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Flowerpot Men
The Haptic Image in Brian Cosgrove and Richard Hall's Animations

I. The Haptic Image

Haptic is a term used to describe the experience of touch. In most fields it refers to a generalised tactile sensibility. For example in *Child Psychology*, haptic is defined as 'the perceptual experience that results from active exploration of objects by touch' (Vasta et al. 1999, p.201). In recent art history and media theory, haptic is a term that has come to articulate the perception of touch through any experiential means. So one may have a haptic experience through vision, sound, taste etc., without any exclusive use of the touch sense itself.

Haptic visuality (Marks 2002, p. xiii) or viewing, detaches this sense of touch in order to focus exclusively on that which is experienced via vision. In other words one can experience the sensation of touch through vision alone. This application of the term has its basis in art history (Gandelman 1991, p.5) but has more recently also been adapted to apply to the moving image and cinema theory. For example, an image of skin being cut, or an intimate portrayal of the texture of a stone wall facilitate an haptic viewing. The eye is able to relate in the brain the process of a tactile sensation without the viewer's physical touch sense (i.e. the skin) playing any part in the process.

Haptic viewing moments such as these occur frequently within cinema, as well as in other visual arts. French philosopher Gilles Deleuze was one of the earliest to address such a moment within film in his interpretation of a scene from Robert Bresson's *Pickpocket* in which hands are depicted brushing against each other and passing around an object:

> The hand doubles its prehensile function (of object) by a connective function (of space); but from that moment, it is the whole eye which doubles its optical function by a specifically 'grabbing' [*haptique*] one, if we follow Reigl's formula for indicating a touching which is specific to the gaze. (Deleuze 2005, p.12)

Deleuze refers to the early twentieth century art historian Alöis Reigl in his use of the term 'haptique'. In order to situate the haptic qualities of an image, Alöis Riegl makes a comparison between haptic and optical viewing.

> Riegl stated that one type of artistic procedure, which corresponds to a certain way of looking, is based on the scanning of objects according to their outlines. This trajectory of the regard Riegl called the optical. The opposite type of vision, which focuses on surfaces and emphasises the value of the superficies of objects, Riegl called the haptical (from the Greek *haptein*, 'to seize, grasp,' or *haptikos*, 'capable of touching'). (Gandelman 1991, p.5)

The optical viewing mode is perhaps a more widely recognised way of seeing for contemporary cinema audiences. That is, they watch a film and observe the actions of objects or figures on screen, in order to follow some sort of narrative. It is important to note, however, that this need not inhibit a haptic viewing in any way. As Laura Marks stresses, 'In the sliding relationship between haptic and optical, distant vision gives way to touch, and touch reconceives the object to be seen from a distance' (Marks 2002, p.xvi). So when the viewer sees an image, it is in terms of the complex, continually shifting association between the haptic and the optical.

II. Haptics and Stop-motion Animation

I have carried out analytical research that compared a range of feature films from Jan Švankmajer and Ray Harryhausen.[1] Its aim was to detect similarly visual instances, within such different examples of animation, in order to reveal haptic visual qualities that were potentially inherent to the form. Subsequently, I have proceeded to establish a number of devices for discerning the haptic moments within stop-motion animation. It is the aim of this study to apply these devices and prove their relevance to the topic and the animated image.

For the purposes of this research, stop-motion animation includes any sort of animated filmmaking that constructs a moving image via the sequential movement and image capture of a physically present object. The focus of this research is on puppet or model replacement animation, which could be considered a significant sub-set of stop-motion animation.[2]

The interpretation of such haptic visual moments in stop-motion animation can be categorised in terms of what I have defined as five key cinematic devices:

Framing and Intimacy of camera to object

The proximity of the camera to the surface of an object has much to do with how we perceive its texture. Two cinematic concepts come into play here: framing and depth of field. Framing establishes what will fill the screen, be it an extreme close up on fur or a wide-angle establishing shot of a city-scape. Depth of field determines where the objects are situated in relation to the camera and therefore establishes a concept of distance. With a large depth of field the texture of the grass in the foreground can be as clearly depicted as the shape of the hills in the background of the same shot. In relation to haptics, if the camera lens draws so close to an object that its figure/shape is obscured and only its surface can be observed, this facilitates an entirely haptic viewing. When/if the camera pulls back to allow the figure/shape of the object to be observed this then allows for an optical viewing.

