

Jesper Braley

Rising Fourth Year Award Outcome

Faculty Mentor: Federico Cuatlacuatl

### **An Exploration of Experimental Animation**

My initial plan was to create an immersive four-wall experimental animation of different environments. So far, I have used the Wacom tablet to create many of the works in my portfolio (website) and the specific animation projects enumerated below, which include looping animation installations and a film. I am still in the process of completing one more film before graduation. After re-evaluating my career goals, I decided to instead focus my attention this final spring semester on a narrative film that heavily incorporates experimental segments. I have also been creating smaller looping animations as a way to further bolster my portfolio and accompany this final film in a thesis installation.

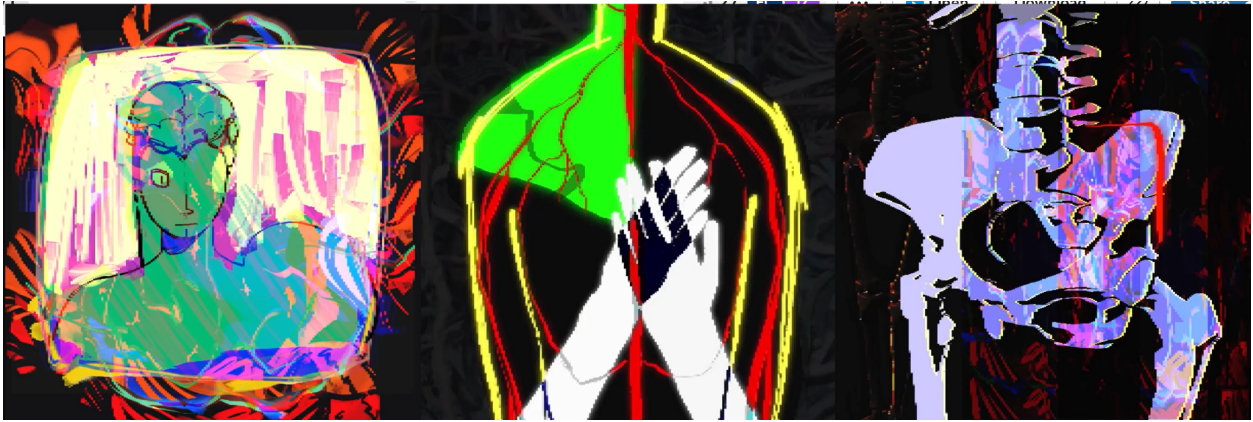
In an attempt to make my art as accessible to audiences as possible, I like for my films to have easily digestible overarching narratives that I can abstract or ground as needed. In my research of styles and concepts, I have watched films produced by students in the Calarts Experimental Animation Masters program, narrative animated short-films, and 1900s German expressionist animation. My work tends toward darker aesthetics with a heavy emphasis on human form, both distorting and adding unexpected elements to conventional bodies as a way to express queer experiences, in all senses of the word. I use these strange, almost-human forms to incite questions about identity and hiding.

The film I will complete by the end of this semester, *Parts*, follows the experiences of a newly-hired secret agent who integrates more and more with the characters he plays in undercover missions. In the world of *Parts*, certain members of society are encouraged into undercover work, as they are able to exchange physical body parts with others at will. As he permanently adopts more and more “parts” from his missions, his friends will struggle more and more to recognize him each time he returns home and eventually cease to recognize him altogether. I am currently transitioning from storyboards and visual development to animation; the introduction is almost completed and needs to be composited in After Effects, with the final film to be completed by the screening at the end of the semester (first week of May).

Upon completing this double major in Materials Science and Studio Art, I plan on applying for a masters in animation—ideally somewhere with a flexible program that allows for

exploration of experimental and classic narrative animation. I would also like to start a career as a freelance animator or start an independent studio with my friends in animation. The Wacom tablet has greatly improved the comfort of and professionalism in my workflow as I work toward my goals. As animated films and installations are incredibly labor-intensive tasks, assigning different people to specialized roles helps to alleviate one person from having to complete all aspects of a production—planning, scripting, storyboarding, rough animation, clean animation, coloring, shading, lighting, effects, compositing, the addition of sound—and would allow for much faster turnaround times when commissioned by individuals or companies.

Portfolio website: <https://squidsquire.myportfolio.com/>



*3-channel self*, hand-drawn digital looping animation installed on LCD screens, 2025.



*Elemental*, hand-drawn looping animation with collaged video, 2025.



*My Nature*, 2D animated film.

