

Pegboard

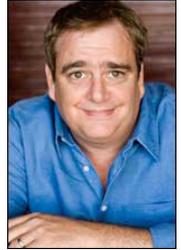
ANIMATION GUILD AND AFFILIATED ELECTRONIC AND GRAPHIC ARTS

Los Angeles, California, April 2016

Vol. 45, N° 4

FROM THE PRESIDENT, JACK THOMAS

ABOUT TESTING



This month's issue of the Pegboard has a lot of content about testing for jobs. It is a hot button issue for our union. We have members who totally opposed it. We have other members who are heavily in favor of it. You can read that debate on the pages that follow. But first, here are a few things you need to know about testing.

1. Testing is specifically allowed for in our Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) in Sideletter J (page 98). Tests must

“require only a reasonable amount of work to complete and should be related to the hiring, promotion, and/or assignment decision.”

2. You are not required to take a test. Nor are you required to “finish” a test. Many of our members have told us they have gotten jobs by just doing enough of a test to showcase their talents and then sending it in. This also gives them the advantage of getting their tests in first.

3. If you apply for a job that requires a test, you should always send a copy of it to the union so that we can track these tests to ensure they are not abusive. We plan to file grievances against studios that hand out tests that we deem to be unreasonably long, complicated or unrelated to actual available positions. You can email tests to shulett@animationguild.org or askjack@animationguild.org.

4. The vast majority of storyboard (or other artist) tests are created by our own members who are either acting as show-runners or directors. If you are responsible for creating tests, respect your fellow artists and keep the tests short and focused.

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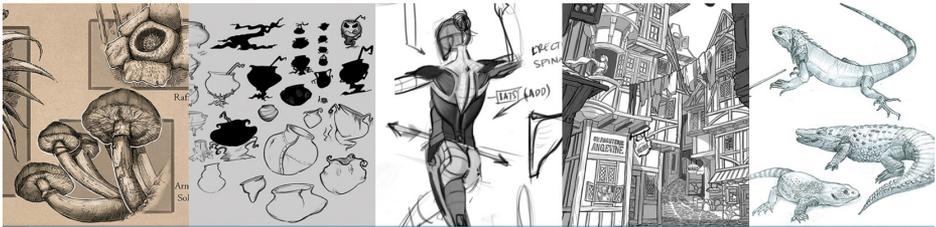


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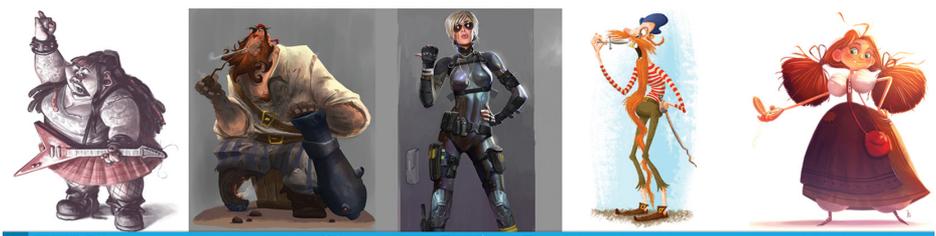
CGMA Online Academy brings the very best online art training for the best price to our industry professional students. Our instructors include some of the most renowned artists in the film, game and computer animation industry, bringing you quality education and training you would not find elsewhere. Our great price and quality of classes is what makes us extremely valuable assets to professionals looking to sharpen their skills, learn something new and stay in the loop in an ever-changing industry.



