The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Stop, Start Lessons in Easy Cartoon Filming

By Nick Dowson

May 16, 2011



Children grabbing some props at a recent Multistudia event. Lessons cost 300 rubles for children, 400 for adults. **Pavel Nevzorov**

A deer runs, children start to fly and shapes appear in a salt-filled pan if you spend time with Nikolai Shakin at his DIY animation workshop.

Shakin, 26, leads participants through a series of different methods to make basic but enchanting cartoons every Saturday and Sunday. The sessions are led in Russian, and Shakin speaks very little English, but the activities he shows are easy to follow.

Shakin's main job is as an industrial climber, but he says his heart is in the cartoons. "I'm not a professional, but I can teach," he said. "For me, this is the main thing — that people are interested in what I do, I can share my skills with them, and they want to learn."

He has a way with children and a clear love of his work. Participants take it in turns to do their

bit within the session that starts with basic techniques. A series of stick drawings were given to participants to color as they wished, and when combined they make a short clip of a jumping deer.

The 10 children at the session, plus three mothers accompanying them, also created plasticine characters that Shakin moved around in front of a background, taking shots in different positions, giving an effect reminiscent of a very basic "Wallace & Gromit."

Then cartoons were created in a frying pan filled with a layer of salt — the salt could be moved around to make different images. Finally, pictures were taken of the participants in a series of different poses, some midair, throughout the room, as Shakin directed them in slapstick motion to the general amusement of both the kids and the adults.

As the session drew to a close the photos were played back set to music, and an amusing set of cartoons was brought to life. The small audience was thrilled, and gave Shakin — and themselves — a hearty round of applause.

The results of each session are different, Shakin said. "I love cartoons, but I would find it hard to spend years and years on one film like professional animators," he said. "This is great because you can create a little cartoon and then watch it straight away without any messing around or fancy technology."

"This is ideal work for me. It's what I love doing," he said. "Before I was doing it in Winzavod and then with volunteers in hospitals."

"I liked everything, particularly the flying!" said Oleg, 11, referring to jumping in the air for the photos.

It's not going to get you a career in cartoon making, but the sessions are fun and will give kids some ideas for ways to spend a rainy day.

Multistudia is on Saturday and Sunday at 11 a.m., 1, 3 and 5 p.m. 52 Ulitsa Usachyova. Metro Sportivnaya. Book in advance: Tel. (916) 984-9615, http://multistudia.ru.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2011/05/16/stop-start-lessons-in-easy-cartoon-filming-a6997