

# VA 401 PROJECT PROPOSAL

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Project Name : Touch the Ocean

# Brief Definition, Goals and Target Audience

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It is an interactive educational installation which introduces marine species to children.

Its target audience is pre-school children who are 4-7 years old.

This project aims

- to turn a learning experience into a fun experience for children
- to create an alternative tool for teachers
- to improve children's sea life vocabulary, visual motor
- to introduce children traditional 2D animation
- to present an old animation techniques within a contemporary medium.

# Background Information

I am really interested in drawing, illustration, storyboarding and character design. Last year, in Sabanci University i took the 'Figure Drawing' course where we drew frames from live models and animate them by taking photographs of them. I also took the 'Illustration as Communication' course, and we had to illustrate a nursery rhyme, I created a flipbook for that project. For both of the courses, although I had to draw many frames and it was a time consuming work, I liked them a lot. Another motivation was the 2D Animation course that i took in my university in Portugal where we were doing animations with handdrawing. So I was sure that i would enjoy doing something with 2D Animation considering my background experience. Besides, another reason for using 2D Animation was because of my research about the differences between 2D and 3D Animation. Garfield example was my starting point. According to me, the old Garfield show in 2D was much fun and succesful than the new show on Cartoon Network in 3D. I could not help but wonder

why I liked the old one better. Firstly, we can easily say 3d animation production is more expensive. They spend a lot of money with expensive softwares and many people to work. When 3d animation is done by Pixar, Dreamworks or BlueSky, it looks amazing and it is really fun to watch. Because those movies are big productions with big money and lots of professional animators. However, they are not the only 3d animations, there are some bad examples unfortunately. For example, if the animation is done for a tv show, since there is not much money to spend on it, it looks like an unfinished video game rather than a 3d animation.. Especially this was the case in last decades. Moving forward with this idea, since i dont have staff to work on a complete, long, good animation and no sufficient time, I don't think I would be creating a fun-to-watch 3d animation. Secondly, when it comes to 3d animations, people's standards are quite high. There are many incredibly good animations done by those big companies, and our eyes are used to seeing

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good works and expecting it somehow. Since one can do much more realistic things in 3d, people would expect something realistic or something to follow some physical rules at least. Otherwise, it would look like a mistake. My point is, nowadays, if you are going to do it, it can not look worse than previous productions. On the other hand, 2d animation is not like this. One can go with more unrealistic, cartoonistic and exeggerated stories. You can actually say more with less. Plus, you can do some mistakes in 2d animation but since it is already unrealistic, you can easily hide the mistake in the exeggeration. Besides, with those mistakes, you would catch the natural imperfection of the movements in life, unlike 3D animation. In addition, the exeggeration in 2D will work for children as well, because it has to be something fun to keep their attention. So, I was sure to go with 2D animation as my technique for the project.

Apart from that, I started to think about my nursery rhyme and flipbook's concept, and I came up with the idea of doing something

for children by using illustration and animation. In our education system, the space for creativity is so little and one of the most common reasons for that is the use of same mediums most of the time. Books are the main medium of education in many levels in our system, but I think there should be a bigger variety of options to use. Because with different materials and mediums, different environments and with different approach to teaching; children may learn things in a more fun way and this can help them learn fastly and more permanently. At the sametime, they will improve their creativity. This issuea holds bigger importance especiall in the pre-school, kindergarten and early primary school childrens' case. So i decided to create something as an alternative for the mediums of teaching today, something that will teach children in an entertaining way. Of course, this had to be something suitable to the digital era that we are in. That is why I decided to create an interactive installation for the youngsters.

## Detailed Project Description

It is basically an interactive entertaining installation for children to enlarge little ones' knowledge about marine species. It is a tool where education and fun come together. There will be characters (the animals) that i designed swimming on the screen. This animation will be 2D and done with the help of a graphic tablet or in the traditional animation style which is on paper. For the interaction of the children with the animals, there will be Kinect camera which tracks their body movements. All the children need to do is to come in front of the Kinect camera placed in front of the wall and wait for the detection. The skeleton tracking will be able to know where their shoulders, elbows and wrists are and then they can play with the installation. When the camera detects their hands, they have to catch and

touch the sea animals. When the children touch the character, they will gain some points and also the character will stop moving and the installation will give information about that specific species. This insallation will convey knowledge to children by combinin the new digital era technological developments and will give them a different way of learning rather than illustration books. This installation will be suitable to present in places such as museums, zoo or aquariums, childrens' festivals and carnivals.

# Required Know-How and Resources

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- Learn how to work with a software for the animation (Dragonframe)
  - Learn how to work with Kinect and Synapse software
  - Learn how to use Max/MSP
  - Learn how to create and animate characters
  - Learn how to work with hardware (projectors, cameras, microphones etc.)

## Difficulties and Risks

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The most difficult part of the project will be dealing with coding part. I have never used Max/MSP before and have to learn how to work with Max/MSP and know the correct objects to use. Another difficulty will be in the animation part. I have to manage my time properly, otherwise I may not finish the animation on time since there will be hundreds of frames for each animal character. I also work on making the characters look fun and cartoonish. One other risk is in the last phase; after I am done with the Max and animation parts on my laptop, I may not achieve to get the look I want on the wall. Because settings with the projection and computer screen may differ so that the installation may not work.

# Criteria of Success

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- To complete the animations and test it
- To give children a new fun way of learning
- To overcome the patch parts in Max/MSP
- To create an interesting , useful and working installation setting



# Phases of the Project

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## **Pre-production phase**

- Research (about different animation techniques, softwares, interactive children games)
- Target audience research for the installation
- Gathering information about marine species and deciding on the animals (content/ number of characters)

## **Production phase**

- Storyboard and animatic
- Characters design
- Completing the animation
- Recording sounds
- Max/MSP tutorials
- Creating the basic patches for the game
- Timing arrangements between animation and the software

## **Pro-production phase**

- Final tests and corrections (hardware problems, calibration arrangements between projector and computer screen, how to present it)
- Documentation

