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ERASMUS+ MARIBOR

The first day - the beginning and the climax of this day was when we left our room where we were placed in and we started walking down the corridor, we reached one of the biggest victories of that day and that was the elevator ride (Slovenes call it ‘’dvigalo’’), every chance to ride the ‘dvigalo’ was a pleasure, like stopping at the bus station in spring and the bus is 15 minutes late and you are sure that it should have come by now, but like an idiot you arrived a moment before the bus passed because you didn't look at the timetable for when they were leaving, so you came to the station unconcerned thinking "it’ll arrive soon". But after that, the day wasn't particularly interesting, we went to eat in a Bosnian restaurant called Baščaršija, Jura ordered stuffed peppers, Nike ordered cutlets, and I ordered kebab and beer. Jura also ordered a beer, but my beer did not arrive, even though I eagerly awaited the moment when it would arrive, it just didn’t. Beer came to Jura! Not for me, twice I told the waiter,’’How about beer?" and he replied "sorry friend", and he then proceeded not to bring me beer. After that failed dinner, we went to sleep.

The second day - we woke up and miraculously we were all rested and ready for the topics and the mentors who will present them, the beginning of the day always delighted me because it meant that a ride in the now familiar ‘’dvigalo’’ would be assured! We were introduced to four mentors, Hana Repše animator, Irena Pamič intermediate art, Natalija Zabav mozaik and Manja Jerič digital media. Of everything presented, I was delighted by Hana, her enthusiasm for work and passion for animation is what delighted me and the reason why I chose her. After walking around and agreeing on who is going to mentor whom, Hana took us (Lucija, Majda, Teodor and me) to a room where she showed us examples of stop-motion animation and the ways in which it can be done, the first short film was on the topic of human history and a possible future in which the author showed everything with graffiti that he painted on the city streets, roads, houses, etc., another animation was known to all of us in the group, and it was an animator who liked to animate food in an unusual way using all kinds of objects from the environment, from tennis balls to transparent D6 dice. The theme of our animation was based on the idea of ‘Relationships’, when we heard the theme we all imagined and thought about what kind of relationships we could show, but in the end we decided to show the relationship between Faluteks, our fictional characters and a Tree that provided them with a home and food, and in return they they took care of and looked after that Tree, the rest of the day I walked around town and went from group to group hanging out until the evening when we went to dinner together and then to sleep.

The third day - it started like every day, waking up and having breakfast early in the morning, we had to be ready in front of the hostel by 9 and shortly after that we would go to Mars, Mars is an institute for artists where our mentors are employed and that space where we worked on everything, the institute was not far from our hostel, not even a minute's walk. This was a huge plus, because it meant that the rooms were very close to us, so we could just get to them quickly and be ready for whatever arrangement we had for the day. Due to our quick conception of the story and what we want to show, we started the production of everything we would use in the animation. Teodor cut out small Faluteks from felt, Majda and Lucija started making backgrounds from paper and cardboard, starting with the introductory background with our Tree, and I started modeling the Tree from plasticine on glass so that it would be easier to transfer and use, but that's was a special glass that is used in stop-motion animation because it has a matte surface and does not reflect the flash of light into the camera and thus becomes imperceptible in the film. After I modeled the basic shape of the tree, with all kinds of tools, I carved that plasticine to resemble the bark of a tree, I used toothpicks, wooden spoons and knitting needles. After carving the bark, I painted the plasticine with acrylic colors to bring out the color of the bark of the tree and to make it look like it was a real tree, because I ran into a problem and that was that when I painted everything in that dark brown, the cuts I made were not visible I made it, so I remembered that when the bark of the tree gets old, it lightens at the ends, like gray hairs, and then I went over all the edges of the cuts with a grayish white color and that achieved exactly what I wanted to convey. This day was very productive, we created a lot and we were very satisfied because it felt like we were going in the right direction. And of course, that day I used the ‘’dvigalo’’ more than 5 times, I was very satisfied. We spent the rest of the day walking around Maribor and socializing with each other.

The fourth day – initially this day was no different from the others, getting up, eating and then working in Mars. Just like yesterday, we threw ourselves into the production of objects for the film, everything went according to plan, Hana consulted us and gave us advice for all the ideas we proposed to her, she never said no to any idea, she would always approve our idea and then add some useful advice, for example, how it would be easier to carry out what we had in mind, etc. We were really very happy with our mentor, she was nice and was there for us when we needed her, and when we were working, she let us work in peace. That day, we moved from the hall on the ground floor to the hall on the first floor, which was called the Fresco room, because the walls were very old painted frescoes that were not very well preserved, but were still visible. After settling in the new room, during the break we wanted to visit the other groups and see how they work and what exactly they have in mind. For intermedial art, they decided to combine old media such as drawing/painting, etc. and incorporate LED lights in their work. The mosaic was exactly what he said it would be, which is a mosaic, and in digital media they drew fractals and then they had a plan to animate these fractals in a program.

