

**2016 - 2017**

**Thesis Student  
Guidelines  
Animation**

Departments of Film & Animation  
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## Letter from the Chairman

Dear Thesis Students,

In my opinion, you all have the potential to become significant artists. From the beginning of your experience at SVA you have each shown talent and originality. Your thesis year should be the culmination of all your hard work. As fourth year students, you have already completed the most sophisticated program available to undergraduates on the East Coast. I am confident that each of you is now ready to produce work of professional quality and substance, which will become your voice and vision.

The SVA Film and Animation Thesis Program is a unique experience, which can become the foundation of a very successful career. It represents your chance to complete one or more projects over the course of a year with all the support, guidance and resources that SVA can provide. The members of the Thesis Committee and the Thesis Advisors have spent hundreds of hours preparing a program that combines the best of their experience in all areas of film and animation. The Committee and the faculty serving as advisors are ready to back it up with our personal commitment and devotion to you during this crucial year of your education.

Remember, you will be dedicating a full year to your project. A large amount of your time, effort and financial resources will be put into this endeavor. We urge you to choose a subject that you are passionate about, that no one can do exactly as you would.

The School of Visual Arts will encourage and support any type of project you choose to undertake; narrative fiction, documentary, experimental, etc — as long as the work demonstrates commitment, an advanced level of content, craft, technique, and quality.

All of us have the highest expectations for you as individuals, and as a class. We look forward to working closely with you, and hoping to help you realize the success you have already worked so hard to achieve.

Sincerely,

Reeves Lehmann  
Chair, BFA Film and BFA Animation Departments

# The Thesis Year

Your thesis year offers many opportunities. You'll develop a relationship with your chosen Advisor. You'll gain experience from the complexities and challenges of undertaking a major project. You'll solidify working relationships and personal friendships. You'll complete a major project that you will be proud of.

More importantly, you'll have the opportunity to express and develop your vision and dedication through your thesis project. This is a rare privilege; one that you've earned during your years of undergraduate work.

Take full advantage of this opportunity. Your thesis project will require a tremendous amount of work. It will take courage and drudgery when you don't know how, or even if, things will work out. It will take a stubborn and constant focus. It will require commitment, passion and discipline.

All that effort is worthwhile, only if it's used to express your own ideas and perceptions and vision. As a storyteller you can entertain, educate, shed new light, energize your audience, give a new perspective, or redefine a genre. Excellent work can only come from what you know, feel and imagine as an individual.

This is a chance to express something in a way that no one else could. It's not time to imitate; it's time to create.

The School of Visual Arts will encourage and support any type of project you choose to undertake; narrative, non-narrative, experimental, etc. – as long as the work demonstrates commitment, an advanced level of craft, technique, and quality.

## Mission Statement

Animation is the most exciting, vital, and progressive art form in the world today. As such, SVA has a vested interest in graduating alumni who will advance the form forward with a wide variety of content and style. To this end, we train students to understand and utilize the principles of story, design, animation, and editing in conjunction with the disciplines of production and economy. The Animation Senior Thesis Short Film, coupled with a professional portfolio, is where the students' mastery of these skills is put to the ultimate test.

# Animation Thesis Advisors & Advisor Selection

Thesis advisors are charged with guiding their students in the making of their thesis film.  
Their responsibilities include:

1. Consulting with advisees every week with a minimum of two meetings a month in person.
2. Submitting monthly Thesis Reports to the Thesis Committee.
3. Grading their advisees in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> semesters (subject to approval by the Thesis Committee).

**Under no circumstance is a Thesis Advisor allowed to perform any creative work on a Thesis Project**

Even though advisors are typically chosen from SVA faculty, an advisor may be selected from outside SVA with approval of the Thesis Committee. Any Non-SVA advisor must provide the following information before approval is granted:

**Name, phone, mailing address, email, Social Security Number, resume and/or CV**

With proper planning and execution, it is possible for the students to exceed the expectations of themselves and their advisors. Mandatory deadlines have been established to help facilitate a smooth production schedule. Students alone are responsible for adhering to these deadlines. Each student should tailor a schedule to accommodate their particular production method.

You are not considered a thesis student until all paperwork is approved.

