



The Inside-Out Character: Strategies for Animating Inner States of Mind

Thesis, M.A. (Research) - Revision

Wee Nai De, Mark

Supervisor: Asst. Professor Kathrin Albers

Co-Supervisor: Assoc. Professor Hans Martin Rall

Nanyang Technological University, School of Art, Design and Media

13th March 2017

Acknowledgements

I would first begin by thanking my research supervisors, Asst. Professor Kathrin Albers and co-supervisor, Assoc. Professor Hans Martin Rall for their strict guidance, guarding, and infinite patience during my learning. They have given me the strength to continue when things seem at their bleakest, in both my journeys through academia and the animation practice. For that, I am eternally grateful to be able to have them as mentors, and friends.

I would also like to thank Professor Ishu Patel for his unwavering support that first put me onto the road of academia, and now, keeping me on it; For making me love animation, and more importantly, for his allegories on life that have humbled me in my days of being wild and still is humbling to me now, as a student of animation.

I would like to thank Miss Hong Bee Kuen, whose infinite patience I sincerely appreciate. Without her, my life as a researcher wouldn't have been much more smooth sailing.

My friends, Goh Wei Choon and Andre Quek. Their companionship extends beyond our first year as undergraduate students, and I can never emphasize enough how having them as close allies during this time have allowed me to keep my sanity even closer.

Also, to my fellow researchers – Zu, Henny, and Santiago – the people who make life as a graduate student that much more exciting and worth undertaking.

The four misfits with whom I have the honor of befriending – Jing Shan, Jiahui, Vivian, and Han Pin. Their friendship is worth everything and more to me, the simplest moments we have spent together constantly pushes me on when I am down and out, giving me the courage to pursue what I am doing today.

Ruben Pang – the person who has been there every step of the way since we met twelve years ago as still ignoramuses. The person whose faith in me as a human and artist I have constantly tried to uphold and keep. Thank you for believing in me, thank you for your wisdom, and thank you for your friendship.

Finally, but not least-ly, my family. My mother, without whom this entire endeavor wouldn't even be possible. She has given almost everything for me to be who I want to be today. Her loving care that never seems to wane has allowed me to leap blindly into the unknown depths so many times. I thank you, with all my life.

Contents

Acknowledgements

Abstract

Introduction	1
Research Objective & Questions.....	4
Chapter Summaries.....	5
Chapter Summary: Literature Review.....	5
Chapter Summary: Research Approach and Strategy.....	5
Chapter Summary: Creation of Practical Component	5
Chapter Summary: Conclusion.....	7
Chapter 1 – Literature Review	9
1.1 The Inner State of Mind, The Emotion, and The Feeling	9
1.2 Examining the “Inside-Out Character” Through Animation	12
The Fundamentals of Animation – Paul Wells	12
Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics - Maureen Furniss	14
1.3 Why Expressionism? - Expressing Inner States through Expressionism	24
1.4 The Self-portrait.....	26
Changing Functionality.....	26
Changing Conventions	30
1.5 The “Inside-Out Character” in Kirchner’s Self-Portraits.....	33
Kirchner, Peter Schlemihl’s Wondrous Story - Magdalena M. Moeller, et al.	33
“No One Else Has These Colors.” Kirchner’s Painting – Karin Schick and Heide Skowranek, ed.	34
Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Retrospective - Felix Kramer, ed.....	35
Expressionism from the Swiss Mountains – Mathias Frehner, et al.....	36
On the Edge of the Abyss of Time – Norbert Wolf	36
1.6 The Self-portrait and the Close-Up Shot.....	37
The Grammar of the Shot - Christopher J. Bowden and Roy Thompson.....	38
1.7 Still to Moving: Cross Media Adaptations.....	42
Animation: Genre and Authorship – Paul Wells	43
Anime and the Art of Adaptation – Dani Cavallaro	44
Screen Adaptation: Impure Cinema - Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelelan.....	46
1.8 Case studies: The Fine Arts in Live-Action and Animation Films	47

Jiří Barta - The Pied Piper (1986).....	48
Chris Landreth – Ryan (2004).....	52
Dorota Kobiela – Loving Vincent (Unreleased).....	56
Gustav Deutsch – Shirley: Visions of Reality (2013).....	59
Chapter 2 – Research Approach and Strategy	64
2.1 Research: Understanding Kirchner’s Approaches.....	64
2.2 The Research Film: Animating Kirchner’s Self-Portraits	65
2.2.1 The Close-Up Shot and the Self-Portrait.....	65
2.2.2 Movement and performance.....	68
2.2.3 Animation design	69
2.2.4 Sounds and music in animation	69
2.3 Reflections: Evaluating the Research.....	69
Chapter 3 – Practical Component: Crafting the Research Film	70
3.1 Premise of the Research Film	70
3.2 Animation Design: Kirchner’s Visual Strategies to Express Inner States of Mind.....	71
3.2.1 Colors that express inner states of mind	71
3.2.2 Compositions and Designs	82
3.2.3 Symbols in Kirchner’s Paintings	88
3.3 Applying Animation Language in the Practical Component	95
3.3.1 Close-ups.....	95
3.3.2 Movement and performance.....	98
3.3.3 Sounds and Music	100
Chapter 4 – Research Conclusion	103
Bibliography	105

Abstract

This research aims to pursue strategies for expressing inner states and emotions in animation films through referencing how the artist, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, did so in five of his artworks. In my practice as a student and maker of animation, I have developed a great interest in exploring visual strategies to animate abstract emotions. In my opinion, visualizations of character inner states that depart from realism can create more compelling characters as well as effective imageries that support the narrative of the animation.

Fine artists throughout history have found individualistic ways to externalize inner states of mind. In their cosmos of moving images and with their own tools, there is much within the field of fine arts that animation filmmakers can learn from to create new and stronger ways of visual expression. This is also especially suitable for the animation medium because of the inherent characteristic of animation to be able to create alternative realities.

Thusly, for the purpose of this study I have chosen to look at the self-portraits of Expressionist, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, as an accessible way to examine the expression of character inner states of mind in art. This investigation begins by studying the artist's approach to translating inner states of mind in his self-portrait works. Subsequently, I shall adapt the artist's approaches as "visual catalysts" into a short animation film, for the practical component.

Also, as the research utilized modern tradigital techniques as well as traditional under-the-camera stop motion methods to create the visual experiments, it too shall explore the differences in how the Expressionists and modern filmmakers create images that similarly achieve the expression of character inner states of mind, but for two very distinct artistic mediums in two very different times.

Introduction

During the production of my graduation film as an undergraduate animation student, I was exploring different strategies for visual storytelling. The resulting film, *The Animals* (2014) tells a dramatization of the historically famed Elephant Man, who lived in Victorian England. The design of the film was influenced by the aesthetics of German Expressionism, specifically those of Die Brücke, an art movement formed during the early 20th century in Germany, as well as the silhouette cut-out animations of Lotte Reiniger. The aesthetics were chosen in order to enhance the narrative of the film through visual imagery.

A major obstacle encountered during the production was that although Reiniger's silhouette animations were visually impactful, a mere direct reference to Reiniger's silhouette animations would not sufficiently examine an individual character's emotions in depth, partly because they were mostly kept in a silhouetted profile design (figure 1, left). Although not Reiniger's intent, I had felt that an exclusively silhouetted film lacked a theatrical expressiveness in the design of the characters. Therefore, it was during this period that I designed the film in the style of Die Brücke woodcut portraits.



Figure 1 – Film stills comparing close up shots from Lotte Reiniger's 1926 animation, *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* (left), and *The Animals* (right).

The eventual stark black and white look of the woodcut portraits achieved a dark atmospheric pessimism through the grotesque distortions of the characters, which offered more room for me as the animator to develop the characters (figure 1, right). Facial expressions could be used to further emphasize the inner states of the characters. The experiments with *The Animals* roused my interest in exploring strategies for expressing the inner states of characters in animation.

However, the difficulty with employing the cutout stop motion technique for this purpose is the extremely laborious process of creating each cutout image, especially to create complicated morphing sequences. Furthermore, there was a need to preserve the very distinct line quality of woodcut prints. All these meant that shots which featured the woodcut aesthetic were constrained to have only very limited animations. Nonetheless, the nature of film allowed for music and sound to compensate for the lack of movement, which substantiated the expression of character emotions in *The Animals*.

Amongst the artists whose works I had researched on for *The Animals*, it is from Kirchner's method of expression that I have found captivating and still relevant approaches to visually represent and animate character inner states of mind. The artist, a tormented soul for much of his working career, frequently bared his soul in his artworks. His unrestrained art-making techniques created an aesthetic unique to the artist alone. The artist wrote extensively on his experiments with visuals¹ and unique mark-making techniques that allowed him to express his very personal emotions. The artist who was an important figure at the forefront of the modern

¹ Kirchner's extensive journal entries on his art experiments and mark-making processes had been the subject of an art-technical research, documented in the book *No One Else Has These Colors*. See Karin Schick and Heide Skowranek, ed., et al. *No One Else Has These Colors. Kirchner's Painting*. (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag. 2012) 25-97.

avant-garde movements of the early 20th Century constantly broke from traditions to invent newer ways to represent the world around him, but more importantly, the depths of his troubled mind.

The above demonstrates why animation is especially suitable for the visual expression of emotions because the animated film is a highly artificial artistic medium² – entire filmic worlds can be created out of nothingness, limited only by the filmmaker's imagination. Also, it explains the propensity for the research to have chosen the works of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner.

On a level that closer to heart, I have also been very intrigued by the artist's life story and him as a tragic character from whence I came across his works. This research therefore stems from inquisitive thoughts, developed from the experiences when working on *The Animals*.

² Giannalberto Bendazzi, *Defining Animation – A Proposal*, 2004, p7

Research Objective & Questions

The research objective prioritizes the acquiring of knowledge to visually express character inner states of mind. Through analytical observation and practice, the research explores the relationship between the animation and fine art languages. It surveys how their shared qualities can be synergized and differences bridged, to create new visual expressions to animate emotions in animation films.

For the pursuance of the above, the research asks the following questions:

- What attributes of fine art works, specifically those of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, can the animation medium acquire for the purpose of achieving the above?
- What attributes of animation allows it to express emotions in ways different to that of the fine arts?
- How can the filmmaker put together these qualities inherent to the fields, to create an auteur animation film whose narrative is furthered by emotive visual expressions?

Chapter Summaries

The research will investigate the topic by focusing on the examination of Kirchner's approaches by analysis of his artistic ideas imbued in his artworks, which will inform the creation of the practical component, in the form of an animation.

Chapter Summary: Literature Review

In Chapter 1, the literature review will orientate readers toward the animation practice and Kirchner as an artist through critical examination of existing literature. The chapter also compares the research's position against other existing experiments or film productions that address the similarities (or differences) in the fields of either animating character inner states or cross-media adaptations³.

Chapter Summary: Research Approach and Strategy

Chapter 2 will detail the approach in which the research will be conducted. This includes the manner in which the practical component, in the form of an animation, is designed and animated.

Chapter Summary: Creation of Practical Component

Chapter 3 will discuss the creation of the practical component. It will first survey the ways in which Kirchner expresses his changing inner states of mind across his oeuvre of works, chiefly the subject of Kirchner's sanity portrayed in his self-portraits.

³ "Adaptation" is used loosely here to describe its common meaning of "changing the form to suit new conditions". The adaptation of an existing aesthetic therefore refers to the re-contextualization of the existing aesthetic into the animated form. Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged. S.v. "adaptation." Retrieved September 19 2015 from <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/adaptation>

Specifically, I have narrowed down the works in question to five of the artist's self-portraiture pieces, each produced during and markedly shaped by one of three significant events which coincided with the artist's lifetime – the turn of 19th century into the 20th; the First World War; and subsequently the looming threat of a Second World War. These five works were also chosen because they displayed a clear and marked change in Kirchner's visual representation of his inner states of mind, ranging from his selection of colors, his subject matter as well as the way he represents himself. More importantly, they include three oil paintings and two woodcut prints. The difference in technique in these works gives the research more material to examine the translating of still image visual languages for the time-based one.

The five selected self-portraits are:



Self-portrait with Model, 1910/1926, Oil on canvas, Hamburg, Hamburger Kunsthalle.



Self-Portrait as a Soldier, 1915, Oil on canvas, Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College.



Schlemihl Alone in His Room, 1915, Color woodcut with monotype inking on woven paper. National Gallery of Art, Washington,



Self-portrait with Dancing Death, 1918, Woodcut on blotting paper, Stadel Museum, Graphische Sammlung, Frankfurt am Main.



Mountain Studio, 1937, Oil on Canvas, Kirchner Museum Davos.

Through critical viewing and research from existing literature, Chapter 3 will discuss the methods of how the artist achieves visually, the expression of his inner mental states. This includes the artist's choice of color palette, subject matter and the use of metaphors and symbols, amongst others. Finally, the research will build on the findings from Kirchner's approach and create an idea for an animation short. The short will center on adapting the artist's story as expressed within his self-portrait works.

Chapter 3 will also expound on the creative process of animating inner states of mind and also of the animation film as a whole. It will examine Kirchner's approach from the perspective of an animator, and finally, culminating in the creation of an animation as the research's practical component. Through a focused discourse on the rationale for the creative choices made on the film, it will bridge theory and practical, as well as to serve the purpose of providing a retrospective critique on the film production process.

Chapter Summary: Conclusion

Chapter 4 will conclude with a summative review of the research as a conceptual study of creating visual strategies to express and animate inner states of mind through Kirchner's artworks. It will reflect on the methodology and execution of the research. Also, it will re-examine the research hypothesis and questions by critically analyzing the practical component as an amalgamation of the research findings.

I am aware of the body of scholarship that negotiates the works of Kirchner within the fields of modernist art theories and history. The books *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Retrospective, "No one else has these colors.": Kirchner's Painting*, and *Kirchner: Peter Schlemihl's Wondrous Story*, documents important historical and art-technical examinations on Kirchner conducted by the Städel Museum, the Kirchner Museum Davos, and the Brücke Museum Berlin respectively. The

research will reference these books as key literature for the examination of Kirchner's methods but will not engage with the historical and theoretical speculations of the artist's life and works.

Also, the research inquiry will be made from my disposition as an animator. My viewing of Kirchner's works and examination of his life will be for the sole purpose of creative inspiration to investigate the research topic, discussed from the perspective of animation studies and its practice.

Therefore, the research does not seek to establish nor speculate on new theories about the life of the artist, his works, nor the techniques he used to accomplish his art. Nonetheless, I acknowledge that creative liberties will be taken during the cross media adaptation and representation of the artist's artworks and life.

Chapter 1 – Literature Review

The literature review will provide a contextual disposition of the research topic through existing literature that addresses the following questions:

- What is an “inner state of mind”, and its difference from the emotion, and the feeling?
- How will the research critically examine the research topic on visual strategies to animate the character’s inner states of mind?
- Why Expressionism, specifically Kirchner’s self-portraits, as the mode of inquiry for the research on animating inner states of mind?
- What has been written on cross-media adaptations, especially in the fields of animation studies and filmmaking?
- What has been done before in the field of animation filmmaking that is also influenced by the Expressionist aesthetic, or those of existing fine artists?

1.1 The Inner State of Mind, The Emotion, and The Feeling

The research film explores strategies to animate a character’s inner state of mind. There is an urgency to discuss the etymology of the “inner state of mind” because it can be easily confused with other psychological concepts, namely the emotion, and feelings. Without delving wholly into the realms of psychological studies, this section shall begin by understanding the limits of the term – what it is and isn’t. A general understanding of emotion according to Antonio Damasio, a professor of neuroscience in the University of Southern California, is “a very well-

orchestrated set of alterations in the body”⁴ which purpose is to serve as a survival mechanism in the human mind. The emotion ensures that we subconsciously know to navigate around danger or to approach an opportunity⁵ Humans are genetically programmed to experience emotions in similar ways, unless one is “not quite well put together”⁶. In *Acting for Animators*, Ed Hooks lays out his seven principles of acting, a few of which center around working with character emotions and translating it into animation performances.⁷ Hooks defines the emotion as “an automatic value response”, a bodily reaction that is directly related to a character’s values.⁸ These basic emotions⁹ are triggered at different rates and degrees in humans depending on their encounters with an object, or situation.¹⁰ The intensities and combinations in which one feels these emotions (especially after similar events are experienced repeatedly) result in the formation of feelings¹¹.

Damasio defines feelings as the “process of perceiving what is going on in” specific parts of the brain when one is in the “throws of an emotion”¹². A feeling is therefore an internalized “emotional conclusion”¹³ about how one should live or engage with its surroundings. Unlike the emotion, it is a conscious psychological reaction to either a danger or opportunity. The mind is made aware of the emotions it experiences, and assigns meaning to them. Different individuals

⁴ Antonio Damasio, “How Our Brains Feel Emotion,” Big Think video, 8:52, July 2, 2010, <http://bigthink.com/videos/how-our-brains-feel-emotion>

⁵ Ibid.,

⁶ Ibid.,

⁷ Ed Hooks, *Acting for Animators*. New York, USA: Routledge. 2011. 11-12

⁸ Ibid., 13

⁹ Robert Plutchik, who was professor emeritus at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, postulates the eight basic emotions of: Joy, Trust, Fear, Surprise, Sadness, Disgust, Anger, and Anticipation. “*Isolation - Mind Field (Ep 1)*”, YouTube video, 34:45, posted by “VSauce”. January 18, 2017, <https://youtu.be/iqKdEhx-dD4?t=1m37s>

¹⁰ Ibid.,

¹¹ Antonio Damasio, “How Our Brains Feel Emotion,” Big Think video, 8:52, July 2, 2010, <http://bigthink.com/videos/how-our-brains-feel-emotion>

¹² Ibid.,

¹³ John Voris. “*The Difference Between Emotions and Feelings.*” John Voris. March 01, 2016. Accessed March 06, 2017. <http://johnvoris.com/featured-articles/difference-between-emotions-and-feelings/>.

will therefore experience emotions similarly, but not feel the same feelings, depending on their inner states of mind.

The experiencing of emotions and feelings generate “states of mind” which likewise may affect the emotions and feelings we experience¹⁴. Damasio describes in the human mind, an “autobiography” that we create for ourselves¹⁵. If we experience an event that is dominant enough to tint this “autobiography”, we are said to be ‘not the same from before’.¹⁶ We are therefore changed in the way we make sense of our lives. This changed attitude can also reversibly affect the emotions and feelings we experience. By way of the above, the research defines the “inner state of mind” as one’s psychological outlook on life resulting from experiences¹⁷ with a sequence of events. More specifically, the research looks to discover Kirchner’s inner states of mind.

A summative analogy given by Hooks demonstrates the functions of the emotion, feeling and inner state of mind. Hooks gives the following description: A man in a park watches as a young woman holds her infant. The young woman begins cooing and doing “those things that all new mothers do” to her newborn. If the man had just experienced a joyous occasion such as a birth in the family or is expecting one, his inner state of mind would be elevated. His bodily responses will automatically cause him to empathize with the joy (emotion) the mother is experiencing. His mind would ascribe a meaning to the joy he is feeling, causing him to be happy (feeling) – he may then choose to make silly faces to humor the infant (compelled to act). Conversely, if the man had just experienced the death of an infant in his family, his state of mind

¹⁴ Ibid.,

¹⁵ Antonio Damasio, “*How Our Brains Build Our Autobiographies*,” Big Think video, 5:41, August 10, 2010, <http://bigthink.com/videos/how-our-brains-build-our-autobiographies>

¹⁶ Ibid.,

¹⁷ As per Damasio, the experience as it “connects with your effective systems of response.” Ibid.,

would be tainted by the misfortune. His response would thus be very much different compared to the former¹⁸. His sullen outlook of life would be more prone to evoking emotions such as sadness, leading him to feel sentimental¹⁹. The emotion may then compel him to walk away sorrowfully.

The inner states of mind in Kirchner's self-portraits are expressed through a variety of methods – symbols, thematic choices, and techniques used. These self-portraits are affected by a series of events that had profound effects on his outlook of life. For the creation of the research film, it is important to understand from the works of Kirchner how his inner states of mind had influenced his choices for these methods, and inversely how he applied them to paint his states of mind. Methodologically, it is clear from Hooks' example that the inner state of mind is largely built upon a character's backstory (a death or birth in the man's family). The research will therefore begin by discovering Kirchner's inner states of mind through examining the artist's works in the context of his life as well as within the historical events of his time. These will be addressed in Chapter 1.5, *The "Inside-Out Character" in Kirchner's Self-Portraits*.

