

# Academy Art U News

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## Success Follows Animation and Illustration Instructor Jeff Bedrick From the Classroom to the Film Festival Circuit



*A matte painting Jeff Bedrick completed for Shrek 2. Image courtesy of Jeff Bedrick.*

BY COURTNEY PETER

Multimedia artist and Academy of Art University instructor Jeff Bedrick's creative talents are not confined to a single arena. Bedrick's interdisciplinary success stems from his ability to utilize a fine arts background in support of his work in illustration, animation and motion graphics, and his commitment to creating and communicating current, engaging course content to students in both physical and digital classrooms.

Bedrick's association with the Academy began nine years ago, when a former DreamWorks colleague referred him for a position as a matte painting instructor in the School of Animation. After several years as a part-time instructor, Bedrick began to seek out additional opportunities to contribute at the Academy. The School of Illustration, in need of an instructor for an online class in digital illustration, invited him to step in.

In addition to continuing to teach for both schools in the classroom and online, Bedrick also creates and rebuilds online courses. This intensive knowledge of the material he teaches has made him a better instructor.

"Obviously, teaching live is preferable. If I can answer a student's question in real time, that's a much more effective teaching situation," Bedrick said. "Online courses have to be much more robust, well thought out and well written. To compensate for the fact that I'm not interacting with the students directly, I've made the content of those courses much richer. It helps the online students, but it also helps the on-campus students because I can refer to that material in my live classes."

"The best instructors are the ones who really train students and encourage them to participate and articulate their ideas. It's the art of pulling the best out of students," said Lourdes Livingston, online director for the School of Illustration. Bedrick fits that mold.



*Academy of Art University animation and illustration instructor, Jeff Bedrick. Photo courtesy of Jeff Bedrick.*

"He's the kind of instructor that I look for," Livingston said. "I have a lot of trust in his work. He has that ability to be creative and express ideas in the written form within the online teaching format."

Bedrick's talents have attracted attention outside of the Academy too. Several years ago, London-based English director James Hughes approached him about doing some animation and visual effects work on *The Velvet Abstract*, his 20-minute short film about the environment. The film's official website bills the production as "a global project by global collaborators with a global message."

Although the two had not previously worked together, Hughes trusted Bedrick to execute the opening shot of the Arctic sequence, a critical element that represents the film's key concerns. That assignment was so successful, it won Bedrick an expanded role as Art and Animation Supervisor for *The Velvet Abstract*. Bedrick worked on a total of eight shots, including the film's powerful ending.

To assist with some of the shots, Bedrick called upon an eager, readily available talent pool: His Academy students. The students gained valuable paid experience as well as IMDB and screen credits on a short film that has garnered a substantial amount of attention.

Throughout 2017, *The Velvet Abstract* has been a robust presence on the international film festival circuit. More than 20 festivals have bestowed nominations in various categories, and the film has won a number of awards, including: Best Animation at End of Days Film Festival and Baretower Forge Film Festival; Best Special Effects at Baretower Forge Film Festival; Best Experimental Short Film at The Monkey Bread Tree Film Awards and Oniros Film Awards; and Best Animated Short Film at Frostbite International Film Festival.

“My focus was on artistic excellence and the enjoyment of working on something that was really creative and collaborative,” Bedrick said. “It’s very exciting to see that it’s receiving some critical acclaim and winning some awards—especially to win best art and animation and best visual effects. I can take direct responsibility for that, which is nice.”

Currently, *The Velvet Abstract* is screening exclusively at festivals, but a trailer is available online at [thelvetabstract.com](http://thelvetabstract.com). Once festival season concludes, the film will likely be available to watch in its entirety via a streaming service to be determined.

Both at the Academy and with respect to *The Velvet Abstract*, Bedrick seized an initial opportunity, proved his proficiency and earned an expanded role that more fully utilized his considerable abilities. Count that as one more lesson he can teach his students.



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