

**Jodi Kuchenbecker**  
**Animated Arts**

**Thesis Abstract**

When an otherworldly experiment breaches containment at an evil laboratory facility, it's up to Xaggar, a rogue thief, to escape the establishment alive.

*Viral Genesis* is a 2D animated mini pilot showcasing the first 3-4 minutes of my larger series premiere. It is a science fiction tv show that deals with an alien cast, revolving around unethical experimentation and small goals of its contained characters. Overall, with this project I hope to bring up questions of how cartoons and fiction can make just as important of an impact on us as real life, and influence our ideas or even decisions.

How many times have people doubted themselves and others due to their appearances? How many times have we set aside our own problems to help others? Been faced with a challenging task and been caught in the middle of our morals?

For the overall show and bigger story at hand, we explore these themes through Xaggar and Virus, an unlikely pair who find themselves caught in between their differences and morals when there always seems to be a bigger conflict at hand. They represent the ideal society through putting differences aside for one another and growing and learning together, but they also represent real society for its problems of acceptance. One feels like they can solve problems nobody else can, while the other struggles to accept himself alone. All in all, The story finds itself at a means to challenge and reinforce acceptance by others.

I have developed this project in an animated show format, adapting a full episode script that I authored. Additionally, I have written episodic breakdowns for an entire 22 episode season of the show, character bios, and a series bible. This thesis defense film is the opening segment of the pilot episode as proof of concept for *Viral Genesis*.

## ORAL DEFENSE (30-45 MINS)

### **I. Introduction / 5 minutes**

Greetings! My name is Jodi Noel Kuchenbecker and I'm one of your fellow animation majors here at PNCA. Thank you all for coming and welcome to my thesis oral defense presentation on my project *Viral Genesis*.

This project is a 2D animated short film showcasing the first 3-4 minutes of my series pilot *Viral Genesis*. It is a science fiction tv show featuring an alien cast, and their interpersonal conflicts that arise from unethical experimentation. The story begins with a monstrous experiment, named Virus, that escapes containment while Xaggar, our hero, happens to be breaking into the evil laboratory at the same time. What was once a simple burglary becomes a fight for survival for both of them.

*Play video*

What you just saw was promotional material I had made before I began my thesis project, way back in January, to show my social media audience what I was working on. Creating that too was a step in garnering a larger audience for once the film would eventually release, and luckily I was able to meet the deadline.

### **WHY/PERSONAL STORY**

*Viral Genesis* was initially something I developed in 2018 when I realized I had a character from my childhood that wouldn't let go of me, one I didn't want to move on from. This main conflict character called Virus, while appearing monstrous and evil, was a character I held very near and dear to my heart, as she was an outlet I poured myself into while I was going through struggles in my own life. As *Viral Genesis* progresses, you'll come to learn that this character is not just a creature to be feared, but is someone who's outcast amongst the others for being a rejected lifeform. The way Virus goes through these things is reflectant upon how I felt outcast growing up amongst my family and friends. This project is important to me in that it's a way of showing myself through my work, and by intending it to be a TV show, may be something others can relate to and connect with as well.

I plan for *Viral Genesis* to be a TV show rather than leaving it as something meant for a short-term basis, like a short film, because TV shows tend to run longer and therefore I feel like I can extend my impact. I want to leave a meaningful impact on my audience in the same way that cartoons did for me, and helped me out of tough times growing up. Rendering it in a TV show format only means there's more potential for that, and is the best option for me to expand on my worlds and characters, develop relationships and make them relatable to my audience. There's also a charm in seeing these characters come to life and seeing how they develop over time, how they can influence other characters and inspire us to do things. Everything I'm trying to achieve is just in line with a television medium.

I feel like a lot of you may have come to this presentation thinking that this was going to be a project centered around a human cast, so that brings up the question, why aliens? What's the significance for me personally? Well, we recognize aliens as some otherworldly thing, something that hasn't been seen before and would probably not be accepted into society if one were to visit Earth. I'm using aliens as the main focus here rather than humans because I've always resonated with what aliens are. I grew up feeling like an outcast, and like I didn't fit in

with the others, so I found myself relating to these creatures in that sense. Also I just feel like humans are too overdone anyway, we are humans, I want to see something different in cartoons and media, new character ideas being explored.