1.2 Examining the "Inside-Out Character" Through Animation

The Fundamentals of Animation – Paul Wells

There are a multitude of ways to examine the "Inside-Out Character". For this research, I have chosen animation as the medium of investigation and the reasons are summed up by Paul

¹⁸ Ed Hooks, *Acting for Animators*. New York, USA: Routledge. 2011. 14-15

¹⁹ In Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions, *Sentimentality* is defined as a feeling that results from combining the emotions of Trust and Sadness. "Isolation - Mind Field (Ep 1)", YouTube video, 34:45, posted by "VSauce". January 18, 2017, <https://youtu.be/iqKdEhx-dD4?t=1m37s>

Wells in his book *The Fundamentals of Animation*. The book discusses the essential theories of animation, which is key for the research as it is conducted through the animation practice.

In it, Wells summarizes the key perspectives of animation as a visual medium. Animation offers “a different vocabulary of expression... and enables greater creative freedoms”. It’s very artificial nature, allows for “a greater degree of control over the construction and outcome of the work”, and constructions of a different “reality” or “worlds” governed by “their own codes and conventions that radically differ from the ‘real world’.” Animation’s ability to operate within different realities therefore stems from it being able to “achieve anything that can be imagined” to create an “art of the impossible”²⁰. These characteristics coupled with animation being a time-based visual medium, can give a perceived realism to other non-time-based visual mediums, such as paintings, prints, and sculpture.

Along with its very distinctive form, Wells describes an equally distinctive and detailed animation “process guide”²¹:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1) Concept: The inciting idea; | 14) Aesthetic analysis; |
| 2) Creating schedule of work; | 15) Layout; |
| 3) Reviewing resources; | 16) Dope sheet; |
| 4) Research; | 17) Development soundtrack; |
| 5) Story; | 18) Backgrounds/sets; |
| 6) Visualization; | 19) Animation tests; |
| 7) Formal design; | 20) Creating sequences; |
| 8) Storyboard; | 21) Construction; |

²⁰ Paul Wells. *The Fundamentals of Animation*. Lausanne, Switzerland: AVA Publishing. 2006. 10-11

²¹ Ibid.,.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 9) Script; | 22) Post-production; |
| 10) Vocal performance/soundtrack; | 23) Final mix/edit; |
| 11) Animatic; | 24) Output to chosen format; |
| 12) Shooting script; | 25) Exhibition; |
| 13) Animation analysis; | |

Wells acknowledges that the animation process requires flexibility, with some “generic consistencies” which varies with the “technique employed”, the “purpose of the project and its outcome” and also the “methods employed”²². As such, the process proposed by the author holds true as a general guide, but seemingly stringent and established steps in the above list can be replaced or abandoned entirely in favor for another or in response to practicality issues²³.

The research reflects on its animation production process in later chapters using key ideas proposed by Wells in this book, particularly in discussing the process of creating the short animation film idea.

Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics - Maureen Furniss

Important to the research’s discussion on creating the research’s practical component is Maureen Furniss’ *Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics*, which will be referred to alongside Wells’ *Fundamentals of Animation*. The book is a focused study on aesthetical issues and theories pertaining to animation film production and animation studies. In the chapters of the book, Furniss provides a bottom up approach to examining animation. The book begins by

²² Ibid.,

²³ Ibid.,

looking at the modes of animation production, particularly the different techniques of animation as an extension of the other arts.

In the book, Furniss points to Marcel Duchamp's *Anemic Cinema* (1927) and Hans Richter's *Rhythmus 21* (1921), as an example of the avant garde's natural inclination to experiment with animation in order to broaden their "explorations" of "movement and temporality in still images and drawings"²⁴. The choice of creating painted animations by filmmakers such as Alexander Petrov (*The Cow*, 1989) and Georges Schwizgebel (*The Year of the Deer*, 1995) therefore seem to be a full-circle recourse by animation filmmakers. The filmmakers return to the traditional fine art techniques and aesthetics to likewise, expand upon their exploration of newer visual strategies for the time-based animation media. Wells in *Fundamentals* also discusses the relationship between fine art and the animation practice. Wells too suggests that the traditional techniques in the practice of fine art is "the very method by which" animation is often "understood as an 'art' in its own right." The techniques and processes of fine art is applied to animation production, in which the final film itself can be seen as the equivalent of the artist's painting or print.

The notion that animation is an extension of the fine art is reemphasized by Furniss, using Clive Walley's *Divertimento no.2 – Love Song*, and *Divertimento no.3 – Brushwork* as examples. Furniss cites Walley's explanation that each of his "*Divertimenti*" are attempts at using "the extra dimension of time in a moving image to emphasize" the contribution of the painting process to the meaning of a painting²⁵, and in the context of this research, to the meaning of the animation.

²⁴ Maureen Furniss. *Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics, Revised Edition*. Yorkshire: United Kingdom. John Libbey Publishing. 2007. 32

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

Furniss also examines the key qualities of animation in individual sections, such as color, image design, movement, as well as sound design. Discussing mise-en-scene in animation, Furniss writes on the attributes of color in animation. In a conversation with the author, animation filmmaker Jules Engel suggests that color can function in ways to create space as “a sense of openness and serenity or...claustrophobia and anxiety.” More importantly, Engel also describes colors’ ability to create moods that are “dramatic, somber, joyous, or otherwise.”²⁶ All these underscores the role that color can take on in animation films, similar to how artists used colors for dramatic effects. The five works by Kirchner, for example, used colors to different effects for the expression of Kirchner’s inner states of mind. The research film will explore this aspect of Kirchner’s choice of colors in his works to express character inner states.

Furniss writes on image design in animation, discussed in the two categories, the character and the background. Furniss proposes that although on-screen characters often are remembered the most by audiences,²⁷ being that character actions are almost always more dynamic compared to the backgrounds which are often static, both the designs of the character and backgrounds are greatly influential on the audience perception of the film and cannot be overlooked.²⁸ Furniss refers to Scott McCloud’s *Understanding Comics* for the discussion on the kind of rendering artists can give to the design in animation. McCloud describes the three types of design as realistic – illustrations that are drawn close to realism; iconic – a sign that represents its object in reality, but does not look realistic, and; abstract – the total reinterpretation of an object into a mere suggestive form. The iconic image, according to McCloud and Furniss, functions by allowing the viewer to “identify with a character to a greater extent”²⁹ than realistic drawings.

²⁶ Ibid., 73.

²⁷ Ibid., 66

²⁸ Ibid.,

²⁹ Ibid.,

Compared with the abstract image, which the authors points to as non-representational of the object or character in reality, but possessing visual qualities that can lend new meanings to the object.

The complication raised by Furniss is the ease of identification with the meaning presented by either the iconic or abstract rendering of the object (character). Furniss gives the example of the Jessica Rabbit character from Robert Zemeckis' *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* (1988) as an iconic representation of the "sexy singer" character archetype made famous in various Tex Avery directed films, such as *Red Hot Riding Hood* (1943).³⁰ In a similar fashion, the Wallace and Gromit characters found in the works of Nick Parks are designed to aid audiences in identifying the characters as iconic figures – Wallace as the classic blundering buffoon, and Gromit falling into the tradition of "silent film comedians" who performs as underdogs overcoming various difficulties³¹. Contrastingly, Furniss refers to the abstract representation of characters in many of Joanna Priestley's films, namely *Grown Up* (1993). Multiple abstract figures represent Priestley in the film. Furniss suggests that the difficulty to identify with these figures are only mitigated with the use of a voiceover narration.³²

Perhaps the most apparent difference between animation as a time-based media and the static painting or print is movement. The examination of movement and its qualities forms a major part of the research. While the research investigates the transposition of a still image media aesthetic into animation, it also simultaneously looks from the reverse at how the visual qualities of still image media can be enhanced by not merely motion, but also the quality of the movement.

³⁰ Ibid., 67.

³¹ Ibid., 69

³² Ibid., 64.

Furniss in another section of the book considers the movement and kinetics in animation. She writes that the characteristics of an object's movement in animation can suggest a range of information to the viewers. Fluid and rhythmic movements may be imbued in an object (or character) a joyful personality. In contrast, slow and hesitant movements may hint that the object is working against gravity, or perhaps having a gloomy persona.³³ The type of movement can also be described as a metamorphosis. Russian filmmaker and theorist Sergei Eisenstein commented on the "plasmatic" and "metamorphic" qualities of early Disney animation films. To Eisenstein, metamorphosis appeals to the human subconscious, increasing the appeal the piece of animation has on its viewers.³⁴ The shape-shifting metamorphoses also immediately allude to fantasy. Metamorphosis can therefore be used to suggest the fantastical and psychological nature of a film's reality. Paul Wells similarly subscribes to Eisenstein's and Furniss' proposals on metamorphosis. Wells points to Koji Yamamura's *Mt. Head* (2002) as an example of metamorphosis transforming the film's reality. Wells writes on Yamamura's use of metamorphosis in the film as "enabling a sometimes literal space to become an emotional space or even the realm of fantasy or dream, without any of the elements being discernably different."³⁵ Likewise, the research film works with metamorphoses to transition between the film's world and Kirchner's mindscape, underlining the differences in reality to express inner states of mind.

Furthering the discussion on animated movements, Furniss talks about the aesthetics that full and limited animation can have. The book explains the terms as employing "constant movement with a minimum of cycles, while limited animation tends to utilize cycles or be devoid of

³³ Ibid., 75.

³⁴ Ibid., 77.

³⁵ Paul Wells. *The Fundamentals of Animation*. Lausanne, Switzerland: AVA Publishing. 2006. 98

movement to a great extent.”³⁶ Fluidity in animation is also ideally achieved through having 24 drawings for each second of animation (frames per second) but it would also be considered full animation when 12 drawings are done for each second of animation. However, a “stepped” feeling can be felt when animating on “threes” (eight images per second of animation) or higher, thus leading to it being considered as limited animation.



Figure 2 – Limited animation in *Gerald McBoing Boing* (1951). The characters snap from pose to pose, giving the effect of a wildly exaggerated shock reaction,

The terms, Furniss writes, are generally “quantitative measures” of the spread of an animated movement across the number of drawings. They have however acquired a “qualitative connotation”, as full and limited can produce a stark aesthetical difference.³⁷ Compared to the familiarity viewing Disney full animations, limited animations have been used to great success to prime visual gags. Furniss cites United Productions of America (UPA) films as good examples of limited animation usage³⁸. In *Gerald McBoing Boing* (1951), characters snap from pose to pose without any in-between drawings, giving the effect of a wildly exaggerated shock reaction.

³⁶ Maureen Furniss. *Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics, Revised Edition*. Yorkshire: United Kingdom. John Libbey Publishing. 2007. 133

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 134.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 140

It was also used in the 1953 short, *The Tell-Tale Heart*, where animation was kept to a bare minimum. Along with the exceptional voiceover narration of James Mason, the limitedly animated morphs and camera movements lends the Edgar Allen Poe gothic horror novel adaptation a dramatic eeriness.

Furniss's examination of movement in animation films addresses the types of animation methods, such as pose-to-pose animation, straight ahead animation, and rotoscoping. The book describes pose-to-pose animation as a method where "the most significant poses, or 'key frames', are drawn first" and "the 'in-between' poses that fill in the action are done later". Straight ahead animation on the other hand, is more "spontaneous" as each drawing is "rendered in the order in which it will be shot." The movement is therefore, usually improvised by the animator when animating. The process of rotoscoping is drastically different. Patented by Max Fleischer in 1917, the technique employs "film footage that is traced by an artist whose images are then re-filmed." It can be likened to the motion capture technology of today.³⁹ Its process of tracing over filmed footage can also be exploited as a means to reduce production time in animation filmmaking, albeit with a different movement quality - Rotoscopy produces movements that are relatively realistic, which can be very jarring when placed beside the more commonly seen cartoony and exaggerated animated movements. The research film experiments with the three types of animation methods and the quality of movements to appropriately represent emotions.

To investigate the use of Kirchner's aesthetic to express character inner states, the research film employs metamorphosis as a way to weave between the character's reality and his inner

³⁹ Ibid., 76.

emotions as alternate realms. The creation of the research film also applies all three methods of animation for purposes of mood creation, as well as for practical time-saving reasons.

A key component of animation films is sound and music design. In the chapter about sound and music design, Furniss begins by emphasizing the importance of good sound design. Good sound design is the “biggest difference between amateur and professional animation”, and the “secret to success for many award-winning films”⁴⁰, is the meticulous care filmmakers give to shape the film’s aural elements. Furniss also writes that the soundtrack can give meaning to the film⁴¹. Furniss’ point is supported by Giannalberto Bendazzi. So important is sound to animation, Bendazzi writes in *Defining Animation*, that watching any animated shorts from the Golden Age⁴² of Hollywood without sound will nullify the film’s intent and poetics.⁴³

Animation perfectly combines with sound and music design to create an audio-visual art form.⁴⁴ As an audio-visual art form, the aural elements present in animation is its second most apparent difference when seen alongside still image painting and print media. The research looks at how the dimension of sound can be utilized by filmmakers to evoke emotions and express character inner states of mind, a tool that artists such as Kirchner did not have.

The research references Furniss’ writings on sound in animation films. In the book, Furniss separates between sound effects and a film’s musical score. Comparing the comedy gags of animated characters such as the Pink Panther and Wallace and Gromit to silent era comedians, Furniss points out the vital importance that music and sound effects have on their comedy

⁴⁰ Ibid., 83.

⁴¹ Ibid.,

⁴² Bendazzi proposes that watching any animated shorts from the Golden Age of Hollywood without sound will nullify the film’s intent and poetics. Giannalberto Bendazzi, *Defining Animation – A Proposal*, 2004, p8

⁴³ Ibid.,

⁴⁴ Bendazzi goes as far as to suggest it as the “most audio-visual of audiovisual languages.” Ibid.,

routines.⁴⁵ Sound effects are usually applied in an overly dramatic manner, often times with not even the slightest bit of conformity to the on-screen action whatsoever. Furniss again gives the example of UPA's *Gerald McBoing Boing* (1951). The titular character who is unable to speak in words but only in sound effects performs outrageously hilarious gags that are otherwise impossible without the juxtaposition of image and sound effect. The use of sound effects can therefore negotiate audience expectations. The type of sound effects applied in a particular moment subconsciously influences audience expectations. Just as in *Gerald McBoing Boing*, a disparity between image and the sound effect used can elicit an emotional response from the audience.

On the other hand, Furniss proposes that sound effects need not always be complex or humorous to create layered and deep meanings that impacts the film's visuals. Sound effects can also be used to create spatial awareness for the audience. Furniss cites the Oscar-winning film *Balance* (1989) by Christoph and Wolfgang Lauenstein, as an example of simple but effective used of sound effects. In the film, a group of spindly-looking men stand on a free floating platform as they each attempt to fish for a box, all the while trying to delicately maintain the balance of the platform, and also prevent themselves and the box from falling off it. The film's minimal use of sound effects serves only to heighten even more the precarious situation the men are in, highlighting the vastness of the environment and hinting at the infinite fall that awaits what or whoever goes over the platform's edge.⁴⁶

Similar to sound effects is the employment of musical scores in animation films. The book discusses the role of music in the works of experimental filmmakers such as Antony Gross' *La*

⁴⁵ Maureen Furniss. *Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics, Revised Edition*. Yorkshire: United Kingdom. John Libbey Publishing. 2007. 87

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 87-88.

joie de vivre (1934) and Norman McLaren's *Neighbors* (1952). In McLaren's *Neighbors*, Furniss notes the filmmaker's interest in the concept of synesthesia, or the overlapping of senses⁴⁷ but more evidently, the correlation between the film's musical score and the "movement of visual imagery".⁴⁸ McLaren almost instinctively interprets broader actions with louder and more intense compositions and smaller actions are translated into softer milder tunes.⁴⁹ Furniss supplements the example given with Disney's *Fantasia* (1940) – a film, which concept was conceived as an experiment on the relationship between film image and sound. Several sequences in *Fantasia* exemplifies McLaren's audio-visual poetics in *Neighbors*. Animators would create movements based on interpretations of the symphonic musical pieces. It is therefore quite evident that these audio to visual interpretations are highly subjective, based entirely on the musical sensibilities of the filmmaker. Norman McLaren would comment that all theories on the correlations of image and sound in animation filmmaking, even those thought up by himself, are arbitrary.⁵⁰

The research film investigates this relationship between animated image and sound through three existing musical scores, each one different in mood from the other two. The pieces were chosen as instinctive translations of inherent emotional qualities in the five works by Kirchner. The pieces are: the piano composition, *Gnossienne No.1* by Erik Satie; *On the other side of the world*, by Tom Waits; and *Oily Night*, also by Tom Waits. Although the three musical scores were composed separately, they were spliced together to form a soundtrack for the practical component. It is a very close approximation of my interpretations of the musical score. The three musical scores should therefore be seen as a singular musical composition and will be discussed

⁴⁷ McLaren was quoted in Donald McWilliams (ed.), *Norman McLaren on the Creative Process*. Montreal: National Film Board of Canada. 1991. 34

⁴⁸ Maureen Furniss. *Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics, Revised Edition*. Yorkshire: United Kingdom. John Libbey Publishing. 2007. 90

⁴⁹ Ibid.,

⁵⁰ Ibid., 89.

as such. The research film looks at how the use of these musical compositions can support the visuals or create irony to alter audience expectations, affecting viewer emotional responses.

Wells' and Furniss' explanations of animation's unique work processes have demonstrated its suitability as a visual medium to express inner states of mind. Nonetheless, further expositions will be made in a subsequent chapter on the research film. It will be discussed using Maureen Furniss' methods of examining the concepts of animation through the individual sections of animation technique, color, design, movement, and sound design.

1.3 Why Expressionism? - Expressing Inner States through Expressionism

This research project deliberately examines the Expressionist aesthetic to explore new visual strategies for animating character inner states of mind. Neither was it just a circumstantial and convenient decision following my undergraduate works. Yet it is as simple and appropriate as the name of the art movement implies: Expressionism – it is simply about the visual expression of the abstract inner state of mind to elicit moods and emotional responses from the viewer.

The term Expressionism was initially used as a helming description to the other aesthetical “isms” such as the French Fauvism, Cubism and Italian Futurism.⁵¹ A group of German Expressionists distinguished themselves by forming the art movement, Die Brücke. The group's manifesto set them out to be the ones who will break free from the apathetic bourgeoisie class and evolving “technocratic” society⁵². Their openness to the free expression of the mind and body manifests in their apparently uncontrolled color palettes and distorted forms.

⁵¹ Norbert Wolf, “Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, On the Abyss of the Edge of Time”. (Koln: Taschen, 2003) 9.

⁵² Ibid., 10.

Amongst them was Kirchner, considered as one of the pre-eminent modern German painters⁵³, whose body of self-portraiture works this research has chosen to focus on. Kirchner's works (and life, tragically) embodies the essence of Expressionism very well. The artist's works document a pictorial change in his emotional state across several periods of his life, from his formative years with Die Brücke, through the two World Wars, up until his death by suicide in 1938. Although critics of Kirchner's time have described his works as naïve⁵⁴, citing his lack of technical proficiency, or denounced them as degenerate art, as the Nazi regime did, he is today almost unanimously regarded as a seminal figure in modern art history⁵⁵. I firmly recognize Kirchner as owning his very own personal and intentional style of expressing the inner state, which is simply not replicable by anyone.

Expressionist artworks are closely entwined with his life. Kirchner's works, more relevantly so for this research, are often created as a reaction to an emotion, set about by events that affect him. The classical painting methods did not bog him down, neither was he bothered by the search for objective truths – the expressiveness in the five works selected clearly shows him relating his emotions and inner states through pictures.

As this inquiry seeks strategies for animating character inner states, I will begin my understanding for how to present the “inside-out” in animation by looking at the artists before

⁵³ Art-historians have considered Kirchner crucial for his role in shaping modernist art. The first seminal research of Kirchner's methods and techniques was conducted and presented by Thomas Brachert, Marlies Giebe, Kenneth B. Katz, Carolin von Saint-George, and Han Steenbruggen.

Karin Schick and Heide Skowranek, ed., et al. *No One Else Has These Colors. Kirchner's Painting*. (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2012) 25.

