

# Reimagining 2D to 3D: Towards a Seamless AI-Augmented Workflow for High-Fidelity Animation Production

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## Abstract

*AI-powered tools for content generation are rapidly gaining prominence in the digital media landscape. A significant challenge lies in transforming AI-generated 2D images into high-quality 3D animations. This research proposes a novel workflow combining advanced AI functionalities with traditional animation methods. Key limitations addressed include tool compatibility, achieving photorealism, overcoming AI creative constraints, and enhancing workflow efficiency. Our solution integrates AI tools like ChatGPT and Midjourney with 3D software (Blender), facilitating a smooth transition from concept to final product. Stable Diffusion is leveraged to enhance 3D animation realism. Creators maintain artistic control through manual interventions. By optimizing the process from scripting to editing, we aim to revolutionize 3D animation production, particularly for AI-to-3D conversions. This research contributes to academic discourse and provides practical guidelines for digital media design and animation.*

**Keywords:** *AI-Generated Images, 2D Images, 3D Animation, AI.*

## Introduction

A transformative shift is currently underway in the digital media landscape. Embedding Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools more centrally into content creation makes this one-way trend all the more pronounced [1-3]. As AI-generated 2D images hold the promises for 3D animations, one particularly dominant area of research is exploring this potential fully [4, 5]. However, a significant problem is still left: how can we convert these 2D results into 3D visual experiences that are good [6]. While previous studies have illuminated the potential for AI in animation production, a number of key challenges still remain. These include integrating diverse AI tools with traditional 3D software seamlessly (without flick, for instance), retaining photorealistic final animation quality – which philosophically is very difficult for AI to understand complex creative concepts. More worrisome still is the fact that currently in use animation pipelines are costly too rather than efficient: this gives rise to a barrier against wider acceptance of AI among animators.

Our research aims to fill this gap in knowledge by presenting an innovative workflow methodology that encourages the union of cutting-edge AI functions with traditional animation techniques. By solving these problems, this study hopes to bring about a groundbreaking shift in the way 3D animations are made, especially those originating from AI-generated 2D concepts behind them. This paper will start by examining relevant texts on AI-based animation and conversations from 2D to 3D. It will also address the current limitations of these and other texts which expatiate upon what is known. Next, a new workflow method is introduced that harmonizes AI utilities such as ChatGPT and Midjourney with 3D animation software like Blender. This approach will lead from the word-of a printout to the finished product, keeping faith with its creator's original vision. Besides, the proposed workflow method will integrate techniques of Stable Diffusion into the final 3D animation [8, 9]. What's more, this new approach keeps creators in control of their own work by giving them the freedom to introduce manual interventions and make creative adjustments throughout the process. In the final analysis, this paper will show that by following such a workflow pipeline we can bring both greater efficiency to the production of animation and benefit artists working within digital media field.

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This paper has the potential to bring about a new paradigm in AI-assisted animation creation by identifying these bottlenecks and coming up with a new solution. The following pages will illustrate in greater detail how this new methodology can benefit those using it at every stage.

## Literature Review

The digital media creation landscape is currently undergoing a significant transformation, driven by the burgeoning power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) [10, 11]. This section provides an in-depth exploration of the methodologies currently employed in this dynamic field, with a particular emphasis on the transformative impact of AI on 3D animation and film production. Following this, we will identify and discuss the critical gaps in current practices that our proposed workflow methodology aims to address.

### *Established Methodologies in Digital Media Creation*

The traditional animation production process highly depends on manual work. Skilled animators seem to be slowly carved from the beginning of each picture to its end frame by It relies entirely on their labour, so to speak [12-14]. However, the development of computer graphics (CG) technology has brought to the animation features on a variety of software tools. These technologies include 3D models, rigging, animation tools, rendering engines. Now, made possible by such applications and methods as ones below makers are able to create more and more beautiful or complex animated works

Firstly, real-time rendering engines such as Unreal Engine, Unity have further revolutionized the field [15]. These engines let artists see their images in real time within the development environment, encourage a fast feedback process and thus provide for much more free-flowing work, etc. [16].

