**Stop Motion Animation**

Stop Motion is an animation technique that involves manipulating and changing figures, objects or scenery in small, almost invisible, movements and then taking a single picture. Then moving the object again and taking another image. By then placing the images together into a sequence – usually between 12-18 frames (single images) a second - it creates the illusion of a continuous film.

The earliest use of stop-motion can be seen in 1897’s *The Humpty Dumpty Circus* where a group toys and acrobats come to life. Then in 1912 one of the earliest clay-mation films, *Modelling Extraordinary,* was released to critical success. It was later in that decade when the first female animator, Helena Smith Dayton, experimented with clay animation and released her version of *Romeo and Juliet.*

There are multiple ways in which the stop-motion can be created. Using handmade clay or plasticine figures, known as clay-mation, which are then manipulated to create sequences. This type of stop-motion is the most frequent and popular, seen in Academy Award nominated film *The Nightmare Before Christmas* and *Corpse Bride.* Tim Burton is a pioneer and most famous for using stop-motion in his movies.

Another but more complex way of creating stop-motion animation is by moving the object while the shutter is open creating a motion blur between each frame. This is called Go-Motion and is famously seen in *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* during the battle of Hoth. *Dragonslayer, Willow, Howard the Duck* and *The Golden Child* are also most notable for using Go-Motion for different elements.

Stop-Motion is used in many films because its cheaper to produce than CGI and also because it has a unique and stand out look, distinctive from CGI. Low budget and cult classic horror film *Evil Dead* uses stop-motion during the last act to depict the melting, burning and exploding deadites. The look of the stop-motion fits and compliments the low budget look and feel of the film. Because the film was an independent feature CGI couldn’t have been used because it would have cost a lot more than the stop-motion would have. Even in the remake, when the budget was higher and cost of the CGI being lower, practical effects were still used.

Possibly the most famous usage of stop-motion is from Ray Harryhausen. He learnt his animating techniques from Willis Obrien, who is most famous for his work on *The lost World* and *King Kong.* Harryhausen’s work is seen in such iconic films as *Jason and the Argonauts, The Golden Voyage of Sinbad and Clash of the Titans.* These films both showed his ability to create seamless stop motion and make un-filmable sequences filmable. His ability to do this cemented his position as one of the best animators of all time.

Stop-motion found its way into television also. The British show *Clangers* used this form of animation and was a great success but it wasn’t as popular as another stop-motion show called *Bagpuss,* which in 1999 was voted as the best children’s TV programme ever made. Another famous show is the adult show *Robot Chicken. Robot Chicken* is famous because of its use of popular action figures like *Transformers, He-Man* and *Star Wars.* The series spawned a trilogy of *Star Wars* spoof film, which used merchandise and action figures from the popular series.