BLUESCAPE
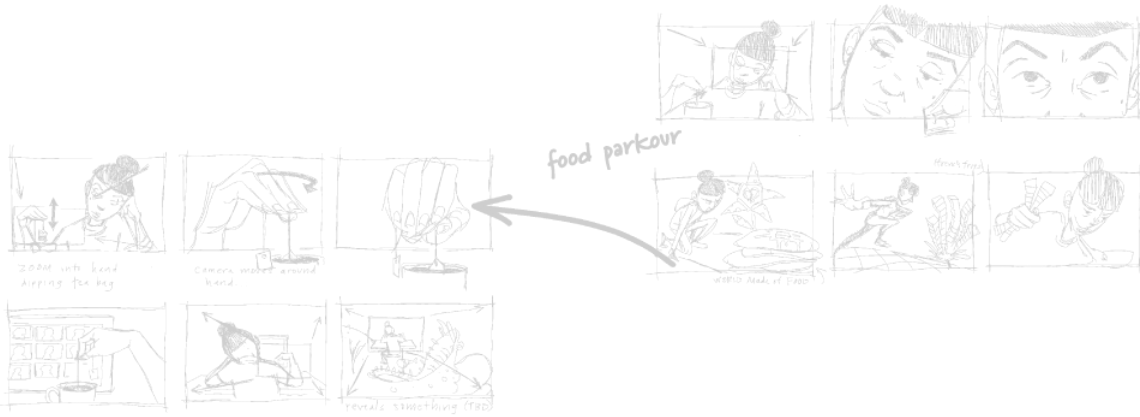
# **The Mystery of Meetings**

How Bluescape made remote collaboration effortless for an animation team

About Titmouse

Titmouse is an independent award-winning animation production company with three studio locations in Los Angeles, New York City, and Vancouver. With over 700 writers, producers, directors, storyboard artists, animators, compositors, and editors, they produce original TV shows, films, commercial work, and branded or digital content entirely in-house. They are best known for their work on *Star Wars: Galaxy of Adventures*, *Rick and Morty: Exquisite Corpse*, and worked on the newly released *Beevis and Butt-Head Do the Universe*.

Otto

Dante

Jeremy

Riley

Matt

Sander

Mari
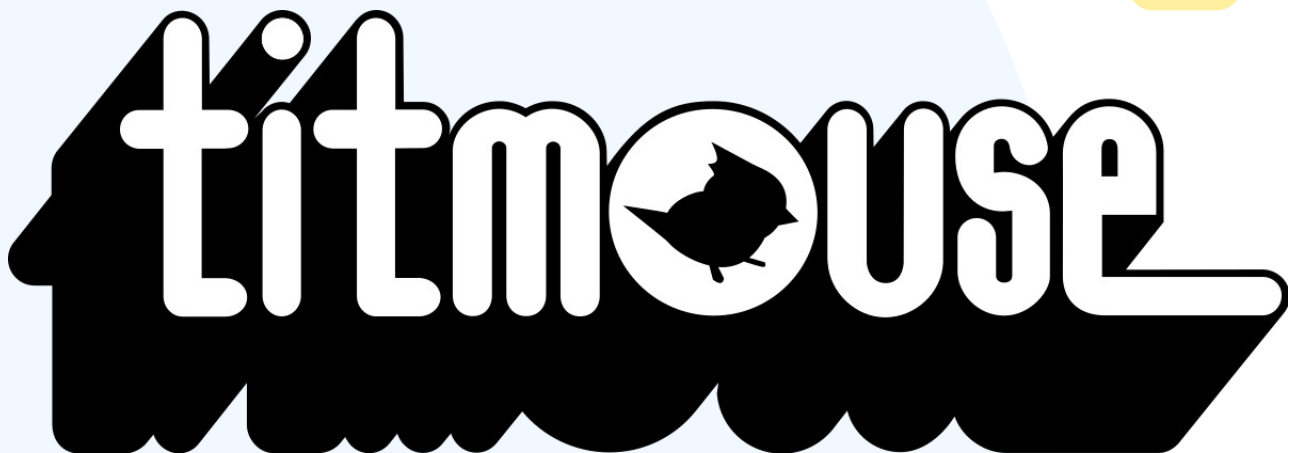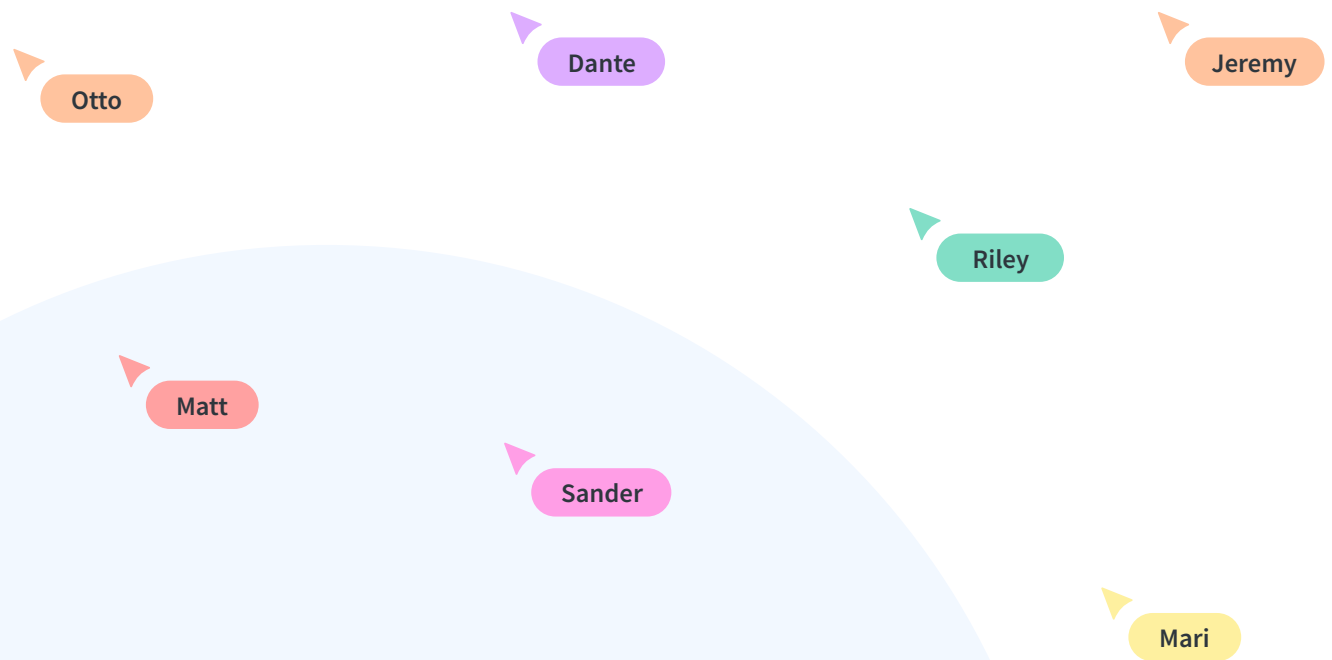
About the Project

