

## A look at Flipbook animation By Mikaela Arnold

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century there is a great demand for big budget CGI animated movies. Recently there has been a boom to remake past line based animated Disney movies into live action movies. We already got the remake of Tarzan and the Jungle Book. There are talks about Lion King being remade like the others. These movies assets are probably being made in Autodesk Maya or blender. This costs the production more than a cartoon based animation to make and brings the budget of the film up. What if these movies were made with the flipbook style of animation? Would it be different?

A flipbook is an interesting type of animation. This is because a flipbook is made and controlled by the artist not by a computer. The artists take either sheets of paper or a drawing book as the medium. Page by page the artist creates a single frame until he/she has reached the animation's end. The viewer of the piece flips through the pages and the animation runs with the speed of the viewer's flipping. Unlike computer animation, there are no play or pause button. There is no undo button. Knowing this, it brings a sense of awe and respect towards the artist. The artist cannot easily correct the animation like he/she could on a computer.

Look at your comics and Manga books. When you think about it, when they are made into video form, the process looks like a flipbook. The artist or group of artists draw out the frames before sending it to the computer to be colored and compiled into video frames. The video frames are plopped into video editing software.

Let's look at Disney's early animated video. One of the main reasons it took a while for animation was because the group of artists had to draw each frame then manually color them. The drawings then went through a video scanner thing to make sure that the frames flowed smoothly. That is probably why no one had done animation before 1937. Interestingly, 1,000,000 drawings were made for "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs." (Disney: The Making Of Snow White ( 1937 )) "Snow White and the Seven dwarfs" had an income of \$2,000,000 with a box office amount of \$184,925,485 (Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937)) while the newest Jungle Book live-action movie had a budget of \$175,000,000 with a gross income of \$364,001,123. As you can see, it took more money to make the live-action movie than it was to make the handdrawn animation of the early days of Disney's animation studio.

There are many types of flipbooks but I am going to discuss two of these types--the [Kinora](#) and the Filoscope. The Kinora was brought to us by the Lumiere brothers in the late 1800's. It was made of concave lens. It sat on a wooden stand. There was a handle that rotated a wheel. The concave lenses were the viewing part of the device. It was a very popular machine during the early 1900's. Unfortunately the brothers' business was burnt

down in 1914 in London. World War I diminished the popularity of the machine. There was a similar machine called the mutoscope patented by Herman Casier in 1894. ([/fancy-names-and-fun-toys/kinora/mhs](#))

The Filoscope looks more like a tape holder than a motion picture machine. It was invented by Henry William in 1897. It was patented in 1898. It was fixed in a tin plate holder. The holder had an iron lever that was used to cycle through the images to make an animation. It was like a mini Kinora. One of the filmmakers who worked with the Filoscope was Robert Paul who was born in 1869. He was a well-known in the British film industry. In fact, he was the pioneer for it. Paul was Short's friend. Short was in many of his films included May and Flora Hengler who were dancers. (short) Some of his films can be found on YouTube.

Flipbooks were very popular for kids during the late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Not only were they found in toys but they were found in Children's books. (Fouché) These books did not seem to have a story but they entertained them with the small animations. Interestingly, like the vinyl, flipbooks are coming back into style. People order their own flipbooks. From what I can defer, businesses use flipbooks to advertise their business. I found a site named flippies that allows you to create your own flipbook and order them. The site has a sample gallery, idea page, and a little snippet in the history of flip books. (Home). The only down part of this website is that the consumer must call in to make one and it does not give you a price for the flipbook until you order. Still, it is interesting that the practice is still around and still popular in some niches in the world today. Probably those that adore antiques like I do.

The concepts of a flipbook are very interesting to me. Inside a small book a small animation can be played as one turns the pages. Each drawing is a small frame of the animation. It is interesting to know that a small flipbook jumpstarted the ideas of motion picture and motion in a single frame. The fact that small children could experiment with the flipbooks as toys was amazing to read when looking at the size of the machine. As I watched the animations in flipbooks I can't help but notice similarities in modern programs especially when watching the documentary of "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs".

Just like animators and children in the past, we can make our own flipbook like animation. There is an Adobe program called Animate that allows you to create your own animation. There is a tool in the program that acts like see-through paper---this is called onion skin. The onion skin allows you to see what you drew on the previous frame to match the movement of the present frame. This is what I thought of at the part where the documentary showed the drawing process of the animation. It is strange to see the progression of the technology of animation from the past progression. It seems like the animation of today takes less steps and much more less complex than in the past. Unfortunately, we cannot buy our own Filoscope or Kinetoscope as they are beyond

vintage. Not even Ebay has any. I would highly suggest trying to make your own flipbooks to get a taste for what they were like in the early days of animation.

## Works Cited

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