

Composing Animations

- Layers Of An Animation
- Creating Backgrounds
- Exporting Animations

Animation Layers

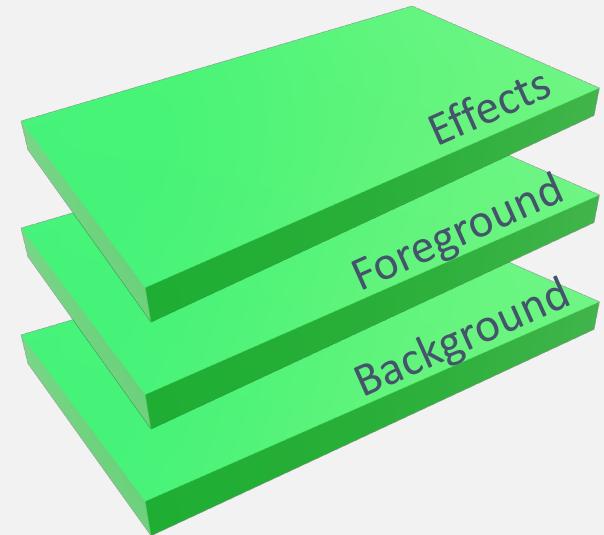
Animations can be broken down into 3 main components: **background**, **foreground**, and **special effects**

Backgrounds are the **scenery** and **assisting action** in a scene. It helps create a setting for our story. Backgrounds are **not always static** and can **evolve** over time. Wind can make trees shake, rain can make flowers sink, water can flow down a river, and all sorts of other actions can occur.

Foregrounds are the **main or primary actions** occurring. After a setting has been established, we want our viewers to focus on these components by having them display in the foreground.

Special Effects are **post-processing layers** added to **enhance** the visuals of a scene. These can be lighting, weathering effects, particle systems, shading, and other effects computationally simulated.

We will cover this category during the **video-editing** portion of the course.



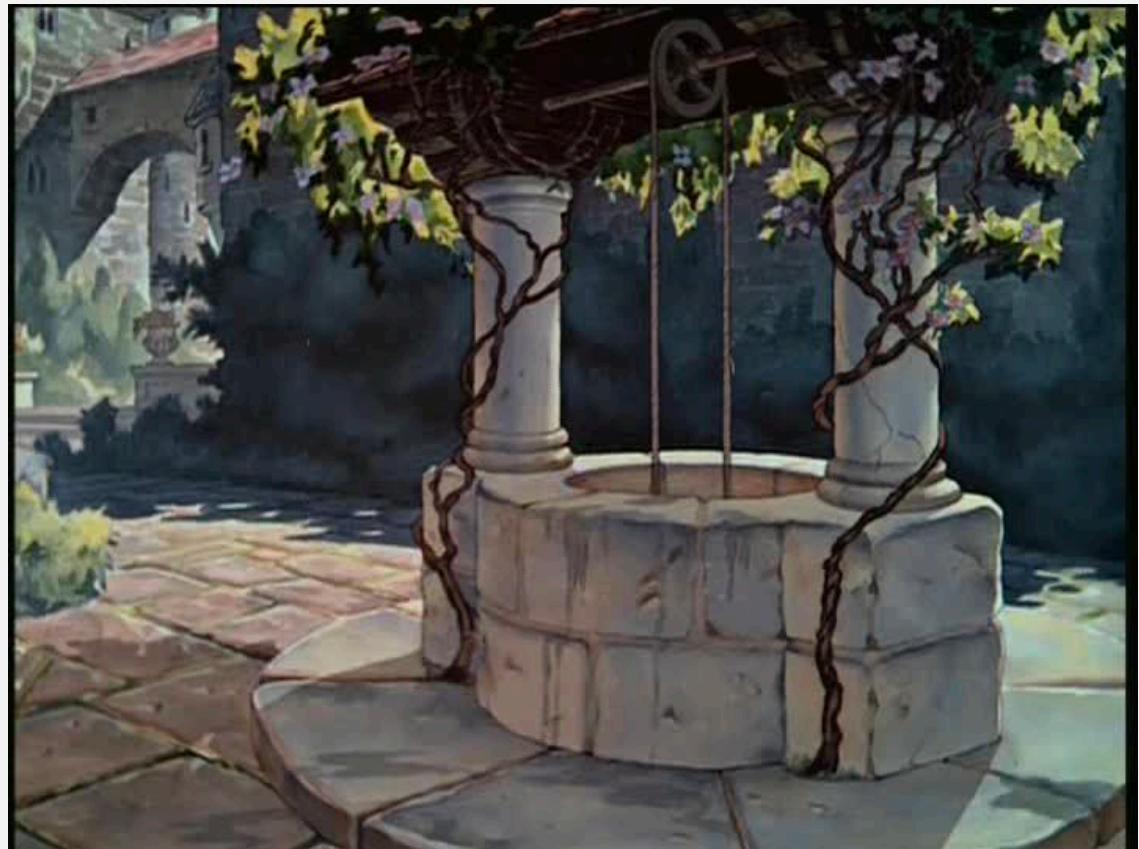
~~Layers Of An Animation~~

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Creating Static Backgrounds

Static Backgrounds have **no animation cycles** or **components**. They are composed as a single image onto the scene.

