory through materials or a material trace of the past, such as the skin of Gunvor Nelson’s mother in *Red Shift*. In this manner, the arousal of the tactile is configured as part of a constructed material memory as a result of a representation built by the filmmaker.

Although originally a linguistic concept, 'deixis' was adapted to cinema by Sundholm (2005) in an analysis of experimental film on film stock, I would like to bring it to the realm of stop-motion animation. As I base my analysis in the presence of textures and the tactility they evoke, my aim is not to focus on the materiality of the film stock and its graininess, for instance; instead, my goal in relation to Sundholm's research is to show that besides eliciting materiality, textures that play an alternative existence are also able to convey memory, even though they are mere representations of real objects, such as a specific fabric employed to build the skin of a puppet, fact that will be explained in depth in the next chapter.

The indexical character of memory and film is thus part of semiotic studies in cinema and, as such, relies on cognitive processes, which inhibit experiences that were never or almost never imprinted in our conventional system. By adapting this process of communication and language between the viewer and the film to animation, Graça (2007) asserts that language "imposes models for the recognition of reality and shapes cognitive, perceptual and sensuous apprehension according to conventional relations of correspondence and codification" (p. 169). This would be specifically the process of identification already mentioned by Marks (2002), when it comes to haptic visuality, which privileges more the process of embodied relationship between the film and the viewer than mere identification.

In a section of her book about the poetics of the animated image, Graça (2006) makes a brief analysis on the way semiotics has been approaching spectatorship's sensibility, which can be directly related to the viewer's relationship with the tactile image and the embodied cinematic experience. She affirms:

Filmic semiology very much insisted on the importance of the spectator's competence, regarding the codification modes that are articulated in the filmic discourse. That would be to forget, however, that both the illusion of verisimilitude of the visual configurations and the illusion of apparent movement happen without the required ability to articulate language. The film presents itself in time, as a temporal expression, addressing first the psychophysiological capacities of balance and location of our own body in space. It is immediately, without reflecting, that the viewer responds to the request of his own kinesthetic sensibility (p. 79).

By focusing on the kinesthetic aspect of the haptics, Graça establishes that there is a relationship between our own muscular sensibility and the cinematic experience. As the focus of this research is specifically on the sense of touch, I would assert that, as a process that connects vision to other body senses, haptic visuality does not require that our cognitive body processes happen immediately. On the contrary, the relation among our senses is enhanced and, as the eyes work as tactile organs, the sense of touch is experienced through sensuous apprehension and perception.

But if the sense of touch can also be explained by the kinesthetic qualities of our body and its relationship with the film experience, how is stop-motion animation brought about in this matter? As already stated, three-dimensional stop-motion elicits our sensuous perception through touch, since materials that are part of our real material

world are depicted by playing their own or alternative tactile existences. In this context, can stop-motion animation address our fingertips by its kinesthetic qualities?

Live-action footage and stop-motion animated films' footage are definitely distinct. If strobing or jerkiness might describe the impression that viewers have of some stop-motion films (Pettigrew, 1999) – which can also be an aesthetic choice - it may also evoke materiality and the relationship between the animation's on screen images with our own body, bringing up a sensibility that is part of an embodied cinematic experience.

Drawing on sensuous perception by relating our cinematic experience to other senses such as touch, smell, taste and our own capacity to feel our weight, movement and dimension, Sobchack (2004) affirms that “our vision is already fleshed out” (p. 60), because it is directly connected to our other senses. Also, if this assumption relates to Marks and Graça's notions of sensing before identifying through mere cognitive functions, “the film experience is meaningful *not to the side of our bodies but because of our bodies*. Which is to say that movies provoke in us the ‘carnal thoughts’ that ground and inform more conscious analysis” (p. 60). In other words, the object makes sense for the viewer because of her/his sensuous perception, which happens before any conventional process of recognition and identification.

Although Sobchack does not mention stop-motion animation in her research, the model is applicable and suitable to this technique. Since it evokes materiality through textures and surfaces, it stimulates the sense of touch and the act of touching and grabbing an object, fabric or other textured materials. Talking about how stop-motion

animation arouses the sense of touch and comparing it to the tactile qualities of the film stock, Barker (2009) comments:

Stop-motion animation, even more so than cel animation, draws our body's attention to the discontinuity inherent in cinema and in our own body, in large part because it appeals to the sense of touch, though in a different way than the hand-cranked mutoscopes and muscular films of early cinema did. Although it could easily be argued that early cinema has a haptic quality to it because of the flatness and graininess of the images, stop-motion animation even more so is a haptic art form, one that addresses itself first and foremost to the fingertips, provoking our desire to touch, caress, squeeze, and scrape the images before us. It is through the fingertips that stop-motion animation entices us to feel the stops and starts in our own physical animation (p. 137).

Therefore, as materiality is evoked in stop-motion animation, what we see translates into what we can feel when it comes to the sense of touch. This is directly linked to a crosstalk of senses, and brings up the notion of a synesthetic perception of cinema, which is not considered a tactile medium in its traditional sense, but an audiovisual one. The tactile qualities of the objects translated into on-screen images are what constitute part of the viewer's experience and the interactions that happen in our sentient bodies.

This crosstalk among the senses is what neuroscientists have discovered as an influence that each sense exerts over the others. That is, brain areas that used to

correspond to one sense are also affected by the other senses (Guterman, 2001). This process draws back to the term synesthesia, a neurological experience that involves more than one sense, as in the stimulation of vision could be translated into the sense of touch or smell, for instance. Although it is a clinical term, synesthesia became a common term used to identify the crosstalk among our senses which, in the cinematic experience also relates to our capability to translate a visual experience into another sensorial one.

Once again, even though the theories here used have not been applied to stop-motion animation except for a brief section in Barker's book, I take them seriously and I believe they can be adapted to this specific kind of animation. In a paper about the phenomenology of animation spectatorship, Bouldin (2000) focuses on cartoons, and bases her research in Sobchack's semiotic phenomenology, by developing premises that can also be applied – to a certain extent and with modifications - to other animation techniques. In it, she makes a comparison between live-action films and animated films, by establishing the imaginary as a strong aspect of animation, which is “constantly engaged in processes of representing and promoting embodied experiences” (p. 63). But if I take the stop-motion animated films analyzed in Chapter 2 as examples again, would the viewer's embodied vision be different from the one Bouldin affirms to be the cartoons'? By asserting that the experience is plastic and that it comes from a world that does not resemble ours in its materiality, I may disagree mainly because the world in three-dimensional stop-motion is composed by textures and surfaces that are part of our real material world. Films such as *Street of Crocodiles* and *Dimensions of Dialogue* are two remarkable examples of how everyday objects are reanimated in their

materiality, and evoke the sense of touch through textures such as the ones of clay, meat, and even dirt and dust.

Even though Bouldin's notions of the embodied spectator's experience in animated cartoons might not fit stop-motion animation, it comes closer to it when she mentions that "Even more than with live-action film or television, in order for the cartoon viewer to make sense of, and make sensible the animated world, s/he must resort to her/his own 'body' of experiences and experiences of the body" (2000, p. 60). This assumption, if related to Wells' concept of fabrication and the relationship between tactile textures in animation and the real material world, brings up issues of recognition of materials and, moreover, as she goes on "We impose the laws that regulate our sensuous flesh upon the animated flesh and thus it can make 'sense' to us" (p. 61). Thus, it is fair to assume that the viewer experiences on-screen textures through her/his sense of touch, which relates to a previous body experience and knowledge of the material. In addition, as sensuous perception happens before mere identification and conventional codification, Sobchack (2004) argues that the experience that precedes our consciousness is not rare. On the contrary, she asserts that it is common, and that "We see and comprehend and feel films with our entire bodily being, informed by the full history and carnal knowledge of our acculturated sensorium" (p. 63), and continues by commenting that the tradition of privileging vision as the only controller of the cinematic experience "tend(s) to occlude our awareness of our body's other ways of taking up and making meaning of the world – and its representation (p. 63-64).

In this manner, our senses are able to engage with the process of identification not in the mere symbolic sense, but in terms of what precedes our engagement with the

narrative or with the characters of an animation. Materiality thus plays an essential role in this process not only because in stop-motion animated films the sense of touch is highlighted by textures and surfaces, but also because the experience of 'sensing' them through the connection between our vision and the other senses are the basis for the process of recognition and more logical identification.

As tactile experiences, the physical act of animating, the relationship between 'deixis', memory and materiality and, finally, the embodied experience of the viewer in three-dimensional stop-motion animation definitely evoke materiality. The elicitation of the sense of touch through animated materials essentially forms the basis of the analysis of the tactile image and of tactility and materiality in the representational world of stop-motion animation. As a mode of perception, our materially embodied consciousness, namely the mutual sensuous relationship between our body and the cinematic element in the particular case of three-dimensional stop-motion animation establishes a point to further analysis and research on the topic and, more specifically, for the application of concepts in my own animated production, *Would a Heart Die?*.

CHAPTER 4

ABOUT *WOULD A HEART DIE?*: THE CONSTRUCTION OF A TANGIBLE NARRATIVE

The particular interest I have in the tactile qualities of materials in stop-motion animation is the basis for the concept of *Would a Heart Die?*. In order to produce this three-dimensional stop-motion animated piece, my intention has been, since the beginning of this project, to gather memory, materiality and the elicitation of the sense of touch, to construct a narrative that could bring these themes together in a harmonic form.

Regarding aesthetic and theoretical foundations, this construction is based on Wells' definition of fabrication – in Chapter 1 - which implies 'meta-reality' and 'alternative material existence', two terms that are essential for this work, and are directly connected to the tactility of materials, and how they behave on screen. From this on, and knowing that the narrative would focus on memory, I could apply Sundholm's concept of memory and the aesthetics of materiality to the production of this stop-motion animated short, as well as Sobchack's embodied viewer's experience, Marks' haptic visuality, and Barker's brief study on the tactile qualities of stop-motion animation. Finally, the idea was to relate these concepts to the production of *Would a Heart Die?*, that is, translate this connection into an authorial work, in which theories enable an analysis of my own animated piece.

By having a pre-established research in mind, and having already built the basic aspects of the narrative, I started developing the previous argument and script, by

creating an atmosphere surrounded by memory and nostalgia. This way, in the writing process of the script of *Would a Heart Die?*, I had the idea of creating a story set in a place not specified in the film, but essential to the inspiration of the physical space that resulted in the final sets and props. Although I was not born in this place, it is a very significant one to me, because it is the city I grew up and spent my whole childhood. The place is called Simão Dias, and it also happens to be the city my mother and my grandmother were raised in, and keeps being the place where the other generations of the family are still settled down.

In this context, the narrative of *Would a Heart Die?* focuses on an elderly woman named Maria who lives alone in a house, and experiences a one-day transformation that brings her back to her childhood. By becoming a child again, Maria starts exploring the empty streets of the city, where she finds special memories through objects, feelings, and the fantastic appearance of her imaginary friend, in a strong connection between the present and the past. As a note, the script referenced in this chapter is the original one without the major modifications made during the shooting (See Appendix L).

