

The Genghis Khan of Cuteness

Recently, amidst the raging pandemic, while everyone was trapped in their homes bored and depressed, the Japanese animation studio Shin-Ei Animation, gave birth to an anime television series “Pui Pui Molcar”, or commonly known as “Pui Pui Guinea Pig Cars” in Hong Kong, which won over millions of hearts internationally with their simple yet adorable and entertaining story and animation, temporarily anesthetizing the gloominess of lockdown. The series is comprised of 12 episodes of 2-minute short stop-motion animation videos, which was aired on a Japanese TV program for kids, and eventually found it’s way to other countries through broadcasting platforms such as Netflix or Muse Communication, taking the world by storm, earning millions upon millions on views with much praise and positive reception.

What it’s about

The story setting is no different from reality, except there exists a bunch of sentient guinea pig and car hybrids (aka Molcars) which interacts with other fellow Molcars and their respective drivers. In each episode, the Molcars or their drivers may encounter a problem or difficulty, and they work together to devise a solution to solve it. Throughout their endeavors, we get to understand more about the antics of the Molcars, while also enjoying their cute interactions between one another. However, such a concept was far from original, yet why was it able to explode in popularity so rapidly?

What’s so special about the series

Unlike tradition animation you see in anime or cartoon shows, the story is animated via stop-motion filming, or in other words, a cinematographic technique where the camera is repeatedly stopped and started, and by combining these shots all together and play them, it would give the impression that it is moving as it would in a video. For example, let’s say you wanted to make a stop-motion about picking up a pen, so what you have to do, is to repeatedly start up and stop your camera, while moving you hand bit by bit so as to recreate the movement of your hand when you line up the shots together, and the series is exactly just like that.

Another unique trait it possesses is that there isn’t a single dialogue throughout the 12 episodes short, be it the interactions between the Molcars, or the interactions between the Molcars and the drivers. Instead, they would make various distinct sounds effects to show the emotion of the characters. For the drivers, a grunting sound indicates anger or frustration, while a scream may induce excitement, shock, or fear, depending on the situation. As to the Molcars, they would squeak to mimic talking, and

just like the “human” counterparts, a high-pitched, high-frequency squeaking tells you that the Molcar is overjoyed or ecstatic, while a slow, tired squeak shows the Molcar’s disappointed emotions.

What’s so great about the series

As aforementioned, the series is animated entirely by the stop-motion technique, and normally, it can be easily distinguished as such, since it can never replicate an actual animation via traditional means and is often prey to clunky and dull animations. Yet, the series had smooth and lively animation throughout the entire 12 episodes, with countless special effects and movement. This really proves how much effort the production team really put into the series, and how patient they were to be able to put up with the repetitive and tedious nature of stop-motion animation, so you really must tip your hat to the creators of the series.

Story-wise, it’s utter lack of dialogue actually triggers the viewers to use their imagination to “fill in the blanks”, while still making the plot comprehensible to them. Since they’re only squeaking and making noises, there’s absolutely no telling of what they’re actually saying, and the limit is only up to the viewer’s imagination. Moreover, the simple yet indefinite story setting also leaves room of imaginative thinking for the viewers. The Molcars are a hybrid of a guinea pig and a car, but what are the proportions of the combination? Do they need fuel? Will they die one day? Why are they there in the first place? Why does the Molcars obey the humans? These are mind-boggling and vague questions viewers will ask when they watch the series, of which almost all of them unanswered, leaving all the work to their own imaginations and fantasies.

Aside from that, the stories were able to subvert the expectations of viewers and surprise them with plot twists, which were never too dramatic, but forces you admit one thing “you never saw it coming”. The plot twists (usually endings of the shorts) might also deliver a positive educational message as well, which makes the kids satisfied, while making the adults taken by surprise with the intricate development of the story, while also making them reminiscent of their childhood favourites such as Tom and Jerry. Last but not least, it’s tremendously cute, which is more than enough to allow a person to fall in love with the show.

All of this successfully invalidates the age restriction of a mere children’s show, and enabling people from all age groups to have a great time, hence contributing to the seemingly never-ending praise for its brilliance, and it’s every-growing popularity worldwide.

If you have never watched them before, then you must stop by YouTube to check it out! They're not too long, so there's no excuse for you to complain them for being too long. Perhaps you might also be captivated by the story telling of the series, or simply like the show due to its lovable Molcars, and hopefully make your day a bit better.