⁵⁴ Colin Rhodes, "Difficult Kirchner – Alternative traditions, visual tensions, autodidactism" in *New Perspective on Brücke Expressionism*. ed. Christian Weikop (Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011), 126-129.

⁵⁵ Ibid.,

(specifically Kirchner) who have set out to achieve the same objectives, albeit in a different medium.

1.4 The Self-portrait

Self-portraiture is a well-established genre in art. The understanding of what constitutes a self-portrait has undergone various changes over history. It has transformed from a platform for demonstrating one's proficiencies for the Medieval craftsmen, to becoming private expressions of the ineffable inner self, by the time of Kirchner.⁵⁶ This section examines the shifts in convention and attitudes toward the self-portrait format.

Changing Functionality

The research's objective is built upon the understanding of Kirchner's methods applied in his self-portrait works. However, it is also key that Kirchner, along with generations of artists, have used the self-portrait format as a means of "self-analysis... self-reflection, self-expression and self-promotion..."⁵⁷ They translate the abstract and intangible into visuals, bearing their souls for the viewers' pleasure, or maybe not. Whatever the intended purpose, artists imbue a piece of themselves in their self-portraits.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ James Hall, *The Self-portrait, A Cultural History*, London, UK: Thames & Hudson, 2014, 8-11.

⁵⁷ Liz Rideal, *National Portrait Gallery, Insights, Self-Portraits*, London, UK: National Portrait Gallery Publications, 2005, 7

⁵⁸ On Dürer's self-portrait of 1500, Joseph Koerner says of the artistic "self" in the image, "What they say is art is an image of its maker." Joseph Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1993), p55.



Figure 3 – (Left) Father Rufillus of Weissenau, *Detail of Self-portrait Illuminating the Initial “R”*, 1170-1200, Ink and color on parchment. (Right) Hildebertus, *Self-portrait with His Assistant Everwinus*, 1150, ink on parchment.

The modern traditions of self-portraiture as a significant genre began in the Medieval times, where despite the obsession with humility in the presence of God, monastic craftsmen created self-portraits to declare their faith and preoccupation with salvation.⁵⁹ These self-portraits while not naturalistic identified the monks as the authors of the illuminated script, inferring self-reflection through pious scribing of scriptures⁶⁰ (figure 3).



Figure 4 – (Left) Jan van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Portrait*, 1434, oil on panel. (Right) Detail showing van Eyck's hidden self-portrait.

⁵⁹ James Hall, *The Self-portrait, A Cultural History*, London, UK: Thames & Hudson, 2014, 24-25.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 26-28

This propensity for self-promotion took off in the 15th century Europe⁶¹. Artists like Jan van Eyck cheekily plant *accidental* glimpses of themselves – a self-portrait – in mirrors within the paintings, such as *The Arnolfini Portrait* (figure 4). The reflected selves of the artists seem to suggest an unconscious alter ego – the artist caught in the moment.

More practically, it could possibly be that van Eyck's self-portrait was a demonstration of skill, considering the artist painted himself as a reflection in a convex mirror that both reverses and warps the image. The complicated distortions boast his ability as an artist to handle spatial design and more importantly, the painting medium⁶².

It is also during the European Renaissance when naturalistic approaches to painting meant characters in a painting could be identified easily through realistic likenesses, unlike in the Middle Ages where they were recognized more through “attributes, scale, position and gesture”⁶³.

Artists began to paint self-portraits that served purposes that were more than for extending their presence in society. Michelangelo expressed the aphorism that “every painter paints himself”⁶⁴, signaling a paradigm shift beginning in the Renaissance. Art commentators have frequently drawn comparisons of Dürer's likeness (figure 5) in his 1500 self-portrait to that of the icons of Christ.⁶⁵ It could be interpreted as Dürer comparing himself to God as a master creator – an “artist in his divinity.”⁶⁶ Artists were divorced from the humility often seen in

⁶¹ Ibid., 43

⁶² The phrase “Als ich kan” (As I can) in van Eyck's *Portrait of a Man*, hints at a pun of his name (ich to Eyck). Where one would relate religious humility (As I can, but not as I would), the other reveals an egoistic master of the craft (As only I can). Anthony Bond et al., “*Self portrait: Renaissance to contemporary Sydney*”: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2006, 18.

⁶³ James Hall, “*The Self-portrait, A Cultural History*,” London, UK: Thames & Hudson, 2014, 17.

⁶⁴ Anthony Bond et al., “*Self portrait: Renaissance to contemporary Sydney*”: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2006, 17.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 71

⁶⁶ Ibid.,

Medieval Christian art, exemplifying the “rise of the sovereign individual”⁶⁷. The self-portrait format had become more personal and private, naturally standing out as a way for artists to express themselves without inhibition.



Figure 5 – Albrecht Dürer, Self-Portrait, 1500, oil on panel

Artists employed the use of symbols to communicate information about themselves in self-portraits. The symbolism of the artist’s hand pointing toward his chest in Dürer’s 1500 self-portrait is widely known and recognized⁶⁸. As society evolved to further emphasize individuality, so did attitudes towards the Arts. Artists looked ever more inward to their private lives. Similarly, the meaning of the symbols they used became less universally understood and more personalized, sometimes even to the point of obscurity, known only by a few within the artist’s circle or perhaps even none. This intimacy meant that artists frequently conveyed the complex psyche in their self-portraits.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 18

⁶⁸ James Hall, *The Self-portrait, A Cultural History*, London, UK: Thames & Hudson, 2014, 84.



Figure 6 – James Ensor, *Self-portrait with Masks*, 1899, oil on canvas

James Ensor, in the enigmatic *Self-Portrait with Masks* (figure 6), paints himself wearing a large flowered hat amidst a crowd of novelty masks. The meaning of the masks in Ensor's works is deep and personal only to him. So little is written by the artist about the mask motifs that today's historian can only vaguely hypothesize that the work reflected the artist's constant search to remake himself by inventing metaphorical masks, a necessity for survival in the decadent world.⁶⁹ The guesswork offers a wild speculation of Ensor's thoughts, and a slight peek into the artist's psyche. Kirchner on the other hand, wrote extensively on his works and in the context of this research, his self-portraits are clear portrayals of his inner states of mind. This is further discussed in Chapter 1.5, *The "Inside-Out Character" in Kirchner's Self-Portraits*.

Changing Conventions

One of the clearest evolutions in self-portrait conventions in the 20th Century is the reduced emphasis on the artist's face, and more of the body.⁷⁰ The full body was rarely portrayed in the

⁶⁹ Ibid., 238

⁷⁰ Ibid., 231

self-portrait prior to the 19th and 20th Centuries⁷¹. Modern thinkers like Nietzsche and Freud influenced a generation of artists by rejecting a “cultural universe of measure and calm restraint”, calling for new ‘symbols’ to depersonalize the individual⁷². The representation of the face and its features, seen as the locus of individuality thus fell out of favor.

The shift was also provoked by the invention of photography, which, was infinitely more suited for the accurate portrayal of the artist.⁷³ Similarly, the 20th Century also saw multiple avant-garde movements that rejected the traditions of art. All these signaled a change in perception of what constitutes a self-portrait – abstraction replaced naturalism as the more telling



Figure 7 – Rene Magritte, The Musings, of a Solitary Walker, 1926, oil on panel

form of art. Breaking from the depiction of likeness meant a separation from the limits of the individual being, granting immense freedom to the artist’s expression.

Artists found more visual solutions to create a self-portrait. Rene Magritte, for example, represented himself as the anonymous back-facing bowler hat man, circumventing any depiction

⁷¹ Until the early 20th Century when Egon Schiele and Edvard Munch freely created nude self-portraits (both in painting and photography), nude and full bodied self-portraits were limited to only a few drawings before the 1900. Ibid., 253

⁷² Ibid., 253

⁷³ Ibid., 232

of the face entirely. In *The Musings of a Solitary Walker* (figure 7) the artist meditates on his experiences with the death of his mother by suicide when he was in his youth⁷⁴.

The Mexican painter, Frida Kahlo created a series of self-portraits that revealed her tumultuous relationship with her husband, the history of her incapacitating medical conditions, and her childhood⁷⁵. In *What I Saw in the Water* (figure 8) Kahlo's self-portrait stands as a visual auto-biography of her suffering. Through symbols, her life is presented without the depiction of her, save for her toes, and glimpses of her scarred post-operated legs (the result of childhood polio)⁷⁶.



Figure 8 – Frieda Kahlo, *What I Saw in the Water*, 1938, oil on canvas

In the selected self-portraits of Kirchner, we can similarly observe the artist's disregard for the classical conventions of the half-body portrait. Also, the voyeuristic qualities of the *Mountain Studio* and *Schlemihl* series of self-portrait represents a modernist emphasis on the self. These works were created at a juncture in the history of art, when tectonic shifts were happening both

⁷⁴ Ibid., 247

⁷⁵ Ibid., 252

⁷⁶ Ibid., 253

within and without the world of art. Kirchner's rejection of the traditions was most appropriately summarized by the vision of Die Brücke – to be the bridge of art with the future. The research therefore examines Kirchner's self-portraits with a view of the above-mentioned shifts in attitudes towards art making.

1.5 The “Inside-Out Character” in Kirchner's Self-Portraits

Kirchner's self-portraits are often centered on the visual representation of the artist's sanity. The artist lived in a constant state of terror, was discharged from military service, and eventually admitted into a sanatorium⁷⁷. This fear, and later, his changing inner states of mind are represented in many ways through his art⁷⁸.

Kirchner, Peter Schlemihl's Wondrous Story - Magdalena M. Moeller, et al.

In *Kirchner, Peter Schlemihl's Wondrous Story*, the book's authors examine Kirchner's most important works in print form, the woodcuts and lithograph that forms the *Schlemihl* series⁷⁹.

The book was an important source to examine the ways in which Kirchner approaches the visual representation of the inner state of mind. By looking at the Schlemihl series of woodcuts alongside his writings, it provided me with an understanding of Kirchner's philosophy on the woodcut print aesthetic and how it applies directly to his artistic externalizing of the inner states of mind. It will serve an important role in the practical component, demonstrated by contrasting

⁷⁷ Günther Gercken, *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's 1915 set of woodcuts* in *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Peter Schlemihl's Wondrous Story*. Munich: Prestel, 2014. 17-18.

⁷⁸ Kirchner would write “Do I have a home? No: an outsider here, an outsider there; no one will have me. Am on my own with my art... and I want to keep hold of this demure mistress of mine who becomes ever lovelier the older I grow – even if it means losing the little bit of recognition I still have.” Ernst Lidwig Kirchner, in Lothar Grisebach (ed.), *Ernst Ludwig Kirchners Davoser Tagebuch. Eine Darstellung des Malers und eine Sammlung seiner Schriften*, new edition revised by Lucius Grisebach, Ostfildern-Ruit, 1997. 112.

⁷⁹ Magdalena M Moeller. et al. *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Peter Schlemihl's Wondrous Story*. Munich: Prestel, 2014. 6.

the black and white, graphically textured visuals inspired by Kirchner's print works with the wildly prismatic and flamboyant colors in the artist's self-portrait paintings, to exemplify a changing state of mind – the artist's deteriorating sanity.

Kirchner likened his story to that of the story of Peter Schlemihl, a character in the Adelbert von Chamisso novella, who sold his shadow to the devil only to be shunned by the people around him and eventually growing to be fearful of the light, as he was without a shadow.

With the series, Kirchner presented the story of Schlemihl in prints that seem to blur the fantastical world of Schlemihl and the artist's own reality with which he saw many parallels. The series could then be seen as his self-portraits, representing his state of mind during that period of its creation. Kirchner himself explains Chamisso's novella as "the story of a man with a persecution complex"⁸⁰. Günther Gercken in a chapter of the book suggests that Kirchner's explanation applies more to the artist himself than Schlemihl, alluding to the artist's fear of getting kill in active war duty, and subsequently his shunning from public light for fear of being identified by as someone not performing an active role during the First World War.

"No One Else Has These Colors." Kirchner's Painting – Karin Schick and Heide Skowranek, ed.

In *"No One Else Has These Colors." Kirchner's Painting*, based on the artist's diaries and handwritten letters, the book provides an in depth look at Kirchner's technical mastery at his paintings, amongst which many are his self-portraits. The book is the culmination of an in-depth art-technical research project initiated by the Kirchner Museum Davos. The research project studied varied examples of Kirchner's paintings from an interdisciplinary perspective, which

⁸⁰ Günther Gercken, *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's 1915 set of woodcuts in Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Peter Schlemihl's Wondrous Story*. Munich: Prestel, 2014. 18.

examines Kirchner's painting style, technique and work process using both scientific technology and historical evidences from Kirchner's own writings.

Although the research is not an exclusive art-technique study of Kirchner's methods, *No One Else Has These Colors* will still serve as an informative reference to replicating Kirchner's painting aesthetics for the animated time-based medium. Understanding Kirchner's techniques may better allow for me as an animator to seek an equilibrium on how paintings and animations are done – the difference in work processes between the intensive method of frame-by-frame animation and the equally tedious art of creating a single painting, as Kirchner had done. This is especially important for the practical examination of the complexities when viewing the still and moving image.

Similarly, books such as, *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Retrospective*, *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: On the Edge of the Abyss of Time* as well as *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Friends: Expressionism from the Swiss Mountains*, provide a foundational understanding of Kirchner's works and methods in the context of his changing inner state of mind throughout the artist's career and life.

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Retrospective - Felix Kramer, ed.

The *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Retrospective* book was compiled and printed for the Kirchner Retrospective held at The Staedel Institute in Frankfurt, one of the first museums to acquire Kirchner's works, beginning in 1919. The catalogue is a compilation of several synoptic but comprehensive essays written by experts of Kirchner, elucidating on some of Kirchner's most famous works as well as those which are lesser seen.

Expressionism from the Swiss Mountains – Mathias Frehner, et al.

Expressionism from the Swiss Mountains specifically explores the works which Kirchner produced during his time in Davos. The period of recovery from health problems in Davos could possibly be seen as a marked shift in Kirchner's inner state of mind⁸¹, following the episodes of hysteria caused in part by his participation in World War I. The book adopts an episodic review on the timeline of Kirchner's arrival and artistic refuge in Davos, a large portion of which details the "intense artistic and personal dialogue" that Kirchner had with a number of younger artists who worked alongside Kirchner in Davos.

Although Kirchner's stay in Davos saw the production of a large body of landscape paintings of the Swiss Alps, the book dedicates a section to the study of Kirchner's self-portraits and the reasons for its transformation from the traditional isolated self-portraiture into allegorical depictions of himself. This study marks a clear point of evolution in Kirchner's changing inner state of mind, useful for my investigation of the research topic.

On the Edge of the Abyss of Time – Norbert Wolf

The book, *On the Edge of the Abyss of Time*, while less so a systematic inquiry of Kirchner's body of works compared to the other literature on the artist, offers an artistic discourse from the perspective of a biographer. It critiques the paintings of Kirchner in chronology and with discernment, discussing the history behind individual works in context to the art scene during Kirchner's time, albeit in a quasi-story novel exposition. The book provides a lay of the land on Kirchner's life but more importantly, it thoroughly examines the period when

⁸¹ Matthias Frehner. *Mountain Landscapes from Davos – "The Big Intensification" in Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Friends: Expressionism from the Swiss Mountains*. Zurich, Scheidegger & Spies. 2007. 19

he was struggling with substance abuse and mental psychosis resulting from the epochal events of the early 20th century.

Kirchner's body of art works deal with diverse topics, from nudes to street scenes and mountainous landscapes. However, the above literature demonstrates the reasons why his self-portrait works are probably the most telling of him. The intense passion the artist poured into the depiction of himself reflects the profoundness of human emotions. Therefore, it is from the ways in which Kirchner deals with these emotions that I will begin the research's exploration to express character inner states of mind.

1.6 The Self-portrait and the Close-Up Shot

An objective of the research is to investigate the possibilities of using film language as a contemporary storytelling mechanism for re-imagining self-portrait paintings. It concludes with producing a film adaptation of Kirchner's life as represented in a series of his works.

The previous section has established Kirchner's self-portraits as a source of study for the visual expression of character inner states. Similarly, the filmic close-up can be used as intimate format for studying character inner states of mind. Through comparative analysis, visual strategies for the still image media was extrapolated and then translated into film language and techniques for the creation of the research film. To examine this relationship between the self-portrait and close-up shot, the research draws parallelisms between the still image and time based mediums.

The following section examines the close-up shot as a visual language for expressing and empathizing with character inner states of mind in film.

The Grammar of the Shot - Christopher J. Bowden and Roy Thompson

In *The Grammar of the Shot* by Christopher J. Bowden and Roy Thompson, the authors introduce the most fundamental concepts of shot types in film language. The authors describe the shot as “the recording of one action from one particular point of view at one time”, whose imagery shows “a discrete unit of photographic coverage of a person, place or event in a motion picture from a unique distance and angle.”⁸² The different types of shots also inherently carry different information. The placement of one shot type in the edit to another shot type can therefore imply different perceived meanings and is often used to “effective cinematic experiences.”⁸³

Bowden and Thompson suggests that the close-up is the most intimate shot in filmmaking.⁸⁴ The close-up is accepted as a “head shot” because it frames the subject from the top of its head to anywhere below the chin and above the upper shoulders. However, it may also range from framing the subject from the top of its head to the middle of its chest (medium close-up) to framing only a single facial feature of the subject (extreme close-up).

The close-up brings the subject into the personal space of the audience. The face of the subject is also enlarged; with previously insignificant details made visible. The audience are able to scrutinize the subject and all its minutest nuances, even the slightest twitch of a muscle – it is easy to tell who it is and what it is feeling. This reduction of metaphysical proximity forcefully breaks the ice between subject and audience, allowing empathy to be established.^{85 86}

⁸² Christopher J. Bowden & Roy Thompson. *Grammar of the Shot*. Burlington, Massachusetts: Focal Press. 2013. 8

⁸³ Ibid.,

⁸⁴ Ibid., 10

⁸⁵ Ibid., 20

⁸⁶ In *Framed Ink* by Marcos Mateu-Mestre, the author even goes as far as to say that in close-ups (especially in the extreme close-up), the audience will “become one” with the subject that is on screen. Marcos Mateu-Mestre, *Framed Ink*. California: Design Studio Press. 2010. 25

Just like the close-up shot, Kirchner's self-portraits position him as the key figure in the still image, and therefore brings himself into the personal space of the viewer. The artist becomes the subject of the art work. In the self-portrait, the details of the facial features and any subtle emotions become more apparent. The theme of a mentally frail man envelops the five selected art works. As Kirchner enters the space of the viewer, so too does he presents his most private moments to them. Like the close-up shot, the self-portrait enhances the viewer's emotional connection to the subject as they watch the artist's struggle in such closeness.

In the research film, the close-up shot performs the role of the self-portrait format. The shot is used to frame the subject of inquiry, placing it at the forefront of the audience's gaze. From this position, the elements that hold little to no importance are excluded by the shot and all the focus is diverted onto the subject. In this manner, the close-up shot can affect the way in which animation expresses character inner states of mind just as the self-portrait does.

Despite their similarities, it is still difficult to equate the close-up shot (or any shot sizes) to the self-portrait format, primarily due to their differences in temporal qualities – one is a time

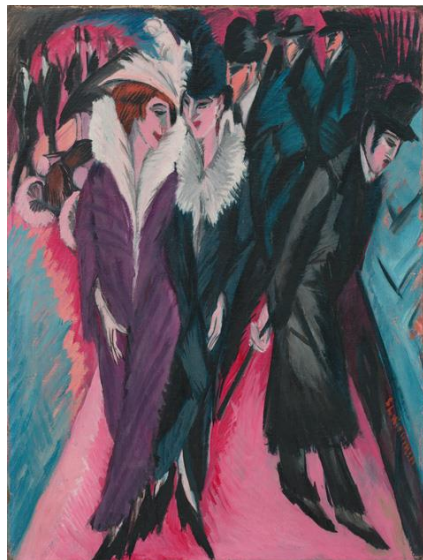


Figure 9 – Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Strasse, Berlin, 1913, oil on canvas

based medium, the other is a still image. The discussion on depicting movement in both film and painting can be problematic.