I would say that memory is a constant in my past works. The construction of memory in *A Tale of Colors and Balloons* (2011) and *Aimee* (2011), for instance, is fragmented, based on the traces of the past, but built in the present. Based on this fragmented character of memory, materiality is brought about not by the exact reproduction of tactile elements or events, but by the textual aspect of memory (Sundholm, 2005), which is “a construction of [memory] under conditions and constraints determined by the present” (as cited in Sundholm, 2005, p. 62).

This way, in order to contextualize the space and the ensemble of memories for the narrative, I interviewed my mother about what she used to do in her childhood, and also collected some of the memories I have of my own and of my grandmother, mainly in the 1990s. *Would a Heart Die?* thus is also an autobiographical narrative, and this can even be noticed in the soundscape, with the sound of the city's philharmonic band, and the crunch of bread, which in turn resembles the bakery my grandfather used to have. For the family pictures that appear in one of the first shots of the animation, I used real old family photos – which can be classified as photographic memories - in order to be the basis for the framed ones in the animation (See Appendix D). Although the movie does not repeat memories exactly as they are, they are based in real facts and, as a result, are a trace of the past, constructed in the present. The concept for the character of Maria as a child is then a mix of my memories and my mother's childhood recollections – and looks - and Maria as an elderly woman is the result of how I remember my grandmother. These characteristics can be perceived by the appearance I chose to the puppet to evoke my grandmother's looks, and by the use of a rocking chair, a place she used to spend long periods of her day sitting on. Also, the gestures projected on her were also based on memory, and evoke the physical act of animating, which is based on our own experiences of the world. As animators, we not only leave our own physical traces in the object, model or puppet being animated, but we also recall memory from this physical act, by bringing our aesthetic sensibility to the performance we imprint on a character, for instance. According to Wells (1998)

the animator develops the character from a script, considering the narrative implications of the role in the determination of character design, the range of movement available to the character, and the character's predominant motivation, which inevitably informs modes of expression and behavior (p. 104).

With this in mind, two main puppets were created: one to be Maria as an elderly woman, and the other to be Maria in her childhood (See Appendix E). Since they behave differently, their gestures were based on memory and adapted to the construction of the physical characters, taking into consideration how expressions can be animated, and heads, hands, and legs can be manipulated in order to achieve the expected result.

Also, as previously mentioned, the present and the past merge; this happens because two separate worlds coexist, and are connected by the presence of Maria, as a little girl, in both of them. These two worlds – the first experienced by both the old and young Maria, and the second experienced by Maria only when she becomes a child – are aesthetically distinct by the use of different props and backgrounds. Whereas in the kitchen all the props are made of real materials, and the tangible world is emphasized by the physical nature of tactile surfaces and textures placed in the environment, the second world is composed of a combination between real props and painted backgrounds, digitally composited together. Although digitized, I privileged the texture of the paper and of the watercolor used in the backgrounds, in order to create some sort of a fantastic and dreamy atmosphere (See Appendix F).

The aesthetics of materiality, defined by Sundholm (2005) as a fact or trace that conveys materiality, also might explain how materiality and memory relate in *Would a Heart Die?*. According to him

Memory consequently implies a poetics – the practice of putting the bits and pieces into meaningful constellations and therefore creating discourses that will foster images and stories about the past triggered by the present. Such a poetics is dependant on both the material in the sense of technique and in the sense of object or thing, that is; the material that is used as a technique for remembering (in my case, film and its aesthetic means), and the very material that is depicted as objects filled with memories (p. 56).

Even though Sundholm's case study is 'film and its aesthetic means', I applied the concept to my own piece. As a digitally shot stop-motion animation, the technique for remembering can be replaced by 'stop-motion and its aesthetic means', because the technique allows emphasis on textures and tactile surfaces evoking, thus, the tangibility of materials used. In addition, the 'very material that is depicted as objects filled with memory' is denoted by the objects and fabricated elements that create an environment for memory representation.

This process can be explained by the fabrication of elements in order to recreate the kitchen and the city environments; in the way the kitchen furniture is displayed, and how the breakfast table contains typical food from the Brazilian northeastern region, and in the manner the backgrounds are highly inspired by the streets of the city I grew up

in. In addition, although the puppets have a specific aesthetic in their design, memory is also present in their creation: one of them is meant to recall the appearance of my grandmother – hair, glasses, and dress, for instance -, and the other, me and my mother when we were children – hair, pigtails, socks, and shoes.

In order to evoke the specific sensuous perception of tactility in all the stages of the project – pre-production, production, post-production and, moreover, the final piece and the relationship between it and the viewer – I decided to use specific materials. This being said, since the beginning of this project I listed fabric as one of the main materials to be employed, mainly for all the lines, textures and patterns it can bring together, and for its physical nature and the sense of touch it might evoke.

Greatly inspired by my last visit to Brazil, in Sergipe, the state I was born, where I saw an exhibit of miniatures and sets on popular culture and traditional folkloric groups, I thought that jute would be a very tactile fabric to begin with for its raw and artisanal appearance. The specific type used in this work was found in a market in Aracaju, the city I was born in, and its color recalls some sort of a medium colored skin. Its surface is full of holes and the material is emphasized on the screen, creating an expressively tangible texture.

In order to re-animate this materiality and create elements from this common fabric, I also based my ideas on the notion of the alternative existence that materials play when animated (Wells, 1998). Thus, I established that, for the skin of the puppets, I would use jute, due to its very textural qualities, and also materials such as pins, wool and wool locks, paper mache and coffee stained fabric, as well as painted osnaburg (a

kind of fabric) in order to materially construct their eyes, hair, noses, and mouths, respectively. According to Buchan (2011):

We can also understand texture in a literal sense: the materials from which animated figures are constructed as sculptural objects are often composed of materials that are not what we would expect a human being to be made of, but the bits and pieces are familiar to us from our own forays in flea markets or stowed-away boxes in the attic. And the objects often embody something else (p. 120).

When Buchan assumes that elements can also refer to other things, I use the simple example of a fabricated paper mache food piece used on the kitchen table of the animation, which recalls a traditional corn cake made mainly in the northeastern region of Brazil, from where I am from. Called *cuscuz* (See Appendix G) - it can be translated to couscous in English, although the recipe is not the same – the specific kind I reproduced for the animation may be recognized by viewers who know or have seen this traditional dish, “if their textural mind-set is aware of the reference” (Buchan, 2009, p. 120).

The very first scenes of the movie are set in a kitchen, in which close-up shots of materials and objects disclose the environment by emphasizing the physical nature and textures of the elements that compose the space. By evoking materiality, these shots arouse tactility from closeness, and are followed by a wide shot of the whole space,

which finally reveals this first and more real world that had only partially been shown (See Appendix H).

At this point, the materiality of the scene is most composed of miniatures such as furniture, china porcelain, plates, silverware, food, flour and sugar sacks, and brooms. The environment is thus surrounded by miniaturized versions of elements and objects that are part of our everyday world, with some of them playing an alternative material existence, such as paper-mache, which was used to fabricate fruits, bread, cake, and *cuscuz*. The process of fabrication of puppets, props and other elements was time consuming, but worth the time spent. Some props of the outside world were made from other materials, such as the envelope and the book, both made of cardstock paper, while other props are the result of material modification, like the bench and the street lamp.

Besides the two main puppets already described, there is the one of the imaginary friend Maria had when she was a child. After Maria finds a drawing she made of him, he appears, and they demonstrate a very fraternal affection. Although he is in just one scene, his presence is enough to show that he is part of a very important memory, and that he is also an essential piece in this connection between the present and the past. In addition, he is significantly different from the other two puppets due to his fantastic character, since he is an imaginary friend who suddenly appears and disappears. In this manner, he resembles a toy, with button eyes, fabric nose, and a head made of paper-mache and painted over with a mix of watercolor and acrylic paints. The result was an irregular surface with brush marks, not much visible on screen, but with a textured finish (See Appendix I).

The imaginary friend is the only character who is not made entirely of fabric. He is also the only character whose skin is not made of jute, and whose hands are only painted, instead of covered by fabric. These aesthetic choices relate to my wish to differentiate him from the appearance of the other puppets; since he is an imaginary creature, I decided that his looks should recall the figure of a toy that could be different enough from Maria, but that simultaneously could speak to the aesthetic of the other puppets, such as in the design of the cheeks.

Although I describe *Would a Heart Die?* as a narrative surrounded by memory, the presence of the imaginary friend is the only fact which was not constructed based on a real memory. However, I was greatly inspired by a folkloric group from Sergipe called *Parafusos*, which consists in twenty men who dance turning around, traditionally celebrating the end of slavery in Brazil. The movement makes them look like screws, and the way they dress reminds me of a playful atmosphere and very curious toys. Some say they look like clowns, but their clothes and peculiar appearance because of the makeup they wear, have particularly inspired me to create the imaginary friend figure for *Would a Heart Die?*.

Stop-motion animation is a technique that, by nature, evokes materiality by its textures and surfaces which, in turn, elicit the sense of touch in the viewer (Barker, 2009). But can this sense of touch be elicited by imperfections resulting from the fabrication and the animation processes? Even though processes of digital image correction are available, what is the value of not totally perfect material results in stop-motion animation?

By making use elements from the real material world, stop-motion animators work with three-dimensional materials that, as any material, can result imperfect on screen. This means that a strand of hair can be out of place, a piece of cloth may have wrinkles on it, or objects can accidentally move. Thus, imperfections are related to the tangibility of the animation process, and can be translated into aesthetic choices. The handmade production of characters and elements also infuses a more tangible feature in them and, consequently evoke a sense that they had been handmade and touched in its fabrication and animation.

Accordingly, in *Would a Heart Die?*, the aim is to use textures and produce a more spontaneous finish instead of a polished one. This point, therefore, translates into an aesthetic choice of privileging what Henry Selick calls “the electricity of life”, when talking about stop-motion:

What are the strengths of stop-motion? What should we try to hold on to? There are a lot of strengths: it's touched by the hand of the artist - you can feel that. You can sense that life force, but it's imperfect. It can't be done perfectly -- that's what CG can do. And I'm trying to get people to embrace that: if it pops, if cloth shifts a little, if the hair is buzzing. It's like this electricity of life (as cited in Desowitz, 2009, p. 2).

This lack of polished finish embedded in stop-motion animation can be seen in *Would a Heart Die?* mainly in the texture of the fabric that comprises the two main puppets' skin, and in the uneven clothing stitch found in their dresses. Also, although

jute has a raw appearance, it is also a frail fabric, and the lines that compose it can come apart easily, but discretely, creating an additional movement that can be also seen in the hair of Maria as a child, which is made of wool locks, and rarely stays static. In addition, the presence of the animator is perceivable by some wrinkles left on the little girl's dress, and also by slight movements imprinted on her ribbons, the result of the manipulation of her head.

Thus, it can be noticed that textures are an essential aspect in the representation of materiality in animation. Real materials are connected to a more tangible aesthetic that is inherent to three-dimensional stop-motion animation through an imperfect and unpolished design. Once again, the use of wool locks in the hair of little Maria created some limitations but, as an aesthetic choice, it implies a particular appearance and tangibility in the character by the use of a real and tactile material.

