



Eric Miller addressing the gathering at the seminar.

Into the art of stories

Story-telling is the key to the success of a film, be it an action film or an animated one. This truth was yet again emphasised by Professor Eric Miller at a seminar organised by IMAGE College of Arts, Animation and Technology recently.

As a New Yorker living in Chennai, Eric admits that his exposure to Indian movies has been limited to Tamil movies. Illustrated by video recordings, Eric discussed many aspects of story-telling, both in India and abroad. "Story-telling is warm, personal and exciting. It grabs the viewer-listener on a very simple, basic human level and draws him or her into an imaginary realm. During the narration of a story, one must be clear about the nature and character involved in the mission of the story," he says.

Stories have a great deal of cultural information that can be stored, accessed and shared. "One must really master the art of telling a local story and make it attractive to a global audience to make sure the right kind of information is passed

on," he adds. During the seminar, Eric also included some interesting visuals from movies like *The Titanic*, *ET*, *Ice Age* and *Kung Fu Panda*. "What really appeals in such Hollywood movies is that there is better production

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quality and lot of importance is given to continuity and research," he says.

Apart from movies, Eric, also spoke on how the scope for animation has increased in the country. "Animation industry is very

new out here and a lot of companies abroad are hiring Indian production houses for animation bringing in more opportunities."

Some of the other points Eric touched upon included the portrayal of realistic aspects of everyday life in local environments and how fantasy can be introduced in movies.

Eric made each member of the audience write down a problem, after which the person sitting next was asked to give a solution to the problem.

"One of the most familiar storyline that really works in the film industry is the problem-solution formulae," he says. "In almost every film, the hero comes across a problem and then he solves it creating a happy ending."

On asking if this particular formulae, which has been over used, is creating a void within the industry, he simply says, "maybe there is just one story in this world - a problem and a solution."