Depiction of light and shadow

The distinction between light and dark plays an integral role in the eye's ability to observe a texture. The relative difference detected by the eye between areas of light and areas of no light allows the eye to 'feel' or recognise and translate the touch sensation associated with an image of a texture (eg. fur or gravel).

Film stock/quality

The moment that the eye is drawn to difference is key in terms of defining the haptic vision. This element applies to the visibility or discrepancy in how the quality of film or film stock used depicts an image. For example the difference is obvious when one compares the image quality of the two versions of *Bill and Ben*, one from 1953 (Cosgrove Hall Productions/BBC 1953) and Cosgrove Hall's treatment in 2001 (Cosgrove Hall Productions/BBC 2001). If one sets aside assumptions associated with technology of each of the productions respective cinematic age, and one focuses instead on the texture or screen surface that each presents, then a haptic viewing can be achieved. The moment the eye is drawn to a discrepancy in the quality of the image, in relation

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[1] This research was presented as an unpublished essay entitled *Touching on the Form: How stop-motion animation represent the animator's reality.*
[2] The process involves hand animating a physically crafted character often within a set or scene, to be photographed frame-by-frame.

to what it is used to seeing, this experience of texture constitutes a visually haptic moment. Marks' analysis of the haptic visual qualities of video art takes a serious look at this concept and the steps that artists have taken to recognise the existence of screen texture.[3]

Fragmentation versus fluidity of movement

The process of animating demands that an object's movement becomes fragmented, that is, any cycle of movement is created or planned and then captured in a series of still frames. Therefore, unlike live-action cinema, the object really never moves of its own accord. This poses a query as to what spaces the object occupies between frames – in the images that the viewer will never be able to see. In other words, a haptic image can exist as a still image. The effect that the process of animation has on such an image – that is, a successive simulation of movement via the position and capture of still frames – raises the issue of haptic movement. In a scene from Jan Švankmajer's *Alice* the puppet version of Alice floats down a stream of water. Whilst her movement is fragmented, this is in relative difference to the movement of the stream that she floats down. Therefore, one element's believability of movement must be sacrificed. In this case it is the role of movement of the water versus Alice's character that becomes disrupted. The puppet appears to have authentic movement and the water does not, whereas in the actual filming process this is the other way around. The nature of the water's original movement is very different to that of the film frames that are being played in a successive order. In other words the two elements originally moved at different velocities but via the animating process they are manipulated to take on a more equal speed. This leads to the eye being drawn to the unusual or strange movement of the water. This facilitates a similar haptic observation of the relatively foreign surface of an object that has its figure obscured. Hence, what the eye is drawn to in terms of difference or contrast exists as an instance of haptic movement.

Sound

Sound can play a huge part in supplementing a visually haptic image, just as it is able to create its own haptic aural experience. However, as the present article focuses on the haptic *image*, minimal reference will be made to the role of sound, even as a supplement to the haptic image.

III. Cosgrove Hall's Haptic Images

Stop-motion or model animation has such a naturally inherent physicality and tactility that in it haptic images can exist on a more equal footing with optical images. Model animation for children concentrates on a sense of tactility, yet also manages to allow for the prevalence of figure and character, thereby offering the right environment in which to locate this balance. It is a simultaneous intention that such an investigation will further strengthen my claims towards the inherent haptic visual qualities of stop-motion animation in general.