**Completed Thesis Student / Advisor Agreements are due in the  
Film Chairman's Office (209 East 23<sup>rd</sup> St., Room 500)  
no later than 4:00 pm Friday, April 22, 2016**

## The Animation Thesis Film

**ONE STUDENT – ONE FILM.** Each thesis student is the sole producer of their own project. Collaboration between students is encouraged. However, each thesis student will be responsible for their film's completion.

**All thesis films must be no shorter than 3 min, and no longer than 4 min 30 sec (excluding end credits).**

Before embarking on any project that includes elements other than your own, you **MUST OBTAIN** all rights and privileges for use in writing. This includes published material, music, photographs, etc.

# Mandatory Animation Thesis Deadline Protocol

The Animation Thesis Coordinator, will invite each of you to join Dropbox. Follow the directions and get an account to have access to SVA Animation Thesis Dropbox. Each student will have their own folder where they will place all the thesis material required for each deadline. Each student folder will have monthly folders within.

Only members of the Animation Thesis Committee and the Thesis Coordinator will access your folder. As each deadline approaches the coordinator will empty each folder. You **cannot** make up missed deadlines. Submit deadline materials in the following formats:

- All documents, such as story outlines or production schedules must be **pdfs**.
- All images, such as model sheets, background designs and storyboards must be **jpgs**.
- Even though your project is in a 1920 x 1080 format, for Mandatory Deadline deliveries, all animatics should be resized to 1280 x 720 in an H264 video codec. Make sure your animatic opens in Quicktime before submitting.

**DO NOT** submit anything where other software (After Effects, Photoshop, Flash, Storyboard Pro, TV Paint, etc.) needs to be opened.

Once you have submitted the proper materials to the appropriate folder, **leave it alone**. The Thesis Coordinator will be archiving once deadline has passed.

This procedure will hold for the entire academic year **EXCEPT** for delivery of your **FINAL PROJECT** that has its own requirements with a delivery date in **April 2017**.

The Animation Thesis Deadline dates for Dropbox are as follows:

**Friday, August 12, 2016 by 4:00 pm**

**Friday, September 16, 2016 by 4:00 pm**

**Friday, October 14, 2016 by 4:00 pm**

**Friday, November 11, 2016 by 4:00 pm**

**Friday, December 9, 2016 by 4:00pm**

**Friday, January 20, 2017 by 4:00 pm**

**Friday, February 17, 2017 by 4:00 pm**

Refer to the appropriate Animation Thesis Mandatory Deadline page for details of what is due by these dates. Missed deadlines will affect grading.

## 2-D Animation Mandatory Deadlines

Deadline deliveries are made via Dropbox. Documents such as story outlines, production schedules and transcripts should be submitted as **pdfs**. Images such as model sheets, background designs and storyboards should be submitted as **jpgs**. Animatics should be resized to **1280 x 720** in an **H264 video**. Make sure your animatic opens in Quicktime before submitting to Dropbox.

### **Friday, August 12, 2016 by 4:00 pm**

- One sentence story or concept description
- First draft of storyboard with dialogue, scene description and action notes
- First draft of character design lineup with preliminary color treatment
- Preliminary background designs with color treatment
- Written description of production method and sound treatment (statement of copyright and clearances, if appropriate) with proposed work schedule

### **Friday, September 16, 2016 by 4:00 pm**

- Revised character designs with color treatment
- Revised rough background designs with color treatments
- Rough animatic (with rough sound)

### **Friday, October 14, 2016 by 4:00 pm**

- Final character and background designs
- Final animatic (with rough sound and vocal track)

### **Friday, October 14, 2016 by 4:00 pm**

- Dusty Festival Pre-Production Grant deadline

### **Tuesday, October 25, 2016 by 4:00 pm**

- First Dusty Program Book submission

### **Friday, November 11, 2016 by 4:00 pm**

- Rough cut of film (with 50% of rough layouts and 15% of rough animation completed)

### **Friday, December 9, 2016 by 4:00pm**

- Rough cut of film (with all rough layouts and 40% of rough animation completed)
- Final vocal track