If materiality relates to the feeling that audiences can touch what they see on screen, this is also due to the physical character of the manipulation of puppets, objects or models in stop-motion animation. In this handmade process, the animator and the object animated are in a tactile relationship, which also translates into the sense of touch evoked by the textures that is, consequently, embodied by the viewer. About this process, Graça (2005) affirms:

There is an obvious direct relationship between the artist and the film itself. With their intimate connection to the body, handcrafted processes reintegrate not only the physical senses into filmmaking, for both the maker and the viewer, but cinematic technology all together (p. 103).

Therefore, this is my intention in *Would a Heart Die?*: to show that stop-motion animation has the ability to evoke this tactility in its production and fruition and, with it, also elicit a myriad of tactile actions that stimulate the viewer to touch, squeeze, and caress the object on the screen.

In order to achieve this goal, as already mentioned, close-ups are used in the animation, so that textures can be emphasized and invite the caressing look that comes with haptic visuality. This way, I attempt to stimulate this connection between our vision and our tactile sensations through particular shots that, according to Marks (2002), can “encourage a bodily relation to the screen itself before the point at which the viewer is pulled into the figures of the image and the exhortation of the narrative” (p. 17). That is why the close-ups appear in the beginning of the movie, and play a dual role: besides partially presenting the environment, they also present the materials by infusing a textural meaning in the animation, rather than only the logical narrative one.

The tactile experience in the movie is not only incited by the mode the textures are displayed on screen, but also by the experiences the characters go through during the animation. As organs of touch, the hands are almost all the time used to evoke the sensuous perception of touch. In one of the first scenes, for instance, Maria apparently touches her heart by grasping the fabric of her dress when she sees her family pictures on the wall. This example is followed by her transformation, in which she holds the chair using her hands and the sense of touch to express the feeling of surprise.

In the outside world, when Maria is a child, almost all of her experiences are related to the sense of touch, with her grabbing and curiously experiencing the tactile

qualities of the objects she finds. But one of the most important examples in the tactile sensations she experiences is the bakery scene, in which the smell of bread evokes in another memory of hers. In a close-up shot, Maria grabs bread, and spends some time feeling its crunch before eating it. In this scene, sound plays an important role, since it indicates Maria's tactile sensations in relation to this specific memory, and is also used to elicit the sense of touch in the viewer. In a final example, when Maria and her imaginary friend embrace, there is also a tactile contact between puppets, which evokes materiality from an animated response between puppets (See Appendix J). About this process, Purves (2008) comments that "These lifeless bits of wood, brass and silicone suddenly connect with each other; not only have we appeared to give them life, but they are responding to each other" (p. 226).

As a warm technique due to its handcrafted and handmade aspect, stop-motion animation is appealing to the sense of touch because the majority of actions and technical aspects are performed behind the cameras and, as a result, are physically made, such as character design, sets, props, and lighting. In this manner, one of the appeals of the technique is that it makes viewers aware of the presence of other people behind details. As the animator employs her sensibility and experience of the world in the animation of puppets or objects, she gives life to the particular material being animated, while communicating tactility that does not conceal her/his role in the film.

In *Would a Heart Die?*, this can be noticed in the use of cotton to produce the kettle steam and bread smell. Even though I could have used postproduction software to add these details, I preferred to employ a real material, and enable both scenes with more texture found in small details, since the majority of this work relied on the

handmade process of animation in order to elicit texture from the very real materials (See Appendix K). Therefore, in this handmade process, inanimate objects, in their distinct materiality, could come to life.

Stop-motion animation is definitely not an easy technique. In the production of *Would a Heart Die?* there were some limitations, and specific scenes were particularly difficult to animate. If sometimes I had to work with the restrictions of camera position, lenses, and lighting that caused some scenes not to be as they were predicted to, I also took advantage of the accident and the mistake – actually, during the animation shooting, some scenes were modified and are somewhat different of what I first planned in the original script (See Appendix L) and storyboard (See Appendix M). Therefore, knowing how to take advantage of the unpredictable and turn it into a useful scene or effect

rehumanizes the procedure, releasing the expressive work from the predictable ostensibility of technology, providing unexpected alternatives in the meaning-giving processes, boosting receptiveness to the transgression of protocol procedures, opening up to expressive results that go beyond programmed sanctions and that prescribed by functional reliability (Graça, 2005, p. 104).

Here, it seems Graça talks about processes that do not rely on cinematic devices, the ones that suspend a great dependency on technologies. In my opinion, stop-motion animation is a dual technique; one that depends on the limitations of the cinematic devices, but that also opens space for a great creative process due to its

handmade character which demands aesthetic sensibility from the animator or director who, instead of being directed by technology, pairs creatively with it. Hence, that was how I felt in the process of production of *Would a Heart Die?*. Despite limitations, the unpredictable originated new creative possibilities during the shooting of the animation. These situations were assets in the making of the movie, and the actual process contributed to the creation of new gestures to the characters, within a creative use of the cinematic device.

As in the experience we, as viewers, are able to go through mutually with the film on screen, I focus on the sense of touch, I would like to mention that materiality and tactility were two very important and interesting concepts to work with in the practical and theoretical processes of this work. The relationship between the animation and the viewer is one that might elicit sensuous perception through touch, in which vision works as touch, and elicit a haptic look that “is a labile, plastic sort of look, more inclined to move than to focus” (Marks, 2002, p. 8). Consequently, it stimulates the viewer to feel through the eyes - in a mutual relationship with the object, such as caressing the bread the girl caresses, for example - and elicits the sense of touch by fixing on surfaces to distinguish textures.

According to Sobchack (2004), in our cinematic experience, we are “able to touch and be touched by the substance and texture of images” (p. 65). In this mutual relationship, our senses are not independent of the others; we feel with all of them, and a caressing and closer gaze at the textures in *Would a Heart Die?* with a tactile analysis might indicate that they, at some point, address our fingertips, even if we are not able to identify, at first, what the material exactly is. Texture is not only represented by

materials on screen, but it is also “something we and the film engage in mutually, rather than something presented *by* the films *to* their passive and anonymous viewers” (Barker, 2009, p. 25). Therefore, it is this embodied perception that establishes the sensuous perception between the movie and us. It is seeing and touching with our eyes, and also stimulating this touch in grasping, caressing, in the sensation of longing expressed by the tactile qualities of our own hands.

The experience in stop-motion animation is related to the experience with the real material world. Even though materials in their tactile existence play an alternative role in the construction of objects, they are brought to life and show the relation between the photographic image and the original object that is part of our everyday world, as we know, resembling the live-action experience, which is, to a great extent, opposed to the cartoon spectator experience (Bouldin, 2000). However, the experience of a stop-motion animated film is directly connected to how the use of the technique and materials influences the perception of the viewer to become an extension of “our experience of fabrics, objects, materials, and spaces in the phenomenal world with the world the films present” (Buchan, 2011, p. 118). This experience can be particularly seen in the kitchen scene, in which the environment and the objects, although miniaturized, are part of the world as we know it, and displayed as so.

As an animator, my experience in the making of *Would a Heart Die?* was more than a technical and learning experience in the handmade process of fabricating puppets, sets, props and movements; it was a sensuous experience in which my sense of touch has been heightened in all the stages of the process, be it in the poetics of

memory and the physical act of animating, be it in the final result and the translation of all the textures I fabricated, gathered, and prepared for the film.

Even though this is a movie based on previous research, it does not mean I was not surprised by its textural and tactile qualities. A mode of perception, and also a form of analysis, tactility is also present in textures I could not imagine at first, and my sense of 'touching through my vision' grew by attempting to elicit the tactility of materials both as an artist doing creative work, and also as a viewer. Putting memory and materiality together was a great experience, and also a very tactile one, mainly because I could attempt to physically and materially reconstruct familiar appearances through a particular concept design.

As a researcher and animator, I hope that with this work I have taken a step further in the study of stop-motion animation aesthetic, and also in the association of a reflexive practical piece to the connection of existing theories in the field. The textural and poetic qualities of stop-motion animated works engage our sentient being, and this embodied material experience offers a whole new tangible world to be haptically looked at, touched and grasped. As sensuous bodies, we are in the realm of materiality and sensuous perception, drawn into a world of haptic and tactile experiences.

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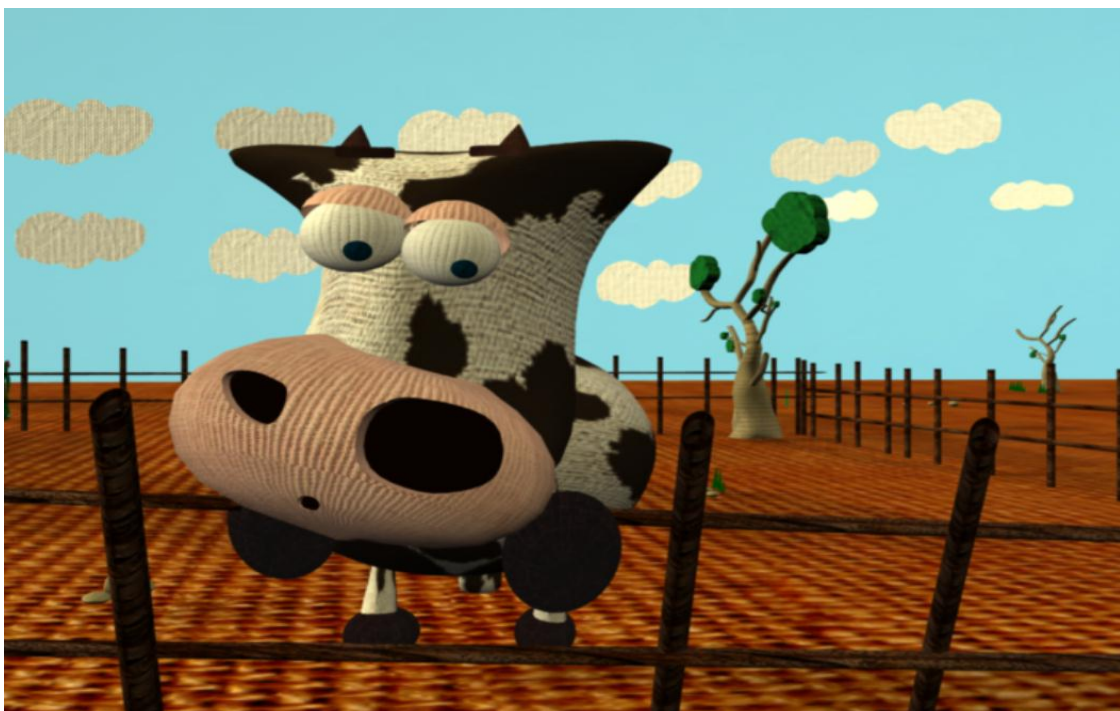
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A



Stills from 3-D computer animation *Vacaleta* (2011), digitally textured with fabric.

APPENDIX B



Stills from the animation *A Tale of Colors and Balloons* (2011).