CGMA Foundation & Design Program

Foundation/Design Program Classes:

- Perspective ■ Dynamic Sketching 1 & 2 ■ Analytical Figure Drawing ■ Fundamentals of Design ■ Digital Painting ■ Environment Sketching ■ Animal Drawing ■ Fundamentals of Character Design ■ The Art of Color and Light ■ Portfolio Development



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Character Design Program Classes:

- Head Drawing & Construction ■ Character Design for Animation ■ Costume Design ■ Intro to Character and Creature Design ■ Storyboarding for Animation ■ Character Design for Production ■ Character Illustration for Film ■ Art Direction for Character Designers



CGMA Environment Design Program

Environment Design Program Classes:

- Fundamentals for Architecture Design ■ Fundamentals for Creative Environment Design ■ Environment Sketching for Production ■ Environment Design 1 & 2 ■ Visual Development for Animation ■ Matte Painting

STORYBOARD TESTING: OPPOSING VIEWS

JOB TESTING: WE NEED TO STOP THE MADNESS

BY LLYN HUNTER

*Direction / Storyboards / Storyboard revisions / Animation / Development - 25 years
guild member*

Testing from contracted studios has become a habit, and we need to find a way to stop it. Sadly four years ago, Sideletter J (page 98) was inserted into the contract. The way this insertion was worded actually allows the abuses to excel. The biggest problem with the tests is that they are not given as evaluation of skill for a position, but rather as an audition for a slot. Animation artists are not actors, musicians or dancers. This is not a performance art. We do work similar to an author, engineer, or designer; none of these professions require an unpaid test in order to acquire a position, and up until sixteen years ago neither did ours.

Here is a list and detailed explanation of what we are all experiencing:

- Tests are unpaid labor

Currently, this is the only profession I know where you do unpaid work, that creates a physical result, without any guarantee that there will be actual employment if the example passes muster. When was the last time you had your auto mechanic, doctor, or electrician do a sample piece of work for free to show they could do the job? You have to get a guild job before you can be a member of this guild. That's the way it works; which means that every member of this guild is a qualified person in the area of their profession already. As it stands with many of the contracted studios now, to be even considered for a position you MUST take the test. There is no guarantee that a job will be given if you pass the test, and there is no payment for the work done. That is in total conflict with Side Letter J. The problem is, that by the time the guild even knows the tests have been given out the position is usually filled.

- There is no director for the tests

These tests supposedly show that the artist can create to the style of the show. It is the job of an animation artist to coordinate with the director to get a feel for cutting, taste and setup for the show style. The director acts like a conductor of an orchestra and without their input the artist can only guess at the correct show style.

- Size of the tests are insane

The size of the tests has run amok. Four years ago it was requested by the Guild that the size of the tests be kept to a minimum i.e. one script page, one background, one character turn around. I personally have been given a one page test once in sixteen years, and recently they have been as extensive as three and four pages. I have had colleagues who have reported that they were to paint three backgrounds, requested to do two more and then were not hired for the job.

- Reference materials are nonexistent

When working on a TV show you need a minimum of a part of a completed storyboard, a show bible, sample backgrounds, model sheets and props in order to create

JOB TESTING: LLYN HUNTER

(continued on page 6)

STORYBOARD TESTING: OPPOSING VIEWS

IN DEFENSE OF TESTING

BY PAULA SPENCE

Okay, I get it: A lot of people don't like tests. They don't see the value of testing for positions in our industry, they feel tests are abusive and insulting, and they don't believe they should have to offer any more proof of their talent and experience than their resume and portfolio show. I understand this position, but my experience and opinion are different and I hope my fellow Guild members will consider the idea that tests might be a useful hiring tool and that WE – the members of Local 839 – have the power to shape and control the tests that are given out.

I got my first job in the industry after taking a test. I had a BFA in Illustration and over ten years' experience in different art fields (but not animation) when a college friend asked if I was interested in taking a background design test. My portfolio qualified me to take the test and he could vouch for me personally, but I needed to show the art director, creative director and show creator that I could match the style of the show. It seemed like a reasonable request back then and I feel pretty much the same about testing now.

As an art director, I can see from a portfolio review that a job applicant has strong drawing skills, a good sense of design, and understands anatomy, perspective, color. What I can't necessarily see in a portfolio or resume is whether that person understands the sensibility of my particular show and can work in the style already set. I offer reasonable tests to the artists with the most promising portfolios, and they have a chance to show that they're right for the job. Any further testing needed is paid for as freelance.

