

*To see the ocean for the first time*  
Todd Fuller



# Seeing the ocean is easier in residence

In 2018, Sydney based artist Todd Fuller was brought to Port Macquarie by the Glasshouse in order to explore a local story. Fuller created the animation *To see the ocean for the first time* which re-imagined local icon Harry Thompson.

The story of Harry is remarkable. In 1960, prior to moving to Port Macquarie, Harry won the lottery. With his winnings, he purchased a new car and caravan and travelled towards the coast. He and his wife Jean wanted to see the ocean for the first time. On arrival they drove onto Shelly Beach and unexpectedly get bogged in the sand. Harry was towed out of trouble by some locals before living in his caravan on the edge of the beach for nearly 40 years. Harry was a well loved icon of the area; cleaning the beach, carving the steps to Harry's Lookout, gathering lost objects on his 'thong tree' and informally managing wedding bookings at the Lookout. At one point there was an effort to have Harry removed from the beach as an illegal squatter. This was overturned and a few years later he was a 'citizen of the year' before later being announced the unofficial Mayor of Shelly Beach. Harry and Jean raised two children in their van on Shelly Beach.

After Harry and his wife died (2000 and 1985 respectively), the van was removed and replaced with a series of artworks which remind us of Harry's life. One such artwork is still evident on Shelly Beach; a wooden carved caravan sculpture of Harry in his robes created by Stephen King and Stephen Killick. The totem like figure is carved from wood featuring Harry in his mayoral robes. This sculpture sits alongside other functional objects and a mosaic piece by Sue Bell forming the sculpture park of Shelly Beach.

On Fuller's visit to Port Macquarie, he was struck by Harry's story. It was visible not only in the artworks on Shelly Beach, but also in the Lookout, as well as the stories and imaginations of many locals he encountered. Throughout his residency, Todd explored local museums, artworks, archives, and chatted with locals to help research this animation. He also drew daily across the area observing caravans in local holiday parks, houses and street corners, as well as the landmarks of Shelly Beach and Harry's Lookout.

Fuller's *To see the ocean for the first time* is a hand drawn animation which, frame by frame, draws Harry's story into being. The animation is painted and drawn across 32 pieces of paper. Working with analog animation methods, Fuller draws and documents each frame before re-drawing and photographing the same scene with a slight change. By compositing these photographs together he is able to create a digital video, or a hand-drawn film as the artist calls it.

"The process is very similar to a flip book animation or the type of animation you might create by drawing across the corner margin of a math book. But in the end, it becomes more of a sketchbook brought to life. Drawing and redrawing onto the same page lets me capture the history of a movement on a page. The accumulation of marks becomes like the blur of memory. It's a process that feels really appropriate for excavating stories of the past" writes the artist.

"This project could have been researched and drawn remotely, but by being in the area and working in direct response to the region the artwork becomes so much more authentic. This is why residencies are important" writes Fuller.



# Watch *To see the ocean for first time* here

## Cultural

There are reminders of Harry's story all over Port Macquarie. Find an article about Harry Thompson and Shelly Beach, recount his story.

Shelly Beach houses a series of public artworks created around Harry's story. Visit the beach and photograph or draw one of them. Describe what aspect of the Harry story it alludes to.

If you were to create an artwork about the past or current region of Port Macquarie, what might your artwork be about? Is there a story, person or significant event you would like to see an artwork about?

Describe how this artwork was made.

## Structural

This artwork does not depict Port Macquarie using a palette you would expect for an animation about a beach. Comment on the colour selections of the animation.

Watch the animation *To see the ocean for the first time*, list as many symbols from the local area as you can find.

Do you think this work effectively captures Port Macquarie. Evaluate why or why not?

Examine the below images from Fuller's Sketchbook. What insights do they offer into his process for creating an animation?

## Subjective

Choose a scene from the animation. List three words which describe how it makes you feel?

Re-watch the same scene and identify one technique the artist has employed to make you feel this way.

Listen to the animation without watching it. Interpret how has the artist and composer used sound to change feelings and mood throughout the piece?

## Postmodern

The artist describes this artwork as a drawing. Do you agree with this? Justify an argument for or against this artwork being described as a drawing.