APPENDIX C



Stills from *Aimee* (2011).

APPENDIX D



Family pictures in *Would a Heart Die?*, greatly inspired by real pictures of my own family.

APPENDIX E



Puppet of elderly Maria, inspired by my grandmother.



Puppet of little Maria, which resembles my mother and me in our childhood.

APPENDIX F



The two worlds in *Would a Heart Die?*.

APPENDIX G



Cuscuz, the yellow cake next to the bread basket.

APPENDIX H



Some of the close-up shots in *Would a Heart Die?* (1).



Some of the close-up shots in *Would a Heart Die?* (2).

APPENDIX I



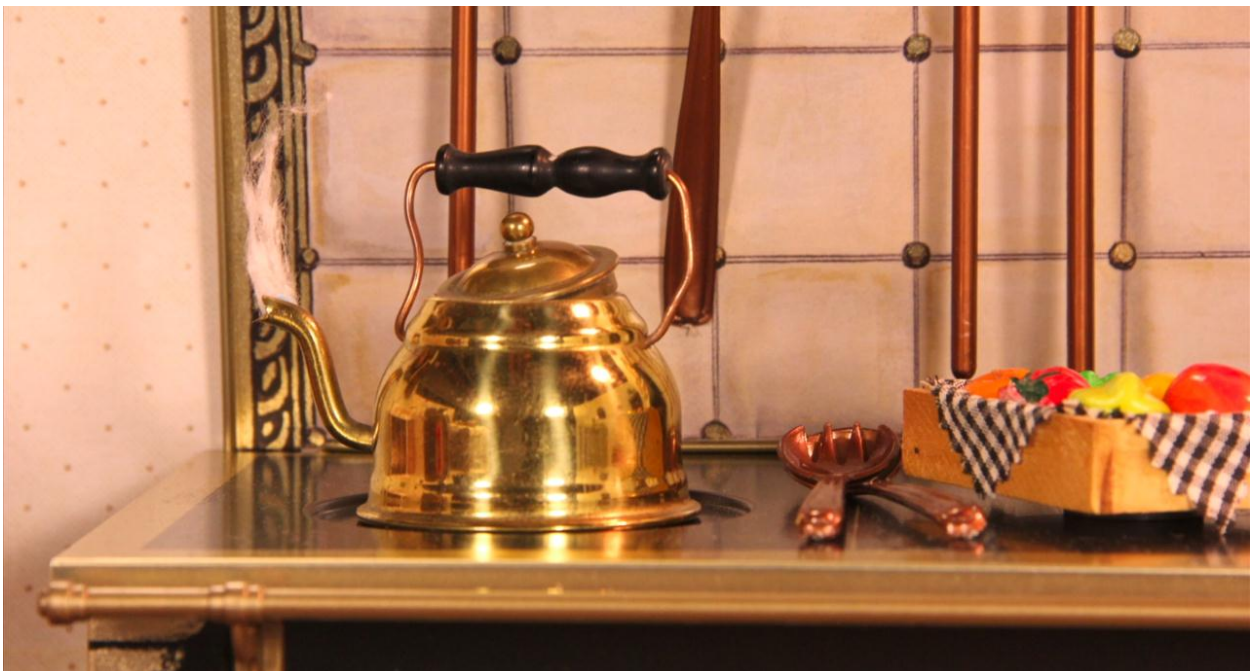
Maria's childhood imaginary friend.

APPENDIX J



Two scenes that evoke the sense of touch in *Would a Heart Die?* through the puppets' actions.

APPENDIX K



The use of cotton as water steam that comes from the kettle.



Cotton as the smell of bread.

APPENDIX L

Would a Heart Die? *

By

Ellen Rocha

*Previous version before the modifications made during the animation shooting.

1 EXT. - FRONT HOUSE - DAY

FADE IN

It is early morning in a small town. The town still conserves the appearance of old houses.

VERY WIDE SHOT:

The front of a house with a vintage and classic look appears. The house has been carefully conserved over time, with the same shape and size of doors and windows, which are tall and rounded in their upper parts. The architecture has a strong influence of the Portuguese, a result of colonization.

2 INT. - KITCHEN - DAY

MEDIUM SHOT:

The sunlight enters the window and casts over the four-chair table - covered with a white lace tablecloth - that is almost ready for breakfast. There lies a basket with fruits, as well as a basket with bread, a milk pot, a sugar pot, a cup, a spoon, a knife, a fork, a big plate, a small plate with a block of butter, and a rounded plate with Brazilian *cuscuz*.

CUT TO

Cupboard and sink.

CUT TO

Some family pictures are hanging on the wall. (We hear the) Sound of a RADIO being tuned in. It starts playing a SONG, followed by the sound of MARIA that is HUMMING in the rhythm of the song.

CUT TO

Kettle is boiling water over an old, but well conserved wood stove. Over the stove, there is a shelf in which some kitchen utensils are hanging. Next to the stove, there is a hutch. (We hear the) Sound of Maria's SLOW STEPS approaching.

CUT TO

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WIDE SHOT:

(Of) The right left side of the table. (We hear the) Sound of Maria's SLOW STEPS getting closer.

PAN

The rocking chair is revealed on the left.

CAMERA stops

Maria appears, and sits on the rocking chair.

She is an average height elderly woman with short gray hair and clear glasses. She wears a floral dress.

FADE OUT

3 INT. - KITCHEN - DAY

MEDIUM SHOT:

Maria is tired, and her face has the wrinkles of long years of life. She takes out her glasses, and puts them on the table. She starts swaying back and forth in her rocking chair. While she is swaying, she feels something strange is happening with her legs, and tries to look at them. Intrigued and not understanding what's happening, Maria frowns her eyebrows.

CUT TO

Maria's legs turned into an 8-year old girl's legs. CAMERA TILTS UP to show that Maria became a LITTLE GIRL. She is short, and wears pigtails with yellow ribbons in each one. She looks around the kitchen.

CUT TO

The Little Girl gets out of the chair, straightens out her dress with her hands, and walks towards the door.

4 INT. - FRONT HOUSE - DAY

She looks at the street. (We hear) The sound of bells that comes
(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

from the church.

5 EXT. - STREET - DAY

There's nobody in the city, but we can still listen to MURMURS of people talking, and BIRDS.
The Little Girl starts walking, and finds a small wooden sword.

CUT TO WIDE SHOT:

She plays with the sword, and pretends she is fighting a dragon, when she is, in fact, fighting a gecko that doesn't seem to care. She then gets sick of playing with the sword, and drops it on the floor.

6 EXT. - STREET - DAY

The Little Girl keeps walking through the city and finds a ball. She bows to pick it up, gets up again, and looks at the ball for a moment. She then throws it to the right side.

She walks, and listens to the sound of the PHILARMONIC BAND coming from far. She hurries, and jumps a 3-step little stair on the sidewalk.

She stops, looks to the left and to the right, but she can't see anyone, because she's alone in the city.

7 EXT. - FRONT OF BAKERY - DAY

A "smell" is passing by. PAN follows the smell.

CUT TO the Little Girl smelling bread. She looks hungry. She looks to the side, so she can see where the smell is coming from.

CUT TO a POV of her looking at a bakery.
She arrives at the bakery's door.

CUT TO CLOSE UP:

(Of) The basket of bread, and her hand taking one bread.
She has a smile upon her face.

8 EXT. - SQUARE - DAY

The Little Girl finds a book on a bench, and when she opens it, she finds one of her first drawings. She is nostalgic and gets entertained until something calls her attention.

She looks at the thing's direction. She is surprised, as if she's seeing someone she never imagined she'd see again.

Her IMAGINARY FRIEND is looking at her. He is taller than her, and wears white-layered clothes.

CUT TO

Little Girl looking at him.

CUT TO

Little Girl runs and hugs the Imaginary Friend with tenderness. He caresses her hair and gives her a letter in an envelope. She looks at the envelope and then looks at him, nodding her head. She suddenly hears the bells and looks behind very fast. She then looks back to the Imaginary Friend, but he is already gone.

9 EXT. - FRONT HOUSE - EVENING

The Little Girl walks towards the door of the house. She looks behind, and then opens the door.

10 INT. - KITCHEN - EVENING

The Little Girl walks until the table, puts the envelope there, and then gets to the rocking chair, and sits down. She sways back and forth.

CUT-IN to her arms that just became Maria's.

Maria looks at the table, and tries to find her glasses. She also looks at the envelope and grabs it.

Maria has an intrigued face. She takes the envelope, and puts her glasses on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CUT TO CLOSE UP of the envelope, in which it's written
"MARIA".

CUT TO

Maria looks at the envelope. (We hear the) Sound of envelope
OPENING, and UNFOLDING PAPER. She looks over the letter and puts
on a serene smile.

She takes out her glasses, leans the letter on her chest, leans
on the rocking chair, sways back and, sighs with tranquility, and
closes her eyes.

FADE OUT

THE END

APPENDIX M

WOULD A HEART DIE?

(Storyboard)

1 EXT. - FRONT HOUSE - DAY

1.1



IMAGE Establishing shot of a classic and vintage front house.
AUDIO Birds singing.

2 INT. - KITCHEN - DAY

2.1

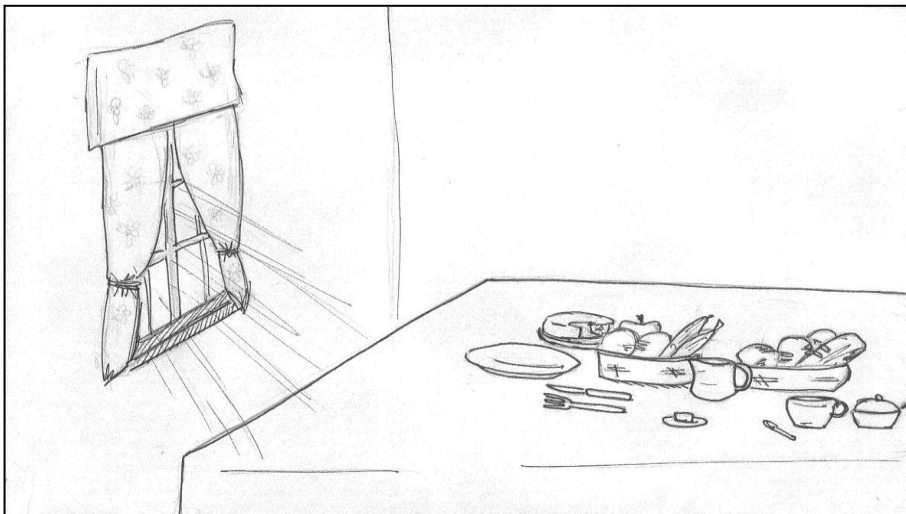


IMAGE Table is ready for breakfast.

AUDIO Birds singing.