In order to carry out this analysis, I will analyse the stop-motion or model animated programmes produced by Cosgrove Hall in relation to the aforementioned devices. This company has a thirty year history of producing a variety of animated productions for children. I will concentrate on *Chorlton and the Wheelies* (1976), *Noddy* (Cosgrove Hall Productions/BBC 1992),

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[3] Many of these works manipulate the celluloid or video image directly in order to accentuate the screen as a surface, rather than as a transparent pane for looking through. Although Marks does not refer to him specifically, Len Lye's direct animation technique is a good example of this. This technique involves scratching and painting directly on to blank film celluloid, therefore bringing what is presented on screen as close as possible to the surface of the screen.

Bill and Ben, Flower Pot Men (Cosgrove Hall Productions/BBC 2001) and *Little Robots* (Cosgrove Hall Productions/BBC 2003). These films effectively represent the company's stop-motion/model animation pursuits in terms of time span, commercial success and variation in style.[4]

Framing and Intimacy of camera to object

In terms of the textures that the camera reveals to the audience, there is a sharp contrast between textures that are recontextualised and those that have been reclaimed. Recontextualised textures are those that are easily recognisable as textiles or materials that might exist predominantly within the viewer's world. Textures such as fur, hair, woollen textiles and wood grain are examples of these. They become apparent to the eye because they stand out in terms of scale, relative to associations of scale prompted by the character models (which are all less than fifty centimetres tall). So the extent to which the size of the wood grain and the fineness of the hair and fur fibres contrast, in scale, to the other elements within the diegesis (i.e. a character's hand or eye) indicate that the material has been taken from another context. In terms of the haptic image, this distracts the eye from the figure or objects and draws it to focus on a more direct tactile moment and one that relates back to the viewer's subjective tactile knowledge.

In contrast to recontextualised textures, the predominant aesthetic theme of the animations is smooth, flat and rounded surfaces and bright, solid colours. This may have something to do with the technical requirements in terms of maintaining consistency and continuity in such a highly changeable and precarious filmmaking process. This aesthetic does not necessarily pervade all areas of design but certainly dominates. Also, some productions appear to make use of this aesthetic more so than others do. The sets, props and characters in *Chorlton and the Wheelies* and *Noddy*, for example, prescribe to this aesthetic, whereas for *Bill and Ben* and *Little Robots* effort seems to have been put into including and constructing other textural aesthetics. In *Bill and Ben* there are a lot of organic textures that may situate the diegesis in a space that becomes easily associated with the viewer's own environment (e.g. their backyard). *Little Robots* reworks the recontextualised aesthetic via an interesting artistic technique in which the smooth surfaces of the puppets and set appear somewhat greasy or grimy. Whilst managing to retain a consistency of texture, the look is disrupted in such a way so that rather than a colour appearing bright and uniform there is a notable amount of tonal variation.

Design intentions also influence the depiction of colour and shape in terms of creating a look that will appeal to young audiences. Cosgrove Hall's creative director Bridget Appleby suggests that

> The round bellies, biggish hands and bright embraceable costumes of Astronaut Al and Messenger Mo [from *Engie Bengie* another Cosgrove Hall production] allow the characters' childlike personalities to easily shine through.' For her, the colorful, clean lines of preschool programming are both fine art and great fun. 'I think there's a danger with model animation; to build in too much detail,' Appleby says. 'That's not necessary for me. I think simple lines are best. Simplicity allows the depth and richness of a character to come out in the animation. (Street 2002, p. 20)

There is an evident desire in terms of the production process, to create characters and sets with clean simple shapes and bold colours that are easily perceived and understood by very young audiences.

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[4] According to executive producer Chris Bowden the main production techniques used to produce the films are model replacement and poseable puppets. Models are constructed from a steel armature skeleton with a foam latex or silicon skin (and occasionally fibreglass for heads) in order to sculpt the character's body. Costumes and props are 'generally regular fabrics that can be store bought but died and printed to our specifications.'

