



San José State  
UNIVERSITY

## Good luck foot

San José State University students create professional-caliber projects and gain sought-after career skills using Adobe® video software



Put 25 eager San José State University students, a dedicated instructor with a terrific idea for a short film, and an ample supply of pizza, sandwiches, and tacos in a classroom for 55 days, and what you get is *Fumi and the Bad Luck Foot*. This sweet and wonderful animated short film, created using Adobe video software, was one of only six domestic animated films accepted to the prestigious 2006 Sundance Film Festival from among 4,000 entries.

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*David Chai,  
instructor and film director,  
San José State University*

“Although recent alumni and faculty members contributed to the production, a dedicated crew of students accomplished the bulk of the work,” says David Chai, Animation/Illustration instructor for San José State and director of the film. “Students gave up their summer for the love of animation and a desire to learn the latest graphics and animation software.”

### Zero budget, award-winning results

There was no budget for the project; Chai paid for the pizza, Vietnamese sandwiches, and tacos from his own funds. The Adobe software also came without a price tag. San José State students won the software at the 2005 Adobe Design Achievement Awards, where their film *Neighborhood Roots* was a finalist in the Animation category. Frank Gladstone, a judge in the competition, also generously donated to the school the software he received for helping with the competition. According to Chai, the project would not have been possible without affordable, powerful Adobe software, including Adobe Photoshop® CS, Adobe Premiere® Pro, After Effects®, Adobe Encore® DVD, and Adobe Audition®.

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### Award-winning animation on the desktop

The short film is about a young girl whose left foot brings her bad luck and is a source of misery in her life. She is in a state of desperation until she learns to use the bad luck foot for good causes. She becomes a young superhero, and in the end her foot is her greatest source of pride and self-esteem. The style of the film is whimsical, resembling an animated children’s storybook with watercolor illustrations.

To create the film, Executive Producer and senior student Konstantin Abadjiev headed up a team composed of faculty, alumni, and 25 other students. The team used Adobe products throughout the project, from initial thumbnail sketches to the final film.

First the team created sketches on paper depicting Fumi and the bad things that happen to her foot, from safes falling on it to heavy machinery running over it. Students videotaped the sketches in sequence to test continuity and transitions between images. They then scanned the pencil drawings into Photoshop CS2, using it as an ink and paint tool to color each image digitally. They brought the colored images into After Effects for compositing all of the 2D drawings, then used Adobe Premiere Pro to edit their work and add finishing touches.



The making of *Fumi and the Bad Luck Foot* occurred in a span of only 55 days. The integration and file compatibility among Adobe software applications enabled the team to collaborate easily and achieve professional-caliber results.



Creativity shines through in the many imaginative disasters that befall Fumi during the course of the short film, produced from start to finish using the full complement of Adobe graphics, video, and audio software.

“Adobe Premiere Pro is a powerful finishing tool. Real-time editing in Adobe Premiere Pro enabled us to make tight editing decisions, with the benefit of having accompanying sound clips to make any necessary last-minute tweaks,” says Abadjiev.

Adobe Audition was the mainstay tool for audio editing and effects. The students recorded and edited voices and added sound, tapping sound libraries to add effects such as car crashes. Several of the songs in the film are original compositions recorded using Adobe Audition.

Final rendering, audio adjustments, and other finishing touches were accomplished using Adobe Premiere Pro. As a final step, the students used Adobe Encore DVD software to produce a DVD for submission to festivals and distribution to other venues. They designed DVD labels using Adobe Illustrator® and used Adobe GoLive® software to post the short film on the website.

“We used Adobe software front to back and up and down on this project,” explains Chai. “Some people worked on animation while others worked on coloring and scanning. It was down to the wire to meet the deadline for submission to the Sundance Film Festival. Integration and file format compatibility among Adobe video applications were vital to our ability to work as a cohesive team and finish on time.”