2.2

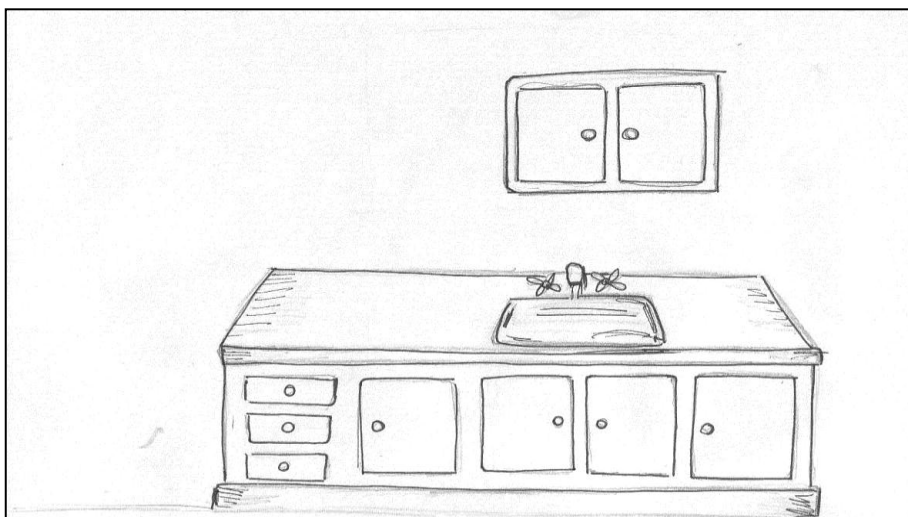


IMAGE Wide shot of cupboard and sink.

AUDIO Birds singing.

2.3

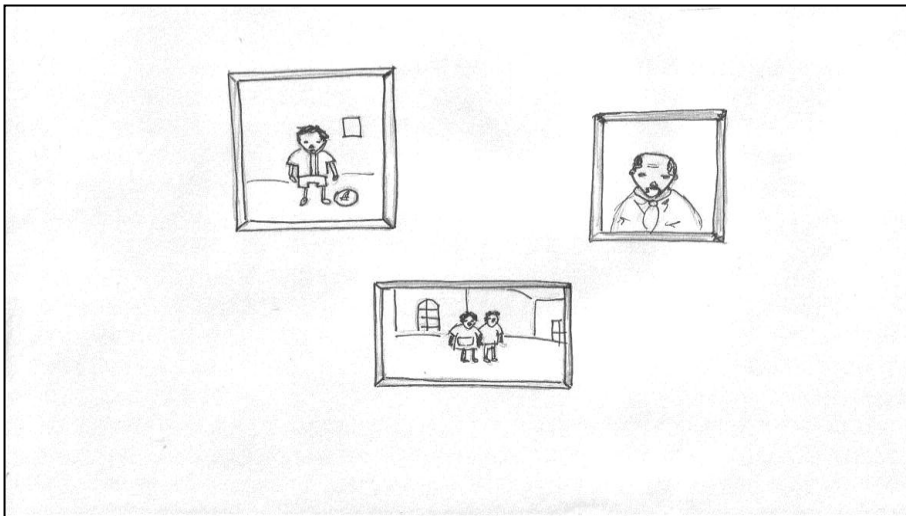


IMAGE Family pictures on the wall.

AUDIO Birds singing, radio being tuned in, music playing, and Maria's voice humming along.

2.4

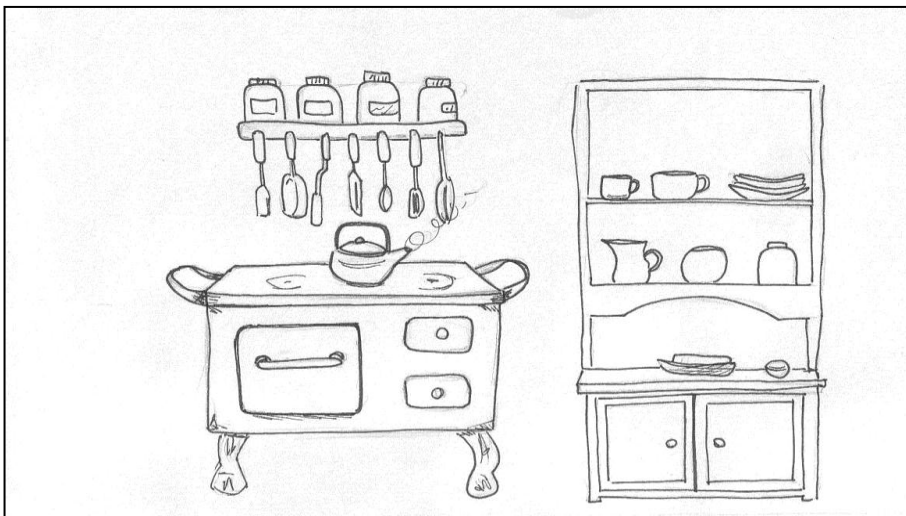


IMAGE Kettle is boiling water over the stove.

AUDIO Birds singing, music playing, Maria's steps approaching.

2.5

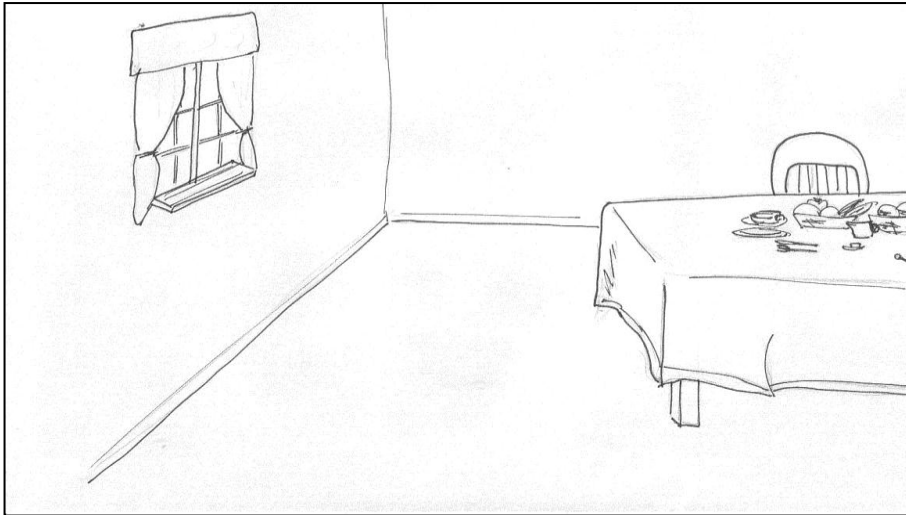


IMAGE Wide shot of the right side of the table.

AUDIO Birds singing, music playing, Maria's steps getting closer.

2.6

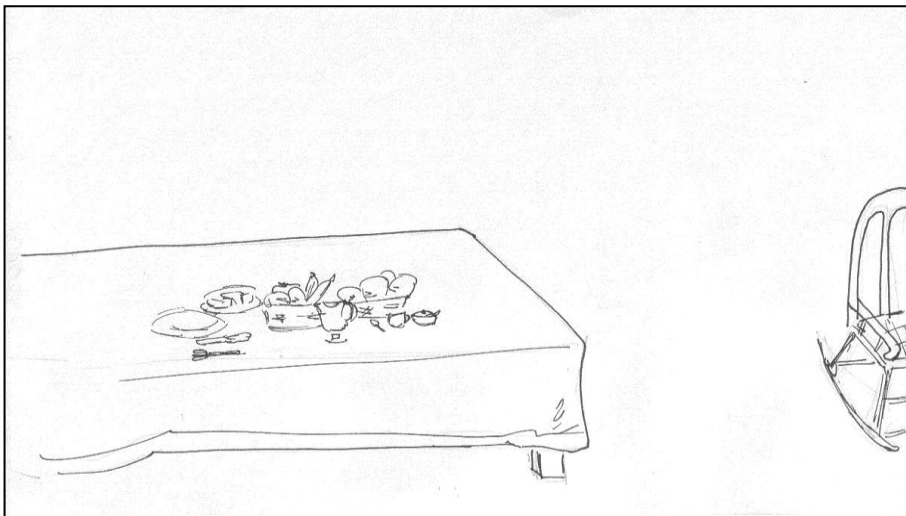


IMAGE Camera pans and reveals the rocking chair.

AUDIO Birds singing, music playing, Maria's steps getting closer, Maria's voice humming.

2.7

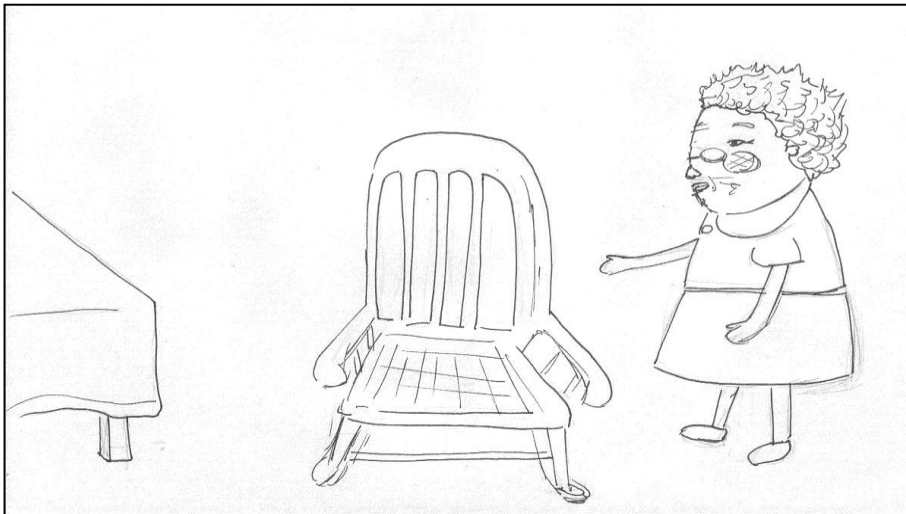


IMAGE Maria enters the scene.

AUDIO Birds singing, music playing, Maria's steps, Maria's voice humming.

2.8



IMAGE Maria sits on the rocking chair.

AUDIO Birds singing, music playing.

3 INT. - KITCHEN - DAY

3.1

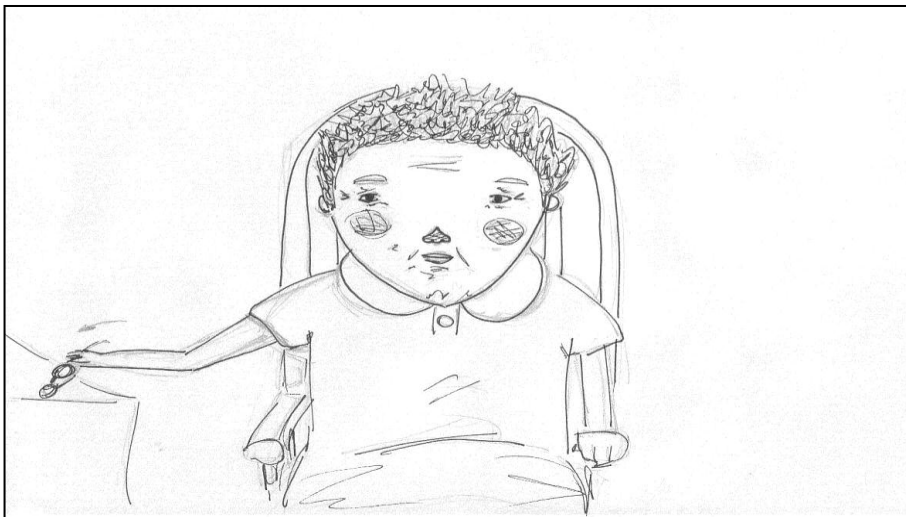


IMAGE Maria takes out her glasses, and puts them on the table.
AUDIO Birds singing.