Storyboard tests can be a bit more complicated because the job itself requires a different range of talent and know-how. Many comedy shows require that a storyboard artist possess not only drawing skills and film-making knowledge, but a deep understanding of the spirit of the show and the ability to write most of the dialogue and gags from a premise or outline rather than a full script. A short test is virtually a necessity in order to narrow the field of applicants to the ones who might be right for the position, and an outstanding test can seal the deal.

The people creating tests in this industry are usually members of our own Guild. Production teams may organize materials, hand out and receive tests from applicants, but it's the art directors, show creators and other creative managers who conceive the actual tests. People who know how to do the job that needs to be done are the ones who decide what goes into the test and what they want to see from prospective hires. It is the responsibility of those talent seekers to create tests that are REASONABLE. They should imagine themselves in the position of applicants and construct a test that has clear parameters and instructions, includes any necessary reference (model sheets, style samples, bibles, blank storyboard sheets, etc), and can be completed in no more than two to four hours.

Please send all tests to the Animation Guild so that we can better educate the test makers and advocate for our members!

JOB TESTING: LLYN HUNTER

(continued from page 4)

a story board correctly. For tests I have in the past been given one to three pages of script, a few model sheets and maybe one background, and possibly a few props, and from these I am supposed to determine the style of the show. Anyone who is a board artist or director knows that you need at least a piece of a completed storyboard to figure out the cutting and shot style of a show, without it you are “flying blind.” I don’t know how many times I requested one and was told I couldn’t have it. That alone tells me that the tests are worthless. And never have I been given a bible. We are supposed to know who all the characters are and how they should interact with each other from two pages of script taken out of a show with out context.

- **Deadlines are ridiculous**

We are usually given a week to turn around the test, but I have yet to get a test that didn’t take at least 30-60 hours to complete. I have always been working when given a test, if not animation, free-lance work that was under deadline. That means double duty, and that means no sleep. When you are working full and overtime on another job, and then add in an excessive test with a one week deadline... You do the math.

- **Who is looking at the tests?**

We have no idea (at least if you are taking one - they don’t tell us) who is doing the evaluation. Does anyone know a director of a show who has looked at a test? Who is making the decisions on these tests? As a former director, and guild member for over 20 years, I can look at anyone’s resume and web site portfolio and tell you if they can do the job for a specific show. I can say the same thing for just about anyone who has been a member for five years in the business. We know who can do the work. As a matter of fact, especially for those in TV, because of the ridiculous amount of work we do, chameleon is our collective middle name. The testing itself tells me that whoever is hiring for the show won’t be able to judge a test any better than they can judge a resume or portfolio.

- **Is there a point to the test?**

How many people have actually gotten the job from taking a test? The two times I got the job with a test, I was chosen for the job and the test was a “technicality.” I had to do the test because HR was requiring it. I suspect that all this testing is to give HR people something to make them feel as if they are actually being productive. Often there is only one or two openings for the job, and rather than make the effort to look through resumes and websites they hand out tests while someone inside becomes free from a project, and they select that person because they are already employed by the studio and are easier to fit in the slot.

So why are we even taking the tests? Because we want that union job that pays hours into a pension and will cover our healthcare, and we will literally jump through fire to get them. Every time I take one of these insane tests I know there is no job at the end of it, but I keep doing it because the mere hope of the possibility of a job is much better than the idea of unemployment and perpetual low paying freelance work.

I’ve had enough of testing - have you? We’re a guild gang, lets put our heads together and do something about it.

-Llyn Hunter

IN MEMORIAM

This month we celebrate:

LE CLAIRE MICHELE MOORE passed away on February 20, 2016. She worked as a Cel Painter and Mark-Up Artist at Hanna-Barbera and Kurtz & Friends.