Figure A - Todd Fuller, Sketchbook, 2018



# Conceptual Framework

## Artist

This artwork was created through the artist experiencing Port Macquarie via a residency. Explain why an artist might prefer to visit and experience a place first hand before creating work about it. Do you think this is important?

Todd Fuller has created multiple works about Regional Australia through direct experiences. These include *Ode to Clarence* (Grafton NSW) and *My brother calls this place God's Country* (Branxton NSW). Select one of these animations and propose what the artist may be positioning us to feel about these places.

Todd Fuller has collaborated with Composer Paul Smith for many years. Propose why a visual artist and a musician may chose to work together to create an artwork of this nature?



Figure B - Stills from *Ode to Clarence* and *My Brother calls this place God's Country*



Figure C - Todd Fuller during the Glasshouse Artist in Residence

## Audience

This artwork has many links to a specific geographical area. Consider how audiences without local knowledge may interpret this work compared to those who are not familiar with the area.

Do you think it is essential to have this knowledge to appreciate the work?

## Artwork

Todd's animation involves drawing and erasing images over and over.

Propose a reason why the artist would chose this technique to examine a historical story?

## World

Todd Fuller was raised in Branxton, NSW. Watch the artwork *My brother calls this place God's Country* about the town Fuller grew up in.

List similarities can you find between how he depicts Branxton and Port Macquarie?

# Make a flipbook

## YOU WILL NEED



A4 PAPER



SCISSORS



PENCILS



PENS, MARKERS, COLOURED PENCILS



BULLDOG CLIP

1. Print the template on the next page. To make the flipbook, you will need ten copies of the template. You can print multiple copies, or rule up your own using the template.

2. Using a pencil, draw an image onto the end of the first strip. This will be the first image of your flipbook. Keep the drawing within the marked section to ensure it will be seen when you flip your animation.

3. Draw the same image on the next flipbook strip, making sure to change it slightly. Try and keep the image in the same spot as the first drawing.

4. Continue drawing images, changing each one slightly from the one before it. Think about how you can add or subtract objects from the animation, a ball dropping in from the top edge, a person walking in or out of the frame.

5. Continue drawing until you have 100 drawings. Work back into the drawings with a marked or coloured pencils to add colour or tone if you like.

6. Cut each page into strips if you haven't already done so (see animator tip #2)

7. Arrange drawings in order, with the first drawing on top and the last drawing on the bottom. Place the bulldog clip on the end without the drawings.

8. Start flipping and watch your drawings come to life.

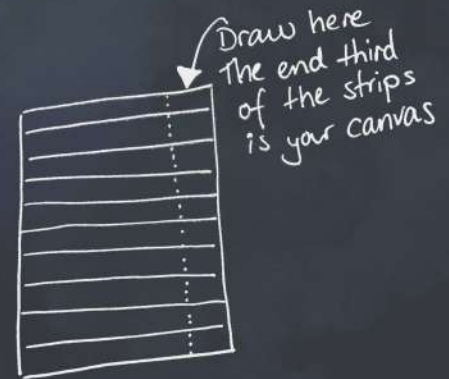
## EXPERIMENT

- Once you have assembled your flipbook one way, rearrange it so the first image is at the bottom.

- Create an animation that tells a simple story. You might want to use a simple stick figure or a bouncing ball as a character to begin with

- Try an abstract drawing, focused on colour or shape, rather than figurative drawing.

- Change the size. Make bigger or smaller flipbooks, using the bottom of an A4 page for each drawing or limit your drawings to only a centimeter of space.



## ANIMATOR TIP #1

Label the order of your strips to help keep them order.

## ANIMATOR TIP #2

To help your image stay in the same spot you can use a window as your own lightbox. Cut up all the strips then once you have done your first drawing, place it against a window. Lay the second piece over the first to match the position. Trace over the first image, remembering to alter it slightly.

## ANIMATOR TIP #3

Small changes between your drawings will result in a smooth animation. Bigger changes between drawings will be much more drawing. Experiment this to simulate different speeds.



