

Danet Hugo - CFRA 2024

RHINOCEROS

Adaptation of the last scene of Rhinoceros by Eugene Ionesco

Pitch : All humanity has turned into a rhinoceros, except for one man. In a fit of despair, he tries to transform himself into a beast, but fails. He decides to remain as he is, a man-rhinoceros hybrid.

INTENTION NOTE

An adaptation of a play

The short film takes place at the end of the play *Rhinoceros* by Eugene Ionesco. When the film begins, many events have already taken place: we find an exhausted man in a world destroyed and invaded by rhinoceroses.

I wanted to adapt this text by asking myself the following question: Why adapt theater into animation? I then saw a way to amplify the absurdity of the play. Ionesco writes scenic intentions that are complicated to realize in theater (for example, to bring many rhinoceroses on stage) but imaginable in animation. This medium will also allow to amplify the metamorphosis of the character, and the graphic evolutions will help to hyperbolize the underlying themes of the scene.

A man facing the norm

This scene presents a man who tries at all costs to adapt himself in order not to be a pariah of society, even if he has to lose his authenticity.

Gone are the days of men and buildings, replaced by free rhinoceroses. Even though man does not understand this evolution, he will try to transform himself to blend in with the mass.

The opposition between man and the norm can be read visually:

The immense rhinoceroses will take up all the space outside. The man will be tiny and powerless in front of the beasts.

I want to make clear by this difference that dialogue is not possible: The norm will not change, it does not even hear man.

Graphically, the man will have a silhouette made of curves, and will be -before the metamorphosis- well proportioned. The rhinoceros, on the other hand, will be very structured, rigid, and will have a more pronounced graphic style, with cubist/surrealist inspirations. Two worlds are opposed, and if the man wants to be part of the norm, he will even have to change his graphic universe.

The consistent representation of the man (flat colors) will be opposed to the more subtle textures (made with a watercolor brush) of the rhinoceros.

The colors will accompany this idea of opposition: the dull blue space of the building will contrast with the bright pink of the rhinos. Since man will try to become the norm, the pink of the rhinoceros will gradually invade the shots until the end of the transformation.

A metamorphosis

It is by despair that the last man, will try to transform himself. The first goal of this short film is to represent this dramatic tension: to show the strength and the difficulty of the transformation, the distress of the man.

This metamorphosis will be amplified both by a suffocating framing, but even more thanks to a graphic game during the transformation:

At the beginning, the man will be represented in a simplified but realistic way. During his transformation, he will become

more and more abstract/cubist/
disproportionate.

The variation of lines and shapes
will voluntarily create an aesthetic
confusion, like films made with
traditional tools. I wish to support the
tension of the film by questioning the
consistency of the forms during the
climax of the short film: the scream.
At this moment, the masses and lines
that define the character will be lost.
We can distinguish the appearance
of a rhinoceros, with straighter
and more structured lines, but the
metamorphosis fails, and the forms
scatter to create an abstract image
that transcribes the chaos of the
situation. This failure of transformation
will also be illustrated by the color:
while the man wishes to go from dull
blue to bright pink, parasitic colors
(yellow, orange) will appear in the
image.

After the failed attempt, the man will
remain in a semi-figurative form: semi-
human semi-rhinoceros. He will then
say «I am the last man. I will remain
so until the end», leading the spectator
to ask: What is human here? Is the
creature that man becomes really the
most human thing in the world?

And what has he lost in this attempt
to belong to the masses? Can we
still define him as authentic? What is
certain is that he has lost his original
nature, and will now try to evolve
marked by the mass.

Breakdown list

Location: A glass building, where the man is, surrounded by hundreds of rhinos.
Broken buildings are seen between the rhinos.

Characters: Many rhinos and the man.

The last man observes the beauty of the standard and covets it. But he is deeply
not in this norm, and never will be. Physically, he is not especially handsome. He
has a large forehead, in his forties.

The huge rhinoceros embodies an unparalleled strength (superpowered force of
nature, or God, the perfect form).

Universe : Graphic, abstract, surrealist

Genre : Absurd/Dramatic

SCRIPT

The whole city is filled with huge rhinos and destroyed buildings. A glass building stands alone in this saturated setting. A man takes refuge in it, he stands in front of a giant glass window and silently observes the pachyderms. This man is in his forties, has a large forehead, and looks quite exhausted. He comes out of his silence by realizing:

«They are the ones who are beautiful. I was wrong!»