Kirchner painted motion extensively during the years he spent in Berlin⁸⁷, seen here in *Strasse, Berlin*⁸⁸ (figure 9). Kirchner believed that painting figures in motion better expressed the vitality of the human body⁸⁹. In addition to painting ‘snapshots’ of moving characters, Kirchner developed the style of painting with bold outlines and hard hatching strokes to enhance the “excitement” and “dynamism” he saw in the Berlin streets⁹⁰. However, Kirchner’s paintings function as the artist’s suggestions of the reality he sought to depict. The movements are limited and bounded within the edges of the canvas. It requires a level of imagination on the part of the audience, in addition to the prior knowledge required to understand the intentions for the artist’s methods (of strokes and outlines). Contrastingly, the temporal qualities of film, and by extension the close-up shot, addresses Kirchner’s proposals (on “vitality” and “dynamism”) by allowing for the visual representation of character movement in the literal sense. In this manner, the film (animation) medium is more accessible, and may demonstrate character performance more successfully when compared to the painting.

Motion is also presented in the form of camera movements. Apart from the characters, the camera (as a proxy for the audience presence) also maneuvers in the filmic space and time⁹¹. Shot sizes change as the camera approach or move away from a subject, reframing its importance and presenting new information. Also, unlike the individual painting, most films consists of

⁸⁷ Sandra Gianfreda and Martina Pfister, "Beginnings in Dresden," *Kunsthau Zürich – Ernst Ludwig Kirchner*, accessed March 06, 2017, <http://www.kunsthau.ch/kirchner/index-en.html>.

⁸⁸ Sandra Gianfreda and Martina Pfister, "Berlin and Fehmarn – Between big city dynamism and island idylls" *Kunsthau Zürich – Ernst Ludwig Kirchner*, accessed March 06, 2017, <http://www.kunsthau.ch/kirchner/index-en.html>.

⁸⁹ Ibid.,

⁹⁰ Ibid.,

⁹¹ Christopher J. Bowden & Roy Thompson. *Grammar of the Shot*. Burlington, Massachusetts: Focal Press. 2013. 165 - 174

sequences made up of multiple shots (of various sizes – wide shots, medium shots, extreme close-ups). Different shot sizes are used to convey different emotions⁹². When stitched together, shots support or contrast each other, giving an entirely different dimension to filmic storytelling and semiotics⁹³. The movements within a shot does not necessarily remain in one and may be carried across time, over a series of shots. These qualities of film are absent from the still-image format, offering more possibilities for creative visual mark-making.

Other complications arise when re-creating Kirchner's paintings in the research film due to the aspect ratio size difference between film and painting. Whereas the canvases can be customized to the artist's fancy, the research film works with a 16:9 widescreen format⁹⁴. This meant that the rules for composing effective visuals are different for both the film and the paintings it re-creates⁹⁵. Common compositional arrangements like the Rule of Thirds would place the subject at very different positions on a vertically rectangular canvas and on a 16:9 widescreen ratio frame. Though must then be given to directing the audience's attention around the shot, much as how painters compose their paintings for visual appeal. While the still-image painting format permits the viewer's eyes to explore its canvas in scrutiny, the time-based film medium is transient and less forgiving towards cluttered compositions.

The research does not compare the two mediums to determine their superiority over the other. Nonetheless, the above considerations are crucial in the creation of the research film as it negotiates the limitations and possibilities of film and painting in a cross-media adaptation of

⁹² Ibid., 8 - 22

⁹³ Ibid., 54 - 65

⁹⁴ The horizontally elongated aspect ratio is preferred due to it replicating the natural human field of view. Ibid., 7

⁹⁵ Ibid., 5-7

Kirchner's paintings. The creation of the research film is further discussed in *Chapter 3 – Practical Component: Crafting the Research Film*.

1.7 Still to Moving: Cross Media Adaptations

The research will use the aforementioned five self-portrait works of Kirchner as visual and narrative inspirations. Therefore, it will undeniably be examining both the visual and narrative cross-media adaptation aspects of Kirchner's life and artworks into the animated art form. It should be expressed that while part of the research will require the consideration of theories on adaptation⁹⁶, it is not a targeted study on adaptation as an academic field within the film and literary studies. It will however, be based on the theories as interpreted by academic scholars from within the fields of animation studies and animation filmmaking. This section will review the key literature written on animated screen adaptations.

For the discourse on adaptations, I will examine Kirchner's story, presented and inferred from within the five selected self-portraits, as the source text. Therefore, subsequent mentions of a *source text* or terminologies of the likes (i.e. original source, parent text, original text, etc.) shall similarly refer to Kirchner's self-portraits. Despite the classic adaptation source being traditionally understood as a piece of textual literature, this research adapts fine art techniques for the animated medium.

⁹⁶ Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan puts forward the existence of an adaptation theory, based on the book *Film Adaptation and its Discontents: From "Gone with the wind" to "Passion of the Christ"* by Thomas Leitch. Cartmell, Deborah & Whelehan, Imelda. *Screen Adaptation: Impure Cinema*. New York; Palgrave Macmillian. 2010. 11

Animation: Genre and Authorship – Paul Wells

In *Animation: Genre and Authorship*, animation scholar Paul Wells discusses the relationship between animation film and the fine art practices and principles. The author in his analysis of said relationship underscores the “self-enunciating vocabulary of animation”⁹⁷ – the principles of fine art (draftsmanship, model-making, painting and so forth) are inherent within the animation process.⁹⁸ Consequently, Wells suggests animation as the logical “progressive” extension of the traditional fine art aesthetic media. Citing Susanne Langer in her book *Feeling and Form*⁹⁹, Wells proposes that animation “enables the fine artist to reconcile” the issue of suggesting “the illusion of movement through static forms” by showing “how the movement they wish to suggest is actually enacted”.¹⁰⁰ Wells cites the example of the Disney produced television program “The Art of the Animated Drawing”, whereby the cave paintings at Lascaux depict six or eight-legged animals seemingly in motion are animated, demonstrating the suggested movements as shown in the still-image medium.¹⁰¹ The very inherent quality of animation as a time-based illustrated medium allows for this relationship to exist. The result of this relationship, Wells writes, is the animator using techniques established within the fine art practices to create “similar aesthetic outcomes in motion” as “recourse” to the traditions set about by the classical established art forms. In doing so, the animator seeks to “authenticate” the source of inspiration, the inherent qualities of the animated art form, as well as to “acknowledge”

⁹⁷ Wells, Paul. *Animation: Genre and Authorship*. London, Wallflower Press. 2007. 31-32

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 32

⁹⁹ “Nothing demonstrates more clearly the symbolic import of virtual forms than the constant references one finds, in the speech and writings of artists, to the ‘life’ of objects in a picture (chains and tables quite as much as creatures), and to the picture plane itself as an ‘animated’ surface. The life in art is a ‘life’ of forms, or even of space itself.”

¹⁰⁰ Langer, S. *Feeling and Form*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1973. Cited by Wells in *Ibid.*, 32

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 33

animation as not merely an art, a technique, but also its ability to enhance the other established forms in fine art.

Wells does not explicitly address this “recourse” as an adaptation, but rather, in the example of Oscar Grillo’s *Rembrandt* (1992), described what Grillo did as using “visual catalysts”¹⁰² from Rembrandt’s paintings to achieve “similar aesthetic outcomes” with motion. Wells writes that Grillo in his documentary uses Rembrandt’s late paintings and the “illuminated” qualities of “Rembrandt’s aesthetic” as this “visual catalyst” to examine the process of aging and death – themes that Rembrandt often mused about in his own paintings. Wells similarly cites the extinguishing of a flame in the film as a metaphor for the thematic inevitability of death.

The research film is therefore not simply an adapted series of animated paintings; it is a treatment of Kirchner’s works that is interpreted for animation, adapting Kirchner’s story into animation and referencing the artist’s “visual catalysts”.

Anime and the Art of Adaptation – Dani Cavallaro

As such, important to the research is the book by animation and film writer, Dani Cavallaro, *Anime and the Art of Adaptation*. The book is a thorough and comprehensive study of famous works of animated adaptations from both the East and West. Cavallaro roots her investigation in the writings of various scholars, critics and writers from the fields of cultural, film and historical studies, many of whom such as Thomas Leitch, Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelelan have written on and contributed to the field of adaptation and film studies.

¹⁰² Ibid.

In the book, Cavallaro considers the proposals put forth by several writers of the subject on the categories of adaptation, citing John M. Desmon and Peter Hawke's triple "typologies" of the "close, lose, or intermediate" adaptations¹⁰³, Constanzo Cahir's differentiation of the "literal, traditional, or radical" forms¹⁰⁴, and the Dudley Andrew's taxonomy of "borrowing," "intersecting," and "transforming"¹⁰⁵. Most appealing of all is Cavallaro's exegesis of Kamilla Elliott's proposal on the six categories of adaptations¹⁰⁶:

- The "psychic" adaptation highlights the significance of "preserving the spirit" of the original source.
- The "ventriloquist" adaptation gives a new voice to the source, and is only vaguely similar to the original source in terms of its content.
- The "genetic" adaptation continues the narrative depth structure of its original source, but functionally are two different versions.
- The "merging" blends the ideas of two or more sources into a singular adaptation. Aspects of the sources are preserved at the discretion of the filmmaker.
- The "incarnational" presents itself as the on-screen visible adaptation of the abstract ideations contained within the original source.
- The "trumping" adaptation is the attempt to demonstrate that the "book's spirit" is in the wrong medium and should be rightfully and appropriately be restituted to the filmic form.

I will approach the re-treatment of Kirchner's story and the "visual catalysts" as a form of "psychic" adaptation. Cavallaro's interpretations of the "psychic" adaptation are corroborated by Andrews' arguments that the adaptation, however it's form, must adhere to preserving a

¹⁰³ Dani Cavallaro, *Anime and the Art of Adaptation*. North Carolina; MacFarland & Company. 2010. 6-9

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 7

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*,

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 8

“spiritual fidelity”¹⁰⁷ inherent within the original source. Furthermore, it must not be merely be a “reproduction of something essential about an original text”¹⁰⁸ – qualitative changes must be made in the new adapted form.

Screen Adaptation: Impure Cinema - Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelelan

Although the notions put forth by Andrew and Elliott are succinct and agreeable, Cartmell and Whelelan in their book *Screen Adaptation: Impure Cinema* downplays the urgency to discuss the “spiritual fidelity” of adaptations. They rationalize the measure of and debate on fidelity as an “inexact science deployed to compare often something as inchoate as the “spirit” of the thing...”¹⁰⁹

The authors contend that thoughts on fidelity preservation creates an expectation for the film to bill itself as a re-bodied, but same-old version of the original source – exciting critics and audiences alike into making such a comparison. The authors also argue that the best adaptations can re-imagine the most clichéd narrative structures into a film for an entirely new demographic, even if the re-imagining is wildly severed from the “spirit” of the “origins”. However, this severance does not indicate the authors’ disagreement on the need to adhere to this “spirit”. On the contrary, the authors suggest that the severance from the “spirit” of the source may be a much needed “criticism and reparation” for the text that may well have “outlived its usefulness”, or have become “too tired for contemporary tastes.”¹¹⁰

Cartmell and Whelelan’s deprioritizing of examining the “spiritual fidelity” of adaptations is in direct contention against Elliot’s “psychic” adaptation. The research therefore

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 7

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.,

¹⁰⁹ Deborah Cartmell & Imelda Whelehan. *Screen Adaptation: Impure Cinema*. New York; Palgrave Macmillian. 2010. 19-21.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 23

must take caution when adapting Kirchner's five art works for animation. Its practical examination has to draw a balance between preserving the "spiritual fidelity" of Kirchner's five art works, and presenting an auteur voice when interpreting the works exactly because animation is not, and cannot duplicate the still image format.

Thusly, the animation adaptation for my research re-contextualizes Kirchner's art works (which are deeply connected to his own personal story) for the viewership of today, but by no means is it a mere replication of Kirchner's paintings, with motion (see Wells' description of Grillo's *Rembrandt* above). It is instead my realization of Kirchner's "spirit", just as he had as a painter and engraver, realized it a near century ago. The approach allows for a more reactive way to discover, translate, and apply Kirchner's aesthetical and artistic qualities to animate inner states of mind. More importantly, it is imperative to this research that the adaptation process has to acknowledge the existence of a film language, and even more specifically for this research, animation's own visual language.

The research process will be further elaborated upon in a later chapter dedicated to the discussion on the research's approach.

1.8 Case studies: The Fine Arts in Live-Action and Animation Films

In this section, I will examine existing live-action and animation films that take visual inspiration from the fine arts, and whose processes are similar to the research's.

The selected films are examples of films that have adapted the fine art aesthetics for animation, and have also successfully solved problems inherent to adaptations of this kind. The

examination will reference Maureen Furniss' method of film analysis. Each film will be examined accordingly in the order of:

- i) The film's approach to referencing the fine arts;
- ii) The film's use of image design (or cinematography for live-action)
- iii) The quality of movement (performance for live-action)
- iv) The film's use of sound and music.

Jiří Barta - *The Pied Piper* (1986)

In previous sections, I have considered Maureen Furniss' proposal on animation as an extension of the arts. Contemporary filmmakers have been experimenting with new visual strategies to achieve more compelling ways to express themselves by looking towards fine art practices. For example, contemporary treatments can re-examine an existing aesthetic from a different angle shaped by different sociological and temporal contexts, and produce vastly different designs to the same effect.



Figure 10 - The influence of German Expressionism on Jiří Barta's 1986 animation, *The Pied Piper* is apparent when seen alongside this woodcut by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner. Elisabeth-Ufer, Berlin, 1912. Woodcut

The animation film by Jiří Barta, *The Pied Piper* (1986) was heavily influenced by German Expressionist art (figure 10). The film draws from the Expressionist woodcut aesthetic

to inspire the designs. The backgrounds in *The Pied Piper* are distorted and characters appear as malformed aberrations. In this manner, the film inherits an apocalyptic and cynical atmosphere often depicted in Expressionist woodcut prints. The most observable difference between *The Pied Piper* and its influence though, would be that Barta animates with three-dimensional sets and puppets. Nonetheless it comes from the same design approach as the Expressionists did when they created their art works and arrives at a similar outcome. In fact, from a design perspective, it would not be too farfetched to describe Barta's *The Pied Piper* as an Expressionist film.

In a discussion on animated literary adaptations, Paul Wells notes that when animators adapt from literature, they perform a “critique” on the parent source.¹¹¹ While Barta's film takes its influence from the Expressionist woodcut aesthetic, it too also surfaces the limitations of the still image print medium. In its most fundamental, animation offers movement, sound, and rhythm as elements that the still image medium does not possess. These elements function on a temporal level, different from the still image print medium. The experience of viewing an



Figure 11 – A sequence of film stills demonstrating the extreme design changes that reflect characters' inner states. Film stills from *The Pied Piper* by Jiří Barta (1986)

¹¹¹ Paul Wells, ed. Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan. *Thou Art Translated: Animated Adaptations in Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text*. (New York: Routledge, 2005), 200.

animation will therefore also be unlike that of looking at a woodcut print. The animated image, for one, can inherently contain more information than a woodcut print.

This can be seen in figure 11, for example. As an argument between two characters breaks out, their designs change drastically to reflect the emotions of the characters in the scene. However, their changing appearance is supplemented by their movements and its quality. As the characters morph to become more monstrous, they too begin to move increasingly erratically. The sequence is presented clearly to show that a disagreement has occurred which has resulted in the two characters behaving animalistic-ally. This is animalistic behavior is further reinforced with the element of sound. In their devolution, the characters' mild manner gibberish voices also change drastically to become a savage caw. Along with the sound design, the musical score blasts a loud dissonant orchestral chord at this point of the sequence. These subtleties in sound subconsciously hint to the audience the tragic events which are to follow.

This level of information would simply not be possible with the still image print media, which only has a single image to suggest character transformations. Animation thus allowed the filmmaker to express himself in ways the Expressionist could not. Before where the artists could only suggest character inner states with the still image, Barta's animation could further enhance the expression of emotions with the added advantages of performance, movement, and the audiovisual component of music and sound. The re-contextualization of the Expressionist woodcut aesthetic for the moving image gives it a "propositional outcome", transforming the

“as-it-is” to the “as-it-would-be”¹¹², as Paul Wells suggests. Barta’s *The Pied Piper* is therefore a proposition of what a moving woodcut print could be.

¹¹² Ibid.,

Chris Landreth – Ryan (2004)

In the animation film *Ryan* by Chris Landreth, the filmmaker crafted an equally dark and Expressionistic world but with a very different treatment¹¹³ made possible with the aid of the computer. Using Computer-Generated Imagery (CGI), Landreth could easily create complicated designs and animations. The characters express their inner states of mind by literally manifesting their thoughts and frame of mind onto themselves or their surroundings.

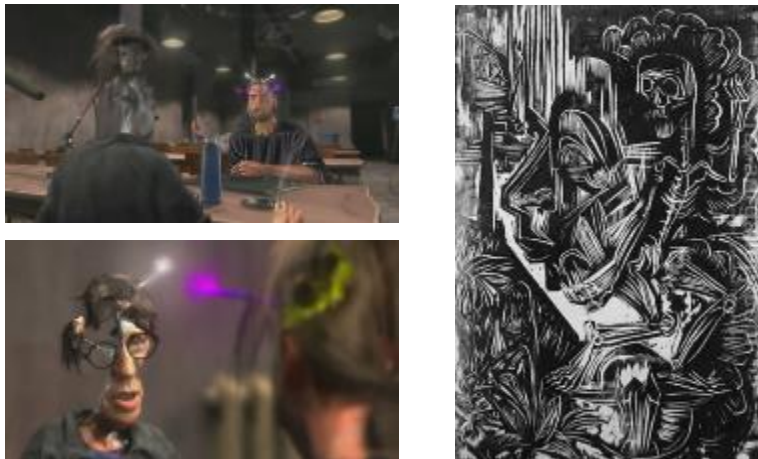


Figure 12 – (Left) Film stills from *Ryan* (2004) by Chris Landreth. The character's changing inner states of mind manifests itself by shaping the physical world as well as the characters themselves. Similarities can be observed when seen alongside Kirchner's *Self Portrait with Dancing Death* (Right).

In figure 12, the similarities in the design of *Ryan* and Kirchner's woodcut print is observed. In Kirchner's *Self Portrait with Dancing Death*, which was created during the artist's stay in a sanatorium, the artist expressed existential doubts about his ability to continue creating art as he experienced a failing mental health. The artist represents these abstract thoughts and feelings by exteriorizing them as symbols upon his face in this self-portrait. The visual elements

¹¹³ Chris Landreth coined the term *psychorealism* for the aesthetic of the film. The filmmaker defines psychorealism as a physical visualization of "the realism of the incredibly complex, messy, chaotic, sometimes mundane, and always conflicted quality we call human nature."

"Psychorealism." *Computer Graphics World* 27 Issue 7 (2004). Accessed (March 07, 2015).

<http://www.cgw.com/Publications/CGW/2004/Volume-27-Issue-7-July-2004-/Psychorealism.aspx>

in the woodcut print meld into each other forming a chaotic mess. Kirchner's head peers out and from it, a skeletal figure appears to have sprouted. The symbol of Death carries away the artist's head as it dances, giving it quite literally the meaning of losing one's mind.

Correspondingly, with Landreth's *Ryan* we see how the inner states of the characters are exteriorized on their bodies, carved out to represent metaphorical emptied shells. In this scene, as the two characters, Landreth (as the interviewer) and Ryan Larkin (as the interviewee) meet for the first time in a soup kitchen. Their friendly demeanor is symbolized with the tiny waving arms that grow from their heads. Even without learning their backstories, it is evident on the outset that both the characters suffer from severely damaged emotional conditions.



Figure 13 – (Left) Red spikes burst from Larkin's face, symbolizing his rage at Landreth who had just tried to lecture him on life. (Right) Landreth's guilt manifests on his face as tendrils that suffocate him. Film stills from Ryan (2004) by Chris Landreth.

As the film progresses, Landreth unintentionally upsets Larkin. Immediately, the character's design morphs, red spikes bursting out of his body and head (figure 13, left). After Larkin goes an angry tirade about life and money, Landreth's despondence and embarrassment is manifested as spindly tendrils that reach out, eventually wrapping tightly around his face as if to symbolize him being overwhelmed by shame.