In terms of the medium, I chose animation for this project because from the very beginning, animation has always been the most enjoyable vehicle for me to express myself and my ideas. At a young age I discovered characters that I could relate to over any other medium, and it made all the difference. I also feel like animation lends itself to stylistic interpretations. For *Viral Genesis*, I'm animating and drawing the characters in a hand drawn style that is very reminiscent of early 2000s cartoons, which is good for bringing in older audiences which might make them think of the cartoons they grew up with, all the while also attracting new audiences with the wide diversity in styles they had back then. Through *Viral Genesis*, I hope to make you all question how cartoons and fiction can impact us in real life, and how they can potentially influence our ideas, decisions, and aspirations.

## **II. Overview / 10 minutes**

### THEME

How many times have people doubted themselves and others due to their appearances? How many times have we set aside our own problems to help others? Been faced with a challenging task and been caught in the middle of our morals?

For the overall show and bigger story at hand, we explore these themes through Xaggar and Virus, an unlikely pair who find themselves caught in between their differences and morals when there always seems to be a bigger conflict at hand. They represent the ideal society through putting differences aside for one another and growing and learning together, but they also represent real society for its problems of acceptance. One feels like they can solve problems nobody else can, while the other struggles to accept themselves alone.

All in all, The story finds itself at a means to challenge and reinforce acceptance by others.

### PROJECT EVOLUTION

From the very beginning of this project, my first step was taking a look at the 30 minute series premiere script I had already completed in Jason McNamara's scriptwriting class. I knew I wanted it to do with something along the lines of the script in order to introduce the concept properly, and set the stage for the rest of the show. The hardest thing about this project was figuring that out. My goal was to just animate the initial pages of the script, but then I took that thought aside and was like "wait a minute, if I just animate the script as it is, it won't bring too much of an incentive to my audience to keep watching if I eventually release the pilot some day. So I spent days just thinking about what to do, how to configure the script in a way that would leave off on a cliffhanger but not be repetitive. What I landed on was an eventual alternate version of the script in this four minute format, that wouldn't give anything away from the real pilot episode. I took parts of my pilot script, rearranged them and reconfigured them in a way that would be something new. In doing this, something unlike my original script was that I incorporated the unethical experiences the experiment itself was going through during its time of creation, one of the characters and main conflict of the story, and introduce the audience to that before the real story begins. Doing this I feel shows the audience what they're going to be

getting into when they start watching, and sets a precursor before any plot begins to unfold. Through the five months of non-stop animation and illustration I've worked on for this, some changes were starting to happen as the goal for the mood of the project only intensified. There's a scene where a light goes out in the film, and it was actually supposed to turn back on, but after completing some scenes and viewing them and the characters in a darker setting, the goal changed not only for a story reason, but a visual one. It didn't make much sense for the light to come back on but I thought it would be an interesting choice, having not considered rendering the rest of the film in darkness before that point. I switched from using purely Toon Boom to do my lighting, to After Effects very early in the project and you might be able to tell a difference visually, not for a negative reason, but for the lighting I was able to achieve in different rooms and environments.

This is Virus. She begins as a corrupted, newly made yet unstable experiment that functions as the main conflict of the film, something for our main protagonist to get away from and what pushes his goals of escaping the laboratory he's currently in.

I've provided the base color reference of what she looks like in the light, but throughout the film she's only shown in muted colors and as a partial silhouette. This is to set the stage for her menacing demeanor towards the other characters and give way to or otherwise add to the effect of the darker scenes she's featured in.

And I'd like to mention something. As she is a female type of animal character, I wanted to stay away from basing her design solely off of the fact that she's a female. I know animation companies have the tendency to articulate eyelashes, chests, or waists to convey feminine looks in their female animal type designs or female designs overall. I wanted to instead focus on more of her animal and alien structure, as she is an unknown lifeform and a threat. When designing a character, I think it's important to consider those things before you consider stereotypes.

