

A Grade animators remain few and far between in SA advertising

While animation continues to grow in popularity with advertising agencies and target audiences animation agencies are facing a serious shortage of talented and properly trained animators, says commercial animation agency Masters & Savant, which claims that only 7% of graduates are commercially viable.

As the workload continues to grow, animation industry leader Masters & Savant says it finds it hard to find the right calibre of talent.

Said producer Roger Smythe, "Animation is essentially an extension of fine art. If an animation hopeful is not a naturally talented artist then they should not be allowed to enter the industry, for their sake and the industry's.

"Artists should be artists before they learn to use the tool, in this case the computer and design software. Animation has a bad wrap because the barrier to entry is so low. Computers have promulgated bad design and animation because talented animators and designers are producing sub-standard work."

Having received and reviewed over 300 showreels (where approximately only 7% display a commercially viable level of creativity) from recently graduating students, Smythe states that some schools are exploiting parents by accepting students without creative abilities, and merely utilising software tutorials in their training curricular.

"It is obvious that schools are accepting and churning out untalented designers and animators. These students love creating, as to them it is useful and personally rewarding, but they do not have that natural ability to produce beautiful images. Schools should only enrol kids with viable natural talent, and while this may lead to closure of many of these schools, our creative industry will lift its creative standard," Smyth stated.

Masters & Savant general manager Reto Reolon says that at this time, the industry requires 'out the box' professionals to cope with the high workload. In order to achieve this quickly, he suggests that animation courses and design degrees should, in addition to teaching the necessary basics, also concentrate on fostering and fine-tuning good graduates to become excellent animators.

In short, the educational institutions should aim at creating a master out of every student.