### *AI's Inroads into Animation and Film Production*

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly changing animation and film making. From creating new concept art that matches up closely with its inspiration, to handling elements like storyboarding and even very basic character animation tasks, AI provides solutions for artists. Tools developed around AI, such as Midjourney or Dall-E 2, can help make what is only a rough idea come to life and create interesting options that could not exist without careful research while ChatGPT will pen initial storyboards and scripts. AI could even free human creators to focus on the more sophisticated aspects of storytelling through research into automating specific animation tasks using robots. The potential of AI to greatly supplement and smooth the animation production pipeline is clear from these developments.

### *Gaps in Current Practices: A Call for Seamless Integration*

Furthermore, one major problem remaining in current AI-powered animation is how to integrate many diverse tools of artificial intelligence with traditional three-dimensional computer graphics software packages [17]. Also the workflow process now often needs data manipulation, making it cumbersome and inefficient as a whole. Another problem is how to achieve real quality in 3D animations. The overall effect of imagery generated through AI may well be aesthetically impressive, but it often lacks the richness or subtlety that gives a feeling of realism. Lighting, texture and material properties are crucial in creating realistic visuals; however, certain AI tools won't know this essential fact yet. Another significant barrier to realizing full potential in AI-powered production comes from AI's grasp of artistic creativity. This is an area in which even the best AI voices struggle to make themselves heard [18]. Today, the incorporation of AI into animation pipeline can bring many inefficiencies. Disparate working methods and lack of standardization will hold up the productivity of the entire production process. Our proposed workflow method aims to bridge these critical gaps with regard both efficiency and form, by fostering a more integrated approach to AI-augmented production in general animation.

## Methodology

This research presents a comprehensive methodology that integrates artificial intelligence (AI) applications with traditional digital media tools to create AI-driven 3D animations. The methodology is structured as a sequence of stages, each designed to optimize the process for efficient and high-quality animation production.

**Script and Narrative Development:** The initial stage involves the use of OpenAI's ChatGPT to generate creative scripts based on user-provided prompts. These scripts are then iteratively refined to align with the narrative goals of the project.

**Conceptualization and 2D Image Generation:** The next stage involves the use of Mid-Journey AI to translate the textual script into visual imagery. This process involves several iterations to generate a diverse selection of conceptual art.

**3D Modeling and Scene Creation:** Once the conceptual images are created, the workflow transitions to 3D modeling. Depth maps generated by 3dphoto.io are used to convert 2D images into 3D models. These models are then imported into Blender for initial scene construction and basic animation. To enhance depth perception and textural details, a high-resolution depth map extension for Stable Diffusion is utilized.

**Animation Refinement and Visual Effects:** Further refinement of the animation and the application of visual effects are executed within Blender. This includes sophisticated camera movements, lighting effects, and volumetric elements to render the scenes with greater dynamism and impact.

**Audio Integration:** Concurrent with these stages, audio integration is addressed using AI voice synthesis tools complemented by Adobe's audio enhancement software to produce clear and natural-sounding voiceovers.

**Final Composition and Post-Production:** The final stage involves the use of Adobe Premiere or a similar video editing suite to seamlessly integrate the narrative, sound effects, and visual components into a cohesive final product.

Throughout the process, a robust integration framework is established that ensures a seamless melding of AI-generated elements with human creativity. This framework includes quality assurance checkpoints, feedback loops for creative adjustments, and protocols for the harmonious incorporation of both AI and human-refined elements. The proposed workflow is designed for innovation and efficiency, providing a modular and adaptable blueprint that is scalable for a range of project scopes. It leverages the strengths of both AI and human input to enhance the quality of digital media production, setting a new standard for the creation of high-quality 3D animations in the digital age as seen in Figure 1.