Major animation studios have used Bluescape to create some of the most popular theatrical and streaming releases of the past few years. To shed light on how Bluescape is helping creative teams bring their visions to life, Bluescape brought together a team from Titmouse to collaborate on a 2D animated short.

Their assignment? Reveal what's really going on behind the screens of virtual meetings.

WATCH THE SHORT

Mari

Jeremy

Dante

Sander

Matt

Otto

Breaking the Ice

Six animators contributed to the short: Matt Taylor (*Rick and Morty: Exquisite Corpse*), Mari Jaye Blanchard (*Swing*), Sander Joon (*Sounds Good*), Jeremy Polgar (AREA21), Otto Tang (*Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja*), and Dante Buford (*Star Trek: Lower Decks*).

The Titmouse team used Bluescape to collaborate while working from California, Oregon, Texas, New York, and Estonia.

Matt Taylor, the director, and Riley Riggen, the associate producer, kicked off the project by uploading the schedule, early concepts, and inspiration to their Bluescape workspace. Then, they invited the rest of the team in and got to work!

Bluescape was used for all of the team's meetings, from brainstorms to creative reviews. As the project grew, the workspace took on a life of its own as the team began to fully claim their creative space.

The team kicked things off by reviewing the schedule, specs, and reference material for the project. They also introduced themselves by drawing in the workspace.

Organizing the Pipeline

Associate producer Riley Riggen was responsible for wrangling the remote team, tracking deliverables, and keeping the entire production organized, on schedule, and within budget.

"The first thing I did when I got into Bluescape was create a timeline and section it off week by week," said Riley. "This served as a visual representation of the production pipeline. Having it in Bluescape made it easier for people to see where we were at and where we needed to go."

"Some people use spreadsheets to track projects and highlight things in different colors to show what state various deliverables are in at a given time," added director Matt Taylor. "It's sort of a bare-bones way to track stuff. After a while, your eyes get crossed scrolling through a long list of shots."

In Bluescape, Matt and Riley were able to instantly see all assets and centralize feedback in one collaborative workspace. This helped the team save time on technical aspects of production and focus on bringing the animation to life. Everyone on the team was juggling other projects while working on this one, so the timesaving aspect was especially significant.

"Working in production, I occasionally need to be the middleman between the artists and director,"

explained Riley. "Using Bluescape, I was cut out as the middleman, which saved a lot of time. The artists could upload their work right to the workspace for Matt's review, and I could easily track everyone's progress."