With the help of computer animation, Landreth creates the morphs and movements in accordance to the characters' inner states. The moving image materializes information about the characters that can be somewhat complicated to suggest with a still image. Also, the quality of movement reflects directly what the characters are going through. Audiences can immediately identify with Larkin's intense displeasure from the manner in which the spikes erupt from Larkin's body. Had they formed in a slow gradual manner, Larkin's emotions would have been interpreted not as rage, but perhaps a slow seething hate.



Figure 14 – (Left) Larkin delivers a sobering monologue of his views on life in an awkward silence. (Right) After the two characters make peace, Larkin returns to his uncomplicated lifestyle as a panhandler. The musical composition that plays in this sequence feels even more mellowed after the extended period of emptiness. Film stills from Ryan (2004) by Chris Landreth.

The sound elements in *Ryan* was effective too in creating moods that reflect what is seen on screen. In many moments throughout the film, the score prefaces a piece of musical composition with long periods of awkward silences. This serves to intensify the emotional impact of the musical composition when it eventually begins to play.

From the two examples, it is clear that both Barta and Landreth achieved a more complex and intriguing expression of character inner states through the use of Expressionist aesthetic. Although the films and the art they were influenced by were produced many years apart, their designs brings out a fervent passion recognizable in all Expressionist works of art, albeit with

very different methods of approach. However, it is also clear that animation has the ability to craft a unique setting for audiences to experience the intricacies of art. As an audio-visual and time-based art form, animation can create whole realities from the seemingly unreal and in the process, be used to tell compelling stories.

Dorota Kobiela – *Loving Vincent* (Unreleased)

Expanding the field of investigation, the research looks at the recently released trailer of the hand painted animation *Loving Vincent* (unreleased as at the time of writing this report) by Dorota Kobiela. The film's plot centers on the life and death of celebrated painter Vincent van Gogh. The film is told through several of van Gogh's paintings and the characters within them, weaved together to form a coherent narrative. The artist's life is dramatically reconstructed from the 800 letters written by van Gogh himself to the people most significant to the artist.¹¹⁴

The film draws its visual inspiration from van Gogh's aesthetic and painting processes, recreating over one hundred and twenty of the painter's most important paintings as key moments in the film. *Loving Vincent* is another example of animation film as an extension of the art, and especially so in the case of Kobiela's film. On its release, it will be the world's first feature length painted animation. With 30 painters creating each of the 56,800 frames of the 80-minute film. Each frame of the film is essentially a new painting, "inspired by the style and the hand of van Gogh."¹¹⁵ From what was presented in the trailer, multiple sequences were created using the rotoscoping method, whereby the film was first shot using live-action actors and sets and subsequently traced and painted over in van Gogh's aesthetic on the Painting Animation Work Stations (PAWS), an invention patented by BreakThru Productions.¹¹⁶

The animation process for *Loving Vincent* attempts to very closely replicate van Gogh's own methods to achieve van Gogh's strokes and even color palette. The film's production methods create the illusion of a moving painting. The visual style of van Gogh is used to present

¹¹⁴ *Loving Vincent*. "About the Movie" [Lovingvincent.com](http://www.lovingvincent.com/?id=about). <http://www.lovingvincent.com/?id=about> (accessed July 15th, 2016).

¹¹⁵ *Loving Vincent*. "Technique" [Lovingvincent.com](http://www.lovingvincent.com/?id=technique). <http://www.lovingvincent.com/?id=technique> (accessed July 15th, 2016).

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*,

the artist's history in an alternate filmic reality, as if it was seen through the eyes of van Gogh himself.



Figure 15 – Screen captures from the *Loving Vincent* trailer demonstrating the film's replication of van Gogh's strokes and color palette.

In line with Wells' proposal, *Loving Vincent* as a filmic adaptation critiques the limitations of the parent source – van Gogh's paintings. In the trailer, we see the familiar characters from van Gogh's paintings in motion and even speaking. Kobiela presents her interpretation of van Gogh's world in the film, taking artistic liberties in the creation of this alternate filmic reality. The film reimagines the behaviors, demeanors and voices of the characters, attributes that are clearly impossible to recreate in a painting. In addition to reimagining the characters, the film also reimagines the world of van Gogh. The trailer showcases the beautifully animated backgrounds – the rough and patterned brushstrokes so often identified with van Gogh are individually rendered, giving a dreamlike effect akin to the movement of shifting sand dunes.

Although the concept behind *Loving Vincent* is similar to the research's practical component, the objective of the film differs from that of my research. Both *Loving Vincent* and the research film adopt fine art practices and the aesthetics of two historical figures in art to create an experimental exploration for new visual strategies. However, while the contemporary treatment of van Gogh's paintings is clear that it does not attempt to realistically examine van

Gogh's life as a documentary, its aims are essentially to present an alternate historical narrative of van Gogh, as if told by the painter himself¹¹⁷. It is also a character study – offering a character-centric viewing of van Gogh as the enigmatic figure he was, and his role in a filmic plot that is centered on the speculations surrounding the painter's life story. In comparison, the research's practical component focuses on exploring ways to express character inner states of mind, through an original interpretation of Kirchner's methods. Critically, in my opinion, *Loving Vincent* may be too self-indulged in its attempt to duplicate van Gogh's paintings, resulting in a moving painting that lacks an auteur language. Nonetheless, *Loving Vincent* is a valid and relevant case study for the research's investigation.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.,

Gustav Deutsch – Shirley: Visions of Reality (2013)

Another fascinating film adaptation of fine art aesthetics is the live-action film, *Shirley: Visions of Reality* (2013) by Gustav Deutsch. The film brings to life 13 of Edward Hopper's paintings. It tells the story of Shirley, "a woman, whose thoughts, emotions and contemplations lets us observe an era in American history."¹¹⁸

In his director's statement, Deutsch writes that the starting point for *Shirley* is to investigate the "staging of reality and the dialogue of painting and film"¹¹⁹. The choice to adapt Hopper's paintings stems from the filmmaker's interest in presenting the "personal stories" that made up key historical and culture-defining moment like World War II, The Cold War, and Rock N' Roll movement. Thus, using Hopper's pictorial depictions of the times and film language, Deutsch exhibits the fates of Hopper's characters as representative of the American social culture from the 1930s to the 1960s and retells Hopper's stories. Deutsch's decision to adapt Hopper's paintings also alludes to the painter's own interests in films. Hopper's influence by film noir seeps into his art, evident in paintings such as *Night Windows* (1938) and *Room in New York* (1932).

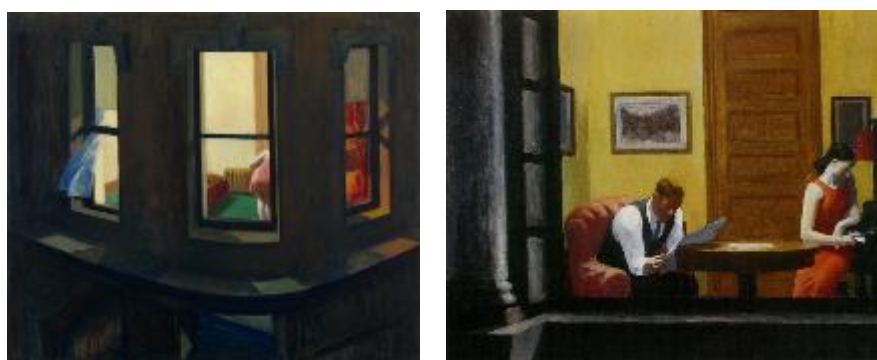


Figure 16 – (Left) *Night Windows*. Edward Hopper. 1928. Oil on canvas. Private Collection. (Right) *Room in New York*. Edward Hopper. 1932. Oil on canvas. University of Nebraska – Lincoln, Anna R. and Frank M. Hall Charitable Trust.

¹¹⁸ Shirley: Visions of Reality. "Synopsis" [www.shirley-visions-of-reality.com. http://www.shirley-visions-of-reality.com/#synopsis](http://www.shirley-visions-of-reality.com/#synopsis)

¹¹⁹ Shirley: Visions of Reality. "Synopsis" [www.shirley-visions-of-reality.com. http://www.shirley-visions-of-reality.com/#about](http://www.shirley-visions-of-reality.com/#about)

The works of Hopper in turn influenced generations of filmmakers, such as Jim Jarmusch and Martin Scorsese. An entirely new narrative was constructed for the adaptation allowing for a re-examination of the paintings. The viewers are allowed to see the America of Hopper's time, through the artistic mind of the painter. Just as the painter translates his feelings of his time into his paintings, Deutsch's return to Hopper's paintings as visual influence is most appropriately summed up by the Cine-vue film review line: "A prime example of art imitating art."¹²⁰

On the surface, the film functions as a visual imitation or replica of the paintings using set design, costumes, and cinematography. Accurate production sets were made to recreate the unique spatial arrangement and architectural elements, sometimes to unreal dimensions. Deutsch says of the production: "The dimensions (Hopper) worked with are unbelievable. Often his beds are three meters in length. Then there are armchairs so narrow that it is almost impossible to sit in them."¹²¹



Figure 17 – Film still from Shirley: Visions of Reality (2013), showing an abnormally large door and window frame to replicate Hopper's design of the room.

¹²⁰ Shirley: Visions of Reality. "Synopsis" www.shirley-visions-of-reality.com. <http://www.shirley-visions-of-reality.com/#about>

¹²¹ Shirley: Visions of Reality. "Synopsis" www.shirley-visions-of-reality.com. <http://www.shirley-visions-of-reality.com/#interview>

When discussing the challenges faced, Deutsch notes the production team's obsession to recreate the painted light in Hopper's paintings. The act of the artist painting and blending the colors is thus transformed into the physical lighting of the film's set.

However, on a deeper level, it is clear that the filmic treatment of Hopper's paintings offers much more to the cinematic film language. This example of the cross-influencing between painters and (animation) filmmakers underscores an intriguing phenomenon of the adaptation process. With each level of visual adaptation that happens, qualities that are inherent only to the medium of adaptation is added to the final art work. What it results in, is the birth of newer artistic and visual strategies that may be used to examine the different facets of human life.

For example, it is interesting to note that the film had multiple constraints for the cinematography, with no handheld nor shot-reverse shots¹²². Deutsch insisted that the film's cinematography maintains in the "position of the spectator", much like how Hopper's paintings "assume a voyeuristic and observant position."¹²³ Camera movements were kept at a minimal to maintain an exact match to each of Hopper's paintings. The filmmakers were limited to work around camera zooms, shot size changes, and only the slightest of camera pans. The challenge for the filmmakers was therefore to create new artistic and visual strategies (or apply existing ones) to "avoid boredom and create suspense in a subtle way."¹²⁴

Again, the film manages this through movement and sound, qualities that are absent from the still image painting or print media. Through movement, the film transforms the way audiences interacts with the image. More visual information is presented as the actors perform

¹²² Ibid.,

¹²³ Ibid.,

¹²⁴ Ibid.,

their roles as the characters we see in Hopper's iconic paintings. As a result, audiences are able to empathize with the character's thoughts through their performance. The audiences are given more than a brief glimpse of a moment-in-time, but rather a temporal sequence to interpret the image.

Likewise, the film employs sound and music to develop the narrative. For example, in the *Room in New York* scene, non-diegetic sound effects suggest a metropolitan setting and an imminent thunderstorm. Audiences would be able to immediately place it in an urban setting even without prior knowledge of Hopper's painting. The sound effects hint at a three-dimensional space beyond the flatness of the screen, lending a certain credibility to watching Hopper's paintings move, unreal as they may be.

Also, the musical score supplements the moods established visually. Like Norman McLaren's *Neighbors* and Disney's *Fantasia* whereby the musical scores reflect the on-screen drama, the music in *Shirley* too gives aural stimulation to the audiences. It was used to heighten the uneasiness when audiences are to be left in suspense (when the protagonist addresses the allegations on communist sympathizers during the McCarthy era), or sentimentalize during heartwarming moments (as the protagonist laments on the unpredictability of life as the world teeter on the brink of the Second World War). Although the musical score is entirely subjective to the tastes of the composer and filmmaker as Furniss suggested, *Shirley* illustrates the excellent utilization of auditory sensations to influence audience emotional responses. The film's aural elements also include voiceover narrations which affects the narrative in a straightforward manner, delivering information to the audiences verbatim as the character thinks it.

Even though live-action and animation filmmaking share many traits, it is quite evident from the above analyses, the constraints of live-action films. In live-action film, the "action on

the screen” has to happen as “it would in real life for real events...”¹²⁵ It is reliant on the filmmaker’s ability to create alternate world with real life production sets, as well as the camera’s ability to capture images. Although Deutsch’s film aimed only to recreate Hopper’s paintings as they are, one can only imagine the effort that would be required to recreate the world of Hopper’s mind. To be able to traverse and explore it, live-action filmmakers would have to build entire sets as Hopper would have it. Even then, the filmmaker is at the behest of changing lighting conditions when the camera is moved to a different position. Fortunately, this complication is not quite as harrowing today as it was decades before with CGI.

While this is not an attempt to pit the efficacies of live-action and animation filmmaking against each other, animation does have an advantage due to its dealing with images that are “not real.”¹²⁶ As this research looks into the expression of abstract and intangible emotions, the “elliptical and symbolic”¹²⁷ nature of animation language aptly indicates it as the medium in which the research should be conducted in.

Nonetheless, the critical analysis of the above films demonstrates how the film medium and its language can be applied in a multitude of ways to examine and tell stories about the intricacies of life. More importantly, the analysis has also identified a direction for what the practical component should be – an original interpretation of Kirchner’s ideas and methods exemplified in the five selected works.

¹²⁵ Giannalberto Bendazzi, *Defining Animation – A Proposal*, 2004, p7

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*,

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*,

Chapter 2 – Research Approach and Strategy

This chapter explicates on the approach of the research. It is discussed in two sections:

- i. Researching on the visual strategies for expressing character inner states of mind;
- ii. Applying these visual strategies through animation language, in the development of the research film.

Section 2.1 begins by describing the process of extrapolating the visual strategies for expressing character inner states of mind from the five selected works of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner. It is conducted through observation and critical analysis of the artworks.

Section 2.2 continues by presenting the process of applying the conclusions from 2.1 to create the research film, serving as the practical component of the research. It dissects and discusses the research film in its individual scope of inquiry.

2.1 Research: Understanding Kirchner's Approaches

The objective of the research is the search for strategies to express and animate character inner states of mind. By using the art works of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner as visual references, the research begins to understand Kirchner's formal approaches to expression. This is achieved through the visual and critical analysis of five of the artist's self-portraits. The analysis of the five self-portraits examines the following qualities that may contribute to the artist's approach to expressing the inner states of mind:

- Color choices;
- Expressive strokes;

- Compositions and Designs; and
- Use of symbols.

These approaches are translated as visual strategies that are used to inform the creation of the research film.

2.2 The Research Film: Animating Kirchner's Self-Portraits

The research film explores the use of Kirchner's visual strategies to express character inner states of mind through the animation medium. The narrative of the research film is based on Kirchner's life story, observed in chronological order from the five selected art works. The narrative begins at the time when Kirchner was still characterized by his artistic optimism, progressing to examine the far-reaching effects that war had on Kirchner's state of mind. Finally, the narrative concludes with Kirchner's conceding to paranoia. All the time, the research film looks at the relationship between Kirchner's self-portrait works and animation in the following aspects:

2.2.1 The Close-Up Shot and the Self-Portrait

The research film uses the close-up shot as a proxy of the self-portrait format, as a technique to emphasize character states of mind within the film. In the previous chapters, I have explained the function of the self-portrait through history, as well as in Kirchner's body of work. The self-portrait frames the artist, who becomes the centerpiece, and clearly directs all

interpretations of the work to himself^{128 129}. Just as the self-portrait provides an examination of the artist's existence, the filmic close-up shot too offers an analysis of the on-screen character.

In films, the close-up shot is used as the typical emotional shot, placing the character's inner state of mind front and center in filmic space. When using the close-up shot, the filmmaker is intentionally forcing the audiences' attention upon the object in frame. The close-up shot tells the audience that the object in frame is the subject and asks them to consider "who is this?" and "why is this shown?"^{130 131} Both the self-portrait and close-up shot limit what the audience can see through composition, and if I may compare them to the very ludicrous example of holding and focusing on a partner's face before going in for the kiss, the self-portrait and close-up may then be the most intimate form of compositional framing.

Figure 18 shows an example from *The Animals*. The close-up of the protagonist suggests to the audience that he is in a precarious situation. The shot then cuts to a wider view, revealing that the priest character had morphed into a serpent ready to strike at him.



Figure 18 – Film stills from *The Animals*. The character becomes the subject of the shot, and audiences are asked to consider from the disposition of the character. The protagonist here encounters a difficult situation, dealing with the priest who has morphed into a serpent.

¹²⁸ Bond, Anthony and Joanna Woodall. *Self-portrait: Renaissance to Contemporary*. (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2005). 14

¹²⁹ Drury, Elizabeth. *Self Portraits of the World's Greatest Painters*. (San Diego, CA: Thunder Bay Press, 1999). 6

¹³⁰ The sentence paraphrases Peter Springer's interpretation of the self-portrait format. Peter Springer, trans. Susan Ray "Hand and Head: Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's Self-portrait as a Soldier". 2002, (University of California Press. Berkeley, California), 1.

¹³¹ Bowden, Christopher J. & Thompson, Roy. *Grammar of the Shot*. Burlington, Massachusetts: Focal Press. 2013. 8

Apart from the use of the close-up shot, the film will also experiment with using the different forms of close-up shots, such as the medium close-up (where the character's torso is in frame), the close-up, or the extreme close-up (where only a few facial features of the character can be seen in frame).

Figure 19 demonstrates an example of how the film intends to translate Kirchner's methods of expressing character inner states of mind to film language, through the use of the close-up shot.



Figure 19 – Storyboard sketches showing the different types of close-up shots for expressing character inner states

More crucially, the close-up shot and self-portrait format have different ways of capturing and expressing the artist's emotions. While the self-portrait format relies on tangible factors such as the visualization of details and expressive brush strokes, the close-up functions through the qualities of movement, design, and perhaps even those of the aural elements. The difference is therefore also in the way these visuals are view – the self-portrait can be observed timelessly but the close-up shot requires temporality, without which the shot is meaningless. These concerns are examined in the creation of the practical component.

2.2.2 Movement and performance

Animation can provide an added dimension to the reality of the artist's still image paintings through movement, which serves to emphasize the severity of the image.



Figure 20 – Storyboard sketches showing the film's expression of character inner states.

Figure 20, for example, shows a short sequence, in which the Kirchner character expresses his fear that the psychological trauma caused by his experiences in the World War may have robbed him of his creativity. The sketch shows in sequential order the progression of the sequence. The colors of the background reflect the character's pessimism about the cataclysmic future as nude corpses – a metaphor for the freedom of expression – litter the ground. The scene ends with the sickly looking Kirchner character losing both his hands – another metaphor for his creativity – which spills blood – yet again another metaphor for his artistic passion – that fills the frame with chaotic movement. This moving interpretation of Kirchner's *Self-Portrait as a Soldier* is presented as a “propositional outcome” of the artist's thoughts when he painted the self-portrait a hundred years ago.

2.2.3 Animation design

The film's design learns from Kirchner's approaches and adapts them for the animation filmmaking. For example, in figure 19, the design of the sequence is inspired by Kirchner's use of large flat swathes of unmixed, saturated and bright colors to reflect optimism and the carefree attitude. Comparing this storyboard sequence to the one shown in figure 20, it is evident that the use of colors in both the examples reflects two very different sides of Kirchner's emotions.

2.2.4 Sounds and music in animation

The animation medium is a highly audio-visual one. Sounds and music have been used to enhance animations by lending a sort of credibility and meaning to the image. The research film explores unique ways that the aural elements of film can help shape the animated image's expression of inner states, including but not limited to the use of diegetic and non-diegetic sounds, contemporary compositions, and the interpretation of the aural elements into animation visuals.

2.3 Reflections: Evaluating the Research

The third phase will evaluate the creative choices made during the production of the research film, and rationalize on how Kirchner's approach has been translated into visual strategies for expressing internal states of mind in contemporary animation.

Chapter 3 – Practical Component: Crafting the Research Film

This chapter provides a focused discussion on the process of research leading up and into the crafting of the practical component, which will be presented in the form of an research film, a short 3-minute line test animation video, attached in a DVD rom format together with the research report.