Such an aesthetic is achieved via the sculpture of materials such as latex, clay, rubber, fibreglass and spray paint. In terms of the art form one could even go so far as to say that the smooth clay/latex material has become a look so well recognised in relation to stop-motion that it has been claimed as something intrinsic and distinct to the art form. This is where the concept of reclaimed texture becomes apparent. The look has become so innate to this form of moving image that it becomes difficult to locate the textures as belonging to anywhere but the diegesis itself. The striking look of such a texture – that is, one that is unique to its diegesis (and in the case of these films an often very surreal diegesis at that) – immediately registers with the eye's haptic awareness.

The textures within these productions present themselves as extremely visually haptic in terms of their relative recognisability and the eye's tendency to attempt to place them within an original context. This concept of texture placement is also something that is particularly relevant to Cosgrove Hall's programmes, wherein entire fantasy or foreign environments are created in terms of *mise en scéne*. Further, it seems that recontextualised textures are obscured wherever possible. For example in scenes that include leaves or bush within *Bill and Ben* and *Noddy*, the plants are positioned either too far away or too close to the camera. This makes the details of the object often appear out of focus but also provides the depiction of the set with a certain depth-of-field.[5] The difficulties involved in simulating organic or 'natural' objects may play a part in such a tactic. In other words, the ability of the eye to discern the texture of the object as being uncharacteristic means that it is preferable to obscure the camera's depiction of these elements. Through dark lighting and extreme close-up within a large depth of field, the elements can exist within the scene as environmentally relevant objects in terms of colour and rough outline. They then avoid comparison to other, less authentic scene elements, such as the characters themselves. Note here that, relative to such elements, the characters are placed in areas of light and remain the focus of the scene.

Depiction of light and shadow

The application of light and shadow in relation to haptic viewing can be perceived similarly to that of the reclaimed textures. The most noticeable aspect of the lighting in these productions is that it is everywhere and in abundance, except where it is not supposed to be. Where an area of shadow is needed, it is applied in extreme contrast to the predominantly well-lit remainder of the scene. For example, in *Bill and Ben* only the shed and the Slowcoach's home receive such a relatively shadowed lighting design and, where this is applied, it in very high contrast. In *Noddy and the Broken Bicycle* the night scene appears to be lit almost like a stage, with blue light and chiaroscuro patterns projected on the ground. In terms of texture, high contrast lighting such as this uses side-lighting in order to draw out surfaces relative to each other, therefore potentially increasing the haptic qualities of the image. Such an approach aligns with the tendency of these programmes to present the *mise en scéne* as a discrete set, reminiscent of theatrical stages or puppet shows.

Light is also utilised to obscure recontextualised materials, again in order to promote the status of reclaimed textures. In this way, the brightly lit[6] versus the shadow obscured textures create a surreal and fantasy based dieges. The lighting presents everything in the diegesis as too

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[5] Such an effect is also supplemented through lighting, especially with the use of high contrast, light and dark areas as will be discussed.

[6] It is important to discern here between an over-saturated lighting setup and maximised saturation. To describe a scene as 'brightly lit' refers in this example to a technical lighting temperature that maximises the saturation of colour in the shot. In other words the exposure will sit towards the middle of the range of exposure times and temperatures. This gives the effect of full colour saturation so that the scene appears 'bright' but not over lit. This in turn will maximise the visibility of both light and dark and therefore any notable textures.

real or ultra real, which in turn draws attention to its status as a make-believe world. This helps to assert the diegesis-specific position of materials like latex and painted balsa/plastic, and of the presence of recontextualised materials that are left very visible (hair, fur etc.).

Film stock/quality

As with the lighting techniques, the film quality and post-production elements maintain a crystal clear image, especially in the most recent *Little Robots*. It is unclear as to the technical specifications of film stock used in these films, however the establishment of Cosgrove Hall's new C.G. (Computer Graphics) unit suggests the intention for an image of film quality to be produced. The relative visual clarity and quality of a screen image is of course an inevitable artefact of technological developments, but its presence certainly helps reinforce the surreal, ultra bright environments created by lighting and use of colours. The granular and relatively washed out colours of *Chorlton and the Wheelies* (and even the relatively recent episodes of *Noddy*) is a notable artefact that marks a contrast to the more recent productions. This is despite the fact that its production, compared with productions from a similar era and with similar budgets, would seem to have had relatively equal attention to image quality as its predecessors. The haptic image qualities of the film stock itself seem to be an element that becomes haptically more relevant when discrepancies occur. Any elements such as a granular picture, noticeable qualitative differences relative to contemporary cinematographic film or damage can provide moments in which the screen develops a surface for itself.

