STOP MOTION ANIMATION – ART 455 – Colorado State University – Professor Tornatzky
You will be creating stop motion movie using abstract objects and a digital camera.

FINAL OUTPUT DETAILS
What you turn in*: A* ***QuickTime .mov*** *file that is comprised of at least 200 individual shots. This will give you a final movie that is around 3 seconds in length. The more shots the better.*
Digital Delivery*: You will burn a CD or DVD with your final QuickTime .mov file and turn this in to me.*
Resources: *www.blublu.com, barnstormers_scounge.mp4*

TO START:
Select objects that you can use to tell a story. They could be wooden blocks, legos, dolls, sand, rocks, water – anything you want. You will want to set up a stage for the objects – a draped background with a white or black cloth (minimal wrinkles is optimal). You may also choose to shoot using the green screen in the shooting room – let me know so we can schedule it.

TO START:
Pick a song you like, focusing on your favorite part of that song such as a chorus.

EDITING SOUND IN AUDACITY:
You will use the sound editing program Audacity to edit out the snippet of music you want to use.

CREATING A ROUGH SKETCH
Listen to the part of the song you've chosen several times. How would you translate what you hear into simple lines or shapes? Be as open and creative as possible: don't think "that won't work…" Write a simple narrative describing the types of movements that you think would work with the music. Color, object shape (smooth vs rough, man made vs organic) and contrast in size can come into play here.

CHOREOGRAPH YOUR OBJECTS
Now that you have a narrative that works with your music, map out how you would like your selected objects to be used illustrate the movements. You can create a rough sketch using color on paper, or you could place the objects where you want them to appear for key movements in the music and take pictures of the objects, working later to recreate the animation that would lead to the key movement positioning.

SETTING UP THE SHOT
We will now set up for filming. You will have to mount your camera on a tripod. The camera's registration must remain the same for your shots - you may want to put tape on the floor where you have your tripod legs. Try setting up the camera three feet away from the table you are filming on, or 10 feet away if you are filming bodies in motion. Once your camera is set up, arrange your props.

It can help to start by pre-focusing the scene. Use your shutter release (press it halfway) to get your scene in focus - then switch your camera to manual focus. By doing this you keep your pre focused setting. If the camera has a remote trigger, use it.

After you have set up your scene and checked your focus, it is a matter of moving your object a tiny bit, then taking another shot. Move them again a tiny bit more and take another shot. And so on. You will probably have to take more shots than you think you'll need - in addition to testing your focus, you may want to take some test shots and then review them in the viewer window. You can click forward through the shots to get an idea of what it will look like. You can play with concepts such as velocity - taking many shots as an object starts off and then making the distance between the object larger before taking the next shots. This creates a sense of speed, although if you take the shots too far apart the film will look jerky and not hang together.

How many shots?

The more shots you take, the smoother your film will be. In general, video plays at 30 frames per second, film 24 frames per second and animation at 12 frames per second. Rather than trying to shoot at 30 frames per second, let's shoot at 10 to 12 frames a second, meaning that you should have at least 100 frames for a 10 second movie.

IMPORTING YOUR SHOTS INTO QUICKTIME PRO

We will be using the cheap and awesome Quicktime Pro to do simple editing. To get your images into Quicktime Pro:

1. Place all of the images into a single folder.
2. Number the images sequentially (such as Fig01, Fig02).
3. Switch to QuickTime Pro.
4. Choose File>Open Image Sequence, then navigate to your folder.
5. Select the first image and click OK.
6. An Image Sequence Settings dialog box will open. Choose a frame rate for each image. Use a frame rate that matches your shooting i.e. if you shot 10 frames per second, choose 10 frames per second
7. QuickTime will import all of your images. When finished, save your slideshow as a self contained movie.