The creation of the research film begins with the investigating and understanding of visual strategies that translates inner states of mind found in the five selected art works by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner. Simultaneously, I have also interspersed the theoretical examination of visual strategies with explanations on how these strategies have informed the creation of the research film.

The research film applies animation and film language to explore the use of these visual strategies derived from Kirchner's art works to express and animate character inner states of mind.

3.1 Premise of the Research Film

The premise of the research film is based around the life of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner. With Kirchner as the main character, the premise explores his relationship with the Lady and Death, psychical manifestations of his passion for the arts and his failing mental health respectively. The research film examines the period of Kirchner's life from his Die Brücke period, through his first-hand experience with the tragedies of war, and finally the paranoia and depression that overcame him. The timeline traces Kirchner's transformation from the free-spirited and idealistic artist into a woeful melancholic.

The research film is built upon the visuals presented in the five selected art works, which are incorporated as key moments that express Kirchner's inner states of mind. In addition, I have referenced themes that Kirchner had explored in his works, such as motion and movement in dance as, the distortion and compression of space, and the nude figure as a symbol for artistic expression. These themes will expand on the visual vocabulary of the research film, allowing for more ways to present and animate character inner states.

3.2 Animation Design: Kirchner's Visual Strategies to Express Inner States of Mind

The research begins by studying the five selected art works to discover the visual strategies Kirchner had used to express his inner states of mind. The following sections look at the ways Kirchner visually manifested his emotions in his art works through:

- His choice of colors;
- Expressive strokes;
- Compositions and Designs; and
- Use of symbols.

3.2.1 Colors that express inner states of mind

It is visible from the five selected works of Kirchner, that there is a method to Kirchner's choice of colors. For example, in the three paintings from the selection, we can identify a clear shift in color choices. The painting *Self-portrait with Model* was largely painted with warm oranges and yellows. In the self-portrait painting, reworked from a 1910 sketch, the artist paints himself and the model with an overload of bright and intense colors, colors that have a child-like excess to them. Additionally, the artist's enthusiasm for the arts is indicated in an over-the-top

color treatment the studio he resides in. The burst of colors in the painting's background serves to rile up the excitement in the image even further.



Figure 21 - (Left) *Self-Portrait with Model*, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, 1910, Pastel, Private collection. (Right) *Self-portrait with Model*, 1926, Oil on canvas, Hamburg, Hamburger Kunsthalle.

While these unusual color choices were not meant to realistically reflect the world, they functioned as a visual translation of the optimism he still possessed during his time with Die Brücke.¹³² This was a time when the artist was free spirited and eager about the spreading of his art into the community.¹³³

Kirchner also avoided the use of greys and all earthy colors in his palette, the “enemy of all painting”, according to Eugene Delacroix who was studied by Paul Signac¹³⁴. The theories of Signac in turn influenced Kirchner’s methods, resulting in a lack of blending in Kirchner’s paintings to prevent the muddying up of the colors. The saturated and jarring colors therefore allow Kirchner’s paintings to better reflect his inner states of mind.

¹³² Felix, Kramer. *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Retrospective*, published in Conjunction with the Exhibition "Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Retrospective", Städel Museum. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz. 2010. 33

¹³³ Ibid.,

¹³⁴ Karin Schick and Heide Skowranek, ed., et al. *No One Else Has These Colors. Kirchner's Painting*. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag. 2012. 87

In *Mountain Studio* (figure 22), a stark difference can be seen in the color palette. The painting, created one year before the artist's death by suicide, reflects a very changed personality in the artist. Years after the artist's traumatic experience serving as a soldier in the First World War and struggles with substance abuse, the artist's mental health was failing. In addition to the series of unfortunate events, the rise of the Nazi regime in Germany saw a widespread denunciation and cultural "cleansing" of all modern art. These objectionable art works were decreed to be removed from German museums. Kirchner had 639 of his works confiscated by the time the campaign had reached its climax in 1937.¹³⁵ In this time, the artist began to increasingly keep to himself, leading to a severe depression and thoughts of death.¹³⁶



Figure 22 - *Mountain Studio*, 1937, Oil on Canvas, Kirchner Museum Davos.

¹³⁵ E.W Kornfeld and Christine E. Stauffer. "Biography Ernst Ludwig Kirchner" Kirchner Museum Davos, 1992, <
http://www.kirchnermuseum.ch/fileadmin/inhalte_Redaktoren/Bilder_Inhalt/E.L.Kirchner/Biography_E.L.Kirchner_english.pdf
 > (29th July 2016).

¹³⁶ Felix, Kramer. *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Retrospective*, published in Conjunction with the Exhibition "Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Retrospective", Städel Museum. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz. 2010. 33

Kirchner's state of mind during this period is again reflected in his use of colors in the painting. The artist paints himself seated in the middle, separated by a room down a corridor. He is represented in colors that are comparatively milder than those in *Self-portrait with Model*. In fact, there is a stark difference in the warmth of colors in both paintings. The artist's depressive emotions are also reflected in the backgrounds. The artist's Wildboden house studio in Davos-Frauenkirch is also painted with neutral earthy browns and cool greys, contradicting his earlier beliefs that earthy and grey colors should be avoided. The painting therefore exudes a sterility and coldness not seen in the way he depicted the studio in *Self-portrait with Model*. The difference in the colors chosen by Kirchner can be seen as his resignation to the cruelties of life.

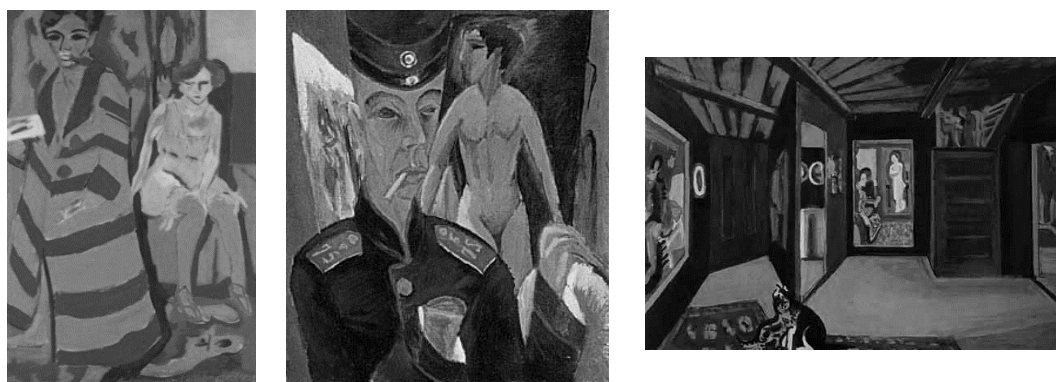


Figure 23 - Reducing the saturation allows us to see the intensity difference in contrasts of the colors. (Left) *Self-portrait with Model*, 1910/1926, Oil on canvas, Hamburg, Hamburger Kunsthalle. (Middle) *Self-Portrait as a Soldier*, 1915, Oil on canvas, Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College. *Mountain Studio*, 1937, Oil on Canvas, Kirchner Museum Davos.

Kirchner also used contrasting lightness to create a sense of emotional heaviness. In figure 23, when the saturation is reduced, we can see the difference in the contrasts in image lightness. In *Self-portrait with Model*, the colors used are of lighter values when compared to those in either *Self-portrait as Soldier* or *Mountain Studio*. The darker values in the latter two create a dramatic lighting in the art works, magnifying the urgency of the image's theme. In *Mountain Studio* for example, lower luminance distribution across the painting transforms it

from merely a dim room into a gloomy space - the melancholic nature of the painting is exponentially magnified.

This is even more apparent in Kirchner's woodcut prints which are largely in stark black and whites. In *Self-portrait with Dancing Death*, Kirchner used the woodcut print medium to express his frustration at his inability to paint – the experience from the war had left him in a catatonic state. The artist stayed in a series of sanatoriums while he recovered from the psychological damage, bodily illnesses, and a paralyzed hand. The high contrast of the black and white woodcut print, similar to the contrasting lightness values in *Self-portrait as Soldier* and *Mountain Studio*, adds to the drama of the narratives, heightening tension. Even in the colored woodcut print *Schlemihl Alone in His Room*, the application of soft blues and yellows were negated by the large swabs of black. The absoluteness of the black creates the impression of a character locked in a dimly lit cell. Again, the lightness of the colors emphasizes the claustrophobia, sadness and loneliness, states of mind that Kirchner was attempting to express in this woodcut.



Figure 24 – (Left) *Self-portrait with Dancing Death*, 1918, Woodcut on blotting paper, Stadel Museum, Graphische Sammlung, Frankfurt am Main.
(Right) *Schlemihl Alone in His Room*, 1915, Color woodcut with monotype inking on woven paper. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C

Perhaps, what is most important about Kirchner's color selection is his rejection of color theory, especially the harmonizing of colors.¹³⁷ The artist wrote in his journal that theories on color harmonizing is "outdated", preferring to work with both "dissonance" and "harmony" to stimulate the eye and generate certain hues that develop from the theme"¹³⁸ His disregard for the traditional concepts of academic art and technique may explain the accusations of a lack of technical mastery, and also the intensity of the artist's expression in his color choices.

Expressing with Colors

The design of the film directly references the five selected works of Kirchner. The color design replicates Kirchner's choices, namely those in *Self-portrait with Model* and *Mountain Studio*. In the storyboards below, we see some key moments that reflect the transformation of Kirchner's inner state of mind with colors (figure 25).



Figure 25– (Top) Color scripts created for the research film showing the color palette change across the three acts. (Bottom) The color scripts adjusted to show tonal contrasts.

Brilliant colors of similar tonal values are used to create an uplifting mood as seen in the Act 1 sketch. Comparatively, the color design in Acts 2 and 3 are increasingly contrasting in

¹³⁷ Karin Schick and Heide Skowranek, ed., et al. *No One Else Has These Colors. Kirchner's Painting*. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag. 2012. 96

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*,

lightness, making the image more somber. Similarly, the color design in Act 1 is characterized by its use of colors that are warmer, in comparison to the color designs of Acts 2 and 3. The cooler colors of Act 3 have a sterilizing effect on the image, making it more aloof. The unfeelingness of the final image reflects the character's eventual submission to his illness, concluding the narrative.

3.2.2 Expressive strokes – mark making

Kirchner's works are expressive not merely in its use of colors, but also in the image marks that he makes. Kirchner wrote extensively about his painting methods and the ways he achieves the distinct mark making style. In *No One Else Has These Colors*, Kirchner is noted for writing in his journal "Painting is the art that portrays a sensory experience on a two-dimensional plane. The means of painting is color as surface and line."¹³⁹ To achieve the ability to portray the "sensory experience", Kirchner invented techniques and processes that allowed him to "capture everything."¹⁴⁰ The technique focused on his mark making approaches.

For his oil paintings, Kirchner preferred tightly-woven, coarse linen canvases made from vegetable fiber. The canvases were often uneven in surface and unbleached, giving the paintings a heavily textured appearance.¹⁴¹ Adding to the characteristic textured canvases are Kirchner's priming methods, which included a self-prepared primer made of chalk paste, glue and linseed oil which he applies onto the canvas with a brush, rubbed by hand and thinned down using a

¹³⁹ Ibid., 25

¹⁴⁰ Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, letter to Curt Valentin, dated 17 April, 1937. In Hans Delfs, ed. *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Der gesamte Briefwechsel*. 4 vols. Zurich, 2010.

¹⁴¹ Karin Schick and Heide Skowranek, ed., et al. *No One Else Has These Colors. Kirchner's Painting*. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag. 2012. 28-30

spatula.¹⁴² This method of preparation made the canvas surface extremely absorbent, allowing Kirchner to work very quickly.

Kirchner would then begin his painting process by sketching a composition on the prepared canvas using colored lines. Kirchner then filled in the sketch with thinned glazing paints, before adding the thicker, saturated colors.¹⁴³ Kirchner also insisted that the final paintings look matte, noting that it would allow the colors to appear more brilliant. One of the ways Kirchner achieved that was through creating a pastel-like character in his paint colors. Kirchner wrote about replicating Edgar Degas' technique of removing binder from the oil paints and then repainting over with turpentine to create the look of pastel drawings.¹⁴⁴

A combination of all of Kirchner's technique along with his rough painterly strokes creates the distinct powdery dry-brush look unique to Kirchner's oeuvre. This in turn meant that Kirchner's strokes looked sketchy and edgier. The individual strokes contribute to the patterned expressiveness in Kirchner's paintings.¹⁴⁵



Figure 26 – (Left) *Schlemihl Alone in His Room*, 1915, Color woodcut with monotype inking on woven paper. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C
(Right) *Schlemihl Alone in His Room*, 1915, Color woodcut with hand-colored on woven paper. Museum Folkwang, Essen.

¹⁴² Ibid., 32

¹⁴³ Ibid., 38

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.,

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 42

Kirchner's technique for creating woodcut prints are similarly centered around working quickly and expressively. The artist makes rapid, decisive cuts that reflect his paranoia and anxiety¹⁴⁶. To color, Kirchner either applies thin glazes of paint that are translucent onto his woodcut blocks without overlapping the colors, or paints by hand. Figure 26 compares two versions of *Schlemihl Alone in His Room*, each one colored differently. A characteristic of Kirchner's color printing is the translucent color glazing over the black prints. We see in figure 27 that the colored glaze emphasizes the wood block's texture, which would usually be concealed by the black print. This subtle detail lends a sensorial experience when viewing the art work, allowing the artist to produce more complex visuals when expressing the inner states of his mind.



Figure 27 – (Detail) *Schlemihl Alone in His Room*, 1915, Color woodcut with monotype inking on woven paper. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C

Recreating Kirchner's Expressive Strokes

The research film recreates Kirchner's expressive strokes by using under-the-camera painting and scratching techniques. For the purpose of the research, I have chosen a short sequence from the line-test animation for rendering. The sequence replicates the woodcut

¹⁴⁶ Moeller, Magdalena M. Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Peter Schlemihl's Wondrous Story. Munich: Prestel, 2014. 139.

aesthetic in Kirchner's *Schlemihl Alone in His Room* and *Self-portrait with Dancing Death*. The experiment tested four different techniques, producing results of varying success. All four techniques are variations of the scratching on film technique (or direct animation) used by Norman McLaren for the creation of films such as *Begone Dull Care* (1949) and *Blinkity Blank* (1955). In the technique, the animator draws directly onto exposed film, removing the film lead with a sharp object and exposing the clear film. Subsequently, these film-drawings will be shot on an animation table that is lit from the bottom, with a translucent white surface to diffuse the light.¹⁴⁷

The objective of conducting the four technical experiments was to discover an animation process that is balanced in its ease and efficiency to work with, as well as its ability to reproduce a look that is comparable to the woodcut aesthetic.



Figure 28 – Details from the first failed experiment, showing the inconsistent strokes when manipulating slow-drying oil paint.

In the first experiment, oil paint is spread evenly across a clear glass surface to create a blackened drawing surface and is scratched with a variety of self-made tools that reveal the white back-lit surface underneath, creating a stroke. These tools include needle pens that are used to

¹⁴⁷ Furniss, Maureen. *Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics, Revised Edition*. Yorkshire: United Kingdom. John Libbey Publishing. 2007. 40-42.

create thin precise strokes, and wooden squeegees that make thicker strokes and are useful when manipulating large areas of paint.

As oil paint is slow drying, the drawing area can easily be reset to black by brushing the surface to smoothen the paint again. However, the slow drying properties of oil paint also meant that it was very difficult to achieve the woodcut aesthetic. When still wet, oil paint made the drawing surface too slippery to scratch into, leaving shaky, hesitant strokes that did not resemble the quick and decisive cuts Kirchner made in his prints. However, subsequent experiments with fast drying acrylic and gouache paints were equally as unsuccessful. Even though the paints had a decreased drying time allowing for the scratch marks to be precise and resolute, the process of repeated painting over to reset the drawing surface resulted in areas that were much thicker. These irregularities in thickness caused the paint to flake off inconsistently in large pieces, causing “bald spots” in the drawing (figure 29).



Figure 29 – Details of the failed second experiment, showing the “bald spots”.

To manage these technical difficulties, the experiment eventually returned to replicating the established scratching-on-film process used by Norman McLaren. The lack of exposed films meant that I had to create my own equivalent by creating hundreds of blackened cel-sheets using

a silk-screening press and quick-drying acrylic. In this manner, every drawing is done on a consistently smooth and flat drawing surface, solving the issues caused by irregularities on the drawing areas and wet-paint. The final technique allowed me to replicate Kirchner's working process of cutting (scratching) quickly into each frame to recreate the controlled-chaos often associated with Kirchner's woodcuts.

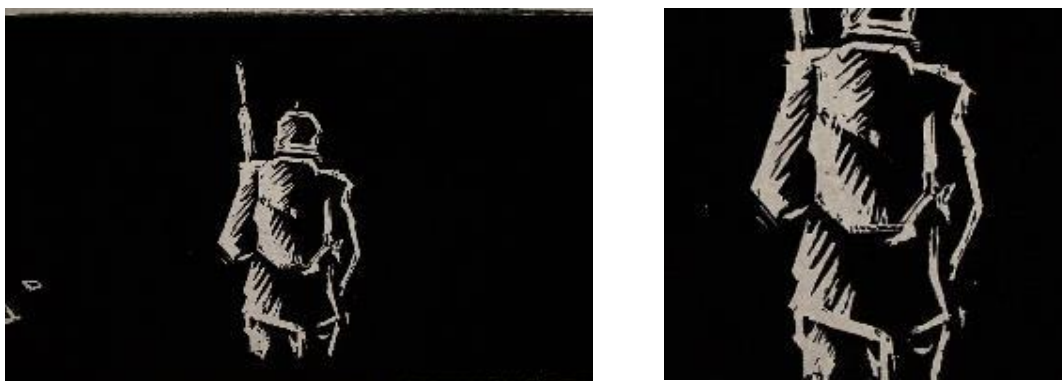


Figure 30 – Details from the more successful fourth experiment, showing consistent scratch lines.

3.2.2 Compositions and Designs

Kirchner's paintings are unique for their sharp geometric compositions. For Kirchner, who was architecturally trained¹⁴⁸, the basic shape forms are important to explain spatial relations in his paintings. In a letter that Kirchner wrote to a friend¹⁴⁹, the artist described his methods of making his art accessible to the viewer through the use of flat primal compositions. Kirchner attains simplicity with “whole or broken triangular” and “circles or circle segments” to build in the image, “a high degree of tension”.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Karin Schick and Heide Skowranek, ed., et al. *No One Else Has These Colors. Kirchner's Painting*. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag. 2012. 74

¹⁴⁹ Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, letter to Jan Wiegers, ca. May 1937, in Hans Delfs, ed. *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Der gesamte Briefwechsel*. 4 vols. Zurich, 2010.

¹⁵⁰ Karin Schick and Heide Skowranek, ed., et al. *No One Else Has These Colors. Kirchner's Painting*. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag. 2012. 74

Together with the brilliance of Kirchner's colors, these forms create decorative motifs that distort space. The deviation from the old master's traditional methods of depicting perspective compresses depth in the image¹⁵¹, giving an impression of multiple vanishing points. This creates unease for the viewers while still sensibly representing visual spaces in the painting. The dizzying portrayal of space contributes to Kirchner's expression of his thoughts and feelings.



Figure 31 – Triangular forms in Kirchner's paintings and woodcut print. These forms create "a high degree of tension" that distort the image's reality.

Kirchner's geometric shape compositions can also be observed in the shape of the human figures in his works. In the example of *Self-portrait as Soldier* above, Kirchner's face forms a tight triangular shape that intersects with the many other broken triangular forms in the painting. Even the female model is painted with a strangely masculine body that forms an inverted triangle. The heightened tension and movement in *Self-portrait as Soldier* is echoed by the chiseled appearance of Kirchner's depiction of himself.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.,



Figure 32 – (Left) *Mother and Child; Woman and Girl*. 1924. Swiss pine wood, painted. Stadel Museum, Frankfurt am Main. (Right, Detail) *Schlemihl Alone in His Room*. 1915, Color woodcut with monotype inking on woven paper. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C

Kirchner's flat compositions are contrasted with his sculpted facial designs in Kirchner's earlier paintings. The angular forms of Kirchner's human figures were developed from Kirchner's experiments and working with wood sculptures. Kirchner wrote in a letter to Gustav Schiefler, "Whatever is new arises out of the process of alternating among painting, drawing, wood sculpting, and the material advantages of printmaking."¹⁵² Kirchner worked with many artistic mediums and often, the artist translates the characteristics of one medium for another. These depictions of characters with sharp features began as an imitation of the natural chiseled look of his wood sculptures (figure 32, left). It eventually became a design that Kirchner's later used to represent his sorrowful state of mind in *Schlemihl Alone in His Room*.¹⁵³

¹⁵² Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, letter to Gustav Schiefler, dated June 16 1913, in Henze et al. *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner – Gustav Schiefler: Briefwechsel 1910-1935/1938*. Stuttgart and Zurich, 1990.

