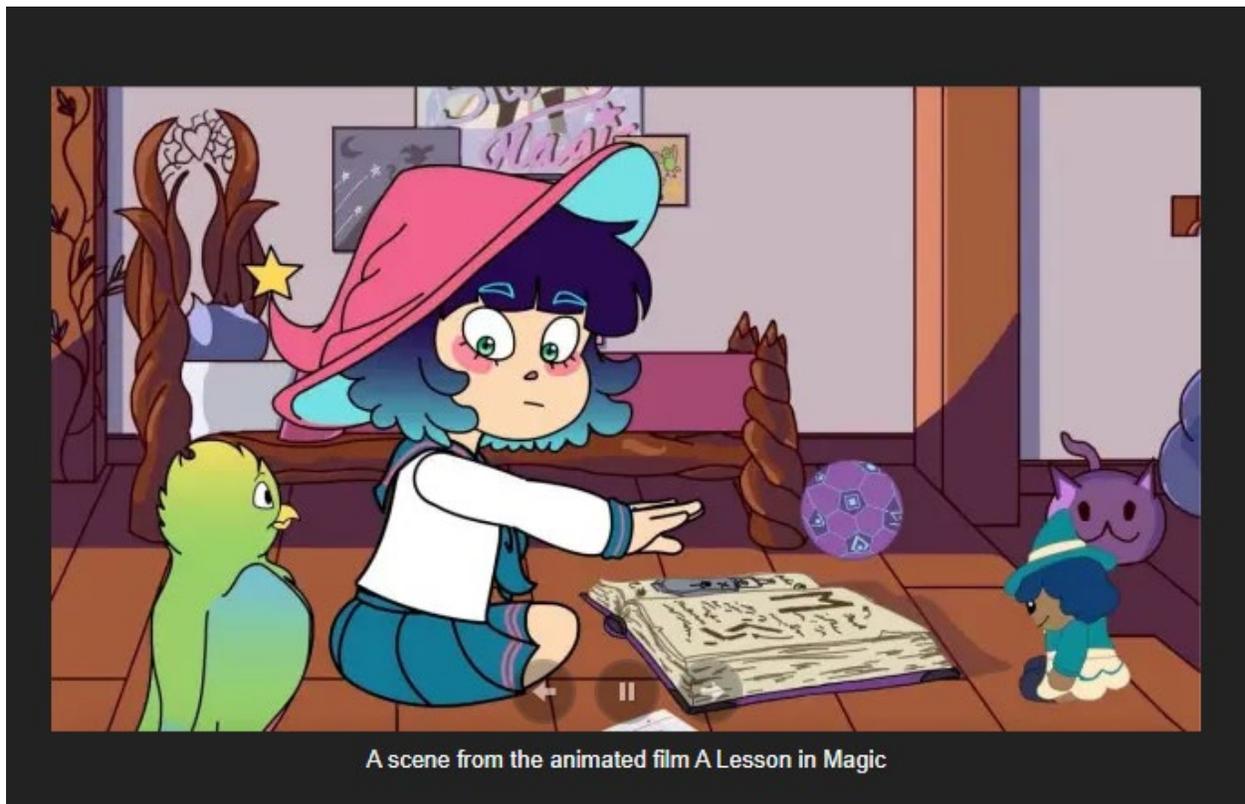


MIAMI'S COMMUNITY NEWS

MDC student creates short animated film featuring hearing/speech-impaired lead

BY NORMA ARDILLA
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Hannah Roza, a future graduate of Miami Dade College's (MDC) Miami Animation & Gaming International Complex (MAGIC), is the latest MDC student

to see her work featured on the screens of ViacomCBS' Nickelodeon and Nick Jr. television networks across Latin America.

Her animated short film, *A Lesson in Magic*, captivated her mentors with its original and inspiring theme that places a character with hearing and speech impairments at the forefront of the story. The film was broadcast recently in the networks' Spanish and Portuguese feeds. This is the first MAGIC production featuring a character with a disability in a leading role.

"So much goes into making just two minutes of an animated short! I had known that producing animated films was a long and labor-intensive process, but experiencing it firsthand really opened my eyes to just how much work goes into this kind of a production," Roza said. "This mentorship gave me an even deeper understanding and respect for this industry and the people who work within it."

Roza, 26, first earned a Bachelor of Science in advertising from the University of Florida. She then decided to enroll in MAGIC, the state-of-the-art animation and gaming facility at MDC's Wolfson Campus, to pursue a degree in 2019.

"I have been an artist my whole life and always had a love for animation. Digital Arts and sciences was my minor at UF," she said.

A Lesson in Magic, which served as her capstone project, was Roza's original idea and evolved from a concept about a non-speaking adventurer named Eirie and a magical quetzal she was traveling with.

In 2.22 minutes, *A Lesson in Magic* tells the story of Luna, a young witch who wants to attend magic school. Hard of hearing and unable to speak, she communicates through sign language, which can be a problem as, in her world, magic can only be performed through speech. Such is the case until Quetzal, her animal companion, teaches her to believe in herself and inspires her to try her own way to perform magic.

For nearly 10 months, Roza developed and produced the final version of the film along with a team of 20 MAGIC students and professors. The process, which transitioned to virtual collaboration last year, was intricate as it involved sign language in English, Portuguese and Spanish. It required sign language interpreters to send in videos based on the film's script to the animators, who then replicated the hand movements. It took many hand designs until it was finally right.

"It was challenging to work during the pandemic doing all the work online," she said.

"Lacking in-person interaction, made the process longer."

Born and raised in Miami, Roza hopes to one day develop A Lesson in Magic into a full series. After graduation, she hopes to work as a storyboard artist for an animation company and to continue raising the profile of characters in underrepresented groups.

"It was incredibly rewarding to see how the short was received, especially from members of the deaf community. The people who helped us with the sign language were so enthusiastic about A Lesson in Magic and seeing sign language animated in a 2D medium," she said. "It made me realize just how important this kind of representation is, and I want to continue incorporating even more underrepresented groups in the projects I do."

Roza and her team were mentored and guided by MDC faculty and professionals from ViacomCBS Networks Americas (parent company of Nickelodeon and Nick Jr.) through a partnership with MAGIC to mentor students and showcase their best work.

A Lesson in Magic was a part of an event to launch Access4All an application that provides users with visual and hearing disabilities the chance to enjoy the world of entertainment through multimedia accessibility elements such as

Mexican sign language, audio description and subtitles from their cell phone or tablet. Nickelodeon Latin America and MAGIC joined this initiative dedicated to help children in the region.

“A Lesson in Magic was the first production produced at MAGIC with a lead character with a disability and we were all very proud of it. The mentorship provided by industry professionals from Nickelodeon once again elevated the production quality of the short and enriched the education experience for all students involved in this project.” said Mauricio Ferrazza, MAGIC chair.

With facilities that mimic the production pipeline from PIXAR Studios, and located at MDC’s Wolfson Campus, the Miami Animation and Gaming International Complex (MAGIC) offers students an intensive, hands-on two-year program to develop skills in modeling, lighting, motion, sound, and storytelling. The program also provides an opportunity to gain command of the technical skills required in today’s highly competitive animation industry.

MAGIC bridges the gap in affordability and accessibility, providing quality programming and the very best facilities at a fraction of the cost compared to private competitors.

For more information, visit www.magic.mdc.edu.

For more info: <https://communitynewspapers.com/biscayne-bay/mdc-student-creates-short-animated-film-featuring-hearing-speech-impaired-lead/>