

The expected outcome for this unit in Virtual Spaces was to create a character which represented a celebration of our chosen culture. Being a first generation Romanian in my family born in the United States, I choose to select a Romanian celebration. Reflecting upon the many traditional festivities I've been given the opportunity to experience, I began brainstorming on three perfect celebrations: Easter, springtime ghiocci (snowdrop) flower season, and the capra (goat) dance. Organizing my three key ideas in Padlet and adding moodboard / concept idea photographs helped me imagine what type of character I could come up with for each traditional celebration.

I came to realize that the most feasible option was to continue with the capra (goat) dance. Beginning my character designing process, I drew many images of standing goats with different proportions and body types. Additionally, class time helped me explore more action movements and using shapes as body silhouette types. I enjoyed creating a background story for my character alongside designing their body as a way to express their story and personality. After drawing full body and close up face pictures, I used watercolors to create a color palette which I would later use in designing the characters material in Adobe Photoshop.

Overall, the modeling for my goat character was unproblematic and swift. I learned more about the sculpting features of Maya which I will certainly apply to future projects. In previous works, I found the UV unwrapping concept to be much too tedious and annoying to do; However, in this project, I followed a very simple character UV unwrapping tutorial and found the process to be quite easy and therapeutic. I enjoyed the logical approach of creating cuts in order to fully open my characters mesh. UV unwrapping the goats hair was a bit annoying since each strand was an individual shape. Next, I put my UV map into Adobe Photoshop and began to paint colors from my color palette on top of it. This was my first time using Adobe Photoshop in my life, and while in the beginning I found the tools very confusing, over time I began to understand how and when to use specific tools. In the end, I was very satisfied with how the goats shirt matched traditional Romanian iei shirts. Since University of the Arts London did not have a subscription with Adobe products for students, I had to use the seven day free trial window to finish my goat material in Adobe Photoshop. This was a bit annoying since I felt very time pressured and frustrated that I could not go back and fix small details after the seven day

free trial window was closed. Nonetheless, I finished the goat's material and had no trouble attaching it to my goat in Maya.

The next step was to create a skeleton, skin it, and create a character definition for my model. While the process of doing these steps is relatively easy, I believe Maya had bugs which prevented me from getting quickly to a proper result. Using the QuickRig feature in Maya allowed me to create a functional skeleton for my goat model, however for an unknown reason, there would be continuous bugs in adding animations to my goat. After lots of time spent with Kelvin (Virtual Spaces tutor) trying to find solutions, we ended up deleting the goats skeleton and character definition multiple times and repositioning the arms and legs to fit the general T-Pose stance. Once cleaning up the mesh from repositioning my model in a T-Pose Stance and deleting the history of many individual parts of my model, we were able to successfully attach an animation to my model. In the end I did use Mixamo animations since the Universities Mocap suit was broken.

I had a fun time experimenting and learning how to make snow through the nParticles feature in Maya as well as applying panoramic pictures as sky-dome backgrounds. Placing my goat in these scenes with dancing and snow animations made me feel very happy as my project was finally coming to a successful end with lots of time left to render many animation videos. I had a bit of extra time in which I used to create another character of a bear, which I would have had dancing alongside with my goat in the final animation scene. Sadly, however, in the end, the bear's mesh was very messy and I did not have the time nor the energy to go back on UV unwrapping and creating the material steps in order to fix the mesh. I still would have liked to create this bear in the right way since I was applying what I just learned from creating the goat onto the bear (more practice for me!)

If I were to do this project again, it would have been nice to create the secondary bear character in a more logical and time saving way so that down the road I would not have run into the same messy mesh problems. Overall, I feel like I paced myself on this project very well, allowing me to have plenty of time to render animations; Unlike in the previous Virtual Principles project where I ran out of time in rendering my scene animation. For future projects, I

will apply what I have learned in creating a character from the first concept designing steps all the way to attaching animations to a finished character model.