His ugly reflection on the glass is superimposed on the face of a rhinoceros.

«I would so much like to be like them... I don't have a horn, alas! How ugly it is, a flat forehead.»

While looking at himself in the mirror, he tries to extend his forehead with his hand by pressing on it.

«I would need one or two, to enhance my drooping features. But it doesn't grow!»

Decided, he presses hard on his forehead, which stretches. His hands let go of his forehead at the end of the movement. He looks at them. He touches his sweaty fingers.

«My hands are sweaty. Will they become rough?»

We see the rhinos again, hundreds of them. With one blow, he hits the glass with his fist. The glass ripples. The man's fist is flattened, taking the shape of a paw. We can see his silhouette, which is no longer quite human.

«I have flabby skin. Ah, this body too white, and hairy! I would so

like to have a hard skin, without hair, like theirs!»

While he speaks, he tries to transform his body himself. He grows fatter, changes, his back arches. The rhinoceros barks. The man stops moving and looks at the animals.

«Their songs have charm... If I could do like them.»

He inhales sharply and with a cry, tries to imitate them:

«Ahh, ahh, brr!»

When he shouts, the masses and lines of the figure tremble, they no longer really hold the shape. His silhouette tries to approach that of the rhinoceros.

«No, that's not it! Let's try again, harder! Ahh, ahh, brr! I can't bark. I only scream! Ahh, ahh, brr!»

The image gradually becomes unreadable: The shapes and lines of the man are mixed, going in all directions. In the sound, the barking and the howling are superimposed.

The man finishes his scream. Black image. The rhinoceros' barking still resounds. He takes his breath with difficulty. We see him again in front of the glass. His silhouette has remained hybrid.

«I am a monster. I will never become a rhinoceros, never, never! How ugly I am.»

He shakes his head.

«Well, too bad! I'll defend myself against everyone!»

He goes to the door limping because of his deformities.

«I'm the last man, I'll stay that way until the end! I will not surrender!»

He exits.

The end.



1 Uwe Heidschötter



2 Jeon Jinkyu



3 Rien by Govo, Orgesticulanismus by Labaye



The man will have a rounded shape similar to the works of Heidschötter and Jinkyu (images 1 and 2). His structure, initially quite proportionate, will be modified, and when he is transformed into a rhinoceros, the volume of the man will be reconsidered to lead to a more graphic representation of the character. The lines of the contours will take precedence over the mass of the forms.

Thus, the first evolutions of the body of the man will be volumic (like the Clip Rien of Govo and the short film Orgesticulanismus). Then, the line will come to detach itself from its form, the features of the man will draw more towards cubism (a first evolution of the line could be similar to the designs of Jules Rigolle, image 4, where the elements of the face are not correctly placed). During the climax of the film, the forms will mix with the lines and the face in metamorphosis of the man will have no more consistency (see image 5), the image will have passed to the abstraction. A game of transparency of the masses (see images 6) and accumulation of geometric forms (see images 7) will be created.

After his transformation, the man will have, like the rhinoceros, strong contour lines and a watercolor texture. However, he will have retained his dull blue color and human characteristics.



