



NUA
Summer
Schools
Series

‘Waste not!’

Designing characters from waste materials

Workshop developed by
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You will need:

- Scissors
- Drawing materials (pen, pencil, marker pens)
- Tape, glue stick or blu tack
- Scrap paper
- At least 6 pieces of rubbish

Top tip:

Look for clean and dry materials in different colours and sizes. Soft and malleable rubbish is easier to work with, but sturdy and solid rubbish can be used to build a character’s spine or body. Cardboard, plastic netting and bottle tops are always great!

Objective

This workshop will challenge your perception of character design and waste materials. You will consider how the waste you produce can be given another life and turned into a creative character design for Animation.

Background

Animation has simple beginnings and can be traced back to shadow play or shadow puppetry.

This ancient form of storytelling and entertainment uses flat 2D cut-out figures which are held between a source of light and a translucent screen. Lotte Reiniger, a German Animator in the early 20th century, was a pioneer who used this technique for Animation. Reiniger made elaborate paper silhouettes to tell a feature-length magical story using stop-motion animation.

Today, a huge range of materials are used in stop-motion animation and many Animators make use of rubbish and waste materials in their work.



Still from Lotte Reiniger's 'The Adventures of Prince Achmed'

Activity: make your character

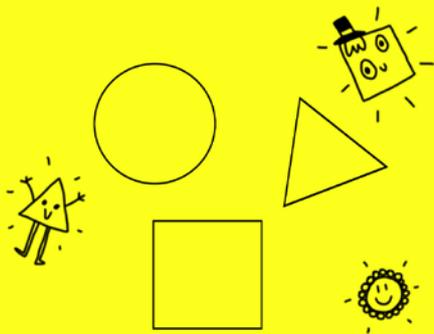
Task one – select your materials

- Lay your waste materials out in front of you and get to know them.
- Are there any sturdy materials that can be used to create a strong body?
- Do any have an interesting texture or colour?
- Select 3-4 materials to use for your character.



Task two – create a rough character drawing

- Grab a pen or pencil and your scrap paper and doodle a rough character drawing, made of your chosen materials.
- Try forming your character from basic shapes like a square, circle or triangle.
- Your character could be a human, an animal, a robot or even an imaginary creature!
- The looser the drawing the better, focus on capturing the basic shapes and material properties (see image).



Top tip:

Think about the shapes you decide to use for your character. Triangular shapes are often used to portray villains (think horns, sharp teeth, claws). Whereas, softer more rounded shapes are used for safe and friendly characters. A square conveys characteristics of strength and dependability and is often used for protagonists and strong heroes.



Task three – repeat

- Create a second rough character and try to think of completely different ways of using the same materials.
- Repeating the same exercise can push you to come up with even more creative ideas!

Task four – choose your character design

- Compare your two drawings.
- Which one do you think stands out better as a character design?
- Which would be easier to make?
- Pick one of the designs to make.

Task five – create your character

- Use scissors and glue, tape or blu tack to create your character.



Conclusion

- Stop-motion Animation can create a lot of waste as a by-product of production and design. By giving waste materials another life, it can inform your creative process and expand problem-solving, while also being good for the environment!
- In designing characters with a purpose, you learn to think ahead and consider what movement your characters might need.
- You can keep making and creating with your characters after completing this workshop through story design and Animation.





Let's go further

- How many characters can you make from the rubbish you have at home? Can you make a cast or family of characters?
- Can you imagine a story that your character(s) would be involved in? Would it be a comedy, drama or thriller? Write it down or draw it as a comic or storyboard.
- If you have access to the internet and a device with a camera (smartphone, tablet, PC) download a free 'stop motion' app from the links below. Now you can animate your story by taking multiple pictures of your characters moving!
- Aim for between 5-10 seconds of Animation for beginners.
- Set your frame rate to 12.5 frames per second (you will need to take between 60-120 frames).

Top tip:

You can animate 'on twos' - taking the same picture twice to increase the frame duration and decrease the number of pictures required. This is great for beginners as it means less work, but it will mean your animation will appear less smooth.

Find out more about Valentina Hučková:



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[Website](#)

Further resources

[Lotte Reiniger, Early 20th Century Cut-Out Animation](#)

[Terry Gilliam, Story Time Cut-Out Animation](#)

[Michaela Mihalyi, Contemporary Cut-Out Animation](#)

[Recycled Stop-Motion Music Video 'Where Do The Children Play?'](#)

[Stop Motion Studio - Free App for Animating](#)

Careers:

- Character Designer
- Animator
- Producer
- Art Director
- Composer
- Background Artist
- Layout Artist
- Prop Designer
- Modeller
- Storyboard Artist

We would love to see your work!

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Useful links

[Creative Careers](#)

[Animation Careers](#)

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