Fragmentation versus fluidity of movement

The movement of the models in all of the productions is strikingly noticeable to the haptically viewing eye. Characters move with a combination of sliding, jerky movements and completely still poses. The use of wheel-based technological implements is also a recurring theme in terms of how the characters move about on set. While these instances are again specific design strategies that are symptomatic of the technical constraints of simulating movement in stop-motion animation, they are utilised to enhance characterisation (eg. Bill and Ben's sliding, Noddy's tricycle, Chorlton's wheeling). The jerkiness of the characters' movement may arise from the ratio of the length of limbs to the number of joints in a model. This gives the impression of broken up or arthritic movement that has a visually haptic sensation to it. For example, in a scene in which Noddy helps Big Ears (an elderly character that had injured himself in a bicycle accident) to walk, despite Big Ears being doubled over, his walking movement does not appear dissimilar from Noddy's. This sort of character design, accompanied with their movement, is one that enhances their toy-like status.

This would cohere with the aforementioned claim that haptic qualities of the moving stop-motion image are perceived with the awareness of discrepancies in the natural movement of an object. So, when one notices a walk cycle that appears different to what may be witnessed outside of the animation's diegesis, the eye attempts to discern what is causing such a discrepancy. Also, because the viewer is aware of the nature of the character, their physical movement becomes naturalised and does not distract from the haptic qualities of the movement. In other words in *Chorlton and the Wheelies*, their strange frenetic, sliding movement does not distract the viewer from the character itself, but adds to the entire diegesis. The majority of the characters move in this way and this haptic motion therefore becomes more identifiable with the show as a whole

and its production style, rather than as some character-based quality. The haptic movement is a sensation the viewer experiences when watching the programme and as such need not interfere with narrative or character based concepts.

IV. The Child Audience and Play Simulation

Cosgrove Hall's animated productions have proven extremely popular throughout their thirty-year history. The success of their model-animations is no exception. Professionally they have won a number of reputable film and television awards and their productions sell to over eighty countries around the world (Pelling 2001, p.16). According to Iain Pelling, 'programs like *Fetch the Vet* and *Bill & Ben* sell faster than they can be produced in more territories than ever before' (2001, p.16).

The consumer demographic responsible for giving these model animations such a warm reception consists of a child audience aged up to about five years old. This is both the market at which they are targeted and the actual group that have subsequently become their audience. Chris Bowden (2006) asserts that the programmes included in this research have all been targeted at the three to five year old age group. Also, although industry ratings information remains unavailable, the awards gathered by the shows and the nostalgic 'fan sites' that exist are evidence enough of their popularity.[7] I suggest that the haptic visual qualities of the form play a major role in such audience appeal. By extension, it can be argued that the way this age group perceives haptic images is unique.

In *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media*, Laura Marks makes a number of references to haptics in her discussion of infants' perception highlighting the psychoanalytic aspect:

> If we were to describe it [the haptic] in psychoanalytic terms, we might argue that haptics draw on an erotic relationship between mother and infant. In this relationship, the subject (the infant) comes into being through the dynamic play between the appearance of the wholeness of the other (the mother) and the awareness of being distinct. (2002, p.17)

Marks also addresses children's haptic perception within a more psychological frame of reference: 'Infants can feel but they cannot identify what they feel, because the ability to symbolise must be acquired.' (2002, p.11). In Marks' understanding then, infantile perception is based around minimal, symbolic vision and the reliance on touch – the infant's tactile relationship with its mother – for the basics of survival.