Our main protagonist is Xaggar and our main antagonist of the series is Dr. Schmidt, you can see I've kept the cast very alien. Even though this takes place on a distant planet it doesn't make their motives any less clear, and I wanted to portray that or their personalities as such through these designs and how they carry themselves.

Xaggar here in the first episode looks a little different because he hasn't received his true calling or motive for the show quite yet. He's established as the main character, but his character motivations change as soon as his silhouette changes, and that's with the addition of this anti-mind control device he gets later on.

#### ABOUT UNIVERSE/STORY WORLD

In terms of the world depicted in this story, it is a universe inhabited by partially organic, partially robotic aliens called the Dynyxes. This is a world also rooted in retro futuristic technology while also having a dichotomy between more advanced technology.

#### WITHIN MIDT LABS

The show's main evil establishment called Midt Laboratories functions as a dictatorship over the whole planet. With that, the facility possesses the most advanced technology made, which includes things like holograms, elevation/hover devices, spaceship transportation, Dynyx system upgrades, and even near perfection of advanced teleportation. The establishment keeps all the advanced technology improvement for themselves and away from the public eye so that it is only in use for experimentation, cloning, and all things related.

#### OVERALL SOCIETY/IN THE DYNYX HOME

On the other hand, the rest of the public outside of Midt Labs is essentially stuck with outdated, 90s-early 2000s technology. Things like portable dvd players, VCRs/VHS tapes, windows 98 computers, flip phones, retro game consoles, cd players, etc. This also means anyone who doesn't work there doesn't receive the benefits of system updates, making them more vulnerable to, since they're partially robotic, hackers and other life threatening things. In this sense, the mistreatment on this planet extends beyond Midt Labs walls. Not to mention there's also a corrupt news broadcasting program called Fake News Media, so this planet is always being fed nothing short of lies.

#### PUBLIC TECHNOLOGY

Then there's technology that is for public access, provided by the government but not available for purchase anywhere. This includes public transportation like hover trams, mailboxes that rely on simple teleportation, and hover delivery services. Since the planet is rather small and everything is more or less in close proximity, there isn't a need for cars. Hoverboards and hoverbikes populate Dynyx streets instead.

#### TONE

The tone of Viral Genesis is science fiction drama sprinkled with dry humor. The series focuses on character development and the escalating plot as opposed to a day-in-the-life-of type cartoon. This is how I plan to hook my audience, by encouraging them to get swept up in a larger story, traversing unique worlds and environments through a character's point of view. By taking this journey with Xaggar, the audience is experiencing each twist and turn with the protagonist, creating empathy and a bit of ownership. This will become their story as much as Xaggar's or even mine as you experience the story alongside us. I am going to achieve this through creating characters that are believable and can act as story ambassadors to this world.

How these characters react to the scientific experimentation and the relationships they have with one another, should elicit a reaction and allow the dramatic tones to stay with the viewer. Through this dramatic take, you may be inclined to feel sympathy and shock due to subject matter and violence, but charmed through the values of these characters and the journey they take to develop and change.

#### AUDIENCE

My audience will be targeted towards teens/young adults with a TV-14 rating for fear and violence and more mature themes. This story conveys the journey one takes for acceptance

and growth, which are the kinds of things this demographic may be struggling with at this time in their lives. My audience hasn't changed necessarily, but my interpretation of the TV ratings has because I've come to find out that shows that possess the same rating I'm aiming for, are wildy unlike mine in the sense of violence and themes. When I found out that Arcane and Family Guy are both rated as TV-14 it threw me for a loop, because I know for sure my show concept does not go to those degrees in terms of themes and certain visuals. There's only so much you can get away with in terms of TV-PG though, which is why I still feel the need to bump it to TV-14. This is a show about unethical experimentation and I feel like it should be conveyed as such, to the degree of seriousness it needs to in order to get the point across, but in a way that won't be so over the top or involved as the previous shows mentioned.

