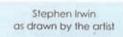
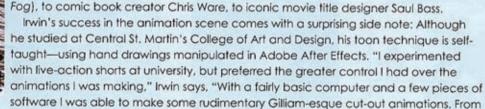
Stephen Irwin Director/Animator, The Black Dog's Progress

The haunting story playing out in endless flipbook scenes in Stephen Irwin's short, The Black Dog's Progress, was inspired by a news item the 29-year-old London-based animator saw some years ago: After several attempts to get rid of the family dog, a woman sets the creature on fire, only for it to set the house ablaze, killing her children. "I wanted an original way of telling the story, and came up with the idea of laying the entire narrative out on the screen all at once," Irwin explains, "I love the repetition of optical toys such as zoetropes and flipbooks ... I also wanted the violence to be very cartoon-like and made up of as few frames as possible."

Black Dog was created for Channel 4's Animate Projects program in 2008. Irwin has previously been commissioned by the BBC and U.K. Film Council (Dry Lips, Bows & Arrows), receiving commendation for these as well as his graduate film Dialog. He says he is inspired

> by many different creative icons, from director Stanley Kubrick, to Russian animator Yuri Norstein (Hedgehog in the





there, my interest developed and I began to experiment with different techniques, and continue to do so."

While he continues to pursue commercial projects, Irwin has two new shorts in the works. "One of them is much bigger in scale and ambition than any of my previous works ... it will be shot in pixilation with actors and sets, as well as 2D drawn animation, so I need to find funding before I can start production," he shares, "The other is an animated double bill, but with the two films playing simultaneously on top of each other." This inventive Brit surely has plenty of animated twists up his sleeye! ■