4 Jules Rigolle

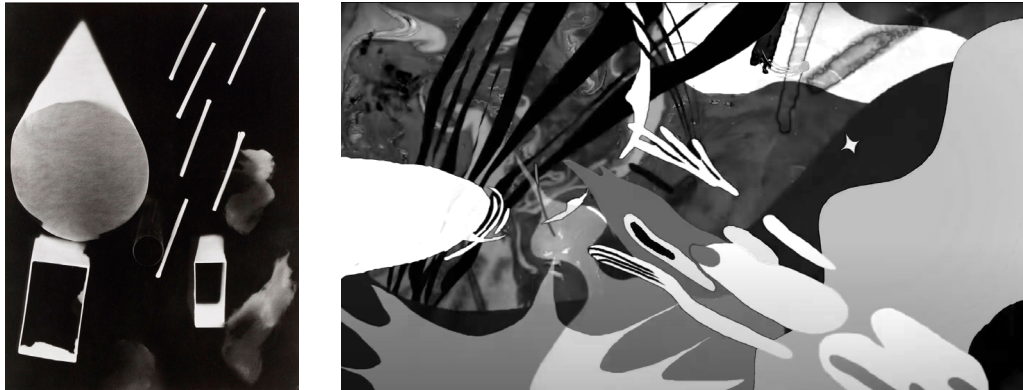


5 Genius Loci by Adrien Merigeau



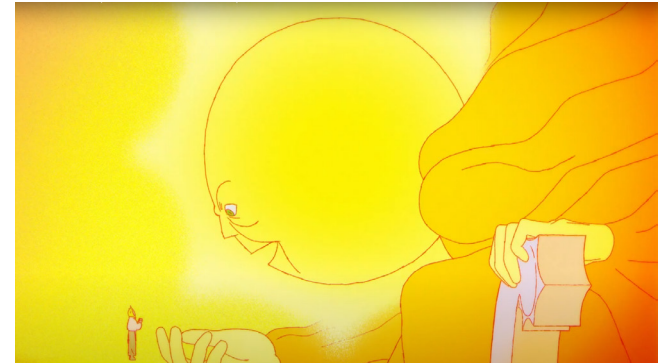


6 Paladines by Pedrosa and illustrations by Brecht Evens

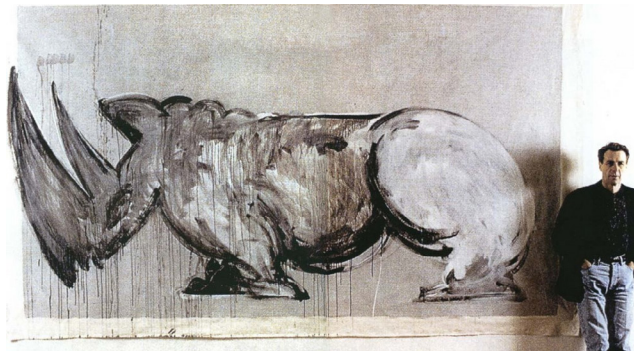


7 Photographics researchs by Man Ray / Killing Time from Gobelins students

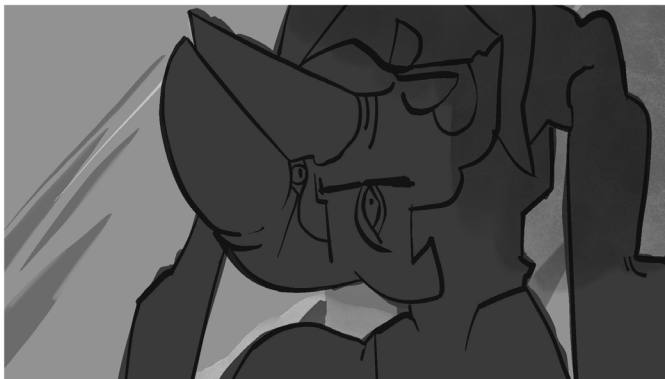
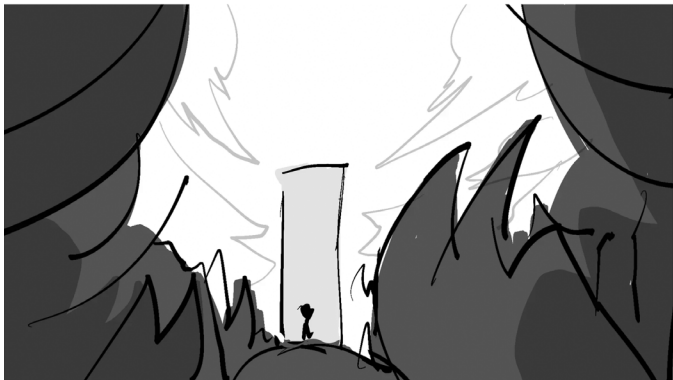
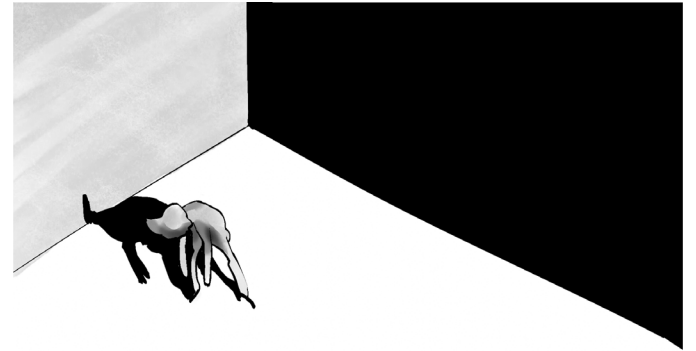
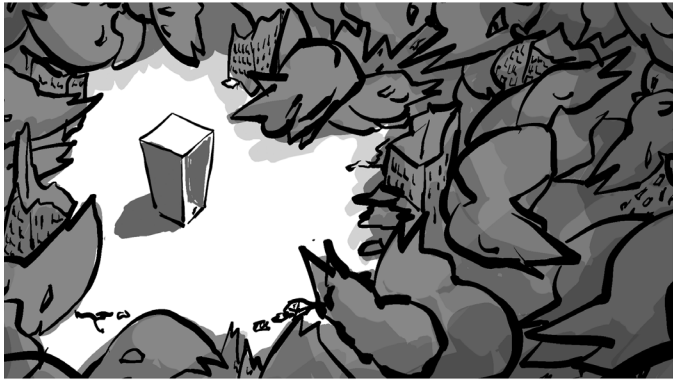
9 After the sun by Gianni Bouyeure
exemple of scale man/rhino