### **Friday, January 20, 2017 by 4:00 pm**

- Rough cut of film with 80% of rough animation completed

### **Monday, February 13, 2017 by 4:00 pm**

- Second submission to the Dusty Program Book

**Friday, February 17, 2017 by 4:00 pm**

- Rough cut of film with all rough animation and 20% of animation cleanup completed

**Friday, February 17, 2017 by 4:00 pm**

- Dusty Festival Post-Production Grant deadline

**Tuesday, April 18, 2017 by 4:00 pm**

- Delivery of the completed film. Specifications will be detailed later
- Deadline for Dusty Festival judging/screening

## **Stop Motion Mandatory Deadlines**

Deadline deliveries are made via Dropbox. Documents such as story outlines, production schedules and transcripts should be submitted as **pdfs**. Images such as model sheets, background designs and storyboards should be submitted as **jpgs**. Animatics should be resized to **1280 x 720** in an **H264 video codec**. Make sure your animatic opens in Quicktime before submitting to Dropbox.

**Friday, August 12, 2016 by 4:00 pm**

- One sentence story or concept
- Rough character designs, backgrounds and begin storyboards
- Statement of copyright & clearances if appropriate

**Friday, September 16, 2016 by 4:00 pm**

- Revised storyboard & completed character / set designs

**Friday, October 14, 2016 by 4:00 pm**

- Approval of sculptures and mold making begun
- Sound recordings of vocal tracks (if applies)
- First draft of animatic with vocal tracks (if any)

**Friday, October 14, 2016 by 4:00 pm**

- Dusty Festival Pre-Production Grant deadline

**Tuesday, October 25, 2016 by 4:00 pm**

- First Dusty Program Book submission

**Friday, November 11, 2016 by 4:00 pm**

- Exposure sheets if your film contains any dialogue
- Stop motion sculptures & molds complete, animation armatures begun



**Friday, December 9, 2016 by 4:00pm**

- All stop motion characters completed
- 75% of sets completed

**Friday, January 20, 2017 by 4:00 pm**

- All stop motion sets completed
- 10% of all animation completed

**Monday, February 13, 2017 by 4:00 pm**

- Second submission to Dusty Program Book

**Friday, February 17, 2017 by 4:00 pm**

- Remaining animation completed

**Friday, February 17, 2017 by 4:00 pm**

- Dusty Festival Post-Production Grant deadline

**Tuesday, April 18, 2017 by 4:00 pm**

- Delivery of the completed film. Specifications will be detailed later
- Film submission deadline for Dusty Festival judging/screenings

# Animation Grants

## Dusty Festival Pre-Production Grants - **DUE Friday, October 14, 2016:**

Dusty Festival Pre Production grants are awarded in the fall semester. All thesis students with a cumulative 3.5 GPA are eligible. The Animation Thesis Committee will choose the recipients of Pre-Production Grants based on the quality of the work submitted via the Dropbox. The following materials are to be submitted:

- Most current animatic (with rough sound)
- Most current character designs (color treatments)
- Most current background designs (color treatments)
- Pdf of your transcript showing a minimum 3.5 GPA
- Proof of voter registration (US citizens only). This can be found at [www.rockthevote.com](http://www.rockthevote.com)
- Any material requested by the Dusty Festival Office
- Statement of intent as to what the Pre-Production Grant money will be used for
- **NOTE:** You must also have completed your submission to the Dusty Program Book to be eligible.

**In addition to submitting everything on Dropbox, you must email the Thesis Coordinator at [svaanimationthesis@gmail.com](mailto:svaanimationthesis@gmail.com) stating that you are a Grant Applicant. You may CC the Animation Chairman's Assistant, Heather Freudenthal, if you wish: [hfreudenthal@sva.edu](mailto:hfreudenthal@sva.edu)**

## Dusty Festival Post Production Grants – **DUE Friday, February 17, 2017:**

Dusty Festival Post Production grants are awarded in the spring semester. All thesis students with a cumulative 3.5 GPA are eligible. The Animation Thesis Committee will choose the recipients of Post-Production Grants based on the quality of the work submitted via the Dropbox. The following materials are to be submitted:

- Rough cut of film with all rough animation completed
- Production schedule (showing what's been accomplished to date)
- Copy of your transcript showing a minimum 3.5 GPA
- Proof of voter registration (US citizens only). This can be found at [www.rockthevote.com](http://www.rockthevote.com)
- Any material requested by the Dusty Awards Office
- Statement of intent as to what the Post-Production Grant money will be used for
- **NOTE:** You must also have completed your submission to the Dusty Program Book to be eligible.