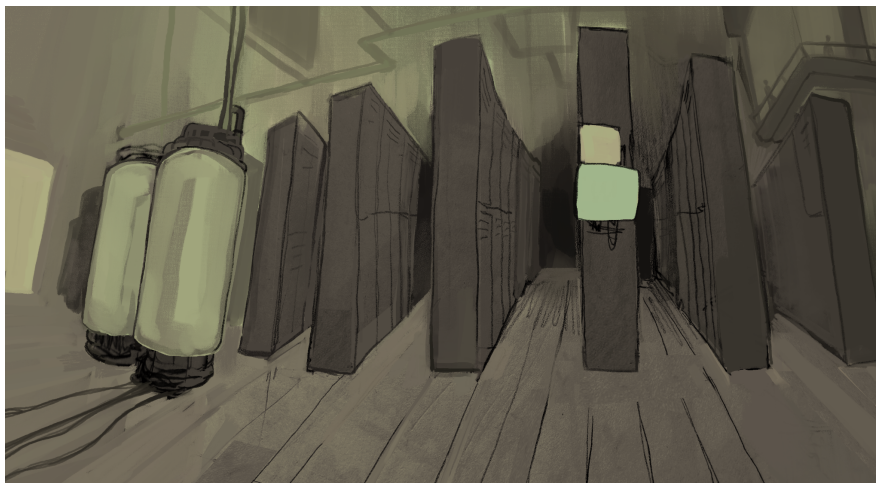
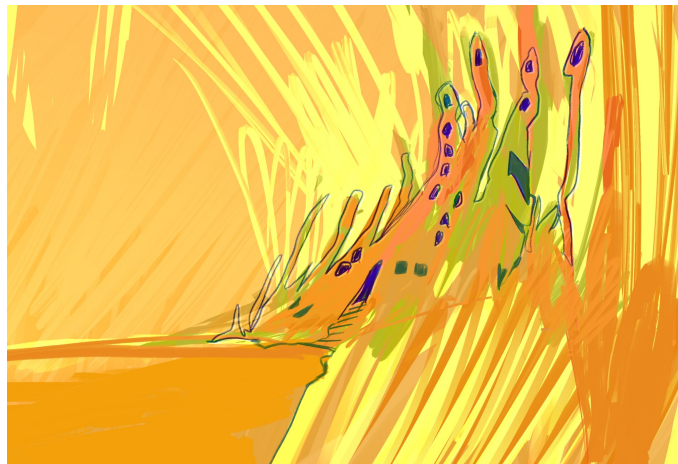
## Parts Progress

### First two pages of script:

<p>[S1] MC sitting at desk, light swinging overhead</p> <p>[S2] Broad-shouldered BOSS GUY in front of him stamping confirmations on his employment forms</p> <p>[S1a] Back to shot 1 of MC sitting across from BOSS GUY, shadows of stamps passing in front of him</p> <p>[S3] Stamps reveal title, a little mission information</p> <p>[S4] Cut to "locker" room / prep room MC obscuring part of the scene? Slowly zoom out to capture larger room; background bent perspective, screen and other characters in view</p> <p>[S5] Cheery Screen gives overview on exchanging parts "Just relax"</p> <p>[S6] Cut to close up of mission instructions lying on table, MC rummaging through drawer in the background to find the right setup</p> <p>[S7] Screws off head, puts on "gooping" one</p> <p>[S8] Walks through YELLOW portal</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MISSION 1: PHLEGM - LAND of PHLEGM -</p> <p>[S9] [Montage of stills that slide across screen; each could drop down suspended from a string of goop...] MC walks toward large goopy castle</p> <p>MC sitting at table TARGET sitting at table "You know... this year, I think I'm turning over a new leaf as a king. I don't think I'll kill nearly as many commoners." MC: ...</p> <p>Guy he was talking w dead on the ground</p>	<p>Return</p> <p>[S7a] BACK IN HQ: unscrews goop head</p> <p>[S8] MC driving home (looking from BEHIND) See excess GOOP dripping off head from underneath his HAT</p> <p>[S9] AT HOME, leaning on desk, looks at letter on desk inviting him to a get-together w/ friends</p> <p>[S10] At the door of FRIEND's house, GOOP drips off his hat</p> <p>[S11] FRIEND briefly makes a strange/disgusted/questioning face, but opens the door further MC waves hi to everyone</p> <p style="text-align: center;">- Back at HQ - Holding another mission pamphlet, MC scans hanging "skin" outfits Character in PHLEGM slimes by behind him (behind) [behind THEN side view - camera pans up from hand holding pamphlet]</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Abruptly: MISSION 2      **GONG/BELL SFX** - LAND of BILE - - BLUE (to represent black bile in this case.. blue bile instead) Shoots off roof at someone on a stage Changing room Blue head pops off (stop motion robot from arbys with a ton of filters) MISSION 3--&gt;RED BLOOD: 456789101112... SPEEDING UP TO CHANGING &amp; MISSION END &amp; RETURN</p> <p>- Party with friends after several more missions - Door opens onto MC "Hello!" "...You're... oh, right. Hello."</p> <p>Door opens onto MC "Hello"</p>
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Backgrounds, concept art, color keys:



- Storyboard video (not full film, as some parts animated straight from imagination in the interest of saving time): <https://virginia.box.com/s/h6f2nvpukd1xk9blq0a8w962hlz571jc>
- Hallway scene [work in progress](#)