The fifth day - the usual start of the day, but today we had to start thinking about how and where we will animate, Hana showed us a program called Dragonframe that allows all already taken animation frames to be manipulated, cut and copied as many times as needed. We also set up a corner for animation, Hana gave us a camera that we connected to a laptop and lights that we will use. After that we went back to creating objects for the animation, Lucija and Majda continued to create the backgrounds, and Teodor was still cutting out Faluteks, he had a lot of work because he had to cut every position for every frame, and I modeled a new tree, actually the same tree but smaller because it was a faraway shot in the opening scene.

The sixth day - we started with animation, we started working on scenes for which we already had all the objects made, we took turns so that each scene was animated by someone else, the first scene was done by Teodor and Lucija, and Majda and I continued to create things for others scenes. It was a short day and animation took up most of the time.

Seventh and eighth day - Saturday and Sunday, these days were free for us and we did not create anything related to our work. On Saturday morning we went to see Ljubljana where we spent the whole day and returned in the evening. Ljubljana is beautiful and I hope to go again one day and see the things I didn't get to see that day. We visited a modern gallery that had an exhibition of Yugoslav artists and their works and we rode the funicular to the fort in the middle of the city!

The ninth day – The deadline for the exhibition was approaching, and because of that, starting today and every day after that, we stayed two hours longer at the institute, because otherwise we would not have had time to finish our animation. The next scene was animated by Majda and I, we animated the Faluteks walking under the roots while carrying water. After animating that scene, I drew and painted the face of the tree and its eyes and mouth, but that day I only managed to make its face. I made his face in paper because there was no time to make everything in plasticine, it is also easier to manipulate and animate the paper and cut out eyes and mouth instead of moving the plasticine frame by frame. First, I just colored the paper with water colors and then I would go over the colored paper with wooden crayons (ironic I know) that I bought in Maribor a few days before. The tree turned out exactly how I imagined it from the beginning!

The tenth day – While Lucija and Majda animated the scene of Faluteks waiting for a leaf to fall, I finished the eyes and mouth of the tree, it was a tiring and boring job because it required me to draw and paint more or less the same thing several times so that the movement can be evoked. This lasted all day, from nine in the morning to four in the afternoon. In the meantime, Teodor and Majda animated another scene, so it was a very productive day for animation!

The eleventh day – I was done with everything and all that was left was to animate my scenes, the scenes with the tree! First, Lucija and I animated the scene in which the tree is in a large close-up shot. The first of those scenes was where the tree yawns, and then after that we animated the scene in which a leaf falls on the tree's nose, which it then blows away. That took about half of our working time, while we were animating it, Majda was cutting out the canopies for the last scene, and Teodor was cutting out the letters for the opening scene. After those scenes, Lucija and I animated the opening scene where the camera slowly goes down while looking at a tree in the distance, we were slowly getting tired of animating after that and the work part of the day was over.

The twelfth day – Exhibition day! The exhibition was at 7 PM, so we had time to animate everything and to record all the sounds we needed for the scenes. In half an hour, Lucija and I animated the scene where the canopies of the trees spread and a forest forms. Teodor and Majda animated the introduction shot with letters and Faluteks and around 1 PM we were done with the animation. All that was left was to record the sounds, for that we went to my room where we had made a small sound studio by covering the bottom bunk bed with a sheet to isolate the sound, we glued a microphone to the ceiling of the bottom bunk bed in which we produced the sounds, in order for the sound to fit with the scene, we had a laptop on which we watched the scenes while recording the sound so that it fit perfectly with the animation. Jura Momčilović, who was in the intermediate art group, helped us with the sounds, I thought he had a good voice for the Tree, and I was right! He is responsible for the Tree sounds, the Falutek sounds for the intro, and the scene where the Falutek are happy about the fallen leaf. He also worked with me on the sound for the final scene where the forest forms! After recording all the sounds, we returned to the institute to arrange all the scenes in the program in the correct order and to put the sounds we recorded. Around five in the afternoon we were done and the short animated film was ready for projection! At 7 we all went to the hall where Hana showed the movie to everyone. We were very happy and satisfied, everything we decided should be in the film, got in. During the entire production of the film, everything went smoothly and there were no problems that we could not solve. I had a great team and a great mentor, I am very grateful to everyone!