*

MARILYN PIERSON passed away on March 20, 1016. She worked as a Cel Painter and Inker at Hanna-Barbera, Filimation, Disney and Kurtz & Friends, as well as many other studios.

BOOKMARK THE TAG BLOG

<http://animationguildblog.blogspot.com>

FINAL DRAFT DISCOUNT

Our friends at Final Draft have set-up a coupon code for IATSE members. It will discount Final Draft to \$149 for a full copy or \$59 for an upgrade, which is 40% off the MSRP. The code IATSE2016 is good for 2016.



Simply go to www.finaldraft.com, select the product, enter the coupon code, and the discount will apply.

BOOKMARK THE JOB EMAIL ARCHIVE!

Accidentally delete that email with the latest job posting? Did you hear about a posting and not get a copy in your Inbox? Now there's a way you can review the latest job posts that have been sent out:

<https://animationguild.org/about-the-guild/jobs-post-archive/>

Thanks to the latest features in MailChimp, the bulk email program we use, this archive will feature the latest job emails we've posted to the membership for both union and non-union work.

FROM THE BUSINESS REP, STEVE HULETT SIMPLE? OR COMPLICATED?



When I was a lad (I'm talking late twenties to mid thirties, so maybe a few years beyond lad hood), I had a stock broker who had a complicated investment plan, built especially for *moi* (and probably a number of other clients, but who's counting?)

He had me in individual stocks, and he sold them and bought other stocks quite a bit. All the buying and selling was quite dazzling, and I got regular printouts with graphs to show how well everything was doing, and he only charged me 2% off the top for all of the busy service.

Which I thought, in my stupidity, was a bargain.

Years went by like this, and slowly, steadily, my investments crept up. But one day I read about these investment called "index funds", and further read that they were very inexpensive. Like way less than the 2% my broker was charging.

So I asked for a meeting with my broker. He had offices up in a high rise in Newport Beach, and there was a breathtaking view of the Pacific and California coastline through his floor-to-ceiling windows. He sat me down in a padded chair and ran through all the stocks I was holding, showing me charts with colored bars that went up and up.

Impressive. (This was the go-go nineties, when many investments looked impressive).

But then I asked a pointed question. ...

"So. Are these investments doing better or worse than the S & P 500 Index?"

He answered promptly: "Better. We've made 14.7% annually. The index has done 14%."

"Before or after the 2% fee?"

Less promptness this time. In fact, there was a long, pregnant pause. Finally one of his staff (who happened to be one of his adults sons; he had three of them working in his big office) piped up with:

"Before. You're ... ahm ... doing 1.3% less than the index after our charges."

We all stared at each other. And finally I said: "So ... what am I paying you for?"

I thought of the above when, earlier today, I read this from a financial blog called The Reformed Broker:

... It should not come as any surprise that a sophisticated investment thesis will appeal to funds whose reputations are steeped in the aura of being able to solve market puzzles before the crowd. Sometimes it works beautifully but sometimes the consequences are disastrous. I've come to learn that, for most investors, the entire enterprise is completely unnecessary. Year after year, decade after decade, portfolios with simple building blocks and transparent mechanics get the job done. A bet that this will not be the case in the future because of (name your reason) is a low probability one.

Many intermediaries sell funds that traffic in complexity because they position it as their value-add. "There are you things you cannot understand going on in these funds, but I am managing and monitoring it for you." It's a barrier to entry and a justification for above-average fees. It also gives the advisor or family office person interesting things to discuss at quarterly reviews or in newsletters. It's a signifier that the fees are being earned. Ben Carlson points to this "agency" problem as one of the main reasons so many institutions order from a menu of convoluted solutions – it's the menu they've been brought by their waiter. And if something gets too simple, the intermediary can begin to feel his or her own place in the process becoming more vulnerable – what do we need you for? ...

