# Timing For Animation: A Comprehensive Guide by Tom Sito

Timing is one of the most important principles of animation. It refers to the speed and duration of an action, and it can be used to create a wide range of effects, from humor to pathos. In this article, legendary animator Tom Sito shares his insights on timing for animation, and provides tips on how to create effective and engaging animations.
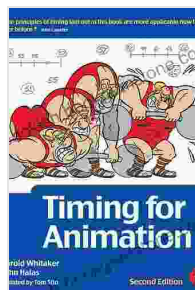
Timing for Animation by Tom Sito

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 13431 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 174 pages

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Squash and Stretch

Squash and stretch is a fundamental animation principle that can be used to create a sense of weight and elasticity. When an object is squashed, it becomes wider and shorter. When it is stretched, it becomes narrower and longer. This principle can be used to create a variety of effects, such as bouncing balls, jiggling characters, and flowing water.

To create effective squash and stretch, it is important to exaggerate the movement. The more exaggerated the movement, the more believable the

animation will be. However, it is also important to be careful not to overdo it. Too much exaggeration can make the animation look unrealistic.

Slow In and Slow Out

Slow in and slow out is another important animation principle that can be used to create a sense of realism. This principle states that the speed of an object should be slowest at the beginning and end of its movement, and fastest in the middle. This creates a more natural-looking animation, as it mimics the way that objects move in the real world.

To create effective slow in and slow out, it is important to use a smooth, gradual curve. The speed of the object should not change abruptly. Instead, it should gradually accelerate and decelerate.

Anticipation

Anticipation is a technique that can be used to create a sense of suspense or excitement. It involves showing a small movement before the main action occurs. This prepares the audience for the main action, and makes it more impactful.

There are many different ways to create anticipation. One common technique is to use a small, preparatory movement. For example, a character might shift their weight or take a step back before jumping. Another technique is to use a sound effect. For example, a door creaking open can create a sense of anticipation before the door actually opens.

Exaggeration

Exaggeration is a technique that can be used to create a variety of effects, from humor to pathos. It involves exaggerating the features or movements

of a character or object. This can be done to make the animation more visually appealing, or to create a specific emotional response.

Exaggeration can be used in a variety of ways. One common technique is to exaggerate the size or shape of a character or object. Another technique is to exaggerate the speed or movement of a character or object. Exaggeration can also be used to create a more cartoonish or humorous effect.

Secondary Action

Secondary action is a technique that can be used to add depth and realism to an animation. It involves adding small, additional movements to a character or object that are not essential to the main action. These movements can help to create a more believable and lifelike animation.

There are many different types of secondary action that can be used. Some common examples include:

- A character blinking their eyes

- A character fidgeting with their hands

- A character swaying back and forth

- A character breathing

Timing is a vital element of animation. It can be used to create a wide range of effects, from humor to pathos. By understanding the principles of timing, you can create more effective and engaging animations.

About Tom Sito

Tom Sito is an American animator, director, and teacher. He is known for his work on animated films such as *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, *The Little Mermaid*, and *Beauty and the Beast*. Sito has also taught animation at the California Institute of the Arts. He is the author of the book *Timing for Animation*, which is considered a classic in the field of animation.
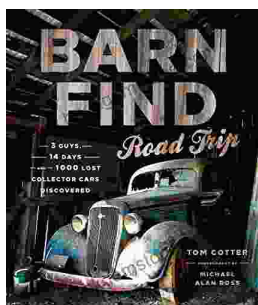
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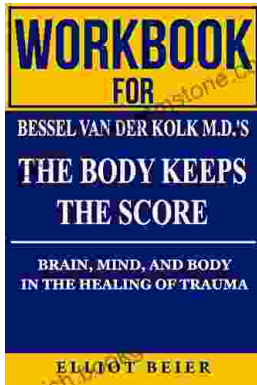
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