The animators also very much appreciated seeing what was expected of them and when it needed to happen.

"It was fun to submit checkpoints during the process because I knew my crew could sneak a peek at my work and I could peek at theirs, too," said contributing animator Jeremy Polgar.

> "Bluescape is such a good tool for artists because we communicate visually," said contributing animator Mari Jaye Blanchard.

"I really liked showing up and seeing that someone left a note or feedback. Seeing how other people were branching out creatively and finding random sketches in the workspace opened up bizarre and amazing conversations for us. It felt comfortable, like we were sitting around a table together."
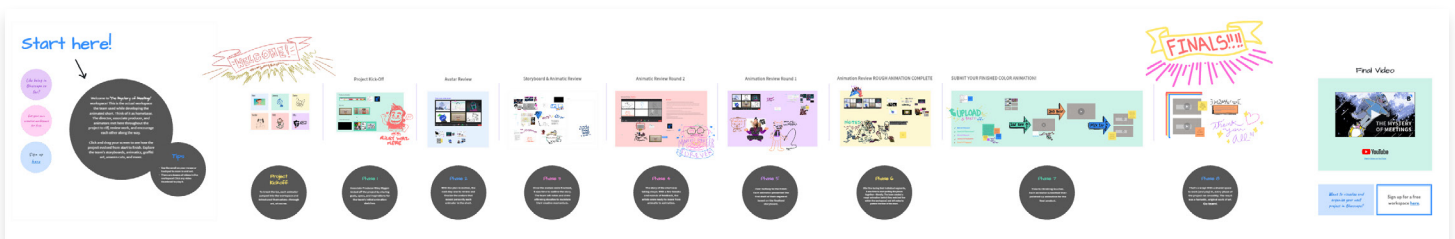
Associate producer Riley Riggen created a visual pipeline in Bluescape, outlining the entire project from kick-off to final production.

Getting Off Your Island

Working remotely can sometimes feel like working on a desert island. Even when team members are focused on different parts of a project, they still need to lean on each other for help.

When Matt was struggling with how to end the short, he almost threw all of his hard work in the trash.

"I was about to scrap the ending when I saw Riley was in the workspace at the same time I was," said Matt. "Seeing him there—his RR initials on the screen—was exactly what I needed. We hopped on a call and talked it out. It was a crucial conversation that shaped the entire ending."

"He showed me his work and I said, 'dude, it's too good! You can't get rid of this,'" said Riley. "Having a conversation and reviewing everything in the workspace in real-time was a game-changer. We were able to figure things out so much faster in Bluescape versus regular screen shares."

Being able to meet live and quickly share feedback in Bluescape not only saved the ending of the short, but helped Matt and Riley perfect it into something that was better than originally imagined.

"Working remotely, we kind of just see each other in this box," said contributing animator Otto Tang. "So, to have a space where we can physically see each other moving around, it reminds me that this is a team."

"When I see your cursor moving on my screen, I feel connected to you in a different way," said Otto.
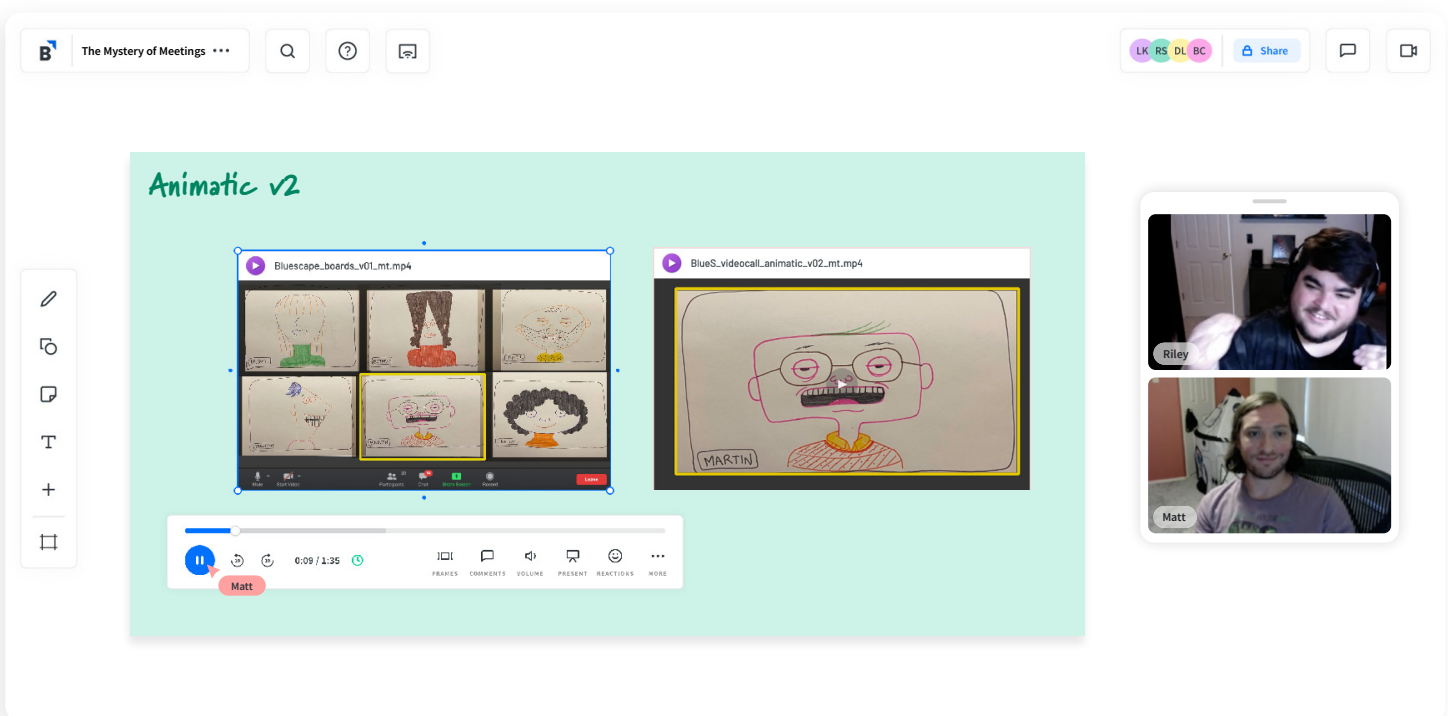
Matt and Riley met live in the workspace throughout the project to check progress, discuss concepts, and review work.