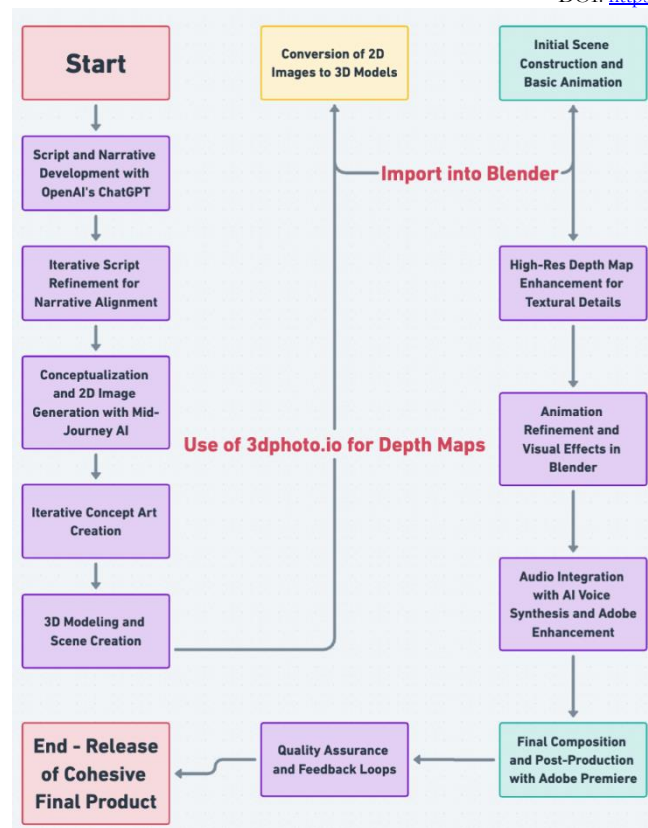


Figure 1. AI-Driven Production Pipeline

### *Case Study: Floating Island Sanctuary*

The floating island sanctuary serves as a practical application of the proposed AI-driven workflow, demonstrating its efficacy and highlighting its innovative features. This case study dissects the application of the workflow in a step-by-step manner and addresses the specific challenges encountered, along with the solutions that were implemented to overcome them.

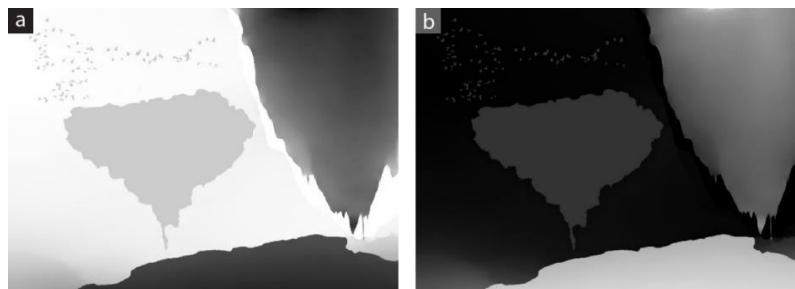
### *Application in the Floating Island Sanctuary*

The project commenced with the generation of a script using ChatGPT, which provided a narrative base for the envisioned a series of fantasy floating islands. The AI's output was refined through several iterations until it met the conceptual depth and detail required for the subsequent stages. Mid-Journey AI then translated this script into a series of 2D images, offering visual representations of the floating island and its unique natural sanctuary elements. The final image was synthesized after multiple prompts to ensure diversity in design and perspective as demonstrated in Figure 2. For the 3D modeling phase, 3dphoto.io was utilized to create depth maps from the 2D images, facilitating their transformation into 3D models.