¹⁵³ Moeller, Magdalena M. *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Peter Schlemihl's Wondrous Story*. Munich: Prestel, 2014. 139.

Visually Composing an Alternate Reality

The compositions of the research film references closely the way Kirchner represented space in *Schlemihl Alone in His Room* and *Mountain Studio*. It uses the Kirchner's concept of composing with shapes to create tension. In the opening sequence (figure 33), the camera pans around to explore the room Kirchner is in right before the audience is brought into the world of Kirchner's mindscape. The space is warped and distorted using triangular designs, reflecting the complex mechanisms of Kirchner's state of mind and is clearly not a realistic representation of human spatial perception. Inside of Kirchner's mind, space is contorted even more with dramatic perspective designs, similarly formed with triangular compositions.

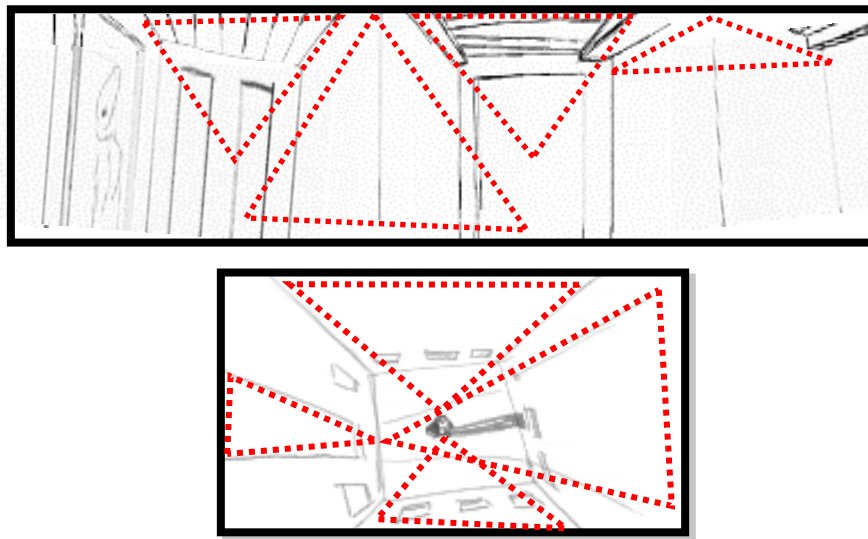


Figure 33 – The use of triangular compositions in the design of the research film references Kirchner's art works.

In the process of creating the line-test animation, I have observed from Kirchner's *Self-portrait with Dancing Death*, the use of a black background to indicate infinite space. Without lines or formative shapes to indicate perspective, a void can be implied, allowing the compositions to be exaggerated to its limits. In figure 34, we see in the confrontation between the

Kirchner character and Death, Death drags him by the legs into a space that reaches infinitely deep into the image, indicated only by the relative changes in character sizes. The size difference suggests a void. Death's forceful pull of the character bridges back to the loneliness and helplessness the real-world Kirchner felt about his mental condition.

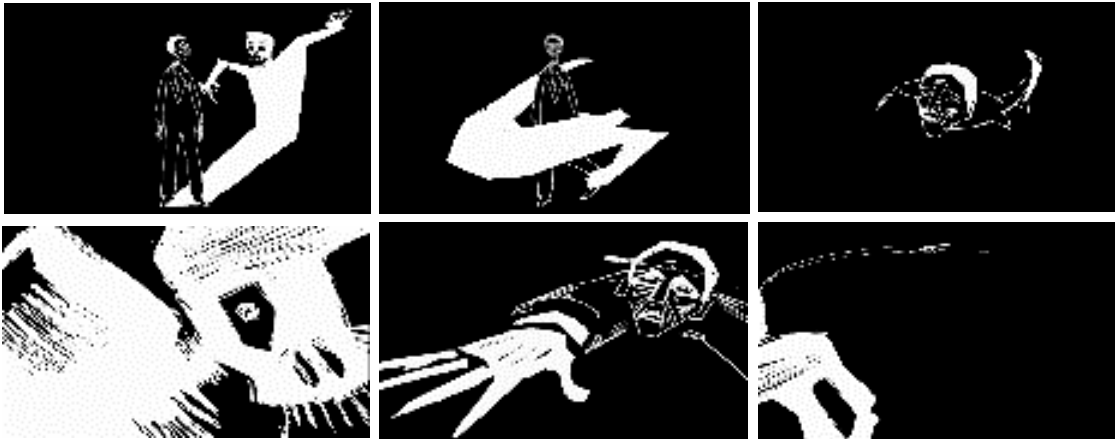


Figure 34 – Sequence from the research film showing Death dragging the Kirchner character into the infinite film space.

The spatial manipulations discussed above are contrasted with the designs in the concluding sequence. In the ending of the narrative, the audiences are brought out of the character's mindscape and into a reality more fitting of our own, the designs of the world become formal, with a one-point perspective (figure 35). The rigidity in design serves as a visual indication of the return to normality in Kirchner's world.

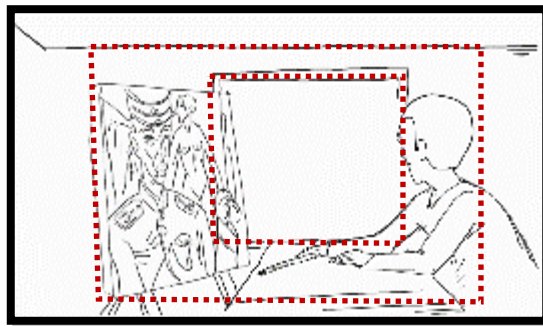


Figure 35 – The rigidity in the design of the final sequence contrasts with the more chaotic compositions in earlier sequences.

Designing Characters and Their Inner States

The character designs in the research film are driven by Kirchner's changing inner states of mind, changing incrementally as the narrative progresses. The designs also follow the progressive design differences in the five selected art works.



Figure 36 – Close-up shots of Kirchner throughout the research film, showing subtle changes in design, suggesting the artist's devolving mental psyche.

In the beginning of the narrative, Kirchner's character design is influenced by the artist's representation in *Self-portrait with Model*. A degradation in his mental psyche is represented by creating increasingly carved features in the artist's face, as Kirchner had done himself in *Self-portrait as Soldier*. It soon departs from the sculpted form to recreate the scratchy-edged aesthetic of Kirchner's woodcut prints, such as those in *Schlemihl* and *Dancing Death*. In the final sequence, the character's design is drastically different from whence he first appeared. With sunken eyes and cheeks, the emaciated design of the artist reflects that of a man at the end of the life. These trail of design changes subtly hints at both the artist's literal death and the metaphorical dying of his passion.

3.2.3 Symbols in Kirchner's Paintings

When looking at Kirchner's paintings and prints, it is easy to detect Kirchner's use of symbols to express his inner states of mind. In the most recognizable of Kirchner's paintings, *Self-portrait as Soldier* (figure 37), the artist dressed in the uniform of the 75th Mansfeld field artillery regiment stretches out his bloody hand stump. His participation in the First World War had taken its toll on the mental psyche of the painter. Kirchner had resorted to abusing opiates and absinthe. In the painting he stares catatonically into nothingness, indicating a drunken stupor he frequently found himself in. The substance abuse had left him with a temporary paralysis of his right hand. This contributed to the fear that he might never paint again – symbolized by the amputated and gangrenous hand wound.¹⁵⁴ Behind him stands a nude model; symbolizing his passion and love for the arts.¹⁵⁵ The skeletal Kirchner bites loosely as a cigarette hangs off the side of his mouth; his gaze is lifeless, all symbols of him feeling the “powerlessness”¹⁵⁶ towards the possibility that he might be at the end of his artistic endeavor.



Figure 37 - Self-Portrait as a Soldier, 1915, Oil on canvas, Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College

¹⁵⁴ Felix, Kramer. *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Retrospective*, published in Conjunction with the Exhibition "Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Retrospective", Städel Museum. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz. 2010. 33

¹⁵⁵ Moeller, Magdalena M. *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Peter Schlemihl's Wondrous Story*. Munich: Prestel, 2014. 17.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*,

During this time, Kirchner produced the Schlemihl series of woodcut prints, about a man who sold his shadow to the devil in exchange for wealth. The shadowless Schlemihl soon came to be outcast by society. Kirchner who was serving in the army during this time, felt depersonalized by the enlistment. He wrote, “Instead, what meant the loss of my shadow was having to surrender my own will in military service, losing my individuality...”¹⁵⁷ Kirchner identified with the Schlemihl character deeply, equating Schlemihl’s loss of his shadow to his own losing of identity because of the “disguise of the uniform.”¹⁵⁸



Figure 38 – *Schlemihl Alone in His Room*, 1915, Color woodcut with monotype inking on woven paper. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C

In *Schlemihl Alone in His Room* (figure 38), Kirchner lamented the loneliness that he as an artist had to endure. Likening the story of Schlemihl suffering ridicule from schoolboys who mock his lack of a shadow to him feeling displaced in the German society during his time. Kirchner represents society with the laughing heads at the top of the image. As Schlemihl seeks refuge in the dark box-like room, so too did it symbolize Kirchner's solitude. Kirchner presents Schlemihl as his literary counterpart. Schlemihl is depicted naked and holding his oversized head

¹⁵⁷ Moeller, Magdalena M. Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Peter Schlemihl's Wondrous Story. Munich: Prestel, 2014. 12.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*,

and a gesture that traditionally symbolized melancholy. The nude body similarly alludes to the Ecce Homo image of the sorrowful man, or Christ as the persecuted figure.¹⁵⁹



Figure 39 – Self-portrait with Dancing Death, 1918, Woodcut on blotting paper, Stadel Museum, Graphische Sammlung, Frankfurt am Main.

Likewise, in *Self-portrait with Dancing Death* (figure 39), Death dances around Kirchner's head, taunting the man whose paranoia is causing him immense suffering in his daily life. The symbol of Death dancing in and around Kirchner's head forewarns the artist's eventual suicide. Metaphorically, the symbol of Death carrying away the head points to the losing of one's mind, and the thoughts of death.

Translating Kirchner's Symbols for the Research Film

The use of symbols in Kirchner's art works function as visual translations of Kirchner's profound emotions, making it accessible by the general viewer. These symbols serve as visual motifs representing Kirchner's thoughts in the animation's narrative. As they recur, they are

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 139

presented in a different manner, reflecting Kirchner's psychological transformation. In the research film, I have learnt from Kirchner's use of symbols to similarly provide my own symbolic interpretations of the artist's inner states.

Kirchner's early enthusiasm and thirst for life is represented in the research film as the Lady, a recurrent character. In the film, the Lady appears first as a dancer performing the Waltz dance with the Kirchner character. In the sequence, she moves flowingly like a spirit, often incorporeal and gas-like. The rhythm in her movements could be seen as the character's own vigor of his younger days. The dance is brought to a sudden halt when the Lady morphs into crows, symbolizing an impending omen – a vision of Kirchner's tragic future (figure 40). The flight of the crows also signals the character's departure to join the war efforts, as well as his departure from youthful naivety

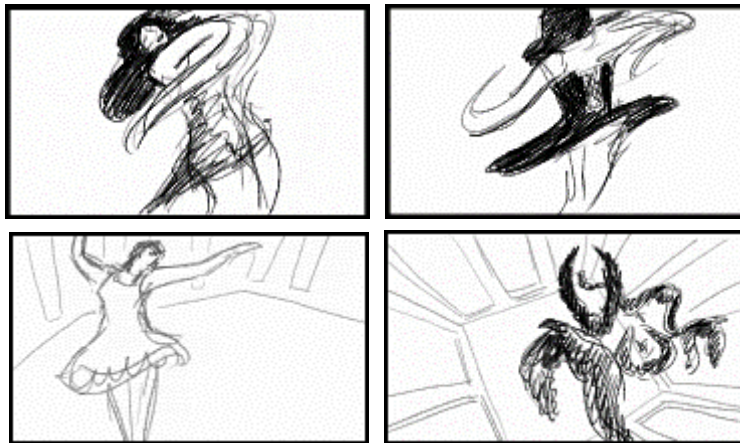


Figure 40 – Sequence showing the massless forms of the Lady. The design of the Lady suggests gracefulness as she dances. She eventually morphs into crows which fly away.

In the following sequences, the Kirchner character experiences a vision of the Lady's death, serving as a metaphor for the war's debilitating effect on his artistry (figure 41). This is further exacerbated by the appearance of Death, who eventually tears the Lady – his's last remaining shred of sanity – out of the artist (figure 42).

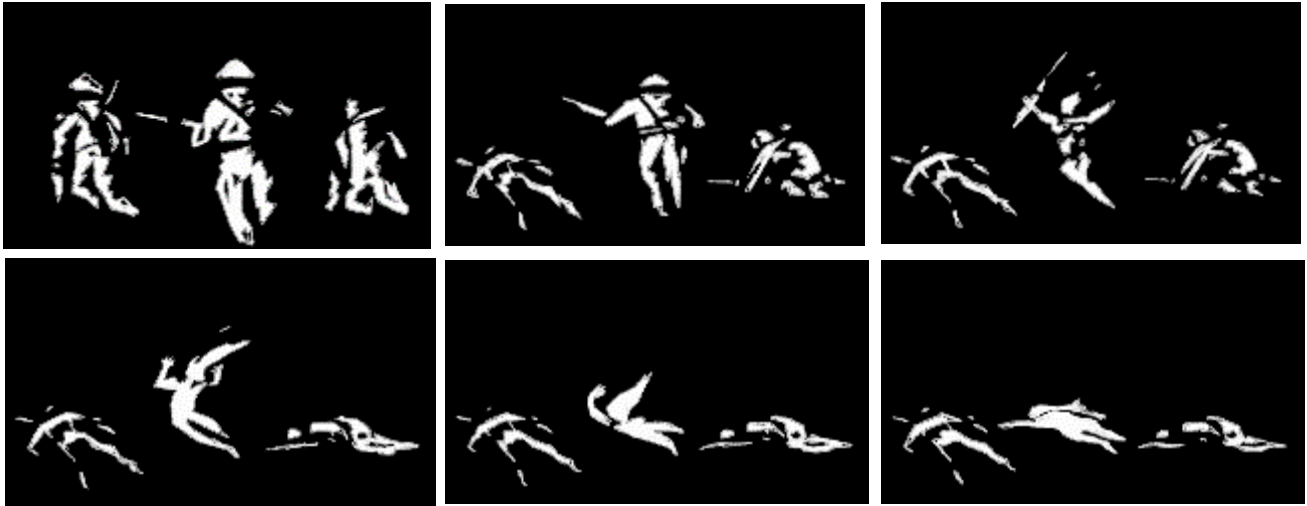


Figure 41 – Sequence showing Kirchner's vision of the Lady's death; a symbol of the psychological harm on Kirchner caused by the war.



Figure 42 – Sequence showing the Lady being torn away from Kirchner's body, a metaphor for Kirchner losing his last remnant of sanity.

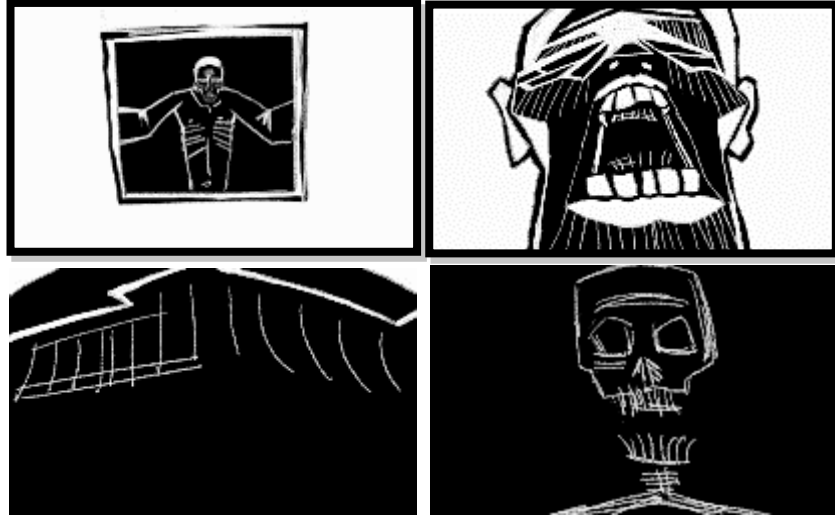


Figure 43 – Sequence showing the character's transformation into Death.

Death, the skeletal figure, is used here (figure 43) as a symbol to represent Kirchner's failing mental health as well as the harbinger of Kirchner's (and the filmic character's) tragic and eventual passing. Death is shown as an internal affliction of Kirchner's mind by the way it appears only from within the character – firstly from when he peers into the room while observing the corpses; and also when Death forms from Kirchner's shadow. This internal affliction would go on to literally take away Kirchner's ability to create art (figure 44).



Figure 44 – Sequence showing Death forming from the shadow of Kirchner. This visual, along with those in figure 43 represents the intrinsic nature of Kirchner's paranoia.

As the Kirchner character falls deeper into the endless depths of his mind, we see the motif of the amputated hand, a direct reference to the *Soldier* self-portrait. Again, the crows reappear to sound the bells of Kirchner's impending end (figure 45).



Figure 45 – Sequence showing Kirchner falling into the void, a symbol of the depths of his mind.

As the narrative ends, Kirchner, who is shown painting *Self-portrait as Soldier*, puts down his paintbrush and contemplates his life. The shot transitions to outside the character's house, the Lady observing the psychologically maimed character from afar, his future unknown. The final departure of the Lady reflects both Kirchner's real world fear that he could not paint again, as well as his death (figure 46).

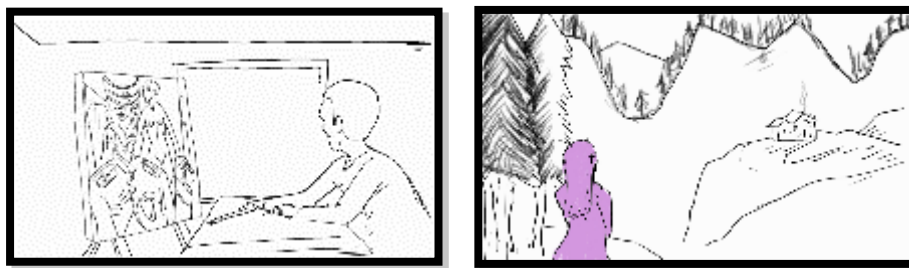


Figure 46 – The final sequence in the animation film, showing Kirchner contemplating his life as the Lady observes from afar. The departure of the lady suggests the death of Kirchner.

3.3 Applying Animation Language in the Practical Component

3.3.1 Close-ups

The research film uses the close-up shot as an analog to a function of the self-portrait – to express the character psyche. As expounded in chapter two, the close-up shot focuses on the character as the main subject, excluding elements that are deemed unnecessary. It manipulates the distances between the audience and the on-screen character, becoming a tool to create empathy.

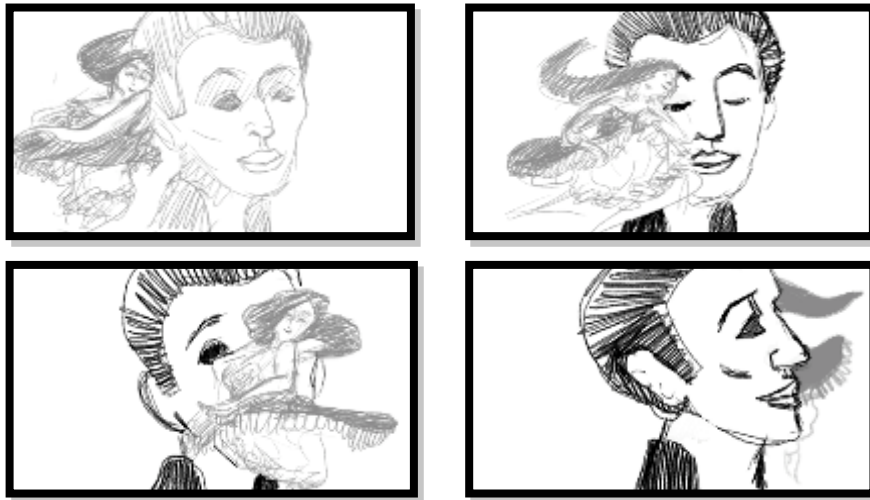


Figure 47 - A close-up shot of Kirchner that allows the audience to examine his expressions in detail.