### **III. Project Description + Process of Making / 15 minutes**

#### **PROCESS**

The project starts with the creation of beat boards I did for the entire project in studio paint. I used Adobe Premiere to compile them and time them out, and from there I hunted down sound effects and got to work on putting together voice actor script sheets.

I cast three voice actors, I had worked with before and sent them the script, beat boards and an overall project synopsis. Working with the voice actors is always fun because I get to see the different deliveries they put on for the characters, and that's a process of ruling out what delivery is fit for the tone of the scene. So we go through different takes together until the delivery is just right. I was doing animation in the meantime using clip studio paint and toon boom harmony. For some scenes I'm not exactly sure of the movement for, I do rough animation in toon boom to get the movement down and then complete the full cleaned up frames in clip studio paint to get a more illustrative quality. If I'm 100% sure of what movement I'm going for, I'll just go straight to clean up. I switched gears and added the recorded lines into the animatic and timed it out accordingly. Once the animatic itself was in a good state, I collaborated with a composer and we worked together on the soundtrack to come up with an eerie score to fit the tone of the piece. I created the base motif or structure for the song myself and sent it over to the composer to work with. What he did was he used that motif and expressed it rhythmically throughout the whole piece and used the same key and instruments. Together we both collaborated very well on achieving the feel of the piece, using instruments and synthy atmospheres to give way to the eerie feel of experimentation, and being in a place of wrong. When that was completed, I took the same elements and created my own music for the credits at the end.

Afterwards, I started work on backgrounds and brought in the production crew I've worked with before to handle coloring. This small team works through references and color guides that I share over a designated Discord server. I assign individual colorists certain scenes, then export the transparent cleaned up frames and compile them into a .zip folder with the color guides included. I give them special instructions in regards to a particular scene, then have them send me one frame they've colored so I can check them off and clear them to work on the rest of the frames.

The whole process is a lot of going back and forth between programs a thousand million times. Additionally, there are scenes in the film that are completely dark and I wanted to bring attention to the fact these characters are robotic by putting a glow on their antennae and eyes. This way I'm accentuating these features in the darkness, and because of this, created more work for myself because that means I had to export the eyes, antennae, and base frames all as separate image sequences and put them into ANOTHER program called After Effects. Also, if there are elements I wanted to apply different lighting to in the background, that would mean I'd have to export *those* as a separate image sequence as well if there was any sort of camera move. So I'll end up importing like seven image sequences with different timing, depending on if there's like a pan or not for just one scene, out of however many scenes this entire thing had.

The team workflow went well but things got a little tricky when one of my colorists went *off book*, which created a minor delay in production. This means there was just a problem with continuity but it also meant I had to go back and fix it myself. Organization for all of this process was another ordeal because I made the animatic before I had a proper storyboarding class. I didn't order my scenes accordingly and had to switch to a different naming convention which made things a little harder to locate when dealing with a million frames for each scene. So instead of titling scenes as shot 1A, 1B, and so on, I named them according to character and the action carried out during the scene. Still though everything ended up working out, but from now on I'll be naming things according to their storyboard shots.

Many of the scenes I animated from the animatic turned out to be longer than I anticipated. I started getting different ideas for character movements and actions, and I found out I wanted to hold some scenes for a longer beat to get the pacing right. Which meant, I had to re-engage the composer during the very last month of production so we could re-time the entire piece.

However, in terms of struggles I had come across in my time working on this project, oh boy are there a few. For one, I made the mistake of not completely storyboarding out some important scenes during the animatic phase, so that meant I had to quickly board them right before I animated them. That was stress I could have avoided. Also, I didn't learn about shot maps until I took the storyboarding course, which led to issues in environment placement. It's frustrating because I was way too far in the process to change that because everything I already have done was technically wrong in terms of environment. I only noticed it was a problem when I was illustrating the backgrounds and keeping a lookout for what I had to actively reference. And on top of all that, I forgot lip sync for an entire scene. Luckily though, one of my friends named Mack Mayo came in clutch and was able to animate it for me, because there was no way I was gonna be able to go back and fix that with everything else I was working on. So there have been little changes and issues here and there, but overall it was a fairly smooth process and I definitely learned along the way.

