

# การสร้างสรรคผลงานสตอปโมชัน “Meta” ของคณะนิเทศศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยสยาม

## “Meta”, Stop Motion Animation Production for Faculty of Communication Arts, Siam University

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### บทคัดย่อ

บทความสร้างสรรค์ทางวิชาการนิเทศศาสตร์ฉบับนี้ เพื่อศึกษารูปแบบ กระบวนการวางแผน สร้างสรรค์งานอนิเมชันในรูปแบบสตอปโมชัน “Meta” สำหรับคณะนิเทศศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยสยาม โดยวัตถุประสงค์ที่สำคัญในการศึกษาค้นคว้าครั้งนี้คือ (1) เพื่อศึกษาลักษณะการสร้างสรรคสื่อประสมสตอปโมชันแอนิเมชัน เช่น การขยับวัตถุควบคู่กับพิกเซลเลชัน ทั้งเทคนิคและแนวคิดในการ สื่อสาร เพื่อตอบโจทยกลุ่มผู้ชม (2) เพื่อศึกษาปัญหาและอุปสรรคข้อจำกัดในการสร้างผลงานตลอดจนวิธีการแก้ไข การศึกษาค้นคว้านี้มีเป้าหมายสำคัญเพื่อนำองค์ความรู้ที่ได้ไปใช้ปรับปรุงการสอนแก่นักศึกษาคณะนิเทศศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยสยาม ซึ่งในการศึกษาค้นคว้านี้จะทำการศึกษาจากการสร้างสรรค์งานอนิเมชันในรูปแบบสตอปโมชัน “Meta” ที่ได้นำไปใช้ เป็นคลิปเปิดแนะนำช่องยูทูป ของคณะนิเทศศาสตร์มหาวิทยาลัยสยาม โดยผู้เขียนบทความ ได้ทำหน้าที่เป็นผู้อำนวยการสร้าง ผู้กำกับ และผู้ตัดต่อ ของผลงานสตอปโมชันชิ้นนี้

**คำสำคัญ:** สตอปโมชัน / พิกเซลเลชัน / อัดตา (เมตา)

### Abstract

This creative academic article in “Meta”, Stop Motion Animation Production for Faculty of Communication Arts, Siam University’ aims to present the knowledge, techniques and tools involved in producing the Stop Motion animation piece of the titular titled. The objectives of this study are: (1) Study the creative process in integrated types of stop motion i.e. object-based and pixilation, as well as the creative thoughts in visualizing each key scenes for audiences’ understanding. (2) Identifying problems, limitations and solutions that were used to solve them. The outcome of this study will be used to apply in teaching the students at Faculty of Communication Arts, Siam University. In this creative academic article will utilize the commissioned stop motion animation “Meta” for the Faculty of,

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Faculty of Communication Arts, Siam University which utilized as overall introductory video clip at the faculty's YouTube Channel. The author of this article was the producer, director and editor of the project.

Keywords: Stop Motion / Pixilation / Meta

### Inspiration

The stop motion animation “Meta” draws inspiration from the self-referential aspect of contemporary media which often references itself, its genre, or the actual production itself. The famous usage of metareferences in media is not something new or breakthrough, it has been done in various forms of media throughout history. Meta references can be found in literature, painting, films, comics, etc. however, the author drew inspiration mainly from the films.

### Metareference

Metareference is a form of self-reference which refer to itself in various different methods, to draw attention to, or reflecting upon issues within itself, the media or methods utilised in turn, “self-reflexively become objects of reflection and communication in their own right” (Wolf, Werner. 2009). A more colloquial term of metareference is ‘Breaking the fourth wall’ coined from the work in theatre, where the fourth wall is “the invisible wall which is imagined to exist across the front of the stage in proscenium-arch staging, which separates the audience from the actors and through which the audience can see but the actors cannot” (Mangan, 2013), to break the fourth wall, the theatre performer turns and interact with the audience, hence the fourth wall is broken. Examples of metareferences in popular media that has influenced this work are as follows.



Figure 1: figure showing the famous metareference fourth wall break in Spaceballs (Mel Brooks, 1987)



Figure 2: figure showing the titular character Ferris Bueller addressing the audience after the end credit

### “Spaceballs” (1987)

This 1987 Mel Brooks comedy famously has its characters pop in a video of the film itself, finding themselves on the screen. Rick Moranis hysterically says, “What the hell am I looking at? When does this happen in the movie?” (Strassberg and Rodriguez, 2014) The main humour of this scene stems from usage of life feed to mimic the rolling of the film currently shown that infer to the audience that what the characters experiencing is concurrently happening.

