

Latest Trends in Animation Industry

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Abstract

The Global Animation industry has grown rapidly in the past decades and is now emerging as one of the fastest evolving industries fueled by the rapid development in technology and growing demand in the global marketplace. This has produced lots of opportunities in the industry and has sparked the interest of the creators, producers in the field to bring out their creativity and contribute their best to the industry. The demand for high definition, visually engaging, quality animated contents is on a rise and so is the competition between the various emerging and old animation studios, production houses and market places to produce the best contents.

Keywords: Animation industry, trend, global, 3D, 2D.

Introduction

The Animation Industry has seen gradual changes, evolution and growth since it came to existence. In the recent years it has seen a boom in its growth as a result of the boom in technology, IT, networking and easy availability of the same to the general masses, audiences. The development in technology has made creation of visually appealing and realistic contents with fluid and realistic animations possible. We have movies, animated series, web series and other animations with the best CGI's, fluidity, Vfx, visuals etc. that had never existed before. But it does not stop here. There has been an increasing demand for powerful, creative, immersive world building, character development and storytelling through the medium. The industry is being revolutionized and reshaped with these new standards.

Some advantageous trends have made great impact and are helping in the boom of the industry like availability of free and open-source softwares helping the aspiring artists, animators, startups, businesses to start making, delivering their content without worrying about budget issues. Emergence of newer paid and free distribution platforms like Netflix, Amazon, Hulu, YouTube besides the traditional cable, Satellite TV platforms, growing popularity of online video streaming has led people spending hours watching them. Introduction of more animated stories made for and directed towards more mature audiences and adults, the boom in the popularity of merchandises and products based on these animations, the rise in technologies like AR/VR, games, holographs, various apps, 4D technology etc. that heavily uses animation, graphics, vfx and CGIs happen to be the areas of contemporary interest.

Latest Trends around the World

United States of America and Japan have always been the giants and leaders in the animation world, closely followed by other emerging countries in the animation industry like France, China, Canada, South Korea, Russia, UK, India and other European countries. The other countries are following these countries and polishing and advancing their animations.

In the western side we have the America and the European countries where 3D animation is now the standard for all animated feature films. 2D animation is more prominently used in the animated TV series and shows. It is relevant to mention some of the world's greatest animation studios (Disney Studios, Pixar, Blue Sky studios etc.), the animation from which has produced some of the top works in the field. Historically and Culturally, the western animation industries have always made animations for kids and later for families. As of in recent years, there has been a rise in demand for more adult-oriented animated contents. There are very few niche marketers that make series, films, contents for adults like Adult Swim and almost all big budget animated feature films are never made with solely mature audience as their targets and they always try to secure high Grade. The big studios have a trend of producing sequels of hit movies which have history of being both successful and unsuccessful. The use of animal like characters has been very prominent since the beginning of the industry here. The trend of remaking of the old cult classics using the modern technologies are back now with remakes of 'The Lion King', 'The Jungle Book' etc. Newer and better technologies of merging 2D and 3D, merging 3D with live action have been developed and the end results are all encouraging.

The European nations like France, Italy, Spain, Poland are relatively newer to come to the market place, but have rapidly grown to compete with the bigger studios with big hit titles like 'Despicable Me', 'Minions', 'the secret life of pets' etc. and a large number of award winning animated short films. Many of these big studios extensively outsource their work to other countries. The Russian animation industry has grown quite well too and seeks to compete with the big studios of the west. In the recent years they have produced good works like 'The Snow queen', 'Masha and the bear' etc.