3.2

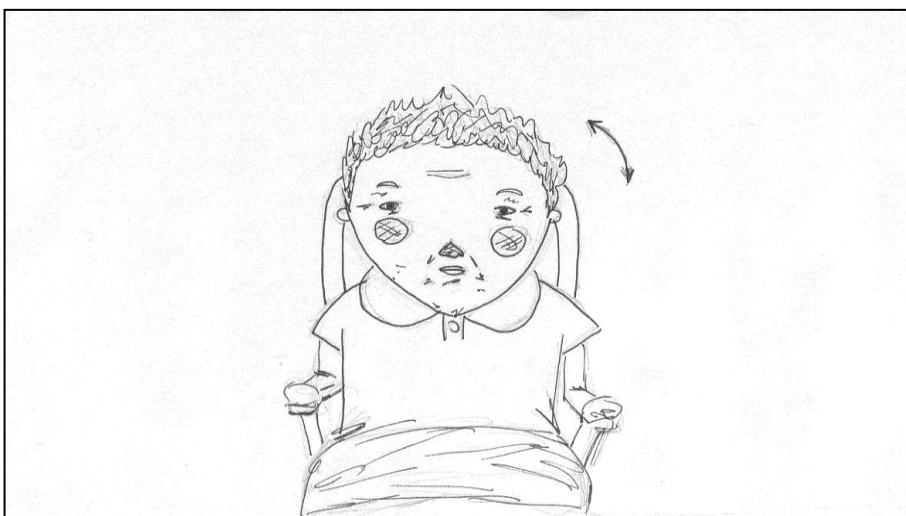


IMAGE Maria sways back and forth on the rocking chair.
AUDIO Birds singing, sound of rocking chair.

3.3



IMAGE Maria feels something strange is happening with her legs, and tries to look at them. She frowns her eyebrows.
AUDIO Birds singing, Maria's voice.

3.4

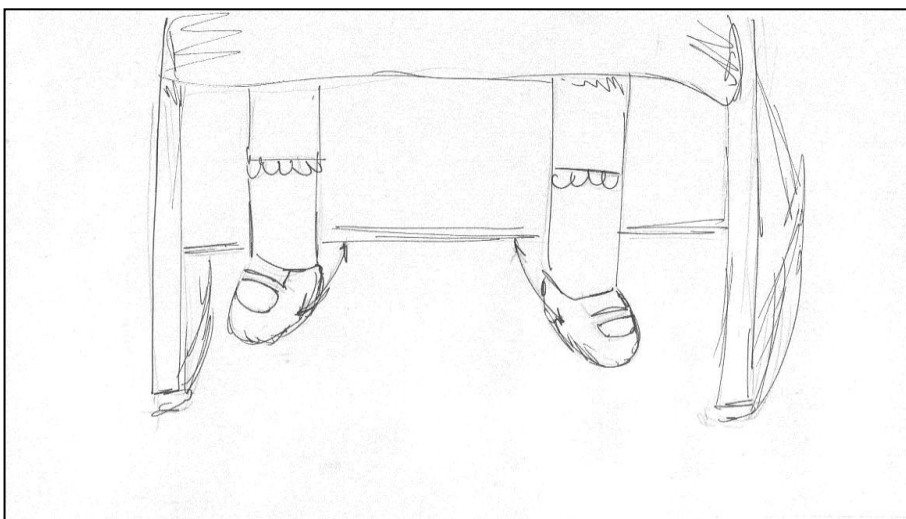


IMAGE Maria's legs turned into an 8-year old girl's legs.
AUDIO Birds singing.

3.5



IMAGE Camera tilts up to show that Maria became a Little Girl. She looks around the kitchen.

AUDIO Birds singing.

3.6



IMAGE The Little Girl gets out of the chair, and straightens out her dress.

AUDIO Birds singing, Maria's feet touching the ground.

3.7



IMAGE The Little Girl walks towards the front door of the house.

AUDIO Birds singing, Little Girl's steps.

4 INT. - FRONT HOUSE - DAY

4.1

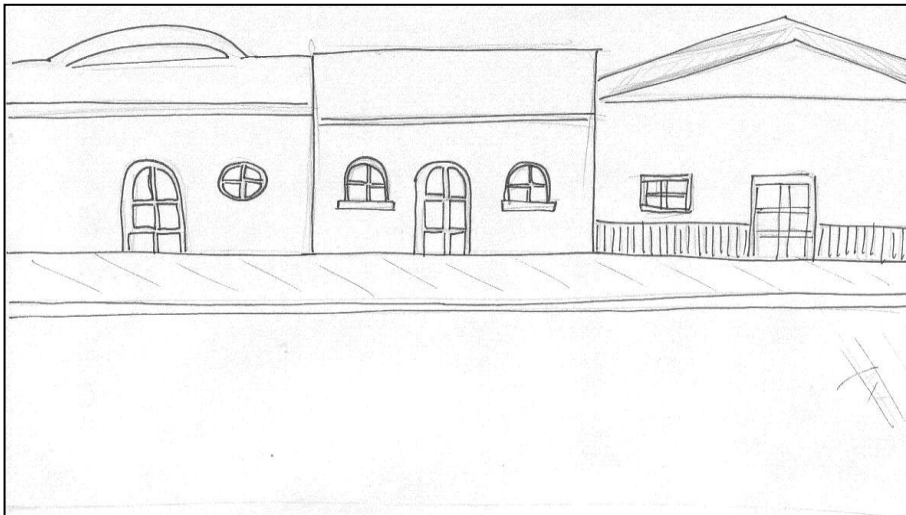


IMAGE POV of the Little Girl looking at the street.

AUDIO Birds singing, church bells ringing, murmurs of people Talking, and other small town noises.

4.2



IMAGE The Little Girl walks and finds a small wooden sword.

AUDIO Birds singing, steps, murmurs of people talking, and other small town noises.

4.3



IMAGE She pretends she is fighting a dragon.

AUDIO Birds singing, murmurs.

4.4



IMAGE She gets bored of playing and drops the sword on the floor.

AUDIO Birds singing, steps, murmurs.

5 EXT. - STREET - DAY

5.1



IMAGE The Little Girl keeps walking through the city and finds a ball.
AUDIO Birds singing, steps, murmurs.

5.2



IMAGE She bows to pick the ball up.
AUDIO Birds singing, steps, murmurs.

5.3



IMAGE She gets up again, and looks at the ball for a moment.

AUDIO Birds singing, murmurs.

5.4



IMAGE She throws the ball to the side.

AUDIO Birds singing, murmurs, sound of the ball hitting the ground.

6 EXT. - STREET - DAY

6.1



IMAGE The Little Girl listens to the philharmonic band from far.
AUDIO Birds singing, sound of the philharmonic band.

6.2



IMAGE She hurries up.
AUDIO Birds singing, band playing, steps.

6.3



IMAGE She jumps a 3-step little stair on the sidewalk.

AUDIO Birds singing, steps, sound of band playing.

6.4



IMAGE She stops, looks to both sides, but she can't see anyone.

AUDIO Birds singing, band getting further away.

7 EXT. - FRONT OF BAKERY - DAY

7.1



IMAGE The Little Girl smells bread.

AUDIO Birds singing, murmurs, sound of girl smelling bread.

7.2



IMAGE POV of the Little Girl looking at a bakery.

AUDIO Birds singing, murmurs.

7.3

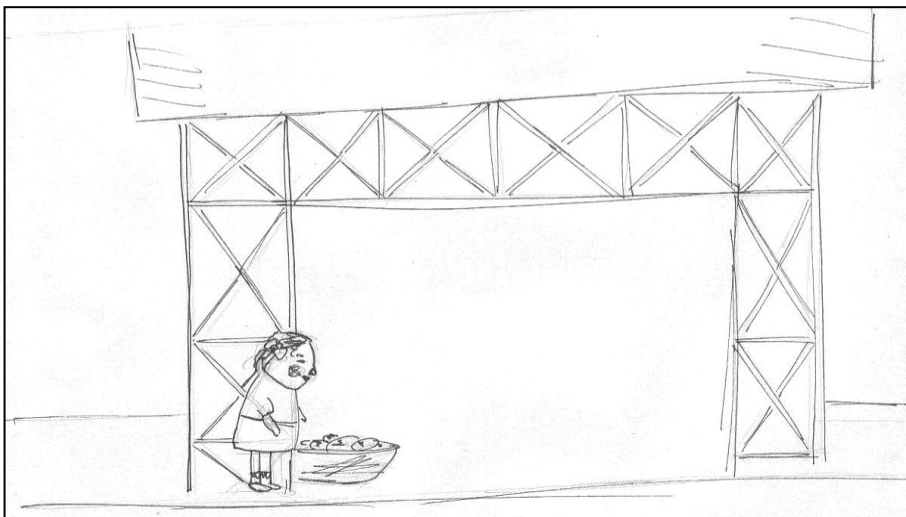


IMAGE The Little Girl arrives at the bakery's door.

AUDIO Birds singing, steps.

7.4

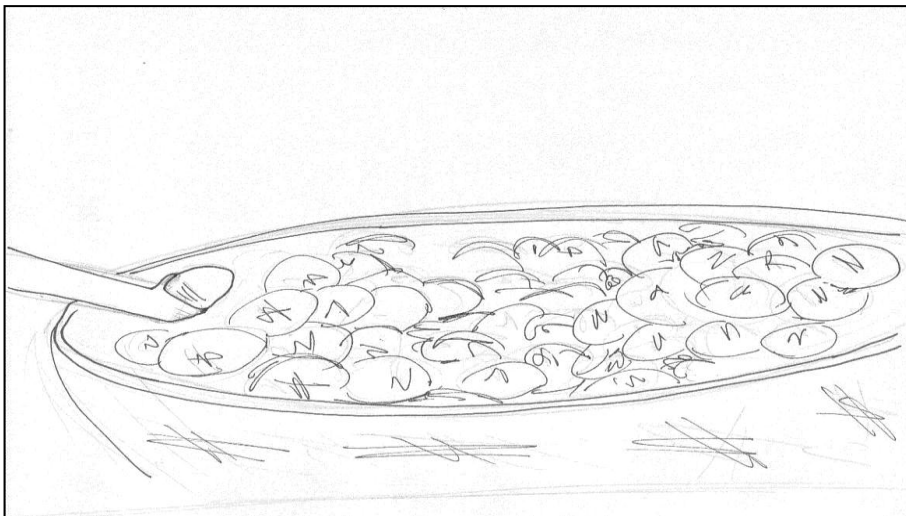


IMAGE Close-up of the basket of bread and the Little Girl's hand.

AUDIO Birds singing, sound of her hand taking a bread.

