

Letter of Intention

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I'm a dreamer; always have been. An idealistic perfectionist – or so I've been called. Naive enough to believe he can change the world simply by communicating the right ideas, in the right way. Realistic enough to not trust those beliefs – entirely. But what better way than film to combine a desire to cause change, with at least an enjoyable pass-time should the product not have the desired result!

This is what I say to *myself* when I question why I want to do this. When others ask; I tell them it's because there are few things I'd rather spend my time doing than creating environments, characters and stories for animated films. Both explanations are equally true, of course. It just depends on who's asking.

On my quest to one day make this a reality I've already spent three years studying 3D-Design & Animation, 3D-Game Design and 3D-Film Production, respectively. While also learning to paint on the side. All of these courses were taken at the Noroff Institute in Norway. Through these courses I've gained some knowledge of storytelling and game-design, as well as a solid understanding of the 3D pipeline. I've also come to learn a variety of different softwares; including 3ds max, Photoshop, After Effects, Mudbox, Maya and Zbrush, by ascending order of ability. Sadly I cannot rightfully credit the school for too much of this. In truth it was essentially an overpriced “learn it yourself -program” in which you only had a single teacher each year. This arrangement spells bad news if that teacher is rarely present and; “you're a grown man - google it” is his catch-phrase.

But really im just justifying what I feel is a lack of skill after three years of schooling. I guess it comes back to the perfectionism, and the need to impress and over-deliver. This mostly drives me to work hard, but occasionally causes me to claim victim of circumstance. (Using that term makes me feel clever).

Despite my self-imposed victim-status I managed to land a job right out of school. This was for an interactive dance-performance called “Gamer” which will be in theatres by the end of april 2014, and go on tour in the fall. My job was to create all of the animated, video-game-like footage to be projected on a screen behind the dancers. Twenty-seven minutes worth of animated sequences and backdrops. Four different “games” in completely different styles. Everything had to be designed, paced and timed to music and story that was all being developed alongside the visuals. What a headache! The project-lead hired a professional game designer to help with designing the challenges. I also had them hire a character-animator for what little there was of that. Beyond this I was left to my own endeavors in designing and producing the look and feel of the sequences. From concept to final product. It took me six months, though I was only payed for four of them. I guess It's just another version of the old “client has a great idea, but doesn't know what she actually wants – clichè”. Suffice it to say I had to contribute a little ways beyond what was specified in my contract, and ended up credited as Co-writer for the entire performance. Showboat disclaimer.

The last two months working on Gamer I also had a fulltime job as a modellor for Storm Studios, working on Captain Sabertooth, the Treasure in Lama Rama. I was effectively a “prove yourself” junior-modellor by day and an indie-game developer by night. That was a rough seven weeks!

At Storm I was brought into an established team-environment, working with experienced and very talented people. Having been trained in 3ds Max, I thought I was off to a rocky start when I only got a five day notice to learn Maya. But the transition was very smooth, and the guys in the cg-department were very helpful. At Storm I learned a good deal about proper workflow for a production as a whole, how to manage your 3d scenes when working as part of a team, and I even learned a little MEL and python for Maya. I also picked up on various techniques and approaches to

different set-extension tasks, as well as when and why to use one over the other. Lastly I received a thorough introduction to matte-painting from the studios art-director, and I have now landed a new job as a matte-painter for Storyline Studios. If all goes well I'll be working there until I come to Viborg in the fall.

So why do I wan't to go back to school, even if I can already make a living in the industry? It goes back to what I opened with: I want to tell stories, and animated film is by far my medium of choice! Most of what I know caters mainly to live-action asset-creation, and that simply doesn't scratch my itch.

Furthermore I believe I have a pretty good technical foundation for what I want to do, but I lack proper understanding of form, design, storytelling, and overall fundamentals. I hope to be able to start- and run an animation studio at some point. Matte-painting and modelling for live-action isn't gonna take me there anytime soon. At least not at the level of quality and overall awesomeness I'm hoping to achieve. This I am convinced requires a fulltime commitment! Given the severity of my "*everything I do has to be top notch -syndrome*" it wouldn't quite be satisfactory to tell OK stories, with great visual style. Nor would it satisfy to tell great stories with average visual style. No, I'll be taking both, thank you very much! So, that's decided.

From here it's really just a question of how to get to that level. And I've come to believe that The Animation Workshop (notice capital letters, you're welcome) is my best bet. More specifically; your CGA-course; guided by which I hope to make a solid contribution towards my aforementioned goal. I also believe it will propel me into an ideal, future scenario. In which; I've officially saved humanity by means of my obviously excellent ideas, giftwrapped in deliciously cell-shaded squash & stretch! But that's entirely in your hands!

Additionally I'm pleased by the school's evident invitation to innovate and experiment with techniques and mediums. While I know my portfolio doesn't look it, I do have a desire to innovate and come up with new creative solutions. Like every other bipedaler with a shirt on; I love seeing new things, and I hope to contribute in that area myself. Though I must admit; I favor the more conventional interpretations of whats "cool" and "pretty".

I actually applied for the second year of the CGA-course last year, and was accepted. Sadly I chose not to go. Since then; I've come to see things in a different perspective. And I have in turn come to reconsider TAW with renewed interest. Enough even to want to start the course from the beginning, instead of jumping into the 2nd year like last time. A lot of it is due to a current student at your school; Henning Sanden. Seriously, you should pay that guy. He never shuts up about TAW- this and I ate dinner with Peter Chan-that! You have him to thank for TAW being on my mind everytime his name pops up on my facebook chatlist! Good lad.

My varied taste in arts and crafts leads me to be inspired and influenced by a wide range of artists. From Sergey Kolesov to Amin Faramarzian to Nikolai Lockertsen. Each of them showcasing qualities I admire and strive to achieve in my own work: The overall wow-factor in Kolesov's rendering and compositions, especially! Amin's playfullnes and simplicity, and the tastyness that follows from it. And the lively richness of character and mood that is in Nikolai's work. These are things that make me want to work harder and quit simultaneously. So you know i'm not making stuff up! Furthermore I have an appreciation for anything that makes me think and reflect on things I've been unaware of. The Lorax is a great example of one such. While argueably a little obvious in it's criticism of consumer-society, I found it had great depth and it sparked a lot of personal reflection on my part. More animation for grown-ups!

Another great feat is HBO's Band of Brothers; which I enjoyed thoroughly for it's inspiring characters. Anything that triggers a desire to show compassion and personal disregard is a winner in my book. I'm a sucker for that stuff! If I can spark some social awareness and encourage a little humility by means of animated films, I'll be doing that for as long as I can!

Should you find reason to accept me, and should the norwegian government continue to help fund my education (as is likely) I'll be very much looking forward to Viborg in the coming fall!

Thank you for your time!

Best

Henrik