



## Fact Sheet: *The Art of Peanuts Animation*

### Hand-Drawn Animation

“Before the advent of computer animation, all animation was done by hand. All the frames in an animation had to be drawn by hand. Considering that each second of animation contains 24 frames (film), one can only imagine the tremendous amount of work that has to go into creating even the shortest of animated films.”

*Morden Collegiate,*  
Morden, Manitoba

Two techniques, keyframing and cel animation, were used to create animation by hand. These two techniques were used in creating the *Peanuts* animated prime time television specials and feature films:

### Key Frames

Considering the immense amount of work that goes into making an animation sequence, the drawing or painting is usually done by more than one person. After a storyboard has been laid out, the key animator draws the major or key frames of the animation. These major frames, or key points in the animation, are frames in which a great deal of change occurs. Later, assistant animators draw the frames in between the key frames. A key master setup is a cel or cels with their original matching background that can be cued up in the film layout.

### Cel Animation

Another advance in the process of creating animation was cel animation. When creating animation using this method, each character is drawn on a separate piece of transparent paper. A background is drawn on a separate piece of opaque paper. Then, while shooting the animation, the different characters are overlaid on top of the background in each frame. This method saves time because the artists do not have to draw entire frames, but rather just the parts that need to change such as individual characters. Sometimes, even separate parts of a character’s body are placed on separate pieces of transparency paper.

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## **Definitions**

### **Storyboard**

A series of drawings similar to a comic strip depicting the storyline of the animated special or feature film. These drawings will be pinned up on a bulletin board and placed in the order of the storyline.

### **Layout**

Detailed drawings depicting master scenes for a sequence often showing master background (settings), camera movements, and placement of characters.

### **Production drawings**

Original, one-of-a-kind production drawings created by an animator from which cels are later created.

### **Animation Cel**

A cel (short for celluloid) is a blank clear plastic sheet used by the studio artist to paint an animated character or object on the animator's original pencil drawing. Each of the *Peanuts* animated specials is comprised of 40,000 cels; the feature films more than 200,000.

### **Background**

The "sets" over which the action of each animated sequence takes place. Backgrounds are generally done in gouache or acrylic paint, although some animated productions have used backgrounds done in watercolor, oil paint, or even crayon.

### **Set-up**

The combination of a cel or cels with a background. It may also include additional elements from the scene such as overlays or special effects.

### **Color Model**

Cel created by the ink and paint department for purpose of maintaining color consistency during the production.

### **Master Background**

A cel or cels with an original background from a different sequence in the same film.