7.5



IMAGE The Little Girl has a smile upon her face.

AUDIO Birds singing, breeze.

8 EXT. - SQUARE - DAY

8.1

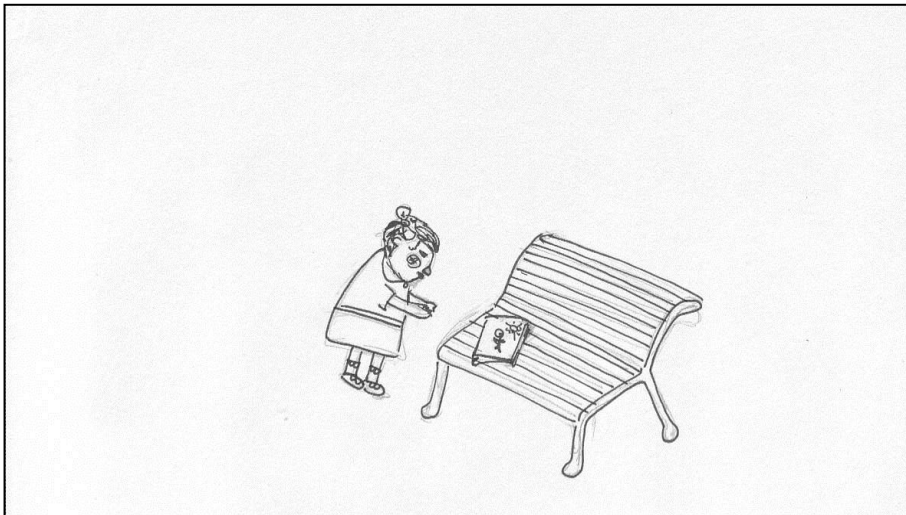


IMAGE The Little Girl finds a book on a bench.
AUDIO Birds singing, steps.

8.2

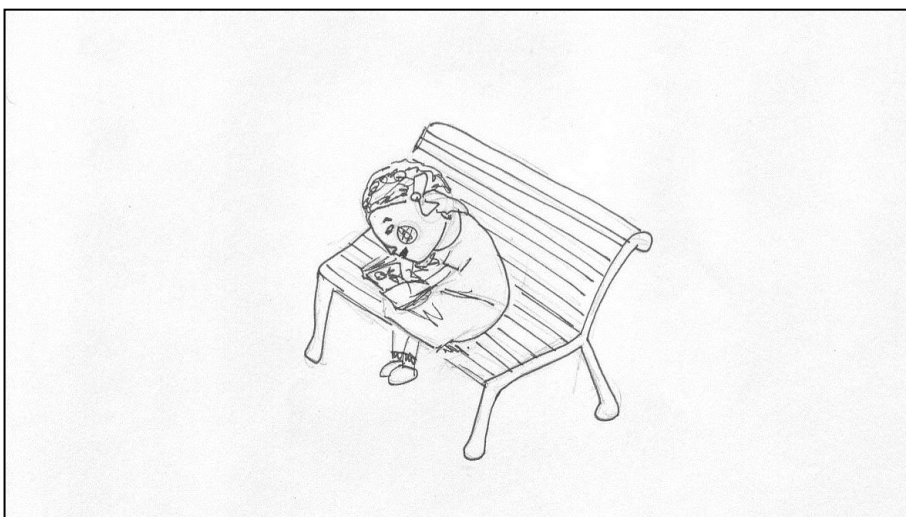


IMAGE She finds one of the first drawings she made, and keeps looking at it
AUDIO Birds singing, sound of pages being flipped.

8.3



IMAGE She looks up, surprised.

AUDIO Sounds get muffled.

8.4

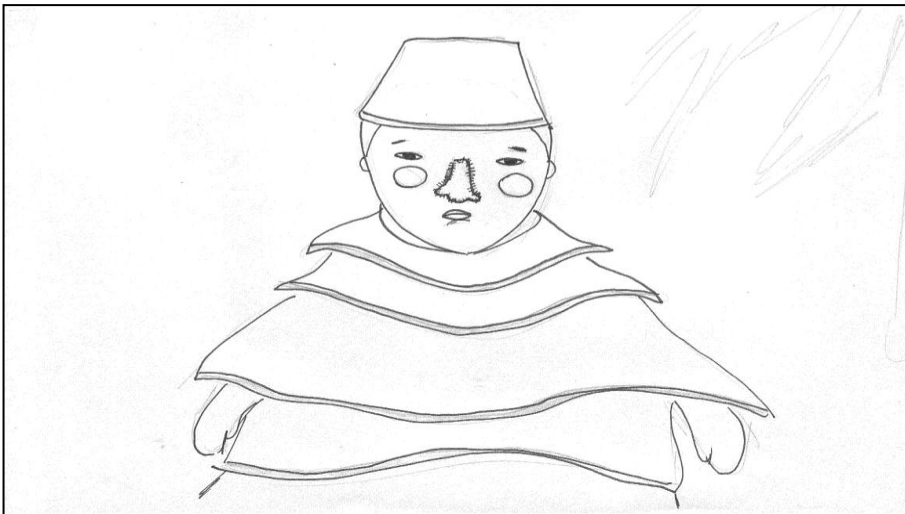


IMAGE Her childhood imaginary friend is looking at her.

AUDIO Muffled sounds.

8.5



IMAGE The Little Girl looks at her Imaginary Friend.
AUDIO Muffled sounds.

8.6

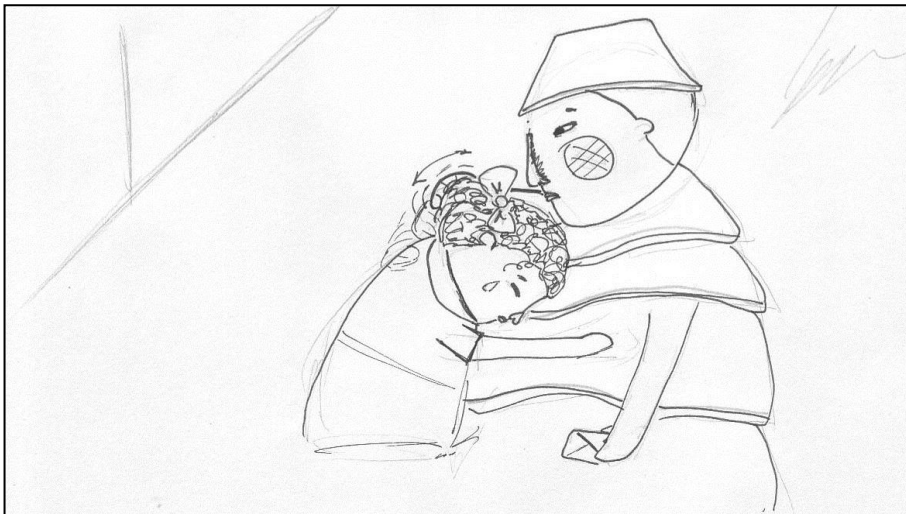


IMAGE The Little Girl hugs the Imaginary Friend with tenderness.
AUDIO Muffled sounds, steps, hug sound.

8.7

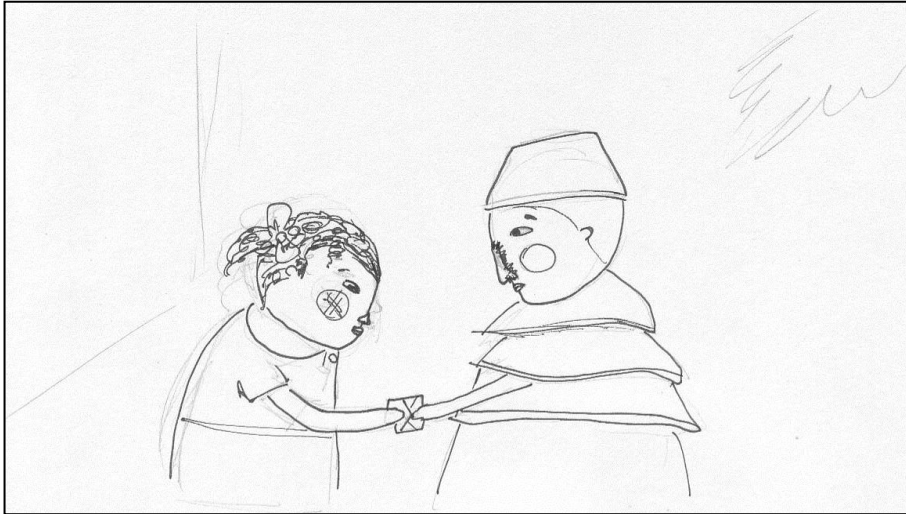


IMAGE The Imaginary Friend gives her an envelope.

AUDIO Muffled sounds, sound of paper being touched.

8.8

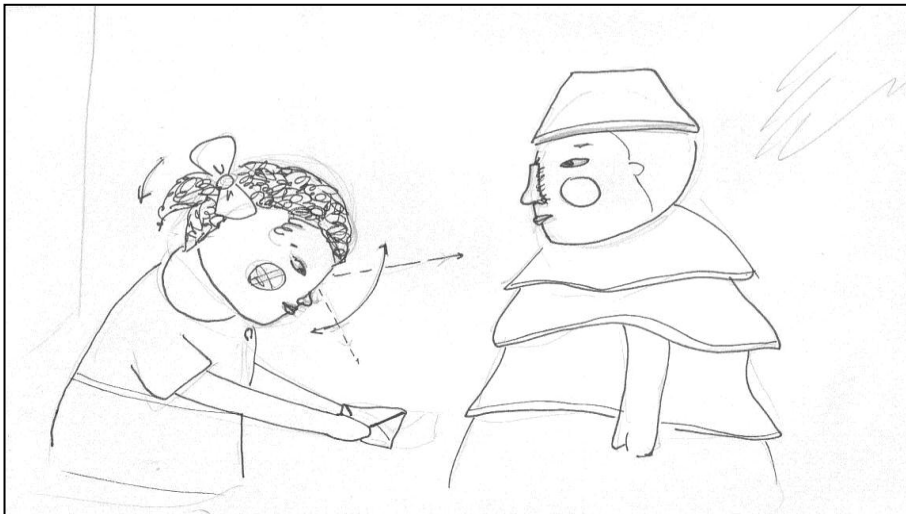


IMAGE She looks at the envelope and then looks at him.

AUDIO Muffled sounds.