#### **IV. Influences / 5 minutes**

Now, it's time to talk about the most influential staple in my life...Invader Zim.

I watched this cartoon for the first time when I was in sixth grade, and I experienced something rare. It was that type of moment you experience where things just line up for you and things are made clear, a moment in time where something ensnares you, and you feel a calling. As soon as I watched this show, I began taking my art more seriously, and I knew what I wanted to do since that point on. Jhonen Vasquez, the creator, always had a style for this show that intrigued me. Angular styles like his are typically known for villain designs, with sharp, threatening angles to prove a point to the audience. However, he completely abuses this even for protagonists and it's always struck me as interesting. Having been exposed to his angular work and really taking an interest in it at a young age, it would influence *Viral Genesis* and my artistic direction for years to come. I don't think I'll ever be able to draw Zim, I've gone years without doing fan art and I just drew him again recently and it's like I never stopped. His design is ingrained in my mind, and honestly with what that show has inspired in me, I couldn't be more thankful.

#### Villainous

A much more recent show known as Villainous, which started with shorts in 2016, also caught my eye. This show also embraces the angular style and has a much different look to it than that of other cartoons airing at the same time. Villainous is a modern, new cartoon that in my opinion still captures that early 2000s style. When I watch that show I just feel like I'm watching a cartoon I grew up with. That's what I want to achieve with *Viral Genesis*. Because while it'd be a new show, it also looks like one someone my age would have grown up watching and therefore gives it more of a nostalgic feel or quality I hope to bring people back to.

#### Dexter's Laboratory

Going back to the early 2000s here for a second, these are some background concepts for Dexter's Laboratory. I took note of its embracing of negatives and white contour lines for some background details. This show inspired me to use this look as you can see it in my past work and even now. I'm intrigued by the use of cool colors combined with cold, mechanical experimentation equipment, and I thought it best to utilize for *Viral Genesis*. This is because it creates and captures a specific busy working and technology focused atmosphere, yet at the same time could also be comparable with an eerie or uneasy one.

#### Kim Possible

Kim Possible is another influence of mine and an example of comparative media, as it occupies the cartoon medium and had an influence stylistically in the project. Kim Possible's stylistic flow carries over to *Viral Genesis* in allowing the characters more clear lines of motion, and flowy lines that allow your eye to travel along the character designs. My style actually hadn't improved until I watched Kim Possible again recently last year, and after doing so I saw a significant change after so many years of just being inspired by *Invader Zim* most notably.

### **V. The Project in Culture / 5 minutes**

The entire project has connotations of science fiction and animation as a whole, though functions as a reference to products of the 90s to early 2000s.

The next steps of the project is mainly entering the film into various film festivals as well as potentially doing a kickstarter to fund the official 30 minute pilot.

I'm planning on submitting my film to the Student Academy Awards, the ASIFA showcase, and the Annie awards since I'm eligible for that given I won the ASIFA Scholarship award last



semester. I also have a few festivals in mind recommended to me by Marilyn Zornado such as the GLAS festival and Ottawa film festival, since Ottawa actually has a pitch contest you can submit your films and pitches to. The first step I will take in figuring out everything to do with running a kickstarter is planning out everything I could potentially offer to backers, continue to do research on running the campaign and continue to build my audience through promotion of my work and the like on social media. I'm also working with a brand partnership manager who sends me weekly lists of those offering sponsorship, so once I get in a better place with my work and start establishing more of a schedule then I can look into doing sponsors. Part of this is also me keeping up engagement with my audience and providing a good mark on them in terms of the project.

I have everything prepared for a pitch so I'll need to work on getting in contact with an executive, but I feel like that pathway will be opened as soon as I can get my foot in the door somewhere else. I know a big part of being an artist and trying to get into the industry or make your mark on an audience with your project, is having connections.