Research into infantile perception from a more empirical psychological perspective would seem to correspond with such a position. According to Tom Bower's *The Perceptual World of the Child*, 'lack of knowledge means that a baby cannot use his perceptual system in the same way that adults can' (1977, p.8). He then links this idea to infant physiology.

> [T]he lens of the eye, which can change its shape in adults to permit precise focusing of objects at different distances, does not change in infants. This means that the image projected onto the infants retina is somewhat blurrier than that typically projected onto the adult's; at worst, the infant might not see some things that are perfectly visible to the adult. (1977, p.16)

For Bower then, not only does the image that the infant sees lack the associated knowledge of an adult's perception, but it seems that the image itself is also of a lesser clarity.

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7 Both *Bill and Ben* and *Little Robots* have won industry awards and web sites such as 'Cosgrove Hall Ate My Brain' prove that even older shows such as *Chorlton and the Wheelies* not only enjoyed a popular reception but have established a cult status as classic animation.

There appears to be, however, a lack of conclusive evidence in finding such a difference in the visual aesthetics of perception at the age of the viewing audience that Cosgrove Hall's model animations attract (i.e. up to the age of five years). The difference that does remain in such an audience compared to their adult counterparts is the role of prior knowledge and the concept of reality that is subsequently perceived. Such an anthropological investigation was carried out in relation to a programme called *The Sooty Show*, which was also a British produced, puppet-based (although not stop-motion) production made for children in the late 1980's. In 'The Bear (Ir)Realities', the authors discuss the relationship of play, reality and perception of the audience of this show. They look into how the young audience can perceive a programme and to what extent this image is understood as something that is really happening.

The study has much to offer in relation to the haptic perception of young audiences of stop-motion animation. The authors suggest that *The Sooty Show*'s audience is in an extended play phase of pretence (Smith et. al., 2001, p.112), one of the developmental stages established by child psychologist, Jean Piaget: 'This is said to be accompanied by more solitary play and a greater reliance on predefined characters and themes, as derived from media-related and marketed toys' (Smith et. al., 2001, p.112) Essentially, the study aligns the child-audiences' perception of the programme with a form of play activity. In addition to this 'because Sooty is constituted as both a TV persona and a merchandised toy, there is a necessity to interrelate play, media, and children's material culture more broadly' (Smith et. al., 2001, p.112). So the manner in which the programme aligns itself with play is further enhanced by the marketability of its characters as toys, rather than solely as on-screen puppets. Both of these points would suggest that these television programmes simulate the process of play via the onscreen animation of toy-related figures and worlds.[8]

Such a simulation suggests that the audience contributes a certain level of belief in the reality of what appears on screen. As is suggested in 'The Bear (Ir)Realities':

> [T]he show becomes perhaps for those child viewers even more exciting than their own play because of their capacity to look into a world from without, where the world looked into, although containing many possible typical imaginative themes, presents itself as bizarre but nonetheless real.'(Smith et. al., 2001, p.120).

The suggestion here is that the child-aged audience is at a developmental stage in which they are able to perceive onscreen action as believable. As mentioned above, the lack of prior adult specific knowledge and their associations with real world play experiences means that the child witnesses a play simulation. It is one that is perhaps even more vivid (or at least more explicitly 'occurring') than the world of play, imagined in the interaction that they have with their physically present toys. Whilst this study finds such use of the term 'real' and 'reality' problematic, particularly within the field of media studies, such an assertion certainly seems to concur with the idea of the apparent simulation of the play process that is/can be perceived.