8.9

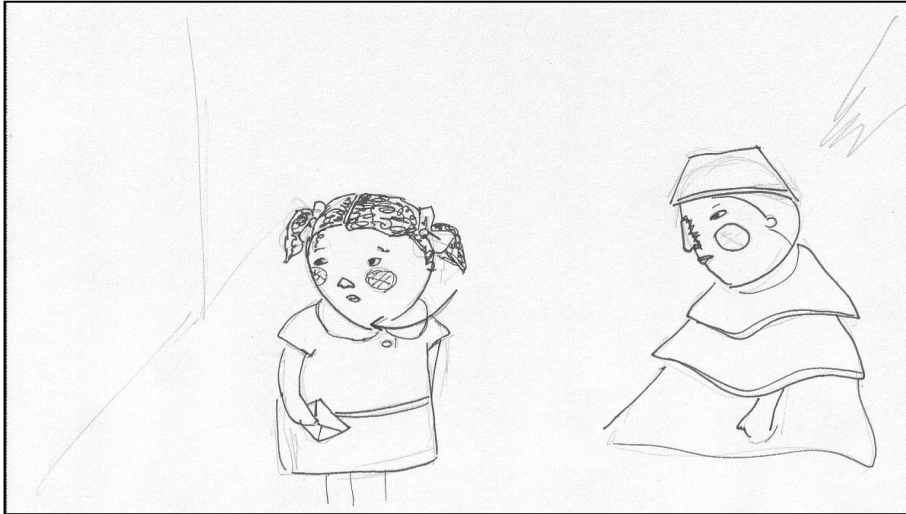


IMAGE The Little Girl hears the bells. She looks behind very fast.
AUDIO Muffled sounds, bells.

8.10



IMAGE She looks back to say goodbye to the Creature, but he is already gone.
AUDIO Murmurs, birds singing.

8.11



IMAGE Close-up of her sad face.

AUDIO Murmurs, birds singing.

9 EXT. - FRONT HOUSE - EVENING

9.1

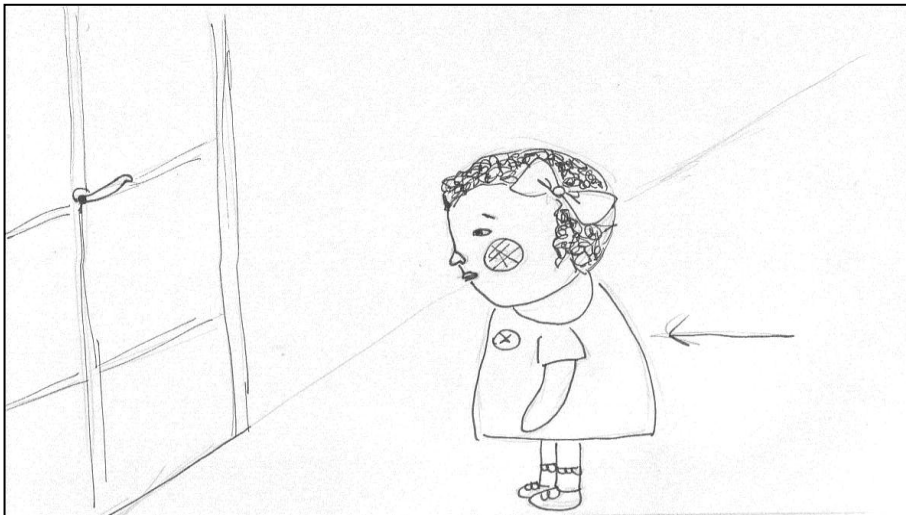


IMAGE The Little Girl walks toward the door of the house.
AUDIO Crickets, steps.

9.2



IMAGE She looks behind for the last time.
AUDIO Crickets.

9.3

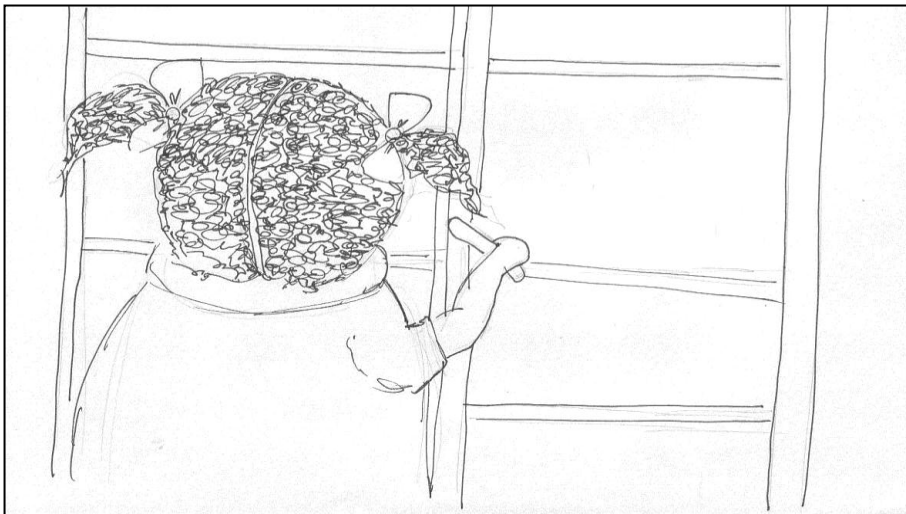


IMAGE She opens the door.
AUDIO Crickets, door click.

10 INT. - KITCHEN - EVENING

10.1

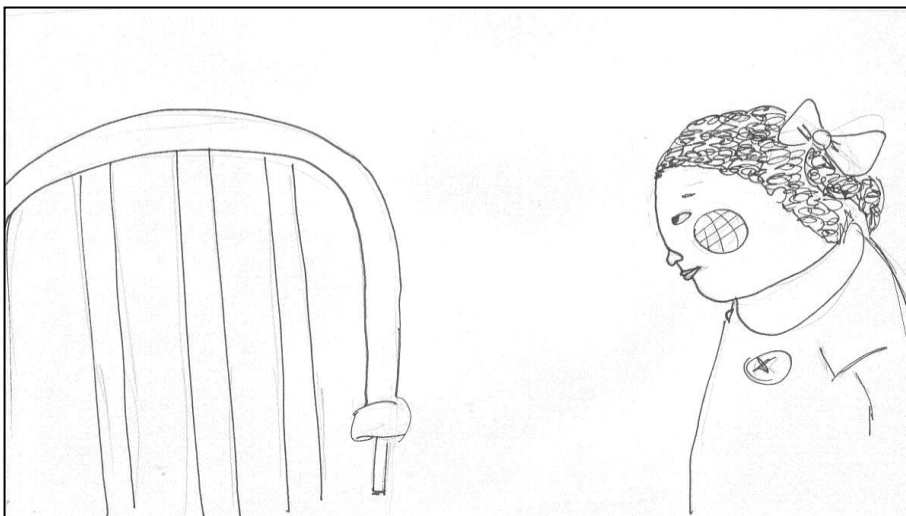


IMAGE The Little Girl walks until she gets to the rocking chair.
AUDIO Crickets, steps.

10.2



IMAGE She sits down, and sways back and forth on the rocking chair.
AUDIO Crickets, sound of the rocking chair.

10.3



IMAGE Cut-in to elderly Maria's arms.

AUDIO Crickets, sound of the rocking chair.

10.4



IMAGE Maria looks at the table and tries to find her glasses.

AUDIO Crickets, sound of her hand touching the table, (radio?).

10.5

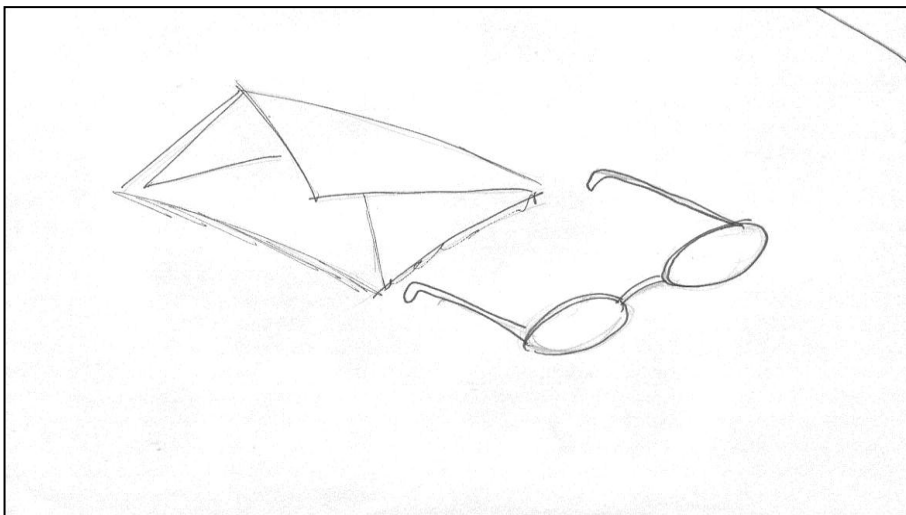


IMAGE Close-up of the envelope and the glasses.

AUDIO Crickets, sound of her hand touching the glasses.

10.6



IMAGE Maria puts her glasses on and takes the envelope.

AUDIO Crickets, sound of Maria putting on her glasses, sound of paper being touched.

10.7

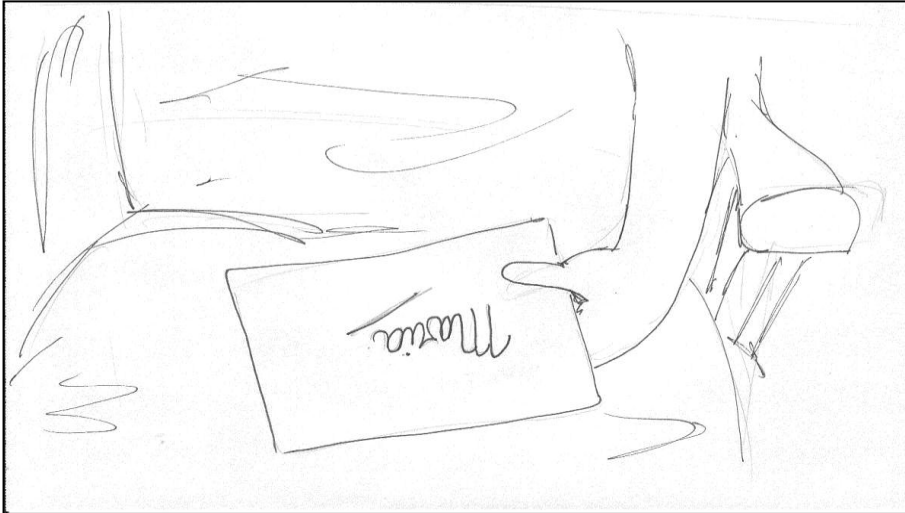


IMAGE Close-up of envelope.

AUDIO Crickets.

10.8



IMAGE Maria looks at the envelope, and opens it.

AUDIO Crickets, sound of envelope opening and paper being unfolded.

10.9



IMAGE She reads the letter and puts on a serene smile.

AUDIO Crickets.

10.10



IMAGE Maria takes out her glasses, and leans the letter on her chest.

AUDIO Crickets.

10.11



ACTION She sways back and forth, and sighs.

AUDIO Crickets, sound of the rocking chair, Maria's sigh.

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Major Professor: Cade Bursell

Publications:

Souza, E. C. R. (2009). The Little Mouse Of Castle Rá-Tim-Bum and The Inclusion Of Stop-Motion Animated Series On Tv Cultura (O Ratinho Do Castelo Rá-Tim-Bum e a Inserção De Séries Animadas Em Stop-Motion Na Tv Cultura). *Anais do XXXII Congresso Brasileiro de Ciências da Comunicação* (CD-ROM). São Paulo, Brazil: Intercom.