HOW TO IMPORT STORYBOARD IMAGES OR A .MOV FILE AS A SKETCH CARD IN MAYA

This procedure will allow you to bring in storyboard drawings you create in an external program like Toonboom or Photoshop and then place them in a 3D image card inside of Maya. This card can then be moved and animated or scaled just like any 3D object. The storyboard images can also be timed out and animated inside the image card as well.

This procedure assumes you are familiar with Maya and a 3D environment. You will need basic knowledge of 3D software and Maya's interface to execute this method.

USING AN IMAGE PLANE IN MAYA

To import the images you will use an image plane in Maya. You can create a free floating image plane or an image plane attached to the camera. An image plane attached to the camera is much like the grease pencil tool which always moves with the camera. You can use sequence of .jpg, .png, or even .psd images on an image plane.

For movies, make sure you export the .mov file as a motion-jpeg or photo-jpeg file otherwise Maya will not recognize the MOV file.

For an image sequence make sure you name your files with leading zeros at the end of the file name. Such as:

File001.png
File002.png
File003.png, etc

IMPORTING AN IMAGE SEQUENCE ONTO AN IMAGE PLANE

1. To import a free floating image plane click Ctrl+M to open the native maya menu bar.
Go to create> free image plane.

2. An image plane is created at the origin. To add an image file, open the attribute editor. Under **image plane attributes** click the file folder icon next to Image name. This will bring up a file browser where you can navigate to your images.

3. If you have a sequence of images, click the checkbox below the image name field. Maya will display the image sequence according to the file name. If an image is named 145, maya will display the image in sequence on frame 145. You can offset the start and end points in the image plane attributes.

4. Once you have a sequence of images imported you can display each image individually and key when each image appears.

5. To make the images keyable, right click on the **image number field> delete expression.** Now you can type the frame number manually in the **image number field** to display that specific image. To set a key, right click again and **set a keyframe.**

6. To display another image, move forward in the timeline and input a different number in the **image number field.** This will set a key for that image on the timeline.

7. The image plane can also be animated as any other object by selecting the plane and setting a keyframe. The only drawback is that the keys you set for the images and any translation keyframes you set for the image card appear together in the timeline. If you want to move or isolate the keys you may need to use the graph editor to do so.

IMPORTING A MOVIE FILE AS A CARD

1. To import a movie file as a card you will follow the same steps 1 and 2 above to import a free image plane.

2. Open the attribute editor. Under **image plane attributes > type> select Movie**

3. Under **image plane attributes** click the file folder icon next to Image name. This will bring up a file browser where you can navigate to your movie. Note: make sure your mov file is a motion-jpeg or photo-jpeg file otherwise Maya will not recognize the MOV file.

4. The movie file will begin to play at frame 1 in the timeline. You can offset the playback in the **image plane attributes.**

5. You can translate and scale the image plane card as you would any other object.

IMPORT AN IMAGE PLANE ATTACHED TO A CAMERA

1. Shift+M to open the native maya menu bar inside the viewport window. Go to **View> image plane> import image (or import movie).** This will create an image plane attached to the active camera.

2. This type of image plane will not show up in the outliner window. In order to select the attributes you need to go to **View> image plane> image plane attributes> select your image plane.** This will bring up the attribute editor for your image plane. You can add a sequence of images inside the attribute editor. **Note: you can have more than one image plane per camera.**

3. To delete an image plane go into the Hypergraph and delete the image plane from the camera it's attached to, or select the camera, go to attribute editor, select the image plane's tab, press **"select"** button at the button then press the **"delete"** key.

4. To detach an image plane from the camera open your script editor. In the MEL tab type:

```
imagePlane -e -detach imagePlane1;
```

(Change "imagePlane1" to the name of the image plane you want to detach)

Highlight the code you just entered in the mel tab. At the top of the script editor click the **blue play button** to execute the script you entered. This should detach your image plane from the camera.