### “Ferris Bueller’s Day Off” (1986)

The titular character often breaks the fourth wall by talking and addressing to the audience as if he is the audience’s buddy, starting from the beginning of film to tell about his technique to fool the parents up until the end of the film after end credits rolled to tell the audience to go home.

### Case Study: “Meta”

The author was commissioned by the current dean of the Faculty of Communication Arts to create a short stop motion to shortly demonstrate the faculty, the students, and what can be expected. The brief specified the usage of stop motion as the medium of choice, mainly due to the physicality of the art form as well as how

the digital imaging technology enables more accessibility to the contemporary generations with its unique charm of its ‘rawness’ and ‘practical effects’ that helps distinguished itself from other universities’ introductory video clips which are mainly 5-10 minutes story-driven plots and dramatic or effects-driven productions. The stop motion “Meta” utilizes a combination of stop motion technique with ‘Object-based’ stop motion and ‘Pixilation’ that involves human actors moving frame-by-frame to convey the story. Multiple camera angles are utilized as if the camera itself is a character and narrator that slowly revealing the scenes, thus slowly letting the audience know they are watching the metareference of the video being produced.

#### Equipment

The following equipments were used for the production

1. Camera Gear
  - 1.1 DSLR Camera, Canon EOS 5D Mark III and Canon EOS 600D
  - 1.2 Lens, Canon EF-S 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 IS, Canon EF 24-70mm f/2.8L
  - 1.3 Micro USB cable adapter
  - 1.4 2 Tripods
2. Lighting Equipment
  - 2.1 2-4 LED Bulbs and mounts
  - 2.2 Light Stands
3. Software
  - 3.1 Dragonframe 4
  - 3.2 Adobe Premiere Pro CC

## Pre-Production

### 1. Obtaining the brief and requirements

1.1 The clip uses stop motion as demonstration to capabilities of students to produce a stop motion production

1.2 The stop motion should involve a Lego® Minifigures as a character

1.3 The output must not exceed 2 minutes in length

1.4 The output should demonstrate the students' life, working projects, and facilities.

1.5 The production utilizes students as cast and crew to practice their skills in media production.

### 2. Draft up the script and rough storyboard sketches to explain each scene.

2.1. The author took keen interest in the idea of self-referential Meta in contemporary media that parodies or refers to itself as such and using the creative process itself as the means to convey the message.

2.2. The key scenes are laid out chronologically as it happens

2.3. The transition from one 'view' to another 'frame'



Figure 3: figure of draft storyboard to convey ideas of each scene and sequence transitions.

After the story has been approved, the author contacted the students regarding this production in order to set up the designated date and locations.

## Production

The Production team consists of a team of students as both actors and crew.

1. Camera Operators (Students) (1) Controls the operation of camera for each shot and (2) Checking camera focus and kept consistent settings throughout each scene

2. Director (author) (1) Oversees the production process and (2) Direction of movements and characters actions. (3) Keeping tracks of completed scenes.



Figure 4: figure showing production process

3. Actors (Students) (1) Acting in each designated scenes. and (2) Camera operators become actors themselves at the key point transition.

The author stood as director of the production and at the beginning of shooting day has gather the cast and crew to explain the roles and how the production would be filmed. Each scene was designed to be shot consecutively and chronologically, as the students has experiences in stop motion production prior to this production, they grasps the production basics easily. The author explained what is required of each scene while allowed creative freedom of the crew as to how to approach the making of each shot with available equipment.

Once the crew has decided on how to film the scene, the author had them testing out the camera movement with video clip through their mobile phones to see how it should turn out. The production scheduled to finish within two days, with some incongruent transition that require minimal reshoot in the second day.

### Post Production

The post production process consists mainly of collecting all photographs from the two main cameras then processed and edited with photo processing and video editing application software as follows.

1. Import the photographs into photo editing software Adobe Lightroom, then proceed to batch crop frames into consistent 16:9 format ratio.
2. Check each frame for any inconsistencies and remove them in necessary.
3. Color correct some scenes for consistencies and continuity.
4. Export the edited frames in sets as JPEG then import them into video editing software.
5. Video editing by putting each frame into consecutive order, adjust speed and duration.
6. Adjust the key transition frames for continuity.
7. Adding background music to match the pacing.
8. Adding minor special effects, as well as color grading each scenes to make them stand out.