# Make your own animation

## YOU WILL NEED



TABLET OR SMART PHONE



MASKING TAPE AND BLUE TAC



PAPER



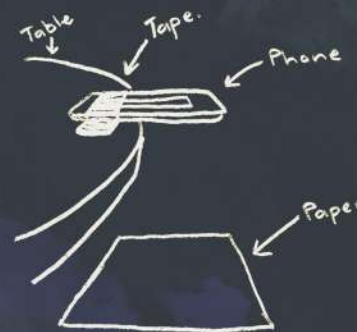
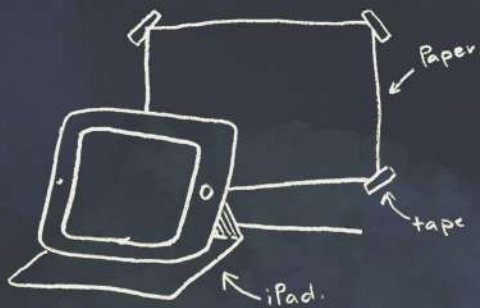
SCISSORS

## ADD OTHER MATERIAL SKETCHES



PENCIL, CHARCOAL, COLOURED PENCILS, MARKERS, WATERCOLOUR PAINTS, ERASER

## SET UP YOUR SPACE LIKE THIS



Todd Fuller's process of creating hand-drawn animations is similar to creating a flipbook. However, instead of lots of drawings on separate pieces of paper, Todd's hand-drawn animations are created by drawing, taking a photograph of the drawing, altering it slightly, taking another photograph, and repeating this process over and over again. The photographs are then processed together to make a moving image.

This process of drawing, erasing and/or painting over the drawing ensures that the remnants of the previous drawings remain visible throughout the animation. By working back into his drawings, Todd is able to limit the amount of paper he uses; only changing paper for a new scene, rather than a new piece for each new drawing,

## BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Think of a narrative you would like to tell. Perhaps it is a story about someone in your life or maybe about where you live. What are the major plot points of the narrative? How will you express them? Create a story board to help you plan your animation.

- Try and limit the amount of paper you use and explore different ways elements of your story can move, transform, enter and exit the page.

- What materials and colour palette will you use?



1. Download the free app iMotion HD from the App Store or Google Play. The free version is fine!
2. Start with a piece of paper, tape it to a wall in front of your device or place it on the floor with your device taped over the edge of a coffee table. Make sure your Tablet or Smart Phone is taped in place so that it won't move.
3. Select the iMotion App. Select 'new movie'. Select 'manual' and then 'start.'
4. Take photographs of your piece of paper by tapping capture. Try to keep your hands out of the shot!
5. Start drawing your scene in small increments. Take a photo after every few lines you draw.
6. Draw your character into the scene. Erase elements of your background if you need to.
7. Erase and change elements of your character in small movements. Your character may blink, move an arm, or do something more ambitious like jumping.
8. Replace the background paper with a new piece as often as you like. Challenge yourself to use at least three pieces of paper to create your animation.
9. Once your narrative is finished, press 'stop' and then 'stop' again to confirm you are finished and export the film.
10. Play with the toggle in the middle of the screen, this lets you adjust the 'fps'. 'FPS' means Frames per Second - or how many photographs the animation is showing each second.
11. Once you are happy with the speed of your animation, select export and save it as a 'video' to the 'photo library' on your device.

#### ANIMATOR TIP

Keep your animation smooth, smaller variations between drawings and taking lots of photographs will help your animated movement look natural. Big changes between drawings will result in jumpy and jarring footage.

#### EXPERIMENT

You can use this app and process in lots of different ways. Try the following to create a range of different animations:

- Limited colour palette
- Found objects
- Collage using cut outs from a magazine
- Modelling clay
- drawing with different materials; paint, crayon, pencil, charcoal, chalk, pastels, etc





SHARE YOUR WORK  
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@glasshousepmq

IMAGE CREDITS

Todd Fuller

*Untitled 21 (To see the ocean for the first time), 2018*

*Untitled 10 (To see the ocean for the first time), 2018*

*Untitled 19 (To see the ocean for the first time), 2018*

Chalk, charcoal and acrylic on paper

56 x 75cm

Commissioned by the Glasshouse Port Macquarie.

Authored by Amy Hill and Todd Fuller. Courtesy MAY SPACE, Sydney.