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Criteria to define animation: A review of the definition in the advent of digital moving images

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Animation has become ubiquitous, from cartoons to special effects, from commercials to information visualization; nonetheless, its own definition is more elusive than ever. Digital imaging has blurred the line between what is animated and what is a reproduction of recorded movement, rendering previous definitions of frame-by-frame production and non-recorded movement seemingly obsolete; moreover, digital automation has also contested the authorship of moving images. In this light, can animation be defined? Rather than defining animation by what it is not, as the illusion of motion that is not recorded, the author reviews constitutive traits common to all moving images, like intervallic projection; those absent from animation, like reconstitution of movement; those specific to animation, like artificial change in positions; and notions of the index and digital authorship to distinguish animation as a particular type of moving image. These considerations are arranged in a set of criteria with which to define animation by what it is, positively. Additionally, while the emphasis is on digital moving images, these criteria are applicable to analogue techniques of animation. Ultimately, the author's examples point to a continuity with old techniques and definitions, a continuity that extends to moving image practices outside of either animation or cinema.

Biography

Omar Linares graduated with a major in Cultural Practices from Emily Carr University of Art and Design in Vancouver, Canada. His studies revolve around animation, documentary film, and international cinema. He will be joining the Master's in Film Studies at Concordia University in Montreal, in January, 2016.

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