

V. Atomic Modern

After WWII, the Atomic Modern Era of Animation starts and goes on until about 1965. The troops came home and both the U.S. and Europe stood down from a war economy and began to rebuild their civilian economy. Of course, in the U.S. this was a lot easier to do since there was very little wartime damage. Because of the massive damage to their infrastructure and economy, it would be several years before the Japanese and the Europeans could invest in something as frivolous as animation. In the U.S., the young men that worked in the animation studios came back and started right back where they left off, creating high-quality, extremely funny, cartoons.

However, try as they might, everything wasn't all the same. The cost of creating an animation was high and the demand for more and more cartoons to play worldwide drove the animation studios to the breaking point. The new medium of television was just starting to be seen in the average person's home and TV had an insatiable appetite for cartoons. A movie shows for two hours and would have one animated short as a preview. A TV airs 24/7 and needs a lot more media to fill up that time.

Studios began to cut quality. At first they moved to a new, abstract, modern style of drawing that was influenced by modern art and they rejected the time consuming, hand-drawn, realistic look of the past for a hard-edged style that spoke to the Space Age. This was called the **UA (United Artists) style** and was adopted by all of the studios. In order to cut costs and speed up production, they also began to skimp on (= économiser sur) quality by lowering the frame rate and reducing the movement sequences and layering, a process called limited animation. By the end of the Atomic Modern era, animation quality was in tatters (= ruined) and the industry wasn't far behind.

In 1950, the first computer animation is created. It was an animated "BOUNCING BALL" done at MIT by Saxenian. Animation for TV commercials becomes an important segment of the animation industry.

In 1952, MGM's Norman McLaren's pixilation film, labeled by some as "one of the most controversial films the NFB ever made" because there was too much violence," wins an Oscar for best documentary (see video 17 for the pixilation film). The level of cartoon violence is what we consider acceptable now, another example of changing social norms.

Most U.S. movie theaters are adapted for Cinemascope projection.

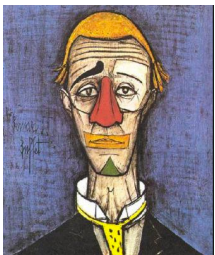
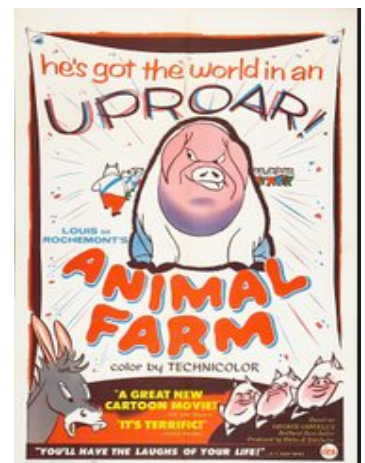
Walt Disney's "PETER PAN" is released.

In 1954, Twenty-nine million homes have TVs in U.S., or 60% of all households.

Halas and Batchelor create first British animated feature, "ANIMAL FARM." (see video 18)

Disney starts phasing out shorts as the cost rises to \$75,000 each.

Disney and opens in California.



Bernard Buffet paints "Circus." His painting style influences the UPA style.

In 1956, Annecy, the first major international animation festival, begins within the framework of the Cannes Festival. In 1960, it becomes an independent festival at Annecy under the auspices of the Association Francaise pour la Diffusion du Cinema.

In 1957, John Whitney used 17 Bodine motors, eight Selsyns, nine different gear units and five ball integrators to create analog computer graphics (see video 19).



Warners Bros. releases "WHAT'S OPERA DOC?" (see video 20) directed by Chuck Jones. This "Bugs" cartoon was voted by professional animators to be one of the best cartoons ever made.



In 1960, Hanna-Barbera introduces "THE FLINTSTONES" (as a tribute to the Honeymooners) the first primetime animated TV series (see video 21).

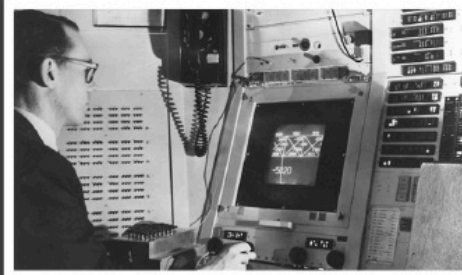
In 1961, Whitney used differential gear mechanisms to create film and television title sequences.

Walt Disney releases "ONE HUNDRED AND ONE DALMATIANS" the first Disney feature to use Xeroxed cells.

In 1962, Warner Bros. Animation closes. (Will re-open in the 1990s)

SKETCHPAD

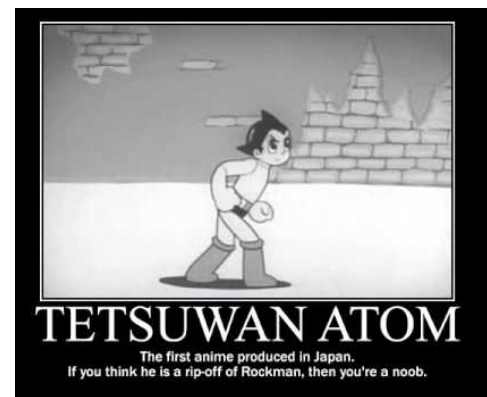
(1963)



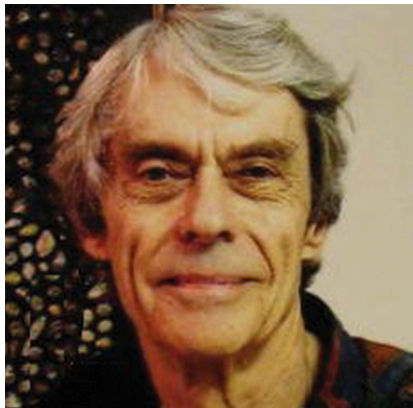
In 1963, Ivan Sutherland invents SKETCHPAD at MIT/Lincoln Labs. In computer animation, Ivan Sutherland's doctoral dissertation at MIT opens the way to interactive computer animation.



TETSUWAN ATOMU (ASTRO BOY), Japan's first television animation series begins. Created by Osamu Tezuka (see video 22).



Ken Knowlton is a computer graphics pioneer, artist, mosaicist and portraitist working at Bell Laboratories. He starts developing computer techniques for producing animated movies.



He developed the BEFLIX (Bell Flicks) programming language for bitmap computer-produced movies, using an IBM 7094 computer and a Stromberg-Carlson 4020 microfilm recorder. This was the first computer animation language.

YOUR MISSION

1. Introduce the period of ATOMIC MODERN.
2. Read the information about the ATOMIC MODERN age and make a timeline for this period, including dates and pictures of famous animated movies. Your presentation must be appealing.