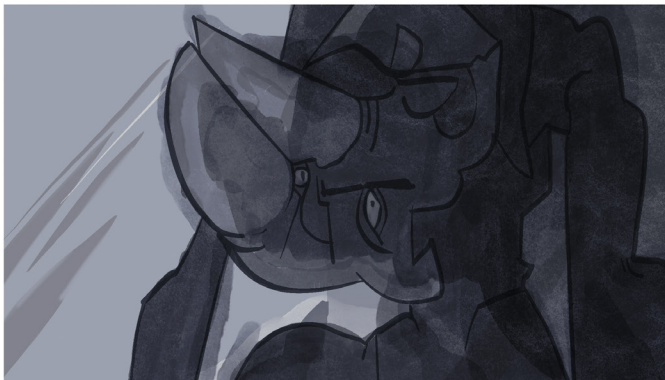
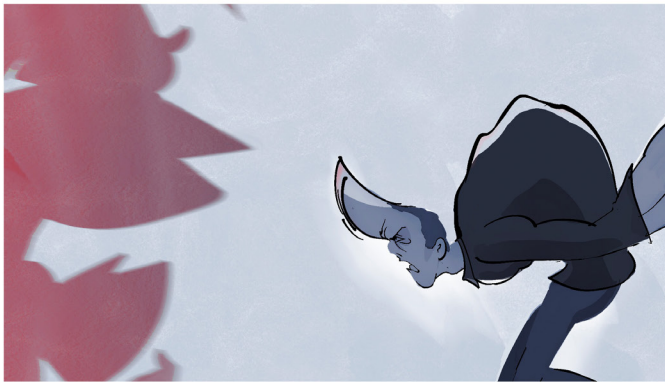
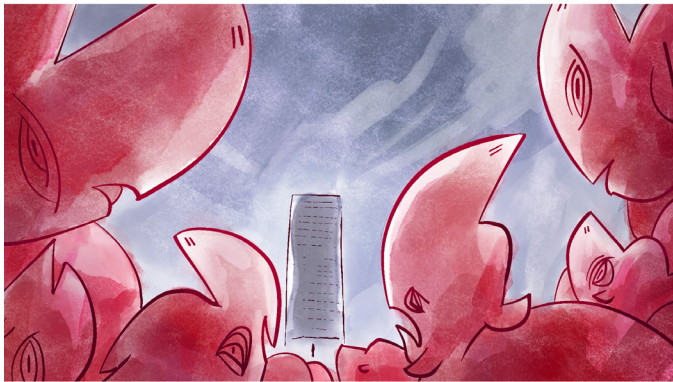
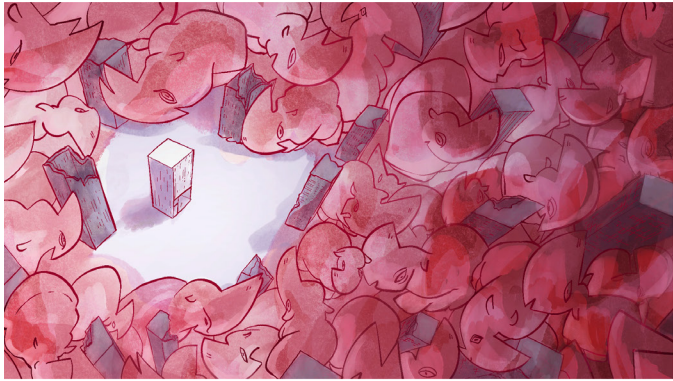
8 Visual references towards a simplification of the rhinoceros