Static Backgrounds can be drawn in **Photoshop** as a **sketch layer**, an **ink layer**, a **color layer**, and a **shading layer**. These layers (minus the sketch layer which is reference) can be **merged** together and **exported** as a **.jpeg/.png** for external applications, or directly imported as a **.ps** file into another Adobe Application.



Snow White, 1938

Creating Dynamic Backgrounds

Dynamic Backgrounds have **animation cycles** or **interact with foreground components**. They are composed of multiple frames that can be cycled through.

Dynamic Backgrounds can be drawn in **Photoshop** as a series of different layers for each animation cycle, and an overall static background. The technique is to first **draw the static background** as all the components that will stay stationary (elements like boulders and the ground may never move), and create a **separate sequence** of layers for **elements with looping animation cycles** that blend in with the background (i.e. a tree with leaves swaying back and forth).

To generate a **looping** animation, draw a **trajectory** of the animation cycle (often an **ellipse**) and draw a frame at the **start** and **halfway** point, filling in frames between them until the animation is smooth enough.



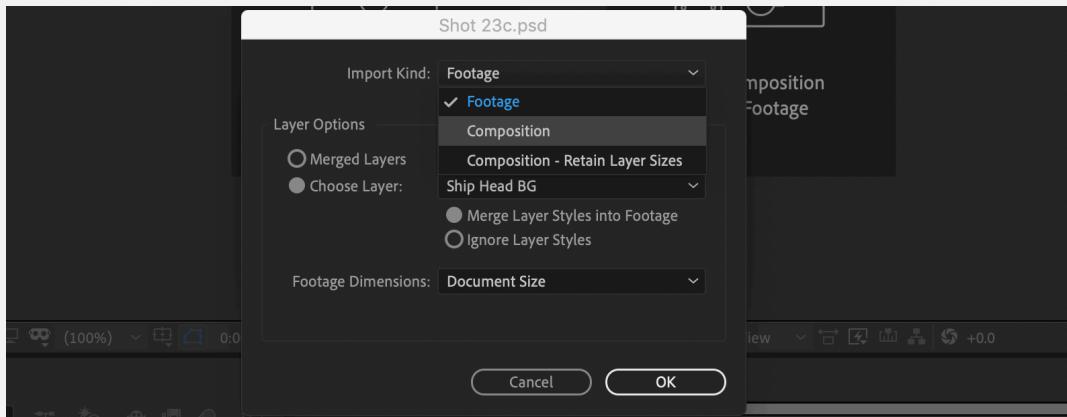
Peter Pan, 1953

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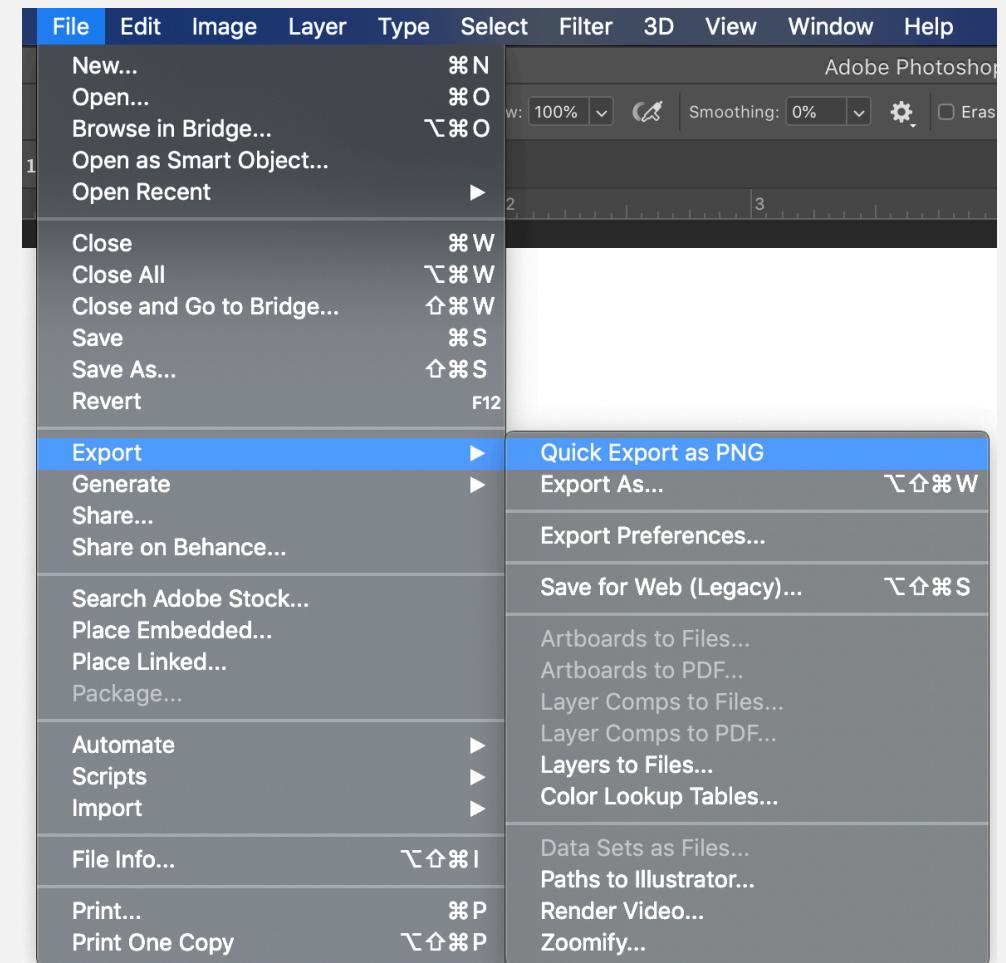
Exporting From Photoshop

