

## *Interview Questions for Francis Glebas*

1. *What did drawing mean to you as a child? When did you know this was exactly what you were meant to do and how did you connect the dots to your first opportunity?*

*As a child drawing was just something fun to do and it gave me a sense of accomplishment- that I could do it. By third grade, I remember that I would become an artist. However at the time artist was a very broad category. I saw myself as an artist and dabbled in all kind of creative endeavors from drawing, painting, sculpting and molds, and inventing things with scotch tape, string, cardboard, rubber bands, popsicle sticks. In college we build bunk beds but the top was just for storage. Within this framework I used some rope and pulleys to make an automatic bedmaker. Pull the rope up, release and the bed was made, just tuck it in.*

2. *Can you tell us more about your time when you left home to work for Disney? How old were you, and what dreams and fears were you weighing in your mind at the time?*

*I started Disney in 1990, I was about 35. I had applied when I first got out of college in 1975 but it was a terrible time for animation. Disney was doing the Black Cauldron. I worked for the college NYIT. The owner loved animation and technology and created the Computer Graphics Lab. We created Tubby the Tuba. and were the hit of Siggraph every year. The scientists moved on to create ILM and Pixar. In 1990 after the success of Little Mermaid, Disney was hiring and that's when I entered as a storyboard and visual development artist.*

3. *Do you see 'symbols' and 'clues' in everyday life around you as a story-teller? Can you tell us an example of how you spot them and what can we learn from observing the world around us?*

*I think I'm more aware of them when I'm watching a movie because I'm aware of looking for them. In everyday life, I don't have the same expectations, but I do notice interesting light, color and space. Maybe going to meet someone new I'll notice things, objects, books, to form a sense of who they are.*

4. *I have to admit, after reading your book, I see all these things I used to notice, but now it's highly organized in my mind and I feel like I'm on the other side of the movie. Now that you use all the structural techniques for directing the viewers, how has movie viewing changed for you, once you realized there was a Threshold of Awareness? What movies today do you feel the illusion or magic again and get sucked in for the ride?*

*It doesn't spoil the movie going experience. We have two minds, the first is the verbal detective. The detective mind has to suspend disbelief. The second child mind believes the story because they're living it.*

*The detective follows the clues and piece together the motivations of the characters. Our other mind just lives the story. Experiencing it as real. Our emotions and physiology are real. It's only on the second or more viewing that you can really see the structuring. The first time we're lost in the story not paying attention to the structure or color moods or music moods. We see and hear but don't pay attention.*

5. *You mention studying psychology and behaviors. Do you have personal recommendations for students of story-telling?*

*I've had years of therapy and personal study of psychoanalysis, from Freud, Lacan, Matte Blanco, Grostein and the relational school. I've studied art history and perception, gestalt theory, notan, Gombrich's Art and Illusion, and Arnheim's Art and visual, Bang's How pictures work, NLP, Medical hypnotist Milton Erickson, Psychology and neuro-science. I've read volumes of books on storytelling. I've found some of the books on playwriting to be stronger on drama than the screen writing books. And of course filmmaking and editing books. And tons of cartoon books like Calvin & Hobbes, MAD Magazine, Dennis the Menace, The New Yorker, Krazy Kat, all wonderful to study for composition.*

6. *Are you familiar with Joseph Campbell's concept of the monomyth? How might you offer advice to others on how one could use or vary these concepts effectively without being repetitious?*

*Yes, I am. I learned about it in a class from Chris Volger who wrote the the Writer's Journey based upon Campbell's the Hero's Journey. I'm not sure what you mean about being repetitious. At first I was very excited about the Hero's journey. We had to analyze many films for his class and they all seemed to fit. However, I grew very disappointed with it when I actually tried to use it to guide writing stories. I found it too abstract to be useful. You should check out my blog where I offer a new approach to stories and have some fun parodying the Hero's journey. <https://francisglebas.blogspot.com/2016/10/the-market-research-event-blog-here-be.html?showComment=1576299820491#c3465793017105247897> my portfolio page is [francisglebas.weebly.com](http://francisglebas.weebly.com)*

7. *Since collaboration is a big part of professionalism, have you ever had conflicts or disagreements where you felt the need to firmly stand by your ideas or how did you compromise with others? Can you offer advice to young artists about personal emotions in a professional atmosphere?*

*We had a few problems with artists when I was directing Piglets' Big Movie. We had to let one go. I found that constructive criticism and teaching the artists helps*

*build team moral. Also invite ideas from everyone and give everyone credit. Team moral is really important.*

*What I found was it's best to put your ego on the shelf when you go to work in a team environment. Being an artist is a roller coaster job. You put your heart into it and then it goes to critique hell. You get notes and you get to do it again.*

- 8. With the onset of a highly-rendered 3D digital process today for so many movies, how do you artistically see and value the need today for 2D traditional skills? (in our current learning environment, unfortunately, they seem to be cutting and restricting these critical skills in the animation program.)*

*The most important skill is to know how to direct the eye to tell a visual story. If you don't get this right you're hampering your audience. I'd look at portfolios of students and they had great skills but they'd but something into the picture would take the viewers eye right away from the main story point. In theatre, they call it upstaging. Students need to study design, COMPOSITION and the 12 principles of animation. About half of the principles are about creating believable physics, such as follow through, overlap, arcs and timing. The second half are about clarity of design such as clear silhouettes, anticipating an action, the contrast of stretch and squash. They're equally important. And one simple rule- show one idea at a time.*

- 9. What was your favorite project you worked on and why? And what was your LEAST favorite project and why?*

*Piglet's Big Movie. It was my first feature to direct. We had a wonderful crew. It was originally supposed to be a direct to video film but Disney liked it so much they decided to make it theatrical. Originally it was supposed to be a compilation of all the stories that Milne had written about Winnie the Pooh that Walt hadn't animated. I wanted to make it a movie, so we came up with the idea that Piglet got lost and the gang had to go look for him. During their search they tell the stories and realize that Piglet was the hero all along.*

*The problem we had was the week it came out Bush Junior started the Iraq war. It killed the box office. During Aladdin we had to change the name of Bagdad to Agroba because Bush Senior started the first Iraq war. We had to change Lilo and Stitch because he was flying a 747 through downtown Honolulu. 9-11 happened while it was being made.*

*The least favorite was Disney's Dinosaur. The management was not fun to work with and the story was set in stone and a downer.*

- 10. Have you ever felt torn between responsibilities between your personal and professional life? What advice can you offer others regarding time management regarding?*

*Yes, it's called life. It's hard. I was lucky enough to sometimes bring my son to work with me. I think it's important to realize that this is a job we do not who we*

*are. Do you your own projects. The worst part of the job is when you're out of work looking for the next job. Keep up your networks. Never burn bridges, it's a small industry. Keep your portfolio up to date. Have an online presence so that it's easy to find your work. The good news is if you're not working you can have a network of friends and create your own project, film, game, what ever, then crowd source it and distribute it over the internet. The benefit is you get new portfolio pieces, you keep your skills up, you learn more, you have connections and you get passive income.*

*Last but not least, IF you could be any animal that you have ever observed, what would you choose and why?*

*An animated flying squirrel because I could be friends with a moose.*

*Best,  
Francis*