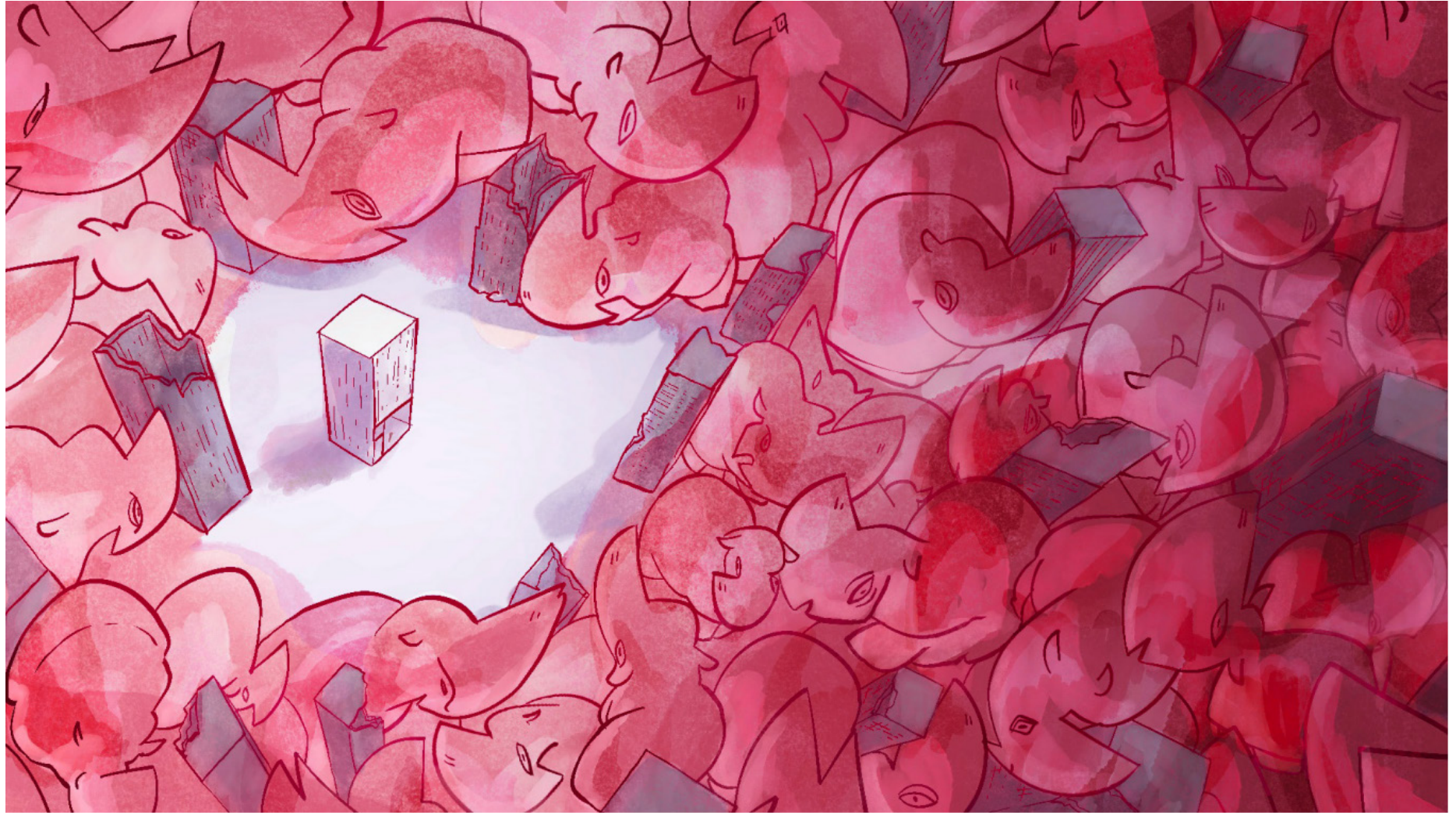


KEYSHOTS



COLORSCRIPT





STYLEFRAME 1



STYLEFRAME 2