April 1. 2010

**CSE459 Pre-Production for Collaborative Animation**

**What is Physical Comedy?**

Today we’ll look at some methods and examples of physical comedy and try to apply them to a single personality – the Nebbish. It is thought that all comedy is rooted in fear and this is important to note as our fears are not all the same and are not felt with the same intensity. We will keep these principles and methods in mind while we illustrate our film with what we feel to be the best possible personality traits that will also entertain an audience. We need to keep in mind that if comedy is based on fear and we all fear different things, then many things will be funny to some people and not to others. \*Also, we’ll be looking at our film so many times that it will probably not be funny to us at all in which case we will need to rely on the use of many of the principles covered today.

Please take notes on the video you are about to see with an emphasis on applying these methods and principles to our specific character in our story. Then we will discuss the notes.

**Comedy -- Methods** (used to strip people from their normal dignity and make people laugh)

1. **Slapstick and Violence.**

Seeing objects in unexpected places or with scale differences sometimes makes us laugh.

2. **Magic and Surrealism**

A magician uses sudden appearance and disappearances and transferring one thing into something else to entertain and amuse us.  Speeding up action is the most typical method, making the motion look mechanical.

Anything is possible (especially with animation) to fish out the right images from the depths of our unconsciousness.

**3. Imitation and Parody**

Most effective comedy is that that pokes fun and makes a mockery of authority

One person imitating another is funny -- if the imitation is exaggerated then it is called Parody and includes ridicule of the person being ridiculed. If the imitation is related to a famous person it is considered parody.

**We’ll be focusing on Comedy through Personality**

\*\*\* Combinations of all of the methods illustrated in our video are used by comedians to create a character with personality. Comedians and actors communicate this through their body language. This is what we’re looking to create for our Nebbish. This is not just a series of gags and requires extreme precision in execution on the part of the actor/animator. Gary Schwartz has done a great job with your direction of bringing Nebbish “alive.”

Some methods to create character include:

**Mime and Body Language**

\*Studying Films without Dialog

**Jokes with Attitude**

We need to be sure to promote the skill of the “performer” (our Nebbish) and his attitude while performing.

There are different kinds of comic attitude. They include the comedy of stupidity, where the character knows less than the audience, an aggressive approach where the character possesses a lack of consideration for others and a crude attitude which is comedy of vulgarity and social embarrassment.

**Notes that might help with our Nebbish**

“The comedian is an alien -- like us but different.”

The verbal comedian is often smarter. That’s because words communicate on a different level.

Many of the comedians who use physical comedy look like adults with the emotional maturity of an infant.

Often comedians using physical comedy have difficulties with objects. Physical comedians constantly make mistakes.

The comedian using physical comedy is clumsy and inept but keeps on doing things when a normal person would give up.

The comedian using physical comedy doesn't understand social convention or has no consideration of others.

**\*We must identify with the social attitude to find it funny.**

**Please add your notes and recommendations below.**