The idea is to get more eyes on the series in an effort to potentially reach executive eyes, so I can take Viral Genesis further and produce a running show.

Viral Genesis serves my long-term career goals by proving I can set myself out to do something, and achieve it within the timespan or duration I give myself. I've proven I can make success out of my ambition and work at a professional pace, even if just a college thesis film. I assigned myself a goal, and broke that goal up into much smaller goals that would be manageable for me over a month to month basis, as the plan was to complete 30 seconds of fully finished animation each month. I was able to hold myself to that amidst my other academic practices in favor of coming out with something I could truly be proud of. With that comes a catch though. Out of fear of missing my monthly deadline, a few times I found I had to remind myself not to rush because that's not what makes a good product. The importance of that is realizing it all comes down to your time management skills, and how much you care about making what you create meaningful. I believe the completion of this mini pilot is what tops off my portfolio of other animation work as well as character design, because it displays the two very much in harmony with one another. You're allowed to see the designs in a place where they function best, and view what I've learned about animation in my years of studying it.

As it stands now, this mini pilot is the longest and most ambitious project I've done yet. Every short film I've completed up until this point has been a silent one or without dialogue, or not fully pushed to the limits of what I can accomplish. I've pushed this mini pilot to the limit in seeing what I can achieve with voice acting, sound effects, original music, and the teasing of a more in depth plot to see how my audience reacts. I've never done any of these things with a fully completed film before, so I'm excited to show you how it's come together.

## **VI. Conclusion / Closing Remarks / 5 minutes**

I hope I can make a difference, not necessarily worldwide, but a difference in the individual lives of my audience. I want to provide an outlet for escapism and a place of comfort, either being found in the show itself, or in a particular character. Whatever it is that will be meaningful to them as well as others who consume this media. As a creator, my audience is just as important as the show itself, and I want them to know I see them and they are loved, that you all are loved. To have connections with my audience, to not be distant, is only to better know how I can best serve them in terms of what I create. Community is key to contributing to a great atmosphere around the show and those involved, and those experiencing it as a narrative. I want to be there for the people supporting me and my project as much as they're there for me. And with that, I want to thank you all for coming out and supporting me today, because you too are part of our community now.

What questions do you have for me, Xaggar or Virus?

**Q + A / Approximately 30 minutes.**

**Jodi Kuchenbecker**  
**Animated Arts**

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## Thesis Proposal

Jodi Kuchenbecker  
*Viral Genesis*  
November 21st, 2021

### QUICK PITCH:

When an experiment escapes containment at an evil laboratory establishment, a thief is caught in the middle of the emergency lockdown while on a mission to steal advanced technology. However, when he comes face-to-face with the loose experiment, his new objective becomes clear: survive.

The project will be a 2D animated short film showcasing the first 3 minutes of my series pilot *Viral Genesis*. It is a science fiction tv show that deals with an alien cast, revolving around unethical experimentation and small goals of its contained characters. With this project I hope to bring up questions of how cartoons and fiction can make just as important of an impact on us as real life, and influence our ideas or even decisions. Though mainly I'm interested in what makes non-human characters relatable and how have they been used successfully in the past? Using anthropomorphism and utilizing otherworldly, non-human characters have been used all throughout animation history as a way to talk about human subjects such as race and equality. When you remove humans from the equation entirely and instead look at a non-human character, you're forced to look at them in a different light. There is no race for the audience to project opinions or stereotypes onto, but are instead inclined to further analyze what about their appearance can clue you in to their personality. How they hold themselves and perhaps what stylistic choices went into their design. Overall, characters and fictional worlds have been great vehicles of instilling connection and understanding within an audience, and I believe *Viral Genesis* will be effective in the same way. This is simply done by providing my audience with a basic template of human emotions through a fictional alien cast.