Photoshop allows layers to be exported as common image formats such as .png & .jpg.

Adobe applications can load Photoshop files directly and import them as a single compressed layer, individual layers, or as a composition of separated layers with editable features maintained. The later is particularly useful for working with dynamic backgrounds and multiple layers.



After Effects CC 2018

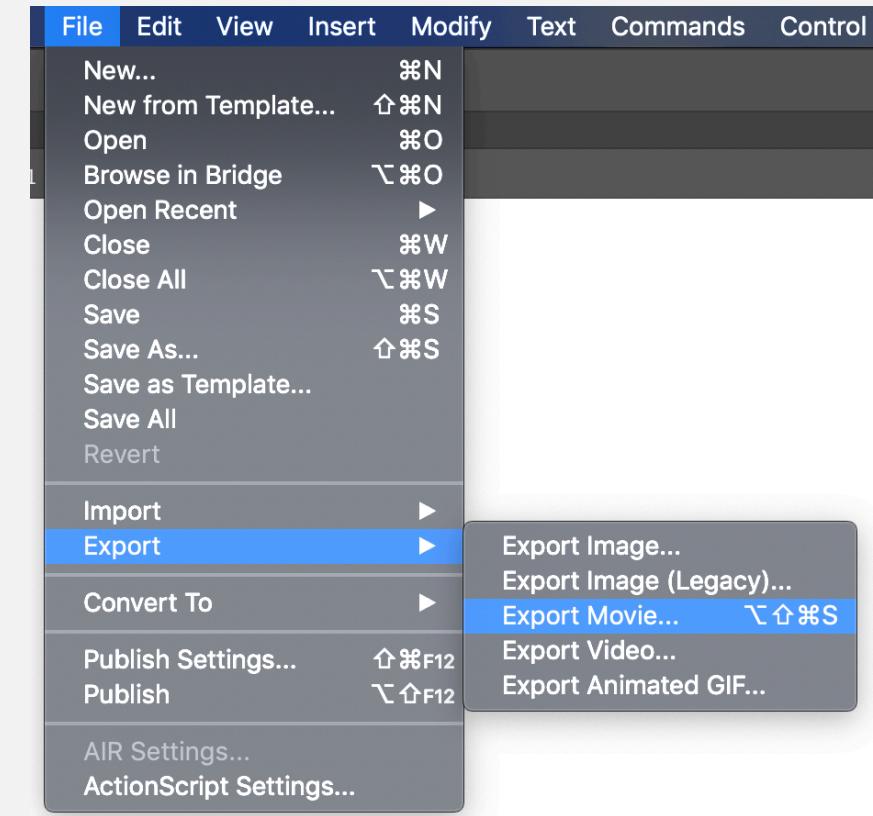


Photoshop CC 2018

Exporting From Flash Professional

Flash Professional can export video frames to a **.swf** format that is readable by **flash players** and applications that support flash.

These files can be treated as videos and directly imported into video editing software. The **audio** associated with these files can end up **lossy**, so it is advised that the audio files used in the animation are imported as a **separate audio file** into the video editing file and overwrite the audio from the .swf file.



Animate CC 2018

Homework

- ❑ Create an animation with foreground and background components animated in Photoshop, Flash Professional, or a mixture of the two. Special emphasis should be placed on the motion of individual components, and of the scene as a whole.
- ❑ You may opt to use either hand-drawn or vector-based animation. You are allowed to use any assets you find online for educational purposes so long as they are credited somewhere in the animation.
- ❑ Upload the .fla or .ps file to the course Drive.

Questions?

Live Demo