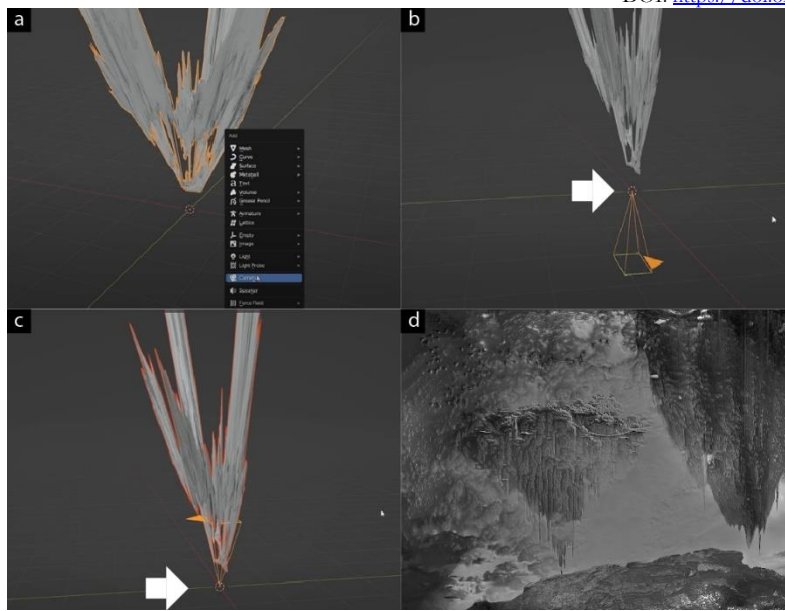
**Figure 2. AI-Generated 2D Image of Floating Islands Created Using Midjourney Based on A Description Provided by Chatgpt.**

Figure 3 illustrates the depth map, which essentially represents an image indicating the position of pixels in 3D space. The depth map used, shown in Figure 3(b), highlights brighter areas for objects closer to the camera, while darker areas indicate objects farther away.



**Figure 3. AI-Generated Depth Map Created Using 3dphoto.Io.**

These models were imported into Blender in \*.ply format, appearing as a complex stretched 3D mesh, as shown in Figure 4(a). Adjustments to the camera's position, rotation, and orientation were necessary, changing from a downward view (Figure 4(b)) to an upward view (Figure 4(c)) to display the 3D model in the correct perspective, as illustrated in Figure 4(d). The integration process uncovered inconsistencies in depth perception and texture details, which were corrected using Stable Diffusion's depth map extension. This adjustment greatly improved the realism of the models.



**Figure 4. The 3D Model After Being Imported into Blender**

The complex stretched 3D mesh, as shown in Figure 4(a) can be seen appears in different angles in Figure 5 which marks certain limitation in camera movement. The animation phase introduced complex camera movements and lighting effects within Blender to imbue the scenes with life and dynamism. After experimenting with various animation styles for the 3D model, the selected option is showcased in the sequence rendered in Figure 6. At this stage, one significant challenge was achieving a balance between the computational demands of high-resolution models and the limitations of the available hardware resources.

The solution was to optimize the models and employ selective detailing, where higher resolution was applied only to focal points of scenes, thereby maintaining visual quality without overtaxing the system. Audio elements, synthesized using AI voice tools, were polished with Adobe's audio software to ensure clarity and a natural tone. The final assembly of the floating island sanctuary project was accomplished in Adobe Premiere, where the integration framework was put to the test. All components; narrative, audio, and visuals were brought together to produce a seamless short film that embodied the project's creative vision.