If one considers the possibility that the audiences of these shows are at a stage of development that allows them to engage in a detached, playful simulation, then the role of haptics in this process can assert itself as an essential characteristic of the animation. The tactile parallels drawn between the moving image and the play in the physically present world are able to transfer across the screen surface. In other words the qualities addressed above (camera intimacy, lighting, movement etc.) all contribute to the potential haptic perception of the audience. The tactile images affect the young viewer's perception so that they are able to enjoy the experience of a

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[8] The common transition that these program concepts make into the toy market itself is also significant of and further cements the association of the play process. Both *Bill and Ben* and *Noddy* have had their characters marketed as products within the toy industry and *Little Robots* has an interactive web site (associated with the BBC) where children can extend the play process past the programme itself.

fantasy play situation being played out in front of them. This occurs much in the same way as if they were involved in the creative imagining of such a scene with their own toys. The marketing opportunities that have been exploited in terms of merchandise created in relation to the shows are further proof of the existence of this connection.

V. Accessing a Haptic Audience

One aspect of what has motivated a research project of this nature stems from the observed presence of an anxiety concerning the popular status of stop-motion animation. Despite the fact that in 2005-06 two commercially successful stop-motion animated feature films were released,[9] the legitimacy of the form as a commercially viable genre of moving image is frequently challenged. The suitability of such an art form for mass production, for example, has perhaps been hindered by what can be perceived as technical impairments. The production efficiency of stop-motion animation has made relatively small technological advancements in terms of the actual animating process. Chris Bowden (2006) advises of the process that: 'We have improved the technology of cameras and digital recording devices but the technique of moving a puppet a frame at a time and taking a picture remains unchanged from the turn of the century.' This seemingly inherent characteristic of the art form is what fuels public opinion that it cannot be commercially viable[10].[10] It is this characteristic that also grounds the form within a specifically haptic sensibility – the physical process of touching the object in order to animate it has never changed.

A further point, which should be made here, relates to the development and addition of C.G. to the model animation process. It is understood that Cosgrove Hall has recently established a C.G. unit and the addition of computer manipulations to images within film's such as *Corpse Bride* are signs that the two techniques are increasingly merging. This research takes the stance that in order to retain an authentically haptic image, the filmmaker must involve himself or herself with the production in a physically tactile way. Bowden (2006) has suggested that

> kids do seem to respond well to stop-motion puppets. Even though compared to C.G. animation it's relatively limiting there is a very definite sense of something real moving around on screen. Also because animator's are making the shots frame-by-frame, there is an inherent element of organic imperfection to the movements which is far more real than perfectly programmed moves of some CG shows.

This is not to say that C.G. techniques will not and have not made allowances for a haptic approach. Devices such as 3D sculpture tools and translators have made steps towards retaining the three dimensional physicality of what will become 3D computerised images. Therefore, the evidently changing nature of the haptic image in light of such technological developments is an area that has become increasingly relevant to emerging discourse on the topic.

The model animations of Cosgrove Hall have proven popular with young audiences because of their ability to create an on screen play environment. The construction and manipulation of diegeses made entirely from reclaimed and recontextualised textures and the placement of toy-like characters in such a space invites what is termed as a *haptic* viewing. Such a viewing functions due to the ability for the programme's young audience to believe in the physical existence of such

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[9] Aardman animation's *Wallace and Gromit: The Curse of the Wererabbit*, directed by Nick Park and *Corpse Bride*, directed by Tim Burton, were both feature length stop-motion animated productions that received widespread cinematic release and had significant box office success, reaching top 10 ratings in U.S. box-office figures in 2005 (see: *News for Corpse Bride*).

[10] The following is an example of such popular criticism form a DVD review web site: 'stop-motion animation is a dying art form, considering its look can be neatly recreated in CG without the time and expense of creating and filming puppets. Virtually the only studios keeping it alive are Laika Entertainment-originally founded by Will Vinton, renamed after he was ousted by owner Phil Knight; they were the animation house responsible for Tim Burton's *Corpse Bride* and they're now the home of Henry Selick-and Aardman Animation.' (Jackson, *DVD Verdict Review*).

an on screen situation. In other words the productions present a simulation of a play situation that the child viewer may relate to their own process of play with toys. The presence of visually haptic elements in these productions facilitates the translation and relation of an extremely haptic screen environment. Its reception is based on the highly tactile process of a child playing and creating imaginary environments with their own toys. ✍

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