TRANSCENDENTS
A teen drama about transition, transgender, and tolerance.

CUPPA COFFEE STUDIOS
CREATIVE TREATMENT
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transcend\-ent
/tran(t)ˈesend(é)nt/

adjective
beyond or above the range of normal or merely physical human experience.
"the search for a transcendent level of knowledge"
surpassing the ordinary; exceptional.
TRANSCENDENTS

Synopsis

A 30 minute Tween/Teen Drama series shot in hyper real stop motion animation about the teen transition from adolescence into adulthood. The story follows the life of a NYC transgender teen, his family and his friends. TRANSCENDENTS will show the journey of the main character’s transition from boy to girl, his twin sister’s transition from girl to woman, as well as his parents’ and the culture’s transition from prejudice to acceptance.
“It is an awful thing to be betrayed by your body. And it’s lonely, because you feel you can’t talk about it. You feel it’s something between you and the body. You feel it’s a battle you will never win . . . and yet you fight it day after day, and it wears you down. Even if you try to ignore it, the energy it takes to ignore it will exhaust you.”

David Levithan, Every Day

“I think what you’re seeing is a profound recognition on the part of the American people that gays and lesbians and transgender persons are our brothers, our sisters, our children, our cousins, our friends, our co-workers, and that they’ve got to be treated like every other American. And I think that principle will win out.”

Barack Obama

“There’s a gender in your brain and a gender in your body. For 99 percent of people, those things are in alignment. For transgender people, they’re mismatched. That’s all it is. It’s not complicated, it’s not a neurosis. It’s a mix-up. It’s a birth defect, like a cleft palate.”

Chaz Bono

“My death needs to mean something. My death needs to be counted in the number of transgender people who commit suicide this year. I want someone to look at that number and say ‘that’s fucked up’ and fix it. Fix society. Please.”

Leelah Alcorn
Animation offers a platform to present mature content softened by characters that are not actual teenagers or even actual people.

While the culture may be ready to accept and embrace the transgender movement, we are all collectively slower when it comes to presenting divergent ideals of gender and sexuality about adolescents... especially when targeted to a tween/teen aged audience.

Hyper Real Animation allows for all the emotion, texture, richness and relatability of live action.

Though the characters will not be played by humans, they are still hyper real as are the sets and backgrounds. No likeness or feeling is lost.

Hyper Real Animation has a higher appeal for the teen audience.

The tween/teen audience is naturally drawn to the animation art form. Boys especially will be more inclined to watch a drama if it is presented with a hip and stunningly original stop motion technique.

Visual Idealism

Because the stop motion dolls have such closeness and resemblance to real people, and yet can be created and perfected to show an idealized version of our world, the animation begins to serve the most powerful metaphor of the show's theme of transitions. As today's world transitions from prejudice to acceptance, from hate to love and aspires towards a cultural perfection, the show's hyper real animation can offer a setting that can visually attain that perfection.
We have created a very special animated piece to illustrate our unique vision for TRANSCEENDENTS. We tell a story of two people meeting for the first time using subtle body language and delicate eye movements - a mini-story that demonstrates the emotional potential for this series.

Technically, look for documentary style camera, natural lighting, and real photo backgrounds. For animation, look for smooth, realistic human motion with nuanced details like the turn of a hand or head, subtle eye movements and detailed human gestures that sell the emotions of dolls in New York.
Imagine looking in the mirror and seeing another you. The lights, the noise, the madness. Can you help but wonder, is it real?

In TRANSCENDENTS we experience the flood of mixed emotions felt when coming to grips with puberty, sexual identity and the mounting responsibilities of teen-hood.

A photo-real New York set in the present, populated by living, breathing dolls is the perfect metaphor for the paradox that is adolescence. It’s about living the reality but daring to be yourself in a world that is both real and surreal, shabby and chic, mundane and breathtaking.

Playing on this tension between feeling real and being pretend sets the tone for this fun and daring dramedy about yourself life in the Big Apple. Lighting, camera, and acting, all come together to make this impossible New York, populated by hyper-realistic dolls seem seductively real.
# 4:35am
Worst Night of My Life.
She leans against the bar, poses with a human sense of weight and gravity, her soulful eyes communicate real emotion.

TRANSCENDENTS is populated by a cast of lifelike dolls that appear human in every way. They are anatomically correct, have soft youthful skin, and lifelike eyes. Urethane eyes refract light to make luminous expressions and smaller irises appear more human.

Stop-motion is especially poignant for this story because it is so effective at portraying the texture of real life while also offering an appealing, surreal twist. The materials, lights and objects are real, making the animation immediately accessible and believable in a way that is impossible to replicate in other mediums.
# I check out your butt every time you leave the room.
# Sometimes you gotta
pick up your own fallen fruit.
Key emotional beats play in CU and ECU.

This lends itself to subtle filmic acting cues like a raised eyebrow, a tightening of the hands, or small eye gestures for nuanced human emotions.

Animators use human choreography for realistic movements and human poses. Record video during voice sessions for performance reference for the animators. Performance benefits from the more tangible sense of life.

A uncomfortable shifting of weight, rummaging through a purse, combing back loose hair. These are the subtle, natural details which allow us to connect with the dolls as real people by conveying the nuances of human performance.
# Sometimes you have to go crazy to figure out who you aren’t.
HYPER REAL INTERIORS
THIS IS AN APARTMENT NOT A SET!

Interiors are places with history
Design for realism
Knick-knack and imperfections
Reinforces notion that these are people, not puppets

Spaces really look lived in!
Through a Tilt Shift lens, the big city seems impossibly small. The people busily move about like insects. We are reminded that our characters are just small ants in this big city. Small ants, but BIG dreamers.

As someone new to the city, New York is dazzling, mythic and overwhelming. We employ a number of visual devices to convey this sense of wonder and portray the vibrancy of New York as seen through our characters’ eyes.

New York exteriors will be created using a mix of Tilt Shift aerials for wide establishing shots, selective focus and shallow depth of field photography for street level shots, and the occasional hyper real set.
# I want other girls to think you're gay.
Luxurious play of light and colour conveys the energy and mystery of life in the Big Apple. Sensual Bokeh techniques separate foreground and background and reduce differences in scale.

# Even the nice guys are dicks.
# Best night of my life.
TRANSCENDENTS is an edgy stop-motion hyper real teen drama that features dolls. The hand-held camera, quick edits and natural lighting all aid in our acceptance of the performance and set as real, helping the jokes hit their mark and helping the characters to feel more real - transforming dolls into characters we empathize with and care about.

Naturalistic and location based lighting convey immediacy and sense of action being “caught in the moment”. The play of light and shadow on real objects is a charm inherent to stop motion.

Dolls take on additional realism with location lighting and decreased saturation.

Single-camera documentary style shaky-cam conveys sense of “being there” while light leaks and lens flares make footage feel raw and authentic. Pulls viewer into the scene and aids acceptance of scene as “real”.

Think of the kinetic camera style of MTV Skins. Represents the chaotic, wild side of our teens’ life in New York.
What are we looking for?

Cuppa Coffee is seeking a broadcasting home for Transcendents.

We are confident that your network shares our vision for delivering an edgy, emotional drama with stunningly original and daring artistic visuals.

Cuppa Coffee’s ultra stop motion will deliver the audience, but it will be the writing team that proves to keep them there.

So we are also looking for writers that will marry the voice of your network with the higher emotional and visual tone that Cuppa Coffee has created.
Our change is now: TRANSCENDENTS
A New Teen Drama from Cuppa Coffee Studios