The current vision of the final work is to be a 2D animated teaser film showcasing the first 3-4 minutes of a 30 minute film. It will be fully colored character animation complete with sound effects, voice acting, and music. The project will be done all digitally and relates to the concept in the sense that it's able to easily convey the cartoony look, feel, and immersion of regular digital cartoons, connecting back to my question of why it is that cartoons and fiction can make just as important of an impact on us as real life. As for scale, time, and feasibility, I'll have to work quickly and will direct a small team to aid me with this project. The team will be in charge of coloring and will refer to coloring reference guides I'll be creating for them. Throughout my time at PNCA, I've made two fully colored character animated shorts in the span of a month, as well as a monochromatic film that took the same format in 5 weeks. With effort and determination I'll be able to complete this project by the intended deadline especially with the help of a team.

When it comes to process, my overall method of working includes research, background sketches, final image making, editing, as well as critique and feedback from my peers. My process will be writing the outline, scripts, and storyboarding first so that I can put the story into a cohesive test animatic. For the animation portion I'll move on to doing keyframes and breakdowns, then doing clean up and coloring in Toon Boom

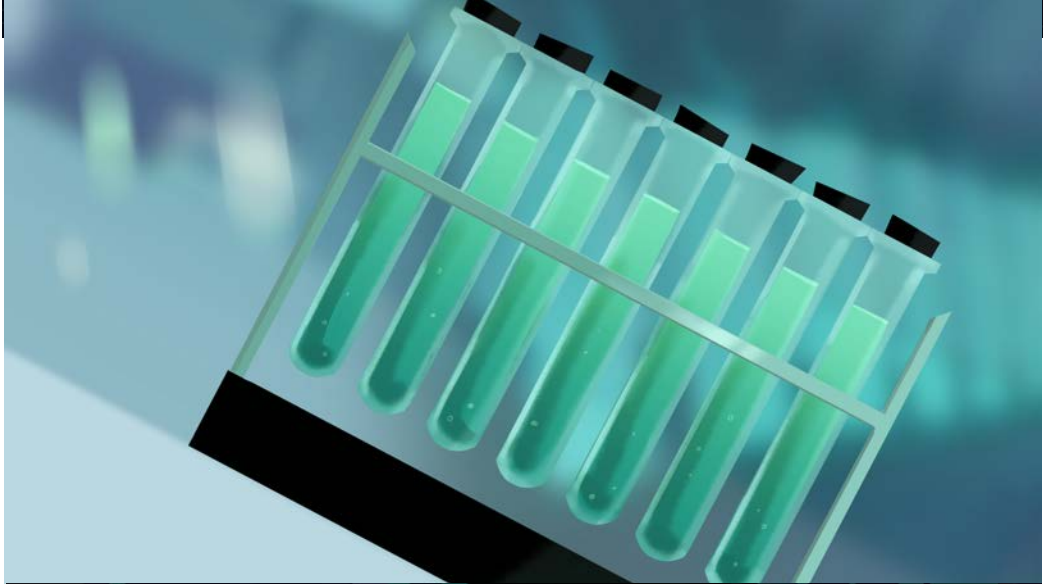
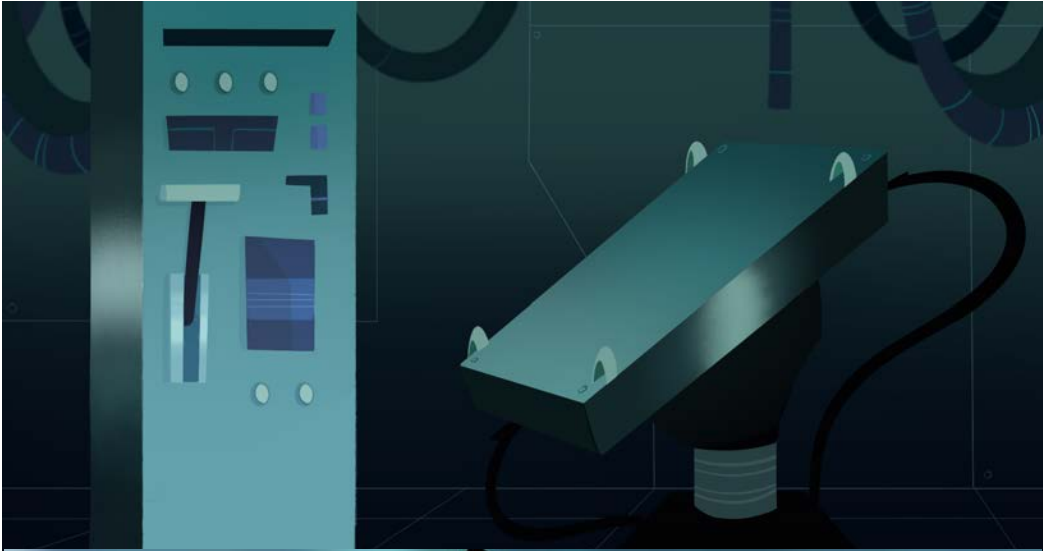
Harmony. Once finished, I'll be appointing my production crew that I have utilized for past personal projects who will be handling coloring. This crew is composed of only a few individuals, but work through references and color guides that I dispense to them over a shared Discord server. I assign individual colorists certain scenes, then export the transparent cleaned up frames and compile them into a .zip folder with the color guides included. I give them special instructions in regards to a particular scene, then have them send me one frame they've colored so I can check them off and clear them to work on the rest of the frames. As this process happens, I'll be designing the soundtrack and collecting the sound effects from Soundsnap.com. I'll be using an array of mechanical computer sounds, horror effects like cinematic risers, and body movements/foot steps to name a few. For the trickier sounds to acquire like fabricated monster noises, I'll be purchasing a creature sound effect pack and layering the sounds in adobe premiere as I time them out with the animatic. As this process goes on, I'll be editing all the sound effects and applying transitions to them in Adobe Premiere. Moving onto voice, the voice actors and their delivery are crucial to establishing character and aiding tone, so will be done during the storyboarding phase in order to ensure the project can come to it's final completed form. I'll prepare individual pdfs of character scripts for my three voice actors, in which the documents will also contain a project overview and beatboards so that they may understand the project, tone, and delivery of the characters they'll be playing. I'll then edit the voice lines to match the animatic and time them out accordingly. As for music, I'll be consulting composer Willaim Succi on fiverr.com for my source of orchestrated music, which will be composed digitally and match the eerie tone of the project. During this, I'll be showing him my animatic so that he may time the music and plan the emotional beats to be in line with what happens on screen. Once the music is done, it will be correctly timed to the animatic so that the piece may arrive at a finished state. My process is connected to the project in terms of time management and how I'll balance each section of the process.