9. Export the edited video in 1080p HD format suitable for distribution via online platform, i.e. YouTube

In order to let the audience submerge into the Meta of the process from one format to another, i.e. from paper storyboard transitioning to actual Lego stop motion then, to how it was shot to how that behind the scene was shot, to the post processing of the prior behind the scene. The author who edit the footage must utilize the frame to make one appear as if follows the other. This is done by scaling the frame, rotate etc. to match the previous frame. At certain transition scenes the frame is repeated without audience suspecting that it is a repeat scene, this method was achieved by scaling out the frame as well as rotate it slightly so that it matches the camera shaky movements of a stop motion.



Figure 5: figure showing the video transition editing to match the subsequence frames.

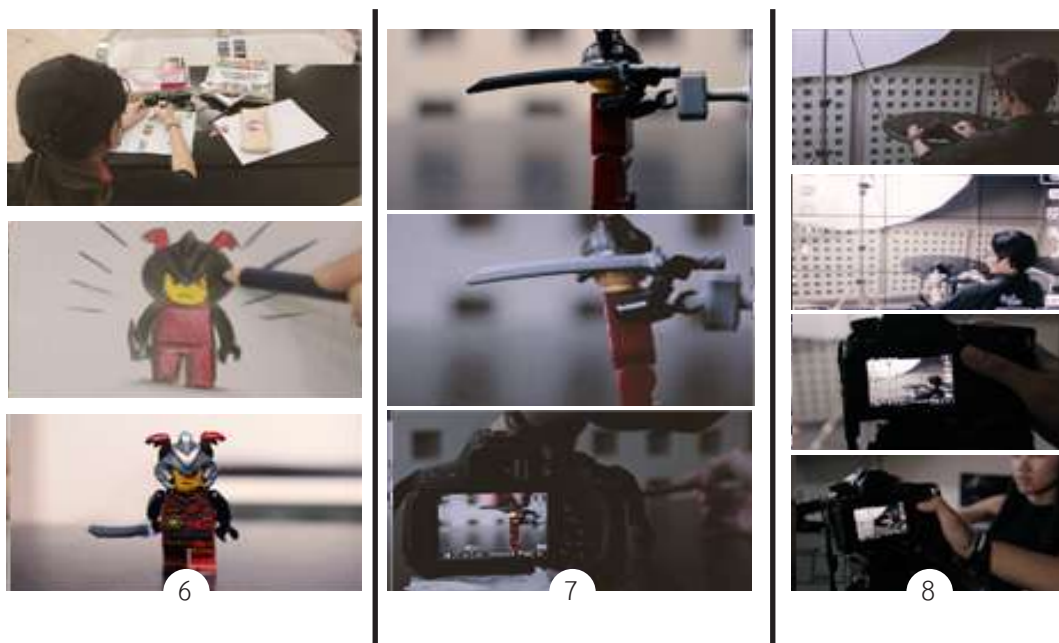


Figure 6: figure showing key scene of transition from paper storyboard to actual Lego stop motion.

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Figure 7: figure showing transition from the Lego stop motion to behind the scene of this production.

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Figure 8: figure showing transition from the scene depicting stop motion production to behind the scene of itself.

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Figure 9: figure showing the transition from behind the scene of itself to the actual editing of the prior scene.

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Figure 10: figure showing the character breaking the fourth wall by nodding to the audience.

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### Conclusion of case study

The creative process in the stop motion “Meta” key elements are how each scenes depicts process of producing the stop motion and the transition that connects the frames from paper to Lego Minifigures

to the person behind the camera animating the Minifigures to the crew behind the scene to the whole team revealed to be editing the prior scene, thus creating the allusion to meta in the production of the stop motion piece itself. The conclusion of this case study is aimed to identify the creative processes involved in the production, problems, obstacles and limitations as follows:

1. Camera movement: the camera of this stop motion does not stay put, the camera itself has to move at the same pace as each movement of the character or actors. The crew must work together to move the camera along the designated path as well as making sure the subject remain in the frame. Utilizing the recent models of DSLR Camera which comes with rotatable screen that can be viewed

from various angles has helped the production immensely due to its flexibility for the scene required.

2. Matching the transition frame: due to scenes require switching set, the crew is assisted by a computer software specializes in stop motion called Dragonframe, this software enables the feature 'Onion Skin' which overlays the composed shot with Live View from the connected camera thus the subsequent shot can be aligned to be as close to the previous one. Despite having an assisted software to compose the shot, the scene still require some editing in order to match the frame as close to perfection as possible.

3. Reshoot: the planned production was to have it shot chronologically, the crew ran into trouble figuring out how the first scene should be shot, subsequently delaying the following scene of Lego stop motion. The crew decided to put the Lego stop motion production to the following day, and focus the efforts in remaining scenes as it requires more manpower...

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