In an example of the close-up shot's function, we see in figure 47 that the close-up reduces the distance to invite the audience into the private space of Kirchner. The audience becomes like a voyeur and watches as the Kirchner character performs his tasks, even entering into the alternate realm of Kirchner's mind. The character is framed using the close-up shot. The sequence brings audiences into Kirchner's psyche through a series of morphing transitions (see section 3.3.2 for discussion on movement and performance). The Lady appears and dances around Kirchner as he looks on at her with joy. Kirchner is rendered with more details, allowing

audiences to observe the facial expressions and nuances of Kirchner as he interacts with the Lady. By focusing on Kirchner, the image implies his significance in the sequence. In this closeness, the audiences are made to identify with and feel more intensely for the character.

Contrastingly, a wider shot is used in a later sequence to emotionally remove the audience from empathizing with the character – just as the changing conventions of self-portraiture would have it in the 20th Century (see *Chapter 1.4, The Self-Portrait*). The sequence begins with the Kirchner character waltzing gracefully with the Lady in a ballroom, both characters in bliss. The camera circles around the room, and eventually zooms out into a wide shot. The Lady morphs into crows (see section 3.2.3 for the discussion on symbolisms) that fly away, leaving Kirchner standing alone in the middle of the room. Kirchner’s size is reduced to a near abstract shape by the wide shot, losing much of the details in his design. This metaphysical increase in distance makes Kirchner appear less human, and as such, tougher to empathize with. Nonetheless, the transformation from a close-up to wide shot signals a change of Kirchner’s state of mind to the audience, and the sequence transitions into the second act.



Figure 48 – Transitioning from a close-up shot into a wide shot brings the audience further away from the character. Making it tougher to emotionally identify with him.

A second function of the close-up shot inverts the relationship between film and audience. The close-up shot is used to invade the audience's space instead, to create discomfort. In the sequence shown below, the head of Death falls off while he is dancing. The camera zooms into an extreme close-up of Death's head. The close-up brings the image of Death right into the face of the audience, with the intention to distress and unsettle. This imagery interprets Kirchner's real experience with thoughts of death as seen in *Self-portrait with Dancing Death*. In this way, the audience is then vicariously experiencing the character's inner state of mind through the intense treatment of the image.

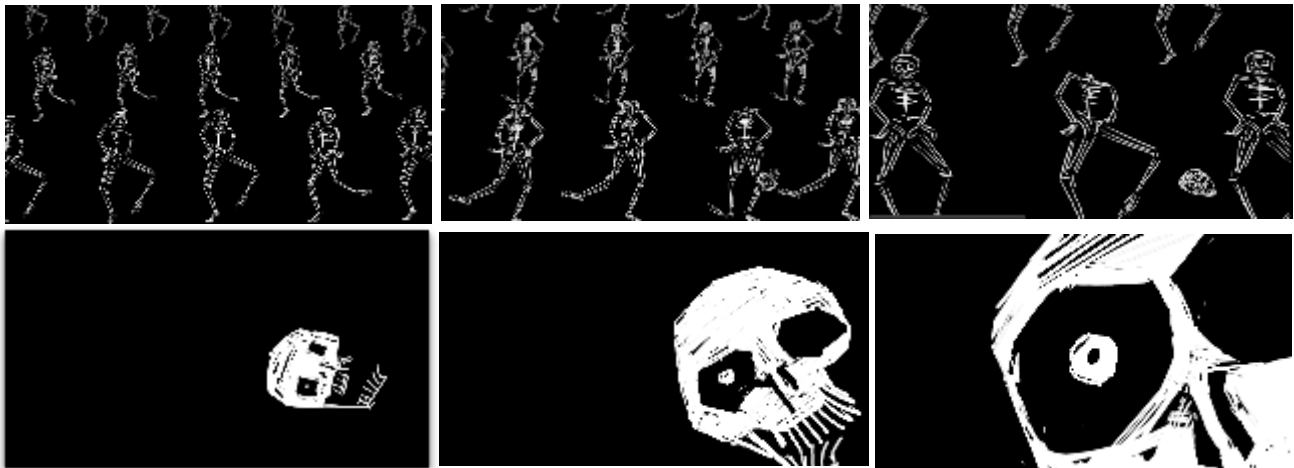


Figure 49 – Sequence showing a zoom into an extreme close-up shot of Death's head.

The above examples represent the concepts derived from studying the five self-portraits through animation language. These interpretations are then presented in the research film in a different format – the close-up shot – to achieve the expression of character inner states.

3.3.2 Movement and performance

The element of movement and performance in animation can be used to express emotions very differently. The research film references the theme of dance, an imagery that often occurs in Kirchner's art works, as a way of expressing emotions through performance. In it, I have used two forms of dance to represent the two states of Kirchner's mind – the Waltz, and the Charleston. The large sweeping movements of the waltz dance are gentle and graceful, reflecting Kirchner's inner optimism in his younger days. The Charleston, a type of dance that was popular during the 1920s, however, is fast paced, energetic, and almost chaotic. In the figures below, Death, as a symbol of Kirchner's paranoia, dances the Charleston.

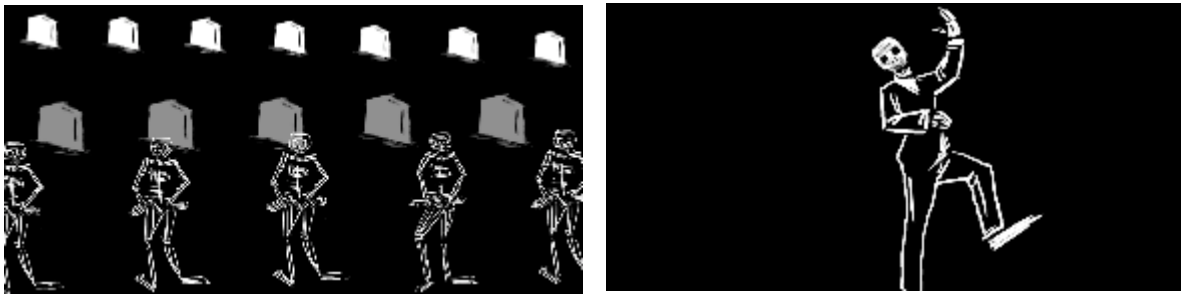


Figure 50 – Death dances the Charleston.

This contrasts with the Waltz routine the Kirchner character had performed with the Lady (see figure 48). The almost comical quality of the Charleston seen alongside the regal Waltz pits disorder against tranquility. These visual qualities of the dances in the film juxtaposes with Kirchner's real world expressions of his inner states through dance in his works. Death's performance of the Charleston in the film therefore mocks the debonair personality of the real world Kirchner, before it was interrupted by the onset of war.

The line-test for the research film also uses a difference in movement quality to contrast the character's inner states of mind. The opening Waltz sequence is animated on fours (6 drawings to a second of animation) to give it an intentional stepped feeling. The broad dance steps of the Waltz, however, compensate the lack of motion fluidity, and even impart a surreal quality to the routine. In contrast, the Charleston dance sequence is animated on twos (12 drawings to a second of animation) and is comparatively more fluid in movement quality. Additionally, the dance sequence is rotoscoped from live-action footages. The sequence thus stands out as more realistic than the other sequences, which are animated using a combination of the pose-to-pose and straight-ahead methods. The more realistic and fluid movement quality of the Charleston sequence makes the already chaotic dance appear even more disorderly, adding to the hysteria that represents the character's failing mental health.

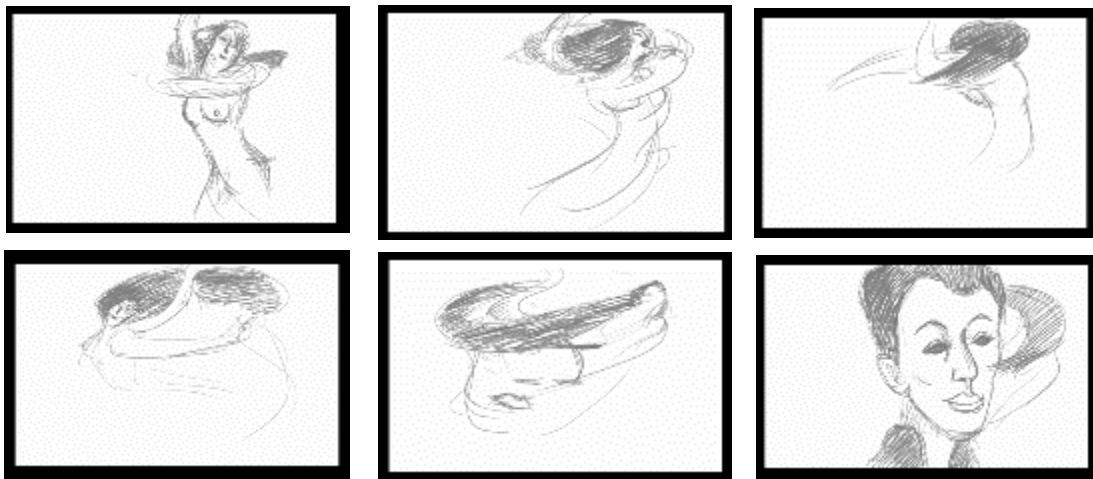


Figure 51 – Sequence demonstrating the metamorphosis of the Lady into a close-up shot of the character.

An important element of animation that has been continuously used in the research film is metamorphosis. The animated morph is a powerful tool in animation storytelling. It is used here to signal a shift in realities – from physical to dreamlike. The research film begins by establishing the physical world the character exists within, scanning the space as he paints.

Almost immediately, the narrative dives into the artist's mind, initiated by the character morphing into a dancing Lady. The morph sets a precedent for the fantastic nature of the sequences to follow (figure 51).

From the example, we can also see that the morph also functions to establish a relationship between the visuals as they transform into each other. A morph of an image into another would transfer the qualities of the first into the next, and so on. The gracefulness of the dancing Lady is transferred to the Kirchner character through a morph, suggesting the character's experience of similar emotions. This cascading effect in the morph chains all the images together and by association, results in a series of images that are linked together by a common quality.

The above ways of visual representation through movement and performance is unique to the film medium. It would be impossible to experience Kirchner's still image artworks in the same manner. Nonetheless, the temporal treatment to translate Kirchner's real world visual strategies into animation bridges the animated and fine arts media, with each inheriting some qualities of the other. What this results in is a new direction for the expression and animation of character inner states of mind.

3.3.3 Sounds and Music

The aural elements of the research film perform an extremely important emotive function in a dimension different from the animated image's.

For this, I have chosen to use only music and no sound design. While both the aural and visual elements can be used to elicit emotional responses, the research film uses the audio component as a second tool for expressing character inner states. My intention for the aural elements is therefore to explore the use of music for this very purpose, and not to examine its

storytelling qualities, which is already known and well documented.¹⁶⁰ The assumption for this examination is therefore that sound design in film leads to the diegetic exposition of the narrative.

The aural elements can give an additional layer of meaning to the visuals. In the research film, I have used the music to re-contextualize the visuals. This is done through either selecting a musical composition that supports the emotional themes within, or one that opposes thereby creating dissonance and irony.

The opening sequence is animated to *Gnossienne No.1* by Erik Satie. It is an example of music that directly supports the emotional themes within the images. A slow piano composition, the piece enhances the visuals, becoming almost an accompanying score for the Waltz dance sequence.

On the contrary, the music for the second act, *On the other side of the world* by Tom Waits, demonstrates a musical composition that opposes the emotional themes within the animated image. Act 2, which presents Kirchner's actual grisly and unsettling experience with death in the war, is incongruous with the music, which is a soft instrumental ballad. The irony created means to romanticize the war. While this might seem inappropriate upon first listening, an examination of the selected art works reveals an equally exaggerated and fantastic perception of the war, albeit from Kirchner's imagination.

Similarly, the third music composition, *Oily Night*, also by Tom Waits, caricaturizes Kirchner's paranoia with what sounds like tribal chants. Although the music may appear to

¹⁶⁰ Bendazzi, Furniss and Wells have individually commented on sound-design's ability to enhance a film's storytelling efficacy. See Bendazzi, Giannalberto. *Defining Animation – A Proposal*, 2004, p8; Furniss, Maureen. *Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics, Revised Edition*. Yorkshire: United Kingdom. John Libbey Publishing. 2007. 87; Wells, Paul. *The Fundamentals of Animation*. Lausanne, Switzerland: AVA Publishing. 2006. 165

trivialize Kirchner's mental illness, the disparity between the image and music in this act intends to aurally intensify the cacophonous visuals of Act 3.

The final use of the aural elements, is, the lack of it. In the denouement, I have opted for silence to contrast the pandemonium of Act 3. Just as the silence is used in Landreth's *Ryan* and Lauenstein's *Balance*, the silence, by comparison, pushes the already heightened tension in Act 3 even further. Simultaneously, the intensity of Act 3 affects the stillness by making it yet more silent. The lack of music is therefore an aural interpretation of Kirchner's solitude upon losing his artistic optimism.

The use of music in the research film makes a further connection from animation to the fine arts. The addition of music gives additional complexities and therefore more ways in which animation can look toward to express character inner states. In this manner, it completes animation as the "most audio-visual of audiovisual" mediums.

Chapter 4 – Research Conclusion

Through the above explorations and experiments, the research has examined the relationship between animation and the fine art language. The two artistic mediums and languages each have their idiosyncrasies but at the same time, each one possessed qualities that bore resemblance to the other's. The research's objective was therefore to identify said idiosyncrasies and similarities, to bridge the practices of animation and the fine arts, and in the process discover new directions for the expression of character inner states of mind in animation.

The research begins doing this by critically analyzing the five selected art works of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, supported by scholarly interpretations of the artist's methods and historical documentation of his life. From it, the research has demonstrated the multitude of ways in which Kirchner dealt with the inner states of mind in his artistic endeavor.

The representation of the inner states of mind underlays a bulk of Kirchner's artistic output. The artist's struggle with mental illness is well documented. To represent the most personal shades of his inner workings, the artist had ingeniously and tirelessly experimented to invent techniques that could represent that deepest part of his mental psyche. These techniques represent the work processes of the fine arts. They are then visually adapted for the animation work flow as visual strategies used to express and animate character inner states in the research's practical component.

Through this, I, as a researcher and practitioner, used the animation medium as an extension to the fine arts to craft and direct the research film. Without attempting to be a time-based imitation of Kirchner's still image works, the research film represents my own discrete

interpretations of how Kirchner's methods can be translated to create new visual expressions for the character inner states of mind, through the animated medium.

At the end of the research, I would like to return to the research question: How can the filmmaker put together these qualities inherent to the fields, to create an auteur animation film whose narrative is furthered by emotive visual expressions? This is a concern as aesthetical adaptations of this nature straddles between original interpretations and stylistic imitations, as seen in the case study discussions of Chapter 1.8.

The answer to that question is, perhaps, best reflected in the thoughts of Cartmell and Whelelan on "spiritual fidelity" (see Chapter 1.7). While it is the essence of aesthetical adaptations to at least have some semblance to its original source, animation filmmakers have to tread that fine line, taking care not to lose one's auteur identity in the application said visual-aesthetical strategies. In this research, I have made an effort to retain this identity in the pursuit of discovering ways to express and animate character inner states of mind.

Through the study, I have realized that while the research film is a cross-media adaptation, it is also two separate entities, each with their own peculiarities. The animated medium may imitate the fine art processes, but eventually the adaptation film must stand as an independent inquiry to the "spirit" of the source, and more importantly, a contemporary film. What constitutes the novelty of the visual strategies therefore stems not from the translation of Kirchner's mark-making techniques or symbolism into animation, but rather, it is from my private reading and treatment of it. I shall conclude by echoing Bendazzi's sentiments that the animation language "exists as an autonomous form of art". This research thus reiterates the animation film language's "role and space" in all theoretical and practical examinations of the artistic medium.

Bibliography

Bendazzi, Giannalberto. *Cartoons: One Hundred Years of Cinema Animation*. Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1995.

Bendazzi, Giannalberto. "Defining Animation – A Proposal." *Giannalberto Bendazzi*. 2004. http://giannalbertobendazzi.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Defining_Animation-Giannalberto_Bendazzi2004.pdf

Bond, Anthony and Joanna Woodall. *Self-portrait: Renaissance to Contemporary*. London: National Portrait Gallery. 2005.

Bowden, Christopher J., & Thompson, Roy. *Grammar of the Shot*. Burlington, Massachusetts: Focal Press. 2013.

Bowen, Christopher J., and Roy Thompson. *Grammar of the Edit*. Burlington, Massachusetts: Focal Press, 2009.

Cartmell, Deborah & Whelehan, Imelda. *Screen Adaptation: Impure Cinema*. New York; Palgrave Macmillian. 2010.

Cavallaro, Dani. *Anime and the Art of Adaptation*. Jefferson, NC. Mcfarland & Co, 2010.

Damasio, Antonio, "How Our Brains Feel Emotion," Big Think video, 8:52, July 2, 2010, <http://bigthink.com/videos/how-our-brains-feel-emotion>

Damasio, Antonio, "How Our Brains Build Our Autobiographies," Big Think video, 5:41, August 10, 2010, <http://bigthink.com/videos/how-our-brains-build-our-autobiographies>

Drury, Elizabeth. *Self Portraits of the World's Greatest Painters*. San Diego, CA: Thunder Bay Press. 1999

Frehner, Matthias, et al. *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Friends: Expressionism from the Swiss Mountains*. Zurich, Scheidegger & Spies. 2007.

Furniss, Maureen. *Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics*. Rev. ed. Eastleigh, UK: John Libbey; 2007.

Hall, James. *The self-portrait: a cultural history*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2014.

Hooks, Ed. *Acting for Animators*. Routledge, 2011.

Katz, Steven D. *Film Directing Shot by Shot: Visualizing from Concept to Screen*. Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions in Conjunction with Focal Press, 1991.

Kraemer, Felix, *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Retrospective*, published in Conjunction with the Exhibition "Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Retrospective", Städel Museum. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2010.

Moeller, Magdalena M. *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: Peter Schlemihl's Wondrous Story*. Munich: Prestel, 2014.

"Psychorealism." *Computer Graphics World* 27 Issue 7 (2004). Accessed (March 07, 2015). <http://www.cgw.com/Publications/CGW/2004/Volume-27-Issue-7-July-2004-/Psychorealism.aspx>

Rhodes, Colin. "Difficult Kirchner – Alternative traditions, visual tensions, autodidacticism" in *New Perspective on Brücke Expressionism*. ed. Christian Weikop. Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited. 2011.

Rideal, Liz. *National Portrait Gallery insights: self-portraits*. London: National Portrait Gallery, 2005.

Springer, Peter. trans. Susan Ray. *Hand and Head: Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's Self-portrait as a Soldier*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press. 2002.

Schick, Karin & Skowranek, Heide, ed., et al. *No One Else Has These Colors. Kirchner's Painting*. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag. 2012.

Stevens, Michael. "Isolation - Mind Field (Ep 1)", YouTube video, 34:45, posted by "VSauce". January 18, 2017, <https://youtu.be/iqKdEhx-dD4?t=1m37s>

John Voris. "The Difference Between Emotions and Feelings." John Voris. March 01, 2016. Accessed March 06, 2017. <http://johnvoris.com/featured-articles/difference-between-emotions-and-feelings/>

Wells, Paul. *Understanding Animation*. London: Routledge, 1998.

Wells, Paul. *The Fundamentals of Animation*. Lausanne, Switzerland: AVA Publishing. 2006.

Wells, Paul. ed. Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan. "Thou Art Translated: Animated Adaptations" in *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text*. 199-213. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Wells, Paul and Hardstaff, Johnny. *Re-Imagining Animation: The Changing Face of the Moving Image*. Switzerland: AVA Publishing. 2008.

Wolf, Norbert. *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, On the Abyss of the Edge of Time*. Koln: Taschen. 2003.