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BASIC INFORMATION

Directed by

Alex Gentemann

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Produced by

Teddie Carlton

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SYNOPSIS

Logline

When a young monk gets creative in the scriptorium, things take an unexpected turn as his doodles come to life!

Synopsis

Long, long ago in medieval Germany, there lived a little monk named Otto. Sequestered away in a monastery, Otto was tasked with the boring job of copying manuscripts all day long.

One day, tired of his dreary life as a scribe, he decided to begin drawing in the corners of the page. Inspired by his abbot Bart's rather - ahem- protuberant behind, he draws a little creature with the likeness of an arsch and dubs him Fertzenpoot. To his shock, Fertzenpoot turns around and begins to move!

Carefully avoiding the watchful eye of Bart, Otto begins to draw more and more marginalia creatures, each one more delightful than the last, who dance and leap across the page.

All of a sudden, the page is ripped from his hands by Bart, who is enraged by Otto's impudent behavior. Otto tries to fight back for his paper, running around Bart who dangles the page above his head. The young monk leaps up, trying to snatch it back from Bart, but all attempts are thwarted with a swift belly bounce sending Otto crashing to the ground. Bart tears the manuscript to pieces in front of Otto, who weeps for his lost friends.

Just when it seems all hope is lost, the paper begins to glow with a golden light as the marginalia creatures awaken one by one to pull the pieces back together! Otto scoops up the page and embraces it, overjoyed with the return of his creations.

However, Bart returns, towering over Otto. He raises his hand to take the manuscript from Otto once more, and Otto braces for his wrath, shielding himself with the page. To everyone's shock, a huge amalgamation of the creatures rises from out of the paper, looming above Bart and Otto. With its many hands and mouths, it takes hold of Bart, dragging him away once and for all into the manuscript page with them.

With the threat of the abbot sealed away, Otto and the other monks are now free to create marginalia on their scripts. As they gleefully ink their creatures with newfound inspiration, the creatures give a little kiss to Bart, now enshrined in the manuscript which reads "in principio creavit Deus caelum et terram".

WHAT IS THIS FILM?

Marginalia directed by Alex Gentemann is a funny, historical dramatic comedy that supposes a fantastical origin to “marginalia”, a term for the drawings found upon medieval illuminated manuscripts along the margins of the pages. The short film uses its inspiration to create a humorous, heartfelt tale many artists can relate to of the struggle of trying to creatively express themselves as children.

The film’s protagonist, Otto, is a lovable little boy who the audience can’t help but root for in making his silly drawings, despite it going against the instruction of his strict teacher Bartholomew.

Characters

OTTO – voiced by Sofia Denise – is a 14th century monk scribe. He possesses the magical ability to draw marginalia that comes to life. He is a gleeful child who just wants to have fun and make up silly creatures all day. He is dreadfully bored of just copying over manuscripts, and struggles with it especially so as a left handed child.

BART– voiced by Thiago Opperman – is the abbot of the monastery. He is a stern headmaster, and a total buzzkill. He watches over each and every monk as they dutifully transcribe the materials of their books. He is prone to fits of rage and harsh discipline, as seen in his reaction to Otto’s drawings. He is also known for having quite a prominent rear.

FERTZENPOOT– a little creature who looks like a butt. He loves to fart and skitter across the page, and likes causing mischief among the other creatures. He loves Otto and loves making him laugh.

THE MONKS – The various other monks of the abbey; an geriatric half blind monk named Alardus, an arthritic but impassioned monk named Chodolf, a buff and half-witted monk named Gerfrid, and a friendly and flitty monk named Hans.

THE CREATURES– a wonderful menagerie born from the mind of Otto. Such friends and fiends include Jan the Plague Spreader, Froschenspitten (and the Frosh), The Fons, The Handsome Brothers, Weinenbaby Fisch, Hupentuten, Töteschrägstrich, and the Shelled Schleimzwillinge.

PRODUCTION PROCESS

Pitching the Film

In Winter of 2024, Alex Gentemann began working on a series of storyboards in a Story and Concept Development class taught by Professor Dennis Robinson. His story premise featured a young monk named Otto, who could draw marginalia which came to life, and a boring old monk named Bart. This would be the first animatic pass at what would later become his capstone pitch idea: *Marginalia*.

In April of 2024, Alex and Teddie donned their robes, put on their tonsures, and pitched the idea to the class of 2025. It was nominated for potential greenlighting that May. Alex and Teddie, clad in their monk outfits (alongside a virtual Fertzenpoot v-tuber) participated in the recruitment fair, quickly gathered ten members, and were greenlit by the end of the following week.