**In addition to submitting everything on Dropbox, you must email the Thesis Coordinator at [svaanimationthesis@gmail.com](mailto:svaanimationthesis@gmail.com) stating that you are a Grant Applicant. You may CC the Animation Chairman's Assistant, Heather Freudenthal, if you wish: [hfreudenthal@sva.edu](mailto:hfreudenthal@sva.edu)**

## **Alumni Scholarship Awards**

Alumni Scholarship awards are given to students to help with the completion of their thesis/portfolio projects; all recipients are required to have a minimum GPA of 3.0 and submit a detailed thesis project proposal. The proposals are then reviewed by panels comprised of notable SVA alumni, which makes recommendations to the Alumni Society Board for final approval. The awards come from generous donations from alumni, parents and friends of SVA.

## **Grades**

Grading is determined by quality of work presented at prescribed monthly deadlines. The following instructions apply to 2D and Stop-Motion students. Grades are given at the end of each semester in the Thesis year; the fall grade is either Unsatisfactory (U) or Satisfactory (S), the spring grade is a letter grade. If you receive a (U) in the fall you cannot receive an A for your thesis.

Grades are given primarily on the recommendation of the advisor, although the Thesis Committee is empowered to raise or lower a grade. No incompletes are given in the thesis year. Any extensions must be approved by the Film Chairman and are subject to additional fees.

Grades reflect the quality of your work, your adherence to the requirements listed in the requirement section, with particular emphasis placed on communicating effectively with your advisor. It cannot be emphasized enough that your advisor is your ally.

## **Student Grievance Procedures**

The School of Visual Arts does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, handicap, age or national origin. Any member of the Thesis student body who feels they been subject to discrimination should talk with the Title IX Coordinator or make a written complaint to the Thesis Committee.

The Thesis Committee will review the complaint, talk with the individuals involved, and hold a hearing if necessary; in short, take all necessary action to correct the situation. If the student lodging the complaint requests no hearing, the Committee will forward its decision to the faculty member in writing. The decision of the Thesis Committee is final and is subject to further review only by the President of the college.

# The Dusty Film & Animation Festival

The Dusty Film & Animation Festival is one of the only Film/Animation School events of its kind in New York. It is as much for Industry as it is for students and their families. Since its inception in 1990, the festival has grown to be the largest and most attended event, co-sponsored by the School of Visual Arts and numerous film and animation companies.

It is an important venue through which the film & animation industry discovers new talent. This is your chance to demonstrate your abilities to people who are committed to developing newcomers; it is your opportunity to make contact with people who may choose to hire you in the future.

Therefore it is crucial that you maximize your participation in this event, taking advantage of every facet of the show from the Festival to the Dusty Awards Ceremony. During the fall semester, students will be invited to attend preparatory meetings for the Dusty Film & Animation Festival.

The Dusty Film & Animation Festival also raises money for each Thesis Class; to date over \$600,000 has been raised and distributed as grants, or in-kind services to Thesis students.

In order to participate, all policies and procedures must be adhered to. SVA has the right to exclude a student from participating if the school feels that any of the policies or procedures have been violated.

Everyone is required to submit a copy of his or her completed project by the Dusty Festival deadline to the Animation Manager. The FORMAT will be announced beforehand. This copy will become the property of the School of Visual Arts. Make sure it is of professional quality, as it will be shown at the Dusty Film & Animation Festival.

**Only COMPLETED films will be judged and screened!**

Dusty Film & Animation Festival Office  
209 East 23rd Street, Room 318  
212.592.2129  
dustyawards@sva.edu  
dusty.sva.edu

ANIMATION  
THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Reeves Lehmann  
Chair  
Departments of Film & Animation

Carl Paolino  
[cpseffects@aol.com](mailto:cpseffects@aol.com)

Donald Poynter  
[donaldbrucepoynter@outlook.com](mailto:donaldbrucepoynter@outlook.com)

# Dusty Festival Pre-Production Grant Application- ANIMATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Specialization: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Advisor (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Advisor (signature): \_\_\_\_\_

Required with application (via Dropbox):

- Most current animatic (with rough sound)
- Most current character designs (color treatments)
- Most current background designs (color treatments)
- Pdf of your transcript showing a minimum 3.5 GPA
- Proof of voter registration (US citizens only). Can be found at [www.rockthevote.com](http://www.rockthevote.com)
- Statement of intent as to what the Pre-Production Grant money will be used for
- First submission to the Dusty Program Book.