Crossing the Finish Line

"I'm spoiled by Bluescape now. A well-organized workspace can serve for an entire pipeline," said director Matt Taylor.

Using Bluescape, the team was able to deliver a short film in 12 weeks that perfectly illustrates the pains of working remotely—while avoiding those pains and having fun in the process.

"Other solutions feel archaic now. Things get buried too quickly. I hope to have Bluescape on future projects," concluded Matt.

Learn more about the project, the animators, and even step into the Titmouse team's workspace to explore storyboards, animatics, and unseen cuts.
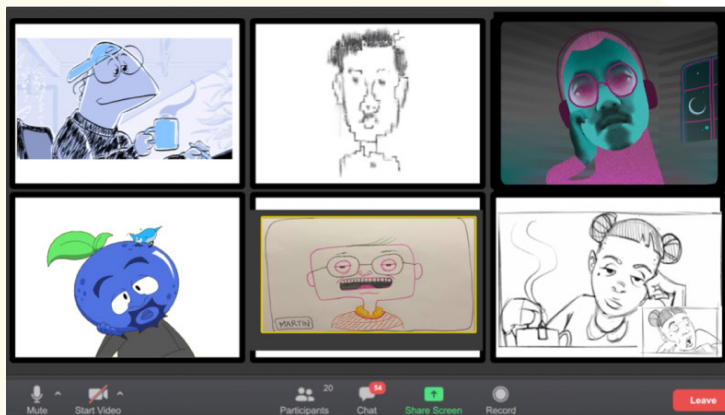
Animatic Concept

Final Video

LEARN MORE

Why the Team Loved Bluescape

Freeform workspaces.

Collaborating on an endless canvas gave everyone space do their part well. Riley created a structure to keep things on track. The artists inspired each other and shared creative feedback through doodles and drawings. Matt kept tabs on the entire production, seeing progress, zooming into details, and leaving notes for the team along the way.

Shared art and "social graffiti."

Seeing other people's work (like you'd see on the walls of a studio) sparked ideas and kept everyone's creative energy up. Sharing sketches and memes in the workspace helped the team feel connected, have fun, and restore the camaraderie that's lost while working remotely.

True team collaboration.

Sharing a space instead of screen allowed each team member to add notes, endorse ideas, and point to elements without having to wait their turn or take over the screen. Collaborating this way gave everyone a voice and turned passive viewers into active participants.

Video sync.

Playing videos in perfect sync made it possible for the team to do live reviews sessions and avoid the choppy experience—what Matt calls "pixelated hopscotch"—when trying to play videos over screenshare. Stepping through videos frame by frame ensured no detail was missed and notes were kept right in the workspace for easy reference.

One shared space.

Centralizing everything in one shared space smoothed the production process from start to finish. The team never had to go into email or chat threads to find notes, revisions, or reference material—it was all there in the workspace, which reduced distractions and stress.

TRY BLUESCAPE

Bluescape is the platform for creative collaboration. Streamline workflows and finish projects faster in a secure platform trusted by Fortune 100 companies, government agencies, and the world's largest movie studios. Learn more and claim your free workspace at bluescape.com.