

25 May, 2024

Dear Sir or Madam,

This letter will serve as an introduction to Samuel Stenbeck Straarup. I have been serving as a Mentor to Samuel through CGSpectrum (CGS), one of the largest international online instructional facilities for animation and visual effects.

Samuel and I began working together in September of 2022, and what initially impressed me about him was his quiet but incredibly passionate nature regarding his 2D Animation studies. Every single one of his required exercises during our first term were executed with speed and accuracy, and I became fascinated by his frequent “surprise” submissions – those duplicated exercises in which he went far beyond the CGS requirements by adding a little something extra.

As I've been a professional in the Los Angeles-based animation community for over 35 years and teaching 2D Animation at the university and post-secondary level for the past four years, I'd not seen anyone with the skills and understanding Samuel had at his nascent stage for this art form.

One of the hardest things for any beginning animator to accomplish is a walk cycle in either biped or quadruped form. Samuel's very first attempt at a biped walk and subsequent requirement to create a shadow effect to accompany his character was an unmatched success (none of my prior CGS students had been able to fully complete this exercise), prompting me to immediately take his work in this exercise to the Animation Manager at CGS. My supervisor promptly agreed Samuel was naturally gifted, and I was then given the directive to loosely abandon the CGS structure and tutor Samuel as I saw fit.

Samuel's second and third terms of 2D Animation Foundations were comprised of a broad mix of CGS assignments coupled with some ideas of our own, and he earnestly took to these with his usual dedication and intensity. His entire third term Two Character Dialogue Project was given an Award of Excellence by CGS, and I couldn't have been more proud of Samuel.

The CGS 2D Cut Out Animation instruction module proves to be an absolute challenge for anyone learning this latest iteration of the 2D Animation art form, but Samuel turned his frustrations with (successfully!) assembling, rigging and animating a quadruped during Term 2 into an exercise of hilarity, as you'll see in his reel at 08:13. Moreover, his work with free, “off the shelf” cut out rigs revealed to me an *incredibly* advanced sense of acting and staging, which you'll see beginning at 08:38 in his reel.

To sum up, I simply cannot express how astonishingly impressed I am with both Samuel's talent and tenacity. It's clear to me (as well as my supervisors and professional colleagues) he's a natural-born animator, and I wholeheartedly recommend Samuel for any and all endeavors he chooses to pursue. It's been one of my greatest lifetime joys to have had the opportunity to work with Samuel and, as a result, I've long considered him a close, personal friend. I look forward to continue working closely with him, should he continue to choose me to professionally accompany him on his journey.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out via any of my contact information.

Most Sincerely,



Todd Jacobsen