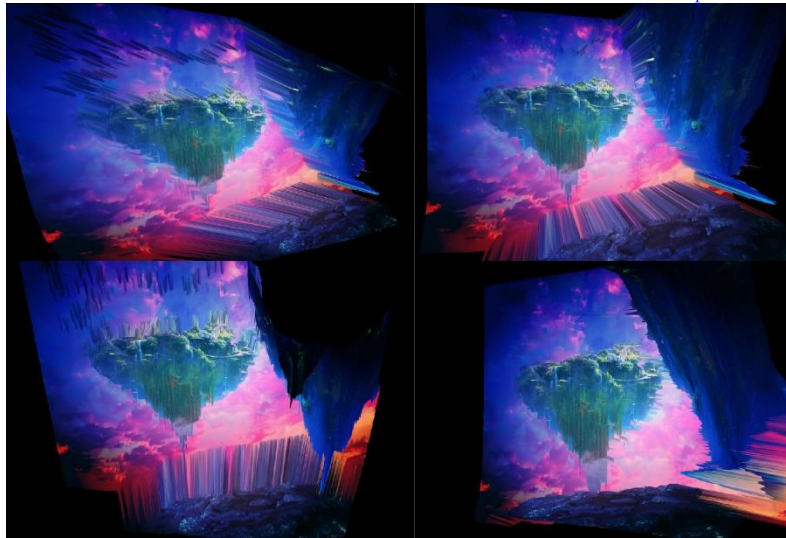


Figure 5. Different Viewpoints of The Rendered 3D Model in Blender



Figure 6. Generate 3D Short Clip from Blender

### *Challenges and Solutions*

Throughout the project, several challenges were encountered, primarily related to the AI's interpretation of complex creative concepts. For instance, the initial script and image generation lacked context-specific intricacies that were essential to the imaginative sanctuary setting. To address this, the AI tools were guided with more targeted prompts that incorporated contextual details from imaginative and speculative idea about the habitat of the floating islands.

Another challenge was the AI's occasional production of incongruent images that did not fit the established aesthetic or narrative theme. This was mitigated by establishing a manual review process, wherein each AI-generated image was evaluated for coherence and either approved, adjusted, or regenerated. Finally, the case study faced limitations inherent to the 3D modeling of the imaginative scenes. The vast landscapes and intricate structures of the floating island environment demanded a high level of detail that could potentially lead to unmanageable file sizes and render times. The implementation of level-of-detail (LOD) techniques

allowed for the management of these complexities, ensuring that the most detailed models were used only when necessary and optimizing the scenes for efficient rendering.

The floating island sanctuary project not only validated the workflow but also provided critical insights into the nuances of AI-assisted 3D animation production. It showcased the potential for this methodology to facilitate the creation of complex and high-quality digital media content, paving the way for further innovations in the field.

## Results and Discussion

The floating island sanctuary project served as a fertile testing ground for the newly devised AI-augmented workflow. A critical evaluation was performed to assess the workflow's efficacy, examining how the integration of AI tools with traditional methodologies impacts the digital media production process.

### *Comparison Table*

The comparative analysis aims to elucidate the contrasts and potential synergies between AI-augmented workflows and traditional filmmaking methodologies. It systematically evaluates each approach across various dimensions, such as speed of execution, creative output, and emotional depth in animation, among others. The AI-augmented approach boasts increased efficiency and variety in creative output, harnessing the power of AI to automate and enhance the production process. Conversely, traditional methods emphasize the irreplaceable value of human expertise, particularly in aspects requiring nuanced emotional expression. The summarized outcomes of this analysis are presented in the table below, offering a clear, side-by-side comparison that may inform decision-making in digital media production environments. The results are summarized in the following table:

**Table 1. Comparing AI-Augmented Workflow and Traditional Methodology in Digital Media Production**

Aspect	AI-Augmented Workflow	Traditional Methodology
<b>Speed of Execution</b>	Significantly faster due to AI-assisted automation.	Slower, as each step requires manual execution.
<b>Creative Output Variety</b>	Higher, with AI generating a multitude of options quickly.	Lower, often limited by individual or team bandwidth.
<b>Detail and Realism</b>	Advanced tools produce high-fidelity models efficiently.	High fidelity achieved but at greater time expense.
<b>Flexibility and Adaptation</b>	Easily adapts to different styles and requirements.	Requires significant rework for changes in direction.
<b>Human Oversight</b>	Necessary to guide AI and ensure relevance to the project.	Integral at all stages for creative direction.
<b>Resource Accessibility</b>	Requires access to advanced AI tools and knowledge.	Relies on widely available skill sets and tools.
<b>Emotional Nuance in Animation</b>	Currently limited; human input required for depth.	High, due to experienced animators' expertise.

Table 1 elucidates the efficiency gains, particularly in the speed of execution and the breadth of creative output, which are unmistakable benefits of the AI-driven approach. Yet, it is equally clear that the nuances of animation and the emotional depth still heavily rely on human expertise.



### *Strengths and Limitations*

While the AI-driven workflow demonstrated substantial potential in reducing time and effort in the creative process, the need for human oversight became evident when the AI misinterpreted complex prompts. These instances underscored the AI's limitations in understanding abstract concepts without explicit guidance. The strengths of the workflow, notably its flexibility and efficiency, suggest it as a viable alternative to conventional methods, especially for projects requiring rapid development cycles and a high degree of innovation.