Email the Thesis Coordinator at [svaanimationthesis@gmail.com](mailto:svaanimationthesis@gmail.com) stating that you are a Grant Applicant.

**Due Friday, October 14, 2016 by 4:00 pm**

# Dusty Festival Post-Production Grant Application- ANIMATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Specialization: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Advisor (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Advisor (signature): \_\_\_\_\_

## Required with application:

- Rough cut of film with all rough animation completed
- Production schedule (showing what's been accomplished to date)
- Copy of your transcript showing a minimum 3.5 GPA
- Pdf of proof of voter registration (US citizens only). Can be found at [www.rockthevote.com](http://www.rockthevote.com)
- Statement of intent as to what the Post-Production Grant money will be used for
- Second submission to the Dusty Program Book

Email the Thesis Coordinator at [svaanimationthesis@gmail.com](mailto:svaanimationthesis@gmail.com) stating that you are a Grant Applicant.

**Due Friday, February 17, 2017 by 4:00 pm**

# Animation Thesis Student / Advisor Agreement

Specialization (Circle One): STOP MOTION / 2-D / 3-D

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

I have selected the above named individual as my Thesis Advisor for the 2015-2016 academic year. Obligations to my thesis advisor and the thesis committee are as follows: (initial next to each):

STUDENT Initials:

\_\_\_\_\_ Communicate with my Advisor on a weekly basis

\_\_\_\_\_ Attend meetings scheduled with my Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_ Submit all required materials to the Dusty Film Festival Office

\_\_\_\_\_ Submit copies of ALL materials pertaining to my project to The Animation Thesis Committee and The Office of the Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_ Failure to comply with these responsibilities will jeopardize my thesis status, affect my final grade and/or make me ineligible for any grants.

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Address: \_\_\_\_\_

X \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Student Signature)

X \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Advisor Signature)

**Due: Friday, April 22, 2016 @ 4:00 pm**

COPIES FOR: Student & Thesis Advisor

ORIGINAL: Office of the Chairman



# Animation Thesis Advisor Requirements

Thesis advisors are responsible for guiding their students in the making of their thesis film. Advisors' minimum responsibilities include:

1. Consulting with their advisees every week with a minimum of two meetings a month in person.
2. Writing monthly Thesis Reports by the mandatory deadlines. Reports to be submitted, by email, to [svaanimationthesis@gmail.com](mailto:svaanimationthesis@gmail.com)
3. Grading their advisees in the 1st and 2nd semesters (subject to approval by the Thesis Committee)

Any additional time spent with the student is up to the discretion and availability of the advisor.

Any Non-SVA advisor will be subject to approval by the Thesis Committee and must provide the following information before approval is granted: **Name, phone, mailing address, email, Social Security Number, resume and/or CV**

## Thesis Reports

The monthly Thesis Reports are a record of your work with your advisee. As such, each report should include an objective assessment of the student's progress in applying the storytelling, technical and managerial skills necessary to complete their thesis film. These reports are used to help the advisor and the Thesis Committee evaluate and substantiate grading decisions. Thesis Reports are due the same dates required by Animation Mandatory Deadlines.

Even though the advisor's contract as Thesis Advisor officially starts in September, consultations (whether by email or in person) with advisees is required to help guide advisees in meeting their August deadline and filing of August Advisor Reports. (**see Animation Mandatory Deadlines**) The mandatory deadlines have been established to help facilitate a smooth production schedule. Students alone are responsible for adhering to these deadlines.

## The DROPBOX Folder

Each student is required to deliver thesis materials via Dropbox, as outlined in the Animation Mandatory Deadlines (**see Animation Mandatory Deadlines**).

Advisor Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_