Pre-Production

In June of 2024, the crew began to plan ideas over Discord to begin the Visual Development process for the film. They started to practice drawing Otto and Bart to familiarize themselves with the characters and style of the film. Thanks to Alex, the film already had a first pass at an animatic as well as preliminary character designs well before the school year started.

Teddie and Alex set three main goals for that fall: to refine and hone the story, reimagine the character and nail down designs, and establish the style of the visuals and animation. To rework the story, the team went through multiple passes of storyboards, each followed by vigorous critique and collaboration, guided by Professor Robinson. For characters, the team worked through tweaking and reimagining each design until they all felt unified and cohesive to the story. To establish the visual style, the team explored and perfected designs to set the stage for the layouts of each scene. Animation tests were started to get a handle of how each character would look in motion.

Production

The team hunkered down in winter and started grinding out the bulk of the rough animation and layouts of the film. There were a lot of drawovers and corrections to be made at first, but by week five of production things started to flow more easily as layout artists and animators alike began to grasp the characteristics and quirks of the style.

During this time, composer Jake Williams completed the score for the film and sound design began shortly after.

Post-ProductionS

As animation and layouts wrapped, the team moved onto finishing clean-up for the film and began compositing. Using the color script made in pre-production as a guide, the lead animator, Leah, combined the colored animation and layout to set the look of the film. The rest of the team quickly adapted to the compositing style and completed the film's comp in just a few weeks. Since the music and sound teams had worked contemporaneously alongside the making of the film since the start of production, the film was finalized and submitted right on time.

MEET THE CREW

Alex Gentemann - Director

Alex Gentemann is an animation director, concept artist, and illustrator based in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. A recent graduate of SCAD's Animation Story/Concept department, Alex is currently on the lookout for a project to which he can contribute his artistic skills. He is most passionate about the art of character design, but is enthusiastic about every aspect of visual development. In his free time, Alex enjoys painting, studying history, and playing video games.

Teddie Carlton - Producer

Teddie Carlton is a visual development artist and producer based in South Carolina. Teddie is most drawn to designing worlds and populating them with props and people. When he's not drawing, you can find him researching vintage toys, watching Star Trek, or cooking.

Jackson Reside - Co-Producer

Jackson Reside is a 2D animator and visual development artist. He is passionate about worldbuilding and loves to bring visual narratives to life. Jackson enjoys environment design and character animation. He also likes to fish and go on nature walks in his spare time.

Leah Simon - Animation Lead

Leah is a 2D animator and avid sketchbook enthusiast from Rome, Georgia. She loves all things drawing-related— from animation, to comics, to napkin doodles she pastes in her sketchbook. When Leah's not sketching something, you can find her with her dogs (or looking at pictures of her dogs if she's not in town), struggling to roller-skate, or eating a breakfast sandwich (regardless of the time of day).

Madison Edwards - Art Director

Madison Edwards is a concept artist and background designer. She enjoys creating stories through art and illustration, and recently obtained a BFA in Animation focusing on Story and Concept Development from the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD). When not making art, she likes listening to music, collecting Kewpie dolls, and making her friends laugh.

Marlowe Gold - Animator

Marlowe Gold is an Animator and Storyboard artist hailing from Seattle Washington. He is most passionate about storytelling, and the art of bringing stories to the screen. He is an enthusiastic team member, excited about collaboration. Marlowe is always on the lookout for which project will be his next great adventure. When he is not drawing you can find him taking a nap in his coffin, collecting artisanal teas, or caring for his plants.

Yoonji Park - Animator

Yoonji Park is a 2D animator and storyboard artist from Seoul, South Korea who loves to emphasize heightened emotion in her artwork, pushing expressions and body language when she can. While enthusiastic about animating, storyboarding is where she finds her passion. She enjoys being able to build upon the ideas of others during production and is eager for feedback. When she's not drawing, you'll probably find her enjoying a nap, watching shows and movies with her friends, or drinking tea.

Sarah Peavy -Visual Development Artist

Sarah Peavy is a visual development and layout artist from Montgomery, Alabama who loves to create narratively rich environments and scenes. While she dabbles in storyboarding and background design, color and lighting are where she thrives. Sarah is constantly working on improving her craft and loves getting feedback from her team and directors to help tell the best story possible through her work. Alongside creating projects, Sarah loves gardening, reading, and stalking craft stores to find new hobbies.

Alley Williams - Animator

Alley Williams is a 2D animator from Delaware whose passion is to mix reality and fantasy together through his artwork. Taking aspects of his real life to create characters and stories, whether it be dramatic or fantastical. Taking his sketchbook where he can, he also enjoys experimenting with different art supplies and mediums from time to time. When he's not going through his artistic journeys, you can find him growing his collections ranging from taxidermy to Pokémon cards.