The eastern animation is dominated by the global animation industry of Japan. The Japanese animations popularly known as 'Anime' are now extremely popular among the youth and adults as well. With their top notch and high end outputs in all aspects like visuals, animations, music, sound, variety of themes, genres, character development and compelling story telling; their popularity, demand and emergence as the leader in the animation industry is only increasing day by day. The animated contents from the eastern side are largely different from that of its western counterparts. 2D animation is widely more preferred and is more prominent here over 3D outputs, many of their production houses and studios still use traditional animation techniques. They do most of the work in their own country and outsourcing is done in lesser quantity, most of the animated contents made are adaptations of 'mangas' that is Japanese comics. Appreciation and acknowledgement of Japanese animation or 'Sakuga' along with their creators, are now a trending practices among the fans. 'Sakuga' was originally a term for Japanese animation but now it is being morphed into various different definitions inside the Sakuga community. Taking into consideration, Sakuga as any kind of high quality, fluid and dynamic animation and camera movements; be it from any country, the term and the practices are now becoming a global phenomenon. Historically and Culturally; Japan has always created animations for all demographic ages; ranging from kids to adults. This was even more diversified when the military and political leaders of the country urged the content creators to use this medium for their political propagandas during the 1800s and 1900s. This has helped them in penetrating people's heart and the magic created by their content stays with the people even after they have grown up from kids to adults. They also have a large number of varieties, themes, genres in their content. All these factors have helped them in becoming the master storytellers. Their stories, characters, world building, contents have psychological depth, realism, mature themes and an immersive experience that give them an edge and advantage in the competition. Some of the big hit anime feature films in the recent years are 'Spirited Away', 'Your name', 'A silent voice', 'Mirai', 'Weathering with you' among others. These kind of contents have revolutionized the concept of

animated storytelling and entertainment. It's not only about using high end technology, 3D or 2D or extraordinary visuals that has the ability to capture visual realism. It's about how creatively we use the animated mediums to make those stories, worlds and characters feel real in a deeper, relatable, inspiring and humane way. The demands of more animated content similar to those are increasing day by day because they serve one of the demographic groups which the animation industries of most countries historically tend to ignore; the adults, audiences seeking more mature contents. There are many animations tools for anime that offer you a variety of features that come in very handy when creating this type of animation. Some of the best animation softwares are Toonz, Moho studio, Clip studio paint, Retas pro.

The other emerging countries from Asia are China, South Korea. The animation industry of both the countries has grown and developed well over the last few years. South Korea has always been involved in doing the outsourced works from big studios and has produced many fully Korean animated TV series and movies too. 'The king of pigs' is one of their hit movies that have a global reach. The influence of both eastern and western style animations and visuals is balanced and evident in their produced contents. In China, the Chinese Government urged the animation studios, houses to produce more locally and originally made animated contents with emphasis on the Chinese culture following the rising popularity of Japanese animation in China. The Chinese animation or 'Donghua' is thus making a comeback again and the country's studios have produced some very high quality animated films in the recent years. The other south east countries like Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam, Indonesia are trailing behind and are trying to catch up with their bigger competitors. While these countries do many outsourced works, the production of home grown original content that are of good quality is less.

Conclusion

India's animation industry has been there for many years but better animated films and series have come to surface only in very recent years. Culturally, animated content has been always and is still largely being made for kids. As such, the animated films, TV series produced do not develop much appeal for the teenagers or adult audiences. The quality of animation and visuals has improved in recent years. But there is still much room for development. India is focusing on improving both its 2D and 3D wings and contents are produced in both style. India has potential to make better and top quality animations and has worked on a large number of outsourced projects from big studios. The recent 3D film 'Chota Bheem Kung fu Dhamaka' has one of the best visuals and animations produced completely in India so far. And the 'Mighty Little Bheem' is one of the best work in 3D TV series produced so far. But in terms of 2D, the Chota Bheem franchise; though the most popular among the kids these days; does not have the best visuals or good animation as some of the other 2D movies or TV series. With the rise of free video-sharing and streaming platforms and availability of free softwares, some independent startups and individual or groups are making use of these facilities to produce contents too. Studio Durga which is India's first Anime studios, is among such a group and their primary platform for distribution is YouTube. Their film 'Karmachakra' made for teen and young adults is set to be released in the coming years and is now a hot topic of discussion among the anime fan community of India. Their work is being appreciated visually, animation and story wise by the community. More such films with stylized character art and styles like Vishak-the eagle boy by Rudra Matsa Entertainment are on the make too and will be released in the recent years.

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