- <http://839iat.se/ReformedBroker>

This is what I've learned from forty years of investing: **Simpler is good.**

Also, too, simpler is often better than anything else an investor can do. It's when a person believes that complicated/complex investment maneuvers will deliver more money into her/his pocket that trouble ensues.

Contract Holidays in 2016

Memorial Day (May 30)
Independence Day (July 4)

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and
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3D and Animation
Time Management
Conflict Resolution
Communication

Contact Mike Sauer (msauer@animationguild.org) to register today.
Annual subscriptions begin on September 1, 2015.



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and the TAG Blog ...

<http://animationguildblog.blogspot.com/>



GALLERY 839

MAY SHOW



CHARLES E. PICKENS

Charles E. Pickens feels greatly blessed to have been able to create art for over a half century. A graduate of Art Center College of Design Pasadena, and Long Beach City College, Charles enjoys creating figurative art. His medium of preference is Acrylic and Oil on canvas, water and oil base clay sculpting, and Photoshop digital drawing and painting. Charles has worked in the animation profession since 1989. His profession has allowed him the opportunity to travel and create theme park designs in Japan, as well as, allowing him the opportunity to create production art for major Los Angeles studios. Charles has created production art for studios such as, Warner Brothers, Walt Disney, M.G.M, Paramount and more. He is currently creating a series of paintings on canvas which depicts the environment of his childhood, an environment where creativity and ingenuity was a major part of everyday life.

**Please join us for the show's reception at Gallery 839 on
Friday, May 6th, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.**

FROM THE EDITOR, LAURA HOHMAN

WE ALL DESERVE RESPECT



During this last General Membership Meeting, there were some strong opinions going around when discussing the concerns of storyboard testing. While I believe the topic was well worth talking about, the way some of the statements came across made me realize something I have been slowly noticing for a long time; there is some serious ageism within The Animation Guild. While storyboard testing is a real issue, I feel the side comments made towards new artists out of college to be really uncalled for and unfair.

New membership in the Union has been on the rise over the past 2 years, growing our numbers up into the 3000s, and most of those new members are artists coming into the industry fresh from college. I still consider myself of the new generation of Union Members, and I have first hand experience of the pressures we face finding our first few jobs. Many of us without any real professional portfolio or relevant work experience, having moved across country without leads, and under huge student debt.

All these pressures, and this overwhelming desire to be working in this industry, make us push more than anyone should. (This includes doing many crazy storyboard tests, staying up all hours of the night, chugging red-bulls and driving ourselves to the brink, because we feel we have to and because we want it that badly.) I understand that its impossible to compete with this if you may have a family, or other responsibilities that take up your time, but by no means should that be a reason for anyone to diminish the drive and the talent that anyone, even someone new to the industry, may have. To claim that artists are being hired who don't have the skills and don't "deserve" the jobs is something I feel to be just as entitled and unjustified.

I believe both these kind of thoughts are degrading to artists, and are one of the reasons we don't see as many new members at our meetings. There are a lot of accusations thrown around and blame put on those who, in all cases, may not know any better, and are also desperate enough to do whatever it takes. Until we can view all artists as equal, instead of veterans versus desperate "youngins", we wont be able to fix any of these issues. Instead, we will just instill a greater divide, making the new membership less likely to be involved, and the established members increasingly upset about the lack of education of our new membership. Its a cycle that needs to end.

SAVE THE DATE

SCREEN CARTOONISTS' GOLF TOURNAMENT

**Saturday... May 14, 2016
Hansen Dam Golf Course**

**It's in nearby San Fernando. Tee Off start at 10 am.
All people in Cartoon Studios ... Producers, Artists,
Management, Contractors are considered eligible
members and may invite guests.**

**Approximate cost per player is \$100 and includes Golf
round, cart, post round meal, cash prizes for winners.**

**Perpetual trophies for winning members - Gross.. Net..
Calloway.**

**For entry info call Dave Brain 818 426 3178 or
Lyn Mantta (at TAG) 818 845 7500**

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