Mo Wright - Animator

Mo Wright is an animator from Florida who loves using drawing and animation to tell stories. From doodling in their sketchbook to animating a sequence to playing Dnd they love all things storytelling. When not drawing they can usually be found reading a book about dragons (only dragons) or hundred percenting Spyro reignited for the tenth time.



LINKS

Instagram: @marginalia_film

Linktree: https://linktr.ee/marginalia_film

Film Freeway: <https://filmfreeway.com/Marginalia371>

FAQ

Q: What was the inspiration for this film?

A: Marginalia was duly inspired by my appreciation for medieval art, and my want to make a story which artists could relate to. I wanted to take an experience that I know many young artists are familiar with (the agony of being reprimanded for drawing in the margins instead of doing your schoolwork) but set it in a different, but believable, time and place. The fantasy element was added because I liked the idea of imagination bringing ideas to life in a literal sense, and I feel not doing so would be underutilizing animation as a medium.

Q: What software did you use to make Marginalia?

A: The Visual Development and Layouts of the short were created in Adobe Photoshop and Procreate. Animation was made in Toon Boom Harmony, and Compositing was done in Adobe After Effects. The final edit of the film was produced in Adobe Premiere Pro.

Q: What made you want to direct?

A: I wanted to direct because I enjoy the act of curation. I like fine tuning and tweaking things to meet my specific taste, and I'm not afraid to say if something doesn't work quite yet. I also feel very comfortable in leadership positions, and find the direction process to be very rewarding.

Q: Who's your favorite of the marginalia creatures?

A: Fertzenpoot! He was the very first creature I designed, and was partially based on a drawing our producer made of me from when we were in high school.

Q: Do you think Bart really deserved to be trapped in the manuscript forever? Is there any chance for him to escape or be redeemed?

A: One could argue that Bart was just doing his job, and that is not reason enough to deserve becoming trapped in a parchment forever. Personally, there are people who have committed even lesser infractions who I would trap in a parchment forever if given the chance, so I'm alright if he stays in there. At least until the sequel, Marginalia II: The Wrath of Bart.

Q: Where do you imagine Otto's story goes after the end of the film?

A: There are two ways this could go: in the good ending, Otto's unique skill of creating ugly drawings is appreciated, and he leads a fulfilling life continuing to do just that. In the bad ending, others find out

Otto is both left-handed and able to create drawings which come to life, leading to him being tried for witchcraft.

Q: So, is Bart seeing anyone? Just asking for a friend.....

A: To “see” anyone would be impious. Shame on you!

CREDITS

Alex Gentemann	Director, Visual Development Artist, Layout Artist, Animator
Teddie Carlton	Producer, Visual Development Artist, Layout Artist
Jackson Reside	Co-Producer, Animator
Leah Simon	Lead Animator, Storyboard Artist
Madison Edwards	Art Director, Visual Development Artist, Layout Artist
Marlowe Gold	Animator, Storyboard Artist
Yoonji Park	Animator, Storyboard Artist
Sarah Peavy	Visual Development Artist, Layout Artist, Storyboard Artist
Alley Williams	Animator
Mo Wright	Animator
Olivia Merriam	Extra Help (Layout Artist)
Erica MacCormick	Extra Help (Animator)
Sydney Hyoub	Extra Help (Clean up Animator)
Dayna Dyar	Extra Help (Clean up Animator)
Genevieve Gonzalez	Extra Help (Clean up Animator)
Cailyn Goodfriend	Extra Help (Clean up Animator)
Kasey Marcos	Extra Help (Clean up Animator and Composer)
Timos Stein	Extra Help (Clean up Animator)
Leah Whalen	Extra Help (Clean up Animator)
Samantha Zielinski	Extra Help (Clean up Animator)
Regina Huerta Palmero	Extra Help (Compositing)
Priscilla Koilm	Extra Help (Compositing)
Jake Williams	Composer

<i>Arisa Nelson</i>	<i>Sound Supervisor and Sound Designer</i>
<i>HJ Kang</i>	<i>Sound Designer</i>
<i>Jillian Pilarski</i>	<i>Sound Designer</i>
<i>Cody Cote</i>	<i>Sound Mixer</i>
<i>Aidan Jones</i>	<i>Sound Mixer</i>
<i>Sofia Denise</i>	<i>Voice Actor (Otto)</i>
<i>Thiago Opperman</i>	<i>Voice Actor (Bart, Creatures, Various Monks)</i>
<i>Dennis Robinson II</i>	<i>Faculty Supervisor</i>

FILM STILLS









FILM SPECS

Running Time: 3:15

Aspect Ratio: 16:9

Sound Mix: Stereo, Binaural, 5.1

Film Type: 2D Animated Short Film, Color

Release Date: May 12th, 2025

Language: English