The film will be shown in a dark room, preferably the mediatheque, with lots of wide open space to make the project more presentable and understood by a larger audience. It will make the meaning of the piece understood by an audience gathered together rather than a smaller crowd of individuals who alternatively, in a different setting, might come and go as they please. All in all, I prefer to screen this film in a theater setting as it was intended.

In conclusion, the project will touch on what it means to deal with science fiction worlds and alien characters otherwise unseen before, as well as topics of unethical experimentation., Since the characters exhibit human emotions and behavior, I'll make the audience question the relationships they have with one another. In this sense of characterization the audience is brought back to familiar emotions they can relate with, which makes the world and characters believable in their actions. Having elements of drama and action, there are topics of experimentation, urgency, and wrongdoing in terms of character actions and morals. With *Viral Genesis* I will be testing how the audience reacts to certain feats brought upon by the characters, and will gauge how they sympathize or fear what's on-screen.

## VISUAL ELEMENTS









**Jodi Kuchenbecker**  
**Animated Arts**

**Artist Statement**

Jodi Kuchenbecker is a Portland based animator. With a focus on character design and narrative work she is passionate about capturing, and building upon, the cartoons and media that inspired her as a child. Jodi's work reproduces those familiar visuals in a stylized and colorful manner, providing new takes on different types of character designs while working in the digital medium.

Her current project, *Viral Genesis*, subtly hints at the response of feeling outcast, misunderstood, and outrightly judged for miniscule reasons. It's important to her to create fantastical science fiction worlds for viewers to escape to, but to also keep those themes ever present in the work.