Creative Brainstorming in After Effects

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ABSTRACT

Creating a motion design workshop designed for casual After Effects users who are looking to expand their mindset as well as skillset. Something I've noticed as a long time After Effects user is that although AE is a commonly available and often an entry point for students into animation; many people do not utilize as a medium for artistic expression. It's often used only as a tool to piece together elements for a predetermined project.

Simply put, because most often AE is only used for very basic functions; many creative people miss out on the opportunity it offers for experimentation.

Artistic exploration is standard practice when creating work in the fine arts. However, coming from the background of a college-educated digital artist; it's been my experience that there is not as much emphasis on play as there is on skill learning. Digital artists tend to be pushed more towards a commercial focus earlier in their careers and many miss out on this time to play.

KEYWORDS

Creative brainstorming, After Effects, Motion graphics, Experimentation

1 INTRODUCTION

The base of this project will be a simple faux 3d cube designed using precomps as a platform for creating an abstract creative exercise. Technically speaking, the workshop will cover both smart ways to set up the project file for easy workflow and creative shifts as well as suggestions for techniques to play with. The basic setup functions include 3d layering, precomping, and appropriate anchor point placement. Once basic set up is covered, I will go over shape layers, blending modes, clever matte techniques, offsetting animation, and building the look of complexity. The final product will be a stylized, animated cube.

Although this exercise is intended as art for art sake; all the covered techniques are things I use frequently when developing a style and problem solving in client work. This workshop is creating space to think about thought process outside the pressure of a

specific need. I focus on sharping abilities and generating ideas for future use. We will be creating an abstract work, but all the elements can be translated into other arenas.
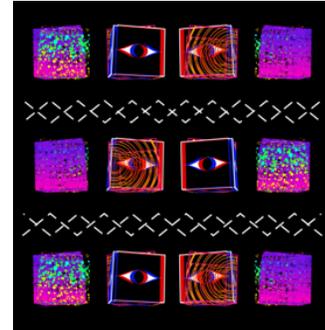

Figure 1: An example of boxes created in during one of my brainstorming sessions.

2 WORKSHOP OUTLINE

- Background on my personal viewpoints and workflows
  - Why play is important to me
  - Recognizing and utilizing happy accidents
- Setting up simple project for easiest working guidelines
  - Overview of 3d layers
  - How to best utilize precomps
  - Importance of anchor point
- Elements of play
  - Shape layers
  - Blending modes
  - Creative Matting
- Adding interesting dynamic with animation
  - Setting keyframes
  - Off set layers
- Final touches for exporting and sharing
  - Final comp set up
  - Rendering

Figure 2: Additional examples of projects I?ve created through experiments for the sake of fun and learning.