### Achieving professional results

Throughout the project, Adobe video software gave the team all the tools it needed to achieve professional-caliber results. Extensive color correction capabilities in After Effects made color adjustments easy, and integration among Adobe video software applications enabled the team to reuse, place, exchange, and update files, regardless of the originating application.

Adobe video software offered another bonus: ease of use. “Many students here are self-taught in Adobe software—we learned it before we arrived,” says Abadjiev. “Once we learned one Adobe application, learning the others came very easily.”

### Helping students realize their dreams

*Fumi and the Bad Luck Foot* is just one example of the amazing projects emanating from San José State. Abadjiev and his peers, as well as other students who came before and those who will follow them grew up watching mind-boggling animation and visual effects that blur the line between fantasy and reality. For some, this experience ignited a strong desire to learn the techniques behind the CG magic that is so popular and prevalent and perhaps even garner a career in the field. However, for most youngsters, this dream never materializes because tuition at private art colleges is out of reach.

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David Chai, instructor and film director, San José State University



Students report that their jaws dropped when *Fumi and the Bad Luck Foot* was accepted to the prestigious 2006 Sundance Film Festival. The director and several members of the team accompanied their film to the Sundance Film Festival. With knowledge of Adobe software and strong creative sensibilities, students have the skills they need to succeed in careers in animation and effects.

**Back Row:** Konstantin Abadjiev, Ariel Alvarez, David Chai, Wally Der; **Front Row:** Tim Heitz, Lauren Andrews, Sophorn Sin

Not so for students in San José State University's award-winning Animation/Illustration program. The program competes favorably with private art colleges whose tuition rates are up to ten times that of San José State. Many students in the program are underrepresented minorities actively recruited through outreach programs with local high schools and community colleges.

### Dreams made real

San José State credits the success of the program to the generosity of local corporations, the dedication of faculty, and the work ethic of the program's students. Since 1998, San José State students in the Animation/Illustration program have benefited from the classes, equipment, and enrichment opportunities usually available only at private institutions. As a result, graduates have competed favorably for prestigious positions in the entertainment industry, where the recruitment effort has been international.

Graduates of the program are hired in the animation and illustrations fields, securing employment at top-notch firms such as Electronic Arts, Industrial Light and Magic, Walt Disney Feature Animation, Warner Brothers Feature Animation, Sony, Film Roman, Pixar, and DreamWorks.

For Chai and his students, Adobe video software has been a powerful enabler and catalyst. Skill in Adobe software is also paving the way for individuals who dream of becoming motion graphics artists. “Adobe video software is the future of visual effects and animation,” says Chai. “Students who know Adobe software and have strong creative sensibilities will always have an entrée into the magical world of animation and effects.”

For more information on the San José State University project, *Fumi and the Bad Luck Foot*, please visit [www.adobe.com/motion/SJSUFumi.html](http://www.adobe.com/motion/SJSUFumi.html).

For more stories like this, please visit [www.adobe.com/motion/customerstories.html](http://www.adobe.com/motion/customerstories.html).

#### Organization

##### San José State University

San José, California  
[www.sjsu.edu](http://www.sjsu.edu)

#### Challenges

- Provide affordable education in motion graphics
- Create an award-winning short film with zero budget
- Build skills that launch students' careers with major studios and animation companies
- Maximize student creativity

#### Solution

- Use Adobe video software to create an animated short film
- Build student skills in Adobe video and audio software
- Work with Adobe to help build student self-esteem and software skills

#### Benefits

- Created a short animated film that was accepted into the 2006 Sundance Film Festival
- Helped students develop skills that allow them to get jobs at top-notch studios like DreamWorks, Industrial Light and Magic, Walt Disney, Warner Brothers, and Pixar
- Enabled students to learn Adobe software in an integrated, productive workflow that promotes creativity

#### Toolkit

- Adobe After Effects
- Adobe Audition
- Adobe Encore DVD
- Adobe Photoshop CS2
- Adobe Premiere Pro
- Adobe Illustrator
- Adobe GoLive
- HP PCs with Intel® processors running Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional

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