However, the workflow's dependency on cutting-edge technology posed an exclusionary barrier, as access to such tools and the requisite expertise to operate them is not universally available. This limitation is significant, highlighting an area where the traditional methodology retains an advantage: the reliance on human skills and creativity that are independent of technology.

### *Potential Improvements*

Moving forward, an impactful improvement to the workflow would be the incorporation of AI tools capable of learning and adapting to specific creative styles and preferences, thus minimizing the need for intensive human intervention. Further development could involve creating more nuanced AI animations through the integration of emotional intelligence algorithms, thereby enhancing the depth of characters and scenes.

In summation, the AI-driven workflow represents a significant advancement in the field of digital media production. Its implementation in the floating island sanctuary project has demonstrated both its transformative potential and the areas ripe for further enhancement. Future research and development will be pivotal in realizing the full capabilities of AI within this creative domain.

### *Novel Contributions*

The workflow introduces groundbreaking techniques for integrating AI with traditional 3D animation, marking a notable shift in digital media production. Its innovative aspects lie in the harmonization of AI-generated scripting and visual content creation with human-led refinement processes, paving the way for enhanced efficiency and creativity in media projects. This integration represents a novel contribution:

To the field, as it demonstrates the transformative potential of AI in augmenting traditional animation workflows, resulting in a symbiotic relationship between human creativity and artificial intelligence. Moreover, the scalability and adaptability of the workflow stand out, indicating its potential applicability across various digital media contexts, from independent short films to expansive cinematic productions. This versatility highlights another novel aspect.

Of the workflow, as it showcases its ability to cater to diverse production scales and requirements, thereby expanding the horizons of digital media creation. Additionally, the workflow's emphasis on collaboration and iterative refinement underscores its innovative approach.

To digital media production, emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and technological innovation in driving creative exploration and advancement within the industry.

## **Conclusions**

The research has led to important findings that enhance the field of digital media production, especially in converting textual prompts into 2D and then 3D content using AI. The novel workflow developed herein showcases an innovative integration of AI tools with traditional animation techniques, resulting in a substantial enhancement of efficiency and creative output. A pivotal finding is the AI's ability to rapidly conceptualize and generate diverse visual assets from textual descriptions, which, when coupled with 3D modeling software, accelerates the traditionally time-consuming process of 3D animation. The workflow's

adaptability was rigorously tested in the floating island sanctuary project, providing a proof of concept for its scalability across various digital media applications. This adaptability, along with the workflow's modular nature, signifies a potential industry-wide application for projects ranging from educational content to expansive entertainment productions.

Reflecting on the implications of these findings, the integration of AI in the media production pipeline is a disruptive innovation, offering a new lens through which the future of digital storytelling can be envisioned. It invites a re-examination of creative roles and processes in the industry, suggesting a collaborative synergy between human ingenuity and artificial intelligence. As the field propels forward, future research should concentrate on refining the AI's interpretative algorithms to better understand abstract creative concepts and further reduce the need for human intervention. The ultimate goal is to achieve a seamless and intuitive workflow that not only simplifies the creative process but also amplifies the expressive potential of digital media creators. The exploration of AI's role in enhancing emotional expressiveness in animation also emerges as a promising direction, heralding a new era of storytelling that resonates deeply with human experiences. In essence, the significant discoveries from this research not only present a compelling case for the adoption of AI in digital media but also lay the groundwork for continued innovation in 3D animation production, setting the stage for a future where AI's role is integral to the creative narrative.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

There are no relevant financial or non-financial competing interests to report.

### **Author Contributions Statement**

Izani Zainal conceived the research idea and designed the experiments. Fauzan Mustaffa analyzed the data and contributed to the interpretation of the results. Izani Zainal and Aishah Razak wrote the first draft of the manuscript, and all authors contributed to revising and editing the manuscript. All authors approved the final version of the manuscript for submission.

### **Data Availability Statement**

No additional data is available or required for this study, as it is based on experimental work for a proof of concept. All relevant information and findings are fully described within the article.

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