

Bryce Hallett is an independent animator who works with Corel® Painter™ and Toon Boom Studio

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Bryce Hallett
Independent Animator



Name:

Bryce Hallett

Occupation/Profession:

Independent animator, cartoonist, graphic designer

Company:

Independent artist
Frog Feet Productions
www.frogfeetproductions.com

Location:

Toronto, Ontario

How long have you been in this profession?

I've been an independent animator/cartoonist/graphic designer living and working in Toronto, Ontario since 1999. I graduated from the Graphic Communications Program at Canadore College in North Bay, Ontario and the Classical Animation program at Sheridan College in Oakville.

What are your most important accomplishments?

I've created 23 animated cartoons for The Red Green Show (cbc/pbs) over five seasons. I was responsible for creating everything except the script and the sound. I did the design, directing the actor, storyboards, animation, backgrounds and compositing/editing. I've always worked with a tight deadline and with only one other person, Enos Brown, to help me colour cells. I'm proud of the fact that I have been able to remain a successful independent animator for six years.

What's your history with Corel Painter and Toon Boom Studio, and why did you choose to combine both products?

I like textures, and I like my work to look like it was done by a human being. Painter is a great program for creating backgrounds with a natural media look in a hurry. Toon Boom Studio then lets me import it and lay it out just like I would in a classical camera stand set up, but it's much, much easier. Combining the two gives me some flexibility in creating the

animation as well as giving a look that is not so cold and digital.

I usually have modest budgets to work with and I always need to get things done in a hurry. The combination of these two programs helps me do both and still give it a unique and professional look.

Please describe your workflow?

I start with a rough storyboard on paper. I animate on paper the "old fashioned" way and scan it into Photoshop. In the future, I hope to be able to scan directly into Toon Boom and take advantage of some of those functions.

Then I test it out in the scene-planning mode and add any extra moves to the animated bits that I need. Once that's done I create all my background in Corel Painter. Unless it is a complicated piece, I just draw directly in the program. Then I'll do it on paper and scan it in and add the color. I usually have a PNG of the characters on a separate level of the background so I can be as accurate as possible with the colors and composition. I pop the backgrounds into Toon Boom and do a test run. Often I will draw directly into Toon Boom to add little things like eye blinks or extra little animations, like waves, sparks or fire.

I find it's faster to do a minimal amount of paper drawings, scan them in, and then use the software to do certain things that would be too tedious or even unnecessary to animate by hand. Finally, I output the result to QuickTime and send it to the client or bring it into another program like FinalCut Pro, if I need to do some additional editing effects.

I also like being able to mix your own colors like you would with a paint palette in the real world.

What kind of animation do you create?

Primarily I create short cartoons running about two or three minutes. It's mostly funny cartoons for live action sketch comedy shows. I also create shorts to show off at festivals that are a little different in style.

What are your favorite features in Corel Painter and Toon Boom Studio?

The biggest features in Painter are the layers and the multiple undos. I also like the paper texture. It helps give your art a much more organic feel. The paint mixer is also a favorite. It feels very natural to me and allows for some "happy accidents". The variety of mediums you can use, and the ability to mix them so freely is remarkable.

The best feature in Toon Boom Studio is the scene planning mode. It's fantastic to just grab the camera and put it wherever you want and actually see what the shot will look like as you do it. The pegs are great too. I like that the exposure sheets are laid out just like the ones I have on paper and that they are easy to manipulate. I love the ability to do multi-plane camera moves, and the different camera view screens so you can really get an idea of what you are actually shooting.

What are the Corel Painter and Toon Boom Studio features that allow you to distinguish your animation productions.

Being able to "fake" natural media in Corel Painter gives my cartoons more character. Sometimes computer art looks cold and slick, but this way I can

give it some life! Being able to draw directly in Toon Boom in scene planning mode and being able to move the camera and elements so easily, allows me to create great-looking cartoons quickly. It helps to make a small budget cartoon created by a single animator look as good as something you usually only see on a larger studio budget.

Is it possible to get the same results with other digital painting and animation software?

So far I've found I get the best results in my backgrounds with Painter. It's easy to use and it looks great. I have used other software combinations to create cartoons, Toon Boom makes it a lot easier. I find that Toon Boom and Corel Painter give me the best results.... I was trying to keep that a secret though. I don't need any more competition!

How do you feel about Corel Painter?

I love it. It is so much fun. I use in most of my projects.

How do you feel about Toon Boom Studio?

I think it's a great program and look forward to the next Mac update. It's easy to use and has a real classical animation feel to it.



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